



# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

JUNE  
1981

The Journal Of Professional Adventurers

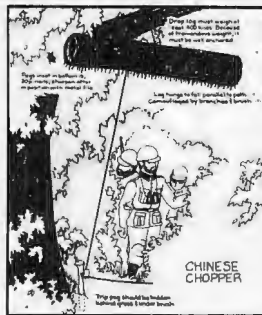
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Need to know how to purify water, mix concrete, or manufacture matches? Do you want more facts about food preservation, veterinary doses, or homemade brews? Information is what *Henley's* is all about. A total of 10,000 topics treated in 900 pages of practical—and for the survivalist, invaluable—reference material. This is information to live with! When everyday goods become unavailable, *Henley's* will shine in the survival library. Fans of Kurt Saxon's *Survivor* series must have this book. Just a few of the how-to subjects covered: fertilizers, paints, chromium plating, pyrotechnics, leather, cheese, adhesives, bricks, poison antidotes, solders, soaps, and rust preventives. You'll even find a remedy for gunpowder-stained skin. The chapter "Useful Workshop and Laboratory Methods" explains centrifugation, dialysis, filtration, fermentation, and much more. Most folks consider plastics an inscrutable chemical mystery; after reading a dozen pages of "Useful Information Concerning Plastics," you'll be armed with all the lay knowledge you'll ever need. Complete and unabridged, this collection is both entertaining and educational. 6 x 8 1/2, hardcover, illus., 900 pp. N.D. **\$14.95**



### LIVE OFF THE LAND IN THE CITY AND COUNTRY

**by Ragnar Benson**

Not just another "eat roots and berries" book! Ragnar Benson, famed survival writer, looks back at his experiences while living off the land—even in the city—for the past 40 years. He reveals a totally practical survival program that is unlike any other. Contrary to similar authors, Benson believes that wild, fresh game (not plants) is the best source of nutrition in a survival context. Even in urban habitats, game is always plentiful—if you know how to find it. Yet Benson's all-new book covers much more. A separate chapter details how to make your own cache tubes—a big money saver—and also which supplies to store away in them. (Hint: it's not that expensive freeze-dried stuff.) Gives hands-on advice about survival medicine, firearms, reloading, fuel storage, diesel generators, retreating, etc. Other comprehensive, photo-illustrated chapters explain how to raise livestock and vegetables/grains on your retreat the *smart way*. Drawing from his Indian background, he analyzes their good example of living comfortably and cheaply without the trappings of modern society. A goldmine of native American lore about: curling hides, preserving meats and vegetables without refrigeration, foraging and trapping the Indian way, and much more. Benson even provides plans for building your own A-frame cabin, just like his own, from local timber in one summer—3,000 square feet of living space for under \$10,000! This complete guide to surviving in style is, of course, written in Benson's lively, down-home manner. Survivalists, retreaters, backpackers, and anyone else wishing to develop a more self-sufficient lifestyle should definitely have this one in their libraries! 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, 15 chapters, 60 photos, 230 pp., ISBN 0-87364-200-7. Available July 1981 **\$14.95**

### ARMCHAIR MILLIONAIRE

How To Go From Rags To Riches



### THE ARMCHAIR MILLIONAIRE

**by Frederick Hal Vice**

Money may not buy happiness, but it sure beats being broke. Not many millionaires sing the blues. You too can leave the rat race behind and take the fast track to top money. *The Armchair Millionaire* is fact, not fiction, written by an ex-corporate banker who relinquished both salary and suburban amenities to start his own small business at home. His success story can be yours—with maximum return on minimum investment. This money-makers' manual goes far beyond pretty pep talk and financial fairy tales. Solid guidelines, practical examples, and real-life solutions set it apart from get-rich-quick quackery. None of that early-to-bed-early-to-rise folderol, either; as Vice writes, "It's not hard work, it's smart work." Flexible formulas for financial self-sufficiency are feasible for anyone's lifestyle. Dozens of case histories support the accessibility of economic independence. Discover why cottage industries all over America are alive and well—the income ideas are endless. Whether you seek some extra pocket money or a major makeover in purchasing power, *The Armchair Millionaire* is effective encouragement. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, 120 pp. ISBN 0-87364-204-X. **\$7.95**

### SPECIAL FORCES HANDBOOK

Paladin Press once again presents the long out-of-print *Special Forces Handbook*. This classic contains chapters on tactics, demolitions, air operations, weapons, communications, first aid, and survival. There are also techniques on unconventional warfare, guerrilla forces' missions, and composition of operational detachments. 4 1/2 x 5 1/2, over 200 pp., illustrated, softcover. **\$8.00**

### TRAINING THE GUNFIGHTER

**by Capt. Timothy Mullin**

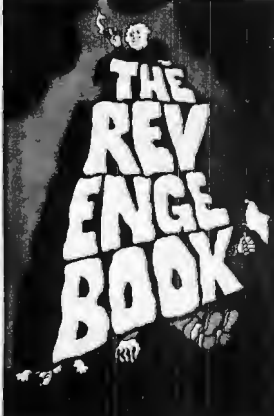
An encyclopedic, collector's volume on the combat application of firearms, written for law officers and legally-armed citizens by an ex-sheriff and practicing attorney. The author provides complete historical, tactical, and legal coverage for all combat firearms, and especially their use by police. Shotguns, rifles, and handguns are studied extensively, as are special purpose weapons, such as submachine guns and silenced countersniper rifles. The author is particularly well qualified to write on this topic: he presently instructs police forces on combat pistolcraft, and provides legal advice on the use of deadly force. Sixty photos accompany the text, which also analyzes the merits of various accessories, like grips, sights, holsters, and body armor. Chapter titles include: Handgun selection, Revolver vs. Self-loader, Bullet Styles, Carries, Stances, Burst Firing, Night Shooting, Legal Considerations, Range Construction, and 21 more. An attractive reference volume that could save your life. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, photos, 220 pp., ISBN 0-87364-185-X. **\$24.95**

Available July 1981

### THE REVENGE BOOK

**by Bob Smith**

Over the phone lines and through the mails, in the hands of messengers and on the backs of vermin, *The Revenge Book* tells you how to strike out anonymously at those vexing individuals who make life miserable. Revenge artist Bob Smith paints a shadowy panorama of vengeance that is guaranteed to inspire wickedly devious grins on the faces of good guys everywhere. Enrage your target's spouse. Shock his neighbors and business associates with sordid tales of debauchery. Turn the world against him. In short, reduce him to a quivering mass of paranoid jello with what is perhaps the most sophisticated and well written of all the revenge books. It took a mastermind like Smith to brew up this devilish concoction of trickery, which we understandably offer for *entertainment purposes only!* 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, cartoons, 90 pp., ISBN 0-87364-210-4. **\$8.00**



### BLACK MEDICINE III

**Low Blows**

**by N. Mashiro, Ph.D.**

Long awaited by self-defense specialists around the globe, *Low Blows* is the third volume in N. Mashiro's infamous *Black Medicine Series*. In *Low Blows*, Mashiro presents his favorite techniques for bringing the body's natural weapons into violent and painful contact with an opponent's vulnerable areas. Reveals devastating responses to wrist holds, punches, chokes, rear attacks, bear hugs, and special defenses against knife and club attackers. Especially noteworthy is a chapter on fighting a standing opponent from the ground (this trick could save your life!). Mashiro goes on to critique many commonly taught self-defense methods that he feels are suicidal. Over 90 dramatic photos illustrate the holds and moves in *Low Blows*, making it substantially longer than the other volumes in this series. An excellent self-study guide for beginners, and an eye-opening reference work for advanced students and instructors. But be warned: *Low Blows* is not for readers with weak stomachs. Buy now, before you need to use these secrets in the streets. . . . 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, illus., 140 pp., ISBN 0-87364-214-7. **\$10.00**

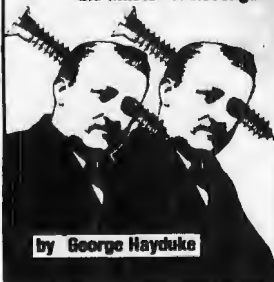


"Your book *Life After Doomsday* is a most excellent production, well written and communicating some crucial thoughts. I have just finished reading it and I am glad I ordered a copy."

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### GET EVEN 2:

More Dirty Tricks from  
 the Master of Revenge



**by George Hayduke**

### GET EVEN 2

**by George Hayduke**

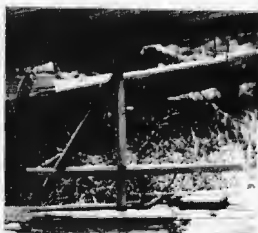
Enemies beware! Here's the outrageous sequel to George Hayduke's underground bestseller, *Get Even: The Complete Book of Dirty Tricks*. *Get Even 2* presents a wide range of all-new dirty tricks people pull to get even with big business burns, footloose spouses, lousy landlords—ripoffs of all types. Hayduke, master of vengeance, has recently been featured on numerous talk shows and in magazine articles. A tremendous public response ensued. People around the country flooded Hayduke with novel ideas for getting even with *just about everybody*. These nasty revenge techniques are included in *Get Even 2*. This inspiring volume is a product of public frustration. . . . the little guys don't have to take it any more! Some of the topics covered are: utility companies, sweephearts, animals, lawyers, drugs, the military, mass transit, and dozens more. This is the real thing! Note: *Get Even 2* is for *entertainment purposes only*. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, 170 pp., ISBN 0-87364-213-9. **\$9.95**

### THEY SHOOT TO KILL

A Psycho-history of Criminal Sniping

**by Ronald Tobias**

There are, conservatively speaking, anywhere between 6,000 and 8,000 sniping incidents occurring yearly in the U.S. which result either in physical harm or property damage. Written with unflinching regard to detail, *They Shoot to Kill* defines the drama and devastation that one armed person can create, without warning. In-depth research and on-edge accounts take readers behind the scenes of sniping both notorious and obscure. Professional criminologists, psychologists, law enforcement officials, and the general public will find this study of criminal sniping an educational—and absolutely engrossing—reading experience. Included are major case histories which represent each of the different types and methods of the criminal sniper, ranging from the juvenile vandal to the psychotic mass murderer, Charles Whitman fighting to the death atop Texas Tower; David "Son of Sam" Berkowitz stalking the streets of New York City; Alain "Max" de la Toucyne hot on de Gaulle's trail—these are criminal snipers who are internationally infamous. They are examined alongside the lesser-known snipers: Attebury, Carattini, Essex, Hayes, Unruh, and others. The author is recognized as a leading authority on criminal sniping, and has advised police departments and law agencies in such cases as the crippling attack on *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, 240 pp., ISBN 0-87364-207-4. **\$14.95**



### FLEXIBLE WEAPONS

**by John Sanchez**

From the author of *Slash and Thrust* comes the definitive study on flexible weapons, complete with construction details and training methods. Revealing a unique dimension to self-defense, Sanchez examines the advantages to fighting with flexible weapons. Chain maces, manrikikuari, steel whips, meteor balls, and rope knives—all are treated individually and intensively. Their lethal potential is for *real!* And realism—physical and mental—is the bottom line in this book. The author offers programs for solo and partner training; the section on sparring techniques includes designs for mock weapons and protective gear. Line drawings illustrate assorted weapons, strikes, chokes, engagement attitudes, and anatomical targets. Blocking, gripping, locking, roping, and thrusting are also discussed in specific detail. Sanchez's new manual is a companion piece to the popular *Slash and Thrust*; at the same time *Flexible Weapons* stands alone as a very special self-defense book. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, illus., 80 pp., ISBN 0-87364-219-8. Available June 1981 **\$8.00**

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**FIREARMS SELF-DEFENSE**

An Introductory Guide  
by Robert M. Price

As crime rates rise, more and more people are turning to firearms as a last means of self-defense. Unfortunately, many gun-owners have little or no training in their proper and safe defensive use. These shortcomings can have tragic consequences. **Firearms Self-Defense: An Introductory Guide** is meant to help correct this situation. In this comprehensive, large-format edition, Price uses nontechnical language and high quality photos to explain how firearms function and how to use them safely and legally in self-defense situations. Thorough, thoughtful examination of alternatives tags this book as a standout. Chapter titles include: Is A Gun The Answer?, The Use of Deadly Force; Safety; Permits And Legality; Buying Your Gun; Care And Maintenance; Basic Marksmanship; and five others. Not just for novices, **Firearms Self-Defense** is recommended for anyone seeking more information about gun usage. 8 1/2 x 11, 125 photos, 12 chapters, 200 pp., ISBN 0-87364-218-X, hardcover, \$19.95

Available July 1981

**PATROLLING AND TRACKING**

Published originally by Australian Military Forces. A compact, knowledge-crammed manual developed by the famed "Aussies" from their combat experiences in Korea, Malaysia, and Vietnam! 104 pp., 4x6, soft cover \$4.90

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR PALADIN READERS**

The following books are now available for immediate shipment: **Don't Become the Victim**; **The Armchair Millionaire**; **Combat Survival**; **The Revenge Book**; **The Complete Book of Karate Weapons**; **Chinese Praying Mantle Boxing**; **Shooting to Live**; and **Get Even 2—More Dirty Tricks from the Master of Revenge**.

Paladin will also announce rules and prizes for its **Second Annual Survival Drawing** within the next few months. Keep checking your mail box for complete details in the next **Paladin Press Catalog**!

**EVERYMAN'S GUIDE TO TAX HAVENS**

by Adam Starchild

Survive the monetary chaos that many experts predict will strangle America's economy by 1985. Starchild explains how foreign tax havens are the key to future economic survival. According to the author, his information "is not intended as a spur in evading taxation, but as a guide in avoiding taxation. Tax evasion is illegal; tax avoidance is legal." Discusses finance laws for over 30 attractive tax havens such as Bermuda, Barbados, Switzerland, the Bahamas, Cayman Islands, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, 112pp. \$6.00

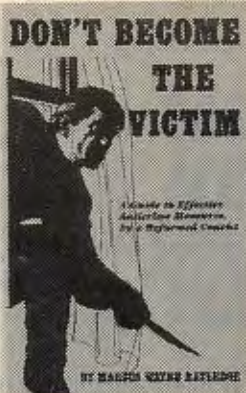
**RIOT CONTROL Material and Techniques by Col. Rex Applegate**

Newly revised 1981 edition of Col. Applegate's classic manual on riot-makers, riot control, techniques and equipment. In 1980, worldwide riots claimed many lives and destroyed millions of dollars worth of property. The coming years promise even more mob violence and civil disorder. **Riot Control** is meant to help correct this critical situation. It is an up-to-date study of the tactics and tools needed to defeat every type of riot action. Law enforcement officials particularly will welcome this new edition to their libraries. Provides complete training information on organizing riot patrols and large forces, handling barricade and sniper situations, prevention of looting, clearing houses and streetfighting, using the riot baton and chemical agents, and much more. **Riot Control** also includes a complete survey of modern riot control gear, such as chemical agents, foggers, batons, helmets, firearms, vehicles, etc. Hundreds of equipment photos and practical line illustrations. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, illus., 300 pp., ISBN 0-87364-208-2. \$19.95

Available MAY 1981

**PRINCIPLES OF QUICK KILL**

An inside look at the Army's technique for instant shooting. Learn how to determine your master eye, how to hit tiny disks thrown in the air 8 times out of 10, and how to simply and instinctively hit any target. Perfect for police, marksmen, and hunters. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, illus., 72 pp. ISBN 0-87364-065-9. \$6.00



**DON'T BECOME THE VICTIM**

by Marcus Wayne Ratledge

Jimmy Carter once called this book's author "the most dangerous criminal in the history of Georgia." Now Ratledge's inside story on crime avoidance is here. Shoplifters, con artists, auto thieves, muggers, robbers, even rapists and murderers—Ratledge gives you specific, down-to-earth details on how to avoid becoming the victims of crime. This is not just another "leave on a light and lock your doors" anticrime book. It is a gutsy, real-life guide on effective anticrime measures told by a reformed criminal and gifted writer. In fact, Ratledge is presently incarcerated in the Georgia State Prison, the maximum security home of some of America's most infamous convicts. Each year, over \$20 billion is lost to crime in America. You owe it to yourself, your family, and your community to do your part to help correct this disturbing situation—with the practical help of **Don't Become The Victim**. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, 9 chapters, 120 pp., ISBN 0-87364-211-2. \$6.00

**COMBAT SURVIVAL**

Never before available to the public. An extremely useful, comprehensive training manual on physical and combat survival, tactics, and techniques. Our inside sources believe that this is the same manual used to instruct Great Britain's elite Strategic Air Service (SAS). These specialists in secret warfare were responsible for the daring 1980 hostage rescue operation at the Iranian embassy in London. **Combat Survival** illustrates combat and survival training and tactical methods useful in similar ops, as well as general survival conditions. Also contains rare info on evading and silencing guard dogs, sabotage and intelligence gathering, navigating under survival conditions, and much more. Includes over one hundred detailed line drawings and valuable charts. Chapter titles include: Evasion; Survival Navigation; Improvisation and Escape Kit; Contacting Agents; Dog Evasion; Wild Foods; Animal Traps and Snares; Fishing; Water Survival Still; Shelter; Primitive Medicine; and four more. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, illus., ISBN 0-87364-212-0 156 pp. \$12.95

**HOW TO KILL V**

by John Minnery

The author combines solid historical data with keenly imaginative scenarios to produce volume five of this infamous series. Minnery grimly explains how a new wave terrorist need not be a sophisticated nuclear physicist to wreak radioactive havoc with homemade atomic weapons. Detailed information on building the "Dragonfly," handheld, magnetometer-sanitary rocket gun. Presents a provocative lesson in self-defense — against attack dogs. "Eye-opening" tactics against night-vision sniper equipment. Actual photos of a "Flying Shotgun," WW I phantom dagger, the SOE penguin, mantraps, crossbows, and much more! 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, illus., 85 pp., ISBN 0-87364-201-5 Not Available in CANADA \$5.00

**GET EVEN: THE COMPLETE BOOK OF DIRTY TRICKS**

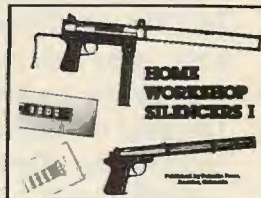
The latest word in do-it-yourself "justice" for everyman makes the other harrasmant books look like a Sunday school picnic. **The Complete Book of Dirty Tricks** teaches you how to get even whether wronged by an enemy, victimized by a credit card company, or just ripped off by any number of obnoxious individuals and menacing organizations. The methods range from simple pranks to sophisticated techniques of devastation. "George Hayduke" is a master of revenge whose wisdom will help you on top of any situation where you formerly felt helpless. The book is brimming with anecdotes describing ingenious tactics that have been successfully employed by veteran tricksters. For entertainment purposes only! 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, 190 pp. \$9.95

"Get Even: The Complete Book of Dirty Tricks is the title of a nasty little volume by George Hayduke (not his real name). It is a catalog of ways the set-upon and mean-minded can avenge perceived injustices dealt them by those who wield a measure of power over some small corner of their lives. You won't find it in most bookstores—most refuse to carry it. According to Hayduke, the 300 or so letters he has received from Get Even readers suggest even more vicious revenge schemes, which he intends to put in a second volume. Chicago Tribune

**THE HOSTAGE-TAKERS**

by H.H.A. Cooper

The incidence of hostage-takings, skyjackings, and penitentiary takeovers has increased dramatically in the past decade and shows no signs of abating in the '80s. Hostage-takers can cripple entire countries; the murders at Munich bear witness to power wrongly wielded. Law officers, security professionals, and governmental authorities need perspective on the problem. In **The Hostage-Takers**, H.H.A. Cooper provides that perspective from legal, psychiatric, sociological, and tactical angles. The worldwide-published author is consultant to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and as senior associate of the Washington, D.C. IMAR Corporation he explores aspects of aviation security. Seven different types of hostage-takers are identified and analyzed—political extremists, fleeing criminals, religious fanatics, institutionalized, estranged, or mentally disturbed persons, and people who feel they have been wronged. Individual analyses allow police officers and security specialists to assess and approach each hostage-taking as the unique event it really is, saving civilian and police lives in the process. 8 1/2 x 11, softcover, 100 pp., ISBN 0-87364-209-0. \$12.00



**HOME WORKSHOP SILENCERS I**

It's finally here! The first complete set of working machinist's drawings showing step-by-step construction of three different firearm silencers. All drawings are done to scale, and are of absolutely superb quality. Over 50 9 x 12 machinist's drawings are presented. This beautiful large format edition clearly details all construction and operation procedures for a smg silencer, a pistol silencer, and a simplified smg expedient silencer. Without doubt, these are the highest quality, most precise silencer designs available anywhere at any price. Compare and see for yourself! Historians will recall that the famed Dutch underground armors of WWII fabricated many silenced weapons for their behind-the-lines ops against the Nazis. If our own nation is ever invaded in the future, silenced firearms will certainly play an important role in resisting the enemy. Of course, **Paladin Press unconditionally guarantees** your satisfaction with this intriguing, all new book. **WARNING:** severe state and federal regulations outlaw the possession of silencers unless an appropriate license is obtained. **Home Workshop Silencers I is for reference and historical purposes only.** Be warned! 9 x 12, softcover, illus., 72 pp., ISBN 0-87364-193-0. \$12.00



**LIFE AFTER DOOMSDAY**

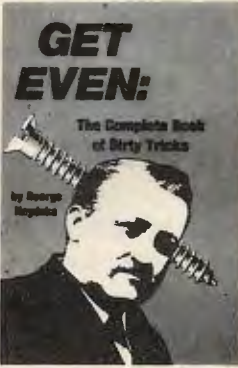
by Dr. Bruce Clayton

Who will survive the nuclear war that many experts predict is coming? **Life After Doomsday** tells you how to survive through such a nuclear nightmare. It is an exhaustive investigation of the strategies needed to survive an atomic war, and of the problems that will face those who do live through it. Suggests a step-by-step procedure for creating individual survival plans, including previously uncollected information about shelters, food storage, home medical techniques, and the psychology of survival. The difficult problem of shelter defense is also closely examined. Tells you the prime nuclear target areas in the U.S., as well as those areas least likely to be attacked. Dr. Clayton offers a practical discussion of both the short and long term effects of nuclear weapons' use, and ensuing medical consequences. Explains how to measure fallout radiation, and build an expedient fallout shelter on short notice. One of the most comprehensive and up-to-date works ever compiled on modern survivalism. **Life After Doomsday** is also an excellent reference on surviving through any major disaster. An invaluable addition to your survival library. Includes dozens of useful charts, drawings, and photos. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, illus., 200 pp., ISBN 0-87364-175-2. \$19.95

**THE GREAT SURVIVAL RESOURCE BOOK**

Compiled By Paladin Press

The most complete resource book ever published for the modern survivalist! Fans of **Life After Doomsday** and **Survival Poaching** will definitely want to add this one to their survival libraries. Includes concise reviews and bibliographies of the most important survival literature, listings of practical equipment suppliers, PLUS state-of-the-art articles by the best survival writers in America: Mel Tappan, Ragnar Benson, Bruce Clayton, Ph.D., Joel Skousen, and more! A virtual **Whole Earth Catalog** for survivalists, retreaters, and homesteaders. If it concerns self-sufficiency, it's in this book! Names and addresses of over 400 suppliers, with descriptions of their products and services, are provided in six easy-access sections, from homesteading and city survival to building and alternative energy. Critiques dozens of useful books on timber framing, foraging, farming, woodcraft, hunting, energy efficiency, and even first aid. All new articles, written especially for this all new book, cover remodeling for self-sufficiency, psychology of survival, the right all-terrain vehicles for the mobile family, the true adventures of a modern mountain man, and firearm selection for retreat defense. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, illus., 200 pp., ISBN 0-87364-196-X. \$16.95



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# MEMO FROM THE EDITOR

**A**S you have noticed, *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* is more expensive this month and, if you'll quickly flip to the back of the magazine, you'll see that it's also bigger: up from 96 to 100 pages.

That's just one of the reasons why it was necessary to raise our cover and subscription prices: up to \$2.75 and \$26.00 respectively.

In addition to a larger magazine, we here at SOF believe you'll be getting a more attractive one, since this is the first issue being printed by World Color Press in Mt. Vernon, Ill. World Color Press, one of the nation's biggest and best, was selected by SOF after a lengthy search. One reason we picked them was because of their equipment, the best on the market, and their track record as a quality printer capable of fine color reproduction.

SOF's staff has also grown in recent months: we've added some fine writers — Fred Reed and Jim Coyne — and more editorial staff.

There's also the expense of keeping our writers out in the field. While the chow's not particularly good where our people go, it's still not cheap. Since January 1980, SOF staffers have been on assignment in Afghanistan (three of them), Pakistan (six), Thailand/Cambodia (two), Australia (one), Cuba (one), Guatemala (one), Mexico (three), South Africa/Rhodesia (six) — not counting correspondent Al Venter, who operates from South Africa — Morocco (one) and Hawaii (one). (Next time I get that last trip.)

We realize that prices are going up everywhere and, although we hate to be part of that process, remember that you buy SOF because we cover the action, wherever it is. We don't intend to change that. In fact, we're already busy planning who we've got who's brave enough and dumb enough to go to . . . . .

## PETITION DRIVE

**T**HE National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia (see "What Price Glory?" p. 30) is currently conducting a petition drive to encourage the Task Force on American prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia to bring more pressure to bear on the Republic of Vietnam.

The petitions will be presented to President Ronald Reagan on 17 July 1981.

Persons interested in helping can obtain a petition by writing to Clyde Sincere, 446 Tudor, Cavina, CA 91722.

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (ISSN 0145-6784/USPS 120-510) is published monthly by Omega Group Limited, 5735 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, CO 80303. (303) 449-3750. Controlled Circulation Postage Paid At Boulder, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 1397, Boulder, CO 80306. Subscription rates for twelve monthly issues: \$26.00 — U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. (Save 20% off Newsstand Price) \$50.00 — 1st Class (sealed envelope) U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. \$60.00 — Airmail, Europe and Latin America. \$70.00 — Airmail, All other countries. \$33.00 — Surface, All countries except U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. Single Issue Price — \$2.75.

CONTRIBUTORS: Manuscripts, photographs, drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, P.O. BOX 693, Boulder, CO 80306, and cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. Any material accepted is subject to such revision as is necessary to meet the editorial requirements of SOF. All manuscripts must be typed double-spaced. All photographs should be credited and be accompanied by captions. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/SUBSCRIPTION PROBLEMS: Six weeks notice is required on all changes of address. Please include current mailing-label information with all correspondence. SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 1397, Boulder, CO 80306.

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JUNE/1981

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**COVER:** The Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group never authorized an official emblem. The one on this month's cover was duplicated from one of the earliest plaques prepared "unofficially" in Vietnam. The emblem also wound up on coffee mugs, blankets and shoulder patches, two examples of which appear in the magazine.



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# BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



## BELATED MH...

President Reagan has awarded the Medal of Honor to a Green Beret veteran for deeds of bravery performed 12 years ago.

The President said to retired Army Master Sgt. Roy P. Benevides, when presenting the nation's highest award for military heroism: "A nation grateful to you awards you its highest medal. It is time to show our pride in those who fought in Vietnam. They were greeted by no parades, no bands, no thank you for their sacrifices."

Benevides, clutching his Green Beret, replied: "I think I did my job. I'm no hero. The heroes are the ones who are buried or in hospitals and the wives."

Benevides, 45, was a staff sergeant in the 5th Special Forces Group on 2 May 1968 when he went to the rescue of a 12-man reconnaissance team which had been ambushed in deep jungle. He directed a helicopter to a cleared LZ and dashed through enemy fire to aid the team, all of its members either badly wounded or dead. He was wounded in the leg on the way but repositioned the survivors so they could lay down a field of fire, permitting a rescue chopper to drop in. He carried half the wounded to the chopper.

He then returned to the site and, while recovering the body of the team leader and the classified documents on him, was wounded in the back and stomach.

Meanwhile, the rescue chopper was shot down and its pilot killed. Benevides helped the wounded out and recovered more classified papers from the pilot's body. He called in air strikes and was again wounded, in the thigh. But the air strikes permitted a second rescue helicopter to drop down.

While helping wounded aboard the second helicopter, Benevides was clubbed by an enemy soldier, whom he killed. He then killed two more North Vietnamese charging the chopper.

After making certain that all the survivors were aboard, Benevides returned once more to the bodies to ensure that all classified documents were either recovered or destroyed and to make sure there were no further survivors. Only then, weak from loss of blood, would he permit himself to be pulled aboard the chopper.

The award citation identifies the area as "west of Loc Ninh," but some sources say the rescue effort actually occurred inside Cambodia.

Benevides earlier had received a Distinguished Service Cross but, according to the Army, it took this long

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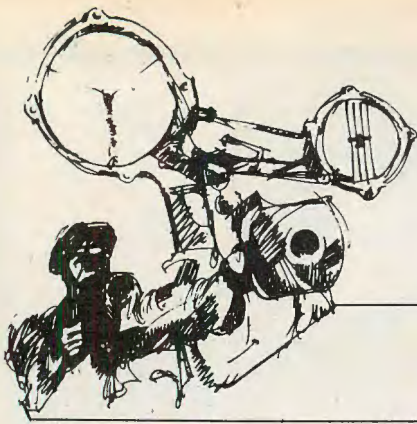
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## FLAK

### ON GUTS, GUNS AND GREMLINS ...

Sirs:

In "Sharpshooting with Chairman Jeff" (SOF, January '81), you refer to the F-4 as "gutless." I must take issue with Jeff Cooper's characterization of the F-4 airframe. I am also assuming that he bases his judgment of the F-4's operational success on the American air battles against the North Vietnamese. There have been more than 5,000 F-4s produced. The Israeli Air Force has done quite well with this airframe against the same type Soviet aircraft as those flown by the NVN.

The difference between the Israeli success rate and the American can be found in the relative levels of training

and the political constraints placed upon the two air forces. The Israelis are willing to spend the money to insure that their pilots are capable, and their aircraft are maintained in a constant combat-ready status.

During the Vietnam War, American F-4 aircrews were not trained in air-to-air combat, because this training was considered "too dangerous" when compared to the probability of combat losses. Training losses were "not acceptable." American crews were trained to drop bombs — their primary role. Only a few "special" squadrons were given the air-to-air role. The rules of engagement were such that U.S. combat air patrols were only permitted to engage Vietnamese fighters which

were a threat to the bomb carrier.

Therefore, I believe you will understand that the F-4 airframe and associated systems are not "gutless." It is a lack of adequate training and quality maintenance plus the constraints imposed by the political authorities that made the F-4 gutless. As an F-4 weapons-systems officer with 830 hours, I am intimately familiar with current F-4 tactics and capabilities. I respect Jeff Cooper's opinions as an expert in firearms. I hope he will respect mine as a professional flyer.

Sincerely,

Capt. Richard E. Radcliffe, USAF  
Alamogordo, New Mexico

*Jeff Cooper replies:*

*When that issue of Soldier of Fortune hit the stands I hit the ceiling. What I wrote was gutless, and what was printed was gutless, which latter is, as you correctly point out, a ridiculous adjective in this case. The exasperating thing about typos that alter meaning is that they are always attributed to the author rather than to the copyreader or proofreader — but what is worse is that they cannot be recalled. It is I, not SOF, who is now on record as not knowing what I'm writing about. I make my share of mistakes but calling the F-4 gutless is not one of them. (To which we add: we've noted Jeff Cooper's request to have the proofreader set to washing dishes for a month and are taking the matter under consideration.—The Eds.)*

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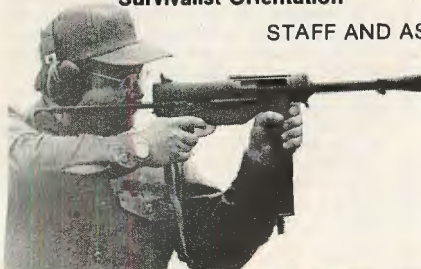
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### OREGON AIDS AFGHANS ...

Sirs:

I wish to pass on to you and your readers an excellent suggestion recently made by Jim Coxen of Hermiston, Ore. He is IPSC section coordinator for Oregon.

Our statewide practical shooting association has begun a championship rifle series alongside the regular pistol matches. Coxen has determined that we should devote at least one of our practical rifle matches this year to the benefit of the people who are fighting America's fight — the Afghan rebels. Consequently, the Oregon Practical Shooting Association intends to forward the entire profits of at least one practical rifle match to *Soldier of Fortune's* Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund.

But we hope this idea will not stop at the statewide level. We hope SOF will make our intention known nationwide so that other IPSC and like-minded groups will consider sponsoring similar events. What better means of communication between the riflemen of America and those of Afghanistan!

Best wishes,

Barrett Tillman,

Oregon Practical Shooting Assn.

*All right! We appreciate your offer. We can't say the same for the Russians. Death to tyrants!—The Eds.*



## POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE ...

Sirs:

Your January 1981 issue has several interesting articles, two of which stand out in particular. The first, "Equal Opportunity Airborne," raises some questions about equal-rights-policy procedures encountered by my older son when he was an MP stationed in Germany. From numerous discussions since his return, I believe there was a deterioration of morale in his unit due to favoritism to some female MPs — who in some cases did not stand duty, while others, both male and female, stood extended duty hours. The relieving of women gate guards who were scared of the darkness and isolation further diminished the morale of those who faced this task.

The government has hired consultants to implement its policies. It seems that the grim reality — war — in which people get killed is being overlooked. War is not a jogging exercise — but often combines fighting and running with equipment under extreme circumstances. Many current policies seem to be centered around using the armed forces as a social laboratory with secondary emphasis on combat preparedness. One tactical solution might be to sell other teams on similar experiments:

Whisky Rangers and SEALs?

The second article, "Were You There?," showed an experienced-looking collection of men whom your publication might question on current military policies. Unfortunately, they probably aren't into the social sciences and, therefore, would not be taken seriously as consultants.

Sincerely,  
Clayton Patterson  
Stillwater, Minnesota

## MAGAZINE MATTERS ...

Sirs:

I am a subscriber and ardent supporter of the ideals and purpose of *Soldier of Fortune*. Although I suppose misuse of the information in *SOF* is inevitable, as a subscriber and a police officer here in Indianapolis, I feel readers must be reminded of such misuse and guard against it.

On 11 December 1980, one of our homicide detectives was savagely shot down while he and four other officers attempted to serve warrants on several murder-and-robbery suspects. When they forced the door open, one of the suspects fired, hitting the detective, who fell face down on the front porch. The suspect then leaned out and fired several more times into the officer's back.

When the ordeal ended some three hours later, three men and two women were in custody. They were armed with two AR-15s, one CAR-15, one M2 carbine and assorted handguns. More

weapons, including scoped rifles, were recovered from a car. A bizarre plot — to assassinate both the homicide detective who was killed and the county prosecutor — emerged. It involved target practice using live cattle and information passed to the suspects by a civilian employee of the department.

A few days later, a call was made on our 911 number. The caller stated, "Goldsmith [the county prosecutor] is dead." The line was locked in and traced. Ten minutes later, three officers and I hit the apartment. The caller had fled, but a search revealed that the apartment belonged to a relative of the suspect's — who had frequently used it. To my surprise I found the October and December 1980 issues of *SOF* on the kitchen table.

This tragically and graphically illustrates a need for readers — whether law enforcement or military — to be aware that the enemy you face next may read the same books you do.

Yours,  
Stephen C. Robertson  
Indianapolis, Indiana

## WAR IN LIVING COLOR ...

Sirs:

I read your interview with John Milius (*SOF*, September '80) with interest. To think of the Vietnam War again makes my heart pound hard and fast — and it's not a good feeling.

Milius talks about *Apocalypse Now* as an examination of war. He says the film tried to bring out the truth — and in some ways it did. At the end of the interview he says the hero didn't come back a burnt-out, deranged man, but a man rich in experience. I think burnt out and deranged could fit a lot of us, and if the hero had spent 13 months in the armpit of hell he would not have come home "rich in experience." To look into the armpit of hell is one thing; to spend 13 months there is another.

When I went to 'Nam I was 19, well adjusted and the life of any party. I returned burnt out and deranged. After I had been home two weeks, having screaming nightmares and wild fits of anger, I was asked to leave. I had killed the enemy, I had had friends die in my arms, I had been wounded twice, I had gotten revenge for friends who had been killed, and the war had changed me. I was not the well-adjusted son any more. Revenge can be an ugly thing where there are no laws — and there were no laws in Vietnam.

Looking at *Apocalypse Now* from my burnt-out, deranged mind, I would give it a 6 on a scale of 1 to 10. That's the highest I have ever given a war movie. We still need someone to come out with the real thing. Cut out all the bull and let 'em have it straight. They will be so

*Continued on page 81*



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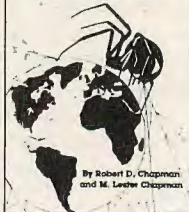
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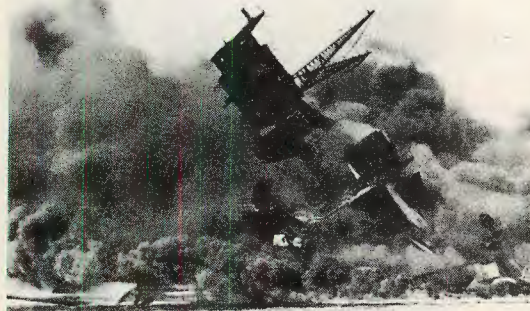
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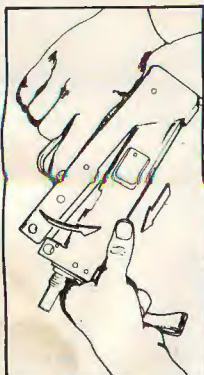
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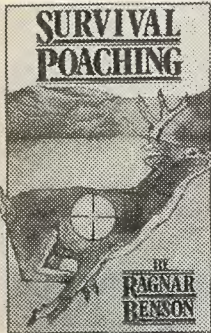


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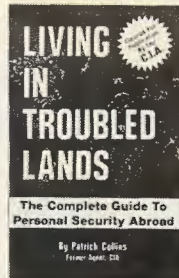
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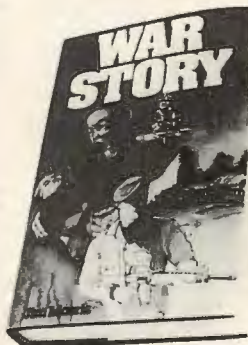
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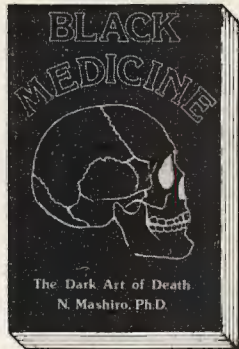
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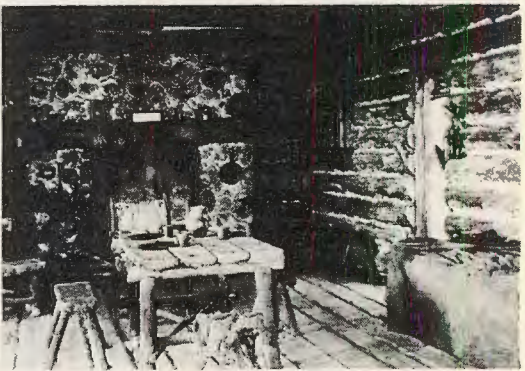
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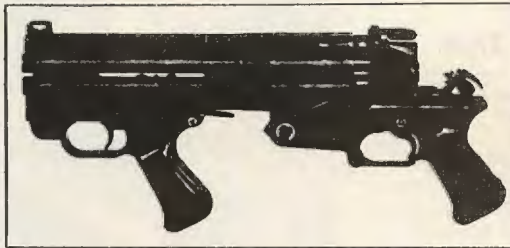
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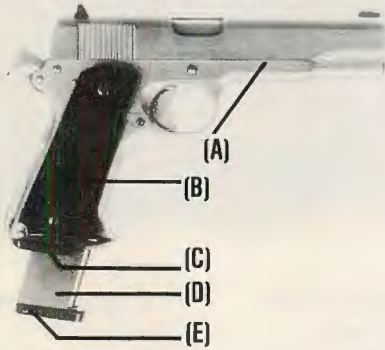
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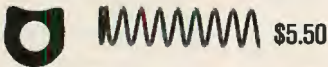
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Raul Walters (USA), left, and Gavin Carson (South Africa), right, shoot it out during 1979 international IPSC match in South Africa. Photo: Al J. Venter

ONE common assumption about IPSC shooting is that it reflects the final word in defensive pistol training. This is, of course, not true. In the current state of the art, IPSC represents the sporting form of practical shooting doctrine, and in this area it far excels the other popular shooting disciplines. In my opinion, IPSC's competitive aspects have given us an exciting, well-rounded test of pistol skills.

Moreover, those who practice to gain the skill necessary for top competitors can certainly give a good account of themselves when the actual firing takes place. It should be recognized, however, that many now-popular competition techniques would be ridiculous if tried in a real-life situation.

Quite often, the technique needed to win a match would be the opposite of what is necessary for an actual encounter. As long as those who play these

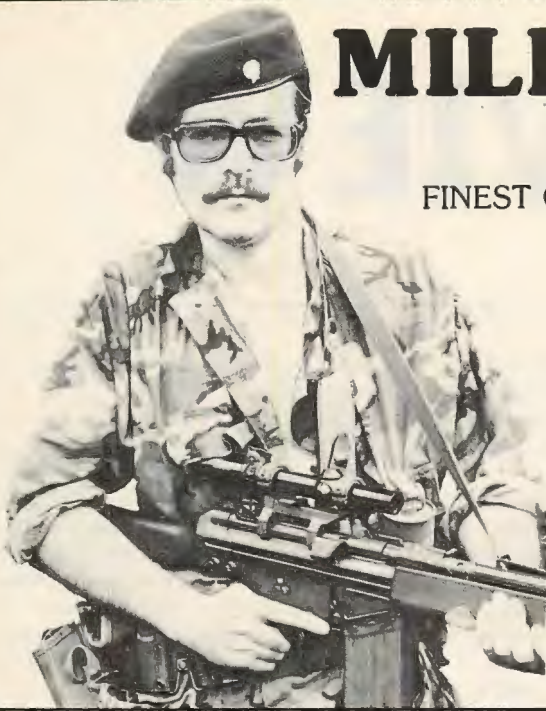
games understand that their tactics are game-winning methods only, we can certainly get by.

Sadly, with the fast growth of IPSC, many people now getting involved with practical shooting do not understand nor recognize the difference between match and combat logic. A realistic approach to IPSC shooting is not as easy as the armchair quarterback might think. Administration can be a nightmare when one tries to judge a man's tactical performance.

For this reason, we must accept IPSC as a sporting endeavor.

If practical shooting is to be considered for its martial applications, three factors must be involved. First is mental conditioning, which must be learned carefully and cannot be tested easily with any degree of accuracy by competition. The second factor is tactics, a critical

*Continued on page 87*



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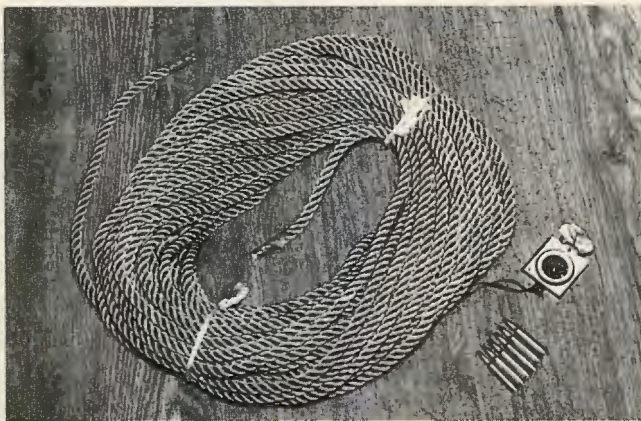
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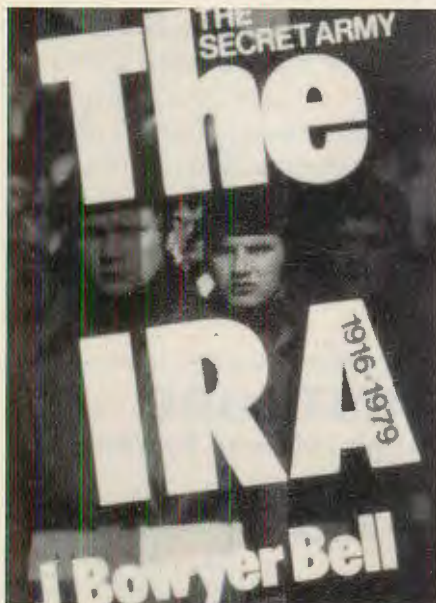
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# IN REVIEW



**THE SECRET ARMY: THE IRA 1916-1979.** By J. Bowyer Bell. Dublin, Ireland: The Academy Press (Distributed in the U.S. by MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.). 1979. 481 pp. \$30.00. Review by Richard T. Crowe.

WHO has not sat in an "Irish pub" in Chicago, New York, San Francisco or elsewhere and been blasted with "rebel songs"? Ballads like "Charlie Kerins, the Boy from Tralee," and "Sean South from Garryowen" have transmitted an oral history of the Irish freedom struggle. But the Irish Republican Army, like all clandestine guerrilla movements, has been shrouded in myth and folklore — its colorful history unrecorded and unwritten for the most part. Now a scholarly and comprehensive study of this once-again-thriving "secret army" is available.

J. Bowyer Bell is an American academician well known for his works on guerrilla warfare and terrorism around the world. This volume is an updated version of Bell's critically acclaimed 1970 study, having almost 100 additional pages of material on the IRA during the savage '70s. It also contains an expanded and revised 16 pages of photographs. The new material, almost enough for a book in itself, makes this edition timely and indispensable.

Bell's sympathetic, yet even-handed treatment of Europe's longest-surviving guerrilla army gives the reader an inside

look at the militant side of Irish Republicanism. Agree or disagree, the current Irish "problem" cannot be fully understood without a close reading of this definitive work.

Many common misconceptions perpetrated by the American press are dispelled here: The Provisional IRA is not Marxist. Physical force is a centuries-old tradition with Irish separatists, not a new ploy. Terrorism as such is not advocated by the Provos, civilians are never targets of bombs although property and "occupation forces" often are. Provo bombers routinely give warnings to evacuate — warnings sometimes fatally unheeded.

As a history of the IRA, this book is probably being used as a text in classes on both sides of the border. Its most unique feature is Bell's treatment of each time period with equal detail: the lean, cold war years as well as current and past flare-ups.

The Gordian knot of Irish politics and parties is severed by the author as he unravels the history of Sinn Fein, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the quixotic Saor Eire and many others. Perhaps only an American could have kept such Balkan-style political parties in proper perspective.

Unusually fair and balanced throughout most of his analysis, Bell lets his prejudices show on occasion. He obviously feels that the IRA's World War II "bomb campaign" against England was a mistake. More seriously, he downplays the Marxist factor in explaining the rift between the Provisional IRA and the left-leaning officials.

This book is not light reading. Condensed into its almost 500 pages are scores of tales of valor and terror, deceit and treason of generations of Irishmen (and women) who felt compelled to "break the connection with England" by force of arms. The text is documented with hundreds of sources and references that offer the Celtophile or militaria buff many hours of fascinating diversion.

Bell credits many current and former participants in the Republican movement for their help and assistance. A quick glance at his extensive interviews list reads like a "Who's Who" of Irish nationalism — the British

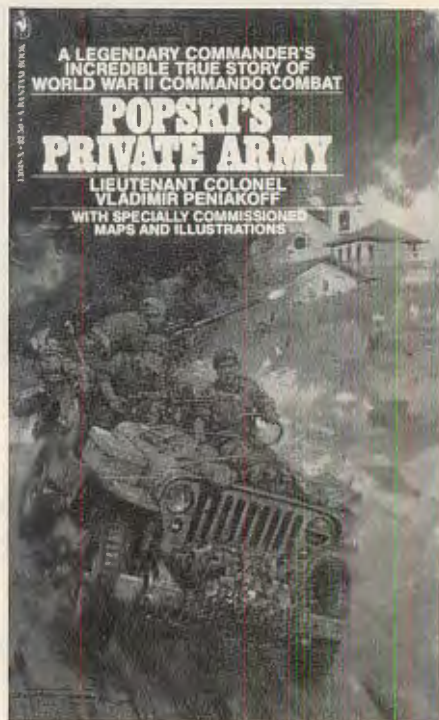
Army or Special Branch could not have done better.

Don't let the high price put you off. This book is a must for any library on Irish — or guerrilla — military history.

*Richard Crowe knows the situation, the people and the dealings behind the Irish revolution. He maintains contacts and has spent enough time in Ireland to know the story — and he is well qualified to report on an American writer's in-depth view of the IRA's brand of guerrilla warfare.*

*In our May 1980 issue, Crowe reviewed the story of a rebellious Irishman in Matthew J.*

*Culligan-Hogan's book, The Quest for the Galloping Hogan.*



**POPSKI'S PRIVATE ARMY.** By Lt. Col. Vladimir Peniakoff. Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103. 1980. 300 pp. \$2.50. Review by Capt. Jerry Lee.

**P**OPSKI'S Private Army was the official name of a small, highly secret British army unit in World War II which specialized in behind-the-lines raids, intelligence and deception operations. The book of the same name, written by "Popski" himself, is one of the most



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interesting and informative tales of unconventional warfare ever written. Published in Great Britain in 1950, this has been a rare book in the United States for 30 years (my own copy came from a generous Rhodesian friend in Selous Scouts), but recently Bantam Books published a paperback edition, at last making this fascinating book available to all American readers.

Vladimir Peniakoff, born of Russian parents in Belgium at the turn of the century, was educated in England, but left Cambridge to enlist in the French army in World War I. He was invalided out at the end of the war, and eventually settled in Egypt, where he worked as an engineer and became an expert in Model-A-Ford desert travel on a series of solo expeditions into the Sahara.

With the outbreak of World War II, Popski, as everyone called him, wangled a commission in the British army and gained command of the Libyan Arab Force Commando, which he organized to collect intelligence from friendly Arabs in Axis-held Cyrenaica, and to blow up enemy supply dumps "only when it would embarrass the enemy at a critical moment and on a large scale." Popski and his small group operated behind Axis lines successfully for five months, and though his presence was known to hundreds of Arabs, no word ever leaked out to the Italians or Germans.

On his return to Cairo, Popski was assigned to guide a Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) raid on Barca. The raid was successful, but the patrol was badly shot up and Popski was wounded.

After recuperating, he was ordered to organize his own group of desert raiders. When Popski balked at choosing an official name for his group, Brigadier Shan Hackett (later of Arnhem fame) suggested "Popski's Private Army," and that was how the unit — with 23 men, four heavily armed jeeps and two trucks — was officially listed. P.P.A. was ordered to return to the Libyan desert to conduct raids and gather intelligence, but the area was overrun by the advancing British Eighth Army before they could get to it, so Popski assigned himself a new mission of operating with the LRDG in Axis-held Tunisia. After 2½ months behind enemy lines — with some successes and some near disasters — Popski linked up with Patton's U.S. II Corps.

Realizing that operations in Europe would require new techniques, Popski attached his Private Army to the British 1st Airborne Division and trained his men to land with their jeeps in gliders. His airlanding operation was cancelled, however, and P.P.A. landed in Italy by sea at Taranto. Immediately the intrepid raiders dashed into enemy territory and spent several months behind the lines,

patrolling as far as the outskirts of Rome, accepting the enthusiastic surrender of Italian generals and admirals, and fighting alongside Italian partisans. Popski's men performed incredible feats of mobility, driving their heavily laden jeeps across the rugged Appenine Mountains where no motor vehicle has been before or since.

Occasionally, Popski and his men returned to friendly lines to rest, resupply and train new volunteers, but for the remainder of the war P.P.A. continued to operate behind German lines whenever and wherever they could find a way, until they linked up with Russian troops in Austria in the spring of 1945.

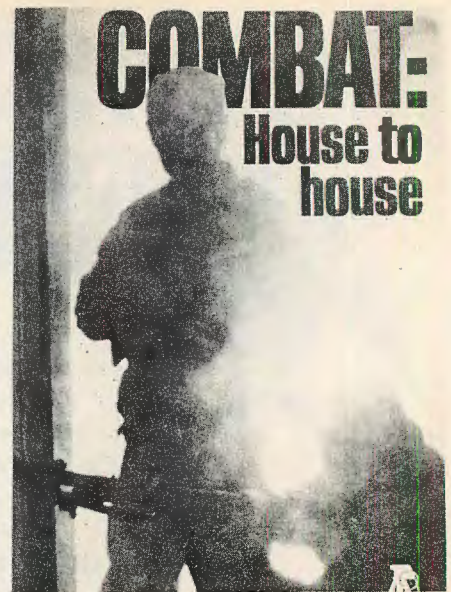
Popski usually preferred to avoid close combat with the Germans, believing his intelligence and deception operations were more effective than the small amounts of destruction his tiny unit could accomplish. But P.P.A. was no stranger to combat, and Popski was wounded again in Italy, losing a hand just before the war ended.

In one particularly daring escapade, Popski and his patrol were bottled up on a mountaintop by a German armored column which bivouacked only a few yards away from Popski's concealed position, blocking the only escape from the area. After a tense day of hiding, Popski decided to escape in the dark and have some sport with the Germans as well. Detonating all their explosives near the German positions to create confusion, the patrol pulled into the middle of the German bivouac and began firing alternately at the armored vehicles on either side of them. P.P.A.'s machine guns had little effect on the German armor, but soon Popski had the Germans shooting at each other in their confusion, and left them to sort it out for themselves. For good measure he called in RAF bombers on the Germans the next morning.

**Popski's Private Army** can be read as a first-class WWII adventure story, but it is also an excellent study of a peculiar style of unconventional warfare. Popski provides insight into many different aspects of the distinctive war he fought: selection and training of personnel, equipment, and of course his unique tactics. There is much to be learned from this unusual warrior.

There are so few historical studies of special operations that most of them are worth reading. Even less are written by actual participants. For this reason alone, **Popski's Private Army** is a valuable book and an exceptional story. Its printing in the United States at long last is a noteworthy event.

*From backpacking to book reviews, Capt. Jerry Lee is no stranger to the pages of SOF. He is currently on active duty with the U.S. Army Reserve in Chicago.*



**COMBAT: HOUSE TO HOUSE.** By Terry Edwards. SOF Book Service, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. 1979. 202 pp. Illustrated. \$6.95. Review by Kurt Priebe.

**I**n recent years, the rural guerrilla warfare of the 1960s has to some degree given way to a deadly form of combat not observed on a large scale since World War II. Urban warfare or — as the grunts prefer to call it — street fighting has become the most common type of armed conflict in the world today. Beirut, Belfast, Londonderry, Managua, Miami and Saigon: these cities have all become household words principally because of vicious urban battles, not to mention expanded media coverage of such conflicts.

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**Combat: House to House** is not really any one man's book — as even Terry Edwards would admit. Rather, it is an encyclopedia of proven urban-combat tactics and techniques made famous by numerous city fighters from Fairbairn to the Lebanese Christian Militia (see "Combat in Lebanon," SOF, July '79). While its ads say that it is must reading for police tactical units, any police chief who adopted such tactics as mandatory strip searches of all females entering or leaving high-crime areas, or who advocated throwing M26 fragment grenades into the residences of besieged

*Continued on page 80*

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# IT HAPPENED TO ME

by John S. Walker as told to M.L. Jones

*John S. Walker is now a registered nurse. He was a Spec. 4 OJT RTO in Vietnam, because he mentioned one night that he'd been a disc jockey on a college radio station. In '68 and '69 he had been an anti-war marcher, but he enlisted, and volunteered for 'Nam, as he says, "To see if I had been on the right side — I wasn't." As he tells it:*

**J**OHN Wayne had died in my place. When I walked into the commo shack after my week's R&R in Australia and asked, "Well, how'd he do?," the guys looked everywhere but at me.

Sgt. Nelson cleared his throat and stared hard at a squashed sand crab on the plywood floor. "He bought it, rode over a mine."

John Wayne Simpson had wanted to be a hero. He had everybody's dream — a cushy job in the rear — but it didn't live up to the letters he was writing home. When he heard I was finally taking my R&R, he came begging.

"Man, I can't go back home without getting in the field. You're going back to the World in a month and they don't have anyone to take your place. Please get Sgt. Nelson to let me carry your radio for you next week."

What could I say? The guy was nuts. But he had that name and I had more time in-country than anyone in the commo squad, so when I said, "Let him try it," they did.

And while I sat on a blanket on the sand at Coogee Bay, John Wayne Simpson sat in my spot on my favorite five-ton dump truck with my Prick-25 on his back in "my" convoy to resupply Tra Bong. The truck rolled over a dud 500-pound bomb converted by the VC into a mine and John Wayne came back down in pieces.

The PRC-25 was leaning in the corner, still fastened to my ruck. The guys had replaced the antenna and handset and John Wayne's body had protected the rest. After I changed into my black-market cammies, I picked it up and walked down to battalion commo.

"I want to go out. What do you have going?"

The 17th Engineers didn't put that many commo men in the field, so they loaned us out to other units in the Americal. They hassled with me. I had less than 30 days to DEROS, but that also meant I'd been there longer and they were mostly REMFs so they gave in.

The stoned freak — hair parted in the middle and tucked behind the ears — Spec. 5 had a call from a small convoy going to resupply Hill 409 west of Fire Base Dottie. The security was ARVN and they wanted a round-eye along to call in dust-offs and arty.

"I'll take it." The scared newbie who had had the assignment fell all over himself giving me the Whiz-Wheel and code book. I put them on a dog-tag chain around my neck and went over to the arms room.

At least Coocher, the armorer and supply man, didn't argue with me. I had wangled a .45 auto as an assigned weapon when we were using a secure-unit scrambler in the field. So I signed for my Union-Switch-and-Signal special and a dozen loaded magazines. Cooch also let me have a frag and four different-colored smoke grenades. I already had a spare battery for the radio and my regular gear in the ruck. I filled my plastic canteens at his water cooler, put them in my thigh pockets and wandered over to the chopper pad.

I sat in the doorway of the Huey with my boots on the skid. Chu Lai dropped away and we turned south out over the South China Sea. Miniature REMFs were surfing on tiny air mattresses. They looked up when our shadow windmilled over them.

*If you have a combat or adventure story for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed.*

*Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we can notify you of acceptance or return your story. Article payment is \$50, upon publication. All entrants will receive an SOF patch.*

We flew over the peninsula where I'd first gone to the field, right over where my first friend in 'Nam had died (before I learned not to make friends). Just a few clicks west of My Lai 4. There weren't words for how much they hated us down there. You could feel it boiling up at you from a thousand feet below.

The skids hit the PSP at Dottie and I went looking for my convoy. It was the usual snafu: four trucks and one jeep to resupply a tiny firebase on Hill 409. The ARVNs were an hour late (the soonest I'd ever seen them arrive). The Americans driving the convoy were terrified. They had a right to be. Vietnamization was in full swing and we had a handful of ragtags instead of the platoon of cav we needed. It was just the kind of operation John Wayne had written home about to his girlfriend in Denver.

The ARVNs didn't even have mine detectors. Two of them walked point, carrying bamboo sticks to probe anything that looked suspicious. They grinned foolishly at us and each other.

The drivers had flipped coins and the loser was in the lead, sitting on the folded-down windshield, driving his truck backwards. He wasn't grinning. I walked up front halfway between the point men and the pressure truck. Two of the ARVNs got close to me and walked on each side, patting me on the arms, chattering. Heaven knows what they were thinking of. That 10-foot whip made me 16 feet, 4 inches tall, and no one with any sense would have been close.

About three clicks out we started taking small-arms fire from a ridge about 300 meters away. I couldn't believe it. The two ARVNs snuggled up to me instead of going to ground. The other ARVNs hit the dirt and started unloading their M16s in the general direction of the ridge. The two Americans in the third truck off-loaded and unlimbered their M60.

And I stood there with my ARVNs. I started to laugh. AK bullets snapped and popped around us and kicked up dirt. I was invincible: John Wayne had died for me and I wouldn't be touched. The shooting on the ridge died down under the fire from the M60 and the ARVNs' noise. One last bullet kicked up laterite off to my left and whined away.

I was still laughing. The two ARVNs came out from behind me and started laughing and bobbing their heads up and down and patting me. It got very quiet. The VC were probably a mile away down a tunnel somewhere. Not one of us was even scratched. The Americans stared at me, not saying anything.

That night I started and threw away a half-dozen letters to John Wayne Simpson's girl friend. I didn't go out to the field again.



# I WAS THERE

by Charles W. Sasser  
as told to M.L. Jones

Charles W. Sasser, now a professional writer, was a policeman for several years — and a homicide detective for seven. His work experience has ranged from soldier — he served in the Special Forces for eight years — to fur trapper and newspaper reporter. He was a policeman in Miami, Fla., in 1968. As he tells it: "Burn, baby, burn!" And the cities were burning during those long, hot summers in the '60s. Newark. Detroit. Tampa.

I was a Miami, Fla., cop during the 1968 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach. Tough Police Chief Walter Hedley had warned the militants talking riot: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts!"

Both started. On the second afternoon of the rioting I found myself pinned down on 13th Street in Liberty City by snipers firing small-caliber weapons. A .22 slug ricocheted, whining off the trunk of my squad car, less than a foot from my head. A rioter popped out of an alley and hurled a Molotov cocktail. It exploded in a gaseous whoosh. I shot at him three times as he fled back into the alley. The crash of police gunfire from other squads riddled the tenements from which we had originally taken fire.

Looters pranced the streets, hauling off stolen liquor in shopping carts. Smoke hung heavy over 62nd Street from Seventh Avenue to 22nd. A large truck burned in the middle of the street. A grocery store was gutted by flames. Burglar alarms warbled. Frequent gunfire erupted. Tear gas lay cloying in back alleys and inside looted businesses.

Casualties were being taken by police and rioters alike. A sergeant took a round in the arm. When a police carbine team opened up on a sniper hiding on top of a billboard on a building, he leaped down — and was carted off with broken bones. My partner shotgunned a looter's legs out from under him.

By late afternoon, several hundred rioters formed a mob before a huge housing complex on 62nd and began to systematically loot the businesses across the street. Policemen who interfered were sniped at or bombarded with everything from bricks to spiked golf balls.

I took two other police teams of four men each and led a charge into the turmoil. We sprang from our cars. One officer was hit by a brick. He fell in the street. Gas grenades arched into the mob. Then, suddenly, the shooting started!

First, a single pop from back among the buildings. Then: *Pop! Pop!* Homicide later found 11 bullet holes

that had come out through screens at us. The screaming crowd dissipated like smoke. We saw the snipers who had been using them as cover and opened fire.

A man holding a pistol dropped to one knee behind some bushes and shot at us. He flopped over and died in a hail of shotgun and pistol fire. Another man grabbed his gun and ran with it parallel to the line of fire. I squeezed off two quick shots with my .38. He fell behind a retaining wall.

The silence that followed was almost startling. The man I shot rose to his feet. Gas clouds swirled around his knees as he staggered out to the street. A splotch of blood stained his chest. He sank slowly to his knees and died. A 12-year-old boy far back in the complex was accidentally hit with .00 buck. A man brought him to me, running, and I took him in my arms and ran to the nearest patrol car.

Hospital corridors and lobbies were crowded with casualties, both rioters and police. On the last night of the rioting I broke an ankle in another fire fight with snipers. A little wimp of a hospital orderly took one look at me and sniffed. My uniform was bloody. I was unshaven and strained from three days of combat on American streets.

"Pigs!" the orderly scoffed. "Pigs!" I couldn't walk — or I'd have broken his leg.



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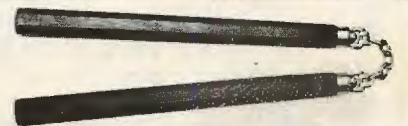
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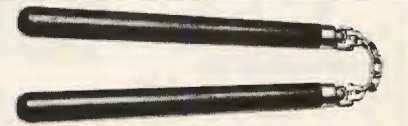
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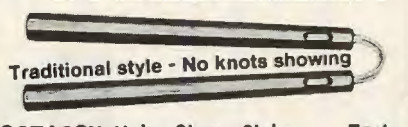


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<p><b>GERMAN ARMY MK III Boot Knife &amp; Scabbard</b> Blade length 5." Features: Quick release safety snap, belt attachment, sure-grip handle, and leather scabbard.</p> <p><b>\$19.95</b></p>	<p><b>M-6 BAYONET M14 RIFLE with M8A1 Scabbard</b> Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment, sure-grip handle and tie-thongs.</p> <p><b>\$20.95</b></p>	<p><b>COLLECTORS' PRESENTATION CASE</b> 6 different Bayonets &amp; Scabbards are ready for your display. A must for every collector! Each case contains 1 each of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SI-1 COLT AR-15/M16</li> <li>SI-10 COLT AR-15/M16</li> <li>SI-3 COLT AR-15/M16</li> <li>SI-4 COMBAT KNIFE</li> <li>SI-11 COMBAT KNIFE</li> <li>SI-5 COMBAT KNIFE</li> </ul> <p><b>\$169.95</b></p>		<p><b>GERMAN ARMY BUNDESWEHR'S Combat Knife</b> Blade length: 5½." Features: Sure-grip handle, aluminum Scabbard and belt attachment.</p> <p><b>\$29.95</b></p>
<p><b>New COLT AR-15/M16 Bayonet with M8A1 Scabbard</b> Blade length 6½." Features wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachment, sure-grip handle and tie thongs.</p> <p><b>\$25.95</b></p>	<p><b>G-3 Adaptor</b> G-3 Adaptor for SI-12, SI-13 and SI-14 for attachment of bayonet to rifle.</p> <p><b>\$7.95</b></p>	<p><b>COMBAT KNIFE with Scabbard</b> Blade length: 7." Features: Razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.</p> <p><b>\$23.95</b></p>	<p><b>COLT AR-15/M16 M7 BAYONET with M8A1 Scabbard</b> Blade length: 9." Features: Belt attachment, and sure-grip handle.</p> <p><b>\$29.95</b></p>	<p><b>Sherwood International</b> 18714 Parthenia, Dept. SOF6 Northridge, CA 91324</p> <p>Order: Call toll FREE 800-423-5237 and use any major credit card. Mail cash, check or credit card number &amp; expiration date. Minimum \$10.00 order plus \$2.50 for postage and handling. In Calif. add 6% tax. NO C.O.D.'s.</p> <p>Questions: Call 213/349-7600 or drop us a letter &amp; stamped, return envelope.</p> <p>Remember: Anyone can order! No license or permits necessary.</p> <p>All prices are subject to change without notice.</p> <p>Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____ Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Signature _____</p> <p><b>For information call (213) 349-7600.</b></p>



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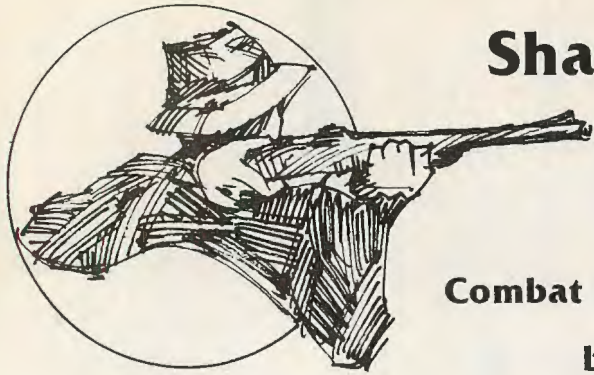


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# Sharpshooting With Chairman Jeff

Combat Marksmanship Schools  
by Jeff Cooper



**I**T is difficult for us who grew up in the first half of the 20th century to realize that there are some people in the United States who do not know how to shoot. In my time a young man did not leave his father's house until he could acquit himself properly in certain activities such as driving a car, riding a horse, riding a motor bike, casting a fly, swimming and shooting.

It was taken for granted that knowing how to handle firearms was part of the standard equipment of any grown man of any consequence — and was reinforced by our recreational reading, which included such authors as Zane Grey, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Rider Haggard, Kipling and Theodore Roosevelt. Therefore, the notion of a shooting academy as such never occurred to us. (This attitude may still be found today in some of the smaller law-enforcement departments of the American West. When the chief in such a place is asked if his men know how to use their firearms, his answer is usually, "Well, sure. Doesn't everybody?")

## Uncle Sugar's Trade School

In addition to this tradition, during the early part of the 20th century most young men were exposed to the training systems of the United States military establishment. I sometimes have to emphasize to myself that there are many adult males — heads of families — in the United States today who have never had the benefit of Uncle Sugar's trade school — but there it is. Many Americans today are not even embarrassed to admit that they have no experience nor talent for firearms. The need for such talent is evidently not apparent to them. Fancy that!

A third novelty is the increasingly obvious fact that today's military establishments are no longer concerned with marksmanship nor the techniques of small arms. There may be justification for this. Note that the Yom Kippur war — the greatest of recent times — was fought only marginally with small arms.

Some of us still retain the notion that a soldier should be a good shot, but the

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*Jeff Cooper is the Honorary Lifetime Chairman of the International Practical Shooting Confederation, and thus combines official authority with his vast background and experience. In this column Jeff will alternate his own observations with those of other experts of his personal selection.*

---

rights and wrongs of this position are irrelevant. Governments do not feel this way. Therefore, even a man who is exposed to a full measure of military training in this last portion of the 20th century may never be shown a personal weapon of any kind. (We have had a number of very highly trained American fighter pilots at our school here at Gunsite. They attend because the government has not given them all the training they feel they need.)

It appears that marksmanship is now the art of the private citizen. But it is the art of the private citizen only if he realizes that he needs it — it is not necessarily assumed to be the business of a father to teach it to his son.

So we enter the age of private shooting schools. We see them springing up like mushrooms all over the country, as more and more "fast-buck artists" see the

Students at Chapman range fire on intermediate range from behind barrier. Shooter begins with hands against barrier and then punches two holes in each of three targets. There is no time limit but score depends both upon accuracy and speed.



possibility of turning this phenomenon to their advantage. There is nothing wrong with that. We live in a free, capitalist economy and the demand for any service should be determined by the public and by nothing else. Nonetheless there are certain problems, as always occur when something new appears on the economic scene — from fast-food chains to karate academies.

Clearly the problem is that of qualification. When you go to a doctor or an attorney you may not be sure of finding a good one, but at least you can tell by the man's certificates that he has been exposed to a certain amount of specialized education in his field. What do you know about the qualifications of your motor mechanic? Or your swimming instructor? Or your stock broker?

There are ways of investigating these latter people but they are not as easy as those involving the learned professions. And when it comes to a shooting school they are almost nonexistent. Anybody can claim he is a marksmanship instructor and hold forth, whether or not he knows anything about his subject. Moreover, a good many of the qualifications which are advanced as testifying to a man's ability to teach marksmanship are irrelevant.

The greatest professor of sidearm technique in Europe for many years claimed as evidence of his capability the fact that he had been the bodyguard of Charles De Gaulle for many years and that President De Gaulle had never been shot. Now this is an interesting fact, and it may attest to the gentleman's ability to conduct security operations for a chief of state, but it says absolutely nothing about either this man's ability to shoot or his ability to teach other people how to shoot.

In America we often see men who have spent a number of years in the large security services, such as the FBI or the Secret Service, who attempt to use this as evidence of the fact that they are qualified as firearms teachers. Obviously it is not that simple. Long service in a department which habitually goes armed is simply not a relevant consideration. A panel full of medals won in marksmanship contests is better, but still not enough. A man may know how to shoot and not know how to teach.

I recall that in my early days as a company officer I found a man in my detachment who had a very fine record as a big-bore rifle competitor prior to his enlistment. Naturally I assigned him to the job of rifle instruction — and found out quickly that he was not the right man for the job. His idea of teaching marksmanship was to shoot bull's eyes and then point to his students and say, "Go thou and do likewise."

This is equivalent to having a great pianist play something ornamental by Chopin or Delibes and then, pointing to his students, say, "Play that back to me as I did." At that, such a system is better than having a man who cannot play the piano tell his student to sit down and play like Rubinstein, having followed all the instructions in the textbook. We find people like that in shooting, too.

Shooting schools are the coming thing. All sorts of strange people are setting up ranges and placing ads to the effect that they are qualified to teach marksmanship. Their customary appeal is that they will do so for less than some better-established institution. We can sum this up by the doggerel couplet:

*"Caveat emptor,  
You get what you pay for."*

Of course it is not as simple as this either. If it were, an unqualified school could raise its reputation simply by raising its prices. It is still up to the prospective client to investigate the background and qualifications of the instructor who presumes to teach him marksmanship — or anything else. It is well to bear in mind that rifle and pistol techniques have been developed rather separately in recent decades. Only those who understand the modern technique of the pistol should be considered as pistol teachers, whereas rifle technique has not been modified so greatly.

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Continued on page 85



# Fellow Adventurers!

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# SECOND ANNUAL SOLDIER OF FORTUNE CONVENTION

17-20 September 1981

Scottsdale, Arizona

The SOF CONVENTION is being held in conjunction with the 2nd Annual SOF Invitational Combined Shooting Championship - a shotgun, pistol and assault-rifle combat shoot to pick the top U.S. all-around combat marksman in the United States. One hundred and fifty top shooters will compete, by invitation only, for over \$20,000 in prize money, guns and gear.

The theme of the convention will be "A Salute to Vietnam Veterans." The Colonel "Bull" Simons Memorial Award will be dedicated to all Vietnam veterans and will be accepted for them by a Medal of Honor winner. The keynote speaker for the banquet will be selected at a later date. Once again, cammies or police or military uniforms will be preferred dress.

Registration will be \$75 if you pre-register and \$100 if you register during the convention. Fee will include: (1) Banquet (2) Transportation to all events (3) Convention T-Shirt (4) Admission to Exhibition Hall (5) Admission to Invitational Match (6) Admission to all demonstrations (7) Admission to outstanding action movies (8) Admission to Vietnam Art Exhibit (9) Admission to a Cocktail Hour and (10) Admission to all seminars.

Seminars will include: Special Operations Group in Vietnam, presented by vets who conducted cross-border operations in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam; POW/MIA; Police Survival; Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion; Survival Medicine & Gunshot Wounds; Russian Small-Unit Tactics & Weapons; plus others on Southern Africa, Central America and Afghanistan.

The 1st Airborne will once again offer a jump school, as well as the opportunity for static-line and free-fall parachuting.

Demonstrations will include automatic weapons, night-firing devices including laser systems, knife throwing and combat-shotgun shooting.

Also, John Farnam will conduct a Handgun Tactical-Combat Course with his famous Duelatron system for \$5.00 per entrant. Contestants will be allowed multiple entries at \$5.00 each.

Once again, a limited number of display tables for exhibitors and manufacturers will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Interested parties should contact SOF Convention/Exhibitor Coordinator Ron Powles (303) 449-3750 immediately for space reservations and further information.

Room assignments at the Headquarters Hotels - the Radisson Scottsdale Resort and Racquet Club (conventioners) and the Sheraton Scottsdale Inn (shooters and conventioners) - will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Rooms will cost \$30 per night, single or double occupancy, in the Radisson and \$35 per night, single or double occupancy, in the Sheraton. (Hotels are within one-fifth mile of each other.)

Hotel reservations will be handled by Jeana Nugent of The Meeting Planners and Miles Travel (see hotel reservation form below for telephone number and address). Miss Nugent will also handle pre- and post-convention travel for those who desire it.

Preceding the convention, SOF is also offering a limited number of spaces - on a first-come, first-served basis - in the following courses running from 0800 12 September to 1700 17 September: (1) Combat Pistolcraft (2) Assault-Rifle (3) Combat-Shotgun (4) Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion (5) Survival Medicine and Combat Wounds (6) 5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot.

Costs for each course, and the cost and prizes for the 5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot, will be determined at a later date.

All convention activities are tentative.

Do not delay!

Fill out the convention-registration and hotel-reservation forms below and mail them to their respective addresses today!

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Detailed information on courses preceding the conference, which are scheduled for 12-17 September, will be mailed directly to persons who indicate an interest in attending by checking the corresponding box(es):  Combat Pistolcraft;  Assault Rifle;  Combat Shotgun;  Desert Survival/Escape & Evasion;  Survival Medicine/Combat Wounds;  5,000-Meter Combat Run & Shoot (date not set).

MAIL TO: SOF Convention P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306

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1. Radisson Scottsdale, \$30 per night, single or double occupancy: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sheraton Scottsdale, \$35 per night, single or double occupancy: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure date: \_\_\_\_\_

If hotel requested is not available, nearest available hotel will be assigned. Rates are subject to applicable taxes. Accommodations will not be confirmed without a check for the first-night's deposit or American Express card number to guarantee reservation. Registrants will be charged for the first night if reservations are not cancelled at least 48 hours prior to arrival.

AMEX No. \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: Jeana Nugent, The Meeting Planners and Miles Travel, 5656 East Orange Blossom, Phoenix, AZ 85018. (Special group airfares may also be available through Miss Nugent. Call 602-231-0200.)

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**P**UNCHING, as a general rule, is a reserve weapon of personal defense best "resorted to" rather than "relied upon." This is so because mankind has, for thousands of years, been a constant and tireless manufacturer of tools. Among these we find the weapon — perhaps man's greatest success. In his never-ending pursuit of a better "edge" in battle, man relegated empty-hand fighting to evolution's rubbish heap, although we still see the trappings of such traditions in the dojo and the ring. Better to argue that whales fly than maintain the superiority of the empty hand over man's industries that smash, slash and shoot.

Certainly progress has put the man without a weapon at the mercy of those not so hindered. Having a finger on a trigger gives one a distinct advantage over the man who weighs 250 pounds and has hand-to-hand expertise.

Even traditional martial systems of Oriental extraction recognized the necessity of weapons training, and one would be hard pressed to name a true martial art that does not contain some training with blades, bludgeons and the like.

In 13th-century Asia, the blade was a superior form of weaponry, but, with the advent of flying lead, ancient martial systems faced a dilemma they have yet to overcome: namely, their ignorance of the firearm and inability to recognize it as more of a martial discipline than empty-hand fighting.

There is something inherently ridiculous about our romantic notions of "doing things with our hands." It is perhaps due, in part, to the idiocy of the media — particularly television and the cinema — where a reluctant Harry-O invariably punches out the nasties, or Jim Rockford saves us all from demented killers with wits and haymakers, implying most subtly that a man who can handle himself needn't resort to gimmicks like weapons. If only life were that simple!

## Doomed To Extinction

For all intents and purposes, save perhaps two, the punching arts as we know them are doomed to extinction simply because they have ignored their basic intent: protection. They have failed miserably to innovate and taper their application toward the conditions of modern everyday life.

In our attempt to keep the Western arts with us, we have turned them into games called *wrestling and boxing*, sacrificing in the transition precisely what made them so valuable: their utility as life-or-death defense measures. Power is sacrificed to gain speed. Gloves are worn to reduce injury and, hence, elongate the confrontation, making it more entertaining to watch.

But real fighting, in the real world, comes equipped with no gloves, no soft ring or mat, no rounds and no referees. So nothing prevents your opponent from

beating the shit out of you with a chair or kicking you while you're down. Add to this the realization that all of the above will probably take place in less than half of a three-minute round, and you are beginning to see why the technique of boxing must be carefully examined to determine what is of use on the street and what must remain strictly an aspect of the "game."

## Too Much Of Very Little

Let us not, heaven forbid, forget to consider the relevancy of the Oriental martial arts, be it Karate, Gung-Fu, Okinawate, or Tae Kwon Do. Today, thanks to the overintellectualization of the simple act that is fighting, we have hundreds of "styles" of Oriental martial arts. The question that must be asked is: How many ways can you hit and get hit? Are spinning kicks *really* a viable means of ending a mugging? Do you really think you'll need a plethora of elaborate blocks and counters to deal with a drunk in a bar who's intent on rearranging your skull with an ashtray?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R.S. McKay of Clinton, Wash., is a 10-year student of practical martial arts. He has most recently trained in modified, non-classical Gung-fu as taught by the late Bruce Lee's first student and assistant instructor, Jesse Glover.

An active IPSC shooter, McKay is a Ray Chapman Academy student, and also provides his services to a large concert theater in Seattle as a security consultant.

McKay teaches privately at his Shin-do Self-Defense Club. He says, "Everyone talks about a punch, but there are piss-poor few who recognize one on the streets!" —John Metzger

If boxing invalidates itself by its encumbrance with rules, does not the Oriental approach fail by making too much of very little; by creating a quagmire of techniques so limited in actual application that they resemble more a gymnastic facsimile of some ancient Dance of Death?

In our misguided but well intended attempt to preserve our primordial fighting heritage, we have turned them, unfortunately, into games with little or no semblance to the reality at hand.

It is with a vanity born of ignorance that many martial practitioners feel themselves capable of coping with most or all attacks upon their persons. If only we could be sure that we will be faced only with unarmed assailants! But, alas, most low-lives, convinced in advance of their own inferiority, will no doubt produce a gun, knife or other implement of destruction, with which they will proceed to shoot, slash or beat your martial artist's ass to death.

When you are left with only your hands to protect yourself, you are a sad case indeed. Countless are the tales of vanquished "dojo ballerinas," left mugged or maimed by persons less educated than themselves — gutter rats who do the unexpected simply because it is simple. I have seen it happen on numerous occasions,

# THE PUL



and probably similar stories have come to your attention. Suffice it to say that, like your raincoat that hangs in the closet, punching is a weapon of limited utility, but valid in certain situations — delivered by a person trained adequately in its application.

It might be that you are blessed with living in one of our more progressive states, one that has rescued you from the temptation to carry a concealed handgun. Restrictions might even include knives with blades over six inches long, or that darling device of the movies, the nunchaku.

Soon, I envision, some state or another will rule that your wallet is a deadly weapon, in which case we will be required to carry our valuables in our outstretched hands, where oppressed muggers and purse snatchers — just trying to make a living — will be able to find them with a minimum of inconvenience to themselves.

In states which still allow the private citizen to carry concealed firearms, there

is little likelihood of your coming up against anyone on a civil level who will drastically outgun you. However, in wonderfully backward states such as California, New York, Rhode Island and, last but not least, Mr. Kennedy's Massachusetts, the mere possession of a concealed handgun, utilized or not, can bring you a jail sentence. Either you break the law on the sly, or you learn to do something with your hands besides play pool.

Being a citizen of Washington state, with its rather liberal concealed-weapons laws, I have not personally been impaled

The hardest part of effective street punching is learning to throw your punch straight and without unnecessary wind-up, or "telegraphing," as it's called. Since the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, it makes only dunderhead sense that the fastest punch is one which is thrown on a straight trajectory toward the intended target, preferably the head. Just as a pistol shooter aims for the center of mass to deliver a stopping shot, so does the wise puncher aim for the master control center: the head. An aggressor who cannot see, who cannot breathe, or who is unconscious, cannot easily harm you, and

With proper training and a certain amount of work, there is no reason that the average man in good health cannot deliver a true knockout punch the first time to, say, eight out of 10 assailants. (Throw in some footwork for retreats when you run into those other two.)

Martial-arts schools are a lot like democracy: not exactly what we might have wished, but the best thing we've got. We may lament their present course, but we are nonetheless indebted to them for having presented us with a wide range of techniques from which to weed out the useful from the decorative. If nothing else, the perspective gained can lead to a solid understanding of how a few simple basics, mixed with about 5,000 years of exaggeration and needless variation, have come to be represented by so many styles and types of fighting. Yet common to all of them is the punch.

Boxing, on the other hand, has maintained a certain amount of its raw simplicity, insofar as it has remained aloof from becoming too vigorously "stylized". It does, of course, suffer from an abundance of rules, to which its techniques are bound, and to the jab, its primary weapon, which is not of particular value on the street.

The jab is a quick, retracted, annoying blow which, although it can have substantial power, is not designed to meet the criteria of a knockout punch. If you're going to smack a guy, you don't want to soften him up with jabs. You want to lay him out with as much haste and as little injury to yourself as possible.

In a crowded hallway or bar, there is no room for fancy footwork, nor will you find feints and draws of value, as they surrender to your opponent your most valuable asset: surprise.

### Don't Get Hit

Neither is it necessary to learn to "take" a punch out on the street. *It is never wise to voluntarily allow someone to hit you.* People who allow themselves to be hit are either lacking in smarts, or they are getting paid for it. You wouldn't let someone shoot at you, now would you? Yet, if hit with sufficient force at various points on the head, the medical implications can include: ruptured eyeball, torn eyelids, fracture of nasal bone and septum, bursting fracture of the jaw, respiratory paralysis, pinched facial nerves and possible concussion, either immediate or delayed.

To quote Brian Adams, an authority on the medical implications of such blows, "Whenever there is the possibility of concussion, there is the possibility of death." So, if you think you can afford to trade blows with someone and still walk home, you'd better hope he has a powder-puff punch — and that your insurance payments haven't lapsed. Professional boxers, as well conditioned as they are and protected by gloves, still get killed in the

# PUNCH FOR THE CRUNCH

## Shoot Or Stab Him If You Can — Here's How To Punch Him If You Can't

by R.S. McKay

upon the horns of that particular dilemma — but I know what I would do. If you choose to arm yourself, despite misguided laws to the contrary, so be it. (It would be imprudent of me to advise you to break any of our laws.)

There are, however, instances when an armed and lethal response to a threat of violence is neither safe nor appropriate. It is in these few situations that you will wish you'd spent some time on the ole punchin' bag, learning the rudiments of man's oldest weapon: the fist.

There are, basically, three instances when the use of the hand as a weapon is valuable: when you are unarmed to begin with or have been disarmed; when the use of hand-held, lethal weapons would endanger innocent bystanders; and when the use of lethal force is not warranted, such as arguments with drunks or imbeciles. Well then, you say, once it's decided to duke it out, how does one go about it?

That, my man, is the crux of the biscuit!

a good, *walloping* punch to the head, in most instances, can achieve one or all of these states. Ideally, the strike should be of sufficient impact to make follow-up blows unnecessary. What is desirable is a "knockout" punch.

After receiving a good straight punch in the kisser, the impact should create enough concussive injury to insure that an assailant doesn't get up off the floor, wipe the blood from his cut lip and come charging back at you like Teddy R. up San Juan Hill.

Just as we have come to take it for granted that the bad guys on Barnaby Jones fall instantly dead with one carelessly aimed shot of ole B.J.'s .38, we have come to think of the punch as something that requires 10 attempts to be effective. Like cheap paint, powder-puff punches require numerous coats. Practice, like greenbacks, can get you what you need for the job.



ring. Without the gloves, how many more might buy the farm?

The Oriental arts are mostly ineffective in real street situations. I would say that probably 75 percent of the mainstream Oriental styles are ineffective in the hands of *most* people who use them. Leaping kicks, utilized to dismount soldiers from horseback in centuries gone by, are pretty, but dangerous. So are contorted ready stances from which you are supposed to move naturally, while trying to keep from communicating your intent at the same time.

Katas are fun, but so is hula dancing, and it is questionable whether blows delivered with nothing to resist them but thin air are useful.

Blocking can be useful, if you have time — which you probably won't. Unless you know how and where a blow is coming from, the neural message that is sent to the part of the body that should block arrives too late, which means that it is always a good idea to throw the first punch and avoid blocking.

Even as fast a man as the late Bruce Lee was convinced that he could not block the attack of another fast man unless the move was telegraphed in some way. This is called reflex lag, and it is the reason why we Pearl Harbor the other guy, instead of the reverse.

## What And How

All right, already. What is a straight punch and how is it delivered? A straight punch is one thrown, theoretically, on a straight line — imaginary, of course — between your nose and the nose of your opponent. The fist is vertical, or “standing,” as it is called. There is no “corkscrewing” of the wrist to add power or shock, as this requires too much time and focus. How so? Because a corkscrew punch requires a wind-up, or, as they say at the dojo, it is thrown from chamber, a spot along the side of the body, anywhere from pectoral level to beltline. Although this punch can be a strong one under suitable conditions, pulling back or cocking

your arm in such a manner is much akin to painting “Duck, sucker” all over yourself.

A straight punch comes directly to your imaginary centerline *as you are punching*, and starts from wherever your hand happens to be at the time. There is no chamber or cocking, and no appreciable loss of power either. During a corkscrew punch, movement either toward or away from you by your opponent will cause a loss of focus and power, and the corkscrewing effect will be either jammed or spent. That is, if he moves into you, the corkscrew is not completed, and the intended shock cannot occur. If he moves away, you can't reach with a corkscrew punch — since the snap was aimed for completion at a given distance, he would be too far away, and the energy of the punch spent.

The straight punch, conversely, begins with roughly the same impetus it ends with, minus the energy transferred to your target. It starts out vertical and straight, and arrives that way. Most of the power is derived from the drop-step initiated by the lower body. If your opponent moves away, you delay the completion of the drop-step. If he is oncoming, the drop-step is hastened.

The drop-step has been with us for some time, used primarily by boxers to stiffen their lead jabs. It probably reached its heyday with Jack Dempsey, who credited to it his success in punching like a mule. Basically, it is a very efficient way to utilize gravity, enabling you to put almost all your body weight into a three-inch drop of the heel from a position on the ball of your lead foot. It is accomplished thusly: feet shoulder-width apart, facing your opponent at about three-quarters, with your *strongest* side forward. (Boxers save their good side for their most powerful punch, the rear cross, which is almost identical to a straight punch, except that it is done from the rear using a torso twist for power.) Raise your lead heel about three inches off the ground and shift 60 percent of your weight to the rear leg. Turn your raised

1. Casual ready stance avoids telegraphing when facing opponent nose to nose. Front heel rises off floor. Fist rises to centerline and front knee and heel rise to facilitate torquing force in drop-step. 2. Punch almost completed, upper body twists sideways while front heel drives down and out. Entire body now begins its forward lean, 70 percent of weight distributed to front, 30 percent to rear. 3. Completion of punch and follow-through. Puncher is inside opponent's arms, 90 percent of weight on front leg, forward momentum carrying into forward lean. Note transfer of rear weight from heel to toes

heel *in toward* your body, still on the ball of your foot.

Now, as if you were squashing an insect, drive your upraised heel down and *away from* your body, impacting the heel on the ground while shifting the weight from the rear leg forward, while at the same time coming up on your rear toes to transfer as much weight as you can on to your front leg.

The drop-step accomplishes what a wind-up would, and, with diligent practice, you can throw almost all of your body weight behind your punch, which is particularly valuable if you are in a dense crowd and unable to maneuver. The so-called “three-inch punch” emphasizes this base of power to make up for the negligible velocity derived from only three inches of arm travel.

## Transfer That Energy

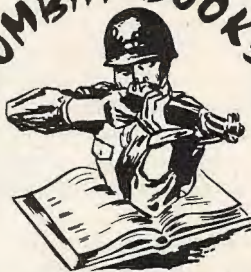
Now, the tricky part is matching the punch to the drop-step, and coming up with both power and speed in execution. Because it is a thrusting punch — as opposed to boxing's retracting punch — follow-through is important, and it is a good rule of thumb to aim six inches beyond your target to insure transference of your energy to his head.

Remember, you are not concerned with recovering to defend yourself after this punch, so lean into it. If you hit someone

*Continued on page 84*



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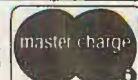
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# WHAT PRICE GLORY?

by John P. Monaghan &  
Robyn F. Evans



“Even after 13 years, I could still go back to that road site in Laos and find them. I can’t sleep at night knowing that I had to leave their bodies. I would gladly give back the Medal to find them or for information on any American MIA.”

Fred Zabitosky  
Retired U.S. Army Special Forces  
Master Sergeant  
Medal of Honor Winner  
Testifying before the United States  
Mission to the United Nations  
at the POW/MIA Petition  
Presentation  
28 October 1980

“What price glory? It’s a helluva price a soldier pays if your country is not only fighting a no-win war, but leaves your ass out in left field, due to political changes in climate, by abandoning you to your enemy.”

## Lament for the Forgotten Warrior

Robert Burton  
Former USMC Force Recon  
Sergeant  
Special Operations Association

**S**TARTING with a slow, measured trace, dawn began to filter through the tiny uncovered window. As the early rays gathered strength and began to fill the small room, the silhouette of an iron crossbar on the window projected upon the far wall. Like a cross on a movie screen, he thought. *The Cross. The eternal sign of Christianity — sadly lacking in this dirt-floored, damp, vermin-infested corner of hell.*

*Intense pain gripped his stomach and he knew the dysentery was back. He swung his legs off the palm-covered bamboo bed. Carefully rising, fighting back waves of dizziness and nausea, he shuffled to-*

*ward a bucket in the corner. Suddenly, his right ankle was jerked out from under him and he crashed heavily to the floor. More pain flooded his body from the beatings administered to him over the past three days due to his infraction of camp rules. Twisting his agonized body slightly, he saw a leather thong tied to his ankle and secured to an iron rung pounded into the floor. Apparently, the restraint had been put on while he was unconscious the night before.*

*Excruciating pressure in his stomach mounted and he tore wildly at the restraint, frantically trying to free himself. The pressure abruptly released itself and a gush of bloody, brown liquid flooded the bottom half of his body. Humiliated, defeated, emaciated, wracked with pain and fever, this shell of an American soldier, wallowing in his own stinking filth, groveled on the dirt floor of his “cell” in a communist prison camp.*

*One thought kept turning over and over in his mind. He had seen them. He and the others working on the road had yelled and waved at them. They were white and they waved back. But the guards were on the workers in a heartbeat with a savage fury they had not known in several years. He himself was beaten to the ground and rendered unconscious in seconds, his body no longer feeling the blows which continued to rain down on him.*

*Sobs wracked his body, involuntarily causing another release of his waste. Within him, the life-sustaining flame which had kept him alive all these years seemed to flicker and die. “No!” his inner self screamed. “No! you really saw them. They were there!”*

*As he lay there weeping, sunlight continued to flood the room, expanding the crossbar’s reflection. As it grew, the image of the cross settled diagonally on his prostrate body, presenting the illusion of a heavily burdened Christ as he slipped and fell on his way to Calvary. The cross, the sign of Christian faith, hope and charity — but he couldn’t think of that. You can’t when you’re in hell.*

**ITEM: TRANSCRIPT OF RADIO BROADCAST FROM SEATTLE, WASHINGTON STATION KIRO, THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 1980:**

A Norwegian construction worker who recently left Vietnam said that, while he was there, a group of Americans, possibly missing U.S. servicemen, were seen working as slave laborers. In a telephone interview from Bangkok, Sten Yooding said some of his fellow workers saw road workers who yelled, “Tell the world about us!” and that their English was American accented. The Norwegian told the radio station that police shooed the men away from where the road gang was working, north of Hanoi. In Washington, D.C., Rear Admiral Jerry Tuttle, Deputy Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, heading the MIA investigation team, said that Yooding’s report is being treated as a serious live sighting.

Anh's back hurt from the bone-jarring ride, but he considered it lucky that he and his sister had managed to catch the last bus from Dalat to Saigon (or Ho Chi Minh City, he thought in disgust). The reunion with his aunt and uncle had been worth the trip. They had not seen one another since the loss of their country to the invaders from the north. The fact that they were still alive put the discomfort he now felt into perspective.

They feared for his uncle in 1975 when word reached Anh about the fall of Dalat. His uncle had been Anh's Company Commander when Anh was a private with the 81st Airborne Ranger Group in 1973. During the siege of An Loc, they were both wounded, he slightly, but his uncle lost his right hand and leg during an enemy artillery barrage after which he retired. When the communists took Saigon, Anh was on leave, recovering from wounds, and the North Vietnamese decimated the 81st. Somehow, both he and his uncle had missed the re-education camps. How, he did not understand.

The bus slowly began its ascent into Chuoi Mountain Pass. Anh's heart felt heavy as he looked out on the countryside and realized it was no longer his country. The bus jerked, jolting the passengers as the engine backfired and died and the vehicle drew to a halt. The driver flew out the door and began to tinker with the engine to no avail. "This piece of dung will never start," muttered Anh to his sister. As if on cue, the driver poked his head into the bus and announced that he could not repair it. With a collective sigh, the passengers settled down to wait out the night or until the next bus came by.

His ears ringing with the deafening sound of gunfire, Anh jerked awake. The bus door was yanked open and a voice yelled for them to get out. The passengers dismounted and formed in a group under bright moonlight. In front of them stood eight armed men. One, appearing to be the leader, announced with a gesture that they were with the Army for the Restoration of National Independence. The men ranged in age from 30 to 40 years. Several, under close scrutiny, appeared to be Caucasian. While thoroughly checking the passengers' identification, they found one government soldier and immediately confiscated his rifle and ammunition. They reassured the passengers they would not be harmed and could soon go back into the bus.

Anh gazed at the white men. There were three of them and they had long, shaggy hair, heavy beards and wore filthy, tattered jeans. One of them caught his gaze and approached Anh, addressing him in fluent Vietnamese. He explained that he and his friends were left behind during the American evacuation of Saigon in 1975 and did not want to surrender; so they had gone into the jungle to hide and fight. Anh could not believe his ears as the man continued to speak. "Originally there were five of us, but two died from

illness." He looked directly at Anh with a plea in his voice and eyes, asking if Anh could help him get a letter to the United States to let people know they were still in Vietnam and needed help to get out.

Dumbfounded and quaking with fear, Anh nodded. "I must be dreaming. The Americans all left in 1975." He remembered it vividly, the chaos, the panic, the enormous helicopters by the Embassy. He closed his eyes. "I'll wake up now. As soon as I open my eyes, this will all be gone." But when he opened his eyes, there stood two Americans in front of him, one still talking. He was saying an address and, as he finished, the second man hastily gave his name and address, too. Anh could not understand this information but, before he could reply, the third Caucasian signaled and the two Americans reached for his hand to shake it. The first man reached for his rifle lying against a tree, saying in a low, urgent voice: "Please, we must have help. We cannot last much longer." For a few moments, complete silence filled the air. Anh's sister came to his side and grasped his hand. Anh still stared at the spot where the men had been as they disappeared silently into the night.

**ITEM: SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER. 30 NOVEMBER 1980. FRONT PAGE HEADLINE: M.I.A. ISSUE IS NOT DEAD**

Outside Ho Chi Minh City, a busload of peasants was held at gunpoint by a political underground group known as the Army for the Restoration of National Independence. Three of the gunmen turned out to be on-the-run Americans who refused to surrender after the fall of Saigon. They gave their names to one passenger and asked him to send word to their homes in the United States, but the frightened man lost the details.

### What Price Glory?

**T**HE two scenarios are interpretations of actual media coverage of real events. The information in the *San Francisco Examiner* was verified by Mrs. Le Thi Anh, translator and Vietnamese coordinator for the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. It was contained in a letter dated 10 March 1980 from a relative of the "frightened passenger," now residing in Chanthabure, Thailand.

"The return of American personnel and the accounting of our missing in action is unconditional and will take place within the same time frame as the American withdrawal." (Henry Kissinger, White House News Conference, 24 January 1973.)

These words, spoken just three days before the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement, caused Americans across the land to rejoice. Finally, after years of war, the fate of Americans captured or missing in Indochina would be known and those alive returned.

Dr. Kissinger's promise proved false, causing more years of anguish for the wives, children, parents, families and friends of those American servicemen and civilians who did not return.

Many Americans are unaware that nearly 2,500 servicemen remain unaccounted for as a result of the Vietnam War. There were 2,553 military and 41 civilians unaccounted for at "Operation Homecoming" in 1973. The military included 96 prisoners of war (POW), 1,178 killed in action-body not recovered (KIA-BNR) and 1,279 missing in action (MIA). The civilians included 25 missing and 16 presumed dead. Since then, 74 remains have been returned and most individual cases of those unaccounted for have been administratively reviewed. Cases reviewed have invariably resulted in a presumptive finding of death (PFD), based on data accumulated in the file and a lapse of time without information to indicate that the individual is still living. Therefore, as of November 1980, only 14 military personnel of those unaccounted for have not been presumed dead. These cases are broken down to 1-POW (USAF) and 13 MIA (11-USAF, 1-USN and 1-USMC).

### Korean Experience

This is not a new reality, but one spawned in the aftermath of the Korean War, where other American servicemen were left behind and neither accounted for nor recovered. Although the official exchange of prisoners of war was completed in September, 1953, the Chinese communists refused to release 15 American servicemen whom they had captured in North Korea. The 15 men, who were held in China, were finally released following a complicated series of negotiations. The date of their release was 1 August 1955 — two years after the end of the war.

The opinion of Gen. Mark Clark, United Nations Far East Commander during the closing years of the Korean War and the man who signed the armistice accord for the United States, was that there were between 2,000 and 3,000 U.N. POWs beyond the 3,313 listed by the communists and subsequently released.

Clark was quoted as saying that we had intelligence from many of our agents who gave us information that at the time of the armistice there were U.N. prisoners being held who were not released.

**NOTE:** Jim Monaghan, co-author, had a close personal friend, now deceased, who was a member of the Eighth Army's 8240 Special Operations Detachment (ASOD), which was responsible for guerrilla activities in North Korea. Hard intelligence provided by these agents pinpointed two camps in North Korea containing approximately 350 captured U.N. soldiers. These men were considered "reactionary" by the Chinese — *that is*, they refused to give any information beyond name, rank and serial number.

Based on this intelligence and USAF

corroborative aerial photos, a large-scale raid into North Korea was planned by the ASOD guerrilla force. But it was canceled by higher U.S. authorities. No reason was given. Not one individual from these two camps was ever exchanged in "Big Switch" or "Little Switch" (code names for the prisoner exchanges).

## Appalling Numbers

The overall number of American soldiers captured during the Korean War was 7,140. A horrifying 2,701 Americans died in POW camps run by the North Koreans and Red Chinese. This was an appalling 38 percent of the total captured. Subsequently, 4,418 POWs were returned to U.S. government control, 3,745 in the two major POW repatriation operations. (These figures were taken from *Study on Former Prisoners of War*, published by the Veterans Administration, May 1980.)

In addition, there were 8,177 men lost in combat and never recovered. After the cessation of hostilities, the U.S. presented a list of 3,404 men — including 944 positively identified by repatriated American GIs as having been captured and held prisoner — to the communists at the conference table for an accounting.

The communists at first refused to provide an accounting, but later released the names of *only 19 men*. The number of MIAs was reduced when a large number of bodies were returned to the U.S., which turned out to be those of men buried by American forces in North Korea when the United Nations was in control of territory there during the war. After that, Defense Department statisticians pared the final number of MIAs to 389. That was the number which a 1955 Congressional investigation determined to be alive and in the hands of communist forces, yet were never accounted for and whose fate remains unknown.

Although proof of death was never provided, each of the 389 Americans was declared "presumed killed in action" (PKIA) by the U.S. government. The United States is establishing full diplomatic relations with this nation without demanding any type of accounting for the MIA Americans.

## WWII

After WWII, Soviet Russia withheld hundreds of thousands of Axis prisoners. Almost one million Germans were captured in Russia alone. Less than 7,000 were returned to Germany and, then, not until 1957!

Communist cruelty and failure to abide by the rules of international law and the Geneva Convention regulations pertaining to *prisoners* of war is a logical outgrowth of the Communist Doctrine of Conflict. There are no distinctions; therefore, the rules which normally limit or channel interstate conflict are generally ignored — considered archaic restrictions

of a historically doomed social order.

The French-Indochina War commenced in 1946. It culminated in 1954 with the agonizing defeat of Groupe Mobile 100 in South Vietnam's Central Highlands. This defeat, coupled with the loss of the fortress of Dien Bien Phu shortly before, ended French government control of the Federated States of Indochina. During those eight years, the French Expeditionary Force fought the Viet Minh throughout Vietnam (North and South),

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jim Monaghan is a retired soldier with 22½ years active service, 19½ of which were spent in both overt and covert Special Forces duty. He also served in the 11th and 82nd Airborne Divisions. He spent five years in Vietnam and one year in Laos. Other duty took him to various other garden spots throughout the Far East, Middle East and Europe.

Monaghan was a direct-commission officer during the Vietnam War and was retired disabled in October 1978. He presently resides in North Hollywood, Calif. He works in the transportation department of the movie industry and sometimes puts packages together for overseas security-type projects. Monaghan was president of the Special Operations Association for 1980 and, at the annual meeting in Las Vegas, was unanimously re-elected in 1981.

Robyn Evans is originally from Chicago. She has traveled extensively in Europe, the Far East and Israel. She studied in the Philippines on an International Rotary scholarship after which she returned to Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., to continue her studies in anthropology. During the October War in 1973, Evans left Northwestern to work in Israel as a volunteer. She stayed there for four years, studying and living on several kibbutzim before returning to the United States.

Evans is presently a purchasing agent for a major movie/TV production company. For the past two years, she has been active in working toward the resolution of the POW/MIA issue as liaison between the National League of Families, the Special Operations Assn. and the Special Forces Assn. Recently, Evans was presented honorary membership in the Special Operations Assn. in appreciation of her untiring efforts on behalf of that organization.

Laos and Cambodia. An estimated 37,000 French Colonial soldiers were captured by the Viet Minh. (Note: Colonial troops included Mainland French, indigenous Indochinese, Moroccans, Algerians and Sudanese.)

A total of 6,000 Colonial soldiers were captured while involved in combat opera-

tions during the battle of Dien Bien Phu. 10,754 more were captured after the fall of the fortress. Combined total of captured French Colonial soldiers was 16,754. When the Geneva Convention was implemented in July of 1954, less than 3,700 Colonial troops were returned to the prisoner-exchange point. In other words, a total of 13,054 men of the French Expeditionary Force died or vanished into thin air while in captivity during the preceding five months. No other prisoners captured during the eight years of fighting were voluntarily returned by the communist North Vietnamese at that time. The number of Expeditionary soldiers missing in action during the length of the eight-year conflict totaled 33,000.

## Body Blackmail

Long after their capture, however, at Dien Bien Phu and other battles, French Expeditionary soldiers would appear in the oddest places. In 1970, Congressman Robert Dornan of California, while at the Spanish Embassy in Bangkok, was told of a Spaniard who had escaped from North Vietnam a year earlier. He had served with the French Foreign Legion and been captured at Dien Bien Phu.

A French naval pilot, shot down and also captured at Dien Bien Phu, escaped from captivity in Laos. He made his way to the French Consulate in Vientiane, found it closed, then traveled to the Mekong River separating Laos from Thailand. When he crossed over into Thailand, he was arrested by Thai Border Police for illegal entry. Before he was subsequently turned over to the French authorities, an American ex-POW in Thailand on POW business got a tip that the man was in jail and managed to get the story from him. This was in January 1980.

The two men had escaped, 15 and 26 years respectively, after the Viet Minh denied the existence of any live French prisoners in captivity. In all, more than 1,500 members of the French Expeditionary Force have escaped or have been released as "defectors" or "ralliers to the communist cause" since the North Vietnamese announced at the end of the war that they had released all Expeditionary Force prisoners.

In addition, the French government has very quietly, over the last quarter century, paid the North Vietnamese government money and other compensation for the return to their control of the remains of more than 3,000 mainland French soldiers killed in action. Let there not be the slightest doubt in anyone's mind that body blackmail is the same game that these animals wish to play with the United States.

Bernard Fall, in his book *Street Without Joy* (from which some of the above figures were taken), warned the United States of this inhumane treatment of POWs by the Viet Minh. Henry Kissinger, while involved in the secret Paris negotia-

tions, should have taken time to read Fall's book. He might have avoided the pitfalls of dealing with the North Vietnamese on the POW/MIA problem.

## American POW/MIA

Overwhelming proof surfaces every day that Americans are being held in Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia as prisoners of war. Over the years, both the Ford and Carter administrations have been aware of this. But the Carter administration continued its policy of conducting status reviews for the express purpose of presuming all the men dead. This action was a direct contradiction of Carter's campaign promises of 1976 regarding the POW/MIA and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

### OCTOBER 1976 FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE STATEMENT BY CANDIDATE CARTER:

"One of the most embarrassing failures of the Ford administration and one that touches specifically on human rights, is his refusal to appoint a presidential commission to go to Vietnam, to go to Laos, to go to Cambodia and try to trade for the release of information about those who are missing in action in those wars. This is what the families of the MIAs want. So far, Mr. Ford has not done it . . . I also would never formalize relations with Vietnam, nor permit them to join the United Nations until they have taken this action. But that's not enough. We need to have an active and aggressive action on the part of the President, the leader of his country, to seek out every possible way to get that information which has kept the MIA families in despair and doubt, and Mr. Ford has just not done that."

### FORMER PRESIDENT CARTER'S PROMISES TO THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES' REPRESENTATIVE DURING A 45-MINUTE MEETING ON 11 FEBRUARY 1977:

1) Carter promised that he would not conduct status reviews which would result in presumptive findings of death on the MIAs. He said the moratorium on status changes would remain in effect until factual information on the missing had been obtained or until he was satisfied that the communists had provided as complete an accounting as possible.

2) He promised he would form a Presidential Task Force to work on gaining an accounting.

After these promises to the nation and to the National League of MIA/POW Families had been made, what did his administration actually do?

A Presidential Task Force on MIAs was formed in 1977 with Leonard Woodcock as chairman. Others on the task force included such stalwart American patriots as: Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield; Marion Wright Edelson of the Children's Defense Fund; Charles Yost, former Ambassador; and Mr. Super Patriot himself, now referred by some (irreverently) as "Hanoi's Favorite Congressman" —

Sonny Montgomery, (D-Miss.). To say that this was a stacked deck is an understatement.

Apparently Hanoi, Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden were busy, or it's quite certain that Jimmy would have requested their participation in the Task Force as well.

## Woodcock's Conclusions

It would be appropriate to state that, while in Hanoi, the members of the Woodcock Commission, as the saying goes, were "wined, dined and shined."

Despite the fact that the Commission received a briefing beforehand by the CIA, the DIA and the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, and had been made aware of refugee reports of live sightings and Vietnamese intransigence in providing the bodies of men known to have been in their hands at one time, the Commission came away with the conclusion that no Americans remained alive in Vietnam. The Commission received 12 bodies, with the promise of a few more later in the year — and nothing else.

They were not even permitted to visit Hanoi's "War Crimes Museum" as they requested. POWs who were forced to go into this museum before departing Hanoi found ID cards, pieces of planes that had been shot down with tail or fuselage numbers and other articles which could have helped resolve MIA cases. The Vietnamese stopped showing POWs the museum when they noticed the POWs making note of names on the ID cards and the tail and fuselage numbers.

The Woodcock Commission completely closed the door on any Americans possibly being alive in Vietnam, Cambodia or Laos. These self-styled survival experts concluded that even the defectors and deserters were dead. But a deserter named Bobby Garwood subsequently proved just how ludicrous their testimony was.

Upon their return to the U.S., Woodcock and Montgomery testified before the House Subcommittee on Pacific and Asian Affairs (a.k.a. the Wolff Committee in deference to its Chairman, Lester Wolff). Woodcock went through the usual routine of saying that the Commission had impressed upon the Vietnamese and the Laotians our desire for an accounting of the MIAs.

But a new play was suddenly thrown into the ball game. Woodcock stated that we had a realistic attitude, and it was the administration's intention to resolve it in a reasonable way in order to remove it as an obstacle to normalization of diplomatic relations between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States. Woodcock went on to assure the panel that the SRV, that paragon of virtue and model to the Third World, would promptly provide us with remains and information about MIAs as it became available to them.

The final blow came from Montgomery, once a staunch friend of the National League of POW/MIA Families, when he

came up with the recommendation that Carter move ahead, as recommended by the Select Committee (of which he had been the chairman before it was disbanded earlier that year), and have a case-by-case review of all Americans still missing somewhere in Southeast Asia. They were to be reclassified as KIA.

What was Carter's reaction to this report? Hadn't he made promises to the families when they were with him in the White House? His comment: "We are satisfied with what has been done." And the status reviews proceeded.

## Presidential Maneuvers

Less than three months after assuring the families that Vietnam would not be admitted to the United Nations until he was personally satisfied that an accounting for the MIAs had been made, former President Carter instructed then Secretary of State Vance to announce that the U.S. was dropping its opposition to acceptance of Vietnam in the U.N. Two weeks prior to that February meeting with the families, then Ambassador-designee Andrew Young testified that the U.S. was going to move toward approval of Vietnam's application for membership in the U.N. and toward open talks for normalization. Former Under-Secretary Richard Holbrooke added to that when he said he felt "The U.S. did not give up a bargaining chip for MIAs by agreeing to Vietnam's membership in the U.N."

If the above seems a contradiction of former President Carter's foreign policy statement of October 1976 and his promises to the families in February 1977, rest assured, it wasn't. His promises were outright damnable lies, and he knew he would never fulfill them.

After the February 1977 meeting with the families, Carter, then Commander in Chief of our Armed Forces and Executive Head of our Government, did not see fit to meet with any member of the National League of Families. He had time, however, for visits to the White House by Dolly Parton, Johnny Cash, Joan Baez and other performers.

But what more could you expect from a President whose first act upon taking office was to declare amnesty for draft evaders and deserters from the armed forces during the Vietnam War; who allowed Americans who fought in the war to rot, slave and die in communist prisons?

*(To be continued.)*

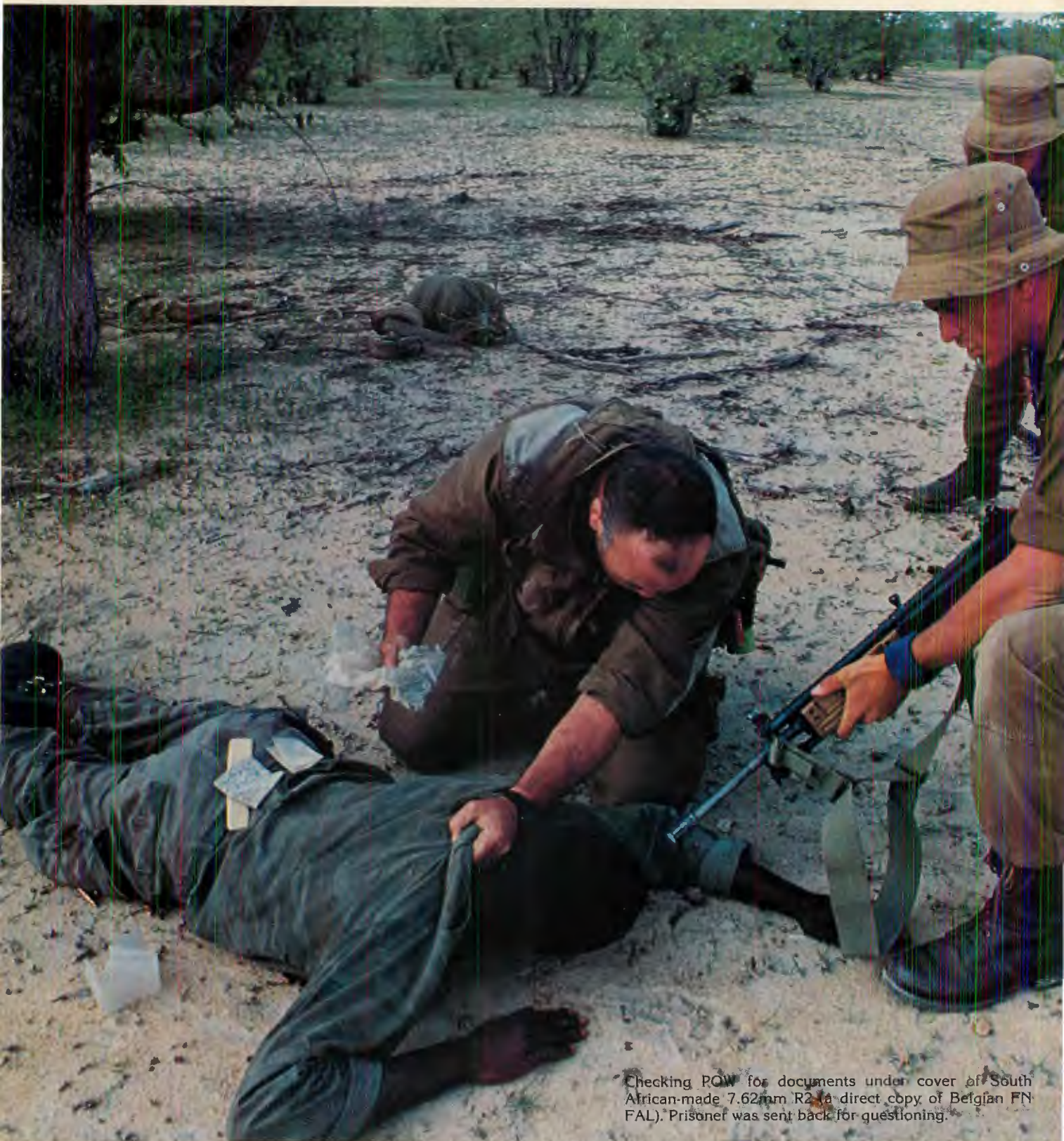
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Checking POW for documents under cover of South African-made 7.62mm R2 (a direct copy of Belgian FN FAL). Prisoner was sent back for questioning.

# SUDDEN DEATH SC IN ANGO

Text and Photos by Al J. Venter



## F Staffer Goes In With South African Troopies

# DLA

*I dedicate this account of a brief but bloody episode to two young soldiers who lived like the boys they were and died like men.*

*The night they were killed I shed tears as we stripped them of their uniforms and cleaned them before they were placed in the dark-green zippered body bags that accompany every military operation along the border.*

*That night they were my boys too. . .*

**T**HE smell reached out toward us the moment we debarked from the choppers: It was the pungent odor of death from last night's fire fight, which had claimed 18 lives — two of them ours.

The odor permeated the desolate, sandy terrain, lending it a sense of foreboding. Small arms crackled — staccato and erratic — punctuated at regular intervals by heavier blasts of RPG-7 rockets and mortars.



Checking bunkers is hazardous. Grenade probes are often met with automatic fire from terrs inside. Rifles are South Africa-made 7.62mm R2s. Troopie in foreground stands guard with unidentified handgun.

You didn't need to tell those who had experienced it before that this was war.

By the time it was over, there were another 50 dead, but they were the enemy. And because we were still alive, their passing was barely noticed as we made our way through trench lines and bunker holes, one after another, all of them littered with the debris of conflict.

But one man's face remains as vivid in my mind as if it were just an hour ago that I found him sprawled, face down, the back of his head blown into unrecognizable pulp. He must have been the SWAPO commander, for we found him clutching his binoculars outside an improvised command post, his hand extended as if still directing the stand, even in death.

We didn't bury the man or the few score others sprawled around a battlefield that any one of us could have paced out in the time it takes to smoke a cigarette. We left that for their comrades, who would come later with their Cuban and East German *confreres* — long after the last air-force medevac chopper had chattered across the no-man's land into the sanctuary of South West Africa.

We had our own dead to contend with. Just two of them — but two too many, for

the loss was personal and intense. Either could have been my son.

## Targeting SWAPO

The decision to attack the major SWAPO staging camp wasn't easy to make. The onslaught would be the end result of a succession of hot-pursuit raids which had taken place in the preceding months.

Many towns directly across the Ovambo border had felt the effects of SWAPO raids originating from this camp. They had seen the results of nightly mine-laying forays by SWAPO cadres in the mutilated dead and wounded — most of them civilians.

But, as in previous hot-pursuit operations, we made it clear from the start that our argument was not with the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of

Angola). Shortly before we lifted off to establish a base, a South African air-force spotter aircraft dropped leaflets in the area indicating that our target was SWAPO. No one else. But, in spite of the warning, our arrival was a surprise.

The small force of South African troopies wasted little time securing a defensive perimeter. Trenches were dug, patrols sent out on forays to establish a presence in the surrounding bush, and radio communications established with "home."

By noon we were dug in. Only the flies worried us: a droning, winged pestilence that settled on eyes and mouth and on anything edible throughout the day, to be replaced at sunset by the sibilant hum of millions of the most aggressive mosquitoes in Africa. After the first night, it was obvious that malaria would again be a serious problem — in a region that had been almost cleared of the disease six years before by the Portuguese administration.

Meanwhile, movement in the nearby SWAPO base, very cleverly camouflaged from the air, was carefully monitored.

We were not certain they knew we were aware of their position. They undoubtedly



The SWAPO base from the air; the defense line was adequate and sophisticated. Later information indicated that the fortification had been designed by East Germans. The Vietnamese touch was the tunnels.

had heard us come in and we received early indications that they were prepared to make a stand.

A forecast of the battle to come arrived unexpectedly, shortly after five that afternoon.

A heavy salvo of rockets and automatic fire burst from the direction of the camp. Initial radio sitreps told of contact between a probing South African patrol and a SWAPO unit which had established itself at the northern end of the fortification.

Minutes later, several dozen detonations from Soviet RPG-7 rockets showered the sky with shrapnel, blanketing the area with smoke which would stay with us for the next two days. This was followed by blasts from SWAPO mortar positions which shook the ground beneath us even though we were four kilometers away.

All of it was off target, but had awesome implications: This was no bush skirmish.

We took our first casualties that evening when two sections of our troops tried to overrun SWAPO's outer trench line. Soviet 12.7mm and 14.5mm anti-aircraft guns fired on them. We watched

strings of tracers and the brilliant blast of rocket fire from our position — it could have been a scene from the opening sequences of the recent Frederick Forsyth film, *Dogs of War* (see review p. 54).

We watched in awe, conscious already of the terrible price we might have to pay.

## Choppers Grounded

Casualty details were vague at first. One of our boys dead. Medevac urgently needed. Already, two more troops were wounded. Would the choppers — on standby, their rotors whining — go in?

According to the Alouette pilot in charge of rescue operations, it was impossible for two reasons: flak was too heavy and the bush too sparse. Also, it was dark and the crews were not familiar with the terrain.

There was no choice but to walk the casualties out. All four kilometers. Enemy mortars which followed the rescue team to camp took another life.

Clearly, a night attack across terrain dominated by the enemy was pointless.

Nonessential troops pulled back. We would wait until dawn to make the final

onslaught. I would go in with the first wave: the first time any local journalist had been allowed to accompany South African combat troops into conventional battle since the end of WWII.

After the main attack force withdrew, night settled uneasily.

By now, both forces were acutely conscious of the other's presence and the dark hours were punctuated by mortar and small-arms fire.

We rose when it was not yet day and ate sparingly. Most of us drank tea in mugs filled from "firebuckets" warmed by solid-fuel bricks from our ratpacks — tea, and yards of liquid in clever plastic bags which required the imbiber to fill the container at one end and suck from the other. Neat! War always has been a mother of invention.

Then came the call. The first two sticks would leave the ground in 10 minutes; it would take us exactly two minutes to reach the contact point. I was warned that I would have only about three seconds to take pictures from the chopper. Then, if I chose to stay aboard, I would return to base with the aircraft.

It's a curious idiosyncrasy of human nature that men have always sought more





South African trooper armed with Belgian-made FN 7.62mm MAG. SWAPO terr lies dead in trench line.

excitement than normal day-to-day routine affords them.

All of the men aboard were under 22, like their two buddies who had given their all the night before. Their faces expressed apprehension, but not fear. Every one of them had sweated blood to achieve battle readiness. Though some may have had reservations, I doubt more than a couple would have given up their places on the chopper.

Fire picked up across the way. We were the attackers and most of us accepted the odds. My companions were still young enough to believe themselves immortal — but after we were on the ground, with explosions popping all around us, that omnipresent fear of death never left any of us, especially when we were taking incoming. Crouched behind a ragged row of dry thorn bushes which provided little more than cover from a rising sun, we could not tell the direction of bullets

ricocheting around us, nor of mortar blasts that shrouded movement of first the right, then the left flank. We just hoped. . . .

### Contact!

Our battle started just after the first soldiers' feet touched ground. Crouched in the bush not 15 meters from the vulnerable, hovering chopper were two terrorists, one armed with an RPG-7 rocket launcher and the other with an RPD machine gun.

They could have taken us out at will.

Fate decreed otherwise, for they dropped their weapons and raised their hands. With adrenalin pumping and fire picking up along a front which extended several hundred meters in each direction, they were lucky they weren't shot outright. Close combat rarely allows discretion.

But we took them prisoner. We needed

information about the camp. Bound, they were sent back to the base on the chopper which landed nearby.

Time is of little relevance in battle. Asked afterward how long it had lasted, I had no idea. It could have been 30 minutes — or three hours.

Images, sensations, feelings: all are compressed into the immediate. We weathered the first two mortar and RPG-7 onslaughts from SWAPO and had the satisfaction of seeing our men walk out of smoke that we had thought deadly the moment before.

We watched our flanks and rear, not only for the enemy who might be lurking there (of that, we were *always* conscious), but also to spot problems along our lines.

South African operational troops, along with the Israelis, have one of the best casualty-evacuation rates in the world. We had been told that, circumstances allowing, it was possible to get a seriously wounded South African trooper from the battlefield into the operating room at No. 1 Military Hospital at Voortrekkerhoogte near Pretoria within three hours, although it was almost 1,000 kilometers in a C-130.

Still, it couldn't really happen to *us*, we thought — even as we smelled the cordite in the air.

### Taking The Camp

Had the enemy been anyone but SWAPO, we would not have emerged from that vicious little fire fight in the South Angolan bush with only one casualty: a trooper wounded in the arm while trying to clear bunkers. He had walked into the darkened underground recess with pistol in hand and been greeted by automatic AK fire, stilled only after we hurled in grenades.

Once we were through the second line of trenches, the camp was ours. SWAPO soldiers broke and ran in small groups — some of them still firing, others weaponless. Others took refuge in a maze of tunnels, reminding us of the fighting in Vietnam.

Moving in, we passed two Soviet trucks burning fiercely. Both were loaded with ammunition and, while we remained in the area, exploding cartridges and shells pierced the quiet that followed the battle. While working on a second row of trenches close to one of the trucks, I thought its whining, random projectiles posed more danger than the enemy. But I took my chances along with everyone else.

And then, finally, it was over.

By the way some of the troopers crouched in the shadows of the few tall trees that dotted the area, I could tell they were exhausted — as much from the psychological as the physical exertion. I was too. I could barely lift my camera case.

Elated, weary, ears ringing from the explosion that had brought me about as close to death as I have ever been, I waited for a chopper to haul me back to base.

Biafra was never like this. . . .



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**TOP SECRET**

# **SOG'S SECRET WAR**

**“SOME OF THE  
HAIRIEST  
MISSIONS EVER  
CONCEIVED”**



SOG Team member practices rappelling from a UH-1F helicopter at Command and Control South (Ban Me Thout). SOG Teams used this technique in areas where LZs could not be located, where the LZs were under fire and where employment of bombs to create a LZ would have attracted undue attention.

**by Jim Graves**

# TOP SECRET

**T**OP Secret: Burn after reading or ingest.

Much of what you are about to read is covered by the National Security Act. Documents which give details on operations and projects described herein can be traced by looking up the index numbers listed in the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) history in the Pentagon.

However, the MACV history is a classified document.

Although most Vietnam veterans, war correspondents and students of the conflict are familiar with the acronym SOG — via rumor-control central, fleeting contact in 'Nam or short references that have appeared over the years in newspapers, magazines, books and movies — allusions to the group's activities have

The acronym SOG stood for Studies and Observation Group; the acronym itself was condensed from the full-blown MACVSOG: Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group. Unofficially it was also known as the Special Operations Group.

SOG was organized in February 1964 by Gen. Paul D. Harkins, Commander MACV. Its basic mission was to conduct covert operations in the denied areas of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Activities within the sphere of SOG's mission included: guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, escape and evasion, direct-action missions, black and gray psychological operations and some operations best described just as unconventional warfare.

For a number of obvious and valid reasons, SOG from the beginning depended heavily on the U.S. Army for its personnel. But since it also drew troops from the Marine Corps (Force Recon), U.S. Navy (SEALs) and Air Force (air crews), and drew headquarters staff from all four services, it was by definition a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force. Since the Vietnamese were also involved, it could be called a Combined Unconventional Warfare Task Force. In addition, SOG used American civilians from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and United States Information Agency (USIA), as well as civilians from other countries.

Depending on whose estimate one accepts, SOG during its heyday had 2,000 to 2,500 Americans, 7,000 to 8,000 Vietnamese (North and South), Nungs, Cambodians, Laotians, Chinese and others involved in its myriad



ABOVE: SOG Recon Team Nungs practice on firing range in camp. Nung in foreground is firing an M79 40mm grenade launcher while one in background is firing AKM 7.62mm rifle. On ground in rear is M-60 7.62mm machine gun.

operations or projects.

As one former SOG trooper put it: "An octopus would wish that it had so many tentacles."

And if it did, it would wrap every one of them around its head and go off screaming if assigned the task of unscrambling the mixture of alphabet soup and operation/project names that provided cover for SOG operations in Southeast Asia.

With a rapidity that would bewilder the most diligent researcher, SOG Operations (the common denominator) acquired and abandoned code names and acronyms for purposes of cover. It worked so well that some people didn't know they were in SOG until later.

To get a real grasp on SOG, it is necessary to start at the beginning and with the Vietnamese.

Since 1958, South Vietnam's government had carried on unconventional-warfare operations against the communists. Since they were on the receiving end of North Vietnam's operations, South Vietnam saw no reason not to reciprocate. It is assumed that the CIA was in on the act from the very beginning.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy authorized the Combined Studies Group — the operating arm of the CIA in Southeast Asia — to assist the South Vietnamese in conducting covert operations in both North Vietnam and Laos. These activities included infiltration of agents into North Vietnam to act as spies and saboteurs, and cross-border operations against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese base camps and supply lines in Laos. The South Vietnamese threw in Cambodia for good measure.

Those operations and a CIA/U.S. Army Special Forces operation, begun the year before, would have an effect on SOG.

In 1960, Kennedy authorized the CIA to conduct an operation named WHITE STAR in Laos. The purpose was to improve the military capability of the Laotian non-communist forces. When the CIA failed to make a dent in Laotian communist activity, the job was turned over to U.S. Army Col. Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, leader of the Son Tay raid in 1970 and the merc operation in Iran in 1978 financed by Texan H. Ross Perot (see "Who Dares Wins," SOF, June '79).

In 1960, Simons took 107 Special Forces men into the jungles of Laos. Benjamin F. Schemmer points out in his excellent book on the Son Tay raid, *The Raid*, that when Simons ar-



Studies and Observation Group launch site at Du Co.

**BELOW:** Master Sgt. Ed Clough (left) with a Nung team member somewhere in South Vietnam. The Nung is carrying an M3 45-caliber grease gun equipped with flash suppressor. Clough, a bit bigger than his native team members, survived the war.



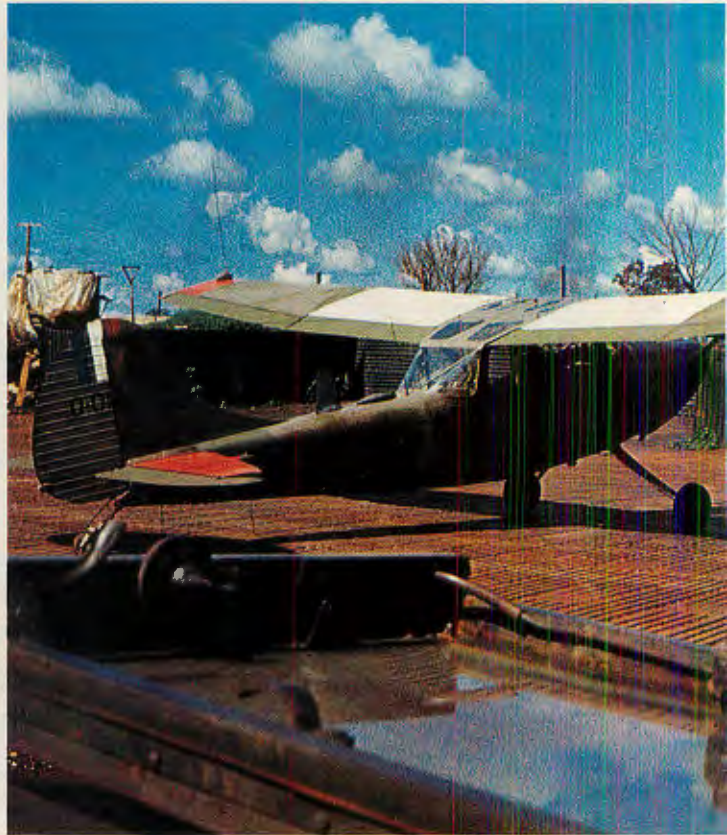
rived in Laos there was no Laotian army there to train. Not to worry, GI. Simons went out and kidnapped 12 battalions of Muong tribesmen, "put them in compounds behind barbed wire, fed them, clothed them — and gradually taught them to soldier. They were eager to learn; life had a purpose and they were even being paid." Simons' 12 battalions of Muong were so successful that the North Vietnamese backed off from cross-border operations.

Direct American Special Forces involvement in WHITE STAR metamorphosed into Project 404 and lasted until 1962, when the Geneva Accords closed off that theater of operations to Americans — at least to American military. The North Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese and the CIA continued to be active in Laos.

As one thoroughly disgusted former WHITE STAR/404 man put it: "This is how fucking weird we do things. If you were on one of the last teams in there in '62 [he was] and your name was on the list that the ICC [International Control Commission] checked off, they [the U.S. government] wouldn't let you back in Laos."

In 1963, the organization that handled unconventional and covert warfare for the South Vietnamese took on the name Luc Long Dac Biet (LLDB), sometimes called the Vietnamese

# TOP SECRET



Special Forces, and sometimes referred to disparagingly by Americans as "look long, duck back." The working relationships between the LLDB, its "Special Branch" which handled unconventional warfare, and the Green Berets of the U.S. were close in 1963, even though the Green Berets were ostensibly involved only in "bird watching" — sitting on the Laotian and Cambodian borders watching communist activity on the trails from "A" Camps. But even then some SF troops were leading Vietnamese units funded by the CSG/CIA.

In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson authorized implementation of Operations Plan (OPLAN) 34-A. That operation, the first with a direct tie-in to the Studies and Observation Group, began as a strategic-intelligence-gathering operation only. South Vietnam's LLDB "Special Branch" was supposed to supply the men; Military Assistance Command Vietnam the training sites and physical assets (boats, planes, guns); and the CIA funds and training.

In February 1964, MACV opened its Studies and Observation Group headquarters building in what had been the MACV 2 compound in Cholon, an adjunct of Saigon. In 1967 SOG moved to a building on Pasteur street in Saigon.

From the beginning, SOG's rather broad mission — clandestine operations in the denied areas of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia — gave the HQ staff the latitude to get involved in just about anything and, since SOG reported directly to the Commander MACV, first Gen. Harkins, then Gen. William C. Westmoreland, and finally Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, it had enough pull to co-opt existing operations and ones started up later by other military units.

However, in his book, *A Soldier Reports*, Westmoreland wrote: "Although SOG was a component of MACV, a special office in the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff supervised its activities, for, from the first, Washington exercised the closest control over SOG's operations. Every action had to be approved in advance by the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and the White House."

Some SOG operators have claimed that the CIA staff had considerably more control over activities than was thought at the time or has been admitted since. In effect, they assert that if the military in Vietnam turned down some pet projects as too risky, the operation would be sold and approved in Washington.

In *The Raid*, Schemmer wrote of Simons, head of a SOG operation: "In

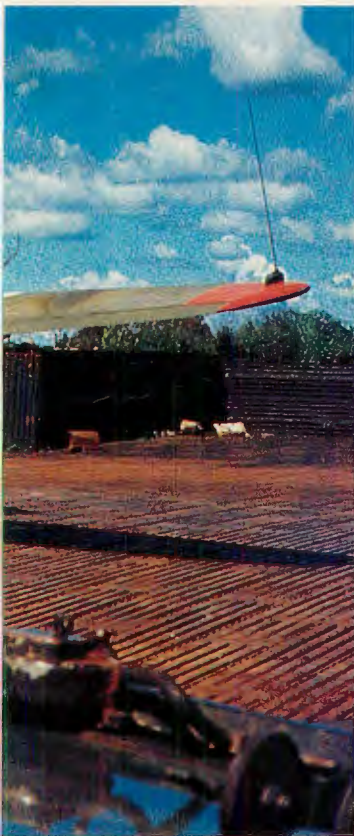
executing SOG missions, Simons refused, in his own words, to 'live with some of the restraints put on me.' But, he would add, 'I got away with it only because I didn't make any mistakes.' He knew that if he got caught, 'they'd get some other conductor for the trolley car and throw my dead body off the back.'"

The MACVSOG established in February 1964 was initially supposed to train, advise and support logistically the South Vietnamese LLDB "Special Branch" — changed to Special Exploitation Service (SES) in April 1964 — in the conduct of covert missions in Southeast Asia.

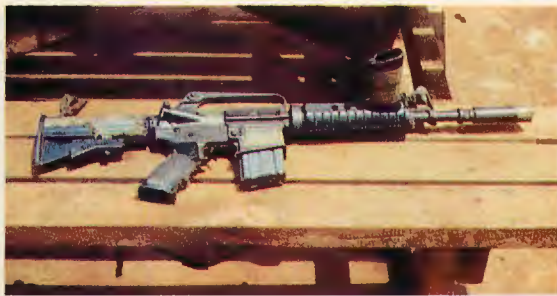
To achieve this, a Naval operation at Da Nang, an air-wing detachment at Nha Trang and a training element at a place called Bearcat, near the village of Long Thanh, 14 miles east of Saigon, were established.

One of the first SOG operations was named LEAPING LENA and was an attempt to monitor and interdict communist logistics on the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos. Five- and six-man teams of South Vietnamese SES troops parachuted in for these missions.

TIMBERWORK, another early operation, may well have been the SOG code name for the PT-boat raids on North Vietnamese coastal installa-



LEFT: SOG Teams early in the Vietnam War carried sterile weapons (ones that could not be pinpointed as issue to U.S. forces) in cross-border operations. This indigenous trooper is carrying a 30-caliber Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) over his shoulder and an M3 45-caliber grease gun.



CENTER: Cessna 0-1 "Bird Dog" was used as spotter plane and radio relay by SOG units operating in Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam.

UPPER RIGHT: Modified CAR-15 was favorite weapon of SOG team members late in the war.

RIGHT: Silenced Hi-Standard .22 caliber pistol carried by SOG patrol members. This system was first used by OSS in World War II.

tions that some sources claim triggered the Tonkin Gulf incident. On 2 August 1964, the U.S.S. *Maddox*, participating in Operation DESOTO (patrols along North Vietnam's coast by American destroyers), came under attack by North Vietnamese PT boats beyond the 12-mile limit. Some South-

east Asia historians have since claimed that the North Vietnamese PT boats either were chasing South Vietnamese PT boats and hit the *Maddox* accidentally, or intentionally attacked the *Maddox*, assuming it was involved in the hanky-panky going down ashore.

There is strong reason to believe that one of SOG's most fascinating operations during the war was the launching of FASCINATION teams into North Vietnam.

The code name may be wrong (or right, depending on the time), but that particular facet of OPLAN 34-A is well documented in the books, mentioned previously, by Westmoreland and Schemmer. Each describes a slightly different method of operation and a slightly different goal — but since neither tied his description to a specific date, both could be right.

According to Schemmer, the plan was designed to shut down the North Vietnamese fishing industry by harassing the fishermen.

In Schemmer's version, the North Vietnamese fishermen were picked up along the coast by PT boats, then transferred to Phoenix Island near Da Nang. "There, they were treated royally, but their captors explained that next time it might be different. Because North Vietnamese political

leaders often used fishing boats to send contraband weapons and supplies to the south, it might be necessary to sink the boats, and some innocent fishermen might be killed. Perhaps, they were told, it would be best not to fish for a while, or not to fish too zealously — just enough to provide for each fisherman's immediate family. Then, by way of apology for the inconvenience, all the captured fishermen were given baskets of presents that contained sewing kits, cloth, fresh meat, vegetables, cigarettes, spices, garden seeds, sandals, small garden tools, pocket knives — and transistor radios tuned to a single, pre-selected frequency [tuned to a SOG-operated propaganda station]."

The fishermen were then taken back north and turned loose. Schemmer claims that subsequent intelligence from captured NVA reported a severe fish shortage in the north. The program came to an end when the SOG fishermen started picking up numerous "double dippers," who risked capture for another shot at the bennies.

Westmoreland says the kidnappings were conducted by motorized South Vietnamese junks which took North Vietnamese civilians, "usually fishermen," to the island. There, out of sight from the mainland, the SOG troops played the role of "communists, but anti-North Vietnamese communists." Then, gradually, during their six-to-eight-week stay on the island, the civilians were indoctrinated into anti-communist thinking. When returned, the civilians were given kits and fixed-frequency radio. SOG provided the programs.

One SOG operator contacted by SOF added one more detail. "They dropped that program when it got too repetitive. When the boats pulled up in the canals along North Vietnam's coast, everybody in the village would jump in a sampan to try and get himself captured and taken off to Phoenix for a shopping trip."

Although the original SOG plan did not encompass direct action by the American personnel assigned to it, that changed before a year was out, because of results obtained by direct American participation in two other classified operations.

In late May or early June 1964, it appears that Johnson approved American cross-border operations into Laos. The first such ops were launched by Project DELTA — an organization formed out of the 5th Special

Forces Group.

Coming in a close second behind Project DELTA in launching the initial cross-border missions was Operation SHINING BRASS. In July 1964, A Company, 1st Special Forces Group, Okinawa, began sending teams of Green Berets into Vietnam on six-month TDY (Temporary Additional Duty) assignments to lead indigenous troops on cross-border operations into Laos.

Westmoreland was so impressed with the intelligence obtained by project DELTA that he had two other classified projects formed: SIGMA and OMEGA. Eventually, SIGMA operated from and in Vietnam's IV Corps and the lower half of III Corps. OMEGA operated in the upper half of III Corps and II Corps and DELTA operated in I Corps and the tri-border area, where Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos come together.

When Col. Donald V. Blackburn became the MACVSOG commander in May 1965, he moved quickly to assert SOG's control over all "over the fence" operations and, within a short time, Blackburn's men were ranging over the hills of not only Laos but North Vietnam.

Soon after Blackburn took command, SOG's activities became concentrated into five major operational areas: OPS 31 (maritime), OPS 32 (air



Nung SOG Recon Team member at Command and Control South (Ban Me Thout) in early 1970. SOG Recon Teams were composed of three Americans and six-to-nine indigenous troops. Nungs, a Thai tribe of Chinese origin which lived in Vietnam were used frequently early in the war.

cover of the South Vietnamese Coastal Survey Service and, as one SOG type said, "tried to explain that it was surveying the coast of South Vietnam."

Operating from PT boats armed with 40mm automatic cannon and 50-

## Studies and Observation Group OPS-31 teams ranged from north of Hanoi to the DMZ.

operations), OPS 33 (psyops), OPLAN 34 (resistance and intelligence operations in North Vietnam) and OPS 35 (direct action, or strategic reconnaissance patrols across the fence).

SOG continued to grow under Col. John K. Singlaub, Col. Blackburn's replacement as Commander MACV-SOG. In 1966 Singlaub got permission to go into Cambodia and in 1968 operations were conducted in North Vietnam. In addition escape-and-evasion nets for downed airmen were established during Singlaub's reign and SOG equipment and training improved considerably.

SOG's OPS 31 operated from Da Nang. Involved was a U.S. element, called the Naval Advisory Detachment, which was a little hard to explain since most of the element's members were Force Recon Marines or U.S. Navy SEALs. In OPS 31, the Vietnamese SES traveled under the

caliber machine guns, SOG's OPS 31 teams ranged from north of Hanoi to the DMZ — gathering intelligence, disrupting night-time fishing operations and putting raiding parties ashore to ambush trains and convoys and attack any coastal-defense units which got in the way — in an operation named WHITE ELEPHANT.

SOG's OPS 32, headquartered in Nha Trang, supplied transportation and intelligence through six separate air units assigned there. Some of them were a bit unusual.

SOG's First Flight Detachment consisted of four C-123 "blackbirds" (the unmarked planes and helicopters which supported SOG missions were called "blackbirds"). What made the unit different was that, in addition to carrying U.S. crews, the ships flew on some missions with regular Chinese Air Force pilots — traveling "black": no papers at all, as civilians.

Another unusual facet of SOG's air arm was the 15th Air Commandos Squadron. Nicknamed the "Stray Goose" detachment, the Commandos flew C-130s with the latest in electronic-warfare and electronic-counter-warfare systems.

SOG also had "blackbirds" equipped for the most sophisticated delivery and recovery techniques. Airborne troops were delivered by static-line parachute jumps or by HALO (High Altitude, Low Opening) jumps. Late in the war, SOG patrols sometimes carried full-recovery systems, consisting of a balloon to be attached by a 500-foot line to the SOG man on the ground. The "blackbird" would snatch the balloon and bring the guy on the end of the line along for the ride. The "blackbirds" were also rigged to handle sophisticated cargo-delivery systems.

Another SOG ship was the C-121 Constellation flown by the U.S. Navy. The bird was crammed with radio equipment and trailed an antenna over a mile long while flying missions off the coast of Hanoi. The C-121 could broadcast right on the main government frequencies in North Vietnam and blank them out.



From early in the war SOG had a running battle going with the U.S Air Force over strike aircraft. The Air Force wanted to convert the 7th and 13th Air Forces to jets. SOG preferred the WWII-vintage A-1Es which could carry more bombs and stay on target longer than any jet. The A-1Es were kept.

Finally, there were helicopters used by SOG. SOG's primary ship was the UH-1F, flown from 1967 on by the U.S. Air Force's 20th Helicopter Squadron, an outfit nicknamed the "Green Hornets." Some of those UH-1Fs were converted to gunships,



Indigenous SOG troops outfitted in sterile uniforms and weapons prior to a cross-border operation. The soldier on the left is armed with an M2 30-caliber carbine (left) and a modified French MAT-49. The North Vietnamese captured a number of 9mm MAT-49 submachine guns from the French and modified them to take a Soviet 7.62x25 pistol cartridge.

equipped with side-firing 7.62mm "Miniguns" capable of firing up to 4,000 rounds per minute. Prior to the assignment of the 20th, the primary source of transport and gun helicopters was a Vietnamese Air Force Squadron of H-34s. The VNAF H-34s, described by former SOG members, as terrific, were also used after 1967 because of the experience of the pilots and because they were better suited to some missions.

SOG's OPS 33 consisted of both gray and black psychological operations — or psyops. The perpetrators of gray operations never identified themselves or told which side they were on. One of SOG's best gray psyops was the "Voice of Freedom," which used a 1,000,000-watt transmitter to broadcast programs into Hanoi in both Vietnamese and Chinese. Another SOG radio operation was a black op, that is, one that was passed off as being something it was not. Vietnamese agents, operating inside North Vietnam, broadcast over a number of stations that claimed to be part of the National Liberation Front.

One SOG black psyop involved the introduction of false documents into

## MACVSOG EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS

Following is an article prepared by Shelby L. Stanton on weapons and equipment carried by the men of MACVSOG, along with a drawing of a man in a STABO rig with auxiliary equipment. When reading any articles on MACVSOG, please keep in mind that at different times the equipment, tactics, formations, etc. changed.

**FATIGUES:** Usually plain 100% cotton-poplin jungle fatigues — the non-ripstop kind with shoulder straps and waist buttons (an early type of jungle fatigues) — sprayed with black spray-paint splotching, with sleeves worn down. Blood type (ex: A POS) embroidered over right pocket and "NO PEN" over left — if no penicillin could be administered. Sometimes the ordinary tropical ripstop was worn, and, rarely, issue camouflage (very late in the war on the latter). On some special operations, enemy uniforms were worn.

**HATS:** Most often, cut-down boonie caps or just bandanas.

**SCARVES:** Triangular medical OD bandages, also worn as sweatbands around the forehead.

**OTHER CLOTHING:** Canvas-duck AF survival vest (*not* the common mesh type) with sleeves and collar from a jungle-fatigue shirt sewn on, was often worn instead of a shirt, or over the "jungle sweater" (the nylon/triacetate, tricot knit sleeping shirt) if operating in the mountains. This because of the vest's improved carrying capacity.

**FOOTGEAR:** Canvas leggings laced midway up the calves; shoelaces on the side. These leggings go down over the jungle boots. They were optional but typical.

**GEAR:** STABO rig with ordinary pistol belt. The STABO rig was made in Taiwan by the CIA and other civilian agencies and named for the two sergeants (letters from their last names combined to form "Stabo") who designed it. (See sketch.) These had snap links attached for lift-out via chopper, allowed both arms to remain free for firing or carrying things and allowed the pistol belt to be worn undone. First-aid and miscellaneous gear (signal mirror, cut-down signal panel, mini-smokes, mini-grenades, etc.) were

carried forward. A small gas mask was worn over the right chest, and a BAR belt was common. A knife of the individual's preference was carried upside down on the chest strap of the STABO rig.

A can of albumin blood-expander was also carried on the chest strap or just over the rucksack behind the neck (where the sun would often ruin it). A small, rubber intravenous (IV) tube was carried in the vest or shirt pocket. Survival-pack containers and canteen covers were used as ammunition pouches. Usually three one-quart canteens were carried behind. New M16 pouches were commonly used. The order of preference on the pistol belt was grenades, cut-down emergency panel in ammo pouch and mini-smokes up front; followed by ammo pouches (as described) and, in the rear, the canteens and two survival packets (A and B type). [Ed. Note: Operational and Reserve Survival Packets.]

**WATCH:** Army-issue Seiko with black face, black plastic band and wrist compass.

**RADIO:** URC-68

**WEAPONS CARRIED BY EACH MAN:**

1. Shoulder or hip holster, 9mm Browning automatic pistol.
2. High-Standard .22 with silencer in canvas pocket added to back of rucksack.
3. CAR-15 was most common. Rarely were enemy weapons used, except in North Vietnam, because the distinct sound of "friendly fire" was used for orientation in fire fights.
4. Sawed-off M-79 grenade launcher with snap-link through the trigger guard and through the web gear on the right side or, as an alternative, on strap over chest (with anti-personnel round in chamber).
5. Pen flares with special cartridges fitted into socket.

Also, other weapons carried instead of the CAR-15 were the Swedish K; Sten gun with silencer; M-1 carbine; M16 with suppressor; XM-203 — all according to individual preference.

**RUCKSACK:** Indigenous rucks only — full, but with no extraneous material hanging out.

*Reprinted by permission from the Maroon Beret.*



Viet Cong organizations in South Vietnam, and another the introduction of sabotaged ammo into communist ammunition stockpiles whenever possible.

The rigged rounds used in these ops were manufactured in the United States, then delivered to SOG in Saigon for delivery in or out of the country. Grenades with instantaneous fuses, 7.62mm rounds rigged to blow up when fired and mortar rounds which detonated in the tube were specialties of Operation ELDEST SON.

"It [ELDEST SON] was a good thing, because nothing is more beautiful than to see an aerial photo of a mortar site in which everything [trees, people, etc.] is blown out from the mortar," said a former SOG member.

ELDEST SON also provided grist for the SOG troops responsible for starting rumors among the VC. The line went: "You have to understand, comrades, that the Chinese [who supplied most of the ammo to North Vietnam] are having great difficulty maintaining quality control during their cultural revolution."

Once they heard that story, every time an NVA fired his rifle, or dropped a round down a mortar tube, it must have been done with trepidation.

According to some of the SOG troops who participated in the salting of bad rounds during ELDEST SON, the real trick was not finding the ammo cache, nor getting in, but getting the ammo boxes open, the doctored rounds in and the boxes resealed without leaving a trace.

OPLAN 34 encompassed all agent-insertion activities into North Vietnam. In the early days of SOG, agents parachuted in but, as most of these efforts were unsuccessful, SOG started moving its agents — both in-

The members of Studies and Observation Group Recon Team Hammer, Command and Control South, 1970.

dividuals and teams — overland. The agents would infiltrate into Laos and then cross over.

Many, if not all, indigenous agents sent by SOG into North Vietnam were doubled by the NVA and, when that happened, SOG would play the agents as triples — feeding harmless but accurate information and disinformation north to cause problems.

## SOG's most famous activities: strategic recon into Laos.

However, in 1968 Americans were involved in ground actions deep in North Vietnam on what were called KIT-CAT missions. Messages from those teams were channeled through a National Security Agency station named Tri Bach, near Hue-Phu Bai. Depending on the type of message received from the KIT-CAT teams it either went straight to Fort Belvoir, Md., by "flash" communications systems or through normal military channels.

SOG's most famous activities, and those best reported on so far (see pp. 47, 51), fell under OPS 35: strategic reconnaissance patrols into Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. OPS 35 was the largest of all the OPS, had the most men and equipment committed to it and was totally controlled by the Americans involved.

The first recon teams on the ground in Laos came from the 5th Special Forces Group's Project DELTA or the 1st Special Forces Group's SHINING BRASS project in 1964. The teams moved into the panhandle area of Laos looking for targets (camps, caches and choke points on the system of trails and roads that made up the Ho Chi Minh trail), to capture

prisoners, place mines and sensors and plant the sabotaged rounds developed in the ELDEST SON program.

When Blackburn took over as Commander MACVSOG in June 1965, he snatched Project DELTA's over-the-fence operations for SOG, but it appears that, for some time, the personnel used to run the missions still came out of 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa.

Under Blackburn and his OPS 35 commanding officer, Col. "Bull" Simons, the name of the operation in Laos became PRAIRIE FIRE. Later on, when Cambodia was added to the target list, it was called DANIEL BOONE. North Vietnam was added even later.

The basic element of the OPS 35 effort was the SOG Spike Teams. (During the later years in Vietnam the name changed to Recon teams.) Spike teams were a mixed force, usually three Americans and six-to-nine indigenous troops, called indigs. The first indig troops were usually Nungs — a Thai tribe of Chinese origin which lived in South Vietnam — and later the majority were Montagnards, though some were Vietnamese and Laotian.

When Col. Simons took over, the American personnel were still coming out of 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa. But, soon afterward, Special Forces troops from Okinawa were given PCS (Permanent Change of Station) orders and sent to Vietnam. In addition, word went back to Fort Bragg, N.C., to other Special Forces troops in the 7th Special Forces Group that there was a demand for volunteers to run classified projects in Vietnam.

The Special Forces troops who ran the Spike Team patrols trained at Bearcat, near the village of Long Thanh. The One-Zero, or team-leader school, was there, as was the parachute-training facility.

The Americans went operational when they were assigned to one of SOG's four FOBs (Forward Operating Bases). FOB-1 was located at Phu Bai, FOB-2 at Kon Tum, FOB-3 at Khe Sanh and FOB-4 at Marble Mountain, Da Nang.

When Col. John K. Singlaub took over as Commander MACVSOG in 1966, SOG's FOBs underwent a name change to CCS, CCC and CCN: Com-

*Continued on page 70*

# SLAM MISSION INTO LAOS

## SOG Sergeant Wins Medal of Honor

by Jim Graves



Medal-of-Honor Winner Fred W. Zabitosky



Retired Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub (center) examines and discusses with *Soldier of Fortune* Publisher Robert K. Brown (right) and Managing Editor Jim Graves (left) a head-up sight display brought out of Afghanistan by SOF staffers. Sight is believed, but not guaranteed, to be a rocket sight for a Russian Mi-24 helicopter. Singlaub, who was a commander of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group, was the featured speaker at the Special Operations Association Convention held in Las Vegas.

**J**UST before the unmarked UH-1F helicopters reached their insertion point in Laos, another slick shot over at high altitude conducting fast recon of the landing zone (LZ).

As the slicks sped toward the LZ at 100 miles-per-hour, the nine members of Spike Team Maine started matching up the actual terrain sliding by underneath with the impressions they had formed of Target Area Quebec 1 — from examination of aerial photographs and old French maps — in the days of patrol preparation at Forward Operating Base Two (FOB-2) in Kon Tum prior to 19 February 1968.

Quebec 1, a 20-klick (kilometer) grid square located 88 klicks west of Dak To, South Vietnam, was east of Attopeu, Laos. Quebec 1 resembled in almost every detail any other 20-klick grid square in eastern Laos.

Of an average elevation of 3,000 to 4,000 feet, Quebec 1 consisted of heavily wooded, mountainous terrain covered by incredibly dense undergrowth. But, in places, the monotonous expanse of woods and bamboo thickets was broken by patches of man-tall elephant grass.

Waiting below for Spike Team Maine was one of the world's most troublesome collections of animal and insect life: red fire ants, leeches, malaria-carrying mosquitoes, venomous snakes too numerous to name, bad-tempered tigers, large monkeys and even larger elephants.

But as Spike Team Maine swept in over the patch of elephant grass selected for the LZ, nine sets of eyes frantically scanned the ground for human sign: smoke, trails or bunkers — because also presumed to be located somewhere down below were green-and-khaki-fatigue-clad North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars.

The Tet Offensive, prematurely launched on 30 January, was not going well for the communists. While the Viet Cong were being decimated in suicidal attacks on the cities of South Vietnam, the NVA were being pulled back to sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia, except for units committed to attacks on Hue and Khe Sanh.

Were the NVA grouping for a massive thrust into the Central Highlands at Kon Tum or Dak To?

In Saigon, the decision was made to run a SLAM (Seek, Locate, Annihilate, Moni-

tor) mission in the tri-border area — where Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam come together.

To seek out and locate the NVA forces, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Commander, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), turned to Col. John K. Singlaub's Studies and Observation Group (SOG).

## A Problem

While Spike Team Maine checked out TA Quebec 1, four other SOG Spike Teams inserted into other Target Areas in Laos and Cambodia. The hope was that the Spike Teams could stay on the ground for five days, calling in B-52 bombers or tactical air to destroy any NVA units located in the TAs.

As the slicks carrying Spike Team Maine into Laos shot into the LZ, Staff Sgt. Fred Zabitosky spotted something he didn't like.

Zabitosky, the One-One, or assistant team leader on this particular patrol, was the most experienced of the three Americans in Spike Team Maine. He was on his third tour of duty in Vietnam. On his first (1964-65), he had served with a Special Forces A Camp in the Central Highlands. During his second hitch in 1966-67, he had moved over to SOG, working on OPLAN (Operations Plan) 34-A, training Vietnamese for infiltration and recon missions into North Vietnam. Late in 1967, Zabitosky switched over to OPS 35 (Operations 35) and made 13 cross-border operations either into Laos (PRAIRIE FIRE missions) or Cambodia (DANIEL BOONE missions).

Staff Sgt. Doug Glover, the One-Zero, or Spike Team leader, was new to the job and nervous. A hard-luck guy, Glover had made two cross-border recon operations while Zabitosky was team leader and had gotten hurt on both. On Glover's first mission, Spike Team Maine was shot off the LZ while trying to insert and Glover was hit in the arm. On Glover's second mission, the team got in but spooked an elephant, which charged the team and broke Glover's foot.

Staff Sgt. Percell Bragg, the One-Two, or team radio operator, was making his first cross-border trip.

The other six members of Spike Team Maine were Nungs, members of a tribe of Chinese origin, and rated the best indigenous troops in Vietnam. The point man for the team was a 6-foot, 3-inch, cross-eyed, 47-year-old Nung veteran. The tailgunner stood only 4-feet, 9-inches and was even older at 54. He had fought with a French parachute regiment in Vietnam and Algeria. The Nungs were often called mercenaries because they were

hired directly by the Americans in SOG. The Nungs on Spike Team Maine had been on the team for 20 months.

Because Quebec 1 was a virgin target, because the mission was important and because Glover was taking the team out for the first time, Zabitosky had volunteered to go as a straphanger (a person not supposed to be there) and be the One-One "...just in case anything went wrong."

As the slicks dipped down to drop the team into the LZ, Zabitosky thumbed his throat mike to give Glover a bit of advice. As the choppers approached the horse-shoe-shaped LZ, he had noticed that a stream running north off the LZ went right up into a box canyon. Zabitosky had a message relayed to Glover, in the lead chopper, to stay away from the box canyon.

As the trailing chopper hesitated over the LZ, Zabitosky and three Nungs leaped to the ground, only to see Glover's section of the team disappearing up the stream.

Zabitosky rushed up the stream, trying to catch up with and stop Glover and the other Nungs. His irritation at the mistake disappeared as a heavy WHAM-WHAM-WHAM of discharging AKs broke out to his front.

Upon reaching the point of contact, Zabitosky saw that the team was under fire from NVA in bunkers, as well as other NVA troops moving through the bamboo toward the gunfire — most of it communist, as the Spike Team was returning little fire.

Zabitosky got the Nungs, Glover and Bragg to return fire with their CAR-15s and to throw grenades at the onrushing NVA, breaking the first attack. But he knew from the extent and number of bunkers, barely visible through the heavy bamboo, that they had hit a major NVA camp and the team would have to break contact and get out.

## Counterattack

During the break, Zabitosky grabbed some claymore mines, which had willy-peter (white-phosphorous) grenades attached to them, and began to set them up — aimed toward the bunker complex.

Grabbing the radio from Bragg — who was inexperienced in calling in air strikes — he handed it to Glover and told him to pull back to the LZ with the Nungs. As Glover headed back down the stream, Zabitosky instructed him to have the two A-1E Skyraiders standing by overhead to bomb on the white smoke.

As the team disappeared into the bamboo, Zabitosky heard the NVA thrashing their way toward his position. As the first one came into sight, he triggered the first

claymore.

The NVA were just beginning to recover from the effect of the claymore blast when a roaring was heard overhead, followed by a tremendous whooshing sound directly in front of the drifting willy-peter smoke. The jungle burst into flames from napalm dropped on the first run by an A-1E.

Seeing more NVA on the way, Zabitosky returned fire with his CAR-15 and then triggered his second claymore. As he turned to run back down the bank of the stream, Zabitosky got hung up in the bamboo. Hearing the A-1E coming in, he made a final lunge and dropped behind a rock just as a 750-pound bomb detonated nearby.

The blast loosened up the bamboo enough to enable Zabitosky to get back to the LZ, where Glover had arranged the Nungs into a tight defensive perimeter.

## Air Cover

Although Glover had two A-1Es and a FAC (Forward Air Controller, flying a single-engine 0-1 spotter plane) overhead, he had been unable to get extraction choppers. All five Spike Teams that had gone in that morning were in contact and there were not enough extraction slicks to pull them all out at once. Spike Team Maine was told to hang on: after Spike Team Florida was pulled out from its target area, the slicks would be turned around to pick them up.

Zabitosky moved around on the LZ, checking his team, waiting for the NVA to come again. He didn't have long to wait. The FAC radioed down that he saw an entire company of NVA forming up to assault the LZ.

As the NVA broke out of the woods and thickets to attack the team on the relatively open LZ, Zabitosky moved from man to man, yelling: "Slow fire. Slow fire."

Grabbing a team member, he pointed and yelled: "Kill that one. Kill that one."

He moved on, firing and reloading, yelling: "Slow fire. Slow fire. Kill that one. Kill that one."

As Zabitosky circled around inside the perimeter, directing the ground defense, the two A-1Es overhead made pass after pass, ringing the team in with 750-pounders (the first one set off 46 secondaries when it hit the rocket supply for the NVA unit — which turned out to be a division headquarters). These were followed by CBU's (cluster-bomb units), which consist of a number of bomblets carried in a dispenser that bursts open at a predetermined height above the ground, dispersing the bomblets in a pattern, and napalm.

Spike Team Maine, still nine strong, had killed 109 NVA on the LZ and withstood 22 frontal assaults when the Covey (the FAC in the 0-1) came on the radio to tell them that they had two slicks overhead and a medevac chase ship to pull them out. The FAC directed the team to go to another LZ, some 50 meters south of the initial one, for the extraction.

Zabitosky's team jumped into the stream and moved south as directed. When they reached the edge of the LZ, Zabitosky got on the radio to talk with the FAC.

"OK," said the FAC, "I think I can get a slick in there. I don't see anybody moving around — but do you have all your people with you?"

"Yes," answered Zabitosky. "Why?"

"Well goddamn, there's another company coming."

Even though each member of the patrol team had started out carrying 45 20-round magazines for their CAR-15s, there was little ammo left among them. Zabitosky had the team ring in the perimeter with the last of the claymores as the first slick dipped down onto the tiny LZ.

The One-One normally goes out on the first slick, but as the roles in Spike Team Maine had gotten switched around in the heat of the fire fight, Zabitosky sent Bragg and three Nungs out on the first lift.

Just as the UH-1D got airborne and started banking to orbit the LZ, the NVA launched the first of five assaults. While Zabitosky, Glover and the remaining three Nungs were beating back the NVA, the slicks could not come in. The LZ remained under sporadic fire after the fifth attack was repulsed, but since ammunition was exhausted, Zabitosky called in the slick anyway.

As it settled down in the short elephant grass in the center of the LZ, Glover and the three Nungs got up and raced for the right side of the UH-1D. At that point, Zabitosky observed the NVA breaking into the LZ on the left side of the slick, so he went that way.

Just as he reached the slick, Zabitosky flushed an NVA ("I thought the son of a bitch was trying to get on the helicopter with us to get out of there," said Zabitosky) and shot him at point-blank range.

Leaping onto the slick, Zabitosky still had his legs out the door on the skids as they lifted off the LZ.

"We were about 75 feet up, when goddamn, they hit us with an RPG," said Zabitosky.

"I could see the tail boom coming around and the ship turned on its left side, throwing me completely out of the damn ship. Just blew me out of the sky. I

remember falling and I could hear everybody else screaming in the back.

"Well, when I came to I didn't realize what had happened. I thought I was dreaming. I thought I was out in the sun somewhere. I was on fire, my clothes were burning."

The chopper crashed only 20 feet from Zabitosky, but at first he didn't pay much attention to it, as he had crushed vertebrae in his back, crushed ribs and his clothes were on fire.

"I started to crawl off in the bush, because I knew, hell, they weren't going to take no damn prisoners. We had killed enough of them SOBs that they just weren't going to take prisoners.

"The back of the helicopter landed so that the pilot and copilot were in a normal sitting position, but the ship turned over on its right side. It was on fire, and the ammunition that they had aboard was exploding. There were three Americans in the back — the crew chief, the assistant crew chief and Doug — and three Nungs. Well, they were already on fire and I could hear them screaming.

"So I lay there and I really didn't want to go into that ship. I just wanted to crawl off in the bushes and hide. Shit. I was burned, my back was crushed. Everything. I knew I was in bad shape.

"But the screams got to me."

On the ground, the first responsibility for SOG teams when a chopper went down was to get the pilot and copilot out.

Zabitosky got up and ran to the slick. The pilot was dazed and had some burns but Zabitosky was able to get him out of the chopper and drag him away from the inferno.

### **"Don't go back— Nobody's Alive."**

Seeing that the pilot was not hurt badly, Zabitosky tried to get him to go back with him to the chopper, but the pilot refused: "You can't go back in that ship. It's on fire. You just can't go back in there. The fuel cells are going off and there is still ordnance on it. Nobody is alive in there anyway."

The pilot grabbed Zabitosky's CAR-15, which had gotten bent somehow during his fall, and headed for the bush.

Zabitosky rushed back to the chopper and caught hold of the copilot; then the fuel cells went off with a tremendous WHOOSH, blasting both of them free of the helicopter.

Zabitosky dragged the copilot away from the ship, then turned to go back a third time to pull out some of his team.

"By this time the ship was all melted and the guys were gone. Hell, they were

dead."

Zabitosky stood staring at the burning chopper when he was suddenly snapped out of shock by the A-1Es strafing the LZ.

"That was policy in SOG," explained Zabitosky. "When a ship goes down and it doesn't look like there are any survivors, they bomb and strafe the LZ."

But the attacks on the LZ were called off as Sgt. 1st Class Luke Nance, orbiting the LZ in a chase chopper, reported he had seen a body fly out as the chopper fell. The FAC, also orbiting overhead, saw Zabitosky rush back to the chopper and pull a man free.

"Nance forced the pilot of the other chopper to set down on another LZ 50 meters away," said Zabitosky. "The pressure was on them then, and there were NVA between me and them. Then the NVA started coming back onto the LZ."

### **Will To Live**

Down to a single hand grenade and a nine mike-mike (9mm pistol), Zabitosky determined that he would take out himself and the copilot the clean way. He pulled the pin on the grenade, then decided to hell with it and threw it at the NVA. He followed that up by expending his 9mm ammo, then picked up the copilot and started heading for the other slick.

"I picked him up, put him across my shoulder, dragged him and everything," said Zabitosky. "This guy was 6-foot, 3-inches, about 250 pounds, and I think I weighed about 130 then. I had a crushed back and crushed ribs, but the will to live — it's tremendous.

"My thought was, 'Get this guy out. Get this guy out, no matter what.'

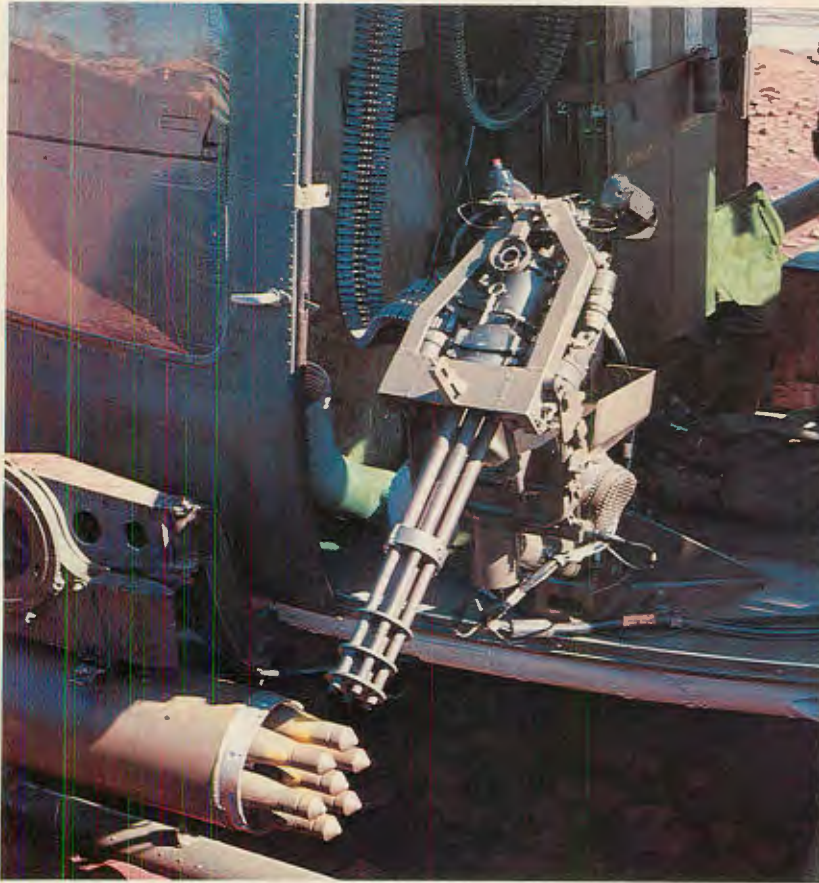
"We'd fall down in the mud and it would feel so good on the burns. Shit, by that time I didn't have no clothes on me except a piece of my pants and he didn't have nothing left on him; he was burned over 85 percent of his body.

"The NVA were still firing. I carried him past them and, on the way, I spotted the pilot with my bent weapon. He was still in shock so I grabbed hold of his vest and guided him toward the rescue ship."

Just 10 feet from the rescue helicopter, Zabitosky's strength gave out and he collapsed. Sgt. 1st Class Nance leaped out and pulled all three men aboard.

For the next five hours, B-52s pounded the area around Quebec 1, trying to annihilate the NVA division Spike Team Maine had run into. Later that day, a SOG *Brightlight* team — Spike Team Texas led by Pappy Webb — went in to try to pull out the bodies of the Americans and Nungs in the helicopter.

Webb's team counted 109 NVA dead around Spike Team Maine's original LZ



SOG "blackbird" (UH-1F) equipped with latest 7.62mm GFE General Electric M-134. 'Minigun' is door mounted (one on each side) and capable of selectively firing 2,000 or 4,000 rounds per minute. Equipment includes large-capacity ammo boxes (inside helicopter) and seven 2.75-inch HE rockets mounted on each side.

and another 56 around the two LZs where the extractions took place. As they were under fire from the remaining NVA, they had to pull out before they could assess the number of casualties inflicted by the team up in the canyon, at the initial point of contact, or in the surrounding thickets from air strikes.

The air crew kicked the body bags out and, since they went out the door a half mile too soon, Webb's team had no way to pull the members of Spike Team Maine and the air crew out of the helicopter. They photographed them, for proof of death, and left them in Laos.

No Spike Team ever returned to Quebec 1.

The Tet Offensive wound down by 25 February without NVA forces being committed to further battle. It is presumed that Gen. Vo Nyugen Giap never intended to use his regulars — with the exception of those units attacking Hue and Khe Sanh — for political reasons.

Zabitosky, the copilot and pilot were

brought out initially to Dak To. Since all SOG recon patrols were top secret they could not even say where they had been or how they had gotten hit.

The copilot came by Zabitosky's room, just before he was flown to Japan for treatment, to thank him for saving his life. Several days later, Zabitosky was told by a nurse that the copilot had died from his burns en route to Japan. The pilot recovered but Zabitosky has lost touch with him over the years.

## Medal Of Honor

Because of the nature of SOG PRAIRIE FIRE missions, Zabitosky's superiors were uncertain whether he could be awarded the Medal of Honor. Medals were hard to come by for SOG soldiers because it was assumed that it would be difficult to control the media: Dead heroes tell no tales. The only SOG recipient of the Medal of Honor before Zabitosky was 1st Lt. George K. Sisler, and his award was posthumous.

In February 1969, Zabitosky was at Fort Bragg, N.C., when orders came through for him to report to the White House in Washington, D.C.

At the White House, Zabitosky was sitting with his wife and child in the Red Room when Gen. Westmoreland came in and said: "Sgt. Zabitosky, we never

thought this would be approved. You know the problems we have had.

"In your citation we can't put Laos, only your name."

President Richard M. Nixon came into the room and told Zabitosky: "Sgt. Zabitosky, I appreciate the project. I know what happened. I know where you were when you got it, but unfortunately we have to write your citation as being in Vietnam.

"You know Congress is up in arms. You know we are not supposed to be in Laos.

"But I have had engraved on the back of your medal: FOB 2, C&C Detachment, 5th Special Forces."

"That was the only thing ever given to me to indicate it was for a mission in Laos," said Zabitosky. "The citation has never been changed.

"That's [the Medal of Honor] the ultimate, but then again it really isn't the ultimate if every place you go the citation reads 'above and beyond the call of duty in the Republic of Vietnam.'

"When people say you got your Medal of Honor in Vietnam you just sit there.

## No More Lies

"Doug Glover was carried missing in action. He's dead. They finally declared him dead in 1976 and his wife came to see me.

"She asked: 'What happened? Where was he?'

"I couldn't tell her anything except not to expect him back."

Why is Zabitosky now willing to talk about this particular operation and SOG in general? Because he believes the stress he has been under in recent years is due to the fact that he has had to live a lie, to hide what he did, and where he did it. And also because of the POW/MIA issue (see "What Price Glory?" p. 30), in which he is heavily involved today.

"We've got POWs and MIAs and bodies still in Laos and, goddamn it, the U.S. has not come out and recognized this. The State Department is not going to come out and change anything.

"My citation is always going to read Vietnam. There are no projects going that declassification could hurt.

"Just like when I talked to the Assistant Ambassador to the United Nations on 27 July when the POW/MIA petition drive started. I told him about being in Laos.

"He gave me a funny look and started talking about POWs and MIAs in North Vietnam.

"They don't want to discuss the 500 and some guys that were lost in Laos."



# FIRE FIGHT IN THE A SHAU VALLEY

## SOG's Recon Team Python Holds Off the NVA

SOME of the most hazardous missions ever attempted during the entire Vietnam conflict were successfully pulled off by team members of the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observation Group — better known by the acronym, MACVSOG, or simply SOG. Composed mainly of highly trained Army Special Forces personnel, these teams ran reconnaissance and exploitation missions along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and other infiltration routes into South Vietnam and provided vital intelligence on communist-base areas in Laos and Cambodia. On occasion, they also launched recon teams into North Vietnam.

Unfortunately, little of SOG's activities has come to light. During the course of the war, all SOG operations carried a top-secret classification and required clearance at the highest levels of government. On the few occasions when SOG was mentioned in the media, the standard DOD (Department of Defense) response was to stonewall the topic, which only added to the intrigue. This situation persists today. Despite the advent of the Freedom of Information Act, only very limited information is available to the general public. The "company line" on SOG is a well-laundered 70-page document entrusted to a colonel in the Pentagon. Several who have read the manuscript agree that it is a sanitized version that provides only a very flimsy outline of what SOG was all about.

This attitude has caused bitterness and consternation among a number of former SOG personnel. They understood the need for secrecy during the war, but today they feel such secrecy is ridiculous.

"It's as though we never existed," lamented one ex-Recon Team leader who regularly operated inside Laos. "They [the brass] don't want to acknowl-

by Paul S. Franklin

edge that, despite the December 1969 Congressional ban on operations beyond the South Vietnamese borders, we continued to mount out RTs [Recon Teams]



for missions in Cambodia, Laos and, yes, even inside North Vietnam."

Other former-SOG types echoed his sentiments. One NCO who worked as an assistant team leader in 1969-70 decried the lack of recognition SOG activities have received in DOD publications on the Vietnam conflict. "Check it out yourself," he urged. "You'll read about the Marines, the Air Force, even the fuckin' Army leg units — but you won't find a single word about SOG — despite the fact that we pulled off some of the hairiest missions ever conceived."

"If the full story of the Special Operations Group is ever made public," said a

third SOG vet, now retired, "it'll read like a combination of Robin Moore and H. Rider Haggard, with a little Jules Verne thrown in for color. The one difference is that it's all true. Some of our ops make the Israeli raid on Entebbe pale by comparison."

MACVSOG operations were planned by OP-30 at MACV 1, located on Pasteur Street in Saigon, and implemented by regional command-and-control elements. These elements included Command and Control North (CCN) based at Da Nang, Command and Control Central (CCC) at Kon Tum and Command and Control South (CCS) which operated out of the Central Highlands city of Ban Me Thuot.

The action arm of the regional elements was the Recon Team (RT), usually composed of two Americans and a varying number of indigenous mercenaries, known as "little people."

Team operations consisted of area reconnaissance on known or suspected infiltration routes in or near enemy-base areas to observe troop movement, snatch POWs or call air strikes. All RTs employed code names and, as a general rule, CCN teams were named for snakes, CCC teams for states and CCS teams for implements and weather. Although the recon teams amassed an enviable record of successful missions against overwhelming odds, the cost was high. It is estimated that the RTs sustained a casualty rate of 200 percent and a fatality rate of 70 percent.

The following account, compiled by SOF stringer Paul Franklin, details an operation carried out in early 1971 by Recon Team Python (CCN). It is based on official records and conversations with surviving team members and is typical of hundreds of SOG operations carried out during the U.S. involvement in Indochina. Moreover, it is the tale of an elite fighting force whose members, individually and collectively, always did more than they were required to do. The brave deeds of these professional warriors are an inspiration to all who value the American fighting spirit. Since the Pentagon refuses to recognize them, the American public must. We owe them at least that much. Poor is the nation that has no heroes. But shameful is the one that, having them, forgets.

IN mid-February 1971, Recon Team Python, consisting of four Americans and 10 indigenous personnel, was inserted by helicopter deep within enemy-held territory in the A Shau Valley along the South Vietnamese/Laotian border. Their mission: set up surveillance and static roadblocks against North Vietnamese troops attempting to back-door

# TOP SECRET

allied units at Khe Sanh supporting Lam Son 719, the ARVN incursion into Laos. RT Python was also tasked with coordinating air support and communications for four other RTs working the same general area.

A number of formidable obstacles lay in their path. The surrounding terrain, consisting of dense undergrowth and triple-canopy overhang, was among the most difficult encountered in the Republic of South Vietnam. Intelligence of the area was extremely old — some say two years — and unreliable. Recent agent reports, however, indicated that a large concentration of NVA (North Vietnamese Army), estimated to be at regimental strength or above, would be moving up

Once on the ground, the RT members spent the next five hours emplacing mines, booby traps and automatic weapons, and digging in a 60mm mortar. They had been spotted, however, and soon began taking sporadic sniper fire, as the NVA attempted to pinpoint their location.

Late in the afternoon, the team's assistant team leader, or One-One, Staff Sgt. Les Chapman, monitored an extract call from a sister team which was in the area and had just successfully ambushed an NVA headquarters element. Chapman got a fix on the sister team's location and radioed for air assets to exfiltrate the team, which was still in heavy contact with the NVA.



the valley floor under cover of darkness. Python's mission was to stop these troops from getting to Khe Sanh.

RT Python was launched from Phu Bai and flown to a small hilltop in the vicinity of Firebase Thor, some six kilometers north of Aloui in the A Shau Valley. On the final approach to Thor, the troop-carrying helicopters came under intense enemy fire. The pilot of the lead chopper inquired if the recon team leader or "One-Zero," 26-year-old Capt. Jim Butler, wanted to abort the mission.

He was told, "No," and instructed to take the choppers in. Once over the LZ, the choppers held a low hover but refused to descend to ground level, stating that they had intelligence the entire LZ had been mined by prior occupants. At that point, Butler leaped from the hovering bird and, utilizing the Marine Mine Sweep Method, quickly determined there were no mines on the LZ. He signaled the choppers and they quickly landed and unloaded the team and their gear.

*Portion of NVA column in open photographed by Studies and Observation Group Recon Team. Note faces turned toward camera. Photographer had just accidentally broken branch, alerting NVA to RT's presence a second before photo was taken. A few seconds later, 90 percent of NVA column was annihilated by claymore mines.*

The exfiltration aircraft arrived at dusk and, during the rescue operation, the pulling slick was shot down, with the command element of the beleaguered team hanging from ropes some 100 feet below the chopper. RT Python continued to monitor frequencies throughout the night and prepared for a search operation at first light.

At 0230, RT Python received a probe by an estimated 20 NVA with automatic weapons. Using M14 "toe-poppers" and claymore mines, they quickly suppressed the enemy attack. Pieces of nine NVA soldiers were found around the perimeter at daylight.

During the night probe, the team also monitored a weak distress signal from a survival radio, apparently transmitted by survivors of the previous day's helicopter crash, and directed search-and-rescue aircraft to that location.

Maintaining their vigil throughout the night, the team members could clearly observe heavy enemy-troop movement along the valley floor, as NVA guides directed their columns with low-intensity flashlights.

With daylight approaching, RT Python came under increasingly heavy enemy pressure. They refused extraction, however, and continued to direct airstrikes on NVA units as well as to direct rescue efforts in an attempt to retrieve survivors from the downed chopper.

During the course of the day's rescue attempts, another aircraft, an OV-10 Bronco, codenamed "Covey," went down under a heavy fusilade from entrenched, enemy AA positions. By that time, however, the rescue operation had succeeded in collecting one survivor and five bodies from the helicopter crew and sister recon team.

Continuing to exchange fire with NVA forces converging on their position, RT Python sustained two wounded, but again refused evacuation until all search-and-rescue operations had ceased. As darkness closed in on the second day's fighting, Python team members directed AC-119 Stinger and AC-130 Spectre gunships in fire-suppression efforts to protect rescue operations still in progress on the ground.

At 2100, the team began taking probing fire from enemy recoilless rifles and automatic weapons. By using organic weapons and mines, and with the assistance of orbiting gunships, Python succeeded in turning back the enemy attack, but not before two additional team members were wounded. Stinger-09 managed to knock out an NVA recoilless-rifle position before departing the area to refuel and rearm.

Throughout the night, the team, using infrared strobe lights and SST-201X transponders, continued to direct other gunships against North Vietnamese columns moving through the valley, about two kilometers below their position. The confusion sown by the gunships succeeded in driving large contingents of the enemy onto the open valley floor, where they were easy prey for the miniguns and 20mm Vulcan cannon.



At 2330, the NVA pinpointed RT Python's position and immediately launched a heavy assault on all sides. Enemy soldiers penetrated close enough for the team to hear clearly shouted commands and the screams of wounded NVA. With the aid of gunships on station, RT Python was able, after several hours of fierce combat, to blunt the enemy attack. Spectre-04, mounting 20mm Vulcan cannon and 40mm Balfour cannon, flew directly overhead and fired 30 meters from RT Python's perimeter in a 360-degree arc.

The NVA were temporarily beaten back and, as they regrouped to renew their assault, Spectre-04 struck again. This time the NVA broke and ran, and hundreds of flashlights were observed moving helter-skelter toward the road on the valley floor. Shortly thereafter, Spectre-07 arrived on station and was employed similarly with similar results. From their hilltop position, Python team members heard eerie screams of pain and panic floating up from the valley floor.

The North Vietnamese were apparently slow learners, however, for at 0400 they brought up fresh troops and renewed their attack against the RT's position, concentrating on the eastern side. When it appeared that they were in danger of being overrun by sheer weight of numbers, Python's One-One employed the 60mm mortar as a direct-fire weapon and was instrumental in repulsing the attack. Although Chapman was severely wounded in this, he continued to expose himself to withering enemy fire to bolster the eastern perimeter.

Gunships firing within 10 meters of the perimeter were also employed to turn back the enemy advance. At first light, enemy activity had dropped to light sniper fire. The lull, however, was not destined to last long.

One hour later, as the sun was burning the last vestiges of jungle mist off the foliage, a squad of green-uniformed NVA was detected attempting to flank the RT's position. Chapman immediately organized a defensive party, consisting of himself and four indigenous mercenaries, and maneuvered to intercept the enemy element.

Almost simultaneously, a heavy diversionary attack was launched against the main body of the recon team. Chapman's defensive party succeeded in ambushing the small NVA force, killing two as the remainder fled into the bush. The defensive party then fell back and established a fighting position.

When the NVA regrouped and renewed their attack, they were again routed, losing several more men. Chapman and his four "little people" then returned to

the main body, where they assisted in beating off the diversionary attack.

Despite the intense enemy pressure, RT Python again refused entreaties from headquarters to evacuate, instead diverting the extraction aircraft to the nearby site of a "Brightlight" team, which was now split and in heavy contact. The NVA persisted in their efforts to annihilate Python. Heedless of orbiting allied aircraft, they launched a massive assault at 0830 in a final attempt to overrun the team's position.

Taking heavy casualties, they still managed to fight their way uphill to the RT's entrenched position, seemingly oblivious of the overhead air armada. Using B-40 rockets and automatic weapons, the NVA began to swarm over the perimeter, firing directly into the team's imperiled position. Air assets on station expended all their ordnance in an attempt to save the RT.



During this final assault, a B-40 exploded inside the perimeter and the blast knocked one of the mercenaries outside the perimeter and several yards downslope of the position, amid the advancing NVA. With complete disregard for his own personal safety, Chapman charged down the slope to attempt a rescue. After killing four NVA at a distance of three meters, he managed to reach the man, now severely wounded, and threw him on his back for the return trip to the team's position — some 30 meters uphill at a 50-degree angle.

As he ran back to the perimeter, the NVA kept a heavy hail of small-arms fire directed at him. Several times Chapman halted or was knocked down as rockets and grenades exploded in close proximity. With the entire firepower of the RT covering him, he finally managed to

reach the perimeter. The mercenary was dead, however, having been hit several more times during the ascent.

Recon Team Python was now completely surrounded by the NVA and, just when it looked like they would go down fighting to a man, a set of A-1Es arrived on station. Using miniguns, rockets, white-phosphorous bombs and CBU-32 clusters, they wiped out the enemy on the salient and all the NVA along the eastern perimeter. An hour later, at 1038, Python — still under heavy enemy fire — consented to extraction. They had been in continuous close contact with the enemy for more than 72 hours.

In the after-action report and debriefings which followed, RT Python was officially credited with killing 42 NVA during this operation, as well as playing a crucial role in directing air assets which resulted in an additional estimated 350 NVA killed by air.

The intensity of the combat during this operation may also be judged by the amount of ordnance expended. During the three-day operation, RT Python members expended 20,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition through its four M60 machine guns, 100 rounds of 60mm mortar ammo, 500 M79 grenades, 100 M26 grenades, 1,000 rounds of 5.56mm ammo (M16) per individual, 145 M14 toe-poppers, 57 claymore mines and assorted homemade booby traps. They also directed and expended the entire resources of one AC-119 Stinger, five AC-130 Spectres, six A-1E Skyraiders and four Cobra gunships.

For the men of the Studies and Observation Group, particularly those who served on the recon teams, perhaps there is no tribute more fitting than that penned by Jean Larteguy, the famed French soldier/journalist who chronicled an earlier Indochina conflict. He wrote:

"I'd like to have two armies — one for display, with lovely guns, tanks, little soldiers, staffs, distinguished and doddering generals and dear little regimental officers, who would be deeply concerned over their general's bowel movements or their colonel's piles; an army that would be shown for a modest fee on every fairground in the country.

"The other would be the real one, composed entirely of young enthusiasts in camouflage uniforms, who would not be put on display but from whom impossible efforts would be demanded and to whom all sorts of tricks would be taught. That's the army in which I should like to fight."

The latter is the army in which the MACVSOG people *did* fight.



Adventure Film On  
Mercs Faithful  
To Forsyth Novel

# DOGS<sub>OF</sub> WAR



## by Bob Poos

A Norman Jewison-Patrick Palmer Production; United Artists/Trans-American Co.; directed by John Irvine; produced by Larry DeWaay; screenplay by Gary DeVore and George Malk; based on the novel of the same name by Frederick Forsyth.

Cast: Shannon — Christopher Walken; Drew — Tom Berenger; North — Colin Blakely; Edean — Hugh Millais; Derek — Paul Freeman; Michael — Jean Francois Stevenin.

**I**F slam-bang adventure movies about mercenaries that seem authentic are your thing, you'll probably want to see this film — if you haven't already.

The movie is based on Frederick Forsyth's novel about a small band of mercs hired by a wealthy English consortium to overthrow the corrupt and brutal government of a small West African nation because a huge mountain of platinum ore has been discovered there. (The similarities between the fictional nation and dictator to Equatorial Guinea and Macias Nguema can't be missed.)

The producers have been pretty faithful to Forsyth's book. Producer DeWaay told SOF that Forsyth is pleased with the film and lent considerable assistance to its making.

One major change, immediately obvious to anyone who has read the book, is the nationality and name of the leading character. In the book it is former British Royal Marine Commando "Cat" Shannon, an Irishman. The film makers have changed it to American Vietnam veteran 'Jamie' Shannon.

The leading role is played by Christopher Walken, who won the best-supporting-actor Academy Award for his role as Nick in *The Deer Hunter* — the soldier with so great a death wish that he played Russian roulette. (SOF reviewed *The Deer Hunter* in September '79.)

Walken's physical appearance is at first distracting. He doesn't look like a mercenary leader: he's pale and almost painfully thin. However, his performance overcomes this potential



**ABOVE:** Four mercs raise a toast to success of their mission to topple the ruthless dictator of a fictional West African nation in movie "Dogs Of War." From left they are: Michel (Jean-Francois Stevenin), Shannon (Christopher Walken), Drew (Tom Berenger) and Derek (Paul Freeman).

**RIGHT:** Drew (actor Tom Berenger) wields a newly developed assault weapon in "Dogs Of War." Designated the XM-18 (Experimental Model 18) in the movie, it fired 20mm short-cased ammunition from an 18-round, open-faced drum. The device is now ready for production and, as modified, fires 40mm ammo from an open-faced, 12-shot drum. Projectiles include HE, fragmentation, piano wire, buckshot, white phosphorous, smoke and tear gas. Unloaded weight is about 16 lbs. Photos: United Artists



# C

ry "Havoc!" and let slip  
the dogs of war.

—William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

problem. As one former Vietnam-era Studies and Observations Group sergeant said upon viewing the picture: "After a while I felt like I was listening to a team leader, rather than an actor."

Others in the team of four mercs are Drew, another American; Derek, a Briton; and Michel, a Frenchman — all of whom turn in fine performances and do look like the popular conception of a merc. Tom Berenger as Drew sports an Airborne "Death From Above" tattoo; Paul Freeman as Derek is never without his Special Air Services beret and is the team's weapons expert. Michel is a hard-drinking con man cum mercenary.

DeWaay claims that making two of the mercs Americans was not done simply as an appeal to U.S. audiences but because "Vietnam was a training ground for many of the mercenaries in the world today and we wanted to lend as much modern-day authenticity to the film as we could."

*Dogs of War* opens with a scene in which six mercs, one dying, are extricating themselves from the final battlefield of a lost war in Central America. Their destination: an ancient DC-3 that will be the last plane out. A similar scene in Forsyth's book was set in Biafra.

This is the viewer's first look at the film's special effects, created by Joe Lombardi and filmed by Director of Photography Jack Cardiff. (Lombardi did the special effects in *Apocalypse Now*.)

Generally, the special effects are realistic, although Lombardi repeats one of his favorite *Apocalypse* tricks — long, searing sheets of flame. This is accomplished by filling a ditch with gasoline and igniting it with a charge. When this one went off, combat veterans in the sneak-preview crowd groaned. The closest thing to it in real combat would be detonation of a drum of Foo Gas, and it just doesn't look the same. But otherwise, Lombardi does an effective job of simulating combat.

In one battle scene, the directors bunch up the four mercs in a tight





**ABOVE and LEFT:** Six mercs, one dying, race to board the last plane out of a Central American country where they have been fighting a losing war. Scenes are from action-adventure movie "Dogs Of War." Main weapons are Colt Commando XM-177 E2s and M16A1 (above, extreme left).

**RIGHT:** Maggie Scott, London fashion designer and model, plays the role of Gabrielle, mistress of a brutal West African dictator in "Dogs Of War."  
Photos: United Artists



cluster — unrealistic, but apparently done to achieve the impression that they are a tightly-knit bunch of professionals, dependent upon one another.

During early stages of production, the film makers came up with a weapon that will be of interest to SOF readers. It is listed in the movie credits as XM-18, a designation that has since been changed to MM-1. It is an automatic with an 18-round, open-faced drum that fires 20mm shortcased shells. Ammunition for it includes HE, frag, incendiary, smoke, buckshot, piano wire and tear gas.

SOF staffers at the preview were unfamiliar with it, and first believed it to be a figment of the movie makers' imaginations. Not so. It is a real weapon, developed by a Chicago-area firm that used to be known as A.T.S. but is now named Hawk Engineering, Inc. The gun is now modified for production to 40mm—to accommodate M79 rounds — and has a 12- rather than the 18-round drum of the movie version. It weighs about 16 pounds unloaded. It appears to be capable of great close-range destruction.

Throughout the film, Walken plays his mercenary as a thoughtful, intelligent — but deadly — professional, who refrigerates a loaded .45 ACP along with a six-pack of Bud. A loner, he keeps his TV on with the sound turned down so he can play electronic chess. He is discouraged at being on the losing side of wars and thinks he would like to change occupations.

First, however, he accepts one more job: reconning the West African state of Zangaro for rich Briton Simon Endean so Endean's firm can overthrow its ruthless, greedy dictator and establish a government indebted to the company. Hugh Millais delivers a splendid performance as Endean — the magnate who is alternately charming, witty, deceitful and treacherous.

Shannon's cover as a bird photographer doesn't hold up for long in Zangaro. Colin Blakely, as the hard-drinking TV newsman North, remarks

**N**ot me, baby. When I go, I'll go my own way. I'd prefer to go with a bullet in my chest, blood in my mouth, a gun in my hand [and] defiance in my heart. . .” Shannon to Julie in *Dogs Of War*.

during a discussion in a hotel bar, “I’m no expert on birds — either.”

So despite being befriended by the dictator’s mistress, Shannon is expelled from Zangaro after a savage beating by police and soldiers.

Two segments stand out in the Zangaro recon episode. When Shannon arrives at customs in the capital city of Clarence, a customs officer notes that the merc is carrying two bottles of booze and inquires politely: “Do you have a drinking problem, Mr. Brown [his pseudonym]?” Shannon replies, “I thought there might be a problem with the water.”

Says the customs official: “There is,” and confiscates one of the bottles, as he does one of two cartons of Luckies and a Penthouse.

The second episode comes after Shannon easily eludes a Zangaron agent, who is ostensibly his bird-watching guide. When Shannon finally returns to their Land Rover, he finds the puzzled — and angry — spy. He remarks to the man — who pretends not to understand English — “In my jungle, you’d be just another asshole.”

Upon Shannon’s departure from Clarence’s grimy airport — beaten, bloody and almost unconscious — the spy snarls, “Can’t leave Zangaro without your passport, asshole,” and hands it to him.

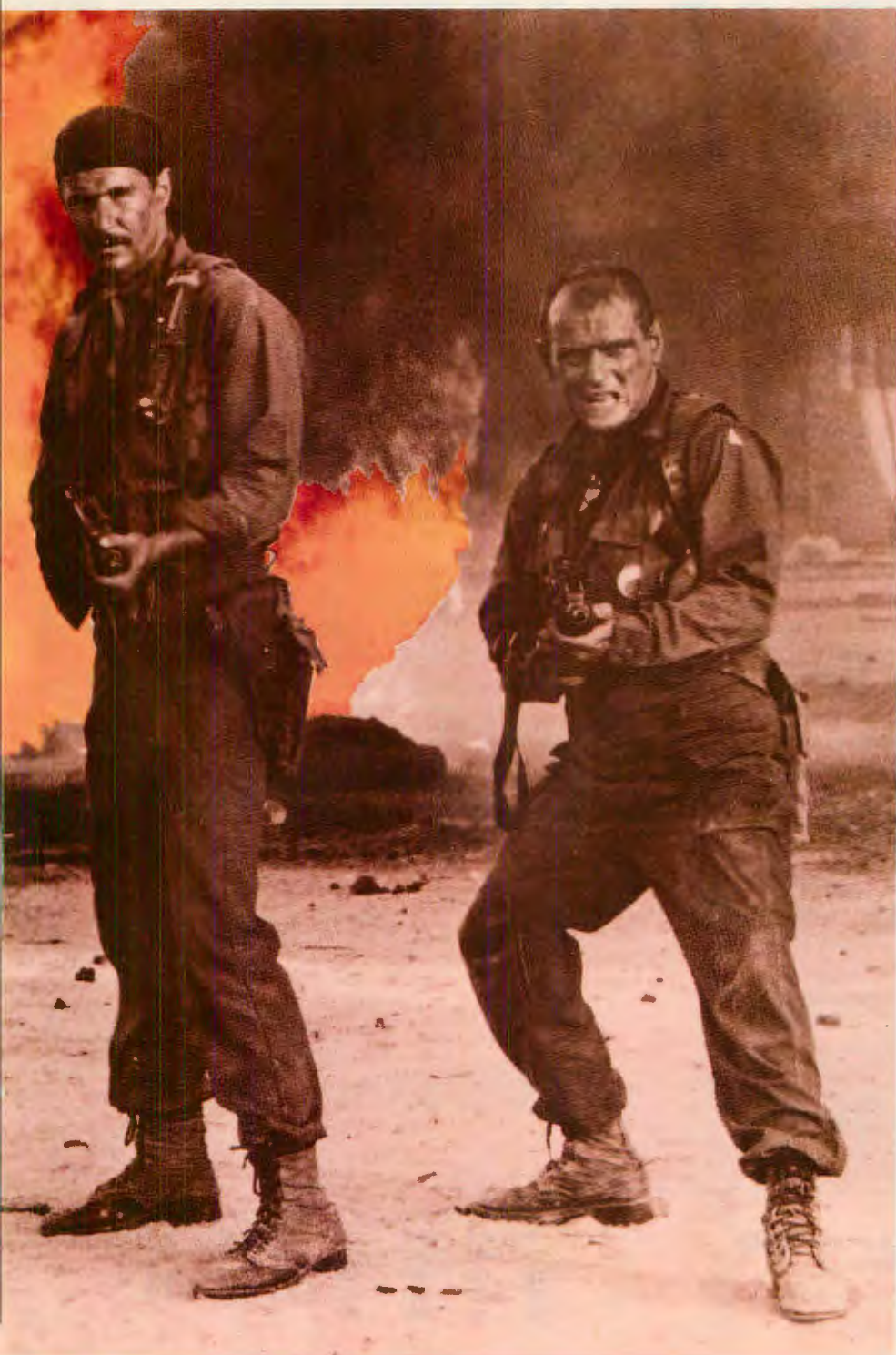
Discouraged by the beating and warned by his doctor that he has suffered virtually every bodily injury and tropical disease possible, Shannon returns to his barren New York apartment, refuses Endean’s offer of a million dollars to lead a raid to topple the dictator and calls on his wealthy girlfriend.

He proposes to her and asks her to accompany him to either Colorado or Montana. He has never been to either place but has heard: “It’s clean out there.”

She replies, “Let’s keep it simple for tonight” — and slips out of their motel room before Shannon awakes in the morning.

Embittered, Shannon decides that a mercenary’s life might not be the best





thing on earth, but that it beats hell out of being a spurned lover.

So he notifies Endean of his change of mind and sets out to recruit old buddies from wars past. One declines but three others, all in the initial scene, accept.

They plan the operation over beer and pizza in Shannon's apartment and toast the mission: "Everybody comes back" and "Vive la mort, vive la guerre, vive le sacre mercenaire."

The scene now switches to London, where the TV reporter North, who had helped Shannon smuggle film out of Zangaro, is murdered by an Endean agent. He acknowledges his employer after Shannon and Drew force him to chew up a little glass from a window pane. His body is left in Endean's study in a scene reminiscent of the horse's-head episode in *The Godfather*.

A good share of the film, like Forsyth's book, now is devoted to a depiction of the mechanics of being a mercenary: how to obtain end-user certificates quasi-legally for the purchase of weapons, in this case Uzis and LAWs; how to smuggle the Uzis from Belgium to France (they are wrapped in heavy, treated paper, then added to partially filled oil drums until the oil reaches the top, after which the drums are resealed); how to negotiate for large supplies of 9mm ammo; how to obtain amphibious boats and outboard motors and which kind are appropriate; how to get hold of a small freighter with a dependable captain and crew for transportation to Zangaro's coast. All quite faithful to the book.

*Continued on page 78*

Four mercenaries in movie "Dogs Of War" survey carnage they have wrought in bringing about the overthrow of the brutal dictator of a West African nation. From left: Derek (Paul Freeman), Shannon (Christopher Walken), Drew (Tom Berenger) and Michel (Jean-Francois Stevenin). Derek, Drew and Michel hold Uzi submachine guns and Shannon has a Browning Hi-Power. Photo: United Artists



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# GUNSMITH DEFIES TYRANNY

## Inventor A Criminal Because Rulers Are Communists

Text & Photos by Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston

RECENTLY I met a man who was visiting the U.S. from another country (I promised him not to disclose which one). He is an unusual man by today's standards — probably by any standards — and a man who clearly knows who he is. He is a philosopher, a fiercely independent thinker and an arms genius. Yes, an unusual man ... with an unusual weapon.

"Gary, I have someone I want you to meet," a friend said. "This is [we'll call him] Herr Hummel."

"How do you do," he said with a heavy accent, firmly shaking my hand.

"My pleasure," I said. I knew instantly he was not run-of-the-mill.

"I have enjoyed some of the things you have written in the *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*," he said.

"I'm flattered," I said.

"We have not seen many of the issues in my country; some people would like to keep it out of my country altogether," he said.

"Some people would like to keep it out of America altogether," I said. We all laughed.

"Do you refer to the liberals?" he asked.

"Well," I paused, "I'm not always sure of their politics; I think the communists hate SOF more than anyone."

"Communists I know about," he said.

"So, show him the pictures," my friend said to Herr Hummel.

"Oh, yes, since you are a student of weapons, I thought perhaps you might like to see a somewhat unusual one — maybe even write about it." He handed me the photos.

"What is it?" I asked. "An STG 45?"

"Very good!" he said. "No, it's not, but you are as close as you are going to come."

"Wait," I said, studying the pictures, "is it an STG 45 prototype?"

"No," he said, "definitely not a prototype."

"OK, I give up. What is it?"

"Actually, it has no name," he said.

"It is something I made."

"You made? Where?"

"In my workshop," he said.

I promised that I would not reveal any information about Herr Hummel's background or where he got the know-how to build almost a copy of the famous STG 45, forerunner of the G 3 and H&K family of weapons. Herr Hummel's rifle is equipped with a wooden fore-end, grips, a right-hand cocking handle and uses a modified MP 44 stock. Otherwise, it is basically an STG 45, right down to the roller-bearing delayed blowback and the 7.92mm Kurtz round it fires. I was amazed.

"How in the world did you do it?" I asked.

"I made the dies and fixtures. I pressed the metal for the receiver and machined the bolt and other parts by taking measurements from originals — it operates perfectly."

"Where is the rifle now?" I asked.

"It is back in my country safely hidden. I own many other weapons which can be legally possessed. Once I could have legally owned this rifle, but no more."

Having a pretty good idea what the laws are in Herr Hummel's country, I put to him what was perhaps the most important question of all: "Why did you make it?" I asked.

"I made it because I wanted to make it, and I was able to," he said simply.

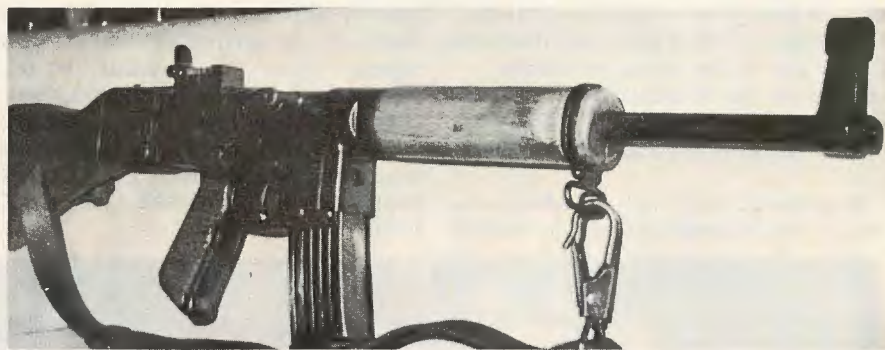
"But aren't you risking prison?"

"Oh, yes," he said, "but people risk prison everyday all over the world. In the Soviet Union, dissenters risk prison, or worse. I risk it for owning an automatic rifle. Neither the dissenters nor I are bad. Where does it stop? I am not a terrorist. Terrorists not only have the most powerful weapons, but they are constantly killing innocent people with them. One should be allowed to own any weapon he can control as long as he does not misuse it.

"Technically, I am a criminal. But when the Nazis were in power, Jews were technically criminals if they resisted, and were exterminated even if they did not. Life is very short, my friend, and I insist on living it as a free man. Don't you have a saying that it is only a free man who owns a gun?"

"Yes," I said, "we have that saying."

I told Herr Hummel that I would write about his rifle, and about him and the kind of man he is. I promised him that, if the story was printed, I would see to it that a copy got through to him, one way or another. Perhaps by then, his government will have seen the light, and perhaps Herr Hummel will be allowed to own his rifle legally and perhaps SOF will be sold at every magazine stand — perhaps not.



ABOVE:  
The "Hummel Rifle," almost an exact replica of the STG 45, was actually handmade by "Herr Hummel."



LEFT:  
The "Hummel Rifle" with stock and magazine disassembled.

# SOF AT THE



*In this issue SOF concludes its coverage of the third annual Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show. As is to be expected, the products mentioned here represent but a small selection from the many items of interest at the show — which hosted over 500 exhibitors. We do, however, feel that they are among the most interesting to our readers.*

*Next year's show, which is expected to exceed by far the size of this year's, is scheduled to take place in Atlanta, Ga., and SOF will be there to bring you news of the latest developments in the shooting, hunting and outdoor trade.*

## NEW FROM ITALY ...

Heckler & Koch displayed a new 12-gauge police/military semiauto shotgun at the SHOT Show this year. Designated the 121 M1, this firearm, shown here by R.J. Scroggie, is manufactured by Benelli in Italy to the specifications of Heckler & Koch and is imported by them.

Several police departments have purchased the weapon, which features a sling swivel, a hammered barrel and an eight-shot capacity (seven in magazine, one in chamber). The shotgun is hard-chromed which reduces maintenance, and has a phosphated finish which reduces corrosion and rust. Weighing approximately seven pounds, the shotgun retails for \$421 and may be obtained through your local gunshop. Write for more details to Heckler & Koch, Dept. SOF, 933 N. Kenmore, Arlington, VA 22210.

## SUPER SHARPENER ...

Spyderco has added several new features to their revolutionary ceramic sharpening system: the Tri-Angle. The additions include another safety guard for increased user protection, a wider base holder to augment stability during use, and optional diamond sleeves which slide over the triangular ceramic rods. According to manufacturer Sal Glesser, the sleeves are timesavers — useful in particular to those professionals who need to sharpen their tools regularly and rapidly. Otherwise, at \$30 a pair, the diamond sleeves are not an urgent investment — considering the Tri-Angle without them still sharpens in one-fourth the time of a hard Arkansas stone, and needs no lubricant.

The ceramic itself is of a hardness second only to diamonds and may be washed

with cleanser or even put in the dishwasher. The rods' unique triangular shape offer two sharpening surfaces: corners for initial coarse cutting and serrated blades, and flats for finishing edges on all straight blades. They incorporate a groove on one side for sharpening pointed objects and can be positioned to accommodate both scissors and shears that are ground flat, rather than at an angle.

To meet specific demands, Spyderco now also offers a package of three ceramic rods of different shapes for filing and sharpening odd-shaped and hard-to-reach objects. "I set out to create the best sharpening system on the market," says Glesser. "I think I have."

The Tri-Angle or the files can be obtained for \$19.95 from L.S. Glesser, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 800, Golden, CO 80401.



# S.H.O.T. SHOW

## COLLECTIBLE SAMURAI ...

*Cam III* recently introduced a unique collector's knife which they claim is as close to custom as they come. It is called the Samurai because it is built by craftsmen with the care and precision that marked the manufacture of the swords of the samurai warriors. The blade is 4¼ inches of mirror-polished Vanadium Molybdenum AUS-8. With a handle of either black or ivory micarta, the knife's overall length comes to 9-7/8 inches.

With sheath, the suggested retail price of the Samurai is \$71.50. For more information write to *Cam III*, Dept. SOF, 243 Millbrook Way, Vacaville, CA 95688.



## HEAVY DUTY ...

*Fabrique Nationale* (F.N.) has developed a sustained-fire, heavy-barrel version of their famous LAR (light automatic rifle) which they designate the LAR H.B. (.308 Match), shown here by SOF contributing editor John Donovan. The distinctions between it and the standard LAR lie in its barrel, which is twice as heavy (bringing the weight from 9.4 to 13.2 pounds) and two inches longer; the strengthened wrap-around handguard; the factory-installed metal bipod and the

fact that it cannot be fitted with a bayonet. Otherwise the weapons have interchangeable parts and accessories, and the same feed with the same cartridges.

The F.N. LAR H.B. is, however, more expensive. Suggested retail is \$2,617 with a wood stock and \$2,418 with a synthetic stock. Offered by *Steyr Daimler Puch of America Corp.* in semiauto for U.S. sales, more information may be obtained by contacting them at Dept. SOF, 85 Metro Way, Secaucus, NJ 07094.



## STAINLESS SPECIAL ...

*Charter Arms* — which over 15 years ago introduced one of the lightest, most compact .38s on the market — displayed its new all-stainless-steel version of the two-inch, five-shot Undercover .38 Special at this year's SHOT Show. This 16-ounce, 6¼-inch (overall length) revolver features a full-length ramp front sight, a square notched rear sight and has a smooth single- and double-action pull and checkered-walnut panel grips. The manufacturers claim that, although giving up a pound in weight to the larger models, the compact Undercover .38 has very little added kick or muzzle jump, allowing the shooter to get back on target quickly and easily. The pistol is stainless steel throughout for maximum corrosion protection.

*Charter Arms* suggests a retail price of \$229.50. For more information write them at Dept. SOF, 430 Sniffens Lane, Stratford, CT 06497.





## SAFARI SNIPER ...

*M-S Safari Arms* displayed their custom sniper rifle at this year's show. The rifle pictured here, in the hands of contributing editor John Donovan, is designed for across-the-course match shooting (notice target sights), but would normally be equipped with a telescopic sight. It is a .308-caliber Remington 700 with a stainless-steel Atkinson match barrel and a Gail McMillan fiberglass Marine Corps sniper stock. Also shown is the M-S Safari Arms trigger-guard conversion, which uses a 20-round M14 magazine.

The trigger-guard modification is available in a kit, which includes two magazines, for \$109.95. The rifle, which includes the conversion (but not the sights), retails for \$1,600 from *M-S Safari Arms*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 23370, Phoenix, AZ 85063.



## .45 SIGHT NEWS ...

*Wichita Engineering* introduced the prototype of their new adjustable rear sight for the Colt .45, shown here by Nolan Jackson. This model — much like the Bomar — is designed for low mounting on the Colt .45 slide. This rugged, all-steel rear sight, designed by Ron Power especially for Wichita, features positive-click elevation and windage adjustment and is built to withstand service ammo and heavy loads. It also obviates the common problem of light reflecting onto the rear sight by having a serrated sight blade and being mounted angularly. The sight is legal for all IPSC and NRA competition.

Both the target model (shown here) and the combat model — which has a rounded sight blade to facilitate removal from holster — retail for \$47.50, and are available from *Wichita Engineering*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 11371, Wichita, KS 67211.



## LATEST LASER ...

*Laser Products Corporation* has recently developed a laser-aiming system for the AR-15/M16, which assures accuracy and control at night. The system projects a small, but intense spot of red light which indicates the exact point where the bullet will strike. This is the latest addition to their line of laser-aimed weapons. They also market systems for the .357 magnum Colt trooper revolver, the 12-gauge Remington 870 shotgun, the 12-gauge Remington short-barrel police riot shotgun and the .223-caliber Ruger Mini-14 rifle.

Each of the laser-aimed weapons sells for \$3,895 and sales are restricted to law-enforcement agencies. The company's assertion is that due to the intimidation factor inherent in the system, less firing will be required and, therefore, officer safety will be increased. Contact *Laser Products Corp.* for further information at Dept. SOF, 18285 Mt. Baldy Circle, Fountain Valley, CA 92708.

## MODIFIED MODEL ...

*Beretta U.S.A. Corp.* has the prototype of their new 92SB available for inspection at this year's show. The 92SB with its modifications is the result of extensive testing and recommendations by the Air Force Armament Division at Eglin AFB in Florida. (Beretta was one of several firearms manufacturers which submitted a 9mm semiautomatic pistol for testing and evaluation by the Air Force to determine whether the military should convert to 9mm from .45 for its personal sidearm — see "Shootout: 9mm vs. .45," SOF February '80.)

The 92SB features improved sights and magazine-release placement (by the trigger guard). It has full-checked panels on its grip — which is grooved. It incorporates a firing-pin block, to reduce movement, and an ambidextrous safety.

The 92SB (above) and the 92SB compact (below) — reduced one inch in height and length — won't be available to the general public until 1982, as the first production models are going to the military and law-enforcement agencies. So, the manufacturer can only estimate a retail price of between \$500 and \$600 at the present time. For more information contact *Beretta U.S.A. Corp.*, Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607.





## DOUBLE NEWS ...

*Detonics .45 Associates* has added a new pistol to their Combat Master series: the Mk VII (above). Slimmer and lighter by almost four ounces than the Mark V (below) or the Mark VI (see SOF, April '81, p. 39), it is reduced in thickness through the slide and the stocks, as well as having the sights removed. According to a company representative, the all-stainless-steel undercover weapon is designed with the "point-and-shoot-type person in mind." The Mark VII will fit into a PPK/S holster and retails for \$622.

All three models are available in .45 ACP (seven shots), and have just recently been made available in 9mm Parabellum (nine shots). By midyear, they will also be available in .38 Super (nine shots).

Another new Detonics offering is their

## CIVILIAN LEGAL ...

*Ithaca Gun Company* featured their eight-shot, stake-out version of the M37 12-gauge police riot gun. Due to its 29½-inch barrel length, the riot gun is civilian legal. (John Donovan, police chief of Danvers, Ill., shown here, is presently carrying one of these in his squad car and will have a test and evaluation of the weapon in a future issue.) This Ithaca M37 with a satin-chrome finish retails for \$350.

Ithaca also makes a five-shot parkerized 18½-inch model restricted to military-and-police use only. For further details contact *Ithaca Gun Company*, Dept. SOF, Gun Shop Hill, Ithaca, NY 14850.



Competition Recoil System to full-size Colt autoloading-pistol owners. They claim that this highly advanced system — already incorporated into Detonics' pistols — offers immediate improvements in accuracy, reliability, control, safety, handling and frame life of Colt autoloaders (Government and Military). It is designed to reduce felt recoil, muzzle rise and time back to target. A space-age elastomer incorporated into the device acts to cushion recoil impact and eliminate frame cracking due to hot loads.

The recoil system (also available for the Colt Commander) can be owner installed in less than a minute with no modification to the pistol and retails for \$28. For more information on what's new from *Detonics .45 Associates*, write them at Dept. SOF, 2500 Seattle Tower, Seattle, WA 98101.

## DYNAMIC DUO ...

*Rigid Knives* displayed two recent introductions to their fine line of knives: the Amigo (above) and the Vaquero (below), designed by Don Collum. Both boot knives are constructed of heat-hardened 440 surgical stainless steel and have hollow-ground blades which maintain a good edge. Each has a 3¾-inch blade, with an overall length of 8 inches, and comes with a top-grain-cowhide sheath with a stainless-steel clip.

The Amigo, with its black-micarta handle, retails for \$58.50, and the Vaquero, with its white-micarta handle and stainless-steel bolster and buttcap retails for \$78.75. Each Rigid Knife is handmade and has a lifetime warranty. A catalog is available for \$1 by writing *Rigid Knives*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 186, Dept. B3, Lake Hamilton, AR 71951.



## WRAPAROUND LOADER ...

*Rogers Holsters* just recently introduced a "six-pack" speedloader case which they claim is the most concealable and close fitting on the market today — and ideal for plainclothes officers and the competition shooter. The holder loops under, and the speedloader divides in half over, up to a 1¼-inch belt. The speedloader is drawn from the holder as shown here.

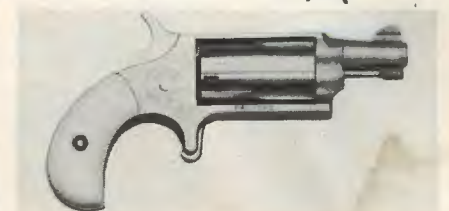
Models currently available fit all sizes of HKS and Safariland speedloaders, and retail for \$5.95 from *Rogers Holsters*, Dept. SOF, 10601 Theresa Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32216.

## MINI-POWERHOUSE ...

*Freedom Arms, Inc.* recently introduced a new member to its fine line of mini-revolvers: the .22 caliber magnum — available in short (seen here) and long barrel. Both the FA-SM (1-inch barrel) and the FA-LM (1¼-inch barrel) are chambered for four .22 magnum rounds, feature stainless-steel construction and weigh under five ounces.

A brand-new development from Freedom Arms is their incorporation of a floating firing pin into all of their mini-revolvers. This innovation enables the shooter to use the sighting slot for improved accuracy and also ensures 100-percent ignition.

Suggested retail for the FA-SM is \$144.75 and for the FA-LM is \$149.50. For more information write *Freedom Arms*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1776, Freedom, WY 83120.



SOMETHING remarkable occurred in Denver, Colo., on February 11th this year. The Veterans Administration and KBTv (a Gannett Broadcasting station) conceived the idea to match jobless veterans with potential employers. Co-sponsored by the GI Forum, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion and the State of Colorado Employment Office, the idea became reality and this country's first Vet-A-Thon was broadcast. Hopefully, it won't be the last. (The only other event even vaguely comparable was a televised VA-benefits-information phone-in, broadcast last July 4th in Pittsburgh.)

The meeting of minds between the VA and KBTv was originally inspired by a five-part mini-series called "The Forgotten Vet," which aired in January 1981. Linda Benzel of KBTv said audience response was overwhelming. The local station received many calls from people who had been moved by the mini-series and were interested in helping out the "forgotten" veteran.

So Benzel approached Raul Barela of the VA, who, for some time, had been trying to come up with a way — with limited means — to initiate a job-matching program. Together they formulated the idea of using TV to promote the program. KBTv News Director Roger Ogden gave the go-ahead and, to capitalize on audience interest, the Vet-A-Thon was organized and aired in seven days.

Judging by the enthusiasm and number of participants, finding volunteers to staff the phones and talk to those vets who came in personally (because phone lines were busy) posed no problem. Among the VA employee volunteers were VA-benefits and vocational-rehabilitation counselors. The latter were on hand especially to take calls from handicapped veterans. Contributions (non-monetary, since the effort was to raise jobs, not

# VET A THON

## New Approach To An Old Problem

by Cynthia E.D. Kite

funds) were made by such companies as Pepsi, Mountain-High Ice Cream and Safeway to ensure that volunteers did not go hungry or thirsty.

Response to the job-matching effort exceeded even the most optimistic projections. At midnight, after 18 hours of ceaseless ringing, a tally revealed a total of 3,092 calls had been taken. The breakdown was about two-thirds veterans (mainly from Vietnam), who called in to relay qualifications and experience, and, the balance, employers with job opportunities — sometimes more than one per call. Altogether, 650 solid job offers were received.

Some veterans who called in had tried every avenue they could think of to find employment — unsuccessfully — and were willing to take just about anything. There were also a few dreamers who sought a corporation presidency — with no previous experience. But the majority

just wanted to find decent work at a decent wage, doing something they might be qualified to do. Many employers were willing to train (and they may be subsidized by the VA), and many vets were willing to be trained.

The actual matching process did not take place until the following day — a state holiday — at the Vets Assistance Center. Over 25 state employees volunteered their expertise to coordinate the matching. The vets who had phoned in the previous day had been asked to show up to fill out applications and set up interviews. More than 500 vets were waiting at the office when it opened.

The jobs listed were not, of course, *guaranteed* to veterans. The unique aspect of this coordinated effort lies in the fact that it was directed toward only one subset of the unemployed: the veteran. The basic idea was to dedicate one day to pinpointing, for veterans, jobs available locally from employers interested in or willing to hire qualified veterans. From then on, it was out of the VA's hands and in the competent hands of State Employment personnel.

As we go to press, it is still too early to have received solid follow-up statistics, but I am informed that 700 out-of-work vets were sent after those 650 job opportunities. They may not receive special preference, but at least they'll get a fair shot.

And, as Barela said, "If, through our efforts, we match up only a few veterans with jobs, it will have been worth it. The goal was to reach the *local* unemployed veteran, but if it catches on ... well ... terrific."

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Permanent phone numbers have been established for employers and veterans in Colorado to call in jobs and job requests. Employers: (303) 234-6632. Veterans: (303) 234-6630.*



### DENVER DOES IT

One initial reaction to the Vet-A-Thon could be "well, it's about time" and another could be "why Denver, Colo., of all places, and why only Denver?"

But that's not really important. What is important is that it happened and there is a chance, at least, that the idea may catch on and spread.

It is common knowledge that Vietnam veterans, in particular, have had a tough time finding jobs.

One possible reason for this situation may be something once called "Business and Clergy Concerned About the War." Purporting to be a peace-loving group, business and clergy actually endorsed and sought a communist victory in Southeast Asia. Well, it got its way and, presumably, those in the "business" end of the group have little interest in hiring or training veterans of the conflict they

opposed, or rather in which they supported the enemy.

A former trooper in the First Cavalry Division, a friend from Vietnam days, once said to me: "I was a machine-gunner. Now who in the hell wants to hire a machine-gunner? There just ain't much demand for them." True.

And, as many Vietnam veterans know, the Vietnam-era GI Bill wasn't much to brag about. It wasn't even as good as Korea's and that one was not as good as WWII's.

The question of why some veterans have had difficulty adjusting to and holding civilian jobs is more complex, and there are several theories.

A popular one is that many of them developed a deep sense of psychological rejection upon returning home and meeting either indifference or hostility. Another is that they were psychologically scarred by fighting in a war that

the politicians never intended to pursue to victory, thus leaving the veteran with a deep-seated feeling of anger, of which he might not even be consciously aware.

Ironically, no such problem faced the cowards who fled to Canada or Sweden in order to avoid serving their country. For the most part, these were well-educated sons of privilege, so they could either step into a job for which their education or birthright qualified them or they could depend upon papa to take care of them.

One thing is certain. If the citizens of this nation expect to have fighting men to defend them, they had better be prepared to accord them the homecoming they deserve, by at least extending honest recognition that they served when called upon to do so.

KBTv's fine gesture is a start. Let's hope it's not the end. —Bob Poos

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# REBIRTH OF A CLASSIC

## Fatally Flawed Fairbairn Redesigned Into Functional Fighter

by Al Mar



Applegate-Fairbairn fighting knife, custom-made by T.J. Yancey of Estes Park, Colo., is now available in limited quantities. The 6" blade is made of corrosion-resistant, tough, 154cm stainless steel. Lexan® plastic handle incorporates two unique design features: wide, deep, longitudinal grooves enable non-slip grip and cavities in handle enable user, by means of lead weights, to adjust balance. Combat model has a non-reflective parkerized-type finish (shown). Optional blade with bright satin-polished finish is available on request. Presentation model with white handle, mirror-finish blade, in wooden case, is also in limited production.

A-F knife features unique capability of adjusting balance and "feel" to owner's taste. Four longitudinal lead weights are wedged and cemented in place in the production model, giving proper balance according to most experts. Handle can be dismantled using a 5/32 Allen wrench. Weights can be pried out, or additional ones added in forward section, if so desired.



**F**AIRBAIRN, Sykes and their knife; Applegate, Fairbairn and their knife: the closest most of us have gotten to these men and their original equipment is the library, the museum or the cemetery.

So? One member of this trio is still very much alive, well and plying his trade — Col. Rex Applegate. Nearly 40 years ago, he and Fairbairn collaborated on an improved version of the Fairbairn-Sykes Classic. The drawing and prototype which resulted from that association is the basis for the new Applegate-Fairbairn knife. But it's a long, hard, expensive road from a first drawing to the moment when a knife is put into the world's hands.

## Stabbing Snags

By the early 1940s the world had an acknowledged classic in the Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife. Why change it? Because it was terminally flawed. It was more a dagger than a knife. It is unfortunate it was not taken off active duty and retired to the museum with other classics. In the first place, the F-S knife was designed to do only half the job. You couldn't sharpen it well enough to slash effectively with it. (Doubt that? Try it.) Although you could stab with it, the knife was susceptible to breakage at both point and tang. This design error, coupled with the poor quality of wartime steel, gave many a soldier serious problems. Users began to suggest that the F-S commando knife might be best employed as a shoulder patch emblem — a use to which it was later put during WWII.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Al Mar, a well-known knife designer and distributor, has been responsible for several successful fighting-knife designs. He is well qualified to evaluate the new Applegate-Fairbairn fighting knife.

A former member of U.S. Special Forces, Mar served with the 1st Group from 1960 to 1962 and was a member of its reserve unit, the 17th, until 1964. Mar is an active practitioner of knife fighting, pistol combat shooting, judo and kendo (Japanese fencing).

—M.L. Jones

The original designers of the classic were very much aware of these problems. To their credit, they met criticism head on. After a tour of duty in England with Sykes in 1941-42, Applegate returned to the U.S. and joined Fairbairn at an OSS training station. Together they began experimenting with prototypes — and in the process took the classic several steps further. The result was a drawing completed 38 years ago, a drawing which has now come to life as the Applegate-Fairbairn Fighting Knife.

Maj. W.E. Fairbairn, the legendary assistant commissioner of the Shanghai Municipal Police, was the author of *Get*

*Tough*. (This book is available from Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306. SOF has also run several articles about W.E. Fairbairn. See "Quick or Dead in Shanghai," March '79; "Shanghai Experiments," April '79; "Fairbairn of Shanghai," September

'79.) His logical mind introduced order into what had been, up to then, only street brawling. The result was a clear statement of the knife-fighter's goals — but one that needed further analysis.

Col. Rex Applegate's biography reads like a Who's Who of war and peace. His army background includes OSS, infantry, military police, intelligence and counter-intelligence. Today he acts as consultant to the United States armed forces and law-enforcement agencies. A consultant to the National Bureau of Standards on police weaponry, his specialty is police and riot weaponry, riot control and small-arms combat training.

The colonel is a prolific author and a sought-after lecturer. In 1943, Applegate's *Kill Or Get Killed* first appeared (it has undergone 17 editions and printings to date; it is now available from Paladin Press). An immediate success, it became the knife-fighter's bible. Col. Applegate not only defined the psychology of the art but, even more importantly, his program for attaining proficiency enabled students to understand the basic principles of knife fighting.

## First Analysis

Fairbairn and Applegate were among the first to analyze the fighting knife as a tool with a single function. They knew their knife needed to have certain basic attributes: it must be strong, easily maintained, capable of retaining an edge under normal combat conditions and have a clean, functional design.

They also knew they must go beyond these basics, because the pure fighting knife requires more: the blade must be double-edged, made of finest-quality steel and long enough to reach vital organs. It must be able both to stab and slash. The knife fighter must not only be able to reach the heart, stomach and subclavian artery, he must be able to sever such major surface arteries as the carotid, radial and brachial.

Balance, weight and handle design are all critical. For the knife fighter with sweaty palms (and whose wouldn't be under the circumstances for which the knife was designed?) a non-slip surface is required. And for the situation in which speed in darkness is critical, instant identification of blade position must be possible from the grip alone.

Use the above checklist to judge the Applegate-Fairbairn and the Fairbairn-Sykes.

Production required one more vital ingredient: a manufacturer. Applegate approached most major U.S. and European knifemakers. No luck. They couldn't produce a knife of the quality required by Applegate for the price he desired. Enter this writer — who took the problem to Japan's top manufacturers. Though intrigued, they weren't persuaded.

*Continued on page 86*



Col. Rex Applegate is author of "Kill Or Get Killed," "Riot Control — Materiel and Techniques" and "Scouting and Patrolling," texts used by police and military throughout the Free World. Col. Applegate is a nominee for the 1981 Outstanding American Handgunner Award.



"Get Tough" and "Kill or Get Killed" are the pioneer, and still classic, knife-fighting texts. Both are available from Paladin Press. Fairbairn-Sykes commando knife (above) was issued in great numbers during WWII. This particular knife, manufactured by Wilkinson Sword of London, was presented to Col. Rex Applegate by W.E. Fairbairn in 1942. Applegate-Fairbairn Knife (below) is available from Wells Creek Knife and Gun Works.

mand and Control North (Da Nang, Marble Mountain). FOB-3 (Khe Sanh) was phased out.

At the FOBs, and later at the Command and Control centers, SOG troops trained and planned their missions. Missions were launched either directly from the FOBs or from Launch Sites — just about any American or South Vietnamese compound in the country. Normally, SOG troops were expected to run one five-day mission per month but practicality sometimes forced troops to exceed that limit.

The Spike Teams running the first cross-border operations went into the field dressed in standard GI uniforms but Col. Simons demanded less-conspicuous attire, since any NVA or VC with a bit of sense would blast away at anything resembling an American jungle suit. It was Simons who started using NVA or VC clothing and, to a certain extent, weapons. Spike Teams, which had their choice of weapons, often went armed with AKs, French MAT-49 submachine guns or Swedish Ks. Since it was expected that Spike Teams, if they made contact, would generally be outnumbered and have to fight for a long time until

extracted, the basic load of ammunition and ordnance carried was extensive. One Spike Team leader told SOF he sent his men out with a minimum of 45 magazines, plus grenades, claymores and sidearms.

Operational areas for recon patrols across the fence were designated Target Areas and given both a name and a number. Two examples — Quebec 1 and Hotel 9 — were notoriously bad TAs. Quebec 1 was 88 clicks from Dak To, east of Attapeau, Laos, and Hotel 9 was in Laos, north of the village of Ban Philadouang.

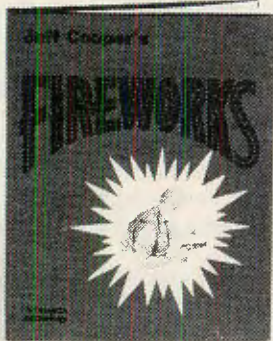
Upon insertion, standard operational procedure for the Spike Teams was to get into the jungle quickly and make the communists hunt for them. If the Spike Teams moved around hunting NVA, they risked being ambushed. By hiding in the bush, *they* could do the ambushing. Because of that SOP, and because the terrain where the Spike Teams operated has some of the thickest bush known to man, movement was limited. One former SOG Spike Team member said the average movement by a team on PRAIRIE FIRE missions was 150 meters per day.

If the Spike Team's major mission was to call in air strikes on NVA or VC targets in the TA, this was accomplished by radio relay to a FAC (Forward Air Controller) flying overhead in an O-1 (single-engine spotter

plane) during daytime. The Spike Teams or the FAC could also contact a C-130 Airborne Command and Control Center (ABCCC), which flew over Southern Laos during the day. The daytime C-130 ABCCC was code named HILLSBORO and the night-time C-130 was code named MOONBEAM. At night, there was no O-1 overhead for the SOG team to coordinate with. SOG teams were also in contact with a radio-relay SOG unit located at a site called EAGLE'S NEST, which was on top of a mountain in Laos.

With an O-1 FAC overhead, the Spike Team would pass targeting information to the FAC, who passed the information on to the C-130 ABCCC and requested strike approval. The ABCCC, not equipped with radar, would contact the Control and Reporting Center (CRC) at Da Nang's Monkey Mountain installation to ascertain what aircraft were in the area and available. The CRC at Da Nang would then release aircraft to the ABCCC in Laos, which would pass them on the FAC to make the air strikes.

Although many of the air strikes were carried out by Air Force A1-E Skyraiders, some were by Marine, Navy or South Vietnamese aircraft. All aircraft operating within the sweep of the CRC radar at Da Nang came under its control, and it could pick up air assets from other CRCs or



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the Control and Reporting Point (CRP) at Dong Ha (code named WATERBOY), if planes flying against other target areas were diverted by weather or if action picked up in Laos.

The strikes in Laos were named STEEL TIGER or TIGER HOUND, depending on whether they were located north or south, respectively, of the 17th Parallel. There was also CR at Pleiku.

At night, SOG Spike Teams used essentially the same assets, but could also call on a C-130 LAMP-LIGHTER to illuminate the target with flares.

After 1967 SOG teams could call on AC-130 SPECTREs. These planes were armed with a mix of 7.62mm

Various SOG Spike or Recon Team leaders attribute the relative ease of operations in Laos and Cambodia in those days, and under Singlaub later, to a number of factors: 1) the SF personnel assigned to SOG early on were better trained and operations better planned and, 2) the NVA didn't know what the hell was going on.

Staff Sgt. Fred Zabitosky, who worked in OPLAN 34 in 1966-67, OPS 35 in 1967-68 and SHINING BRASS, said: "The casualties were not that high then, compared to what we got later, because you used to be able to walk around Laos and Cambodia at will. You could wave to the North Vietnamese and they didn't know what the hell you were doing, because all

## The NVA was telling him it was his turn to go on guard.

"Miniguns", 20mm Vulcan cannons and 40mm Bofor cannons. Later in the war some mounted a 105mm gun. Later-model AC-130s also had laser designators — which could pinpoint a target and direct a bomb to it — and some sophisticated sensors (details of which are still classified and which SOF has no intention of disclosing). The innovations made the AC-130s spectacularly successful.

In the early days of SOG, when Col. Blackburn commanded, American-personnel losses on the 45 cross-border ops pulled during that time were zero.

your weapons were sterile; and you were sterile, cover stories and everything. Most of our people spoke French too.

"Hell, I pulled up in a night RON [re-main overnight] position in Laos and the damn North Vietnamese were sleeping right there next to us — 10 to 15 meters away from us in a truck park."

In a similar incident, Zabitosky's team pulled up in its RON position only to discover that an NVA patrol had selected the same site. Sometime during the night, an NVA came over and woke Zabitosky to take his turn on guard duty.

SOF: "He woke you up!"

"I wouldn't move, so he finally got hold of one of my Nungs. He kept shaking him and talking to him and he finally got up. He told me later that the NVA was telling him it was his turn to go on guard. The NVA had just wandered into our RON."

Zabitosky's Nung did his turn.

In the days when the Spike Teams operated sterile, they would run into NVA on trails in broad daylight, sometimes without incident.

"You've got to understand," said Zabitosky, "I had Nungs who could talk to them [the NVA]. We would run into them on the trail and, when I heard them talking, I would just step off the trail into the bushes."

The Spike Team Nungs would tell the NVA they were a lost unit, then ask the NVA what outfit they were with.

On prisoner-snatch missions, essentially the same thing was done, but deliberately.

"I'd send two people out in NVA khaki uniforms, all sterile, with AKs," said Zabitosky. "I'd send them out to join the company — or whatever unit it was — then call in an air strike. At the same time as the air strike, they would grab one of the SOBs and start running back to the team."

It could be that such incidents engendered a program called the APACHES, later called ROADRUNNERS, which did not start in SOG, but



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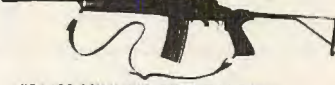
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which later came under SOG's wing.

The APACHE program originated in MACV J2 (intelligence operation for MACV) and was conducted by the J2's Field Force. The APACHE program authorized the Special Forces types assigned to it to recruit troops from the indigenous population for in-country activities.

In the beginning, the APACHES had a relatively simple assignment: dress and act like a Viet Cong in Viet Cong territory. When you get to a Viet Cong headquarters unit, empty a magazine, throw a grenade and haul ass. Due to combat losses and refinement of technique, the pattern changed considerably by the time it was absorbed into SOG. But the basic idea remained the same: penetrate the denied areas and do damage.

The good old days in Laos — when Spike Teams could walk around unmolested — came to a halt when the NVA realized what they were doing and how good they were at it.

The NVA started watching LZs for SOG insertions and, in key target areas, they defended the LZs heavily. NVA trail watchers assigned to the less-heavily defended LZs used bamboo sticks to call in other NVA in the area until enough collected for an attack. SOG's troops called it the "jungle telephone." On the heavily defended LZs, the attacks came more quickly: at the point of touchdown.

"Some missions lasted 30 seconds on the ground. Others longer," said Zabitosky. "Once a Spike Team got on the ground, got off the LZ and started beating through that bush — then the NVA had a damn problem because we had all the air support in the world."

But by 1967-68, it was getting a lot tougher to get Spike Teams in, so the SOG operations staff came up with a number of techniques to alleviate the problems. One was to send a swarm of choppers into a target area — some making real insertions, the others just running diversionary passes. SOG also utilized NIGHTINGALE devices to cause diversions while a team was being inserted elsewhere. A slick would hover over an LZ and drop in a mechanical fire-fight simulator to draw in the NVA. Then a second slick would slip the team in.

As the war continued, losses on LZs in Laos and Cambodia continued to mount, so other techniques were developed. One of the best was the daisy-cutter, or 10,000-pound instant LZ — a bomb capable of punching a helicopter-size hole in the bush.

One of the toughest Target Areas in the tri-border area, according to Zabitosky and verified by other SOG troops, was one known as Hotel 9.

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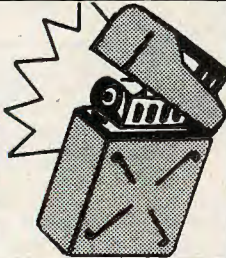
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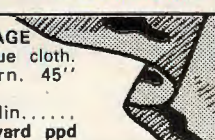
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ple went the other way," chuckled Zabitosky. "Let's see if I can give you a layout so you can get a general idea of the terrain.

"Hotel 9 was up in the area where Highway 9 crosses down into Cambodia. They [the NVA] were building highways into Cambodia. It was surrounded by 6,000-foot mountains on both sides and there was a river on one side.

"It was such a tough target that we saturated it one time with B-52s for 14 days. Then when we tried to insert a team, they got shot off the LZ.

"It took us five days of trying to finally get a Hatchet Team [which was larger than Spike Team] into Hotel 9 and, when they got there, the god-damned North Vietnamese had mined the landing zone, so when the guys jumped off they blew their feet off.

"Christ, we tried for months and months. I mean saturation bombing until there would be nothing left of the mountains. But still they would be burning .51 caliber, 37 and 57 mike-mike when you got in there.

"We would blow a tank or a truck right up above Hotel 9 and, within 15 minutes, they would have a tank retriever up there to get the goddamn tank or truck.

"We blasted down sides of mountains, because the mountains were near the road and it was a small road. Well, they had about 1,500 coolies working road repair day and night.

"Finally, I told them I wanted 14 slicks and I'd get them [his team] into Hotel 9.

"I put my team in the last two slicks and 12 slicks went over and started to insert on Hotel 9.

"I went over the mountain, got in, and was able to come down on Hotel 9 and run some operations.

"But Hotel 9 was a heartbreaker."

Nevertheless, on that mission, Zabitosky's team caught a 104-truck convoy on the road, and he stacked up 14 jets running them in to destroy the convoy.

In addition to the Spike Teams, SOG sent out Hatchet Teams and, much later in the war, Exploitation Companies. Both Hatchet Teams (which were 23-man platoons and could be composed of a number of Spike Teams), and Exploitation Companies simply attempted to bring firepower to bear on targets too hard to get at from the air and too big for a Spike Team.

In addition, Hatchet Teams would be formed up in the FOB when a Spike Team was in trouble on the ground. Missions to recover downed airmen in the denied areas, or Spike Teams in a heavy action were called BRIGHTLIGHTs. SOG became heavily involved in attempted rescues of downed air crews, and records on

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MIA's were kept by SOG headquarters in Saigon. Later on, the Exploitation Companies performed rescue operations under the supervision of another SOG organization called the Joint Personnel Recovery Center.

"They could run those things up to battalion size," said Jim Monaghan, another former SOG trooper and President of the Special Operations Association. "And they were also used for a couple of big raids. Sometimes they brought the Black Panther Ranger Battalion in with them. That was the best and one of the most decorated battalions in the South Vietnamese Army.

"After Lam Son 719 [the operation in 1972 when the South Vietnamese invaded the Techone area of Laos, near the 17th Parallel], they ran a raid 40 miles into Laos and freed about 130 Vietnamese.

"They didn't play it up that much because they didn't want the capability they had to become known," continued Monaghan. "But the Viets ran a couple of good missions to free people." [Eds. Note: According to Schemmer in *The Raid*, 91 rescue operations were conducted in South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia between 1966-70. Twenty were successful in freeing 318 soldiers and 60 civilians. One of Vietnam's untold stories.]

SOG's Spike Teams, Hatchet

Teams and Exploitation Companies, as well as the other projects and operations, continued until American involvement ended in Vietnam, although the level of activity decreased significantly once the decision was made to draw down American participation and turn the war over to the Vietnamese.

But there was one final moment of glory for SOG. Its far-flung, highly skilled and experienced personnel were yanked back into Vietnam from all over the world when North Vietnam's Easter Invasion started on 30 March 1972. On that day the NVA, three-divisions strong and supported by T-54 and PT-76 amphibious tanks, swarmed across the DMZ and rolled the 3rd ARVN Division back below Quang Tri.

To stop the North Vietnamese from taking the northern half of the country, it was necessary to pull back considerable American resources, including some of the old SOG hands.

The word went out to Special Forces Groups in the U.S. and other places in the world, and former SOG personnel were rushed to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, where they went through a "special" 48-hour course with the latest gunships available: the AC-130 SPECTRES (described previously). From Florida, the Special Forces troops rushed to

*Continued on page 90*

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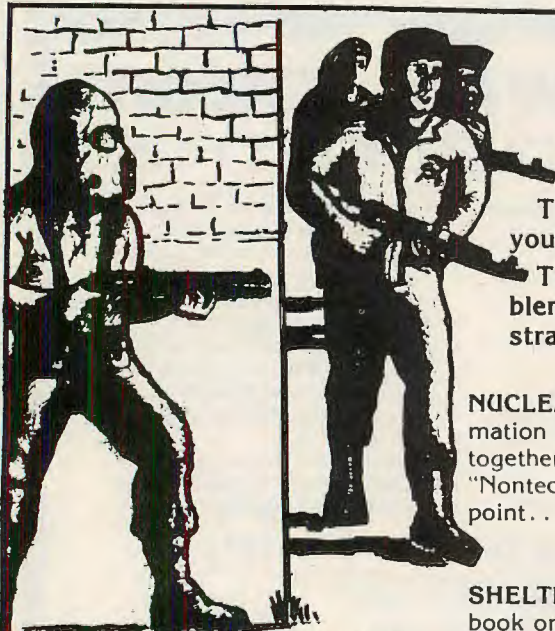
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# DOGS OF WAR

Continued from page 59

More than four men are needed for the mission, of course, and although the would-be new ruler offers troops, Shannon declines them, saying, "We'll furnish our own." In the book, who these men were is made clear, as is the fact that all the white mercs knew them well. This is less apparent in the motion picture — and needlessly so.

The final battle scene has enough blood and action for the vicarious armchair soldier as well as for those who enjoy realistic combat scenes for the sake of the action.

There is also a surprise ending for those who have not read the book, and I won't divulge any more of it here other than to say that the result isn't all that the cartel and the would-be new dictator would have it be.

For some reason, the movie credits do not identify the actual location of the fictional African nation. Because the film's fiction is a little too close to the truth, no African nation would permit filming within its borders.

Producer DeWaay and Director Irvine looked around in the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean before finally finding their ideal location: Belize, a small British colony formerly known as British Honduras. It has the proper heat, paint-peeling tropical buildings, jungle and a primarily black population.

Furthermore, Belize even had a ready-made site for the climactic battle: the former British garrison compound which became the site of a mental hospital when the British army could no longer use it, but was ultimately abandoned as unsuitable for patients. The Belizeans said they would be delighted to have the thing destroyed. And destroyed it was. DeWaay told SOF, "What you see in the movie — after the battle ends — is just what we saw when we were done filming it."

Now, this movie is not without its problems, like the aforementioned sheets of flame. Some of it is so fast-paced as to make it difficult to follow.

But the best thing about it — and what makes it worthwhile to see — is its lack of pretension. Director Irvine (he did the BBC prize-winning mini-series, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*) refrains from moralizing about mercenaries or, for that matter, about the people who hire them, the underdeveloped countries in which they work or the dictators whom they seek to overthrow. Rather, he simply presents situations and leaves it up to the viewer to decide on the morality, or lack of it, portrayed.

Dogs of War does not pretend to be any more than a well-made action, macho adventure story. And it certainly is that.

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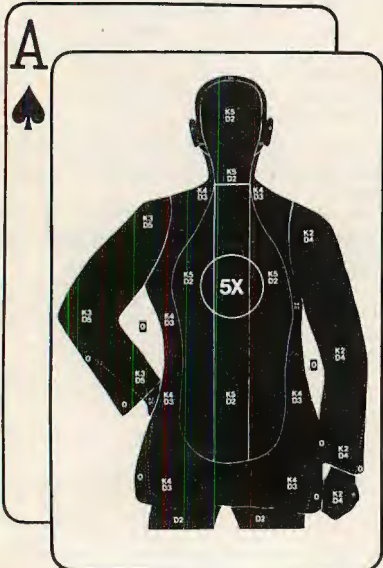
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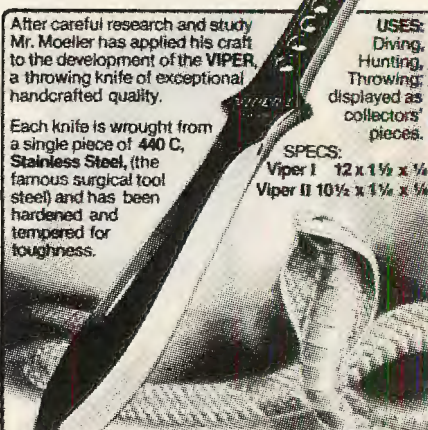


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Continued from page 4

to assemble sufficient witnesses to justify the MH.

However, other accounts claim that the Medal was not given earlier because, until recently, it was not officially acknowledged that American troops were in Cambodia at that time.

### MISSOURI FIRST ...

A Missouri Brigade of the First Airborne Division, which ran the parachute jump for SOF's first annual convention, is being formed.

Missouri-area residents who are interested may obtain more information by writing Joe Kalal, Missouri Brigade, First Airborne Division, P.O. Box 9953, Kirkwood, MO 63123.

### IRAN HOLDS AFGHAN ...

An American citizen of Afghan origin, Zia Nassry, (see "We Will Fight to the Death," SOF April '80) is still being held in an Iranian prison.

After several American inquiries, the Swiss Embassy in Tehran was able to confirm that Nassry was in Evin prison.

Nassry told his wife, Tur, last March that he was going to Tehran to open a clinic for Afghan refugees.

Mrs. Nassry has now been told that Zia is charged with spying for the United States.

### ANNUAL REUNION NOTES ...

The 551st Parachute Infantry Assn. will hold its fifth annual reunion in Atlanta, Ga., 18-20 June at the Hyatt Riviera. For more information contact: Phil Hand, 2824 Tralyn Court, Decatur, GA 30034. Phone (404) 289-7976.

The Sixteenth Armored Division Assn. will hold its 29th annual reunion 13-16 August at the Little America Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. Further information may be obtained by contacting Don E. Millemann, 4420 Woodgate Lane, Louisville, KY 40220, phone (502) 491-5979.

### CHINESE QUIP QUOTED ...

An SOF reader writes: "The [communist] Chinese do have a capability for political satire, as evidenced by the following translation from the Peking People's Daily."

"Question: What's the largest country in the world?"

"Answer: Cuba. Its heart is in Havana. Its government is in Moscow. Its graveyards are in Angola and Ethiopia and its people are in Miami."

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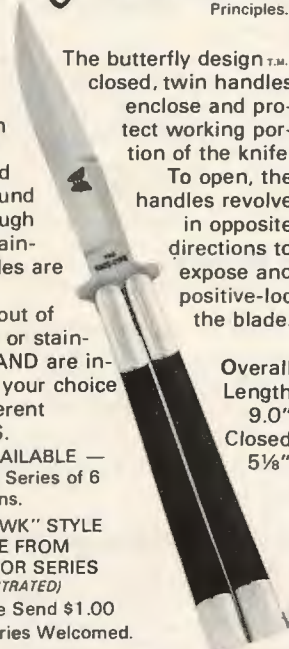
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ture sports decathlon" to be filmed this fall for NBC.

Producer Jack Wheeler told SOF, "I'm looking for the top 10 or 12 adventure-sports participants in the world to compete in what will be a 10-week series on the network, and I thought your readership would include likely candidates."

The 10 events will be divided into two aerial, two water, two land, two motor and two winter adventure sports. Contestants must participate in all.

The sports are: hang gliding and freestyle skydiving from 12,500 feet in which contestants will perform a routine of their choice and also be judged by accuracy of landing; ocean wind surfing in Hawaii and white-water kayaking; big-wall rock climbing and taking the Army survival course in Florida; motocross dirt-bike racing and formula race-car driving; and ice-boat racing plus a one-person luge competition at Lake Placid, N.Y., in which contestants will negotiate a bobsled course while sitting on a small sled.

Competition will be open to all — men and women, military or civilian, professional or amateur — who meet the minimum qualifications.

These are: U.S. Parachute Assn. Class-B skydiving license (50 or more jumps); U.S. Hang Gliding Assn. Hang-III rating; in kayaking, the ability to handle Class-III white water and perform an Eskimo Roll; and in rock climbing, the ability to accomplish the lead in a 5.7 pitch.

Training will be offered in the other sports.

Wheeler said there will be "substantial cash and equipment prizes" for event winners and the overall champion.

Those interested may contact Wheeler at: Wheeler Adventures, 427 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills, CA 90210, phone (213) 550-1861.



## IN REVIEW

*Continued from page 16*

suspects would probably find himself hauled into Federal District Court on a Civil Rights violation faster than you can say ACLU. Nonetheless, it is still an excellent source of advanced reference material for SWAT team leaders and the like.

While all too many police publications are written with the college-educated professor of criminology in mind instead of Joe Cop, police officers (even those with low reading scores) will be able to breeze through this manual with the ease of a Boy Scout handbook. Although very little instruction is given in the actual use of weapons (the reader is

presumed to be an experienced combat soldier — perhaps that is a fatal assumption), each individual tactic and technique — from walking through rubble to “mouseholing” — is clearly explained in precise detail.

Tankers may find some parts of the book downright abusive of the steel monsters, but if they read on they too will learn how to become a valuable member of an urban assault or defense team — as will medics, demolition experts, armorers and, yes, even women. City warfare, at least successful city warfare, is a highly coordinated team effort with no place for either malingers or “over-the-top-lads!” types. Every man on the team from cook to commander must do his job with the utmost efficiency and dispatch or the entire force will pay with their blood — a point Edwards emphasizes on more than one occasion.

**Combat: House to House** is one of those rare military manuals that should be required reading for all American citizens, regardless of military status. For how else are they going to put in perspective the human suffering and bloodshed in those nasty little conflicts that in reality decide what happens to everything from gas prices to the future of the United States?

**Combat: House to House** is Kurt Priebe's second contribution to *SOF's* in-review pages. A free-lance writer out of Washington, Priebe is familiar with police and guerrilla tactics, and qualified to evaluate books on this subject.



## FLAK

Continued from page 7

busy puking up their guts, they won't have time to bitch. Bring war to the U.S.A. in bright, living color and make them look at it and make them dream about it and let them live with it day by day as I have for 12 years.

Then, after you show the U.S.A. the real Vietnam War in bright-red living color, and they see all the ungodly things that took place, then tell all of them to shut up: “We don't want to hear about Vietnam.” That's what they did to me and about 500,000 other men. Fighting that war was a bitch — but living with it is the really hard part.

Thanks,  
Jack Adams  
Sedona, Arizona

## UCMJ AND JUSTICE ...

Sirs:

In *SOF's* December 1980 issue, “Sharpshooting with Chairman Jeff” gave Jeff Cooper's opinion that the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) is more of an obstacle to a

# TECH SEC\*



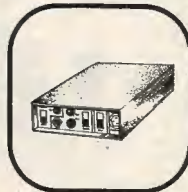
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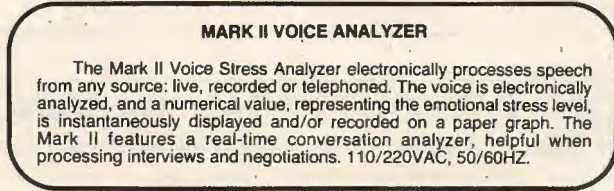
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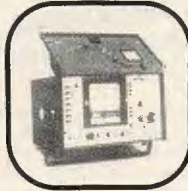
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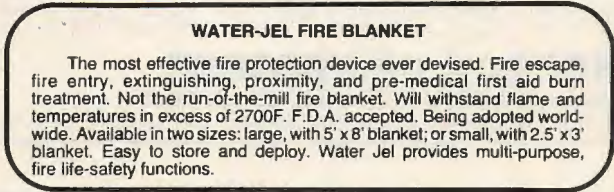
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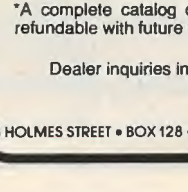
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good military establishment than our current "volunteer army" policy. Would Cooper care to expand on this statement? I am curious about his opinion of the UCMJ.

Yours truly,  
David L. Gerber  
APO, New York, New York

Jeff Cooper replies:

In my early service I was for a time legal aid to the captain of a battleship and, as such, saw enough of the functioning of "Rocks and Shoals" (the articles for the government of the Navy) to justify an opinion. While I have never been a functionary of the UCMJ, my son-in-law was a judge advocate in the Air Force for several years and I have discussed the UCMJ with him at length.

In essence, military justice is an appurtenance to a fighting force rather than a regulatory device superimposed upon it. The reason for the existence of a fighting force is victory, and the "civil rights" of its personnel are of minor importance by comparison.

The framers of the UCMJ were legalists to whom victory in battle was a remote and irrelevant concept. By introducing the "adversary system" into military law they placed abstract justice ahead of military efficiency and thus put the "rights" of the soldier ahead of the fighting capacity of his organization. I believe I know why they did this but I just don't agree with them.

The system we used prior to the UCMJ was neat, fast and efficient. It was also remarkably just, insofar as that word can be defined. Comparing our procedures with those of the civil courts, we concluded that if you were innocent you would always prefer a court martial, but that if you were guilty you had better scream for a civil court. The courts martial of that period quickly determined what happened, assigned responsibility and pronounced judgment. Everyone present was concerned with the facts of the case rather than with rules of procedure. No one was the antagonist of anyone else. What we sought was the truth.

Under the UCMJ, by contrast, procedure became paramount and the discovery of the truth was subordinate to the rights of the accused. A serious army has no time for that sort of thing.

When we first put on the uniform we were told — forcefully — that the only "right" a soldier had was to fight for his country. We saw very few courts, and those we saw were for purely civilian transgressions. As detachment commander for over a year, I never put a man on report. Not once. I had excellent sergeants and I never had any sort of disciplinary problem. That's what sergeants are for.

What is fundamentally wrong with the new system is that it cripples command authority, and command authority is more necessary to success in battle than any other single thing.

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## CONCERNING DECIMAL POWER ...

Sirs:  
Alexander M.S. McColl's editorial, "The Warrior Image" (SOF, January '81), had an important typographical error. The closing biblical quotation, given as John, Chapter 15:2-3, is actually John 15:12-13. Despite the error, I think the editorial is proof positive in favor of your magazine and its patriotic cause. I believe it is important to correct this error. I would also like to comment that this passage had a lot of impact with my friends. Give yourself a pat on the back, Mr. McColl, sir.

Sincerely,

Larry Koehler, A1C, USAF  
Robins AFB, Georgia

*Thanks for getting the 10s back where they belong in "greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends."—The Eds.*

## SIMPLE PARTINGS ...

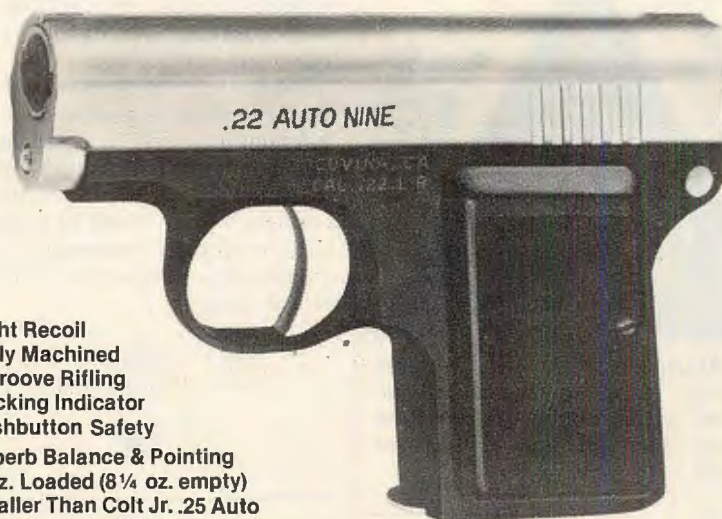
Sirs:  
As a former Los Angeles police officer (Metro Division, SWAT) with five years in the position of "long rifleman," I would like to clarify some points made in Ken R. Pence's "Parting Shots" (SOF, December '80). The article discussed the medulla (spinal cord) as the point of impact for optimum incapacitation. I agree that the junction at the base of the brain is a vital area for target selection. I feel, however, that Pence's "four aiming spots" unduly complicates realistic tactical situations and is misleading when referring to the mouth.

No target area of the human anatomy will guarantee that, when it is destroyed, a motor response — such as pulling a trigger — will not be completed. The rule is that general motor responses will instantly fail. But there have been enough exceptions to warrant caution. When the spinal cord is severed, brain impulses can no longer be transmitted past the transection. But if a thought is strongly implanted subconsciously, it is possible for motor response to occur. A completely independent reflex action, after severance of the spinal cord, is also distinctly possible. Think of a chicken with its head chopped off.

The mouth is well below the junction of the medulla and the brain. If the target turns slightly, a mouth shot could miss the spinal cord. The nose is a more accurate reference point. The tremendous hydrostatic shock of a high-velocity rifle bullet (preferably .223 or greater) sweeping through the brain's midsection is sufficient to immobilize the

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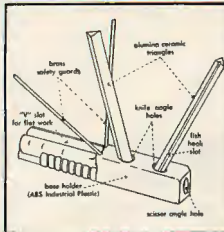
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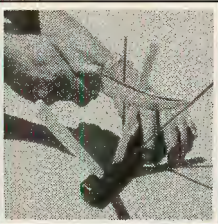
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target. The availability of target mass is one of the conditions that determines whether or not to take a "green light." If suspect and hostage are head to head, with partial exposure of the suspect, the "eyeline" between the nose and eyebrows becomes the target.

My conclusions are based upon events witnessed by police officers and the independent opinions of forensic pathologists and military doctors.

The tactician must never forget the factors involved in a green-light situation, including the adrenalin pounding in the rifleman who must determine impact, put the bullet next to a hostage's head — and be prepared for a follow-up shot, if necessary. Simplicity remains one of the keys to consistent mission success.

Sincerely,  
Karl F. Thompson, Jr.  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho



### PUNCH

*Continued from page 28*

solidly, I guarantee you won't fall over. He will.

Remember: this is not an arm punch. The source of power is in the legs, and is available to you through the use of the drop-step. It may take lots of practice, but eventually the movement will become second nature.

### Develop That Thrust

Practicing is facilitated by using heavy bags and a focus mitt — try an old catcher's mitt stuffed with extremely resilient foam rubber. It is important not to throw full-power punches unless you've got something to hit which resists; otherwise you're going to develop punches that contain little if any *thrust* — a necessary ingredient of any hard punch, regardless of the discipline.

Beware of telegraphing; a mirror can point out to you tell-tale signs of an impending punch, which you must eliminate to the best of your ability. When you can knock a 170-pound man holding a focus mitt against a wall five feet to his rear, you are on the right track.

Think of your punch as a one-shot back-up gun. Become fast getting it out, fast and accurate on target, and fast in execution.

Remember, a punch is your last-resort weapon, but there is no reason — once you've decided you must use it — not to use it to its best effect. In the pursuit of self-defense expertise, there is no need to become entangled in esoteric, superfluous techniques. To quote Jesse Glover, the late Bruce Lee's first student and assistant instructor, "In fighting, the idea is to deliver your weapons in a way that prevents self-injury. The object is not to

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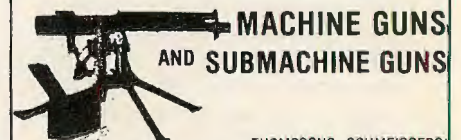
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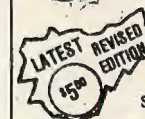
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deliver your weapons in some highly stylized manner."

I rest my case.



## SHARPSHOOTING

Continued from page 23

Pending the impact of practical rifle competition upon the shooting world — a phenomenon which may take 20 years or more — the systems by which the rifle is used are not radically different today from what they were in 1925.

With the pistol the matter is entirely different. The modern technique of the pistol has completely superseded what was previously thought to be standard, so the first question that may be asked by a prospective student is whether or not his teacher is aware of the modern technique. If the school or its spokesman asks, "What is that?" the matter should be dropped right there.

I note a number of would-be authorities who do not understand what is meant by "the modern technique of the pistol," and we need only answer that the modern technique of the pistol is what wins in competition, and practical competition is tested all over the world at this time, primarily under the auspices of the International Practical Shooting Confederation. A schoolmaster or teacher who does not understand that is not worthy of your further consideration.

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Continued on page 89



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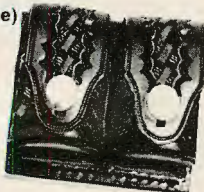
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Look for convention information on page 24 of this issue and for further details next issue.

See you there.

### REBIRTH

*Continued from page 69*

Fortunately, the project didn't die. In February 1980, at the Sahara Antique Gun and Knife Show in Las Vegas, I brought Applegate together with T.J. Yancey. Yancey, a custom knifemaker from Estes Park, Colo., is internationally known for his designs and craftsmanship. He is the creator of several knives which will undoubtedly become classics. Limited production of the A-F knife, by Yancey, is underway presently.

### A-F Characteristics

The result — a six-inch, double-edged, razor-sharp blade — is one-inch wide and 3/16-inch thick. The blade design puts strength at the tang and tip. The steel used is Crucible's 154cm; hardness is Rc60. 154cm is an expensive, corrosion-resistant, stainless steel that holds an edge. It is tough and, when properly heat-treated, resists breakage and tends to bend rather than break under excessive pressure. This steel is used by the most famous and expensive custom knifemakers. It does not machine well and therefore is not used by mass-production knifemakers. The curved crossguard is of 1/4-inch brass bar stock and is press-fit onto the blade. The knives' serial numbers, for identification and quality control, are stamped on the guard.

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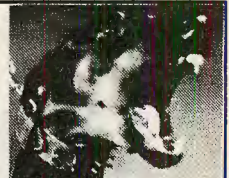


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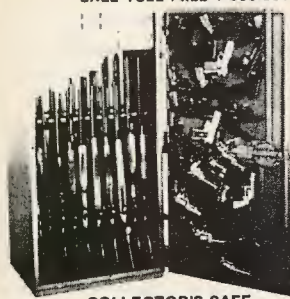


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tudinal grooves, into which the flesh of the fingers and palm compress, providing a non-slip grip even under combat tension. Truly, Col. Applegate has done his homework well.

Last, but not least, is the *piece de resistance* of this magnificent weapon. The eight-ounce knife can be balanced to individual preference through use of adjustable lead weights in the handle cavity — another first in knife design. Balance in a fighting knife is of great importance. Such a knife should be handle-heavy, causing the "feel" to inspire confidence in it as a weapon. Practically and psychologically, this is a most important factor in selection and employment of a knife primarily designed for close-quarter combat.

As far as I am concerned, the production knife is correctly balanced and weighted. If you were to blindfold an individual and ask him to select a knife from a number of currently available fighting knives by "feel" alone, I think he would probably pick the Applegate-Fairbairn.

### Scabbard

The Yancey-designed scabbard, manufactured by Tex Shoemaker, equals the quality of the knife it was made for. Full top-grain leather with double stitching is used. The keeper strap utilizes Velcro® as a fastener. Either a spring metal clip or conventional loop-belt hanger can be utilized. Three hollow, tubular rivets at the tip of the sheath enable one to use thongs to tie the knife in any conceivable manner to his person — or harness.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The Applegate-Fairbairn is available from the Wells Creek Knife and Gun Works, Dept. SOF, Rt. 1, Box 22B, Scottsburg, OR 97473. The Combat Model retails for \$350 and the Presentation Model for \$500.*



### COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

*Continued on page 12*

point with IPSC shooting. We see it compromised constantly, because a fair judgment of a contestant's conduct in regard to tactics is so difficult that most of the time it is not even considered. The key lies in match design. The third factor is weapons skill, and few would argue that good IPSC shooters do not excel in this area. Unfortunately, in real life, mental conditioning and tactics become far more important than shooting skill.

Practical-pistol-course designers may be more interested in making "their" match a lot of fun or so exotic that it

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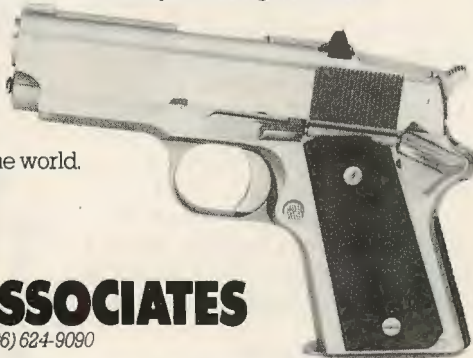
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stretches the meaning of "practical." The good news here is that with the new worldwide organization within IPSC, some really skilled, talented people are available. With proper guidance and consideration, they can provide the groundwork that will make practical shooting much more rewarding.

I believe that most new shooters entering the IPSC shooting scene are far more interested in learning to use a sidearm as a defensive tool than in becoming champion competition shooters, a factor often overlooked in practical shooting. Most people take up karate because they want to learn the skills necessary for self-defense and the self-confidence that results from such training. Becoming a karate master or champion is not why they sign up for courses.

This is also true in the case of practical shooting. If the potential shooter sees the IPSC program as a foolish game without any real value, his or her interest will likely turn elsewhere. Granted, once the new shooter enters the competition program, he may get bitten by the bug and go wild trying to become the top gun. For this reason, course designers and IPSC officials must keep a clear view of what we are trying to do.

Practical shooting need not be complex in order to be realistic. If one studies real-life encounters, he will see what I mean. Running, jumping, crawling or shooting from excessively long ranges may be great fun, but it has little to do

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with the defensive-pistol's mission. A fire-and-movement course that requires a contestant to carry more than two reloads or takes too much time is ridiculous. Keep it practical and we will get along just fine.

Many clubs try to outdo one another with more exotic, outrageous courses of fire. This waste of energy puts everyone in a position of looking phony. In the first IPSC World Championship in 1977, the Rhodesians put on a fine match with some rather exaggerated tests of practical pistol skill. The follow-up World Match held in South Africa in 1979 was an example of a new host organization trying to outdo the last one. The South Africans are fine people and excellent hosts, but to say that all their shooting events reflected something practical stretches the meaning of the term to its limits.

With proper leadership and direction, practical shooting can get back on the right foot, plus be realistic and meaningful both for the sportsman and professional.

(Next month Ken Hackathorn continues his analysis of combat logic and its relationship to IPSC course design by evaluating practical methods of using cover both on the range and in competition.)



## SHARPSHOOTING

Continued from page 85

Mike Dalton and Chuck Taylor. Both Dalton and Taylor are excellent shots, and Taylor has had considerable teaching experience. As these two new organizations expand and improve they may reach the point where their certifications are also acceptable.

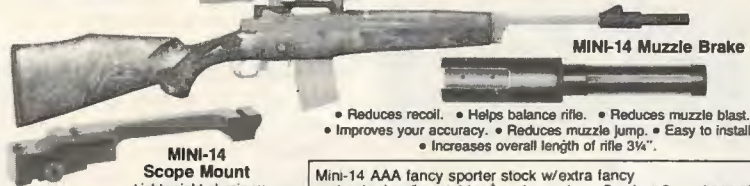
But I earnestly advise you to beware of shortcuts. Not long ago, after the release of a television treatment of our school here at Gunsite, I was called by an operator in the Southeast who said to me something to the effect that since I had a good thing going he wanted to do the same. My response was, of course, that he should first go to school to learn what he was trying to teach, then to engage in organized competition for two or three years (winning himself a sectional or preferably regional title) and only then attempt to put out the word. His feelings were hurt and he seemed to think that I had missed the point. He did not wish to be qualified to teach, he only wished to make money teaching. This is the sort of thing one must guard against.

Nothing so far should be taken as negative criticism of those small and fundamental seminars which are held all over the country for the purpose of familiarizing people with the safe handling of firearms. These classes are fine and should be given full acceptance — always assuming that the people who run them know

Continued on page 92

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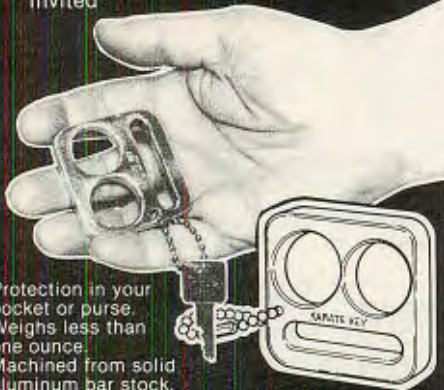
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## SOG'S SECRET WAR

Continued from page 76

South Vietnam's I Corps and into combat. The mission was tank-busting, and results are "rumored" to have been spectacular. At any rate, by 16 September, the South Vietnamese were able to retake Quang Tri.

How successful was SOG?

That's difficult to assess, as the Pentagon to this day has never released any statistics. SOG, and its many, many tentacles are still wrapped within the TOP SECRET classification so loved by the pencil pushers in Washington and nervous nellies in the State Department.

When our reporter questioned U.S. Army officials in the Pentagon about many of the operations and projects described here, the reaction was:

"You're kidding."

"There are no records of these units. I'm sorry, but we can't help you on this."

"No way."

Our reply is: Why not?

SOG is rumored to have been one of the best-organized and best-run operations in Vietnam. The Army Special Forces, Marine Force Recon, Navy SEAL and Air Force air crews who did SOG's fighting were perhaps the best in Vietnam. Without doubt, they were the most highly trained.

SOG's troops fought hard and well and suffered enormously, both then and since. Casualty figures for SOG have never been released. They were buried in the numbers of other units. But SOG troopers imply that they were very high at some points in the war.

Their suffering has not yet ended. SOG personnel listed as missing in North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are not included among the SOG personnel listed as MIA by the Department of Defense. Former SOG personnel, a high percentage of whom suffered wounds in Vietnam, also report that they occasionally run into problems dealing with the Veterans Administration.

SOG's troops wounded in Laos, who turn to the VA for medical assistance, are routinely asked to provide supporting documentation on when, where and how they were hit. The records don't exist or cannot be pried loose from DOD.

While some former SOG personnel are willing to talk about not only what they did but where they did it, many are still reluctant to speak out.

However, it is long past time to do so. As one said: "There are no operations going on today. There is nothing we can compromise." He is correct. The technology used by SOG in the '60s and early '70s is old hat today. The operating tactics, the communists know well. After all, they were on the receiving end.

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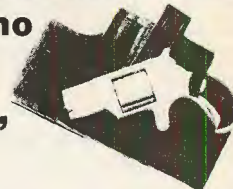
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No less an authority than retired Maj. Gen. Singlaub, head of MACV-SOG, has said it is time.

At the SOAR IV Convention (Special Operations Association — a group which includes SOG people and personnel from other classified operations), Singlaub said:

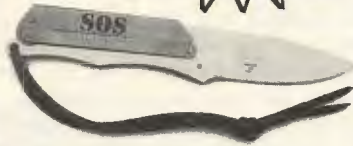
"I think these operations, which produced not only a great amount of intelligence, but destroyed an awful lot of North Vietnamese regular units and incredible amounts of supplies, will be the basis of thrilling books and movies for years to come.

"And as for you guys who were the stars of that program [OPS 35], the time has come now when I think we have to put this all together and let the world know that there were some pretty fine guys who fought that war in Vietnam, and that what they were doing was contributing directly to the success of our war efforts in Vietnam."

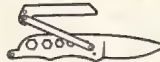
**EDITOR'S NOTE:** It is for the reasons outlined above that Soldier of Fortune Magazine has decided to publish this section dedicated to SOG. Although SOF realizes that some of the information — quite a bit of it — is still classified, it is long past time for America to know where and how some of its finest soldiers fought and died.



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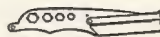
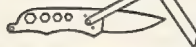


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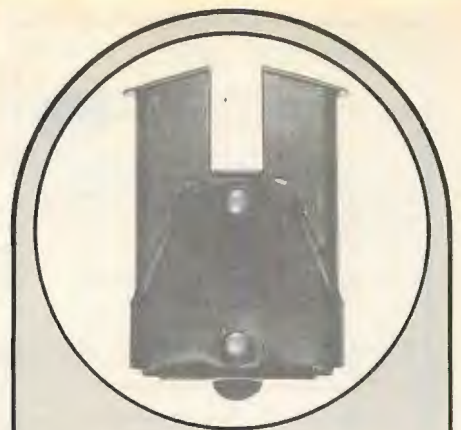
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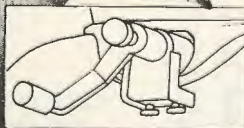
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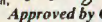
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## SHARPSHOOTING

Continued from page 89

what they are doing. Teaching a novice the principles of firearms, the mechanics of their operation and their safe handling is something that can be handled pretty well out of the textbook by almost anyone who is willing to get up on the platform and put out what he has absorbed.

Such sessions should be regarded as proper feeders for the major academies, since most of the latter would prefer that the student come to school with the fundamentals of operation already in hand. The purpose of the major schools is to raise the marksmanship of the student as quickly as possible to a standard of competence which will give him a basis from which he may be able to develop himself into a master shot.

If you intend to spend your hard-earned money on marksmanship training, we urge you to take the time to check into the qualifications of the institutions available to you. We may assume that such institutions will proliferate greatly during the '80s. It is up to the client to insure that he gets his money's worth.



## SOF OFFERS RUSSIAN MINE POSTER

SOF now has a poster available of the new Russian anti-personnel mine being scattered via helicopter and aircraft in Afghanistan (See SOF April, 1981, p. 24). It is in color, shows mine in exact size and has detailed description. The poster is free to all who order on military letterhead. Copies to others interested are available for 50 cents for the first and 25 cents each additional.

Also available are lab reports on the mine and its explosive. It has now been established that the mine employs liquid binary agents. Binaries are liquids or gasses that are inert until mixed — when they form either an explosive or debilitating gas.

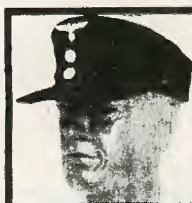
The new Russian mine contains at least two, and perhaps more, binaries. The liquid is mixed into a lethal explosive either while falling through the air or upon impact. It is also a very fast explosive, with a detonation rate of 24,000-26,000 fps — about the same as detonating cord or C4.



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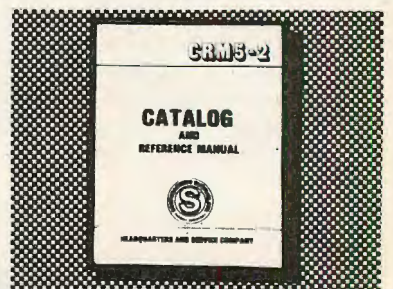
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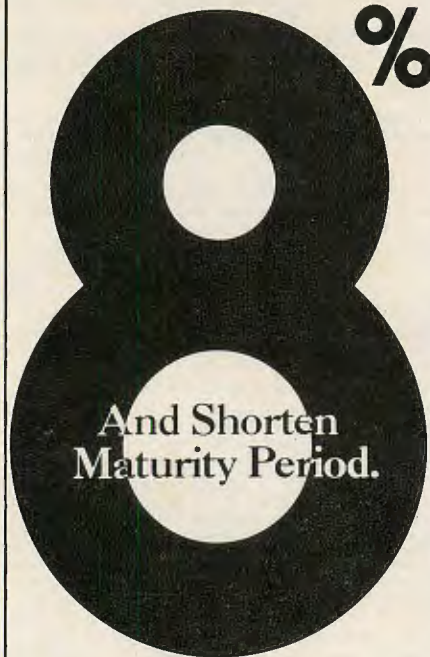
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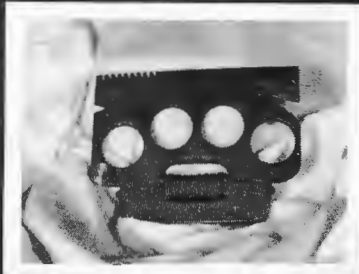
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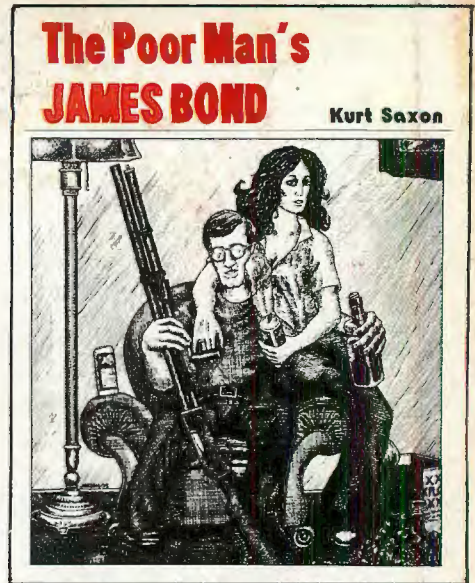
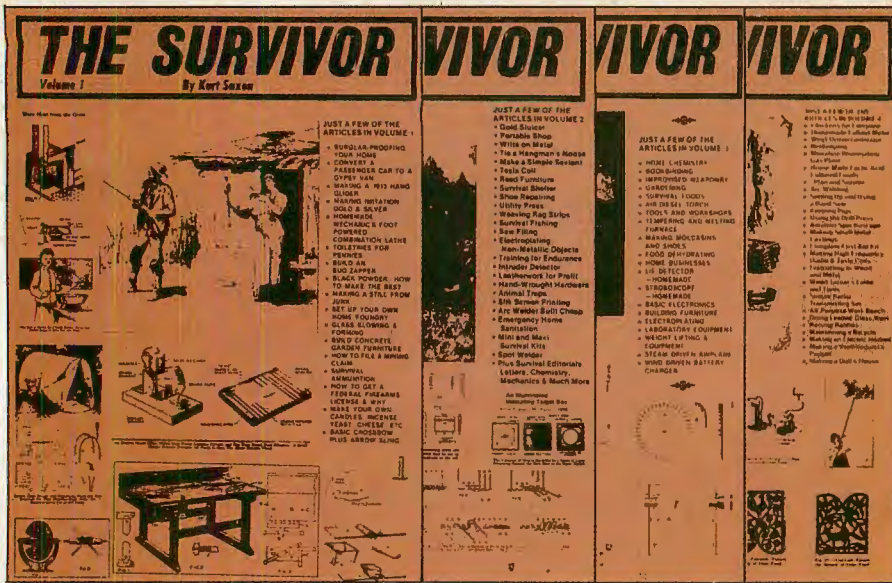
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