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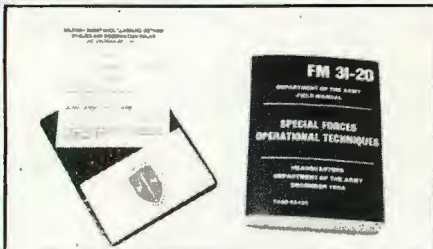


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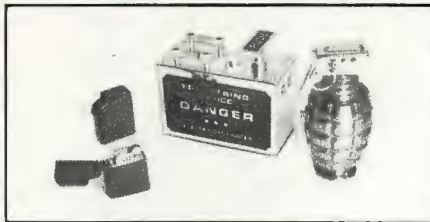
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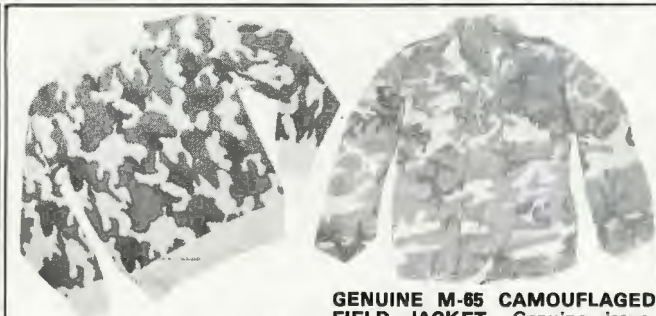


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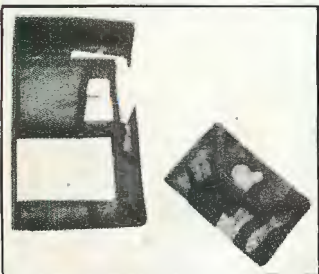
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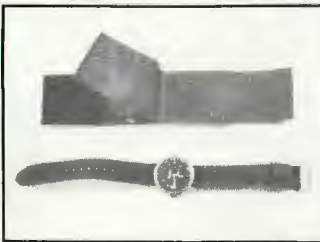


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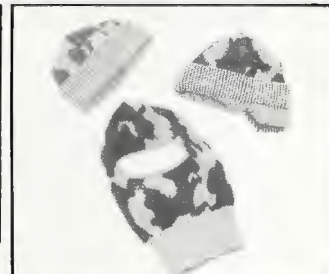


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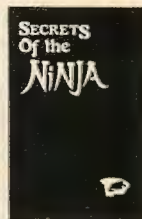
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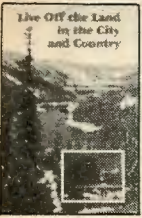
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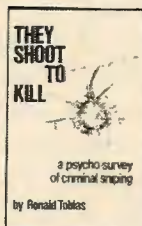
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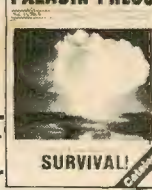
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# EDITOR'S NOTES

**S*****SOLDIER OF FORTUNE*** Magazine Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, who likes being there (anywhere there is action) better than here (the office), revealed at the SOF Convention in Scottsdale, Arizona, that he and other members of the SOF staff had managed to cross Thailand's border into Laos in August.

Brown, who did his time in 'Nam with a Special Forces A team in the highlands, found Laos fascinating albeit complex and physically difficult to reach.

"It's incredible terrain," said Brown, "ideal for guerrilla warfare. It's mountainous, not too high but very rugged, virtually roadless, with ground cover so thick that sometimes you cover only 200 meters a day, hacking your way through the undergrowth.

"Even when you get out of the forest belt, the mountain walls are so steep that it can take you up to eight hours to cover three miles.

"Laos today is a desperately poor socialist state. The economy is ruined — and the communist Pathet Lao military organization set up by Ho Chi Minh in January 1949 as an arm of the North Vietnamese Communist Party today blames the Vietnamese for all that is going wrong.

"As they become more and more disillusioned with the Vietnamese, more and more Pathet Lao are defecting. That includes rank-and-file as well as senior officers.

"Obviously, if the Chinese can make the Vietnamese bleed a little, that will make them very happy. As part of its effort to cause the Vietnamese problems, Peking is taking in Laotian tribesmen, giving them four months' training, then sending them back to Laos with PRC (People's Republic of China) uniforms and small arms, including AK-47s, hand grenades and RPG-2 rockets.

"Right now it is difficult to predict precisely what the PRC has in mind as the Chinese are just building up their strength.

"But from our observations, it is clear that the level of disenchantment with the Vietnamese is such that the various tribes are for the first time willing to unite for a common goal: to expel the Vietnamese from their country."

What Brown, Associate Editor Jim Coyne, and Contributing Editors Tom Reisinger and Fred Zabitosky (the other members of SOF's team) observed in Laos fits in with developments in Cambodia.

Earlier this year, Peking started making moves to dump the Pol Pot wing of the Khmer Rouge in an attempt to bring about a coalition of forces between the KR and the non-communist Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF).

It would appear that the PRC is perfectly willing to support and supply non-communist movements in Southeast Asia, provided those movements are actively engaged in military operations against the Soviet-backed Vietnamese.

If the PRC gets involved in the resistance movements within Vietnam itself — SOF continues to hear rumors of active resistance against the Vietnamese by Montagnards and former Republic of Vietnam forces — Southeast Asia will have gone the full circle.

With each passing year it becomes more and more obvious there will never be peace in Southeast Asia until the People's Republic of China gets the alignment of power it desires.

—Jim Graves

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COVER: SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown with three members of Laos United Liberation Front at LULF base camp in Laos. Brown and two of the three LULF troops are holding Chinese Type 56 assault rifles (China's copy of Soviet Union's AK-47); soldier in center is armed with RPG-2. Many LULF troops have received training in southern China as well as uniforms, arms and ammunition. Photo: Fred Zabitosky

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# SAS Patrol Techniques

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# BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



## RUSSIAN MINE POSTER ...

SOF now has a poster available on the new Russian anti-personnel mine being scattered via helicopter and aircraft in Afghanistan (see SOF, April '81, p. 24). It shows the mine in exact size and with 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 for each additional.

Also available are lab reports on the mine and its explosive. The new Russian mine contains a very fast explosive with a detonation rate of 24,000-26,000 fps, about the same as detonating cord or C4.

## NAVAL NARCS? ...

U.S. Attorney General William F. Smith has asked for help from the Navy to detect drug smugglers on the high seas.

Smith said the widespread traffic in narcotics is a "national menace" that requires action on both a national and international scale.

In requesting help from the military to run down drug runners, Smith endorsed a controversial recommendation recently made by his Task Force on Violent Crime after it heard top law-enforcement officers from Florida appeal for federal help in fighting the state's massive drug-smuggling problem.

The Defense Department, however, has expressed reservations about the idea, fearing that it would siphon off resources that should be used for military purposes.

Another possible solution to the drug-smuggling problem has recently surfaced.

How about government-sponsored privateers? The last time the U.S. government granted a "letter of marque and reprisal" was during the War of 1812 when Congress hired pirates like Jean Lafitte to plunder British merchant ships.

A Key West, Fla., attorney, Randy Ludacer, has petitioned Congress for such a commission so he can mount

his own private war-for-profit against drug smugglers. Ludacer already has a small contingent of adventurers lined up and hopes to split the loot fifty-fifty with the government.

More advanced than his pirate predecessors of 1812, Ludacer proposes to operate patrol boats equipped with sophisticated electronic devices. Utilizing informers, Ludacer would like to insert radio transponders in shrimp boats smuggling marijuana.

"Sometimes the obvious solutions are overlooked because they haven't been used for a long time," he said. Privateering "seemed to be a viable alternative when the Constitution was written."

Ludacer's petition has Washington researchers digging up old archives, and rereading Article One of the Constitution. Article 1, Section 8, of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power "to declare war, grant letters of Marque and Reprisal and make rules concerning captures on land and water."

The last time such letters were issued by Congress was on 26 June 1812. James Madison was president.

"Congress unequivocally has the power," said Senate Parliamentarian Robert Dove. "It obviously is a power that has died out. Most states have renounced the rights. It would be highly unusual, but it still is viable."

"Oh, my God," said a Navy spokesman.

"I don't like to be bogged down in the conventional," said Ludacer.

Hear, hear.

## TAKEN TO TASS(K) ...

TASS, the Soviet Union's official news agency, still doesn't like SOF, which greatly pleases the staff here.

A translated excerpt from its latest "news" account about SOF mentions discussion about us in the United Nations:

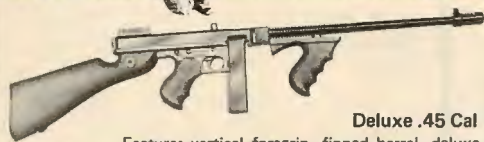
"At the same time as international cooperation ever more decisively comes forward with condemnation of such manifestations of international



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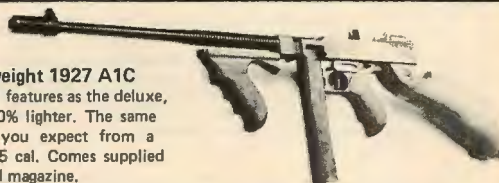
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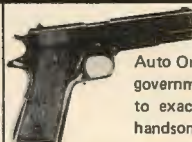
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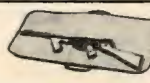
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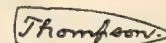


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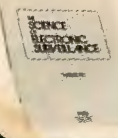


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terrorism as mercenaries, the United States, in fact, openly patronizes hired assassins and their recruiting agents. The current issue of the magazine *Soldier of Fortune* can serve as a graphic illustration of this.

"This publication presents itself as the mouthpiece of a motley group of adventurers with a dark past — Vietnam veterans, pining for cutthroats' bygone 'feats of arms,' ready, for a generous compensation, to set off for other countries to burn and kill.

"In the advertising section, 'work' is offered for 'first class specialists' prepared, in part, for 'mercenary activity.'

"The publication in the United States of *Soldier of Fortune* ... provides indignation among representatives of many countries in the U.N. Particulars in the first session of the special committee for the development of a convention forbidding the recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries recently concluded at U.N. headquarters, have come forth with a demand to suppress distribution of the magazine."

TASS is right about one thing. The U.N. has a committee looking into *Soldier of Fortune*, but thus far it has done nothing but talk, which is what the U.N. usually does.

## ARMS AND O'CONNOR ...

Both the Citizens' Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms and the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) have praised President Reagan's nomination of Sandra D. O'Connor to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court left by the retirement of Justice Potter Stewart. Justice O'Connor was sworn in on 25 September 1981, becoming the first woman justice in the history of America's highest court.

Alan Gottlieb, chairman of the Citizens' Committee, said: "Our investigation certainly suggests that she will vote consistently for the right to keep and bear arms."

Donald Feder, executive director of the SAF, said Judge O'Connor's record in the Arizona State Legislature "indicates a sincere concern for gun owners."

## CHURCH KICKER ...

In a victory for common sense and the Reagan administration, the Senate voted on 30 September 1981 to repeal the "Church Amendment." The five-year-old ban essentially prohibited the United States from lending assistance to groups fighting against

Continued on page 87

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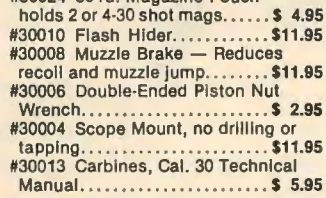
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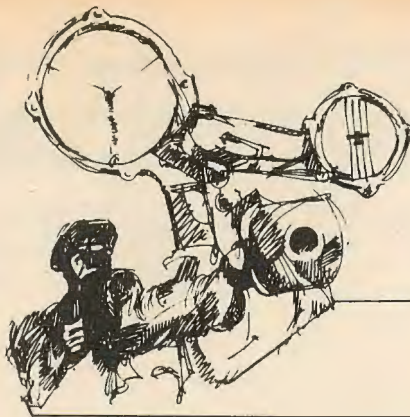
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## FLAK

### KHADAFY'S FRIENDLY SKIES ...

Sirs:

Hats off to the two F-14 crews who rid the skies of those two Libyan MiGs. Once again it's safe to fly the friendly skies. Do today's fighters carry gun cameras like the WWII and Korean War fighters did, so as to confirm a kill? Why won't our Defense Department show these on the evening news? It would be a terrific morale booster for a country full of people who are tired of big-mouthed terrorists like Khadafy telling us what he's going to do.

There's an old saying, "If ya fuck with the bull, you'll get the horn." Maybe we should send Khadafy a book of old American sayings — or he should send his pilots back to training. I'm proud as hell of those crews and America as a nation.

Come and get us, Khadafy, and we'll bury ya next time!

Yours,  
Jeff Mitchell  
Boulder, Colorado

*The Navy reports that the F-14s were carrying special training cameras, as the planes were engaged in a training mission. One malfunctioned and produced no pictures at all. The other showed a lot of empty sky and the horizon sailing around, and not much else. Because a pilot in a dogfight may fire a missile and then maneuver sharply before it reaches its target, his cameras are not always pointed toward the explosion. — The Eds.*

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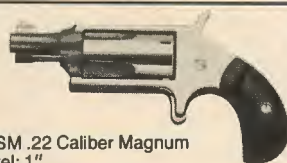
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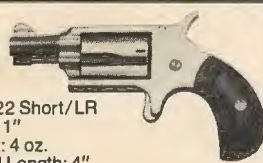
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Overall Length: 4 5/16"



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Barrel: 1 3/4"  
Weight: 4 1/4 oz.  
Overall Length: 4 3/4"



FA-S .22 Short/LR  
Barrel: 1"  
Weight: 4 oz.  
Overall Length: 4"  
All models available in either polished or non fluted mat finish.

### BRAVO RANGERS ...

Sirs:

Well done! The October '81 issue of SOF is easily the best one out in quite some time. Keep up the good work. Fred Reed's article, "U.S. Army Ranger School," was outstanding in every respect. The only error I found was the statement that Santa Rosa Island is 2,000 miles off the Florida coastline. It is more like 2,000 meters — although by Day 12 in Florida the paddle across certainly seems like the mileage he gave. He also failed to give credit to one group of men who are involved with the Ranger Training Program from start to finish. Let me correct his oversight.

Stationed at Benning on Kelly Hill is a unit known as the Bravo Rangers, 1/29th Infantry. No more than a platoon-sized element, it has the honor of being the only non-volunteer Ranger formation in the U.S. Army. It is a recognized DA Ranger unit. Its men wear the uniform, black beret and cammo fatigues, the flash being a solid blue with a 1/29th crest bearing the motto: "We Lead The Way." The mission of this platoon is to provide aggressor forces against Ranger students from City Week to the night raids on Santa Rosa Island that end the 58-day course.

It is, without a doubt, the most thankless job connected with the Infantry

School at Benning. The platoon is split in- to three sections (Darby, Mountains and Florida) and oftentimes men will come back from 18 days in the mountains where they have provided sites and targets for the students to hit, only to find themselves being rotated to the Florida section, leaving two days later for 18 more down south. Although the majority of the men are infantry-trained, they received no further training in their MOS because their schedule requires support at the camps.

Bravo Ranger routine is dull, draining and without reward. The men receive abuse from a minority of the RIs in camp as well. Support from the company at Kelly Hill is usually laughable. Mail is late 80 percent of the time the men are in camp. Checks, unless flown in on the cadre chopper, arrive at least two days after pay day. Besides the details which include ambushes, raids, setting up sites and providing a target convoy up to three times in one night, the men also guard radio-relay points, arms rooms, survival-class stock and maintain vehicles both at the camps and at Benning. Thus, the unit suffers a morale problem which, if the "getting" units could see what the "giving" unit has to work with, under and for, could be improved.

I know. From September 1979 until February 1980 it was my privilege to command the Florida Section of "B" Company Rangers. After weeding out some snivellers, we gathered some young,



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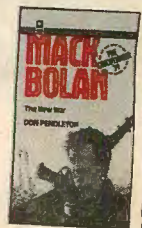
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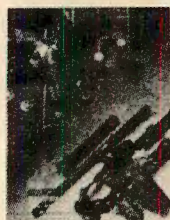
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quality-airborne soldiers and fielded the finest aggressor support the Ranger Department had seen in years. My men's dedication to the mission of preparing potential Rangers was of the highest caliber. The classes that went through during that time faced armed convoys, gun-jeeps, troops using AN-PVS-5 night-vision devices, counter-ambushes and fire fights on Santa Rosa Island that included Mo-Gas explosions and M60s firing up to 2,000 rounds per gun with two to three guns per site and more floating illumination rounds than they had seen during the first 57 days.

There is not an RI in Florida with whom we worked that can say that our support was not the finest possible. Evidence of this was the first-time inclusion of a "B" Company section to work with the Ranger students during an exercise. Their mission was the construction of a blocking force against tanks in support of a raid. The fact that this mission was given to the section by SFC "No-Go" Kendall indicates the respect the Florida cadre had for my men. After we were able to change some minds at Camp Rudder, staff and cadre alike cooperated and supported us, turning those short months from the most thankless to the most rewarding of many of the men's time in service.

Let's set the record straight. The guys who sit out on those sites, course after course; walk into the same ambushes, night after night; see their families less than anyone at Fort Benning and take more shit for being "Bravo" Rangers deserve a chance to be heroes just once. I think my men were some of the most outstanding on the Hill. It is sad to think that their potential as combat soldiers was, and is, being wasted by those who would rather meet a training commitment than actively support the men under their command.

With respect,  
SSG Gregory Walker, 7th SFG(A)  
Monterey, California

**SOF CONVENTION**  
WINS HEARTS AND MINDS ...  
Sirs:

In seeking to make contact with current or former "professional adventurers" in connection with a psychology research project in which I am presently engaged, I recently attended the SOF convention.

As a liberal/woman/student I approached it with considerable apprehension, expecting at least a belligerent reception, if not outright rejection. I felt quite the outsider, even in my new cammies.

While many were curious about my presence, nearly everyone during those four days was polite and friendly. Even with prescription sunglasses, I could discern no one snatching unsuspecting neighborhood pets to consume while hearts still beat.

*Continued on page 88*

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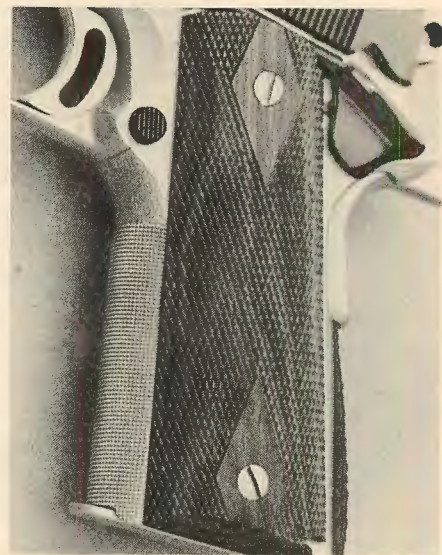
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Author's favorite carry gun, Sports West-modified .45 Colt Commander, gets finishing touch with pair of Hogue diamond-checkered stocks in classic 1911 pattern. Photo: Ken Hackathorn

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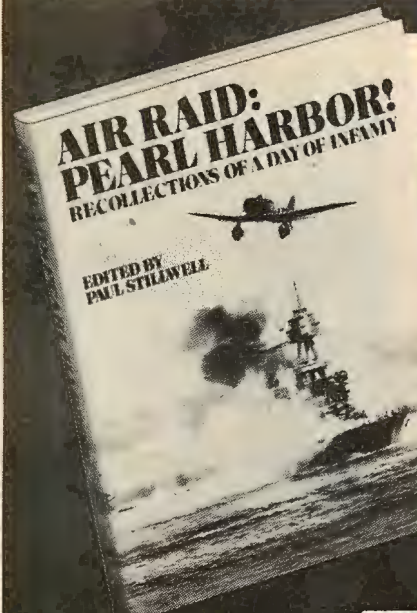
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sidearm, any other stocks feel unnatural.

Recently, the Hogue custom-pistol-stock line has been expanded to include a series of stock panels for the 1911-pattern .45 auto pistol. I have searched for years for a good reproduction of the original 1911-pattern diamond stocks for this pistol. Although a few versions were marketed, none came close to either the quality or the pattern of the original design. The new Hogue line of .45 auto stocks includes a design that is perfect. These outstanding diamond-checkered stocks are the work of the younger Aaron Hogue. After seeing a pair on a friend's .45 auto, I quickly sent in my order. I requested a pair made of coco bolo; they are the finest set of .45 stocks that I own. I put them on my "walk-around gun," a Sports West-built "Chuck Taylor Commando Special" .45 Commander, and the weapon is now complete.

Hogue now offers its custom stocks in micarta, a rugged synthetic material that

*Continued on page 86*



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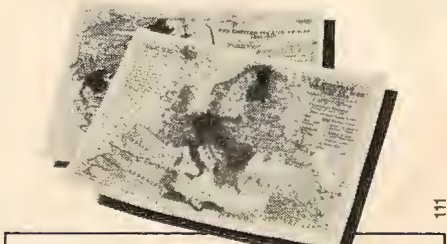
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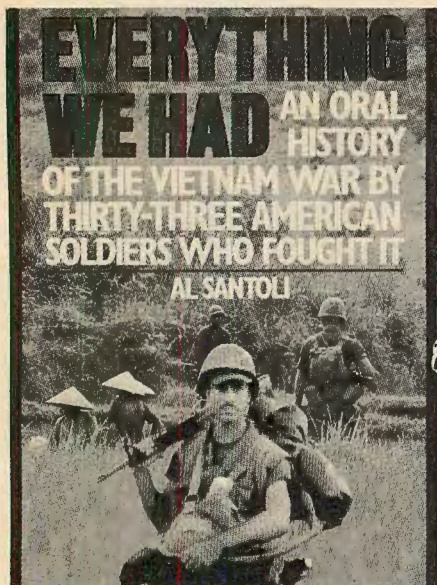
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# IN REVIEW

The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There by Mark Baker



**EVERYTHING WE HAD: An Oral History of the Vietnam War By Thirty-Three American Soldiers Who Fought It.** By Al Santoli. New York: Random House. 1981. 265 pp. \$12.95. Review by William M. Brooks.

Al Santoli, a contemporary writer, poet, playwright, theatrical director and Vietnam veteran, has written an excellent history of the Vietnam War as seen through the eyes of individual soldiers. The author served with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam in 1968-69, during which time he received the Bronze Star for Valor and three Purple Hearts. Santoli says he fought the war twice: once as an 18-year-old infantryman up against the Tet Offensive of 1968; then again, 11 years later, as a veteran with a tape recorder, journeying across America.

*Everything We Had* is the journal of both wars, creating through its account of shared misery and triumph a simple, undeniable reality — the reality of soldiers' lives. "We fought as soldiers," Santoli has written, "not as journalists, movie-makers or politicians. So what we say in our book should be taken literally: what we saw, what we did, what they did and how we felt. Talking about the war that way, as you will see, produces a torrent of contradictory emotions as well as a detached and eerie clarity of mind and spirit.

"And for this," Santoli says, "at least 33 of us don't want a parade, a monument or pity. We want instead an account of the war held together by the combat soldier's bond of trust — an account by people whose life once depended on another's instincts and skill." The reader becomes the soldier as the veteran recalls war's reality.

Thirty-three tours are presented, from December 1962, to April 1975. One reads mostly about ordinary infantrymen, the GI and Marine grunts who put their asses in the grass, but also about a few officers. The accounts include:

Robert Santos was a platoon leader who ran point. Jonathan Polansky fell deeply in love with a Vietnamese girl, who was then butchered by the VC for being an American sympathizer. Herb Mock ran point, had his glasses shot off his face, the magazine shot out of his weapon, a radio shot off his back and three bullets pass harmlessly through his shirt.

James Hebron spent seven months at Khe Sanh, wearing the same shirt and pants, saw his buddy shoot a lifer in the back, his squad dwindle to four and his weight drop from 180 to 150, while only 20 minutes away, Da Nang Commandos wore spit-shined boots, slept in beds, drank beer and ate steak. John Muir lost his squad, ran out of ammunition and killed an NVA with a rock, while 10 minutes away, the soldiers cared only that their water skiing was interrupted.

Lynda Van Devanter found life in the midst of death when she delivered a baby in a battlefield hospital. These 33 experiences of once-idealistic young Americans who fought the war are all documented in Santoli's book, which also has a current bibliography and is illustrated with 27 photographs.

The war's truth, human honor, love and hate can be discovered in *Everything We Had*. Now, every American can find out what it was really like in a distant place, a long time ago, where 57,661 Americans died: "So we can move on, without forgetting."

**NAM: The Vietnam War in the Words of the Men and Women Who Fought There.** By Mark Baker. New York: William Morrow and Company. 1981. 269 pp. \$10.95. Review by William M. Brooks.

Mark Baker, a free-lance writer with no journalistic credibility whatsoever, has written a book of interviews with Vietnam veterans. Since he provides no photos, maps, locations or dates, and since all of the interviewees are anonymous, the stories could be either fact or fiction.

After reading four or five pages of *Nam*, I deduced that the author has never served one day's tenure under arms. Some of the interviews are pure bull. One interviewee stated that when a member of Special Forces entered a bar, everyone hastily offered him a seat — the author should try selling that to the Marines!

I do not recommend this book and I have serious doubts about its validity — not to mention the author's motives.

**WEAPONS: An International Encyclopedia from 500 B.C. to 2000 A.D. The Diagram Group.** Edited by David Harding. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1980. 320 pp. \$25.00. Review by Eugene A. Barron.

**T**HIS volume represents an ambitious effort to categorize all known weapons of all types to date into 32 classes. *Weapons* then covers the theory and practice of each class as it evolved chronologically to date. The book's subject is wide-ranging and complex, to say the least, and it appears the Diagram Group has done a more than adequate job in a limited space. Topics range from rocks and clubs to the weaponry of modern nuclear, chemical and biological warfare.

As might be expected, space limitations prevent coverage in any depth, but some of the information is both unexpectedly detailed and esoteric. I found some answers to questions on 200-year-old small arms and cannon not available in the conventional books on the subjects. Areas of some complexity have been handled by chronological tables; specifically, there are tables for hand-held missile throwers (small arms) and two for mounted missile throwers (machine guns and combustion-powered artillery). There are regional and historical indices, a glossary of famous names in weapons design, a brief bibliography and a subject index.

Evaluated as a basic treatise on the chronological development of man's incessant drive for greater accuracy, range and destructiveness in his weaponry, the book succeeds admirably. *Weapons* will be of particular interest to those looking for treatises on early or foreign weapons of abstruse design. I recommend it as a foundation for anyone wishing to examine facets of weapons through recorded time.



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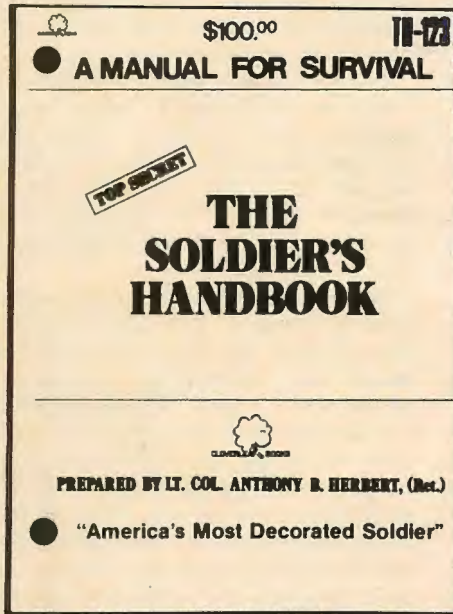
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have it than a gun.*

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Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

The book's already a big hit among old military hands, narcotics folk, cops, corporations and individuals with more than just a little to protect. And, promises Herbert, the book will be updated periodically. Which might prove necessary. After all, you never know when another Noble Cause may come loping around the next corner. □

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# It Happened To Me

by Louis R. Barnes  
as told to M.L. Jones

*Rick Barnes is now a detective lieutenant with a metropolitan police department. He was a Marine from 1965 to 1969, with two years in Vietnam, with Fox Trot Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. After 15 months with Fox Trot, Barnes had a strong comradeship with the other men in his platoon. His company was assigned a search-and-destroy mission in Quang Tin Province during Operation Union II; on 2 June 1967 they'd been in the jungle for two weeks. As he tells it:*

**W**ITH very little warning — the nature of much fighting in Vietnam — all hell broke loose.

We'd been pushing through the jungle, meeting only token resistance. We num-

bered 60 strong, with the Command Group attached. I'd come up through the ranks with 2nd Platoon and was now acting weapons-platoon commander. All of my gun teams were attached to other company platoons.

First and 3rd Platoons were far to our right flank when I heard the first burst of rifle fire. Ahead of me I saw a Marine's helmet rolling down a rock formation. I dashed up the rock base to where he sprawled. Three holes in his chest sucked air from his lungs. I unwrapped the cellophane from my C-ration cigarette pack and covered them.

We moved further up into the rocks. I crouched by a large boulder. Suddenly a burst of fire erupted from its far side, followed by a grenade, which rained shrapnel fragments on me and another Marine. I grabbed a grenade, pulled the pin and tossed it around the corner of the rock. That was the last time he'd put out fire.

I called up one of my machine-gun teams. They nailed a couple more NVA who were running through the rocks toward an open rice paddy. Second Platoon's commander, with only two weeks in 'Nam, pulled everyone down to the edge of the open paddy to form an assault line. We were ordered to cross and make contact with what was believed to be a reinforced NVA platoon.

We started across, not knowing we had been lured into a trap. Halfway there, machine-gun fire opened up from well-

dug-in positions. It kept us pinned down for hours and inflicted heavy casualties.

Then a fire team to my left got up to assault. All three guys were cut down as soon as they stood. One of them, a close friend, was still moving. I ran to him and pulled him behind a paddy dike — and watched him die from a head wound.

Roaring, I jumped up to assault the machine-gun positions to my front. NVA ran from trenches in apparent fear of the crazy Marine coming at them with more hatred than brains. I was able to take over a section of treeline, and about 20 Marines rallied to defend it.

The NVA didn't want to lose their real estate, so they dropped mortars on our position. More shrapnel broke both my arms and put another dozen holes in my leg and side. "My fighting's over," I thought. "A medevac chopper will be landing soon." I looked out through the trees at the paddy.

Waves of NVA swarmed over our positions, shooting and searching the wounded and dead. Two wounded Marines lay beside me. "They'll be searching our bodies next," I said. We knew air strikes had already been called in on our positions, so we got up, running and stumbling, toward the paddy edge. As we staggered out, some of the remaining machine-gun positions opened up. The first man dropped, riddled with bullets. The other Marine and I fell too, playing possum. We both lay bleeding from our wounds. Dusk blurred into night.

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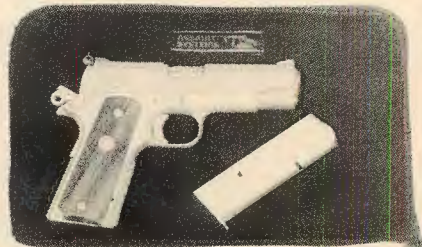
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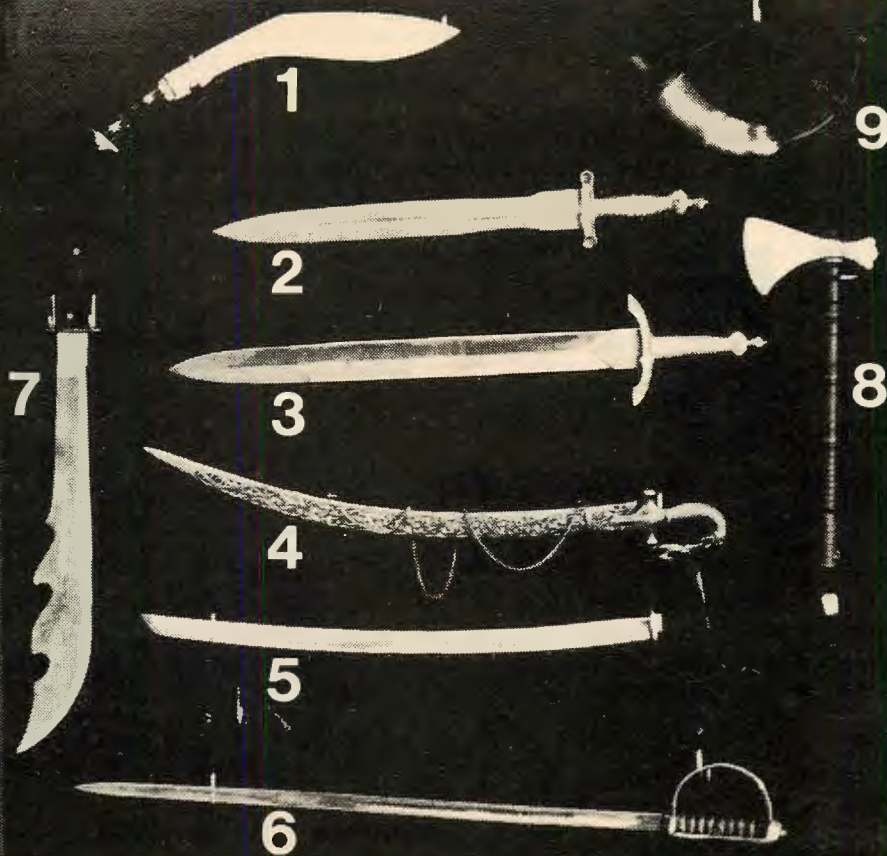
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**Hurry, it may be later than you think.**

As we lay there, a corpsman crawled between us, trying to cross the paddy. An NVA ran up behind him and shot him in the back of the head with a pistol. I wanted to get up and kill him — but I didn't move. Two broken arms and loss of blood from a severed artery made the odds impossible.

By the time night fell, we still hadn't been searched. We crawled back across the paddy to the trees. The Marines who moved in the day after to clean up the bodies counted 372 dead NVA. What we thought was a reinforced platoon of NVA regulars was a reinforced regiment of NVA. Thirteen Marines lived through the night and 47 died.

Maybe we didn't win this battle, but we sure as hell took a few NVA with us.



## I Was There

by Norman J. Lumpkin  
as told to M.L. Jones

*Staff Sgt. Norman J. Lumpkin is now assigned to I Troop, 3rd Recon Squadron, 11th Armor Cavalry Regiment, stationed on the East-West German frontier, guarding the infamous fence. But during Operation Midnight Devil, he was in a C-130 Hercules aircraft, flying toward Normandy Drop Zone at Fort Bragg, N.C. As he tells it:*

It was 2330 hours. I was in the lead plane, 15 minutes ahead of seven other C-130s. We were the pathfinder element for the other planes and had to set up the drop zone for their initial flight.

My buddy, Sgt. Jerry Stringfellow, and I were jumping the doors. When the red light came on, we stood in the door, waiting out those last 60 seconds before leaving the aircraft at the green-light signal.

We both thought, "Who'll go out on the light? Who'll go out on the tap?"

The green light blinked on and I jumped, assuming Jerry had waited on the tap. When we collided underneath the aircraft, we knew we had made a simultaneous jump. The impact was so strong that we bounced off one another.

My chute had just completed opening when Jerry's feet hit it almost dead center. He traveled through my chute, entangling himself in my suspension lines. When he finally stopped falling, his feet were in front of me at eye level. When he hit my chute, Jerry's was in a cigarette-roll malfunction. He was traveling much faster and collapsed my chute, turning it



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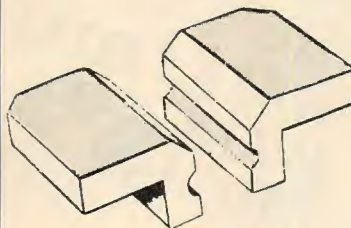
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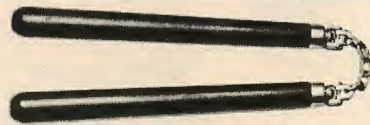
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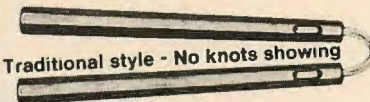


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into a Mae West. God must have been close in the darkness, because Jerry's chute opened back up, pulling him free from mine.

As he lifted away, I felt three, maybe four, of my suspension lines break. My mind kept telling me to pull my reserve, but I couldn't move my hands away from my risers. They felt frozen in place. My heart thumped in my throat and my gut was a mass of knots. It was darker than hell and I was traveling to earth at an unknown speed. All I could think was, "What'll they put on my tombstone?"

It seemed like hours but was probably a minute when my Mae West miraculously popped out. Five seconds later I hit the ground like a ton of bricks. Jerry landed about five feet from me and we both lay there, not saying a word.

While we fell, the medics and drop-zone commander had been watching through night-vision devices called "NODS," so they reached us in a few minutes. We were lucky. We only had a couple of badly sprained legs.

While we were being carried out on stretchers, the DZ commander came over to me. "Why didn't you pull your reserve?" he asked.

I said, "I know four lines broke on the first riser and I should have pulled the reserve, but I just couldn't get my hands to cooperate with what my mind was telling me."

The DZ commander looked at me questioningly. "You didn't break four suspension lines. You broke eight. They broke between three of the four risers."

Man, I sure was glad to be lying down when he threw that information in my face! Oh, by the way, the men in the other C-130s all landed in the trees, completely missing the DZ. I guess it just wasn't a good night for a "Midnight Devil."



**I**f 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.

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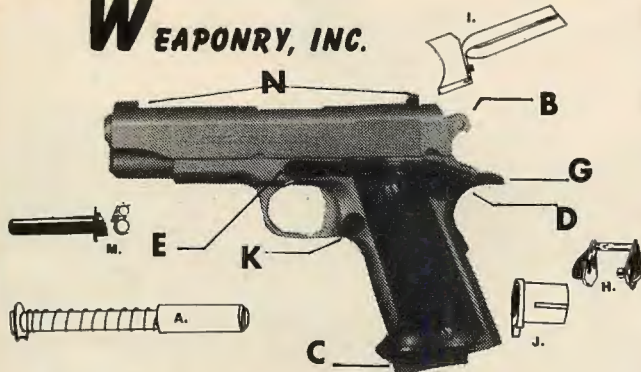


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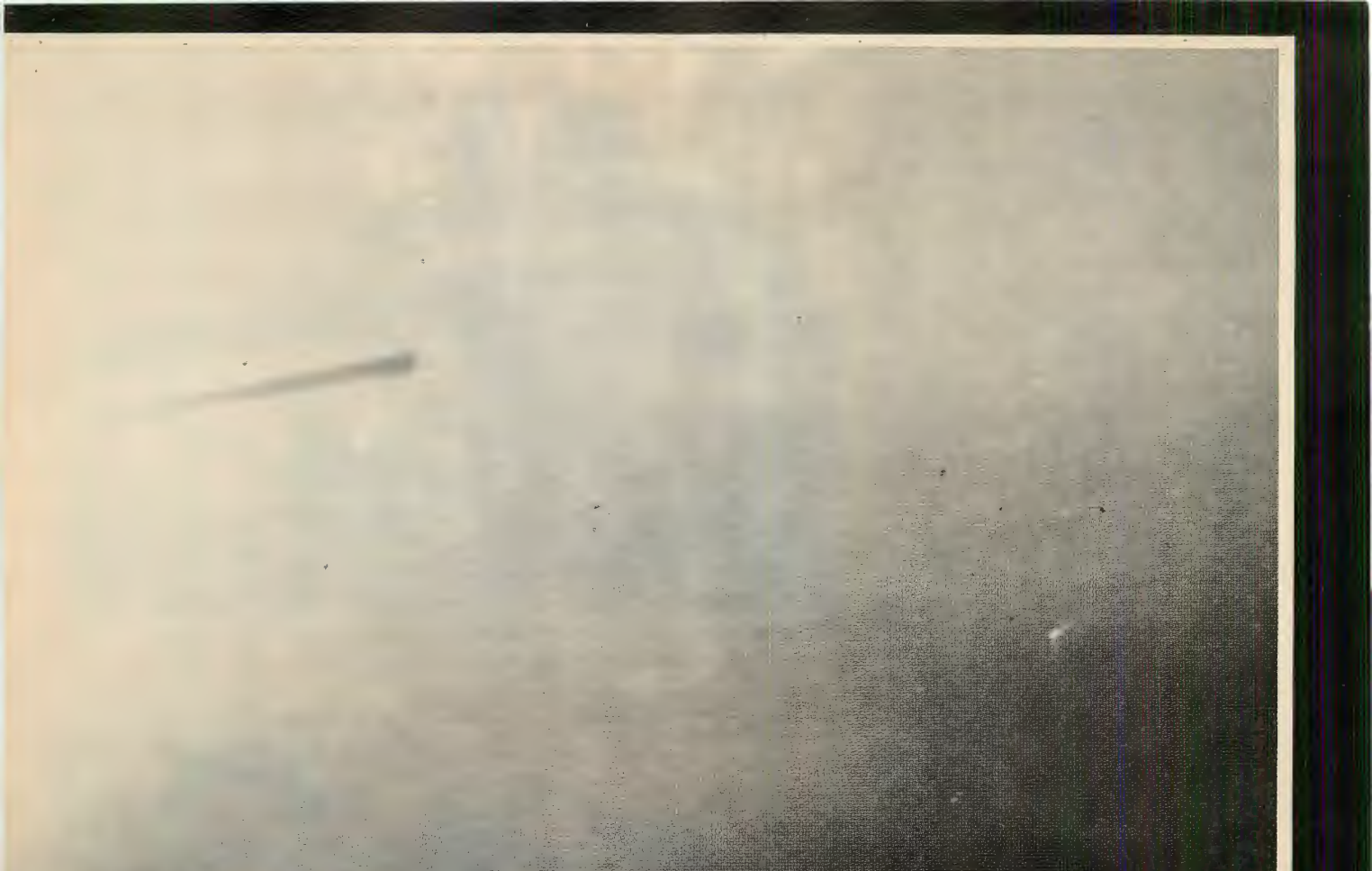


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**Chinook helicopter drops 155mm howitzer in place on LZ O'Connor in Hiep Duc Valley in 1968.**



# "HORSEMAN, PASS BY"

## Remembering Goodbody

Text & Photos by George J. Hawkins

**I** remember the first time I met Goodbody. It was on a high, mist-shrouded mountaintop in Vietnam, southwest of Da Nang. A small landing zone (LZ) had been slashed in a level spot near the top of the mountain. The helicopter I was on circled the yellow smoke marking the LZ, then swooped down over a copse of trees and hovered noisily a few feet off the ground while I jumped off.

I crouched low beneath the whirling chopper blade and hurried off to the side of the LZ where two stubble-bearded grunts sat reading paperback books. I dropped my pack and stood there, feeling a bit awkward as I looked around, watching them unload the chopper and listening to the high-pitched noise of the chopper's engine. The two grunts put their books down and motioned for me to sit down near them. When the chopper finally took off, we shook hands and introduced ourselves. The tall, slender guy with black, curly hair and mud-covered helmet called himself "Spider." The other guy, with thick, drooping handlebar moustache, introduced himself as "Goodbody."

Later that day, when I was assigned to their squad, I learned that "Goodbody" was his nickname and no one ever called him by his real name; in fact, very few guys knew his real name. As we sat talking in the tall, green elephant grass, I noticed that Goodbody was reading Eric Hoffer's *The True Believer*. I had finished the book a short time before, so we launched into a pleasant discussion that evolved into an exchange of opinions on subjects ranging from beer to philosophy.

I learned that Goodbody had graduated from college a few months before being drafted. Although he had majored in history and political science, he had developed a passion for literature, so when he graduated he had more hours in English than in his major.

**Cast a cold eye  
on life, on death.  
Horseman, pass by!**

—William Butler Yeats

In the months that followed we became close friends. Whenever we stopped, whether for a smoke break, to dig a fox-hole or heat up a few cans of C-rations, we would talk about books, women, politics and what we were going to do when we got back to the "world." That was our escape, our way of blotting out the spilled patterns of the reality we were caught up in.

I gave him a book of Irish short stories, a worn, old paperback I'd bought in Seattle shortly before our battalion was sent to Vietnam. A few of James Joyce's short stories were included in the anthology. We both agreed that "Araby" was one of his best. It seemed that we always agreed, not because we tried to, but because it just seemed to work that way.

We both liked the passage at the beginning of the book:

"Cast a cold eye  
on life, on death.  
Horseman, pass by!"

—W.B. Yeats

We talked many times about the mean-



**Gunner sights in on 106 recoilless rifle mounted on APC during Operation Delaware at Camp Evans in May 1968.**



**Hawkins (right) stands with two friends outside bunker on Hill 445, Hiep Duc Valley, in 1968.**

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

George J. Hawkins describes himself as "a gypsy and wanderer" who has written three novels that are looking for a publisher. The first was about Goodbody, the second about "a Casino caper," and the third about Jefferson Randolph "Soapy" Smith, a frontier confidence man and gambler. He's now working on another historical novel about the plains hunters and mountain men and their Hawken rifles — as well as building a .45-caliber Hawken rifle from a kit.

Hawkins was drafted shortly after his graduation from the University of Nevada (Reno) in 1967. He served in Vietnam, first as a grunt and then as a combat photographer and journalist, before his honorable discharge as a sergeant (E-5) in 1969.

When he received our letter accep-

ting "Goodbody," Hawkins said, "It got me tripping back in a montage of triple-canopy jungle, the whump of mortars and, of course, vivid memories of Goodbody, Spider, Top Myers and dozens of Homeboys, Tennessees and Short Rounds. Jesus, it was over 10 years ago, but I can still picture Goodbody's face, with drooping moustache, when I jumped off a chopper onto a hilltop in A Shau Valley. I doubt that I will ever forget him."

After you read Hawkins' story about his friend, we're sure you'll remember Goodbody, too, and like the Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, mourning the death of a friend's son in WWI, wonder why this soldier had to "share in that discourtesy of death."

—M.L. Jones

Discoverers of forgotten truth  
Or mere companions of my youth,  
All, all are in my thoughts

to-night being dead.  
—William Butler Yeats



UH-1D helicopter drops troops into hot LZ in A Shau Valley in 1968.

December 28, 1980  
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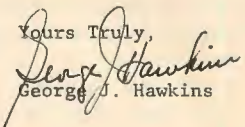
Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a story, titled GOODBODY for publication in your magazine. My main reason for wanting it published in *Soldier of Fortune*, is that I'm trying to locate someone from my old outfit who might read the story and be able to provide me with Goodbody's real name.

I served with the 4th of the 31st, 196th Infantry Brigade in the Americal Division. I was in Vietnam in 1968. As I've dedicated a novel to Goodbody, I'd like to get in touch with his family, who I believe live in Lone Pine or Big Pine, California. However, without the last name, my previous attempts to locate them have been fruitless. I've always wanted to meet his family and visit his grave, as he was a close friend and one I'll never forget.

I know Goodbody's first name was Tim, but I'll be damned if I can remember his last name. I guess I have some kind of mental block? Your help will be greatly appreciated.

If you decide to publish the story, I'll donate any payment to the Afghan Freedom Fund. Hope you can help.

Yours Truly,  
  
George J. Hawkins

ing of the passage. Goodbody believed the horseman was a symbol of death. There were no feelings or emotions involved — the horseman simply came and collected his bounty. We came closer to an understanding of the passage as time passed, but we were never completely satisfied with our explanation. The true meaning was difficult to put into words — like many deep, personal feelings.

Goodbody was especially fond of Eugene O'Neill and his play, *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. He said he was going to do some writing when he got back to the world.

We got separated after five months, but we were still in the same AO (Area of Operation), so occasionally we'd run into each other on LZs or fire-support bases. It was always a great handshaking meeting, like seeing a brother for the first time in many years. We always traded magazines and paperbacks, scrounged up a few warm beers and talked.

Once we met north of Hue, just after Goodbody had been through some hairy action. He told me that his unit was making contact with NVA regulars every day. I gave him a book of Frost's poems I'd been carrying in my pack for almost a month. He showed me a cigarette lighter he bought while on R&R in Thailand. It had the Yeats passage inscribed on it. I showed him my new lighter with the identical passage. We laughed and drank our warm beer.

His company went back into Que Son Valley, an NVA stronghold. Goodbody had been through hell there before and never wanted to go back. When we parted, he put the book in the leg pocket of his jungle fatigues and slipped the lighter into his jacket pocket with his cigarettes.

He was walking point on Hill 205. It was a dark, moonless night. The NVA were on top of the hill waiting. Goodbody walked into a thousand muzzle flashes. Everyone broke and ran wildly down the mountain trail. Tracers were flying in all directions. They had to leave his body on the hill for a night and a day.

Two days after the fire fight, I got on a chopper on Hill 445. The chopper was carrying two bodies back to graves registration. Both bodies were wrapped in muddy, bloodstained ponchos. There was a thick, strong stench in the chopper, even though plenty of air rushed through the open sides. Halfway back to graves registration, the wind blew part of the poncho off one of the bodies, exposing the face. It was Goodbody. I turned away and looked down at the blurred, green-and-brown checkerboard patterns of the rice paddies. All I could think of were the three words in the Yeats passage: "Horseman, pass by!"



# "REBEL" IN RHODESIA

## Part 3: Black Devils Raid Mozambique

by Michael "Reb" Peirce

*Part 1: Just as he got the first big break in his musical career, singer/songwriter Michael Peirce decided to try his luck at an entirely different vocation. Peirce felt he had missed out on an important experience by never having been a soldier (he had been rejected by the U.S. Army for medical reasons). So, prompted by an article in SOF (see "The Black Devils," January '79), he wrote to the Rhodesian army recruiter.*

*Peirce was not put off by receiving a negative response, interpreting it as acceptance. He sold his belongings and packed himself and his lifesavings off to Salisbury where Major Darrell Winkler of the Rhodesian Armored Car Regiment (RhACR) got him into the Rhodesian army.*

*Peirce soon discovered what it was like to be a new recruit, and began adjusting to military life. His nearly useless left eye proved no obstacle since, as the medical examiner explained, "We use our right eye for shooting, don't we?" Four days before he was to be posted to the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) for training, RhACR went on an operation, and Peirce was assigned to the major's stick. The objective: a group of 60 terrorists in the Chinamora Reserve, approximately 40 klicks from Salisbury.*

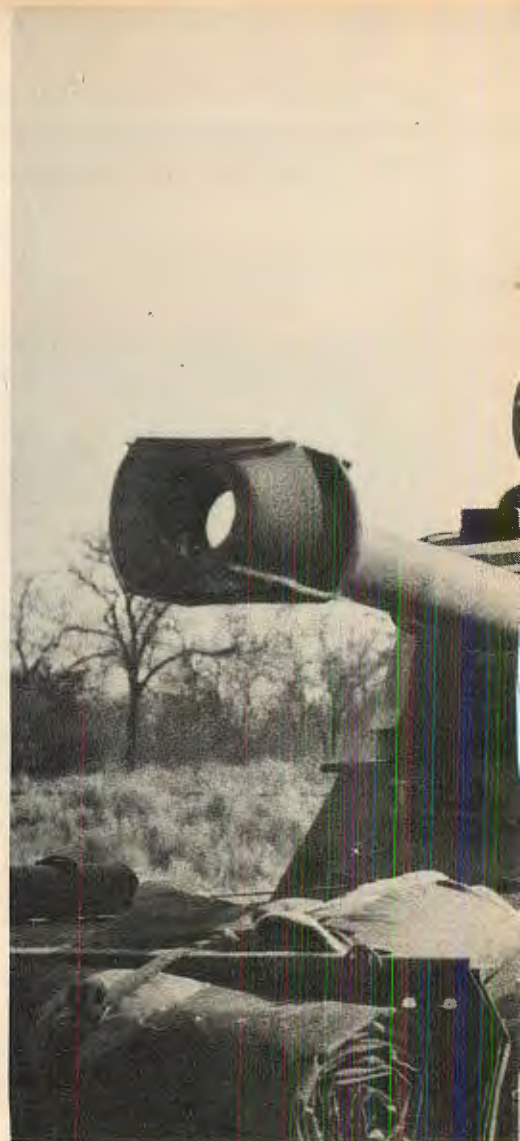
*When the regiment debarked from its column of Elands, Ferrets and APCs, Peirce saw his first action. The hundred men split into sticks and pounded a hill with 90mm rounds, .50s and .30 Brownings. Peirce discovered his targets were a man and a child; only the man was hit. A follow-up action report revealed the group had also taken out three armed terrorists — and Peirce reconciled himself (as all soldiers must) to the inevitable: death in combat and participation in it.*

*A few days later, Peirce reported to RLI Barracks for basic training. He found himself in the hard-working "blue" squad, for which he composed marching songs. His nickname, Rebel, arose from his RLI training. Having spent most of his life in the South, he didn't like people calling him "Yank." "That's Rebel to you," he'd always reply. The name stuck.*

*Part 2: After his return to Rhodesian Armored Cars, Peirce began the three-week armored training course at Katanga Range. Although the days were long and the work hard, he enjoyed it. Students learned to drive and maintain the four-fives, big Mercedes trucks obtained from the Germans in the happier times before sanctions. Those who could drive (Peirce was one) got their four-five licenses and went to armored-infantry training. The course finale was an attack on a mock-up village with armored cars and infantry.*

*When Peirce returned to Salisbury after training, he learned that Rhodesia was preparing to abandon white-minority rule and the army had been ordered to keep terrorists from disrupting the upcoming election. Training Troop was standing down and would be reorganized as "A," Squadron, RhACR. Peirce became gunner for Sgt. Clarence Van der Valt, the only instructor who had combat experience.*

*"A" Squadron camped near the Buby River. Its proposed operation was simple on paper: Clarence would take three sticks on a five-day sweep down the Buby. Six other sticks would form stop groups, and SAS would push the terts toward the Armored Cars units from the other direction. The operation planner forgot one thing, however: Three sticks have to spread pretty thin to*



**Black Devils in convoy. Vehicles are Eland 90s.**

*form a two-mile sweep line.*

*The first day of patrol was a killer, Peirce discovered. The bush was thick, the stick saw no civilians and the heat sapped men's strength. As the stick moved into night bivouac, it made its first contact, when terrorists opened up with AK fire. Clarence ordered his men to hold their fire; after an hour the enemy fire broke off. But next morning, the terts opened up once more before moving off. Peirce's unit completed the rest of the patrol without incident.*

*The troop returned to Salisbury where it was redeployed to Mudzi, a favored infiltration point for ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army) forces, which had sworn to stop the election. There were daily contacts, but Peirce soon came down with tick-bite fever and dysentery and missed the unit's biggest action, when Clarence and his boys caught 30 terts in a local village.*

*After being in the field, Peirce's*



unit returned to school: the Eland course. Peirce found the course a bore; he scored in the top 10 percent on all written tests and failed all mechanical ones. He preferred gunnery lessons in which he was able to blast away with 90mms and Brownings. His group participated in a tactical demonstration at the range in conjunction with artillery, infantry, anti-tanks (106 recoilless) and the air force. After Eland training, Peirce had two weeks of signals instruction.

Peirce desperately wanted to man the big .50 cal. on Major Winkler's truck and learn to drive the two-five. When he asked for the assignment, he was told to start training immediately. He had two weeks in which to master the job.

The unit's first operation was a classical mechanized attack with Elands, Ferrets and the two-fives, covered by mortar and light-machine-gun fire from support infantry, after which the unit combed the countryside for elusive terrors.

When the unit returned to depot, it was assigned to Chirundu on the Zambesi River bordering Zambia,



**Troopies prepare to right Eland 90 with Mercedes-Benz two-five. (Eland is South African-manufactured copy of the French Panhard AML.)**



where terts regularly crossed over. Chirundu held a garrison of RDR (Rhodesian Defense Regiment). A group of infantry and two troops of Elands came with Major Winkler and his crew. At Chirundu, the newcomers familiarized themselves with enemy bunkers, mortar emplacements, command post, and heavy machine guns and recoilless rifles across the river.

The first night the infantry ambushed a group of terts rowing across the river, killing most of them, although a few made it midriver to a sandbar. In the morning, Major Winkler took some of his men up to an OP on a hill overlooking the Zambesi. The infantry and a troop of Elands were deployed below with another armored troop in reserve. On the hill, the Rhodesians had a couple of mortars and two .50s set up in bunkers on tripods. Trenches connected the bunkers.

Major Winkler called in mortar rounds to harass the terts on the sandbar. After an hour, the Zambians began to return mortar fire and, in Peirce's words, "The whole world seemed to explode." The enemy had the Rhodesians registered, and the flimsy bunkers were in imminent danger of collapse. Major Winkler got his men off the hill, regrouped and charged back up. Six Elands opened up with 90mms and Brownings, pounding the enemy village. At nightfall, the buildings on the enemy side were still burning. RhACR was then recalled.

After one day in depot, Peirce was promoted to lance corporal. He learned that Armored Cars was going to hit the terts where they lived: an external raid. The objective of the raid was a terrorist base camp at Chomio, Mozambique, just across the river from Umtali, a major Rhodesian city. Rhodesian intelligence indicated a major buildup of terts and Freddie's (Frelimo troops from the People's Army of Mozambique) in the area and the decision was to launch a preemptive strike.

**Y**OU didn't have to be psychic to know the war was heating up. The Rhodesians had just hit the Zambians and Freddie's with a series of devastating air-mobile strikes and we knew from our pals in the airborne that each raid met with greater resistance. Freddie in particular was getting nasty, employing T-34 tanks and a tert version of fire force. They were hammering our people. The thing was going to conventional war.

Enter the armored combat team.

"Peirce, Miller! Get here!"

"Sir!"

"Draw supplies for a two-week bush trip: rations, extra radio batteries, morphine and ammo."

"In other words, sir, the usual?"

"Not quite — instead of a thousand



**Black Devil practices with .50-cal. MG mounted on Mercedes-Benz two-five.**

rounds for the .50, take 3,000, and draw an extra thousand armor-piercing. Also a thousand rounds 7.62 ball just in case and a G-3 and five mags for me as a back-up gun. Double up on grenades, and I want a case of tear-gas grenades this time."

"Christ, sir, we're going to war."

"Something like that. Now get to it."

We stepped out of the major's office. A lieutenant grabbed me and told me I was in charge of all the .50s and the ammo; I'd also have to train three new gunners.

Our feet didn't touch ground for three days. I was loving it too. Action, yes, lord, that's the name of the game.

We loaded up the trusty old two-five with everything but the kitchen sink and shot out to Inkomo Barracks to meet the Selous Scouts. The bearded crazies of that famous battalion would supply the bulk of the assault infantry for the upcoming op. At Inkomo, our vehicles were painted Freddie-green (a standard practice on cross-border ops to confuse the terts and achieve an element of surprise) instead of our usual green-and-sand cammie. Toward dusk we eased out to the range and tested our weapons. Some of the shooting left a lot to be desired but the major's crew upheld the honor of the HQ group.

That night we got drunk with the Scouts and, in addition to meeting a couple more Americans, I stumbled

(literally) into the famous Col. Reid-Daly, commander of the Selous Scouts, who was to be our operational commander on the strike against Chomio. Then we went to the fire-force base at Grand Reef — a collection of bunkers, barracks, barbed wire and an airstrip. The RLI guys were hanging around waiting for the siren to go off when we blew into camp. I was overjoyed to see Tony Tydings and company from the old training troop who had gone into Support Commando.

Support Commando had gone through the mill during a air-mobile strike against Mapai, Mozambique, earlier in 1979 and didn't do our confidence any good with their descriptions of that escapade. Sammy passed out early but Tony and I drank two cases of beer. His commando was supposed to go on R&R but he wanted to come with us. I tearfully swore I'd get him into my crew.

I staggered over to the two-five, cursing loudly. The boss had gone to Umtali for a meeting and it never occurred to me he might be back already.

"Sammy! Wake up, goddamnit. Tony's going with us."

"Shsssh, Rebel, you'll wake the major."

"Too bad. The old son of a bitch had better take Tony with us or I'll take over command of the damned battalion myself."

"My god, Reb, I hope you like the box."

Next morning I learned Major Winkler had not been in Umtali after all, but was lying next to Sammy



**ABOVE: Members of Rhodesian Armored Corps observe trainees from Mercedes-Benz two-five.**



**LEFT: Troopie with black-face camouflage. Weapon is GPMG (MAG) in 7.62 NATO.**

listening to me make an ass of myself:

"Private Peirce. I don't mind you referring to me as a son of a bitch, but you called me an *old* son of a bitch!"

After a recce of our prospective crossing point, we and the rest of the combat team moved into a state-operated forestry preserve. There we camped in the pines for two days and three nights waiting for the cloud cover to break over Mozambique. The men started to get restive. One of the armorers cracked us up by moaning loudly that he was the first man in history to volunteer for a mission accidentally. It was a classic case of foot in the mouth:

"These wasters don't know how to handle a Browning. I ought to take over one of the damn guns myself."

"Good man, you're coming with us. That's the kind of attitude I'm looking for." The major had overheard his little speech.

While we waited, we went over the maps of the enemy dispositions. Our objective bristled with 12.7 and 14.5mm anti-aircraft guns. It lay only 20 to 30 kilometers from the HQ of a Frelimo tank park.

"Yes, people, that's 'tank,' as in big trouble for you and me. But don't worry, the air force will protect us — as long as the sun shines."

The last night in camp I sat among the pines talking quietly with Sammy and Lt. Rene Regtien, the regimental signals officer.

"Confirm, Rebel, you've had a rather interesting life."

"Yes, sir. No complaints. And tomorrow should be the most interesting day in quite a while."

A couple of hours before dawn, the long line of vehicles began to move out. Some of the Africans were still humming their war song, "Hondo Hondo," but one young recruit looked up at me with wide eyes and said, "Corporal Gunner — the people want peace!"

Our combat team was bakshi compared to the armored armies employed in Europe, but we were packing a sting by African standards. Our regiment was represented by HQ Group, three troops of Elands, a supply echelon and all of support squadron. Combat Engineers, a battery of 25-pounders, six motorized heavy mortars from Support Commando, RLI, and a large contingent of Selous Scouts in the Armored infantry role completed the force. Out in front were air-mobile stop groups from RLI.

The Scouts had some really fine

vehicles for this type of operation: heavily modified, armored two-fives and four-fives, that mounted up to four machine guns. The gunners and drivers of these remarkable vehicles were comm-linked via headphones. The infantry people had the usual Scouts' hodge-podge of weaponry, with the Eastern-bloc hardware predominating.

On our truck, Sammy had a folding-butt G-3 and a 9mm pistol. Major Winkler carried a CAR-15 with a G-3 back-up — and he operated the MAG in the front of the truck. In addition to manning the big .50, I carried a .38 Special and an FN, and later on I picked up a PPSH submachine gun. Our infantry stick had one light mortar and two additional MAGs plus personal weapons. The stick included my good friends, Mark Sullivan and Jerry O'Brien.

Crossing the little stream that marked the Mozambique border took longer than we expected, due to equipment malfunctions and breakdowns. The engineers were the stars of the show. Our vehicle was pulled across the river by a bulldozer driven by a crazy fat man, wearing nothing but a pair of shorts and chest webbing.

I heard a roar and looked up to see a flight of six Canberra bombers peel off and hammer targets directly ahead of our first objective, a dingy little town called Cruzamento, Mozambique. We went in shooting but the only return fire came when boxes of enemy ammunition went off from the flames that engulfed the town.

A chopper landed, bringing a captain in the Scouts and a war correspondent named Ron Golden. Major Winkler champed at the bit. We were at the head of the column and had set the pace for the whole show.

The Chomoio base camp lay ahead — a seven-kilometer complex with 3,000 terrs in residence — although, according to our wireless intercepts, many of the tenants of that particular hotel had already checked out.

Shots rang out behind us. A Browning opened up in front, then another. I swiveled the .50 but saw no target. Helmets were on, faces were tight with concentration. The two-five got stuck, so we went into all-round defense until an Eland pulled us out.

We moved again, and this time the balloon went up for sure. *Riiiiip*. The terr RPD cut through the other noises and the first grenades went off. Major Winkler climbed from the truck and casually announced, "This is it. Let's go." Support Squadron moved to the right through a trench line, knocking out bunkers with white phosphorus and CN gas. Sammy fired single shots the front seat while I swept the woods to the left with the .50.

**Boom-Boom-Boom!** A hail of 90mm rounds and bullets from the Elands put an end to enemy resistance. Mr. Ray was down, struck by a piece of his own shrapnel while standing in the turret directing his troop. Thirty-two terts were dead.

The boss directed the mopping up. He detailed us and another two-five crew to get Mr. Ray to a clearing for medevac. With the wounded lieutenant was a tert the major had hit with a .223. It had entered his right shoulder from the rear and exited from the groin. We needed a live prisoner, so this fellow had to do.

We got to the clearing and Sammy, Mr. Regtien and the other driver started marking the LZ. Just as the chopper came in to land, all hell broke loose. *Crack!* A round split the air an inch over my head and I jumped backwards off the truck like a demented acrobat, groping for the .38 in my shoulder holster. I fired six quick shots, more to rebuild my own confidence than in any hope of hitting something in all the dusty confusion. The enemy gunners were shooting so fast that the grass bent as in a heavy rain. Sammy was behind a tree, blasting away with his G-3 on full auto. The other .50 gunner opened up — I jumped back on the truck behind my gun and it was dog-eat-dog for a couple of long minutes.

Then the Rhodesian Armored cavalry came to the rescue. Major Winkler heard the shooting and sent three Elands to bail us out. Six 7.62 Brownings and two .50s ripped the enemy ambush to pieces. We found 18 bodies later on. Miraculously we were unhurt.

We now had several unwounded prisoners. We killed the wounded terrorist with an eagerness that chills me in retrospect. But, Ma, he hit me first!

We rejoined the major. The fighting continued. As dusk fell, a final series of Hunter strikes punctuated the evening (Hunter Hawks, single-seat, swept-wing, jet attack fighters built in England and widely exported around the world, were mainstays of Rhodesia's air force). Beautiful sight and sound: red, silver and green tracers reaching up to the sky; the screech of the jet engines and the tremendous blast as the golf bombs detonated. The pilots must have had brass balls — the flak came at them from all sides. All sides? Yeah, we were surrounded. The RLI stop-groups were somewhere out in front of us, having trouble — we heard on the "B" set that one seven-man group got taken out within minutes of landing. The 25-pounders were back at Madison Square (a general store just across the Mozambique border) and the Scouts' personnel crouched in the



**Mercedes-Benz two-five is popular patrol vehicle and troop carrier. Two-five is often mounted with twin 7.62mm Browning MGs.**

holes next to us. The terts, on the other hand, appeared to be everywhere — dominating the high ground.

The mortars coughed hollowly all night. The major persisted in guessing where they would hit.

"This will be short." **BOOM!**

"This one's a bit long." **BOOM!**

"Close, very close." **CA-BOOM!**

"Goddamn it, sir, I wish you wouldn't do that. The terts might overhear you and realize they have us bracketed."

"Reb, I think they've probably figured that out. Besides, all the noise is keeping me awake and I need something to do to pass the time."

Lt. Regtien looked over at us and laughed: "No disrespect, sir, but I just can't believe it."

"What's that, Rene?"

"Yanks. Here we sit under a truck in the middle of a mortar barrage and you two merrily bullshit away."

Morning came at last. Still the mortar rounds fell around us. Sporadic bursts of gunfire accompanied the dawn along with the banshee shrieks of the rocket-propelled grenades. The major was tied up in an O group (officers' staff meeting); Sammy tried to sleep. A rocket burst directly over my head. **WHOMP!** Shrapnel everywhere, and a new menace as well.

"Sammy, wake up! We're under attack."

"No shit, Rebel. Let me sleep, would ya?"

"Ya better move, Sam. The RPG hit a bee's nest."

"Oh, fuck...!"

An RPG burst in the air near an Eland. A 20mm shell struck another Eland. Revenge is sweet — the cars responded with devastating fire and

more terts queued up at the pearly gates. Elands are considered out of date in most military circles and these had suffered a lot of abuse. Still, Elands look good to me.

Next came Monte Casino, named after its WWII counterpart. It was a tough nut to crack. The major took Support Squadron up the steep slope and got hit from behind, in front, and both flanks. The terts rolled grenades down the hill and Jerry O'Brien narrowly escaped a blast.

Three Elands and four gun-armed two-fives covered the rear and the approach route. Fire from 20mms and 23mms hit us. An AK opened up and two rockets screamed overhead. Once again, we raked the forest and HE shells followed. Sgt. Maj. Riley now commanded Mr. Ray's troop. Riley was a base-group commando with little taste for action. Luckily for all of us, Allen Jones was his troop sergeant.

From the first Eland, Sgt. Maj. Riley: "Stop firing! You haven't got a target!"

From the second Eland, Sgt. Jones: "Firing now!"

Sgt. Maj. Riley: "I said cease fire! I'll have you on a charge, you bloody idiot!"

Sgt. Jones: "Up twenty, firing now!"

Sgt. Maj. Riley (as a rocket flew past his ear): "Bloody Hell!" And the turret hatch slammed down.

Sgt. Jones: "Silly twit. Turret left, co-ax action!"

Allen Jones had a good day, destroying two anti-aircraft guns. Sgt. Maj. Riley made a lot of noise and tried to claim the credit. He was ignored.

The radio cackled intermittently. Lt. Sumpter's group had suffered heavy losses and the lieutenant was missing and presumed dead. Major Winkler's group had made it to the top

*Continued on page 66*



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# ASP KICKER

## CONCEALABLE STOPPING POWER



ASP 9mm pistol offers excellent stopping power in concealable package. Note clear strip indicating number of rounds in magazine.

### Text & Photos by Evan Marshall

**T**HE concealable handgun is the one area of weaponry that most needs planning and intelligent thought. Usually, too much emphasis is placed on concealability, while factors such as stopping power are generally ignored. The whole point is that if you do not entertain the possibility of using your weapon, you should not go armed. If you have never pointed a weapon at another human being, you should understand that a sizable percentage of those people on the wrong end of a gun are not overly terrified by the prospect of being there. They will push the gun carrier until he either fires or surrenders.

The offerings in the concealable handgun field are many, and range from the Detonics .45 Auto to custom, cutdown S&W Model 59s or Browning High Powers. The .45 auto has a good reputation for stopping power. However, many object to its recoil, and its ammunition is not readily available throughout the world. The cutdown, large-magazine-capacity 9mms are not really better as concealment weapons than their full-size counterparts, because the bulk is primarily in the double-row magazine.

The ASP 9mm pistol offers the best of both worlds in the concealable-handgun

field. This highly concealable weapon has good stopping power and excellent combat accuracy. Originally the brainchild of Paris Theodore, a maker of holsters for clandestine operatives, the weapon is now produced by Armament Systems and Procedures (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 356, Appleton, WI 54912), which obtained the rights to the weapon when Theodore's operation failed. The ASP was the original, downsized Model 39, and the others on the market are generally copies of this system.

The basis for the ASP is the S&W Model 39 pistol. Despite substantial

downsizing, the weapon has lost only one round in total ammunition capacity, and with a total of eight rounds, it offers a substantial advantage over the five-shot .38 snub.

The ASP has been downsized by five different techniques. First, the barrel is chopped to 2½ inches and the barrel bushing eliminated. Second, the hammer has been bobbed to eliminate its snagging on jackets or other clothing. Third, all edges have been rounded and smoothed so the weapon will not hang up while being drawn. Fourth, the ASP is finished in Black Teflon S, applied both internally and externally to provide reliable functioning. I personally prefer dark-finish weapons, and have found Teflon S to be more rust-resistant than the satin-nickel usually found on chopped Model 39s.

Finally, the traditional sights have been

replaced by the unique Guttersnipe system, which offers a bright-yellow longitudinal-groove on three sides instead of separate front and rear sights. The shooter merely brackets his intended target on all three sides and shoots. The system is extremely fast with minimal practice. Of course, it is not a long-range target sight, but for close-range defensive shooting it has no equal.

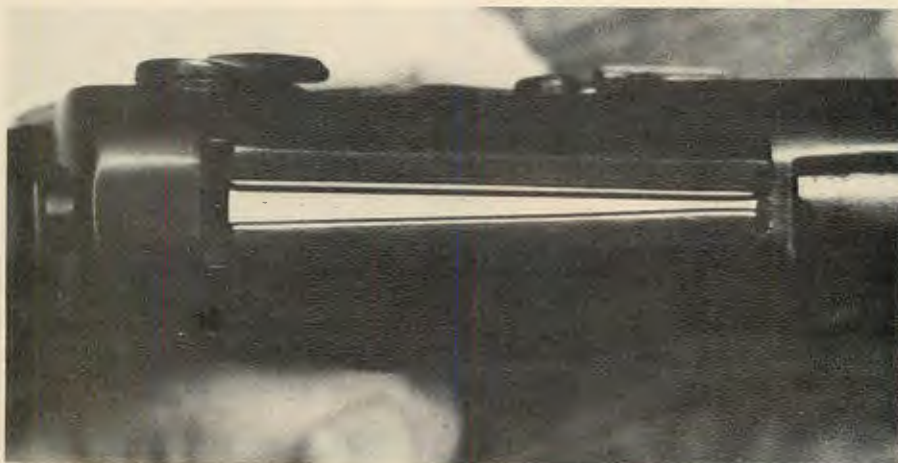
Fully loaded, the ASP weighs only 25 ounces. I routinely wear mine with four extra magazines for 10 to 12 hours a day without feeling loaded down. Despite its light weight, recoil from even the most robust 9mm loads is easily controlled.

The grips are Lexan, an impact-resistant polycarbonate, and have been sand-blasted opaque. A narrow clear strip on their center enables the shooter to tell how many rounds he has left.

Few people who look at the ASP's hooked trigger guard realize that this is the original of this type of modification, and it is covered by a patent. The trigger guard allows the shooter virtually to eliminate weapon movement off target with even the hottest 9mm ammo.

In contrast to the rough out-of-the-box action on the Model 39, the ASP action is a delight to use. Both double- and single-action models are smooth and light. The double-action pull on any ASP is only eight pounds, and the single action breaks at three pounds. Obviously, it took several hours of careful honing to correct the finicky Smith action.

Although the ASP is designed primarily as a concealment piece, it's essential that it be totally reliable. To test it in this area, I put over 1,500 rounds of 9mm ammunition through it. One thousand rounds of this were NSGI reloads. NSGI, Dept. SOF, 26646 Five Mile Road, Redford, MI 48239, offers a low-cost alternative to factory 9mm ammunition for practice at \$70 a thousand (brass exchange). The other 500 were 9mm factory loads. Because I was curious to see how they would perform out of the ASP's abbreviated barrel, I checked both for expansion and velocity. Expansion was checked in ductseal, and velocity on an Oehler Model 33 Chronotach. The results are listed below:

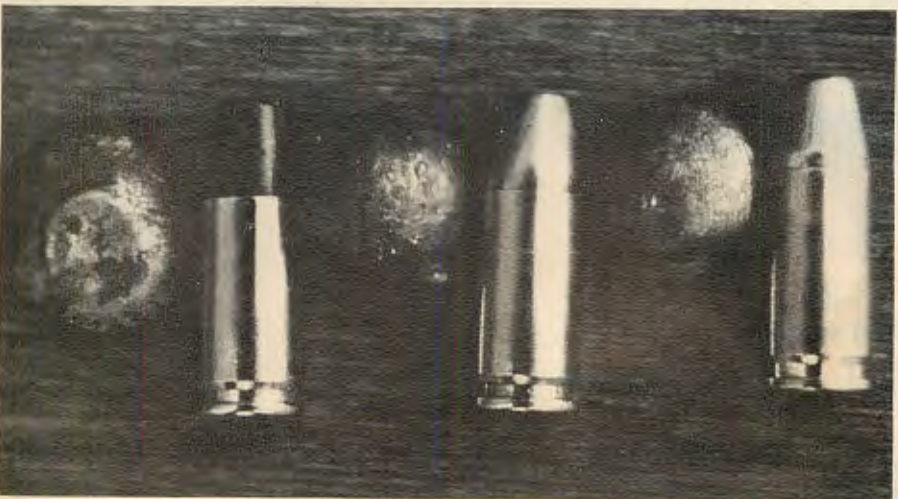


**ABOVE: Unique Guttersnipe sight works well in close-quarter, defensive situation. LEFT: Jake Jatras, U.S. IPSC Director, assisted author in testing ASP. BELOW: Left to Right: S&W Nyclad hollowpoint, S&W jacketed hollowpoint, Frontier jacketed hollowpoint. All rounds perform well from ASP's short barrel.**

Brand	Load	Velocity	Expansion
a. S&W	125gr Nyclad	1106fps	.688"
b. S&W	115gr jhp	1123fps	.532"
c. CCI	100gr jhp	1214fps	.567"
d. CCI	125gr jsp	1096fps	.506"
e. W-W	95gr jsp	1288fps	.556"
f. W-W	100gr jhp	1234fps	.543"
g. W-W	100gr jsp	1198fps	.502"
h. W-W	115gr jhp	1126fps	.532"
i. Fed	115gr jhp	1104fps	.509"
j. Fed	123gr fmj	1090fps	.355"
k. SV	90gr jhp	1324fps	.651"
l. SV	112gr jsp	1125fps	.529"
m. Fron	90gr jhp	1248fps	.602"
n. Fron	115gr jhp	1108fps	.588"
o. Fron	100gr fmj	1102fps	.355"
p. Fron	124gr fmj	1116fps	.355"
q. R-P	115gr jhp	1109fps	.465"
r. NSGI	122gr swc	982fps	.355"

All of the loads tested fed without a hitch. I deliberately did not clean the weapon for the entire 1,500 rounds, and there wasn't a single jam. Certainly I do not recommend this for a defensive handgun, but it does indicate the reliability of this weapon.

Armament Systems and Procedures has a full line of holsters and related accessories to go with its 9mm pistol. All ASP products have the superb quality evident in their pistols. As a cop, I carry a pistol to protect not only myself, but the civilians of the city I serve. Frankly, I can't think of a better weapon than the ASP for that purpose!





**This captured Soviet-built T-34 didn't exactly make a good showing against lighter armed and steeled IFVs.**

# TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

## Springboks Stun World In Cross-Border Op

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter


**I**T was the place to be: On 24 August 1981, South African forces besieged several bases in Southern Angola after a limited deployment of armored cars and infantry across the Namibian border. The Springbok ground forces and air force attacked simultaneously. The result was more than 450 enemy dead, casualties drawn from the combined might of the Marxist-backed South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) and Angola's Russian-trained army — FAPLA (Army of the Popular Front of the Liberation of Angola).

**Gun turret on South African IFV *Ratel*; blooded during *Smokeshell* last year, these lightly armored vehicles have proved highly effective in the kind of bush warfare encompassing much of South Angola recently.**



**Buffalo troop carriers are designed to make them landmine-protected; several were blown up by Soviet TM-57 landmines, but crews received only minor injuries. This column (other vehicles are Elands) was part of the attacking force.**





The Russians, too, were there. But they pulled out of Xangongo, one of the largest towns in Southern Angola, about two hours ahead of the South Africans — 20 men and seven women in all. Russian combatants including two lieutenant colonels and two women were killed; one, a warrant officer, was captured by South African troops.

Strike column of South African infantry in *Buffalo* troop carriers.

In conventional terms, it was probably the biggest single military operation launched from South West African soil since Pretoria's involvement in the Angolan civil war during the middle '70s. The Springboks had 10 men killed in action and one support helicopter was downed. But, in a surprise air raid early on Day One — Monday, 24 August 1981 — they knocked out some of the most extensive Soviet early-warning systems and missile batteries deployed outside Eastern Europe. How the South African Air Force achieved this objective is anyone's guess, for they're not telling; they just might need to repeat the performance.

Nor are they prepared to comment on how much of this extremely

sophisticated electronic gear was captured when the South Angolan towns of Xangongo and Ongiva were taken. Both were known to be ringed by missile batteries and radar networks, not all of which were destroyed by the time the first South African armored columns entered them.

Like most military operations, this one has spawned its share of stories. When the first columns crossed the border on that crucial Monday morning, they drove right past a FAPLA probe patrol south of

Cuamato. FAPLA troopers apparently believed they were another Angolan regiment and ignored them. There was the story of the South African jet fighter that took a SAM-7 missile up its tail. The blast blew off the afterburner, but the aircraft was able to land safely at its base.

There was the South African trooper whose unit was pinned down briefly outside Xangongo by a Russian T-34 tank, which poured massive fire in all possible directions. Undeterred, the soldier asked his section leader for cover, then crept the 200 meters toward the tank on his stomach — and sprinted the last hop to drop a grenade down the open turret. End of action — in that sector, at any



**ABOVE:** Springboks captured this Russian-built BM-21 with 122mm rocket launcher; several were knocked out in five-day skirmish. **RIGHT:** South Africans captured Yugoslavian M55 20mm anti-aircraft guns in Angola. M55 is essentially three HSS-804 20mm guns on towed carriage. System is manufactured under license from Hispano-Suiza of Switzerland.

rate. Another soldier entered a bunker that had been "cleared" of the enemy. He was killed by a hail of SWAPO fire, but first threw a grenade, wiping out the rest of the terrorist group. The names of both men have been put forward for decorations.

No one will be there to collect Angolan army medals for the FAPLA column that pulled into a South African position the night after the capture of the base at Xangongo. They were lulled by the silhouettes of Russian tanks that loomed against the night sky. The tanks had been taken intact, to bolster one of the attackers' flanks. The South Africans opened up immediately. First to go was an ammunition truck that illuminated the rest of the convoy. The Springboks took most of the vehicles virtually intact.

In another operation, the South African forces found a column of almost 70 heavily loaded Russian trucks abandoned near Xangongo. The vehicles contained tons of war supplies: new-generation anti-aircraft weapons and ammunition; hundreds of crates of AKMs, all still in their grease; RPG-7 rocket launchers and grenades; tons of 82mm mortars and recoilless rifle ammunition, and sufficient 122mm rockets to stoke a dozen other wars in Africa. Of particular interest was the ack-ack gear, all of it the new Yugoslavian M55 20mm triple-barreled guns that have not been seen before in Angola. Yugoslavian M55s have been deployed in Mozambique before. Guns are actually Swiss Hispano-Suiza HSS-804s built under license in Yugoslavia.

Obviously someone in the Kremlin got his wires crossed; naturally, the South Africans are beaming.

The number of vehicles captured was awesome: hundreds of them, all brand new. Several hundred tons of fuel was also discovered in



Xangongo. It was immediately used to refuel the entire armored column. By the time the defending force had disappeared into the bush, a combined FAPLA/SWAPO force had lost nearly 20 T-34 and T-54 tanks knocked out (plus an unspecified number captured) and about a dozen BM-21 rocket launchers.

The South Africans lost no vehicles, suffering only landmine damage to a few inside the bases the Springboks took. Once the local FAPLA commanders in Xangongo and Ongiva realized that defeat was imminent, they ordered their men to lay landmines and set booby traps.

"Operation Protea" is basically a continuation of a series of military operations against SWAPO elements inside Angola during the past several months. The fact that FAPLA government forces chose to enter the fray is thought to stem from Russian involvement, since documents captured in Ongiva — many of them, including battle plans for both towns, in the original Cyrillic script — indicated the belief that the South Africans would turn tail and run should Angola commit its armor and heavier weapons in support of the insurgents. The mistake was theirs.

The South African decision to commit a larger than usual force stemmed from intelligence which had been reaching military

headquarters at Sector One-Zero in Ovamboland concerning increased SWAPO activity in the vicinity of the two main towns in South Angola. Previously, all SWAPO camps had been isolated from Angolan government positions. In the past year, however, many had moved to within rifle range of FAPLA strongholds, ostensibly to provide the revolutionary movement with fire support, if necessary. The SWAPO camp adjacent to Ongiva, for instance, adjoins the main town and forms an adjunct to that settlement's permanent defenses. Knowing this, the South Africans went in ready to use maximum force against whatever threat evolved.

Altogether the Springboks deployed four task forces to achieve their ends. A mechanized force crossed the Kunene River in the extreme south of Angola and careened up the west bank in the direction of Xangongo. Its objective was to cut off any possible SWAPO escape routes once the main camp had been hit. A second force headed directly for the town of Xangongo and the SWAPO camp that lay directly in its path. The third element was deployed ostensibly for back-up purposes in the immediate vicinity of Xangongo against the possible threat of FAPLA interference. During Operation Smokeshell a year ago, FAPLA

## One of them described this operation as “a turkey shoot — the enemy acted like turkeys.”



**UPPER LEFT: Ratel crews with camouflage during standby period in South Angolan bush. ABOVE: Tons of Soviet weaponry were seized (and millions of liters of fuel) when South African forces entered Xangongo and Ongiva, including these Russian SAM-7 missiles in mint condition.**

armor had entered the conflict (see “Operation ‘Smokeshell’ Smokes Out SWAPO,” SOF, November ‘80); this time the South Africans weren’t taking any chances. The task of the fourth force was to deploy about 20 kilometers to the north of Xangongo and Peu Peu, where it was known a FAPLA armored brigade was held in reserve. This body of men saw some of the best action. They knocked out most of the Soviet-supplied tanks. One of them described this operation as “a turkey shoot — the enemy acted like turkeys.”

The real drama began once Force Two hit the SWAPO camp. Obviously ready for the attackers, the insurgents — many of them Soviet-trained terrorists — poured out a withering volley of fire as the column approached at first light. After two hours, the South Africans held the advantage, as the urgent — and unintentionally comic — radio message from the SWAPO camp commandant to his revolutionary chief, Sam Nujoma, shows:

“To Comrade President Nujoma. We urgently require help. If this does not come we are fucked . . . I repeat: Fucked!”

The signal ended abruptly. There was no evidence that Nujoma or any

of his lieutenants — the majority of whom live in the comparative luxury and comfort of the Angolan capital — replied.

It took the South Africans three days to dominate the designated area. Due to prior adverse publicity, they took considerable effort to point out to observers the minimal damage sustained by buildings in both towns. In Xangongo only the local military barracks was largely destroyed, due to its fairly stiff armor-backed resistance. The barracks lies on a high promontory overlooking the Kunene River.

Few local inhabitants fled into the bush. Conditions under FAPLA had been catastrophic. Food was in short supply; law was arbitrary, applied by semilliterate soldiers who were drunk most of the time when they weren’t on actual operations. The hospital looked like a pig-sty. After it had been cleared and cleaned by South African military medical personnel, it housed the four FAPLA battle casualties we saw being treated there.

The battle at Ongiva was more difficult. It lasted five days before the town’s defenders disappeared into the bush. Ongiva’s defenses were both deep and extremely well-prepared, since the area had already taken the brunt of prior raids, first UNITA (National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola) attacks and then occasional South African probes against SWAPO. Once they had vacated the town, its former defenders immediately began to wage a protracted guerrilla war of attrition against the newcomers, effectively reversing the role of attacker and defender.

Once the South Africans achieved their objective, they played a low-key role. They opened a land corridor, which they kept open from attack, but they initiated few other sorties.

The attack was a textbook

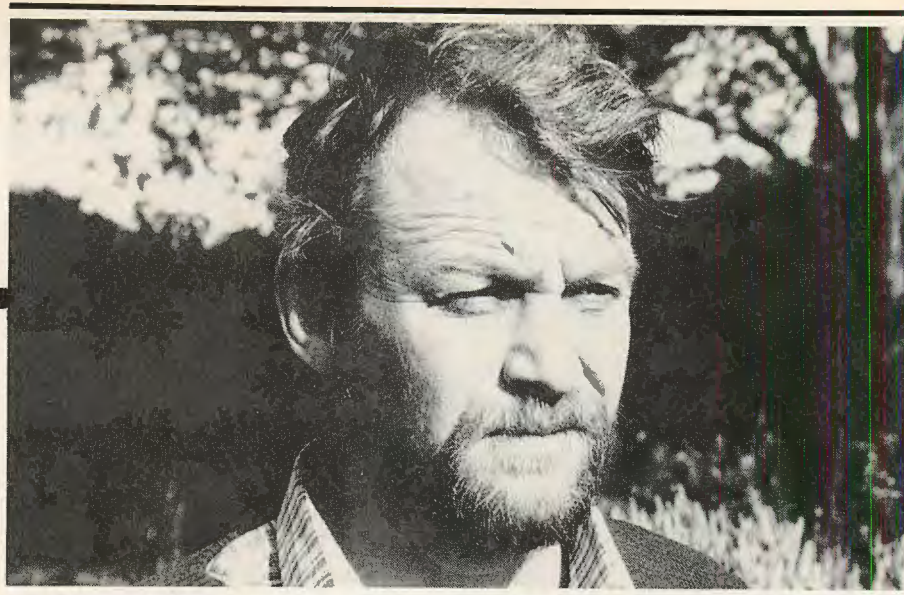


**Battle sequences during onslaught by South African IFVs in South Angola.**

offensive — with one notable difference. Prior to hitting the towns, South African spotter planes dropped thousands of printed leaflets telling the locals that the fight was specifically against SWAPO and not against the Angolan government, its army or its people. This announcement cost the Springboks the element of surprise, and it was obvious that the Angolans were aware of their presence shortly after they had crossed the frontier. Some strategists believe that leaving the local infrastructure intact in a zone that is primarily military-oriented against South African interests was short-sighted. The bridge at Xangongo serves as an example.

When the South Africans withdrew from Xangongo at the start of the second week, the bridge across the Kunene River was still intact. This huge structure, built in Portuguese times, is several hundred meters long. It serves as a major link between the isolated south, a region half the size of France, and the rest of Angola. Cut it and you isolate the area, in which UNITA — the indigenous anti-Marxist revolutionary movement — remains a serious thorn in the side of Luanda (see "The War The World Forgot," SOF, July, August '81). Despite detractors of the UNITA cause, it's no secret that the movement under Dr. Jonas Savimbi — whatever other faults it may have — has successfully crippled Angola's Lobito railway line into the interior for most of the past six years. Much of the Cuban military effort has been directed against UNITA. Whatever the reason — probably politics — the South Africans did *not* blow the bridge at Xangongo.

Other mighty political repercussions will involve the future



**Soviet Sgt. Major Nikolai Fyodorovich Pestretsov — captured by South African forces in Angola.**

role of Castro's legions in Angola, conservatively estimated to number about 20,000 troops which cost the Soviet Union an estimated \$2 million a day. At no stage were Cuban forces prepared to mix it with the invading force, even though they voiced loud threats to do so from the moment the Springboks crossed the Namibian border. The *raison d'être* for the Cuban presence in this West African territory is to protect Angola from foreign military intervention. That the Cubans did not do so, when the opportunity prevailed, must result in a serious loss of face.

Upper echelons of state in the Angolan capital have already heard accusations of Cuban cowardice. American sources have indicated that radio intercepts show that strong words were raised about the Cuban lack of action. One message read: "Why are you in the country . . . ? You eat our food, screw our women and yet you do nothing when we are attacked . . ."

Clearly, whatever the outcome of the South African onslaught, Castro's African ambitions must suffer seriously, due to the lack of enthusiasm of his forces, which are already known to be reluctant to leave their barracks even under the most favorable conditions. Several other African countries have also been saddled with this brand of Caribbean fervor, notably Ethiopia, Mozambique, Chad and Guinea. They must now reappraise the role of the

reluctant Cuban soldier on alien soil. The outcome cannot be favorable to this Soviet surrogate force, whether the "dreaded" South Africans are involved in the fray or not.



**Order Group before main battle in South Angola. Troops are given full picture of battle plan before all major operations.**

# "The arrival of these Soviet advisers . . . appeared to increase the possibility that the region could become a center of East-West conflict."

## ANGOLA'S RUSSIAN CONNECTION

The capture of a Soviet army sergeant major during military action in South Angola and the death of his wife and two Russian half-colonels — all of them in the uniform of the Angolan army — FAPLA — has put a new light on conflict in Southern Africa.

Previously, all Soviet and East German involvement in the guerrilla struggle against South West Africa had been limited to what has been termed "an advisory role." Evidence on hand now proves that there have been Russian cadres active at platoon level, both with FAPLA and SWAPO, the Moscow-backed South West African liberation movement.

Apparently this form of "advisory aid" from the Soviet Union is widespread within the Marxist-dominated former Portuguese colony. Following the South African raid into South Angola, a group of Western newspapermen were ferried into the battle zone. They reported on arrival at Lubango — formerly Sa da Bandeira and now a major military staging post — that another 20 Soviet military personnel had been sent to the region.

This development prompted the *Washington Post* to comment, "The arrival of these Soviet advisers . . . appeared to increase the possibility that the region could become a center of East-West conflict."

Certainly, if one judges by the number of Cubans, Russians and East Germans, and by the quantity of Soviet war materiel captured by the South Africans in the raid — more than 1,000 tons, much of it extremely advanced, including sophisticated anti-aircraft missile systems, BM-21 rocket launchers,

T-34 and T-54 tanks, landmines and automatic carbines — then the Kremlin has every intention of escalating the anti-South African struggle from Angola.

Questioned in Pretoria on this aspect, Russian Sgt. Maj. Nikolai Fyodorovich Pestretsov, aged 36, was not prepared to comment. The man is obviously under severe strain, since his wife was one of two women — also in FAPLA cammie uniforms — who were killed when South African troops hit their convoy on its way out of Ongiva. Apparently, the Russians slightly underestimated the mobility of South Africa's motorized strike force.

It's not yet certain how Soviet weaponry matched up to those of the South Africans in the field. First reports are sketchy, but the South Africans did not lose a single armored car. However, they took out almost 20 Soviet-supplied T-34 and T-54 tanks, the majority being T-34s. Nor was the Soviet and East German deployment of anti-aircraft systems very effective, even though London reports stated that the South Africans captured, "apart from huge supplies of SAM-7s, also substantial numbers of other missile systems intact, including SAM-3s, and SAM-6s." This report has not yet been confirmed, and Pretoria refuses to comment.

Whatever the outcome, this new role of Russian military men in Angola could severely strain Moscow's relations with many African countries. Although most black states are opposed to South Africa's racial policies, Pretoria — unlike Moscow — is not a direct threat to them.

The spectre of an African version of Afghanistan is a recurring nightmare in some African states. In this respect, independent Afri-

can nations like the Camerouns, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, the Sudan, Zaire, Gabon, Senegal, Gambia and Togo — among others — see evidence of Russian involvement in what has been, to date, a purely African conflict, as a step in that direction. Curiously, Cuba is regarded differently since Havana's 20,000 troops are from the Third World, even though they are part of the Kremlin's surrogate influence in the region.

For its part, South Africa insists that before a settlement is reached in South West Africa, Castro must withdraw his forces from the neighboring territory. The South Africans maintain that Angola is being used as a springboard for subversion and this can only be halted when the Cubans are out. Using the Mozambique/Zimbabwe syndrome as an example, South African strategists point out that as long as Cubans and Russians remain in Angola, they will try to force the passage of a Marxist government in South West Africa.

That, Pretoria argues, is contrary to the interests of a free West, an independent, unaligned South West Africa and, more important, black Africa's long-term strategic interests.

One guerrilla war usually nurtures another, and, say the South Africans, it's no accident that since the Soviets have been in Angola, there have been at least two Russian-backed invasions of pro-West Zaire in the past 36 months. Russia will foment as much revolutionary trouble as it can in an already unstable continent if it is allowed. For that reason alone, South Africa has taken the recent initiative in Angola.

—A.J.V.



**T**HE government's search, under the auspices of the Joint Service Small Arms Program (JSSAP), for a new pistol in 9mm to replace the venerable Colt 1911A1, has been well-publicized and much-bewailed by the advocates of the .45 ACP cartridge. (SOF reported on the project in "Shootout: 9mm vs. .45," February '80.)

Almost nothing, however, has been written about the Department of Defense's concurrent quest for a new state-of-the-art submachine gun, which in the interest of NATO standardization must also be designed to fire the 9mm cartridge.

The U.S. armed forces have never relied greatly on the submachine gun. The current-issue SMG, the M3A1 ("grease gun") in .45 ACP, dates back to WWII. It has been supplemented with a mixture of foreign weapons, including the Uzi and the suppressed H&K MP5A3 SD. The need exists for limited quantities of a reliable, effective weapon in the submachine-gun class for use by the special operations forces of all the services, security forces, armed vehicle crew members and even the Coast Guard.

A competitive research-and-development contract for a prototype submachine gun was awarded to Guilford Engineering Associates, Guilford, Conn., and the Navy has issued a call for other designers to submit competing submachine guns for evaluation and testing, along with the JSSAP-selected Guilford SMG.

# THE SMG FOR JSSAP?

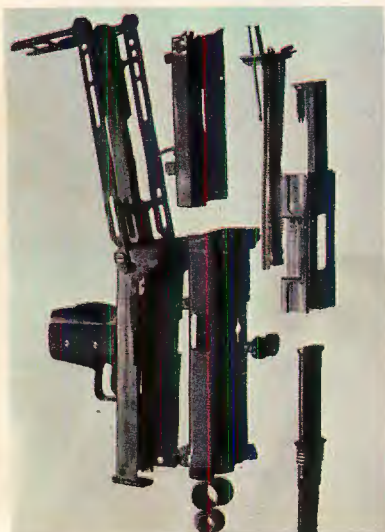
## SOF Looks At Leatherwood's Contender

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

Charles Leatherwood blazes away with Leatherwood SMG. Charles is partner with brother James, designer of prototype weapon.



Leatherwood SMG disassembled for cleaning.



Jim Leatherwood, well known for his Automatic Ranging Telescopic Sight (ART II), which, mated to the XM21 (National Match M14), comprises the Army's current sniper system, has submitted an innovative, challenging design for the JSSAP evaluations. Information about Leatherwood products may be obtained by writing Leatherwood Bros., Dept. SOF, Rt. 1, Box III, Stephenville, TX 76401.

Leatherwood's submachine gun is a direct outgrowth of his experiences in the production engineering department of Military Armament Corp. during the early '70s. Realizing that the cyclic rate of the Ingram gun was entirely too high, Leatherwood began to study methods to reduce the bolt velocity, since cyclic rate is a function of bolt velocity. The lower velocity is also inversely related to the bolt's mass (weight).

Firing on "run-out" is another expression for advanced primer ignition. It means that the primer is detonated before the cartridge is fully seated in the chamber and while it and the bolt are still moving forward. Leatherwood's design has added a unique and remarkable variable to this often-used concept. The barrel is separately spring-loaded to the rear, against the receiver. Thus, the barrel, bolt and cartridge are all moving forward at the moment of ignition. The result of this added mass (the weight of the barrel) is a marked reduction in apparent recoil and a lowering of the bolt velocity with its consequent lower cyclic rate. The Leatherwood SMG has a cyclic rate of about 500 rounds per minute. This rate of fire delivers the best controllability.

Using a forward-moving barrel in this manner is not entirely new. The Robinson Constant Reaction machine pistol, designed and developed in Australia by Russel S. Robinson during WWII, used a barrel which was free to move forward a short distance until combustion and recoil were sufficient to return the slide. Robinson's ideas were, however, incorporated into a true machine pistol, meant to be fired principally while held in one hand. Since there was no demand for a machine pistol as such at the time, it never left the prototype stage.

The 1960s saw the development in Canada by Cliff Douglas of a submachine gun that reduced apparent recoil to a minimum by use of a bolt that blew backward while the barrel was blown forward. As Canada had already adopted the Sterling-Patchett SMG, the Douglas recoilless submachine gun did not go beyond the experimental stage either.

The Leatherwood SMG has a compact, efficient folding stock that does not increase the envelope of the weapon significantly. It can also be used as a front grip. With the stock folded, the weapon has an overall length of only 14 inches. With the stock open, the length extends to only 24.5 inches. Vertical height with the magazine is 10 inches.

Somewhat resembling the MAC submachine gun externally, the Leatherwood has one more inch of bolt travel than the MAC. This helps to further reduce the bolt velocity. The barrel length is eight and one-half inches.

Developed about one year ago, Leatherwood's latest prototype features a 32-round two-position feed, two-column-box-type magazine. The Guilford JSSAP submachine gun supposedly uses a three-column-box magazine. I know of no one who has yet produced a successful three-column magazine — and I don't know why anyone would want to. (Let's hope the JSSAP is not about to continue with another of a long series of recent military small-arms fiascos.)

The Leatherwood fires semiauto from the closed bolt and full-auto from the open bolt to prevent "cookoffs." Safety has been a perennial problem with submachine guns, since they can discharge if they are dropped with the bolt open or when they are incompletely cocked. The Leatherwood is carried with the bolt closed and the safety on, ready to fire in either mode merely by flipping the safety. The Leatherwood safety resembles that of the Garand/M14 and is positioned in the forward portion of the trigger guard.

With the selector switch in the full-auto mode and the bolt closed on a chambered round, the firer has the option of getting off only one round or

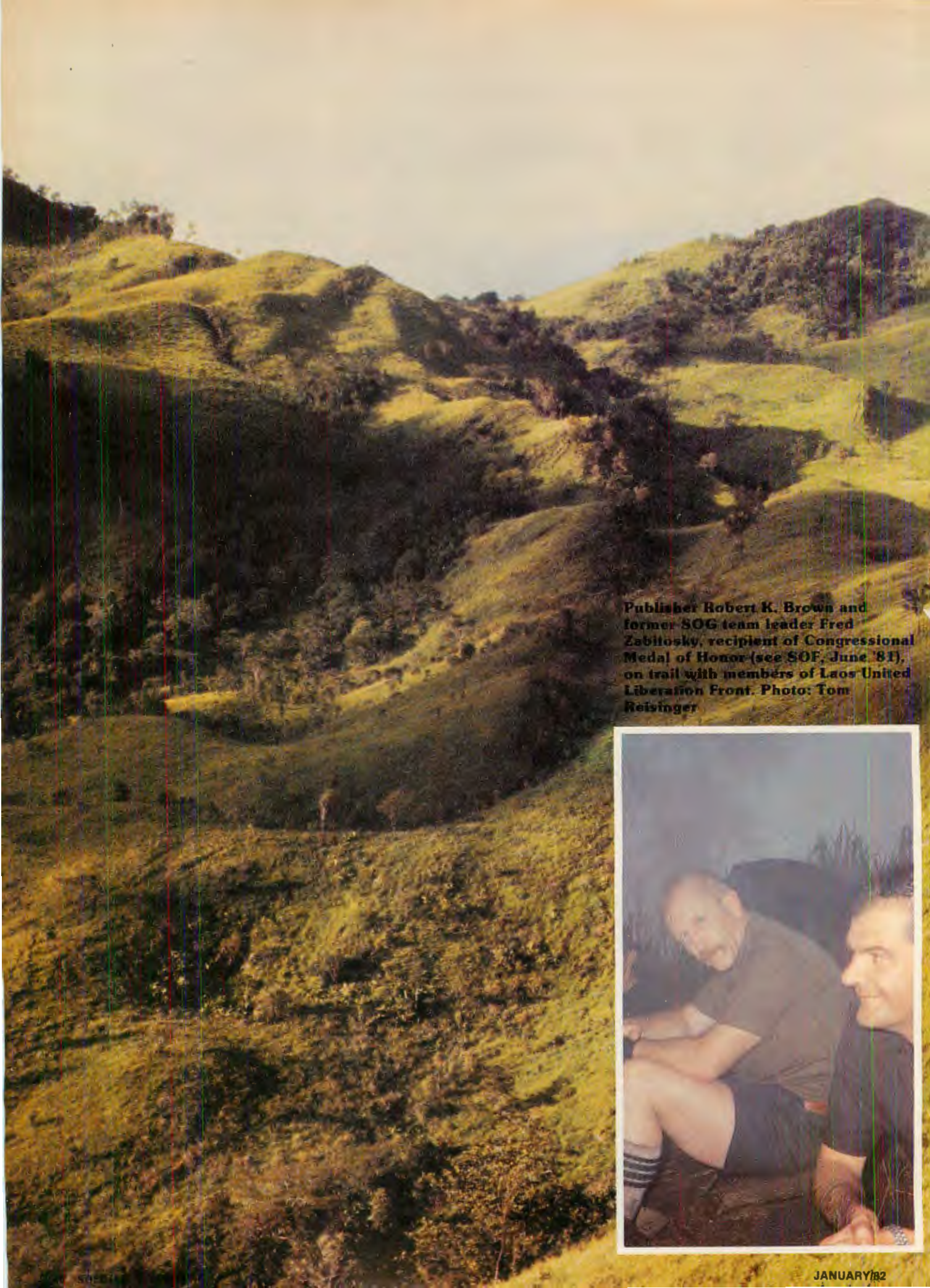
*Continued on page 65*

**When folded, Leatherwood SMG stock may be used as front grip and weapon fired in full-auto mode.**

**Opening folding stock of Leatherwood SMG.**







**Publisher Robert K. Brown and former SOG team leader Fred Zabolosky, recipient of Congressional Medal of Honor (see SOF, June '81), on trail with members of Laos United Liberation Front. Photo: Tom Reisinger**



# THE WAR THAT NEVER ENDED

## Exclusive: SOF Slips Into Laos



Author Jim Coyne with photographic "accessories," his own version of "Cannon Sureshot," U.S. M16A1. Note Laos United Liberation Front patch: three white elephants on field of red worn on right shoulder. Photo: Lao Pao.



by Jim Coyne

**T**HAI-Laotian Border: Zero Dark Thirty. We crouched inside the cab of the light blue pickup truck, away from the cold wind and dazzling rain whipping through the windows as the truck bounced across the rutted road that led toward our drop-off point.

As I write about it now, it sounds like the movie-of-the-week, but then it was serious business.

A border crossing into weird territory is considered *de rigueur* at *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* so it helps to have a sense of humor.

One of leaders of LULF, who must remain anonymous, directs training in mist. Note Chinese-issue uniforms, web gear, Type 56 assault rifle, and RPK-2. Photo: Robert K. Brown

No country likes folks crisscrossing its border without so much as a greeting to immigration control and customs. But there are places in the world where governments can't do much about it.

This was obviously one of those places. The truck slowed, then stopped in the mud clearing near a small village of 30 huts on stilts. Sleepy-eyed people peeked around doorsills through the drizzle at the two *farangs* (Thai for foreigners) and two Laotian guides who seemed bent upon doing something strange in the direction of Laos.

Most of the people the villagers had seen before had been desperately fleeing from Laos, but these *farangs*, armed only with cameras and tape recorders, appeared to be headed in. As the villagers watched and chatted quietly, fearful to approach or become involved, yet another Lao appeared out of the darkness and greeted the two *farangs*.

Then the *farangs* and the Lao turned and headed toward Laos, some seven kilometers away across the rice fields, and up into the mountains.



The Lao guide who picked us up in the village was supplied by the Laos United Liberation Front. The LULF, established in May 1981, in response to deteriorating economic, social and political conditions within Laos, hopes to resist further occupation of Laos by Vietnam, and establish a free, independent Laotian state in what is today northwestern Laos.

The number of people in the LULF is difficult to estimate — deliberately — but total armed strength is approximately 4,000. Individual units, although widely dispersed over northwest Laos, are under one command. They are comprised of the hilltribes most common to the region: H'mong, Lao Tung, Lahu, Yao, Liu and Lao.

Many of the cadres are veterans of the clandestine war waged by the United States in Laos against the North Vietnamese in the 1950s and 1960s. The ranks, however, are now routinely trained, armed and equipped by the People's Republic of China at Szemao in Yunnan

Province.

Although the LULF is not active in the United States, Laotians living in America supplied *Soldier of Fortune* with the names of and introductions to Laotian resistance representatives in Thailand, who in turn arranged for the guided trip over the border to a LULF camp.

After a hasty briefing outside the village, the LULF guide led us toward the hills. I asked, needlessly, which way we would go. The guide just smiled and pointed up into the clouds and said it was beyond the border.

I soon learned the first two of many lessons I would learn in Laos: One, there is no such thing as straight-line distance. Two, up is the only direction worth worrying about.

*Continued on page 51*



**UPPER LEFT:** Publisher Robert K. Brown unfurls the SOF "Death to Tyrants" banner at LULF base camp in Laos. **Photo: Tom Reisinger**  
**ABOVE:** LULF defensive training with Type-56 assault rifle, bayonet extended. Note SOF souvenir patch on left shoulder. **Photo: Tom Reisinger**



## BACKGROUND: SITUATION REPORT/LAOS

In June 1975, after the communist defeat of South Vietnam and Cambodia, communist-sponsored riots ripped through the center of Vientiane, capital of Laos. U.S. dependents and the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) staff were evacuated. USAID had provided cover and support for clandestine military operations in which the United States had been involved since 1961. Also evacuated were General Vang Pao, commander of the U.S.-backed army of H'mong tribesmen, a few members of the Laotian royal family, and a handful of the faithful. On 23 August 1975, Vientiane was proclaimed a "liberated" city by the communists.

Kaysone Phoumvihane was named prime minister of the new Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR). Kaysone for years had been one of the

leaders of *Doan* 959 (Group 959, the Laotian political infrastructure, which had a forward base in Sam Neua Province, Laos, but was headquartered four kilometers outside Hanoi). He now had his place in the sun, but darkness had descended on the people of Laos.

Ironically, now, six years after the fall, it is the communist governments of Southeast Asia, particularly those in Laos and Cambodia, which are faced with a growing problem of insurgency. Anti-communist resistance has increased and become more powerful and effective. Although factionalized by regional and ethnic differences, the anti-communist resistance in Laos now has the broadbased support of all Lao peoples. The Vietnamese are seen — correctly — for the first time by many as an army of occupation, and not as "friends of the revolution." If a spare tire is stolen in Laos, the people blame the Vietnam-

ese for it, most often with justification, always with hate.

The economy of Laos is a shambles, largely because of the high cost of garrisoning the Vietnamese occupation army. (The Vietnamese do not resupply essential foodstuffs to *troops* in the field; they are "provided for" by their "hosts.") The baggage of monumental bureaucratic and economic mismanagement, which seems to follow closely behind every communist government, is about to destroy Laos. The situation is critical. Defections among lower-ranking Pathet Lao troops are commonplace. There are rumors that many high-ranking members of government are looking for ways out, or are under virtual house arrest by their Vietnamese "friends." People are now becoming refugees for *economic* reasons, a dramatic new indication of the ever-worsening situation.

—J.C.



## THE CHINA CARD AND THE PLA

Ultimately, the most important development affecting the stability of Southeast Asia is the evolving working relationship and spirit of cooperation between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries. For many years, China actively supported and equipped internal communist insurgency groups within Southeast Asia. Now, however, after "the big handshake" between China and the United States, China has gone to great lengths to reassure Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and other ASEAN countries that this previous policy has been laid to rest. There are indica-

tions that this is, in fact, true. Arms supplies to the CPT and CPM (Communist Party Thailand, Communist Party Malaysia) have been virtually eliminated. Pro-Soviet groups have been disarmed or left to slug it out alone with the well-equipped and motivated Thai and Malaysian armies.

China is, in essence, saying "trust us" to nations that have every reason to be cautious. Nevertheless, strong diplomatic efforts are being effectively made by both the United States and China to assure the ASEAN bloc that the PRC has no interest in creating instability in the region, but rather in helping combat the increasing Soviet presence. "Time will tell" is the catchphrase now, but with the United

States in China's corner there seems little real choice.

All of this maneuvering is in serious preparation for PRC's "second lesson" to Vietnam. The first lesson came in 1979 when China pushed deep inside North Vietnam in response to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

Reliable sources in Southeast Asia now report impending action in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam. Preparations are well underway for an end-of-the-rainy-season offensive (October-December) in Northwest Laos. Backed by the PRC/PLA (People's Republic of China/People's Liberation Army) and fronted by the Lao resistance, the objective is no less



**UPPER LEFT:** H'mong guerrillas watch from rocks in the direction of a Pathet Lao patrol below. Note U.S. M16 and M1 carbine. Photo: Jim Coyne

**ABOVE:** H'mong work detail in tall grass of Laos. Photo: Tom Reisinger

**ABOVE:** Publisher Robert K. Brown and Fred Zabitosky are briefed by Laotian resistance leaders on situation inside Laos at main LULF base camp. Photo: Tom Reisinger

than the establishment of an independent Laos. The assault in the north-west will be coordinated with attacks by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia to the south and rear of the Vietnamese, combined with pressure on the Sino/Vietnamese border itself.

With a standing Chinese army of over 4,000,000 men, no one, certainly not the Vietnamese, should underestimate the capability such a force provides. The Soviet Union, battered in Afghanistan, bogged down by events in Poland, and beset by problems at home, may simply have to learn from "the second lesson" themselves. Free people can be occupied but never completely conquered.

—J.C.

Villagers on their way to the rice fields scattered quietly out of our path as our small group (we were still in Thailand) emerged from the early morning mist and headed for the hills. For two hours we zigzagged through flat, open rice paddies and streams swollen with the all-night rain. Just as I began to think the walk might not be difficult, it got worse. I should have known from the contour lines on our map.

For the next nine hours, I felt like I was climbing the World Trade Center. I began to understand why these

people had legs like coiled-steel springs. The H'mong guides carried all our gear but never broke a sweat. For me, however, the hike soon became as serious as a heart attack. We crossed the last deep stream, put on dry socks, and kept climbing. After another hour of straight-up jogging (they move fast), we stopped for 15 minutes. I was about to beg to be shot. From here on up it looked worse. Stops were necessary in the third hour, every 25 meters, to let one's heart slow to a near-normal pace. We were pushing ourselves to the max.

To our right, two clicks off the trail, was a known CPT (Communist Party Thailand) redoubt, under daily pressure from the Thai air force, border patrol police and army. We were told it was

not a problem. The CPT wanted to join with the Lao resistance to fight the Vietnamese. I, for one, didn't care at that moment who was around, and would have welcomed a fire fight as a chance to assume the prone position. But we kept on, climbing up, always up, as birds shrieked above us through the triple-tier canopy.

Soaked through with sweat, we came to a small H'mong village slashed into the hillside. The naked children stared fearfully, wide-eyed, at my beard and size from behind the legs of their bare-breasted mothers. The women giggled at our appearance, the men laughed. They offered us rest and water. *Hot water!* They believed hot water was better for thirst. It seemed to work and after an hour of rest we began to move up the mountain.

Further along the trail we met a patrol of KMT (Khomintang) soldiers. When the Chinese communists drove Chiang Kai-shek out of China, portions of his army retreated southwestward into Laos, Thailand and Burma. The KMT forces are now used in some places by Thailand as border pickets. They provide border security where it would be impractical, or impossible, to garrison regular Thai troops. In return the KMT is provided limited support, resupply, and medical evacuation facilities.

If we were going to be stopped it would be here, by the KMT patrol.

Instead of stopping us, however, the KMT troops offered us some home-made, spiced-ginger whiskey from a gallon jug, with what looked like tree bark settled on the bottom. It was served with a

fresh, sliced pineapple heavily dosed with raw sugar. Thanks to the combination of these ingredients I made it into Laos. (Drinking seems to be a tradition in the area. The locals say, "The more Mekong whiskey you drink, the more languages you speak.")

A strand of rusted barbed wire was all that marked the Laotian border. Once beyond it there was no stopping, no laws save your own and no help to come to get you. Being inside Laos bothered me less than my legs. By this time I had two H'mongs working full time, pounding and rubbing the charlie horses from both of my legs. If I stopped, my thigh muscles would cool off and knot until I was almost unable to move. After climbing for 8½ hours I was near the limit of my endurance. (SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, who walked up to the Lao camp some weeks later, said he hadn't done anything so difficult since climbing Mt. Rainier in 1960.) Ahead of us another klick, through a hole in the clouds, at an elevation of 5,000 feet, was our destination and base camp.

It was nearly dark as we came in but even in the failing light it was strange. One step over the Laotian border and one enters into a land of perpetual mist and fog. We had been climbing since dawn and were now too

weary and too sore to sleep. Anyway, as one man, who had been to Laos many times before, said, "If you sleep in Laos you should always be half awake." Because of the pain, sleep would be difficult for the next 48 hours.

I was awakened early after a night of restless sleep interrupted by the muffled sounds of people moving through the long thatched hut. Half awake, I noticed the curious glances of men who walked by the open door of the small partitioned "guestroom" where I lay. The mist outside muted sounds, and my focus seemed "soft" as if I were looking at an old, faded color photograph. A smiling young boy of about nine brought me a cup of hot green tea. It was 0700. People in the camp had obviously been up since first light. Plastic ground sheets were hanging to dry on a line outside. Apparently two men had been stationed outside my door during the night. I had neither heard nor seen them.

The first men I saw laughed as I stiffly tried to ease myself off the raised bamboo bed. They mimicked walking with a limp and rubbing their legs. I had to laugh myself. The walk up was not something I would want to do every day, or even every week, but many



**ABOVE: SOF medic Tom Reisinger (former SF) teaches medical class while men of LULF watch attentively. Medical assistance is direly needed; many men have never seen a westerner before. Photo: Fred Zabitosky. RIGHT: Fred Zabitosky cools off in stream bed near village while indifferent woman and child prepare food. Photo: Robert K. Brown**



were four battalions up on the peaks. No wonder they fell over each other trying to get back down.

Over the next week I came to know some of these men well. Virtually none of them spoke English, however, and communication was through an interpreter who spoke very little himself. A few of the men had previous military training, or some form of paramilitary experience, but most were simply men who did not wish to languish in a Thai refugee camp when there was a chance to kill the Vietnamese who occupied their homeland. They were eager to fight, but because of lack of weapons, ammunition and training were unable to really take the initiative. Most contacts were accidental, on the trail, or while stopping at a village for provisions.

Accordingly, the first training I saw conducted consisted of basic hand and arm signals, and a straight-from-the-textbook version of a squad-size immediate-action break-contact drill.

The Vietnamese had a small garrison of approximately 200 men 12 clicks away, across the Mekong, but they rarely ventured out.

**ABOVE: Fortified bunker connected by zigzag trench system with LULF main base camp overlooking approach route.**  
Photo: Fred Zabitosky

of them did it daily, down and up for needed supplies or to relay information. Night fell soon after we arrived and I had been too exhausted to really notice where we were or what it looked like. I wanted to go outside to see the camp and the lay of the land. The "cook" offered me a bowl of boiled rice covered with hot red peppers for breakfast, but I wasn't hungry. Outside, men moved off for work details in small groups.

I was surprised by the layout of the camp. It could have been a Special Forces "A" camp anywhere in Vietnam. Zigzag trenches deep enough for cover snaked around the perimeter. All that was missing was the concertina wire. The four or five hootches in the main area were all dug into the ground with dirt banked up against the sides. Log bunkers were placed with good fields of fire and heavily fortified with dirt and rock. I estimated 20 people lived within the main area (there were additional LULF troops in

other areas on the mountain), of whom only a handful had weapons: M2 carbines, a few M16s, the rest AK-47s or Chinese Model 56s, but all of them well-oiled and maintained. Ammunition and magazines were in short supply. Many men had only one or two magazines with the remaining few rounds loose in their pockets.

Unknown to us during the day, the easternmost outpost surprised a six-man Vietnamese recon a quarter click away, working up our flank. The Vietnamese, once they realized they'd been seen, disappeared into the tall grass. When the LULF men went to investigate further, they found skid marks all the way down the hill where the Vietnamese had tried to break their rapid exit with their heels. They knew the camp was there, but according to reports from the surrounding villages, the Vietnamese thought there



On the fourth day, a runner came in with news that a 20-man Pathet Lao patrol was going from village to village about two clicks below us, asking questions and buying food. The camp immediately went on alert. Another runner came back from the lowest outpost, which was closest to the patrol, with additional information: Six of the Pathet Lao had pistols, four had binoculars, one an RPG-2, and the rest AKs. By day's end, a villager came up to the camp to report the Pathet Lao had left, back across the Mekong, without paying for what they'd taken. The villagers were all on our side.

It was a different feeling than Vietnam. It felt good. The shoe was on the other foot. We knew where they were, while they walked the trails asking questions. That night I felt more relaxed and began to fall into the camp routine: up with the sun and up until late into the night talking. Some of the men had been to China for training, but according to them it didn't amount to much. The Chinese were generous, however, with equipment and uniforms. They proudly showed me the brand new Type-56s they had brought back, and a basic load of stick grenades. Each small squad was also issued an RPG-2 and as many rockets as its men could carry back. Uniforms and web gear were all basic Chinese-issue green, leg wrappings, the whole bit. They usually didn't wear them all together, since they would look too much like the Pathet Lao or Vietnamese. (The Vietnamese in Laos wear the same soft short-billed cap as the Chinese, but with a shiny black brim and trim.)



Overall, after a week in Laos, I was impressed with the fighting spirit of these "little people." Although short, they are long on spirit and endurance, deriving strength from their cause and from the land of their birth.

When I had come down off the mountain out of Laos I reported in to Bob Brown. He was determined to go up there himself to see and meet these people who were fighting so bravely and hard for an independent Laos. Arrangements were quickly made for him to go. Unknown to him, word had spread of his coming and every tribal leader and chief of the region was waiting for him when he arrived. There, standing at attention, were the men whose one desire was to see a free, independent Laos, without tyranny. The *Soldier of Fortune* "Death to Tyrants" banner was unfurled there in the hills of Laos, and, I swear, the sun came out for the first time in weeks. Solemnly, the men of the LULF raised their flag, the ancient symbol of Laos: three white elephants rampant on a field of red.

**Editor's Note: Because SOF circulates worldwide it was necessary to make some changes in this article. Distances, directions and descriptions have been altered so as not to aid the enemy.**



**Basic Load: H'mong trooper, trained in China, with PRC web gear, pouch and stick grenades. Intended primarily for defensive use, these wood-handle fragmentation grenades are in wide use throughout S.E. Asia. Method of operation: A cord located under a cap on the throwing handle is pulled igniting a delay element of between 2.5 to six seconds, which in turn detonates the main charge. Fragmentation is extensive.**

## YELLOW DEATH IN LAOS

Soua Lee Vang, 29, remembers the morning of 22 March 1981 very well. For the H'mong village of Ban Paa Ngum, in the verdant, remote north central highlands of Laos, the day began early, as slowly as the sun rising red in the east, over Vietnam. Children laughed, casually steering the few water buffalo toward the small rice fields with well-aimed pebbles snapped from handmade wooden sling-shots. Women busied themselves with the first chores of the long day's work. No one expected it to be any different from the day before, or the day before that. But it would be. Much different.

Soua Lee Vang first heard the sound of the aircraft around 1300 — an almost imperceptible drone which reverberated faintly off the steep valley walls, amplified by the relative silence of the Laotian wilderness. He began to feel uneasy. There were only a few aircraft in Laos anymore, and they were no longer piloted by the friendly Americans he had worked with before. Now they were piloted by the hated Vietnamese, or, sometimes, if it were a close formation of MiGs, maybe even the Russians themselves.

This day, however, the aircraft was propellered, and as it approached Ban Paa Ngum he could see that it was an old biplane, flying high and slow toward their mountaintop village. But aircraft of any type were a curiosity now in the skies of Laos, and work stopped momentarily as the H'mong villagers shaded their eyes from the sun to watch the silver-winged plane pass high overhead. Suddenly, it banked lazily over the village and made a wide descending turn from the east, the engine shifting to a more menacing pitch.

Something was wrong. Without warning, in one loud, low, fast pass over the village, a wide trail of yellow "smoke" poured from the wings and whipped into the slipstream, then fell quietly over the village center. It was then that Soua Lee Vang realized the yellow "smoke" was more the consistency of a finely powdered dust. His vision began to blur as he ran, as fast as he could, away, into the trees. Behind him, the aircraft sound faded — replaced by the shouts and screams of those people who had been directly under the cloud. Within minutes, the day became a nightmare: Villagers convulsed, coughing until they collapsed from severe abdominal cramps and spasms, dying horribly in their own blood and voided bowels. They bled from their eyes and ears, and profusely from the nose



and mouth. Men, women, children, and animals. They died one by one and the only sounds were weeping and the brush of the wind on the yellow leaves.

Soua Lee Vang was angry, but he was also severely ill with abdominal cramps, frequent dizziness and sporadic waves of nausea. He kept sneezing and his nose ran uncontrollably. He had frightening dreams, nightmares of suffocation from which he woke choking for breath. After a few days, when he began to feel better, he decided to leave the village for Thailand, many weeks to the south.

With the aid of an old Department of Defense escape-and-evasion map of Laos (1 over 250,000) he had stashed with his few belongings from "the old days," he began the trek toward Thailand. But first, carefully and meticulously, he noted the coordinates of the attack on Ban Paa Ngum (TF 7973), date, time, type of aircraft, direction and results: 21 people dead, approximately 500 people critically ill with vomiting and bloody stools, approximately 400 people with skin disease, blisters or spreading infections.

On the long walk out of Laos he passed through other areas covered with the fine yellow powder, but wisely avoided the densest concentrations. Then, on 2 April 1981, he witnessed another attack, this time on the village of Ban Thong Hak (1400 hours; grid coordinate TF 9177). A MiG-17 appeared suddenly out of the sun to the northwest and dropped its lethal cargo of chemicals on the defenseless H'mong men, women and children: a brownish cloud in which Soua Lee Vang believes 24 people died horribly, and 47 became desperately ill. He isn't sure of the statistics; he was busy. Disregarding his own safety, he placed a wet cloth over his nose and mouth and, with a crudely fashioned bamboo knife, scraped samples of the powdered residue from the leaves and rocks around him. His arm began to tingle and burn; it remains scarred to

this day. When his vision began to blur, he stopped and ran.

He headed toward Thailand, hoping someone there would know what to do. Someone would help. With the chemical sample wrapped in plastic and tape, he reached the Ban Vanai Refugee Center, Thailand, in 16 days. There he stopped to tell the tale of what he had seen.

At Ban Vanai they logged him in and told him to wait. He was tired, and it seemed to him that no one, other than his own people, cared, or even believed what was happening. He learned from other refugees that there had been at least five similar gassings since October in the areas he had been in. Hundreds, even thousands, had died. No one asked them about it; it made the volunteer workers uneasy, they said. Months passed, and Soua Lee Vang fell into the numb daily routine of the refugee.

*Soldier of Fortune* had been aware for some time that the Soviets, and their client states, had been routinely and systematically employing chemical and, possibly, biological weapons in Laos, Afghanistan and Cambodia — but unable to prove it. The agent or agents used were unknown, elusive, and gassings always occurred deep within hostile, virtually inaccessible, areas, far from inquiring observers. The evidence itself seemed to just disappear. All that remained were the results, the accounts from survivors and blank abandoned areas on the maps.

As is often the case in any investigative report or process, we happened on Soua Lee Vang by chance, while gathering background for a story on the present state of the Lao resistance. We asked about refugee reports of the use of gas.

"Of course! Would you like to talk to a man who has just come out of one of the gassed areas inside Laos?" We certainly would.

And in walked Soua Lee Vang. He had four questions he wanted to ask us first. "Is Vietnam wrong to control Laos?" We said yes. "Could we pressure the United Nations to ask the

Vietnamese to leave?" We said we would try. "Do you know of medicine to counteract the gas?" We said we didn't know what type of gas was being used.

"Would you like a sample of the chemical?" The words hit us like a rocket. As far as we knew *no one* had ever had a sample of what was being used against the people of Laos.

"Yes, we would very much like a sample." Soua Lee Vang soon returned with the small, well-wrapped parcel he had carried so long and so far. He said he wanted the world to know what was being done to his people. He wanted to go back to Laos some day. "Tell them, so they will stop."

Within 48 hours of that moment, the chemical sample given to us was hand-carried back to the United States where it began to undergo a long series of sophisticated, and often disappointing, tests. There was something odd present, everyone agreed on that, but nothing lethal. After a few frustrating months and many transpacific phone calls between our people in the States and those who remained in Thailand, a picture of what we were up against began to develop. There was nothing lethal in the sample. The sample was the *carrier* agent for what is now known as T<sub>2</sub> trichothecene, a truly medieval poison made from grain mold and fungus which *dissipates without a trace* soon after exposure to sunlight, humidity or even a change in altitude.

We are certain that the use of chemical and biological agents by the Soviet Union, and its satellites, is an acceptable, integral part of their strategy and tactics. *They will, without hesitation, poison* Cambodian refugee-camp water wells inside Thailand, or spray lethal chemicals on Laotian villages, or gas an Afghan town. For the Soviets, it is a well rehearsed assault practice used by troops on the attack. Moral deterrents do not exist for them; the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which bans such weapons, becomes meaningless if only one side practices restraint. Today, in Cambodia, the use of these weapons has become commonplace. We are faced with the chilling thought that the age of chemical and biological warfare may have already begun.

Last September in West Berlin, Secretary of State Alexander Haig declared that for the first time the United States "had definite evidence" of the use of chemical weapons in Laos, Afghanistan and Cambodia, which were manufactured by the Soviet Union. *Soldier of Fortune* would like to think that we played a small part in bringing this issue to the world's attention.

—J.C.



*PART 1: In June, SOF Contributing Editor Jim Morris traveled to Lebanon via Cyprus to investigate Lebanon's ongoing war. Arriving in the port of Jounieh near Beirut, he was driven to the Lebanese Forces' G-5 headquarters to meet a high-ranking officer in the Christian militia. Beirut, Morris found, is not "Vietnam with sand," but a city of paradox in which high-rise construction competes with the rubble of war. Lebanese Forces personnel to whom he was introduced were highly educated professional people, many of whom work by day and fight for their country's freedom by night. This was a different war, Morris discovered, in which civilization and combat are juxtaposed. On Day One, the author visited the Sodeco section of Beirut.*

*PART 2: On Day Two, Morris traveled to Hadath, a city suburb. He met its Lebanese Forces leader, "Sheik" Tony, a young man who looked like Buddy Holly with twenty extra pounds of muscle. Tony introduced him to Max, his artillery commander, and Bob, the chief of his mortar section. The three men showed him their FDC (Fire Direction Center), and Morris discovered that they had captured the guns and figured out how to shoot them afterward, working out their own firing tables. Tony also showed the author some Lebanese Forces' mortar emplacements, which Morris believes are among the best-made he's ever seen. That evening, the SOF correspondent phoned Robert K. Brown, publisher of the magazine, in Boulder. Brown agreed to send Larry Dring, a former Special Forces officer, to Lebanon to evaluate the Lebanese Forces, after Morris's return to the United States.*

**F**AOUD carefully nosed the Land Rover around a herd of goats. They ran, bleating and scurrying, to get out of his way. The herdsman scarcely looked up as we passed. Even in this Christian area of the Sannine Mountains, the herdsman wore the Lebanese hillbilly costume: bur-noose, regular shirt, and black trousers, tight at the calf, but baggier than any other trousers I have ever seen.

Below us the road twisted down. Around us, mountains dove steeply down, flattened into a wide valley, and climbed sharply back up, row on row of gray-rock mountains, sparsely vegetated, beautiful, climbing into snow-capped peaks.

Faoud, a Lebanese Forces nurse, Claude du Plessis, and I had left Beirut early that morning. We had been driving for more than two hours. Faoud, the Lebanese Forces G-5, is a man about my size, six-two, weighing 190 to 195 pounds. His powerful shoulders are a trifle stooped from hours over the books: He is a lawyer in civilian life, with both Lebanese and French degrees. The Lebanese Forces nurse sat quietly. She wore fatigues, boots, and a bush hat, and held her aid bag in her lap. Next to her

# Our Man Says

# BYE-BYE, BEIRUT

Jim Morris

Lebanese Forces trooper moves out on patrol in Sannine Mountains.

was Claude du Plessis, a photographer for a French news service who had even less English than I had French. We had shared a room for several days, but I barely knew him since we couldn't talk to one another. He was taller than I and about twenty pounds lighter. He wore his frizzy brown hair almost shoulder length, and smoked Gitane cigarettes incessantly. Around the bureau he wore strange-looking French-made cowboy boots, but he had put on combat boots for this job, and wore jeans, a black T-shirt, and an old safari jacket, with the sleeves cut off, and the pockets jammed with film.

After another half-hour's drive, we came to a stop in a little shaded grove of trees, under which a couple of tents and some poncho lean-tos had been set up. Three or four Lebanese Forces fighters sat around, cleaning weapons, smoking, drinking coffee. We got out of the car. Faoud spoke to one of the soldiers who disappeared into the tent. He emerged a second or so later, bringing out the first bum I had seen in Lebanon: a small, bleary-eyed man with what looked like a three-day stubble, his face slick with sweat. He was wearing a dirty white T-shirt and his left arm was missing from two inches below the elbow.

"This is Michel," Faoud said. "He is commander of this outpost." Michel looked sullenly at me, then extended his hand. We shook. My right arm has lost two nerves and an artery, from a time when I covered the wrong story, and went

into a hot LZ with Project Delta (see "Death-Dealing Project Delta," Part 2, SOF, August '81). The hand looks okay, if you don't look close, but a lot of meat has withered off it, and the bones are brittle. The last time I broke it, it wasn't set properly and the bones meet at a jagged angle.

Michel's right hand, however, is incredibly strong, since he has to do everything with it. Additionally, although Michel doesn't need to prove he is as good or better than other men, he loves to demonstrate that he is. He grabbed my hand in what is often described figuratively as a bone-crushing grip. I tried to keep a straight face and ignore the intense pain. He noticed that my hand didn't feel right and dropped it.

He spoke briefly to Faoud, in French, and disappeared again into the tent. "He apologizes for his appearance, said Faoud. "He was out all night on an operation."

I wanted to ask for an immediate description of the operation but restrained myself. Michel was obviously a soldier to the core; if he had been out all night and slept all morning, then he hadn't told the tale yet, and it would come rolling out of him in due course, probably sooner than later.

Michel popped back out of the tent, wearing his fatigue shirt. He expertly flipped a patrol harness over his shoulders. It was put together from Russian gear, and the ammo pouches were smaller than



# BEIRUT

ours. His M16 had an extra-long sling, which he draped around his neck, so the weapon hung about where Elvis used to wear his guitar.

We got back in the Land Rover. Michel took the nurse's place, and the vehicle headed into the mountains. It was all barren rock up there, with not a sign of cover. Faoud drove, keeping the mountain between us and the Syrian positions on the next ridge line over. The Land Rover rumbled and lurched over the rocks. Michel directed him to pull into a concealed position between two fingers of bare rock, and we got out and started humping. I was glad I lived in the Ozarks as we pounded up the steep trail, but even so I was breathing like a bellows to keep up.

At last we came to a shallow depression in the rock, just big enough to hold a small tent. A squad of troops was living in it. Three or four of them sat around outside. "The men who were with me last night are sleeping inside," Michel said in English. He had a heavy French accent.

"What was that operation?" I inquired.

"We mine the Syrian positions."

"What?"

"It is maybe 1½ kilometer to the Syrian positions, but it takes three hours to walk there. Then we go to the road maybe fifty meters from their positions and plant the bouncing-betty mines in the road."

"How many men did you take with you?"

"Six, but for the last fifty meters to plant the mines, only me and one other."

Michel led us further up the mountain to an OP at the very peak. "Stay close to the rocks here," he said as we went up. "They shoot the rocket every time they see anyone move." I hugged the rock, snuggling right up to it.

At the peak we four squeezed ourselves into a tiny perch behind a rock that gave us three feet of cover. Except for Michel we were all big men, and Claude and I both had big camera bags as well.

"You must take off your glasses," Michel said to me. "They will shoot at the glare."

"These are prescription shades," I insisted. "If I take them off, I can't look at all."

He favored me with a look that is cultivated, but seldom achieved, by all the world's drill instructors.

"Got any tape?" I inquired. "I can cut about 90 percent of the glare by taping the outer edges."

Without a word he took his canteen out and made a tiny mud puddle at my feet. I daubed the mud on the outer edges of my glasses. Not as good as tape, but it ought to help some.

While I was doing this, Claude was shooting with his long lens. Then I looked over the top of the rock, moving slowly. Over on the next ridge line I could see a dirt road S-curving along the ridge, but I couldn't see any tracked vehicles or personnel.

For a moment I wished the Syrians would shell. I wanted to see some action for my story. Then I felt guilty. These kids got shelled almost every day. I didn't want one of them killed or wounded just so I could write it up for my magazine. Let them have a break.

I snapped a couple of shots, but there really wasn't anything there, and I didn't have a telescopic lens, even if there had been. After that we crept back down to the tent. Some of the guys who had been out with Michel on his raid the night before were awake.

I really liked those kids. They sat on top of this barren rock for a week at a time, getting shelled almost every day, and still they were laughing and joking.

One of them, a slender, good-looking young man, came up and said, "Hi!"

"Hello!"

"You ever been to Dallas?"

"Sure," I replied, in amazement. His English was almost as good as Rick's.

"How do you know Dallas?"

"I worked there for two years. I was a flight instructor."

I grinned. "How'd you like it?"

"Great!" he grinned back. "I like the pushover."

I laughed and shook my head. "So why are you here?"

He shrugged. "My country is at war."

That must have been some decision. A young man can have a good time in Dallas, Texas.

"So why are you here on this rock?"

He shrugged. "We have no airplanes."

In America, if you could get a guy like this in the service at all, he would have been a hot-rock flyboy, spending his evenings at the club with some young honey. Nobody made him do this. Hell, he had left one of the good-time centers of the world, and paid his own way back to risk his life for his country, to squat on this barren rock.

I decided to see exactly how far this went. "What'll you do after this is over, stay in Lebanon or go back to Dallas?"

He shrugged. "I'll probably have to go back to Dallas. There aren't enough flying students in Lebanon."

"What's your name?"

"Roger."

That's the only name in this series I haven't changed, but since in my short time in Lebanon I met five Rogers, it's not much of a risk. So, to all the girls in Dallas, Roger says hello.

Faoud, Michel and Claude were ready to go back down the mountain, so I said goodbye to Roger. We walked with a good interval between each of us, pausing at Michel's CP to drop him off and share a cup of coffee with the folks there.



Then we wound down the mountain, and the traffic and the civilian population picked up. Faoud got on the CB radio mounted under the dash and called in, probably telling them that we were coming in. I'm not sure because he spoke in Lebanese. However, a few English words have come into general use in Lebanon, and I was able to pick them out. There are some significant differences in American and Lebanese radio procedure: Instead of "Roger," he said, "Okay," and instead of "Out," he said, "Bye-bye."

When I mentioned this to him later, he said, "Well, we must still laugh."

I thought I had seen some driving in Lebanon before, but Faoud was the prince of the kamikazis. Once we reached the Jounieh-Beirut highway, traveling an entire city block without four near collisions counted as a breathing space. He used the horn and he had a siren. He also had a complete inventory of gestures for any other driver who got in his way, or otherwise aroused his ire. I was only familiar with one, but none of them seemed complimentary.

Travel on the shoulder of the road, where there was one, was routine. Once, when traffic on our side of the road jammed up, he unhesitatingly jumped the center island and ran three blocks in the left-hand lane, traveling at sixty miles an



**Christian outpost overlooking Syrian positions in Sannine Mountains, 20 kilometers north of Beirut.**

hour and shaking his fist at the oncoming drivers if they didn't get out of his way fast enough to suit him.

"Listen," I said, as laconically as I could manage under the circumstances, "if you're looking for work after the war, I can probably get you a job driving in Burt Reynolds' movies."

He smiled, hit the siren and accelerated into a space two feet narrower than the Land Rover.

Because of the Palestinians' tendency to take their war with them wherever they go, Rick advised me to do this article under a pen name, and not to do the interview Faoud had set up for me with the Lebanese Forces paper.

We were talking about it out on the balcony, over a Coke. "I don't see how it can cause a problem," I said. "They're not going to use my name in the interview. It's just that Faoud thinks a pat on the back from a former Green Beret major would be good for morale."

"I don't like it," Rick said. "I just don't like it."

Sam said nothing, but he looked glum.

**T**HE young lady who conducted the interview was very nice, as was her interpreter, a young man. We sat at Faoud's antique dining table in his apartment across the street from the press bureau. It was a beautiful apartment, except for a couple of shrapnel cracks in the smoked-glass mirror on the wall by the coffee table, and some rents in the sofa from the same source.

The first thing they asked me about was the quality of their troops, which I couldn't praise highly enough.

Then they asked me if I thought they could win, and if so, how?

I responded that, like them, I was a Christian, and that I believed both in prayer and miracles. And that, on a more practical level, I knew of no historical case of an army with true spirit losing a defensive war to one which lacked it.

Last, they asked me why I was involved in their cause on a personal level.

"Well," I replied, "I once had a friend, a very close friend. He and I fought together, off and on, for ten years. When the United States pulled out of Cambodia he was a major in the Cambodian army. I have reliable information that he and his wife and three little boys were executed in the street out in front of the French embassy. I guess I've just seen enough of that stuff."

We had lunch after the interviewers had gone. In the kitchen, Celeste, Faoud's lady, a wonderfully sweet, *zofitig* young woman, had supervised their Ceylonese maid's cooking. The results were perfection.

"This is delicious," I said, over the main dish, a light, fluffy meat. It was like nothing I'd ever eaten before. "What is it?"

"Lamb's brains," Faoud said, rolling both the l's and the r's.

Amazing how quickly attitudes change. I scuffed up lamb's brains joyfully.

After lunch he asked me if I'd like to see some training. I was feeling a little heavy, but I was eager to see Lebanese Forces' techniques. Dreading the ride and the sun, I got up and reached for my camera bag.

"Where are you going?"

"Training."

"Let's watch it on television," he said. "It's easier that way."

We went into the living room, and he slipped a cassette into his video tape recorder. Celeste brought us coffee and we watched training for an hour.

Their training aid for street fighting interested me most. They had filled stacks of old tires with dirt and made a street, or alley, or hallway, out of them, lined up in a narrow passageway, with openings for doors. Squads were sent down the passageway, ten men with three three-man fire teams. The fire teams leapfrogged down the hall, while the squad leader covered it and directed traffic. As a team approached a door, one man lobbed a grenade in; then, with the fire-team leader covering their backs, and watching their squad leader, two men entered the door, one sweeping left and the other right. They were as smooth as clockwork.

**I**T was Claude's last evening in Lebanon and Sam and Rick asked me to join them and Christine in giving him a rousing send-off.

Since both Rick's and Sam's apartments were right on the green line, they and Christine had rented another place a few miles from the center of the city. We were to meet there for drinks before dinner. It was about six-thirty when Sam drove Claude and me to the apartment. Rick and Christine were just getting out of the shower when we arrived. Rick greeted us at the door, wearing old grey cords, his hair still slicked back and wet. Christine tore down the hallway in an old terry robe, towelling her hair as she went.

"Fix yourselves a drink," Rick said. "We'll be out in a minute."

I spotted a cassette player and a box of tapes on top of a huge white drawing board with a matching artist's lamp clamped to it, beside the bar. Going over Rick's albums I discovered we had about a seventy-percent overlap in tastes in music. I put Jackson Browne's *Running on Empty* on the player with *Workin' Man's Dead* in reserve.

# BEIRUT

Sam, meanwhile, was fixing our drinks. Easy — we had all asked for Arak. I took mine and mellowed down onto a stack of big cushions behind a low coffee table.

Rick was dressed and out in a few minutes; Christine took a while longer. While we waited, Sam showed Claude and me his new AK. It was a Czech model, and some parts of the receiver were aluminum. He told me the stock was a laminated plywood that had been test-boiled at 4,000 degrees without coming apart.

"Do you want to see those pictures?" Rick asked. I had forgotten what pictures he meant. "The little girls."

"Yes."

Christine came in, looking smashing in a white silk suit and open-collared shirt. She had been hiding great legs under her jeans. She wore heels held on by tiny little straps.

"They're pretty rough," he said.

I held out my hand.

He handed me a flimsy 8½ x 11 envelope. I slid the 8 x 10 glossies out of it.

"I'm sorry," Christine said, choosing her English words carefully. She had already seen them, and knew what I was feeling. Two little girls, about six and seven, had been caught in a rocket attack. In death their expressions were sweet, as though they were sleeping, but their tiny bodies were ripped and torn in a dozen places. The six-year-old's foot lay beside her body.

"Nobody will print them," Rick said.

"Brown will," I replied. Rick promised me copies, but he never brought them, and I never pressed it. On the one hand, we both wanted every civilized person in the world to have his nose rubbed in the reality of Lebanon. On the other hand, none of us wanted death junkies drooling over those photos. Let the little girls have their peace.

Rick took the photos back. Sam had put his new AK up and was seated by the window, a drink tilted at a 45-degree angle in his hand, long gone in his thousand-yard stare. I watched him for a long time. He did not move. For perhaps the tenth time in the week I'd been there it struck me that this man had stayed too long at the fair. If he didn't get a chance to go off and get his head straight pretty soon he was going to zone out in the middle of a fire fight, and that would be it for old Sam.

Rick caught my look and winked. He knew what the deal was with Sam. That was why he kept him laughing. It seemed to be one of his major goals, to make Sam laugh every day, reading over his shoulder, jiving: "I keel for money, Sahn, but you my fran'; I keel you for notheeng."

Just before I left I gave Sam my last Montagnard bracelet. It had been my good luck for years.

THE restaurant they had chosen for Claude's farewell party could not have been better. We strolled inside. Our motley crew stood out against the other patrons. The men wore suits, the expertly coifed women exquisite designer clothes. Christine was the only one of us who looked like she belonged there. Claude looked like a French Hell's Angel, Rick's pants were ripped about a half inch at the crotch, and a handie-talkie crackled in his right hip pocket. He had shaved off the scruffy beard, however, and looked like the young Turk in the Camel ad. After a week in the same clothes your correspondent was growing a trifle funky, but Sam looked great, obsessively neat, with his huge eyes, beard and crewcut. He wore sandals, tailored khaki pants and a loose black shirt with a mandarin collar. He was very quiet, and could have been anything from a mad monk to a tong killer.

We elected to eat outdoors, where chairs and tables had been set up under red canopies, high on a hilltop overlooking the bay. We could see the lights of the city climbing toward the mountaintops.

The view was breathtaking, the crowd around us sophisticated, and the meal one

of the five best I have ever eaten. We could have been in the south of France for the season. The conversation was U-shaped. Claude and Christine spoke little English. I speak little French. Rick and Sam had to relay any conversation between the three of us. It was embarrassing. Even our waiter spoke perfect French, English and Lebanese.

Claude told a great story about two Legion officers in North Africa who made a bet that they would finish their dinner on the verandah of their club, even though a fire fight was raging there. While each was brave enough to sit through it while they ate, neither was anxious to linger over coffee and a cigarette — and it was only with the greatest of difficulty that the waiter could be coaxed into pouring more wine. They both won the bet, but neither ordered dessert.

Rick asked me what I thought the Americans would do if we were confronted with the same situation as the Lebanese. I replied that we were much alike, and I thought we would do about the same.

One of the things I had noticed was that the cream of Lebanese Forces, including

## THE LEBANESE FORCES ASSAULT FIRING POSITION



"Here, try it with this," Faoud said, and handed me his FAL. I packed it into my hip to fire a three-round burst into the dirt bank, just to see where it might hit.

"Try it this way," Faoud said. The FAL had an extra-long sling. He draped it around my neck. I started to switch the right side of the strap over my shoulder, but he stopped me. "Here," he said, and jammed the butt-plate into my groin. "Let the sling support the weight of the weapon. Just use your left hand to keep it from rising. Don't look at the weapon. Look at what you want to hit. Shift your point of aim by shifting your body, not the weapon."

"Okay," I shrugged and squeezed off a three-round burst. I failed to observe the bullets strike due to extreme pain, and decided to move the butt a couple of inches higher.

The technique was deadly effective. Wherever I was looking exploded into flying rocks and gravel when I squeezed the trigger. It was as fast, and three times as effective, as firing from the hip, and critical seconds faster than firing a well-aimed shot. For hitting a man out to a hundred meters on full auto it was deadly. I recommend it highly.

—J.M.

**SOF Correspondent Jim Morris demonstrates Lebanese Assault Firing Position he learned while on assignment in Lebanon. Photo: Kathryn Evans-Morris**



**Lebanese Christian village near contested Sannine Mountains.**

Rick, Faoud and Christine, came from the same socio-economic stratum (middle class) of Lebanon which, in America, had furnished much of the opposition to the Vietnam War. I don't think that these folks are any better or braver than their American equivalents; they just face harsher circumstances. Truly it is written that the whole world looks different when there's gooks in the wire.

It was fairly late when we finished dinner, and Sam had an early call, so he went on home. But Rick said he had something that Claude and I must see. We drove back down the mountain and into the city. We drove past all the neighborhoods I was

familiar with, and closer to the sound of AK fire. Finally we parked about one street over from a fire fight. Claude and I both had a difficult time unfolding out of the back of Rick's VW.

Christine was already far enough ahead of us that her white suit was disappearing into the gloom. "*Allez, messieurs!*" she called. Claude and I finally got out, popped the joints in our knees, restored the circulation in our feet and followed.

With Christine in the lead, she and Rick turned the corner toward the fire fight. Claude and I exchanged glances. I was certain that Rick would never expose Christine to unnecessary danger, but they had just turned a corner down a street where bullets were actually flying.

We turned the corner. The street bent slightly. As long as we stayed within eighteen inches of the building wall we were okay, but rounds were snapping past our ears in the street. It was sort of like driving in the right-hand lane on a crowded two-lane highway. As long as you don't stray

**Syrian rocket position atop Sannine Mountains, some 20 kilometers north of Beirut and 10 kilometers from the coast.**

## **ARAB TERRORISM IN THE UNITED STATES**

Since returning to the States, I have met an American businessman of Lebanese descent who just happened to be in Beirut in 1976. This man, who has asked that his name be kept secret, had never been to Lebanon before, but that didn't mean anything to the Palestinians. He was Christian and he was Lebanese, and that made him a Lebanese Christian, so, like it or not, he found himself fighting with the Kata'eb. If you've ever met a former Marine then you know pretty well what that experience meant to him.

Since then he's been actively trying to organize certain projects for Lebanese Forces in the United States. The local Palestinian students, whom our State Department has allowed here out of the kindness of its befuddled heart, have taken exception to his activities. He has been shotgunned on the interstate, beaten almost to death, and had his unoccupied car riddled with bullets.

Since the local police either couldn't or wouldn't do anything about it, he has retaliated in kind, and although he's somewhat evasive about what he actually has done, I gather he has been more successful than they have. He has essentially gotten himself in the middle of a Mafia-style gang war, only there's no money in it.

With that in mind I asked Alfred Madi of the Lebanese Information Service in Washington, D.C., if any of his people had similar experiences. He said that there had been confrontations between Palestinian and Lebanese Christian student groups in the United States.

Our law-enforcement agencies like to treat these incidents as isolated occurrences, but we may well have uncovered a pattern of Arab behavior in America. Friends who have lived in the Middle East have told me that Arabs take their war with them wherever they go.

We'd like to see if there is such a pattern, and if so, what form it takes. Therefore, I am soliciting reader mail on the subject. If you have been subjected to harassment or worse from Arab groups in the United States, we'd like to know about it. We need not reveal your name; we merely want to find out what the deal is. Send your letters to Jim Morris, care of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, and we'll see what comes of it. My guess is that we'll find something important. —J.M.



# BEIRUT

over the line you're okay — but death lies a few feet to the left.

Rick reached in his pocket and produced a set of keys, fiddling with the lock before opening the door. We all crowded through, and he locked it from the inside. The smell was musty and I could vaguely tell we were in a large room, but what the . . . Rick flipped on the lights. At first my view was blocked by a large hanging plant. I stepped around it. To my left a long bar ran the length of the room. Straight ahead were a couch and two chairs facing each other over an Oriental rug and a coffee table. To the right was a dance floor, surrounded by similar conversational groupings of furniture, not standard night-club furniture, but furniture lovingly selected. In one place the coffee table was an ancient handcarved marvel, worth many thousands in the States; in another it was an old GI foot locker. The hanging plants were everywhere. The ceiling was an ancient stone arrangement of arches coming together to form a cross. It looked like what you'd expect to find in the cellar of a monastery. A direct hit upstairs wouldn't even make it quiver.

Rick grinned, obviously delighted. "It's my night club," he said. "It's called the Living Room. It's where we used to come to get away from the war, but now the back door opens onto the line." It was interesting to think that the back door opened onto Palestinian positions, and that anyone attempting to leave that way would be instantly gunned down. Especially since we'd had to skulk down the alley with rounds snapping past our ears to get in the front.

Rick zipped around us and turned on more lights. "What'll it be, ladies and gents?" he laughed. "On the house." We gave him our orders and he got busy behind the bar.

He and Christine spoke to each other in French for a moment and laughed. Then Christine, Claude and I took our drinks and sat down, facing one another across a coffee table. I sank into the comfortable chair with a big grin on my face.

Christine actually understands quite a bit of English, but is not used to speaking it. She sat for a long moment, rehearsing the question in her mind, then turned to me and smiled warmly. "Do you like your life?" she asked.

"Yes, very much," I replied.

"You are a happy man?"

"Yes."

"Gude." She sank back into the couch and drank.

Rick, meanwhile, had been fiddling around with the sound system. I heard the opening strains of a familiar piece of music that I couldn't quite place. Then I



recognized it, the music from the movie musical, *All That Jazz*. Just as I recognized it I heard the *crump-crump* of incoming mortars somewhere upstairs. It was very faint, but with that ceiling it could just as easily have been a direct hit on the building we were in. I really don't think anybody else even noticed it, and Christine turned to me, smiled and spoke. Her voice is high, flutelike, and when she speaks French it is difficult to remember that it is a regular language, designed for communication and not simply music. The harsh Saxon syllables of English do not give the same effect, but her accent was still charming. Just as the mortars slammed in upstairs, she grinned and spoke the line that serves as a signature and recurring theme for *All That Jazz*: "It's showtime, folks."

IT was about four in the morning when Rick brought Claude and me home. Nazih, the bleary-eyed young man who opened the door for us, looked at me in amazement. "You are going to the range with Faoud at five-thirty," he said. Once more part of the ten percent who didn't get the word. Oh, well, under no circumstances would I have wanted to miss the party at Rick's club, and this wouldn't be the first day of training I had gutted after

**Etienne Sacre (right) and one of his bodyguards along road in Sannine Mountains near Beirut. Sacre, also known as Abou Abbas, is the leader of Guardians of the Cedars, one of the parties which make up the Lebanese Forces.**

a night without sleep. I went to shower and change.

A few joggers were out in the blasted early-morning streets. It had been over a week since I had run, and I was feeling my chest start to slide down to my belly. I decided to get back to it. I was beginning to be able to find my way around, and I trusted myself to run a couple of miles without fear of turning a corner into a Palestinian position.

The ride to the range passed in a blur. On the way I confessed to Faoud my eagerness to fire the AK. Over the few days I had known Faoud, he had mentioned a long list of weapons, and I had to confess that, although I had been shot at by most of them, I had very little first-hand experience.

"Sometimes it seems as though you



have never fired a weapon in your life," he said.

I laughed. "I was an adviser. My weapons were flattery and blackmail."

The range was in the mountains on the way to Michel's position. When we arrived the other car was already there. In it were Michel, who had rotated his platoon back in for a week's rest, Nazih, who was the G-5 treasurer, and Toufik, another young man in the office. Toufik looked like a young Omar Sharif, and played the role to the hilt, smoking his cigarettes in an ivory holder, and in all ways affected a suave manner. But there was no BS about him when it came time to get the job done.

Faoud had brought his own FAL and an M2 carbine for me. It had a decal of the Virgin Mary on the stock.

Michel and Toufik both had M16s. Michel had switched to the 16 after he lost half of his left arm at Tall Zaatar. To fire, he laid the front hand guard over the stub of his elbow; he was deadly accurate. Toufik professed to genuinely like the M16, although few others did. Sam had said, "If you think the M16 is prone to jam in the jungle, wait until you get some sand in it." Good news for the proposed American peacekeeping force in the Sinai. It's only going to be one battalion. Maybe they can find a warehouse somewhere full of M14s for them.

Nazih had a brand-new AK he had bought, and also a new P38 — new to him anyway.

The range at first appeared to be an improvisation; in fact, it didn't look like a range at all, but merely somewhere guys could go to plink out a few rounds. I suspect that was how it had started; then it was gradually modified as training required. None of these modifications involved anything like a conventional target, either bull's-eye or silhouette. We stood on a small raised area, a natural platform that looked across a small valley. Some hills formed a natural backstop about 500 meters to our front. Between us and the hills, at 200 meters, a zigzag trench had been dug for defensive problems; at 100 meters were three little hillocks, maybe two dump-truck loads of rock and gravel each. Faoud looked around, found a Coke® can, took it and put it on top of one of them. When he came back, we began to fire.

I didn't know if my weapon was zeroed or not, so I started firing aimed shots into the dirt bank. The dirt seemed to be flying pretty much where I was looking, but I fired six rounds just to make sure. Then I shifted my attention to the Coke® can and popped it off the berm on the second round.

"Who hit it?" Michel asked.

"Morris," Toufik said.

Michel looked at me in obvious annoyance. "We were firing like this," he said, "It was a game."

I looked and every man was firing either from the hip, or with the buttplate jammed right into his solar plexus, just below the belt buckle. "Oops, sorry!"

They set another can up, and we went back to firing from the hip, to no effect that I could see.

I also had a run with Nazih's new AK. He had no sling, so I fired it from the hip. It was a great weapon, accurate and easy to handle.

I had not fired a weapon of any sort in about three years, but I upheld the honor of SOF and the United States. Only Faoud and Michel outshot me, and then it was close.

I was feeling a bit smug about that when Faoud asked us to cease firing for a moment. As soon as we did he took off running in a zigzag diagonal across the front of those hillocks we were shooting at. Going at a dead run, he crossed their front at about 50 meters out. His first round was about six inches out, but after that he put a three-round burst from the FAL into an area about 18 inches square in the center of mass of each of those little hillocks, firing from the hip. It was the most impressive display of combat shooting I have ever seen.

After we quit firing, the others went back to Beirut, but Faoud wanted to show me something up in the mountains, so off we went.

On the way I asked him where he had learned to shoot like that. He said he had learned at the Lebanese Forces Commando Course, so I started asking questions

and comparing that course with the U.S. Ranger School (see SOF's article, October '81). They are quite different. Much of the Ranger course is designed to put pressure on the student to see how he will stand up under the stress of combat. No one goes to the LF Commando Course until he has at least a year of combat.

I mentioned that in the U.S. Army one of the most prized awards is the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Faoud laughed. "I think that in Lebanon everybody would have ten of these medals."

The Ranger School also emphasizes land navigation in all types of terrain, and being able to subsist for days on few rations, while moving in the swamps, or the mountains of Georgia. The Lebanese Commando is operating in his own backyard. So his six-week course is all PT, tactical problems, and range-firing on all types of weapons under simulated combat conditions.

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## "I think in Lebanon everyone would have ten Combat Infantry Badges."

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Faoud pulled the Land Rover into a line of military vehicles parked in front of what appeared to be, and in fact was, a ski lodge in the off-season. "There is a commando company here," he said, "and some support troops. Would you like to talk to some of the boys?"

Of course — so we went inside. He checked in with the XO (executive officer) of the company, an old friend of his. Actually he kicked him out of bed. Since it was eleven in the morning I assumed he had been up all night on an exercise of some sort.

We stepped out through the balcony door of his room and immediately I was surrounded by grinning teenagers in fatigues. The one who spoke the best English was an 18-year-old *squad leader* who had been fighting for three years. He said he was trying to finish high school so he could study electrical engineering in the States.

I asked him how long he had known the boys in his squad, and he seemed puzzled. He had known them all his life; they were the kids he grew up with. He was their leader now because he had been their leader in kindergarten.

Another kid, a tall, smiling boy, wanted to show me his RPG. On its side it had been stamped: "Made by Fateh."

"How did you get that?" I demanded.

He shrugged and grinned. "Killed two Palestinians." That seemed reasonable to me. If you want to graduate to a better weapon, kill an enemy who has one and you're in business.

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continuing rearward pressure on the trigger for full-auto fire.

Turning the cocking knob to the locked position allows firing of a single round from the closed-bolt position without the bolt opening. This bolt lock is intended for use with a suppressor attached. The Leatherwood receiver contains integral suppressor threads which are covered by a thread-protector cap.

Disassembly of the Leatherwood SMG is rapid and patterned after the hinged upper and lower receivers of such weapons systems as the FN FAL and M16. The trigger housing group can be removed instantly for repair or replacement as a separate sub-assembly.

As with most modern designs, the magazine well is located in the grip assembly and the bolt is of the wrap-around type. In general, the weapon is designed to be rapidly produced, using sheet metal and high-production lath parts. Weighing in at only six pounds unloaded and a mere seven and one-fourth pounds with a loaded magazine, it easily meets the JSSAP requirements in that category.

The rear sights are adjustable for both windage and elevation and the front sight is an M16 post type. The weapon has an integral sight base that will accept commercial sighting equipment, such as the Single Point or Quick Point.

Firing the Leatherwood is an interesting experience to say the least - especially one-handed. Controllable one-handed firing in both the semi- and full-auto modes is one of JSSAP's most critical performance requirements, next to reliability and safety. Apparent recoil has been diminished so much that repeated three- and four-round bursts fired one-handed produced only the slightest, almost imperceptible, muzzle rise.

I found accuracy and functioning, in general, excellent, although there were a few malfunctions initially, as a consequence of a new ejector, which had been installed in the prototype just prior to our testing. After the normal fitting and filing, necessary on an essentially handmade prototype, the weapon settled down and performed admirably.

By and large, the JSSAP objectives for the design and fabrication of a Joint Service submachine gun represent a serious, intelligent effort to crystallize state-of-the-art submachine gun design concepts. However, the Pentagon's all-too-common philosophy of always holding out for the final, supremely costly (in terms both of money and

development time) "last ounce" in technology - in hope of getting the ultimate battle weapon - is all too evident in the JSSAP specifications.

Consider the following performance requirement: "The capability of firing a minimum of five rounds full-automatic with the ejection port blocked may be of interest." It would also be more than a little astounding! The suppressor requirements are equally unrealistic, based on current technology. You simply cannot achieve both sound-pressure-level reduction of 30 db and at the same time controllable heat build-up and minimum bulk weight with a muzzle-type-only suppressor.

Overall, the Leatherwood design is well-thought-out and imaginative, and it more than meets the government's realistic desired-characteristics-and-performance requirements. It certainly deserves serious consideration.



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## "REBEL"

Continued from page 32

of the hill but most of his infantry had faded away — fire came in from three directions despite the Hunter strikes. They made their way back down the hill under heavy fire. Small groups of 3 Commando linked up with us and we all pulled back to our jumping-off positions. Everyone was dead-tired, but we felt like shit about losing Mr. Sumpter and many of us volunteered to go look for him. The major was miserable but the order from upstairs was to pull back, period.

Around 0200 the next morning, a scruffy-looking fellow hollered to the sentries, "Don't shoot! It's me, Sumpter!" We were overjoyed. He had some shrapnel in his ass but was otherwise unhurt and refused to be medevacked.

Next day a new ball game began with air strikes, artillery and mortars: our way of saying, "Good morning, comrade." It was a set-piece attack in three sectors at once, meeting little resistance. The enemy had pulled out. After the third day of battle, the field belonged to us. But not for long.

We bumped off the odd straggler and a few determined rearguards. The order of the day was loot. We quickly filled the back of our truck with enemy weapons — mostly Simonovs, PPShs, Sten guns and even a Thompson. Many of our men sported AKs. Sammy collected East German ground sheets for our whole crew.

Numerous AA guns fell into our hands, including the three-barreled 23mms. A willing POW led us through the complex that Russian "advisers had designed." We found a lot of commie literature, including Comrade President Robert Mugabe's famous manifesto, "1979 — The Year of the People's Storm." We heli-lifted out or dynamited tons of food and medical supplies. We had dramatic evidence that United Appeal and World Council of Churches fed and supplied the communists. Trick or treat for UNICEF, my ass!

At nightfall, Major Winkler placed his dinner order with the headwaiter at the Mozambique Hilton: "Rebel, for dinner tonight, let's start with cheese and crackers, beans for the main course and a canteen cup of water."

"Of course, sir. And perhaps a little baked Alaska for dessert?"

I was sleeping like a prince when a messenger kicked me rudely. "Major Winkler, wake up. Enemy tanks are coming!"

"Fuck off, man, I'm not the major — he's the guy next to me."

I rolled over and closed my eyes; then it finally registered: tanks!

"Wake up, everybody! We're moving out. Peirce, get me all the troop commanders. Move it!"

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We arrived at the roadblock manned by two sticks of RLI, armed only with RPGs and a couple of anti-tank mines. In the distance: six big T-34 tanks — and, to the right of the tanks, a very cool customer acting as artillery spotter, calling in fire on the enemy armor.

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Major Winkler wanted to pursue, and argued his case with 09 (General Walls) over the "A" set. Silently I pleaded with Walls to turn him down. Tanks did not intimidate the major but they scared me. Apparently Gen. Walls didn't like them either. He ordered us back to our positions to prepare to cover the withdrawal of the combat team. First in, last out.

We got into another punch-up as we pulled back, and sporadically engaged little groups of terts and Frelimo while the rest of the vehicles made their way to the rear.

During a break, Sammy served tea to an impromptu "O" group, and I made a smart comment about officers.

"Reb, I guess I'm gonna hafta bust you back to private."

"Okay, sir, be seein' you."

"Where you going?"

"I was only a lance-jack, sir, and now I've been busted twice. I must be a civilian now. Got no business at the sharp end."

We spent a final night in Mozambique. Our little group and some RLI took up defensive positions just outside Cruzamento. Everybody was exhausted and most of us slept through the fireworks. Freddie had brought up his big guns and spent the night hammering our former positions, so I missed my chance to get killed by a "screaming mimi." Astounded to be alive, everybody woke up and met the dawn with a cheer and much handshaking and backslapping: We'd made it without being hit by Freddie's tanks and Stalin organs. Only the ma-



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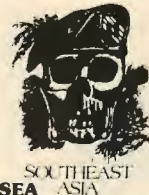


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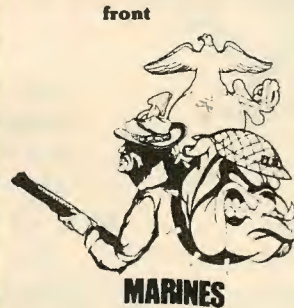


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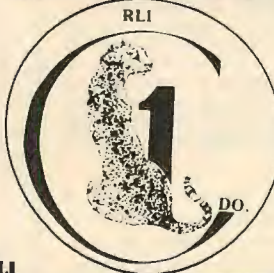
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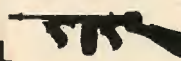
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Major seemed a little put out by this happy circumstance.

"Why the long face, sir?"

"Look, Peirce, I know you guys are all happy to be alive and everything, but goddamn it — I like to fight!"

Our raid had succeeded: We'd captured or destroyed tons of weapons and supplies, terminated hundreds of the enemy and temporarily neutralized a major infiltration area. Our losses were small: two dead. One ominous fact became apparent to us: Freddie had become a deadly adversary. He was sluggish and timid but the muscle was there — heaven help us if he ever developed reflexes.

It was over. We headed back across the border, refueling and pointing the old two-five toward Salisbury to prepare for round two. First we had to submit to a check by the MPs who confiscated the enemy weapons we had hidden in some of the most unlikely places. (One of the Elands had nearly been taken out in a fire-fight — it couldn't fire because of bits of an AK concealed in the barrel of the 90 mil; the gearbox was jammed with terr bayonets.)

The RSM greeted us as we debarked at HQ.

"Corporal Peirce, where is your headdress?"

Even the major appeared slightly intimidated by this awesome individual. I quickly stuck the old pisspot on my head and prayed that he wouldn't notice the baseball cap sticking out of my pocket.

"Good show, Peirce. Been wearing your helmet, eh? Good example for the younger chaps." Clearly, the RSM was proud of the battalion. We all were.

A group of us headed to the mess for a wash and a beer — not necessarily in that order. A couple of canteen commandos started mumbling about our appearance and the fact that we still carried sidearms. We all turned around at once and the mumbling stopped. We meant no offense to mess etiquette: We were simply bone-tired and thirsty.

The boss called us back the next day. After a quick maintenance program and ammo resupply, we were off again. Before we left I had a strange confrontation with my *bete noir*, the RSM.

"Corporal Peirce, you were in charge of the .50 ammunition. How is it that four weapons fired over 40,000 rounds?"

"Impossible, sir. My gun was in action more than the others and I only used 2,500."

"Corporal Peirce, are you questioning my estimate?"

"No, sir." If the RSM says the moon is made of green cheese, I'll post a guard detail to keep the mice away from it. He smiled and walked off.

Then it dawned on me: The crafty old son of a bitch had written off his ammo shortages for the last three years and no one could question it.

Our next op was a strike at the area near Beatrice, Rhodesia, as a sort of dry run for the following external raid. The point of the thing was to tighten up co-operation between the different arms of the service in the combat team. Instead of Selous Scouts, 3 Commando, RLI, accompanied us.

The first day was exciting, but there was no contact. I felt a touch of *deja vu* as an RLI colonel roared up in a Ferret scout car, and armored vehicles fanned out over the plain in assault formation. With a slight stretch of the imagination, it could have been the Western Desert with our predecessors, the Eleventh Hussars.

Then it began to rain. "Darrel's Darlins" (the HQ group) kept dry enough, though. By then we were old campaigners and knew what to carry for comfort. Lt. Light came by and asked us whether we were available to stand guard.

"No, sir, I don't think so. Other things on our minds if you know what I mean, sir. This HQ stuff keeps ya busy."

"Righto, then."

The major asked me later, "You guys standing guard tonight?"

"No, sir, already spoke to the loot about that and he doesn't require our services." He strolled off with a knowing grin.

The following day it cleared up a bit and we bumped into the opposition. I heard the familiar snap, crackle and pop, and Sammy swung the truck around and accelerated. That was the best part — riding behind my .50, racing at top speed toward a fire fight.

George Lopez, an Eland crew commander, showed a lot of class in that scene. His Eland ran down three terts and George slotted all three with the AA machine gun. One, still breathing, bounced a round off the turret hatch, missing George by inches. Lopez calmly pulled up his FN and blew the top of that fellow's head off.

Later Major Winkler asked George whether he got anything of value off the dead terts.

"Yes, sir, a watch and a couple of bucks."

We had a running shootout for about an hour with mortars and artillery adding their two-cents worth. Rhodie artillery was spot on: Those guys were set up and firing before we finished giving them the co-ordinates.

To my intense disgust, we returned to Salisbury after three days at Beatrice. We were supposed to cross the border and hit the bastards again but, as I learned later, political considerations had spoiled our chance for a second external operation. But

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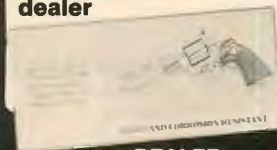
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as usual the major had a special assignment for us.

"Well, boys, everyone else is going on R&R but I've got something for you that will make you glad to give up your leave. You've probably heard the rumors about our getting tanks and you're aware of all the activity out at Inkomo. Well, the rumors are right. A tank-training squadron is forming and you two are going to be in it."

Sammy was tickled to death. I was pissed-off. I didn't want to be in a tank and I didn't want to pass up my R&R for that dubious privilege.

"Sir, couldn't we do that tank-training thing after we have our romeos?"

"Peirce, I'm not asking for volunteers. Pack your shit and head for Inkomo."

The original plan called for a small group of us to train on tanks and then steal some from the other side. It never came off, but the rumors persisted — particularly since the few tanks we did have were of Soviet manufacture. As a propaganda ploy, we allowed (even encouraged) the press to believe we had captured the damn things in Mozambique. We probably *would* have captured some too, but the self-destructive and criminally manipulative policies of the so-called Free World brought an end to our major offensives.

Indeed, the misguided policies of Britain and the United States brought an end to Rhodesia. But of course at the time we still believed — or wanted to believe — like children who no longer believe in Santa Claus but still leave cookies and milk by the fireplace on Christmas Eve.

We had eight tanks, with two more in South Africa for study and evaluation. They were T-55s, manufactured in Poland and bound originally for Uganda. But kindly old Idi Amin got removed from his position and his tanks followed a winding path of international intrigue right into the grateful hands of the Rhodesians.

These tanks were well-put-together in a primitive Russian way. The T-55s mounted a 100mm high-velocity gun, two PKT machine guns and a 12.7mm DShK AA gun. The tank had infra-red gear for night operations and snorkel gear (which we never used) for fording shallow waterways. The fact that the instructions for all the equipment were written in Polish did little to expedite matters for us. However, we had the distinct advantage of being instructed in tank warfare by South African specialists — "volunteers" with no official existence, dressed in brand-new Rhodie cammies.

Our South African friends had their act together and we learned rapidly. One of these gentlemen told us he had gone to Israel to participate in

tank maneuvers. And, oddly enough, the Oliphant tank and R-4 rifle employed by the South Africans are exactly the same as the up-gunned Centurian tank and Galil assault rifle developed by the Israelis. If only the West would wake up.

At Inkomo, we often sat in the big mess tent late at night, drinking beer and talking about how easy it would be to drive the commies completely out of Africa — if only the governments of America and the U.K. would forget about world opinion and back their natural allies: South Africa and Israel. After all, world opinion and 15 cents won't even get you a cup of coffee these days.

Being assigned to the tanks, or E Squadron, as it was known, was a mixed blessing. The major had done a stint in tanks in Europe after Vietnam and wanted his crew ready to roll on any vehicle. Many of my friends were in E Squadron; indeed the pick of the regiment and some volunteers from the RLI as well were there, but it was difficult for me in some ways.

Sgt. Maj. Riley was in charge under a German captain named Rolf Kaufelt. The captain was an excellent officer but several times I lost my temper and almost hurt the good sergeant major. Once he insulted me in front of the troops and I demanded a redress of wrongs or an apology. Riley was reprimanded for that but he stayed on my ass and I seriously considered killing him. I was not the only one: I know of at least one instance in which circumstance intervened and prevented a couple of the boys from wiring his car with an unusual device — one which was guaranteed to make the engine turn over.

One evening after tactical training, Capt. Kaufelt called us together and announced we would be handling a special mission. The assembled troops greeted this with a cheer. We welcomed a break in camp routine.

We eased down to Beit Bridge on the South African border, slipped across in civilian clothes and came back driving 10 brand-new Elands, escorting a whole convoy of other vehicles. It rained the whole way back to Salisbury, but it was the first time I'd had operational command of an Eland and I enjoyed it. Our South African comrades invited us into their mess and it was an emotional moment for all of us. Our respect for them was equaled only by their respect for us. We were brothers, really, fighting a common enemy.

A break in the monotony was a blessing. I had endured the boring regimen at Inkomo off and on for nearly four months. Some of our time there was well-spent, as when we did armored tactics and tac-air exercises, but, for the most part, we withered on the military vine.

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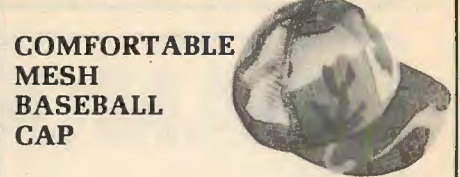
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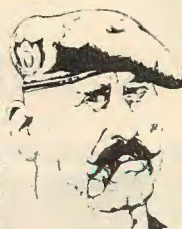
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We nearly got what we wanted when Zambia went on a total-war footing. The order of the day was anti-aircraft drill because those people had an air force. We paraded the tanks through Salisbury on transporters, covered by tarpaulins. Back and forth we went, trying to give an impression of strength — our version of the oldest ruse in the world.

Unfortunately for those of us who wanted action, the Zambians couldn't back up their threats and took to arming new recruits with spears when they ran out of rifles. So much for total war.

My chance came when the major called Sammy and me into Salisbury for operations. We quickly sorted out the truck, drew ammunition and joined a convoy heading to Umtali. Particularly nasty terrorist attacks occurred there and our job as always was to search and destroy.

The ground pounders handled most of the operation: the infantrymen of support squadron. Major Winkler gave me the choice of staying with the two-five or going in on foot. I decided a little stroll might do me good. Once again, we split into teams and went terr hunting. Our group picked up enemy spoor straightaway.

"Sir, to the left — 500 meters!"

We both let rip simultaneously, the major with his CAR-15, I with an AKM. The target terr was a bit out-of-range but apparently he got religion because he started waving a white hankie and ran toward us with his hands in the air. We had a quick chat with him and pushed on about six kilometers.

We saw a large group of terrors hiding among some rocks across a little stream. Bad luck for us — that stream was our tactical boundary and HQ refused to let us stray across that point for fear we would bump into our own people. The boss was furious and called for an artillery strike. He got it — right on top of us.

After three salvos, we managed to convince the gunners to stop shooting at us and engage the terrors. After one volley, they refused to fire any more. Having used up their allotment of shells firing at us, there were no more available to throw at the enemy.

Major Winkler was really pissed-off

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by then, and the terrors faded away in the distance. To make matters worse, it began to rain. We moved up to an area of unpopulated kraals and granite hill formations.

"Check out some of those caves, would you, Mike? We've got to get out of this rain."

"Yes, sir — Christ almighty! It's like a Vincent Price movie in here! Worms — it's crawling with worms!"

"Peirce, you asshole, those aren't worms, they're wet leaves, glistening in the glare of your flashlight. Now get in here!"

We sat in the cave for several hours, wondering where the hell the other patrol was that we were to link up with. Mark couldn't raise them on the "B" set and we hadn't heard any shooting. We were starting to doze off when I heard radio static and someone calling, "Nine, hello, nine; this is seven-three. Do you read? Over."

Without bothering to pick up the telly handset, I replied, "This is nine — got you fives. In fact, I'm standing right next to you." It turned out that the dial on our set was knocked out of position while we were climbing over the hills and we were set on Juliet 22 instead of J 23.

The sun came out and we did some serious walking. Fire force scribbled some people about three miles from us. There followed a mini-Armageddon for the terrors. Talk about "the sound and the fury"! We hid when the choppers flew over us, just in case their thirst for blood hadn't been satiated.

We got back to Umtali and I stepped in shit with the MPs. Mark, Jerry, Yves and I went to a restaurant there for a decent meal and a bit of cognac, and the waiter got cute with my bill.

"Punk, I catch you trying to cheat me again and you're history!" This got blown out of proportion and there followed the army equivalent of an APB out for a mad Yank wearing dark glasses and carrying an AKM.

I reported to the MP office there in town, Kalashnikov slung over my shoulder. "I hear you're looking for a Yank who wears glasses and carries an AK."

"That's right, in fact. Have you seen him?"

"Nope."

Back to "Berg" we went, and to my chagrin I had to return to E Squadron. Major Winkler knew I didn't like the assignment and told me to hang in there — some changes might come down.

Back at Inkomo, I composed another in my long series of letters requesting a transfer and, at long last, was called in to see Capt. Kaufelt.

"Corporal Peirce, I'm getting the feeling that you don't like it here."

"It's not that, sir. My pals are here and as you know I've always been in-

terested in armored warfare. I just don't want to fight this war from inside a tank."

"Okay. We'll work on it."

Out of respect for the captain, I didn't tell him about the other reason I wanted out: my contempt for chikenshit senior NCOs like Riley. It got so bad with those people that only two out of 30 National Servicemen signed up for the extra six months asked of them — even though they knew they'd be called up anyway within two months after they stood down, and had been offered \$1,000 in cash.

Christmas at Inkomo passed in an alcoholic haze.

Sgt. Maj. Reeves (Riley's replacement — he'd been fired at last) woke us up in our tent and made us drink a canteen cup full of rum — an old British tradition, we were told. Then we fell in for a Christmas greeting from the OC, followed by more booze. Then Reeves, myself, and a Yank QM sergeant from Texas proceeded to get blind drunk and pass out. The last thing I remember is Capt. Kaufelt and I drinking a toast to the Third Panzer Division.

On New Year's, I got a couple of days off; 167 Jameson was the scene of the crime. On the first of the year I presented myself to Major Winkler, who told me my application for transfer out of E Squadron was approved.

"You can go to Support Squadron or you can go with me to RAR. I've been posted."

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"Well, sir, that's hardly a question, is it? When do we leave?"

My luck held right down the line. With Jerry O'Brien and Yves Debay, we set off for Gwelo where promotion, good times and action awaited us. We rode out the war to the end with Demonstration Company, Rhodesian African Rifles (See "Abandoned," SOF, November '80). With communist-backed Robert Mugabe installed as prime minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia after the loosely-controlled election forced on Rhodesia and supervised by the United Kingdom, it was no longer prudent for American soldiers of fortune to be there, so in March of 1980, Maj. Winkler and I stepped off a plane at JFK in New York.

"Keep in touch, Mike. You never know when something might come up."

"I've got my fingers crossed, sir. Take care."

I got in a cab and drove off in search of a Big Mac, hoping that someday soon, something would indeed come up, and the old team would get together again.



## LIFE IN THE RHODESIAN ARMY

In writing about a war, it is easy to give the impression that a soldier spends all his time training or fighting. As anyone who has ever worn a uniform knows, there is a lot more to military service than that. Here is a brief rundown on how we lived in the Rhodesian army, the equipment we carried, the recreation we enjoyed, and so on.

African Servicemen (AS) lived in barracks under strict discipline. Since most of the AS came from primitive native villages, the army stressed hygiene, and barrack-room inspections occurred frequently. Until very near the end of the conflict, black soldiers had separate housing and facilities.

White Rhodesian National Servicemen (NS) stayed in barracks which lacked privacy and comfort but were generally clean. An African handled laundry for a couple of bucks a month per man. Unlike the regulars, conscripts ate in the cafeteria and carried tin cups and "grazing irons."

In the bush we suffered the same discomforts, but the army made depot life as comfortable as possible for the regulars.

A regular soldier could live on base or in a subsidized flat. I stayed at the corporals' mess, which had rooms for junior NCOs and regular privates. We paid \$30

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(Rhodesian) a month for room and board. It wasn't bad living.

At 0630 the batman would wake me with a cheerful, "Mornin', baas," and a cup of hot tea. While I showered and shaved, he polished my boots, tidied up the room and took my dirty laundry. Breakfast came at 0700 in a private dining room for corporals only and we had a waiter to serve us. The army usually provided good, nourishing food. After breakfast and gossip with guys from other branches of the service, the duty driver met us outside the mess and took the armor guys to Blakiston-Houston Barracks for the day's work. Conditions permitting, we returned to the mess at 1300 for an hour lunch and a couple of beers.

Depending upon what we were doing, the uniform could be tank suits, number fours or sand dress. Dress greens were only for funerals and weddings. Number fours included boots, beret, cammie shirt and denims, and the regimental belt. Sand dress was mostly for clerks and rear-echelon personnel. In Armored Cars, car crews and infantry alike wore tank suits. They often sold them on the sly to men from other units who had difficulty getting them. They were light, comfortable, one-piece jump suits, with zippers instead of buttons.

Combat gear for car crews consisted of a pack strapped to the side of the Eland and either a 9mm Star pistol or an Uzi submachine gun. Theoretically, crews were supposed to wear web belts with yokes (suspenders), but rarely did. Experienced crewmen usually got FNs to supplement the lightweight stuff issued at battalion. The support infantry wore full webbing with two water bottles, two kidney pouches and two double-magazine pouches.

The army issued infantrymen five magazines (later changed to seven), an FN FAL rifle, white-phosphorous and frag grenades, rifle grenades known as 42 Zulus (based on the British Energa), a field dressing and a hundred-round belt for the MAG. A bribe to the armorer got you five or six extra magazines and plenty of practice ammo. Most of the regulars threw the issue stuff away and carried chest or vest webbing, or had something made to their own specifications, as I did, at Faraday's (the biggest sporting goods store and outfitters) in Salisbury. In addition to the usual weapons, a lot of us carried our own knives and sidearms despite regulations.

A pack contained extra under-

wear, poncho, mess kit, gas cooker, sleeping bag (sometimes tied to the belt), I.V. drip and, in my case, a bottle of brandy. In Rhodesia you were never too far from a bar or store and the army was liberal in allowing the men to fortify their spirits with spirits.

R&R was supposed to be 10 days for every six weeks in the bush. Sometimes it was, but not often. The African Servicemen, NS and European volunteers had different ways of enjoying their infrequent R&R. The AS grabbed a bus back to the TTL (Tribal Trust Land) to kick back with a carton of Chibuku and make babies. The NS went to discos and ate cigarette butts to impress the girls. The rest of us went to 167 Jameson and the Estoril multi-racial bar. The house on Jameson was a mecca for foreigners, although few Rhodies were ever seen there. Colored girls flocked to the place and uptight guys like me soon abandoned their inhibitions.

On Sunday nights there was a soccer game, then a *braai* (barbecue) at 167 Jameson. The boys who owned the place liked a good time and sold us steaks and drinks at cost. The Christmas and New Year's parties at 167 were memorable. After a few drinks the Krauts and Brits would start singing; after

a few more, the rest of us joined in. Naturally, my contribution was *Dixie*.

The Estoril was a Portuguese night club where you could do just about anything. A man who couldn't get laid at the Estoril would probably die celibate 'cause he'd missed his best chance. There were few fights despite the fact that some of the baddest people in the world frequented the place. Everybody was carrying.

That was an interesting aspect of life in Rhodesia: Virtually everyone packed a gun, but aside from the terrorist raids, violent crime was scarce. A purse-snatching was front-page news.

I spent a lot of time at the mess. Beer cost only 20 cents and you didn't have to pay cab fare or climb the fence half-crooked in the middle of the night. Toward the end of the war, when conscripted blacks came into the mess, we often retired to the dining room to drink and speculate.

Social life occasionally included a taste of Rhodesian hospitality, since they were essentially good people and often invited us into their homes.

But in September '79, we were too busy fighting and didn't see R&R for quite some time. —M.P.



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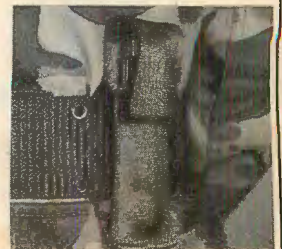
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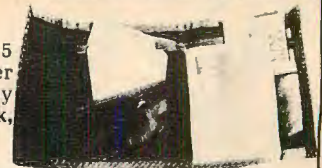
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# LEBANON

Continued from page 63

Faoud took me to lunch with the command group of the company. The company commander was new, recently promoted from XO of another company. He was a short man with a moustache, built like a fireplug, whose arm muscles stretched the sleeves of his T-shirt. The lunch was informal, in the commander's room, with guys sitting in chairs and on the beds.

There was none of the joking and laughing I'd seen with the kids upstairs. All the conversation was in Lebanese, so I didn't know what was discussed, but their voices were low and the silences long. Although one or two men were moving in the room more or less continuously, bringing messages, or scooping up homuz with bread, I never heard a step or a shuffle. This was the most silent group of men I'd ever met. The black T-shirt was the norm among them, frequently with their blood type in red over the heart. One wore an exact copy of SOF's Rhodesian Army T-shirt, except it said, "Be a man among men. Join the KATAEBE Army." I tried to get one, but found they had been made in '76 and were prized possessions of those who had them.

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ON the way back, when we entered the city, we saw a pall of smoke rising from the center island of the boulevard we were on. "Hmmm," said Faoud, "it looks as though there has been some shelling." He hit the ramp to switch to another traffic artery. There was a long string of cars going the other way. "It is very hot," he said. "Everybody is going to the beach."

THE day after he came out of the mountains, which was the day after Claude went back to France, Michel moved into the room with me. "I must get my rest," he said, although his rest would put the average person in the hospital. I never saw a man get as much traffic from beautiful women as Michel did, and most nights I had the room to myself. Once I was up early for my run, and there was a knock at the door. I opened it and there stood the most beautiful girl I saw in Lebanon. "Ou est Michel?" she demanded. She had the face of an angel, and *un balcon magnifique*. I sighed and went to wake Michel up. They were both gone when I got back from my run. I have no idea where they went.

But he was there a lot during the day. I'm not sure why he stayed in the press bureau; he had an apartment with a live-in girl friend in town. Maybe that was the problem; the live-in didn't like the nights out.

I had already stayed longer than I had intended, but I wanted to be in Lebanon when Larry arrived, to brief him.




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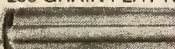
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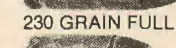
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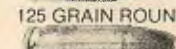
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I knew I had passed some sort of test on the range that day, but it was one they had almost hoped I would fail.

"Well, Jim, I cannot go whenever I want. I must go when they order."

I knew that. I knew it probably wouldn't happen. But for a day or so there I actually had myself convinced it might. I got myself psyched back all the way up to that every pure adrenalin high. I could almost feel that green paint on my face again. Once more I was looking down that long red tunnel, free and at peace.

"Well, Jim, you should know," he said. "If you are wounded in the assault, I cannot carry you out, and I cannot let you be captured. I cannot even let them find your body. We do not want them to think you are *le mercenaire*. I must destroy you."

That seemed reasonable enough. But then I got to wondering how he would "destroy" me.

He shook his head. "No, no, no, no, no."

"Oh, come on, Michel. I'm a big boy. I can take it."

He really didn't want to tell me, but I insisted. He looked at the floor, sort of guiltily. "I would pute a grenahde in your mouth."

I must confess that gave me pause.

"It is very dangerous," he said. "You shoot well, but you do not know the terrain; you would not know well your equipment."

There it was. I was a danger not only to myself, but to his patrol, and to the mission. The last thing in the world he needed was an unknown factor.

The real problem, for me, was that, while I had the right to risk my own life, I didn't feel I had the right to increase the risk to the patrol. My own best military judgment was that I should back off. "Besides I would waste a grenahde," he said.

"Well, Jesus Christ," I shot back. "Will you let me go if I pay for the grenade?"

We finally agreed on a compromise, in which I'd go with his fire-support team, and I'd watch the action, if any, from beside a machine gun on an overlooking hill. If it was a mine-planting expedition there'd probably be nothing to see. Finally I had three days before my boat left. Not enough time to prepare, even if he got a warning order. Maybe next time I'll have time to go through the commando course, and things will be different.

No action. There had been an Arab foreign minister's conference going on over in West Beirut, almost from the day I arrived. "I don't like it, Jim. It's too quiet, too quiet." Michel stood on the balcony, beating on his thigh with his fist. I had seen everything there was to see and interviewed damn near everybody in Lebanese Forces who spoke English. Still there was no action. All I was doing was

waiting for Larry or my boat, whichever came first.

Once a bunch of us were on the balcony, ogling the girls in the dress shop across the street, when we heard that familiar high, shrieking whistle. I hadn't heard that sound since March 1968, but I wasn't the last guy to hit the deck, in this case the checkered tile under the dining room table. It went over and killed two women and a man a mile further east. It was in the papers the next morning.

One evening I was alone in the apartment when, Youssef, a young man in the political section, ran frantically into the apartment, and stared wildly about the room.

"What's up?" I demanded, bounding from my chair, thinking, action at last.

"Starsky and Hutch," he cried, and bolted for the TV.

## FACTIONS

While we were in the mountains, another vehicle arrived with more visiting firemen. The first man out of it was a no-neck goon in tailored fatigues, with an AK slung over his back. The second was a middle-aged, medium-sized man with distinguished-looking gray hair and an imperious manner. He wore custom-tailored fatigues and carried a small automatic — a general's gun.

I'm trying to describe this guy so you can see him whole. American professional soldiers tend to despise all politicians of whatever stripe. And although American politicians try to cultivate a down-home image, one of the roles that works particularly well in the Mid-East is to try to come across as Julius Caesar. This was one of the Caesars. But he was obviously intelligent, and he didn't have to come out here where he could get shot at.

"Who is that?" I inquired.

"Etienne Sacre," Faoud replied. "He's president of the Guardians of the Cedars, one of the parties that makes up Lebanese Forces."

I piled out of the Land Rover to get a shot of him. His purpose was fairly apparent. He had contributed part of his private army to Lebanese Forces, which was both generous and sensible, but it probably hadn't gone down easily. In no sense was it part of M. Sacre's intention to retire gracefully from the scene and let the Gemeyals co-opt his influence. He was jockeying to improve his position in whatever settle-

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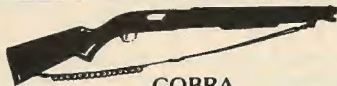
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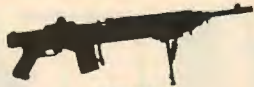
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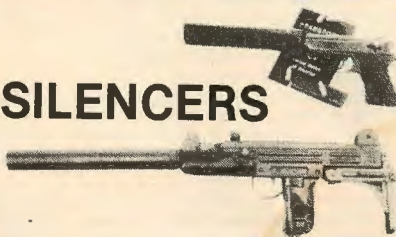
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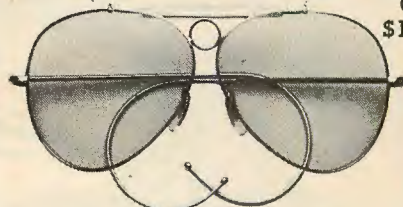
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ment emerged from the conflict. Well, you couldn't blame a politician for politicking.

I got out and fumbled with my camera, to get a picture of a genuine Lebanese VIP and his bodyguard.

"Let me get another, just in case," I said after the first shot.

They had automatically lined up for the usual parade-rest snapshot. "In case of what?" Sacre asked, lifting one corner of his mouth in a slightly contemptuous smirk.

"I'm a writer with a camera, not a photographer," I snapped back.

We piled back in the Land Rover and headed down the mountain, leaving M. Sacre and his goon to head on up to the OP to dazzle the troops with his presence.

That evening Faoud tapped me on the shoulder. "Come with me!"

"Where?" He shrugged. "Somewhere."

We drove about six blocks and parked in a walled courtyard by what appeared to be an office building. We took the elevator upstairs.

I was beginning to feel as though I were going through a series of initiations. Before my first lunch with Samir, we had been talking about getting me a hotel room; after that it was understood that I was crashing at the bureau. Then maybe the trip to Hadath, maybe something that hap-

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pened in the mountains had led me to this place, and somehow I knew it was special.

We went through the outer office and into another. A man sat behind a desk. He stood up as I entered and we shook hands.

He was of medium height, in his mid-40s, and wore a nondescript safari shirt and khaki pants. He did not have the movie star charisma of Bachir, or the commanding arrogance of Etienne Sacre. Described objectively he would come across as rather plain and dull — but then so would Harry Truman or Gen. George Marshall.

What he did have was a perfectly frank and open smile, and the warmest eyes I have ever seen on a grown man.

Faoud introduced us, and then went to see about something else. This man's name was Obad Zouain. He was head of a party called Tanzim, which means the Organization. Tanzim is a small party, and consists of people who had no connection with the former French colonial regime. Having worked with Vietnamese who had been colonials, I could understand and approve of an organization of independent and independence-minded individuals.

Zouain and I chatted at length about Lebanese Forces, their logistical difficulties, their inability to make arms purchases in the States, even though culturally and politically we should be their natural allies.

"Is it necessary to be an enemy of the United States to be your friend?" he asked me. I had no answer, for I had often wondered the same thing.

He recommended Nixon's book, *The Real War*, as the most cogent thing currently in print about the world situation. We talked about the war in Lebanon, and the relations between her peoples and the Palestinians. He downplayed the importance of religion in it. "My wife is Druze [a Moslem sect]," he said, "and if she didn't have our children to care for she would be one of our best fighters."

He explained that the Druze only permitted one wife, and made divorce very difficult. That made it easier for them to get along with the Christians. That reminded me of something Masoud, my contact on Cyprus, had said about the Moslems. "You figure it out. If a man has one wife and two children, both children get educated, and the family prospers; even if everything is equal, if he had four wives and twenty children, the oldest gets educated and the other nineteen end up selling cigarettes on the street in Beirut." The prophet's original injunction that a man limit himself to four wives, and go through some sort of divorce procedure, was designed to bring some order into the absolute chaos of the lives of nomadic desert tribesmen,

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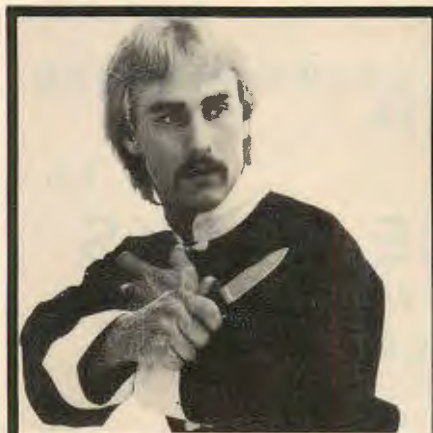
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who took and discarded women like Kleenex®, and produced children like some people produce dandruff. But a social organization that works in the desert, where people die early, and children are helping hands, can be, and is, utterly unsuitable for a modern urban environment. Apparently the Druze recognize this, without lessening their devotion to the religion of Mohammed.

But something else Zouain said, and the way he said it, struck me as even more important as a measure of this remarkable man. "We are very happy in our life together," he said of his wife, and he seemed to be speaking from a well of calm and happiness. A man who is decent in his home is decent with the world. With Zouain I had the feeling that I was dealing with the soul of honor itself.

I mentioned my meeting with Etienne Sacre. He spread his arms, palms up. "What can I say? He is my friend." He had given Sacre his first military training, as, for that matter, he had done for Bachir Gemeyal.

I didn't learn much about Zouain at that meeting, nor did he tell me anything about himself later. A more modest man I have never met. But I later learned he had run his own private military training camp for a number of years, where any patriotic lad could come and learn to fight for no charge except an oath of allegiance to Lebanon.

Since then I have met an American businessman of Lebanese extraction who got caught in Lebanon in 1976, and wound up fighting with Zouain. "He was magnificent," he says.

My next encounter with Lebanese factions came when I called an acquaintance in the press corps at the Commodore in West Beirut. I was bitching to him that in 12 days in Lebanon I hadn't seen another American. He replied that things had been busy where he was, since he covered Tehran out of the Commodore also. He also said that he didn't always contact Lebanese Forces when he came across. He mentioned that Lebanese Forces had run "a particularly brutal assault" against Danny Chamoun's headquarters at Aqua Marina. "Danny's wife and children were there, and could have easily been hurt."

That shook me a bit. It was not a side of Lebanese Forces that their press bureau had been anxious to present. I resolved to ask Sam about it when the time was right. The moment came when we were on our way to Faoud's brother's birthday party at Byblos.

Sam swung by his and Rick's apartment to pick up his AK. "That's kind of heavy for a birthday party, isn't it?" I asked.

"When we scheduled this celebration, we forgot that this is the anniversary

sary of the death of Franjeh's son. He may try something." He went on to explain that the son of Suleiman Franjeh, the president who had given Lebanon to the Syrians, had been killed in a shoot out, which he blamed on the Lebanese Forces. In response Franjeh had raided a church in a Lebanese Forces area during mass, with a squad of his goons, and massacred the congregation.

"Not a nice man, I gather."

"No, not really, and he may make a move tonight."

Interesting, a birthday party at the beach, with most of the men armed. Those swimsuits are really raunchy, but they're a lot worse with a .38 in the back of the waistband, the barrel nestled between the man's cheeks.

I had already decided that the business about the women and children at Danny Chamoun's was not a big deal. I had seen these guys cut diamonds with an AK. If the women and children weren't hurt it was because nobody had intended to hurt them. I asked Sam about it. It wasn't anything he really wanted to talk about, but he didn't want to cover it up. I really don't want to write about it either, but am doing so for the same reason.

"Danny Chamoun is a great combat leader," Sam said. "But when he comes in all he wants to do is get high and get laid. The only reason we let him run as long as we did was because he was President Chamoun's son. [Camille Chamoun, former president, is the most highly respected man in Lebanon.] He didn't try to keep any kind of control on his boys and they used to shoot at our people when they went to Aqua Marina [Danny Chamoun's stronghold, a resort area north of Jounieh]. After a few of our boys got hurt we went to him.

"We told him we had laid off out of respect for his father. 'The only thing the president has here is his picture,' he said, 'So take it and fuck off.'

"We explained the thing to President Chamoun, and that some people were going to get hurt. He warned us about the women and we said to make sure they were upstairs, which they were. Our men found a lot of hash there also. We just can't have that."

Danny Chamoun is now in exile, reportedly in London. My friend in the press corps, I believe, was a friend of Chamoun's; he probably is a great guy to party with. But I am no more upset by Lebanese Forces putting him down that I am upset that George Washington squashed the Whiskey Rebellion. Lebanon is an old country, but it is a new republic trying to form itself under seemingly impossible conditions. There is a lot of friction in the settling process.

Zouain says that one of the worst

dangers facing Lebanon is that the people will look for a hero-leader, a man on a white horse. He is right; wherever that happens it is an evasion of responsibility on the part of the electorate, and invariably corrupts the hero-leader, turning him into a despot.

I mentioned this fear to Sam also.

"I don't think that will happen here," he said. "When Bachir makes his inspections the boys tell him, 'We love you, Bachir, but we do not fight for you. We fight for Lebanon.'"

—J.M.



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Continued from page 14



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I plan to get a pair of Hogue's ivory-micarta 1911-diamond-pattern stocks very soon. I highly recommend all Hogue products. For further details, send a postage stamp to the above address for the company brochure and price list.

**F**OR years, fans of the Colt Government Model .45 pistol have wondered why Colt Firearms does not produce a .45 auto that is ready for combat competition or survival use as it comes from the box. Most Colt .45-auto buyers object to the fact that after their initial purchase, they must

have a gunsmith make a half-dozen modifications to their pistol. Why hasn't Colt modified its standard gun in the past? Since the company sells every .45 it makes, it hasn't bothered to add modifications or pay attention to the desires of those who are in fact its best customers. This attitude may be changing, however.

During 1981, Ben Kilham of Colt took in many of the big practical-pistol matches, asking questions, looking at popular modifications, and listening to shooters' comments. Colt sales representative Lou Sharp, himself a fine practical-pistol shooter, has for years been trying to get the people in Hartford to get in pace with the growing market.

As a result of the efforts of these two men, Colt is now planning to produce a special pilot production of combat-modified Government Model pistols later this year. The plan is to make up 5,000 special pistols with their assembly being handled by the custom shop. Each pistol is to be carefully assembled, but without special accuracy jobs. The gun will have high fixed sights, and the front ramp sight is to be silver-soldered in place. The ejection port is to be lowered as is that of the Gold Cup. Other Gold Cup touches include a flat mainspring housing and serrated front strap. The magazine well will be beveled, and a smooth trigger will be standard. The frame and related parts are to be electroless nickel-plated with the new "Coltguard" finish. The slide and upper parts will be standard Colt blue.

These 5,000 guns should be ideal, and I am sure demand will outstrip the supply, since this is the gun Colt should have marketed five years ago. Maybe the front office will get hot on this model and make a strong effort to produce a standard version of a practical Colt Government Model .45 pistol. Since buyer reaction is the key to most sales programs, interested shooters would be wise to write Colt Industries, Dept. SOF, Firearms Division, 150 Hushope Ave., Hartford, CT 06102, and state their desire to see this project placed on a top-priority basis.



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# BULLETIN BOARD



Continued from page 8

communist puppet governments receiving direct military aid, manpower and weapons from the Soviet Union. Only a handful of such groups exist: the mujahideen in Afghanistan, UNITA in Angola and anti-communist forces in Laos and Cambodia. Out of the Senate 100, only six senators had the courage to remain on the floor when the final voice vote was taken. SOF had urged its readers many times to write their elected representatives in Washington to repeal the misguided and misconceived "Church Amendment." Finally, it's been done.

## TALKING OF TERROR ...

The July 1981 issue of *Defense Electronics*, declares that the United States will soon be threatened by international terrorism, according to a Soviet defector and former high-level double agent for the United States.

Vladimir Sokorov, who served as a high-level Soviet official in Kuwait, said, "I think very shortly that terrorism will involve the United States, particularly with nuclear facilities.

"Imagine what would happen if civil disturbances in Detroit, Miami, Los

Angeles and Washington, D.C., all happened simultaneously."

Sokorov said he did not believe this plot was on the immediate horizon but that terrorism in this country is a goal of Soviet-backed "liberation" groups throughout the world.

Sokorov added, "You don't need a multi-million-dollar research contract or a spy satellite to figure out if the Soviet Union is backing international terrorism. All you have to do is check Lenin's writings dating back to 1922."

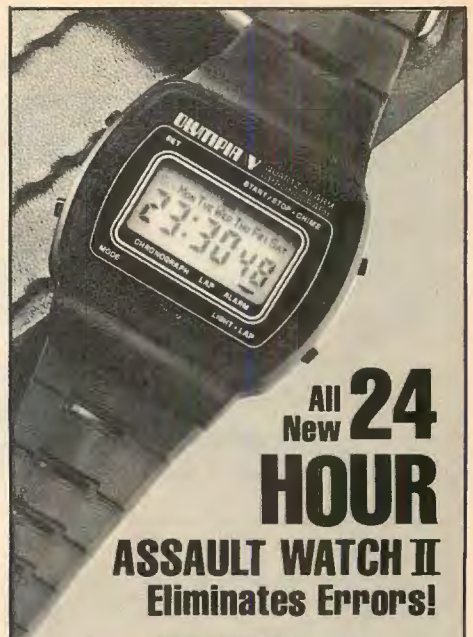
Sokorov now lives at an undisclosed location in this country and has changed his name for fear the KGB will waste him.

## REMEMBER THE ALAMO SCOUTS ...

A reader, Col. Robert S. Sumner, USA Ret., seeks to locate former members of the Alamo Scouts, an Army long-range patrolling and raiding unit which served in the Southwest Pacific theater during WWII.

The unit's association held a reunion last year and plans to do so again in the spring of 1982, provided enough veterans can be located.

Those interested may write: Col. Robert S. Sumner, Director, Alamo Scouts Assn., 4101 Watrous Ave., Tampa, FL 33609, or CSM G. C. Kittleson, Secretary, General Delivery, Toeterville, IA 50481.




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

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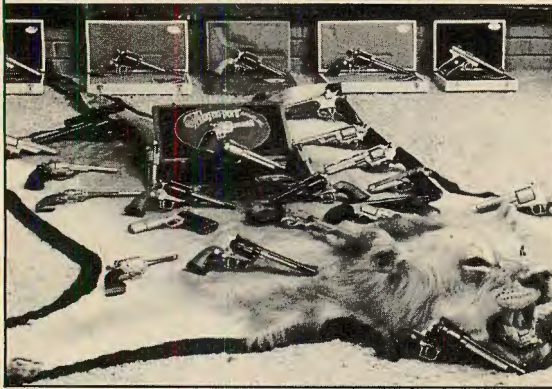
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**FLAK**

*Continued from page 12*

And try as I might, nowhere did I see bulging bags of ears hanging off appropriately army-green belts. However, I can stand as witness to several persons draining the life-force from numerous innocent beers.

I came away with new friends and the reaffirmed knowledge that though we may have ideological and political differences, we are still able to connect in meaningful ways. A special thanks to those obviously busy individuals who took time to listen, talk, offer sincere encouragement and steer me in the right directions. They know who they are.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen M. Robbins  
Van Nuys, California

**I** PSC  
INTERNATIONAL ...  
Sirs:

Thanks for the type of articles you have written on South Africa and Rhodesia; they're articles that keep my friends and me running back to our local news agent for more.

I hope through your magazine I may come into contact with practical shooting clubs in the United States with a view to exchange ideas on practical pistol and shotgun shoots and ultimately set up postal shoots at a club level between our club (Peninsula Pistol Association) and different American clubs. I must emphasize that I am not attempting to set up a contact on a national basis (this has been admirably done by our national body, the South African Pistol Shooting Association) but on a local level.

A word or two about our club: 98 percent of our practical shooters have been converted by Saint Jeff and shoot Colt .45s, the rest Browning Hi Powers. Our range comprises four parts: one 40x40-meter speed-shoot range; one 5x40-meter chrono and tuition range; one 40x60-meter standard-exercise range; one 40x100 assault-course range. We have turning targets, pop-up targets and a portable running man that can be positioned anywhere on our assault course. In the pipeline are two more ranges, both of 100-meter length for jungle lanes, etc.

Yours sincerely,  
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**WE CAN DO IT ...**

Sirs:

I am a PFC in the Hawaii Army National Guard's 829th Maintenance Co. I am shocked and frankly frightened by the attitude of most — but not all — of our Army. I am getting sick to my ears, hearing the same old line, "Shit, if we ever go to war we're gonna get our asses kicked." What with that attitude, the defective weapons and equipment and a few bad troops that are always screwing up, I wouldn't be surprised, but for our own sakes, we've got to make do with what we have — or what we don't have.

What about the Afghan tribesmen? They ain't got half the things we have, but they're kicking some ass and giving the stinking Russians a run for their money. Let's change our attitude and think positively.

In basic training, our motto was *We Can*, and I know we can if some of us change our down-in-the-dumps attitude about our Army. If you think you're gonna get your ass kicked, then you surely will. People who think they're gonna get their asses kicked have no business in the Army. Let's keep our Army saying, "*We Can!*"

Thank you,  
Byron Leach  
Pearl City, Hawaii

**DISTAFF CHEESECAKE ...**

Sirs:

Okay! I can't stand it another minute! Who in hell is that absolutely gorgeous man lighting my life (and other things) on the cover of the September '81 issue of SOF? Finally, after two years of buying your magazine, I found something worthwhile on the cover.

Where did you find him? Who is he? Where is he? Are there any more of them around? Tell you what — ship him to me via Sky Courier. I'll gladly pay all shipping and delivery costs. And I'll most certainly take care of any handling involved!

Gale F. Lynch  
Baileys Crossroads, Virginia

To refresh everyone's memory, Ms. Lynch is referring to Tom Beringer, star of the movie, *Dogs of War*. — *The Eds.*

**R4 ERROR ...**

Sirs:

In reference to Al Venter's article, "Sudden Death in Angola" (SOF, June '81), I believe the weapon on pp. 34-5 is an R4, a 5.56mm weapon of Israeli Galil descent, not a 7.62mm Belgian FN/FAL descendant. The WERMAG (South African Defense Forces) realized that a compact, folding-stock 5.56mm weapon and

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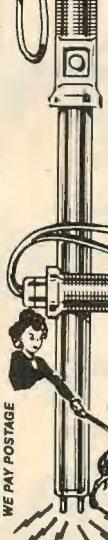
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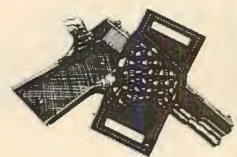
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*George Bennett's letter is typical of the many reader corrections sent about the weapon identifications in this picture. Thanks for keeping us on our toes! — The Eds.*

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
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FALL & WINTER CATALOGUE

## SOLARVOLTAIC RADIO

POWERED BY 9 SOLAR CELLS



BACK

**SAVE \$8.00**  
Offer Expires 1/31/82  
Limit 2 Per Customer

RETAIL \$29.95  
Special Offer \$21.95

Add \$1.50 Shipping/Handling Per Order



FRONT

- Ideal For Emergency Use When Electricity Or Batteries Are Unavailable
- Small, Portable And Maintenance Free
- Radio Is Directly Powered By Nine Solar Cells Producing 3.5 Volts In Bright Sunlight
- Power Can Be Stored In Two AA Rechargeable Batteries (Not Supplied) So The Radio Can Be Used Indoors, Or After The Sun Goes Down
- When Not Being Used As A Radio, It Becomes An Ideal Battery Charger Which Produces Up To 40 Milliamps Of Current To Recharge Any Rechargeable AA Battery.

## WALLE HAWK (Life Tool)

The Survival Tool That Fits In Your Wallet!



Leather Case Optional

**SAVE \$5.50**  
Offer Expires 1/31/82  
Limit 4 Per Customer

RETAIL \$18.00  
Special Offer \$12.50

GET 4 TOOLS FOR \$48.00

Add \$1.00 Shipping/Handling Per Order

- Uses Include: Knife, Can Opener, Bottle Opener, Chisel, Screw Driver, Open-End Wrench, File, Compass, Wire Stripper, Signal Mirror, Hole Punch
- Includes Booklet Showing Over 40 Ways To Use The Tool In Emergencies
- Comes In A Protective Vinyl Case
- Solid 440C Razor Grade STAINLESS STEEL
- 3 1/2" x 2 1/2" And JUST 1/16" THICK

**OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT**

- Leather Case (Pictured) w/belt loop Price \$4.95
- Fire Starting 2 1/4" x 3 1/4" Plastic Fresnel Lens (it really works!) Price \$1.80 (Fits in case with Walle Hawk)