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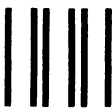
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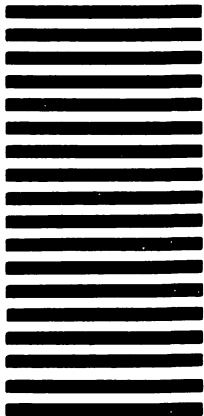
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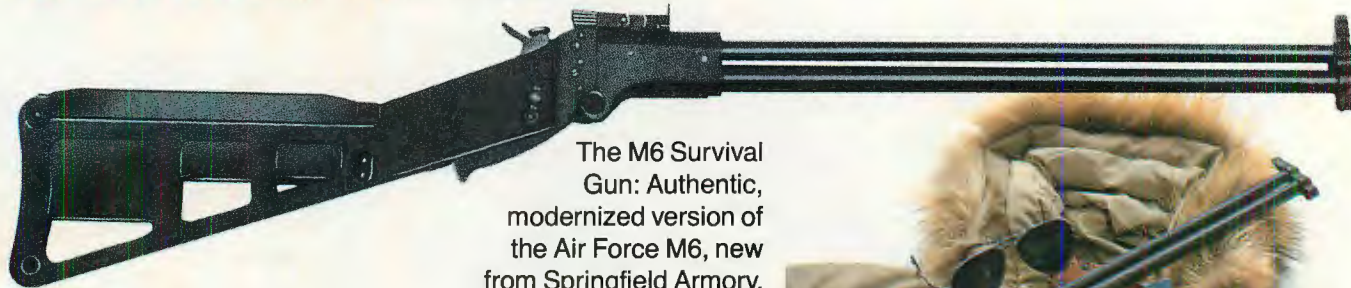
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EDITOR'S NOTE



WHEN Israel made its decision to stamp-out the PLO in Lebanon, *Soldier of Fortune's* Foreign Correspondent, Jim Morris, was in Tel Aviv. Morris was just coming off a three-month assignment in Thailand/Cambodia and was in Israel for R&R and to do a piece on the 82nd Airborne down in the Sinai. Following Napoleon's dictum ("March to the sound of the guns"), Morris went north to Beirut.

Meanwhile, former SOF staffer Fred Reed called in to say that the East Coast metropolitan newspaper he now works for had assigned him to Beirut and would we like anything.

Unfortunately for Reed, one of his fellow columnists out East had written an anti-Israeli piece and upon arrival in Tel Aviv he found himself on a list of journalists who were not allowed to cross over.

He went anyway, crossing illegally twice, but without clearance from the Israeli Army it was a bit dicey.

Look for Morris' and/or Reed's accounts in a future SOF.

Back in the Far East, SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown and Editor/Reporter Jim Coyne broke off from the Bangkok beat for a trip north to Pakistan to touch base with the freedom-fighter leadership council and check on the latest weapons coming out of the war in Afghanistan.

When offered the chance to go inside for a few days to observe an attack on a Russian outpost, Brown and Coyne leaped at the opportunity. For two days, Brown and Coyne watched the freedom fighters work over a 200-man Russian outpost with 12.7mm and mortar fire. The story is in next month's SOF and the videotape of the fire fight taken by Coyne will be shown at this year's SOF convention.

We've finally gotten clearance from Mike Hoare, the famous merc commander of 5 Commando in the Congo and leader of the group that failed to overthrow the Seychelles in December, to run the details on the defense fund for the 44 men on trial in South Africa.

Hoare and the other men were, at press time, still in court, and while a "guilty" verdict and sentence to jail seems almost certain, they will have the right to appeal.

Hoare is overseeing the effort to raise money for the men he is standing trial with and for the five men who have gone to trial in the Seychelles — four were convicted and sentenced to death while the fifth got a lengthy jail term.

Hoare is offering two items. The four-inch, green, white and yellow shoulder patch (shown below), which comes with a honorary Wild Geese membership certificate is \$5. For \$12 you can get a copy of Hoare's book *Congo Mercenary*, signed by Hoare. The book is the Corgi paperback edition.

If you are interested, write: Mike Hoare Defense Fund, Box 441, Hilton, 3245, South Africa.

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COVER: Sweated against early morning chill, proud and resolute professional typifies Portuguese-speaking black, backbone of elite South African 32 Battalion. Soldier carries caliber 7.62mm FAL, magazines fill canvas ammo pouches on nylon open-mesh assault vest with Mk 60/61 rounds for Hotchkiss-Brandt 60mm light mortar suspended from straps. He and his comrades-in-arms teach terrorists a lesson in "Death on the Skeleton Coast," chronicled on p. 54.

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AFGHAN UPDATE . . .

SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Associate Editor Jim Coyne recently returned from a brief but exciting foray into Afghanistan with the Afghan Mujahideen guerrillas, where they witnessed two attacks on a strategic Soviet forward base.

During both attacks, Brown and Coyne came under fire by Soviet mortars and were shelled repeatedly by a lone Soviet tank, now disabled and besieged by freedom fighters using three-inch mortars and DShK 12.7mm machine guns. It was expected the Soviet outpost, numbering approximately 200 men, would fall soon, as have three previous garrisons nearby. The Russians are unable to resupply by road and both the Soviet "advisers" and their Afghan army charges lack resolve. In the previous three victories, the Afghan army troops loyal to the puppet government in Kabul surrendered with their weapons to the Mujahideen after killing their Soviet officers. Many of the former Afghan army troops are now battling alongside the freedom fighters and are providing invaluable intelligence for attacks now taking place.

Vast areas of Afghanistan are now firmly under the control of the Mujahideen.

In a new and significant development, the three largest moderate Islamic Nationalist groups have formed a working alliance and have combined headquarters, staffs, intelligence and finances to form a united front against the beleaguered Soviet invaders.

Stand by for more detailed information in future issues of SOF, as well as videotape of both attacks at the convention in October.

SUPPORT "RED" . . .

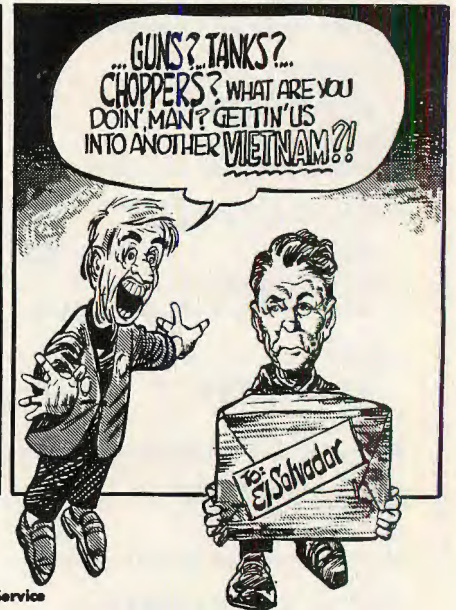
Eugene "Red" McDaniel is running for Congress in the Third Congressional District of North Carolina. As a captain, Red was CO of the aircraft carrier USS *Lexington*. McDaniel served with distinction in Vietnam, and spent six years as a prisoner of the communist Vietnamese. He's our kind of conservative candidate, making a strong stand against unnecessary governmental interference and for the right of the American citizen to keep and bear arms. Those wishing to support a deserving North Carolina conservative candidate should send their contributions to Friends of Red McDaniel, P.O. Box 160, Dunn, NC 28334.

AIM TAKES TIME . . .

Accuracy In Media (AIM), a watchdog organization over the U.S. press,

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



reports that the *New York Times* has yet to report that the solitary source for a story it ran asserting that American military advisers in El Salvador witnessed government atrocities was a Salvadoran army deserter.

The deserter further claimed that the advisers were actually teaching techniques of torturing prisoners.

The U.S. Army Inspector General has investigated the alleged incident, questioning all 20 advisers who were in-country at the time. Conclusion: The report was untrue.

Col. Eldon Cummings, who commanded the advisory group at the time, pointed out at least two other inaccuracies in the deserter's account: Contrary to what the deserter said, American advisers wore neither camouflage uniforms nor green berets; the deserter declared that he was in a paratroop unit advised by two Americans, but U.S. advisers never did work with that unit.

GUATEMALAN DEATH TOLL . . .

Forty-three Guatemalan villagers — and a West German diplomat — have been slain in recent shootings, allegedly by leftist guerrillas trying to overthrow the country.

The villagers included pregnant

women and children as young as two months, according to Guatemalan authorities. The German was identified as Konrad F. Schultz, assigned to the local United Nations office in Guatemala City.

SENATE SCISSORS AND MILITARY BOOST . . .

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has slashed by \$100 million proposed military aid to El Salvador and has threatened to cut off all such aid if the Latin American nation, in the throes of a struggle with communist guerrillas, does not re-establish a land reform program enabling peasants to own their own farms.

Such a program, taking property from large landholders, had been in effect under the former Duarte regime but was halted, at least temporarily, after recent national elections.

The Senate panel's action cut military aid to El Salvador to \$66 million.

Meanwhile, a U.S. Army spokesman said recent training programs for Salvadoran officer candidates at Ft. Bragg and a full battalion of Salvadoran soldiers at Ft. Benning cost a total of \$14.5 million, about half of which was for infantry weapons: M60 machine guns, M16A1 rifles, .45 ACPs

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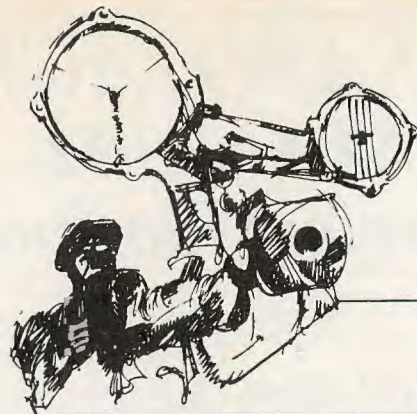
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It was taken on a firing run off Southern California in February '82.

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BALLISTICS BOONDOGGLE ...

Sirs:

Editorial comments made by Mr. Guthrie and Mr. Kokalis in your July issue prompt me to respond.

Mr. Guthrie states that the Newtonian model has never been proven wrong. I recollect that Newton's Third Law of Motion states that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Therefore a seven pound .22-250 should recoil as much as a seven pound .45/70 since both have about 1700 ft. lbs. of kinetic energy. The former should also strike an equal blow to a ballistic pendulum (a tool common to the study of Newtonian physics) which soaks up all of the power available in a projectile. Newton seems to contradict Newton. If indeed Newtonian energy theory holds true, that same .22-250, with a sturdy bullet, should be an excellent grizzly or moose cartridge (the record of the .45-70 is legend) — HOG WASH!

Mr. Kokalis says much the same thing and adds that ballisticians seldom read mass circulation magazines. This is obvious because they keep foisting this energy crap on us while we keep shooting things with their brainchildren that don't fall down.

Continued on page 85

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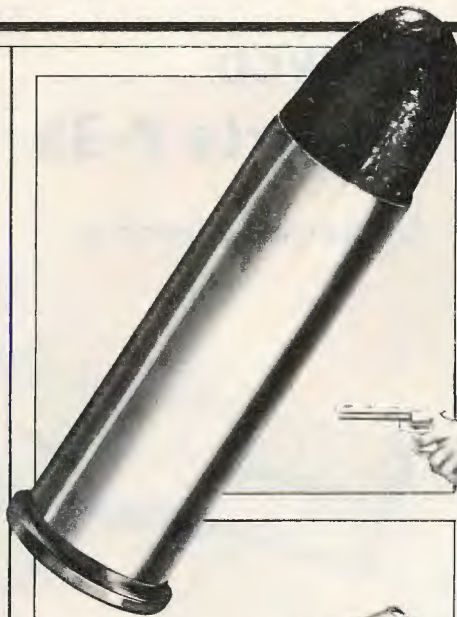


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COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT



Howco Imports P-35

by Ken Hackathorn

MANY prospective handgun buyers ask, "What is the best 9mm auto pistol on the market?" I recommend the Browning P-35 Hi-Power. The rugged, reliable, battle-proven P-35 is currently the most popular military sidearm worldwide, and in the many areas in which only 9mm ammo is available, the P-35 is a sounder choice than my own favorite sidearm, the M1911A1 .45 ACP.

In the United States, the Browning Hi-Power pistol has been popular for the past 30 years. Browning Arms Co. has offered a commercial model that sports a blued finish and walnut grips. It has a fine trigger pull and performs beautifully. Browning recently added other finishes and adjustable sights to the line. These Browning adjustable sights provide a much-improved sight profile.

I have just finished testing another version of the P-35. The Model 88, imported by Howco Distributors, Inc., Dept. SOF,

Close-up of Howco's new military P-35 shows parkerized finish, black plastic grips and standard-issue sights. Photo: Ken Hackathorn



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122 Lafayette Ave., Laurel, MD 20707, is a military version of the weapon sold in Belgium by Fabrique Nationale's Military Arms Division. The Howco-imported P-35 is marked with the FN logo. It is identical to the commercial P-35 imported by Browning except for finish and grips. The Model 88 has a military, parkerized, dull-gray, phosphate finish, giving it a durable, rust-resistant, nonreflective finish. Grips are black checkered plastic.

Fit and overall detail are comparable to Browning's model, but, unlike Browning's P-35, the Howco pistol has a poor trigger pull. Both Model 88s that I fired had extreme creep and a heavy sear release, making them difficult to shoot. Accuracy may be acceptable for a service sidearm, but the test pistol's terrible trigger pull made me grit my teeth. Although I got through the magazine with fairly good results, some less experienced shooters had problems and their hits on target were widely dispersed. The triggers of these otherwise fine weapons really disappointed me.

The Howco P-35 performed without any functional problems. A variety of ball ammo was used, and the weapons just kept on shooting.

For those who want to own a military P-35, Howco's new import is worth checking into. Try to find a dealer with a number of Model 88s in stock and carefully pick one with decent trigger action. Suggested retail price is \$499.50. ☒

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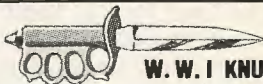
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SWA conflict — of which there is little published material to be found.

GREEN SIDE OUT: Marine Corps Sea-Stories. By Maj. H.G. Duncan (USMC retired) and Capt. W.T. Moore, Jr. (USMC retired). J.H. Gregory, Inc., P.O. Box 63, San Diego, CA 92140. 1981. 297 pp. \$3.95. Review by William Brooks.

DURING World War II, the Marine Corps issued camouflaged shelter halves and ponchos. These were designed to have a predominantly green side (summer) and a predominantly brown one (winter). It had been a standing joke in the Corps — which was then fighting in the jungles of the Pacific — that the brown side was made just in case they were suddenly transferred to North Africa. Every unit had some yahoo who, during training, would pass the word to make up the packs “green side out,” only, after the packs were made up, to have the word pass down, “Brown side out.”

This, according to the authors, “gave rise to some latent literary talent in an unknown trooper who wrote the ditty which has also passed into the backwaters: “Green side out, brown side out; run in circles, scream and shout!” **Green Side Out** is dedicated to all Marines past, present and future, whose devotion to and love of the Marine Corps was, is and will be “complete and all-consuming.”

This hilariously funny — and tragically sad — little book was written by two former enlisted Marines who later became officers. Both authors served 30 years each with the Corps, and maintained vivid recollections of exceptional people and events which occurred during their careers. These two gentlemen have a wealth of literary talent and a remarkable sense of humor.

For example, the glossary of terms lists BCD as “Bad Conduct Discharge. A punitive discharge awarded by special and general courtmartial and invariably suspended by battalion commanders whose occult ability to second-guess the courts has helped to render Marine Corps justice a shambles.” Duty NCO is defined as “the body leaning back in the chair with his head on the bulkhead, sleeping while the troops sneak about the barracks cleverly bringing beer into squad bays and committing other anti-social acts.

“Each six hours the Duty NCO becomes conscious and enters into the logbook all the remarks denoting his alertness and vigilance for the period during which he was unconscious.”

This book’s radiant sarcasm goes on and on. Despite the use of Marine jargon, which may prove difficult for civilians, the authors have skillfully written a work of colorful and dramatic short stories.

If you have ever been in the service, especially the Marine Corps, you will laugh and cry while reading **Green Side Out**. Maj. Duncan and Capt. Moore are certainly “a few good men.” ☞

IN REVIEW



IMAGES OF WAR. by Peter Badcock. Graham Publishing Co. Ltd., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 37387, Overport 4067, Durban, Republic of South Africa. 1981. 112 pp. \$25. Review by Bob Poos.

SOUTH-African born Peter Badcock was educated and lived in Rhodesia until 1980 when he returned to South Africa. From a career in interior design, public relations and advertising, he turned to fine art and writing in 1978 and published two books on the Rhodesian conflict: *Shadows of War* in 1978, and *Faces of War* in 1980. Both books chronicled the activities of the Rhodesian Security Forces up to the war’s end when Rhodesia became black-ruled Zimbabwe.

Upon his return to South Africa, Badcock accompanied troops of that nation in action in South West Africa, fighting communist SWAPO (South West African People’s Organization) terrorists. The result of this tour is *Images of War*, an immediate best-seller in South Africa upon publication in 1981.

The book is a collection of pencil drawings of South African troopers doing the things that soldiers all over the world have done: Filling sandbags, alert on patrol, parachuting, overburdened with weapons and gear on the march. The drawings are accompanied by free verse. In the back of the book are detailed notes of explanation of each sketch. There is also a glossary of line drawings accompanied by full descriptions and nomenclature of the weapons used by both sides.

Images will be of interest to the serious observers, collectors and students of the

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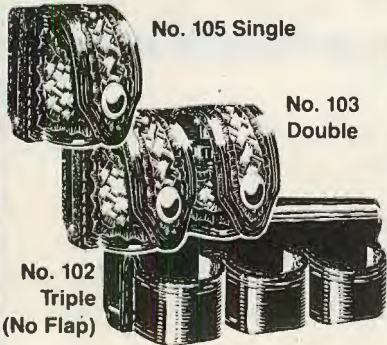
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I WAS THERE

by Maj. F. Gerald Downey
as told to M.L. Jones

Maj. F. Gerald Downey, USAR, commanded Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 196th Infantry Brigade, in Vietnam from November 1970 to May 1971. As he tells it:

IN late January 1971, my company was preparing to conduct sweep-and-clear missions in an area west of Da Nang known as the "Antenna Valley." Standing on the helipad at LZ Baldy waiting to be airlifted in, my platoon leaders struck up a conversation with some Marine officers who garrisoned the base. When we told them of our destination, they smirked at one another and said, "Watch out for the Phantom Blooperman!"

Seeing the consternation on our faces, they grew serious for a moment and told us the legend of the Phantom Blooperman. He had been operating in or near the Antenna Valley since at least 1967. The Marines had made various attempts to kill him but they had all failed.

His general method of operation was to fire a barrage of 15 to 20 rounds from his M-79 grenade launcher just as a unit settled into its night defensive position. He

would repeat his performance when the American unit had completed its mission and was being extracted by helicopter. He usually travelled with two bodyguards from the local-force VC company. His attacks almost always resulted in casualties since his aim seemed to be unerring. Of course he had been operating so long in the same area he undoubtedly had measured the precise ranges to the terrain features the Americans preferred to use for encampments and airlifts.

I decided that I was smarter than any United States Marine with the possible exception of Lew Walt and that I'd devise a plan to bring an end to the Phantom. I huddled quickly with our artillery and mortar support officers. Soon the Hueys came to pick us up.

True to my plan, I picked a piece of ground for our night defensive position that was overlooked by a small hill about 250 meters away. It was the only place where the Phantom could fire on us and observe the results of his handiwork. I warned the men to dig deep. Precisely as dusk turned to dark, the first "Bloop" of a 40mm grenade leaving its launcher was heard. The sound had come from the hill.

No sooner had the M-79 round exploded directly in the center of our perimeter than massed artillery and mortar fire began falling on the forward and reverse slopes of the hill. One more M-79 round came at us — then nothing. After 10 minutes I called off the artillery and

mortars. Sometimes, even in Vietnam, a soldier could sleep peacefully.

The following morning my patrol reported finding torn clothing, pieces of flesh and bloodstains all over the back side of the hill. They also discovered what appeared to be the twisted, bent remains of an M-79 grenade launcher. I was absolutely elated; my plan had worked perfectly.

Ten days later we were pulled out. In eager anticipation of the bragging I was going to be able to do back on LZ Baldy, I literally leaped aboard the helicopter. I had gotten the Phantom Blooperman of the Antenna Valley! As I turned for one last look at the site of my greatest military victory, three 40mm grenades landed neatly, one after the other, detonating exactly in the center of the landing zone.

IT HAPPENED TO ME

by Charles Jandecka
as told to M.L. Jones

Charles Jandecka is now a patrolman for the North Olmsted (Ohio) Police Department but from July 1969 to July 1970 he was an infantryman in Vietnam, serving with B Company, 4/31 Infantry Regiment of the Americal Division, patrolling the countryside around Hiep Duc. As he tells it:

THE small mountain village and provincial center of Hiep Duc certainly did not command world attention like Saigon or Hue, but it and the mountains and valleys surrounding it — like many other little-known valleys — hosted untold savage battles. These occurred primarily because of its strategic location near the coastal plains and Tam Ky. Charley would yearly expend tremendous energy to overrun Hiep Duc, and during the 1969 summer-fall offensive he baptized me with fire — and taught me a couple of lessons.



At mid-August our company was en route to Hoa Que to establish a blocking line against NVA movement toward Highway 534. As we neared the hamlet, the point was chopped down by a machine-gun blast. The rest of us sucked air and dove for cover. Charley then lobbed M-79 grenade rounds among us, one of which

Nightwork!



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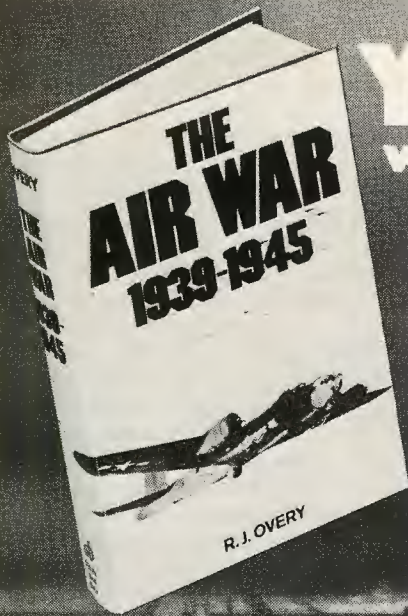
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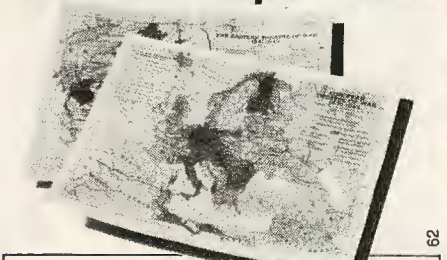
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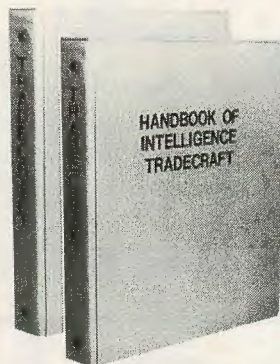
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plattered a guy in the back. I could still hear his screams two days later.

During the ensuing fire fight, I had the bright idea of outflanking Charley along a hedgerow. As I eased over the bank in which I had been concealed, an NVA cut loose from the bushes with his AK-47. I felt the volley strike me squarely in the chest. I fell on my back and swept my hand across my chest looking for blood: There was none.

Then I realized the turkey couldn't shoot straight. His shots had hit low, and I'd been sprayed with debris as they chewed up the ground in front of me. Without hesitation, I flopped back over the bank to reconsider available options.

We eventually broke contact and pulled back to regroup, replenish our ammo and request a dust-off for the wounded. We also needed water. Most of us had brought only a single canteen. I can still remember drinking what little remained in mine by the capful — very slowly.

After a brief rest, we crept back to Hoa Que. Charley was still there — elusive as ever. We spent the rest of the day playing cat and mouse with each other. At sunset we pulled back again — with one KIA. Next day we would have four more.

Initially we had left the day laager under the care of one squad. But during the above, its men were summoned to assist us, leaving the camp unprotected. Because we feared ambush or booby traps, we bedded down a short distance to the east of camp, while we waited for daybreak. I knew we were near the perimeter, and when I spotted a dark bundle lying in the tall grass I figured it was a rucksack. I poked it with my M16 to make sure it wasn't a stump, mentally noting its location so I could have a cool morning drink.

At dawn, however, the rucksack was gone: It had actually been a lurking NVA. Around 0100 hours the guy on guard saw him creep off into the brush. I don't know if my rifle gave Charley any heart spasms — but he certainly took away my desire for water. ☞

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

Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph.

Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we can notify you of acceptance or return your story. Article payment is \$50, upon publication. All entrants will receive an SOF patch.

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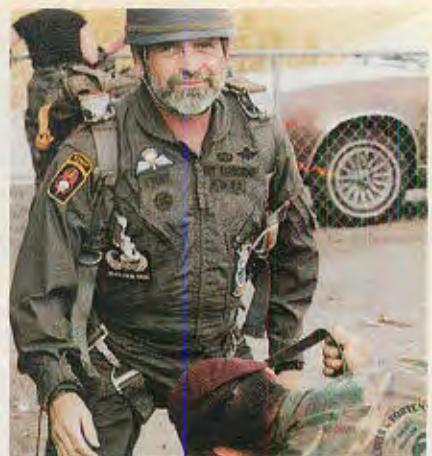
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Hank, the SOF Bartender, learns new definition of "hungover" ... as well as definitions of "fear," "hesitation," "reticence" and "desertion."



1st Airborne instructor Jim Smalley instructs student in 'chute harness adjustment.

1st AIRBORNE JUMP

by Bill Guthrie

The First Airborne came up to Boulder from Shreveport, La., to give *Soldier of Fortune* staff and selected friends private jump qualification. From 19 May to 21 May the trainees did PT, parachute landing falls from the back of a pickup, equipment familiarization, chute packing and the jump itself.

Run along military lines, First Airborne gives civilians a taste of the training formerly reserved for the finest troops of the world's modern armies. Many of the First's instructors are veterans or still serving in enlisted reserve. The enthusiastic attendance showed that soldiers aren't the only people strange enough to jump out of a perfectly good airplane.



Marine recruiter and Viet Vet Mike Rampenthal looks on with grim amusement.



Safety-minded First Airborne staff members talk students through practice of PLF (parachute landing fall) from pickup at 15 mph.

"The Falklands are that way." SOF Small Arms and Fashion Editor Jake Jatras points the way for student.

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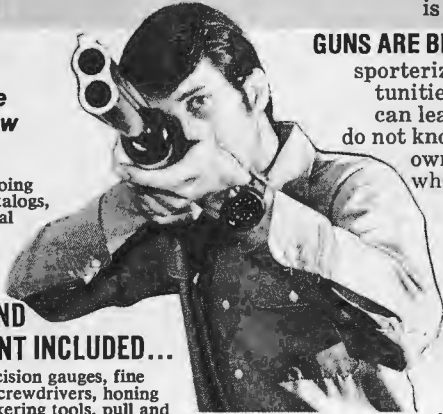
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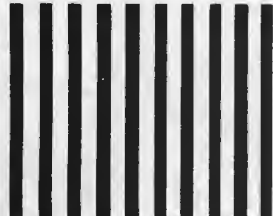
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SOF Associate Editor Bill Guthrie volunteered — Foreign Legion style — to model a potpourri of military-oriented products that we think our readers would like to know about.

Guthrie is ready to edit incoming manuscripts with Craig Nunn's office-back-up CAR 15 with the "Wooley Buger Bipod." This folding bipod was originally made to fit the Ruger Mini-14, but we found it was also compatible with the M16, AR15, M1 Carbine and AR-180. With all-steel construction, the Wooley Buger is durable and of functional design. Manufactured by the Wooley Brothers, the bipod can be ordered through the company for \$48 plus postage. For more info or to order, contact *Wooley Brothers Accessories*, Dept. SOF, Box 7720, Little Rock, AR 72217. Phone: (501) 372-3887.

Dangling round the Guthrie neck is the Field Grade Product's "Panzer" 8x30mm binocular with rubber-armed shock-absorbing exterior. For SOFers looking for a binocular, be sure to check this out before buying any other. I have been using a Panzer for the last year, and have found it an excellent binocular. The overall quality is comparable to other binoculars that cost four and five times the Panzer's \$89.95 price. For more information, see *Field Grade Product's* ad on page 91.

After chipping away the cement from Guthrie's head, we were able to fit a pair of combat glasses, recommended by Brig. Gen. James Culver for use by the U.S. Army. Of heavy-duty nylon con-

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by John Metzger



struction, these waterproof glasses can be fitted to your prescription by any optical dispenser. They are non-reflective, of course, and stay firmly on the user's

head with an adjustable rubber band. To order, send \$19.95 plus \$1.50 shipping to *Combat Glasses*, Dept. SOF, 1710 S. Hillside, Wichita, KS 67211.

Guthrie also sports the Combat Equipment Sales, Inc., vest/harness. We have seen many examples of recon/combat vests, but this one is put together with the highest quality of manufacture we've seen thus far. The basic vest retails for \$130, but is available with all sorts of variations. The vest shown here is set up for a 9mm submachine gun with ALICE pack, but Combat Equipment Sales will customize a vest to your special needs. It's available in many colors, including camouflage, black, brown and OD. To see if they can put together the right vest for you, contact *Combat Equipment Sales, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 398, Palmer, TX 75152. Phone: (214) 597-4472.

Underneath it all, the combat-ready Guthrie hides his wrinkled white body with seven-pocket camouflage coveralls available from International Military Supply. They will be available in woodland pattern only, not the GI leaf pattern shown. Currently being tested by the U.S. Marines, the coveralls are constructed of ripstop cotton with nylon zippers, and are available in sizes small to extra large. To order, send \$63 (VISA and Mastercharge accepted) to *International Military Supply*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 21606, Denver, CO 80221. ✕

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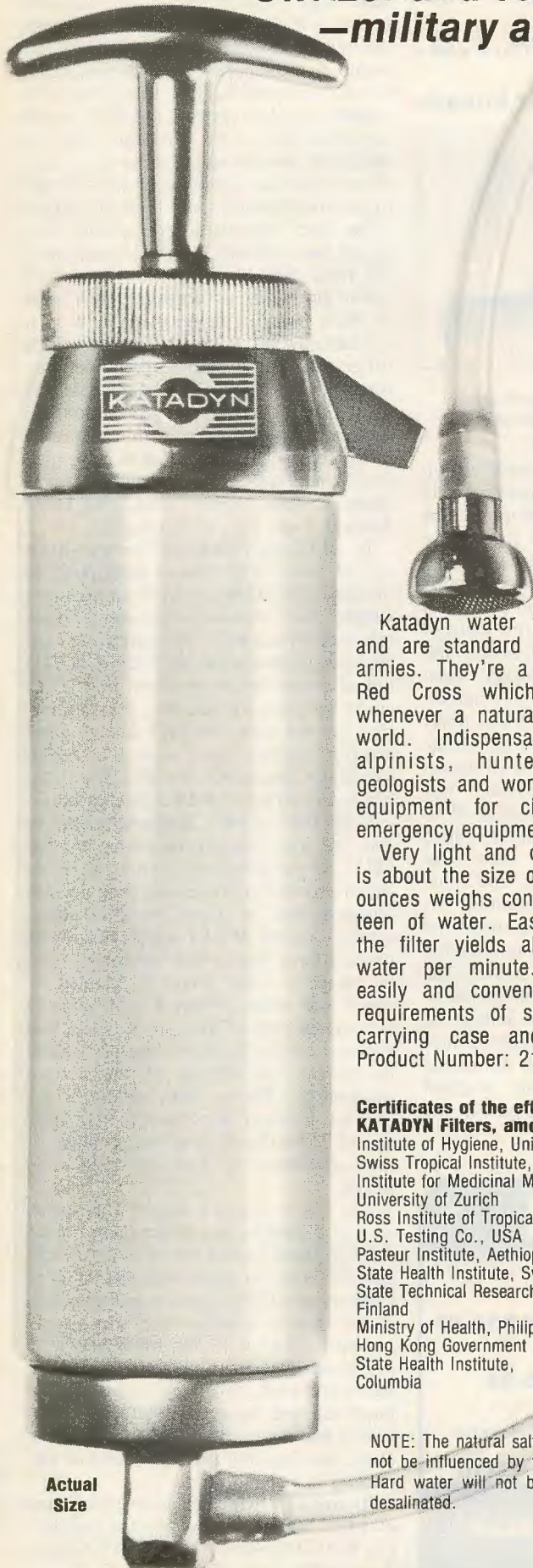
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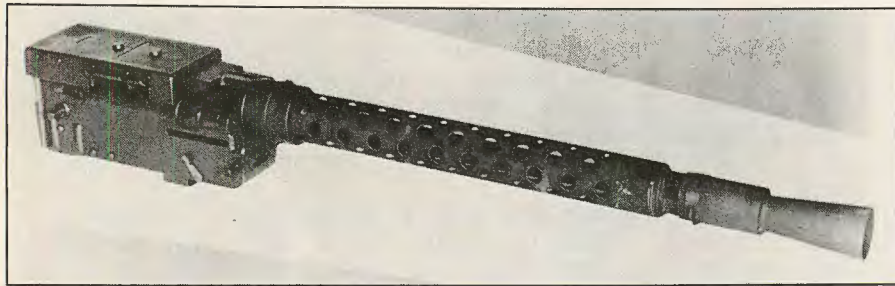
Actual Size



FULL AUTO

U.S.M.G.S.N.A.F.U.

by Peter G. Kokalis



ONE good failure certainly deserves another, and no more fitting mate to the ill-conceived M85 machine gun (see "Full Auto," SOF, April '82) could be imagined than the M73, which accompanies it on the M60 main battle tank.

Designed at Springfield Armory and manufactured there and by General Electric and Rock Island Arsenal, the design specifications were praiseworthy. It featured right- or left-hand feed, a short receiver, quick-change barrel, a top cover hinged on either side, a reduction of fumes — and was supposedly dismountable for ground use. It was meant to replace the M37, an interim but excellent modification of the Browning M1919A4 .30-caliber machine gun. The Browning MG possessed a long receiver group which protruded into the vehicle and of course lacked a quick-change barrel.

The M73's shortcomings were apparent almost from its inception. The most glaring of these were: 1) Its springy (yielding) locking system caused case separations under high pressure. 2) A condition of over-ramming existed which crushed the case shoulders and produced excessive head space. 3) The receiver was flimsily mounted to the barrel jacket and the gun would simply cease functioning when the receiver's top cover was pressed downward. 4) Propellants with a high calcium-

Military problem child, M73 caused grief throughout its more than 15 years of development. Photo: U.S. Army

carbonate content produced muzzle fouling which resulted in excessive recoil velocity and a runaway weapon. The recoiling components would then cause the gun to self-destruct, severely damaging the back plate. The correct timing was also altered. 5) If the gun was not mounted within a certain narrow band of rigidity, it wouldn't fire at all, as the rate-control slide would lose energy when functioning above or below this narrow range. And, in fact, the M73 was never once successfully fired off a tripod! 6) The firing pin was weak and prone to breakage. 7) The extraction system was unbelievably complex and consisted of no less than 21 parts. Using the so-called "dump-cart" method, the case was withdrawn by the extractor and then carried to the rearmost sear position. At this point a set of grippers grabbed the case. After the extractor was cammed, the system initiated its forward stroke. The case was then pulled out of the extractor and pivoted 180 degrees to the bottom of the receiver. During the last short distance of travel, the case was pushed out of the grippers by an ejector and dropped straight downward through a port in the receiver's bottom.

These problems were so severe that when the M73 was initially fielded in 1961, selected lots of ammunition were provided for its use. Under the broadest possible parameters, brass which is too hard will result in case separations while that which is too ductile will fail to extract. Due to its yielding locking system, the M73 would function only with cartridge cases in which the case annealing process had kept the case-hardness gradient on the soft side of the specification. And then, of course, if the cases were just a little too soft they would fail to extract in the M73 and shear the rims. So, 12 specifically designated lots of ammunition were authorized. Most of these were Winchester-Western lots, the cartridge cases of which were a little softer than those of the other manufacturers; thus, the elasticity of the case and its ability to survive rough extraction was greater. These lots were within manufacturing tolerances, but it just so happened that Winchester-Western usually made its cases a little softer than Frankford Arsenal, Lake City or Remington.

In addition, Frankford Arsenal spent untold millions of dollars attempting to produce 7.62x51mm NATO ammunition within the extremely narrow ranges tolerated by the M73. Ultimately, we ended up with two types of 7.62mm-NATO linked ammo in the pipe line: that which could function in, and was thus authorized for use with, the M73 and all other NATO machine guns and that which would not function in the M73, but could be used in all other NATO machine guns.

From 1960 to 1965, Springfield Armory was the sole production source for the M73. As the problems continued, a so-called product-improvement program was initiated and in three separate stages resulted in the M73E1 which had fewer parts, a fixed ejector and was supposed to be easier to clear when it jammed — which was often. When it came time to type-classify the M73E1, the Rodman Lab engineers at Rock Island Arsenal decided to remove the stigma of the current designation. Rather than calling it the M73A1 (normal procedure), they multiplied 73 by the three major redesign efforts and came up with the designation M219.

Ah, but what's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet — and the M73/219's deficiencies were so enormous that a U.S. Congressional investigation was eventually convened to examine its production.

Approximately 13,500 M73/219s were produced by General Electric and Rock Island Arsenal, involving more than 40 modifications between 1959 and 1974. Like a bad dream, the M73 has now gone away, leaving only the bitter taste of ball powder in our mouths.

Its role as a vehicular medium-machine gun has been taken over by the excellent FN MAG (M240) in the new M1 Abrams main battle tank. ☒

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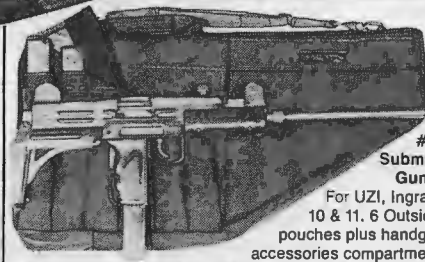
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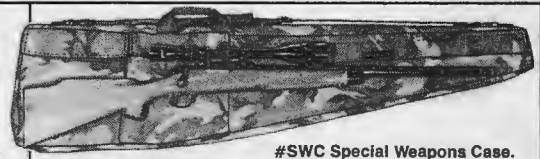
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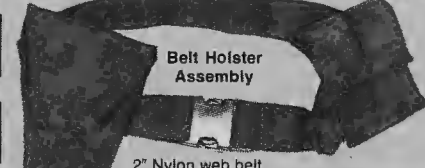
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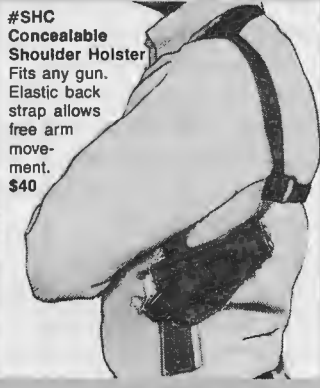
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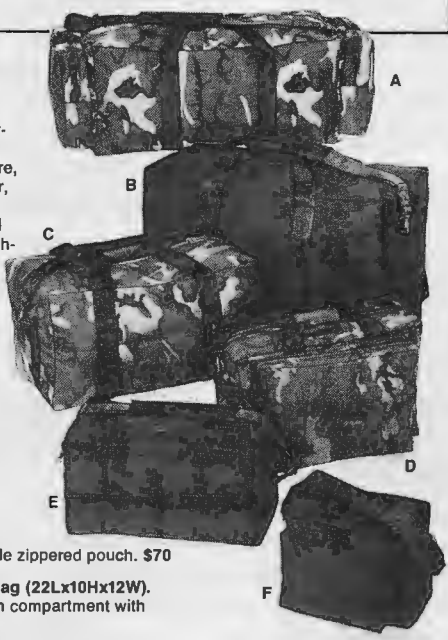


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Open Letter to President Reagan & the American People

by Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt, USAF (Ret.)

Brig. Gen. "Heine" Aderholt served 33 years in the United States Air Force. During the Vietnam War he commanded the famous 56th Air Commando Wing based in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, and provided direct support for all special operations in Vietnam, North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He was Air Officer for Maj. Gen. Singlaub, commander MACV-SOG, and together they initiated the formation of the U.S. Joint Casualty Resolution Committee (JCRC) in 1966. Gen. Aderholt's last duty station was Commanding Officer, Military Assistance Command Thailand (MACTHAI). In 1975, he commanded all air operations during the evacuation of Cambodia. After 15 years in Southeast Asia, he was the last general officer to leave.

PRESIDENT Reagan:

An old soldier's loves and loyalties make it hard for him to criticize his country. This is hard, but it is my duty to speak to my countrymen and my Commander-in-Chief about the abundance of evidence that our enemies are probably holding American prisoners-of-war. They hold these prisoners in violation of their word and our common agreements through the seven years since we quit fighting in Southeast Asia. I believe our men are still hidden there and I can no longer keep my conscience and my silence in the face of our government's inaction.

In our haste to get out of Vietnam we abandoned our soldiers captured in battle and in our haste to forget Vietnam some of us may have forgotten those prisoners. We should never have left Southeast Asia without proof that *none* of our men remained in enemy hands. I have as much knowledge and experience of the war in Southeast Asia as any American, and I am convinced that Americans have been held in Laos and Vietnam ever since we abandoned Vietnam and are still imprisoned ... if they are not all dead.

Five presidents promised the American people that "before any assistance would be provided to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) or the communist government of Laos the United States would insist on a full accounting of the some 2,500 MIA/POWs." It is a simple promise, and, it would seem, an easy one to keep. There is no irresistible impetus for us to provide support for Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. Surely, any aid we give would have to be pay for some good they might do us. It might seem that way, but that is not what happened.

WHEN I met a leader of the Laotian resistance at the Thailand border, he said, "If you do not wish to help us, please do not help our enemies." I assured him that we had no intent of helping the communists against his people. The Laotian leader then told me that there had been a large shipment of medical supplies given to the communist Laotian government at Wattay airport. The American plane had not been charged fees to land free medical supplies at an airport built with American tax dollars.

Unable to believe that my government would give aid and comfort to enemies of America I asked the United States Embassy in Bangkok if what I had heard was true. The embassy reluctantly confirmed the Laotian resistance leader's claim and that, furthermore, this \$25,000 shipment was one of six to be sent to the communist Laotians.

Why, in the name of God, would we give them aid, I asked. The embassy replied that it was a humanitarian donation given in hope that the Laotians might reward us with information on POW/MIAs. This donation of \$25,000 in medical supplies was confirmed to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine and CBS news.

I cannot believe that the government of the United States of America honestly believes that it can buy the good will of the communists. The Laotian government has not only shown none of the good faith that should be a prerequisite for such help, the Laotian army has attacked and probably continues to kill our allies, the Hmong, with conventional and bio-chemical weapons.

Finally, the Laotians were not the eventual recipients of the gift of the American government. I cannot document the fact that the DRV (Democratic Republic of Vietnam) Army confiscated the medical supplies at the landing strip at Wattay and shipped the supplies to Vietnam, but the Laotian resistance leader I met at the border told me that it happened. Thus far he has proved more direct and reliable than the American Embassy.

The DRV has given some information and a few remains, but to my knowledge there has been no cooperation from the Pathet Lao. We have no accounting for the more than 550 servicemen lost in and over Laos. More than six years since our withdrawal we have seen evidence of only two bodies delivered to and identified by the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC).

One set of identified remains was returned to the United States Embassy in Bangkok by an Australian woman on behalf of Laotian resistance groups. I brought a second partial set of remains to the Bangkok offices of the JCRC on 25 February 1982. I agreed to transfer the remains at the requests of the National Forget-Me-Not Association of POW/MIAs and Col. Bud Donahue. Col. Donahue's son served in my old wing and is still missing-in-action since his disappearance in Laos in 1968.

Continued on page 88

VIETNAM... How? Why?

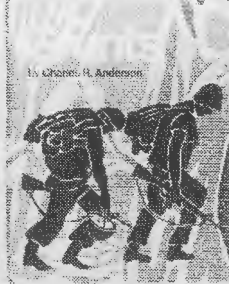
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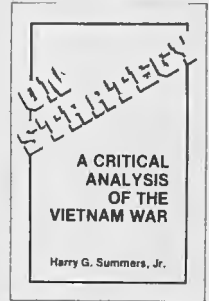
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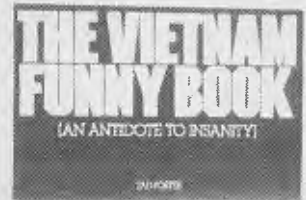
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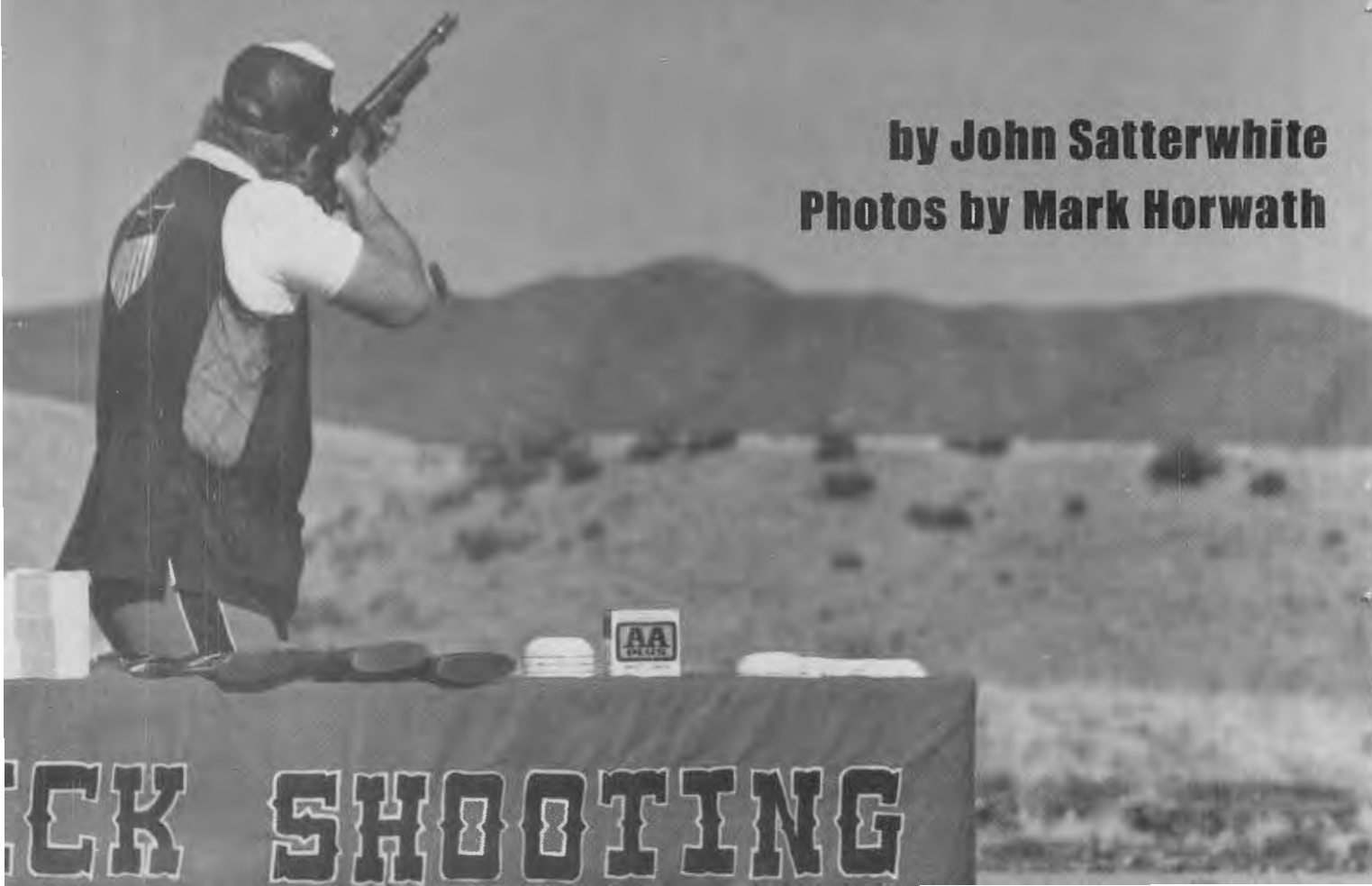
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The Wizard Tells How & Why

COMBAT SHOTGUN

by John Satterwhite
Photos by Mark Horwath



CK SHOOTING

MANY people call it a "riot gun." Some cast verbal stones by calling it a "scattergun." Still others refer to it as an "alley cleaner" or "rehabilitator." Whatever the name, the 12-gauge shotgun is the most effective and devastating short-range, handheld anti-personnel weapon ever devised.

Shotguns have always been used for defensive purposes, although the uninformed view is that the gun is a sporting tool with little defense application. The U.S. military has issued shotguns in every war because they work! In fact, they worked so well in WWI that the German government protested their use and threatened soldiers carrying them with summary execution.

Secondly, civilians use shotguns in combat because of their general availability. Since they are primarily thought of as a sporting arm for small game, the shotgun enjoys general immunity from many restrictions applied to more sinister-appearing firearms. The 12-gauge is an ideal gun for the long-distance sailor, since it will get small game with small shot, buck-size game (including man and large predators) with buckshot, and some slugs will penetrate steel plate. The beauty of the shotgun is that it is classified as a sporting weapon with no military application by most governments. You can keep it in nearly any port. This legal loophole aids the citizen in home defense and places in his hands probably the most underrated firearm in existence.

Consider a shotgun's firepower. It takes no great shooting artist to cycle a pump shotgun three times within one second. Each time the trigger is pulled, up to 12 .33-caliber (buckshot) projectiles travel toward the objective. Projectile dispersal is approximately 2,160 rounds per minute. Few, if any, handheld firearms can duplicate that cyclic rate of fire. And none can claim the density of projectile coverage on impact that the shotgun affords.

The shotgun's multiple projectile launch is also far more forgiving of marksmanship errors than any firearm launching a single missile.

Although America's early West was primarily remembered for the wild exploits of its pistoleros, any competent historian will point out that pistols were used only as defensive weapons and were carried for ease of transport. But when a gunfight was inevitable, the shootist would, if time permitted, reach for his shotgun. As a matter of fact, if circumstances permitted a choice of weap-

LEFT: John Satterwhite, master of shotgun sleight-of-hand, performs in his own running side-show, making the improbable seem effortless with a Remington 870.



What's new Mr. Wizard? Hard work in classroom augments shoot-'em-up.



ons, any sensible gunfighter would opt for the shotgun, since most confrontations occurred then, as now, inside of 40 yards (indeed, inside of 10 feet).

While shotguns have a limited range (as do pistols), no weapon in the gunfighter's arsenal was more terrifying. A buckshot load at close to medium range could inflict horrible wounds. Gunfighters did not use the shotgun because they were poor marksmen, but because shotguns were superior weapons for specific jobs.

Any suggestion that a shotgun can mask defects in basic marksmanship is analogous to offering a submachine gun to someone who cannot hit with his sidearm. In general, specialized weapons require specific handling techniques that bring the shooter full circle: back to mastering basic marksmanship principles. In other words, as powerful as it is, and despite its obvious advantages over conventional firearms, it certainly is no panacea for the unschooled shooter.

The necessity of mastering marksmanship techniques with each weapon that a shooter chooses cannot be stressed enough. I know of no better example than the misnamed "scattergun." Students who come to our academy interested in mastering combat shotgunning are always surprised at the amount of air around each target. Many shooters are under the impression that by merely pointing the shotgun in the general direction of a target, a hit will be assured. Not only do they believe that the target will disappear, but that everything in the general vicinity will be damaged. And so goes the old wives' tale of shotgunning. . . .

Let's examine some basic pattern statistics at 40 yards with 12-pellet 00 Buckshot. From a cylinder-bore police barrel, a pattern of 45 to 50 inches may be expected at 40 yards. The same gun will average 22 to 26 inches at 25 yards, and at 15 yards 13 to 15 inches may be expected. If you'd like to know how large a hole you would cut at seven yards, be prepared to see five to six-and-a-half inches disappear.

Tests such as the foregoing are useful only as statistical data, since individual shotgun barrels throw patterns that are indigenous to those barrels alone. Many believe that since a shotgun is basically an area weapon, there is no need for evaluating their patterns with buckshot or groups with slugs. This type of thinking can lead the hunter to a lot of missed game and the law-enforcement officer to early retirement.

Shotgun barrels will always "like" one brand or size of ammunition more than they will others. Patterns will be tighter and *slug groups* shrink with the right ammunition.

Tested barrels often prove to be bent and printing so far off the target as to be ineffective. Since it is better to make that discovery before the real shooting starts,



it would seem logical that a combat shooter or law-enforcement officer should pay his shotgun the same "sight-in" courtesy he does his rifle or pistol.

A recent combat shotgun class that I supervised had two shotguns printing completely off target with both buckshot and slugs. Since the owners were not aware of the situation, they were not equipped with back-up weapons and spent a portion of the class holding Kentucky windage on targets and the last half with school guns.

The shotgun neophyte who reads this article will wonder how it is possible for a major arms company to louse up a barrel so badly that the gun prints feet, not just inches, off the target at short range. Barrel specialists tell me that it is not at all uncommon to discover brand-new barrels right out of the factory box, not only bent off target, but with no choke at all when the barrel is stamped "full."





Four cases still in the air show the Wizard's magic. BELOW: Attentiveness to individual student's needs as Satterwhite directs close-range sighting/patterning exercise.



SHOTGUN WIZARD

John Satterwhite is a member of the world-record-holding U.S. skeet team and has won the U.S. championship more consecutive times than any other clay-target shooter. He was an Air Force marksmanship instructor and has taught more than 20,000 men defensive shooting with rifle, pistol and shotgun. He currently teaches the technical use of the defensive shotgun through the American Shotgun Academy and travels extensively throughout the country hosting seminars in technical shotgunning. This month he will be at SOF's annual convention in Charlotte, N.C. (see p.86 for more details.) For further information about Satterwhite's courses contact The American Shotgun Academy, P.O. Box 183, Dewey, AZ 86327, or call (602) 772-9539.

Not only are factory barrels delivered bent, one of the most popular combat modifications ruins the sighting of most shotguns. When a law officer or combat shooter cuts a shotgun barrel down to make it more portable by car or more maneuverable at close quarters, test-firing will usually show that the pattern has been thrown high of the sighting point. If the shooter tests his shotgun before he needs it he can correct the pattern by the installation of a corrective ramp to bring the bead up into the true sighting line.

Although the "sawed-off" shotgun is a symbol of irresistible short-range firepower to the average lawman, the real power of the police or military shotgun is limited by the absence of definition of its role. The defensive handgun and the scoped sniper's rifle are much more clearly and effectively defined and limited to their effective roles. The shotgun's folklore confers power on the man who wields one, but no specific mission. Two things can be done to the shotgun to make it a mission-defined weapon.

One is to open the barrel all the way to give maximum dispersal. The idea behind this is to increase the target area and make the shotgun more effective against multiple targets — besides building in a bigger margin of error for bad marksmanship. This makes the shotgun quite strictly a close-quarter weapon.

The second strategy is based on the assumption that the shotgun is better used when it is effective outside of essentially defensive short ranges. A barrel choked for tight patterns lengthens the shotgun's range. Tighter patterns also minimize the danger of indiscriminately throwing pellets around the neighborhood, making the shotgun a more acceptable general-purpose weapon for police.

After reviewing police reports on .38-caliber (single-projectile) hits which failed to stop opponents in fire fights, I am inclined toward a shotgun which could score almost 100-percent buckshot hits on a silhouette target consistently at 35 to 40 yards. In past years this criterion would have been thought impossible, but ammunition and barrel technology have reached a level where this performance should be expected. During a recent pattern failure drill, I witnessed an astounding performance by the new Bennelli Police Gun. With a 00 Buck in the magnum loading, it would consistently place six to seven pellets on a man silhouette at 60 yards. Buckshot loadings could be used in this gun at ranges where others were forced to change to slugs.

Accuracy and tight groups possible with modern barrels and modern shot loads will make the shotgun more powerful and more effective. The traditional and common 12-gauge shotgun will become even more vital to police, the military and civilians than in its past. ❧



More realistic equipment part of author's advice to cops who want to collect retirement. CAR-15 is compact for maneuverability in car or buildings, more accurate and more powerful than any duty pistol and capable of controlled full-auto fire. Military-style web-gear makes firepower accessible, but .357 ammo in belt holder shows this N.M. State Police officer believes in hedging bets. Photo: Bob Provance

COMPLACENCY KILLS

Street Survival Tips for Police

Text & Photos by Lessley Kent Olson

THE flag in front of headquarters is gently fluttering at half-mast. The roll-call is deathly quiet; there is no laughter, joking or the sounds of a "tonk" game being played in the corner. The shift commander removes a roll of black electrical tape from his desk, handing it to another officer after tearing off a small strip and placing it across the center of his badge. At the beginning of roll call, the sergeant, his voice shaking and tears in his eyes, officially confirms another local police officer has paid the ultimate price for his chosen profession by giving his life for the community he took an oath to protect.

Somewhere in the United States a police officer is killed every three days: 1,147 officers murdered in the past decade. With more than 437,000 sworn peace officers in the country, the chance

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lessley Kent Olson is a writer, policeman and competitive combat shooter. A member of the Davidson County (Nashville Metropolitan) Police Force, he has had several articles published in the *Tennessee Fraternal Order of Police Journal*. His article on case-preparation assistance available to duty police from legally-trained policemen was published in the national journal, *Police Chief*, and his attack on gun-control legislation was published in *Police Department News*. Olson is enthusiastically active in his local branch of the International Practical Shooting Confederation.

— Wm. Guthrie

of an individual officer dying on duty is remote. A closer look at the statistics, however, shows a 14-percent probability that an officer will be assaulted in any given year, with a 38-percent chance he will be injured as a direct result of the assault. Keeping in mind 61 percent of these assaults are committed with a firearm, knife or other dangerous weapon, the comfort of relative safety from death seems less reassuring.

Law-enforcement officers must face reality and insure their survival. Police officers are often victims of their own complacency and the felon's bullet is just circumstance. There are measures an officer can take to limit the risks.

The rules of police self-preservation are: (1) make Jeff Cooper's "Principles of Personal Defense" a way of life; (2) train yourself to be a practical handgun



High-profile hat and shield make targeting easier. Survival-minded officer strips down and loads up for fight. Photo: Bob Provance

shooter, instead of an accomplished "paper puncher"; and (3) study and use modern street-survival tactics.

The "Principles of Personal Defense" were outlined by Jeff Cooper in his 1972 publication bearing this title (available from Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306). Police officers and civilians alike should purchase and memorize this book, if they intend to survive an armed encounter. The basic principles are: alertness, decisiveness, aggressiveness, speed, coolness, ruthlessness and surprise. In just 42

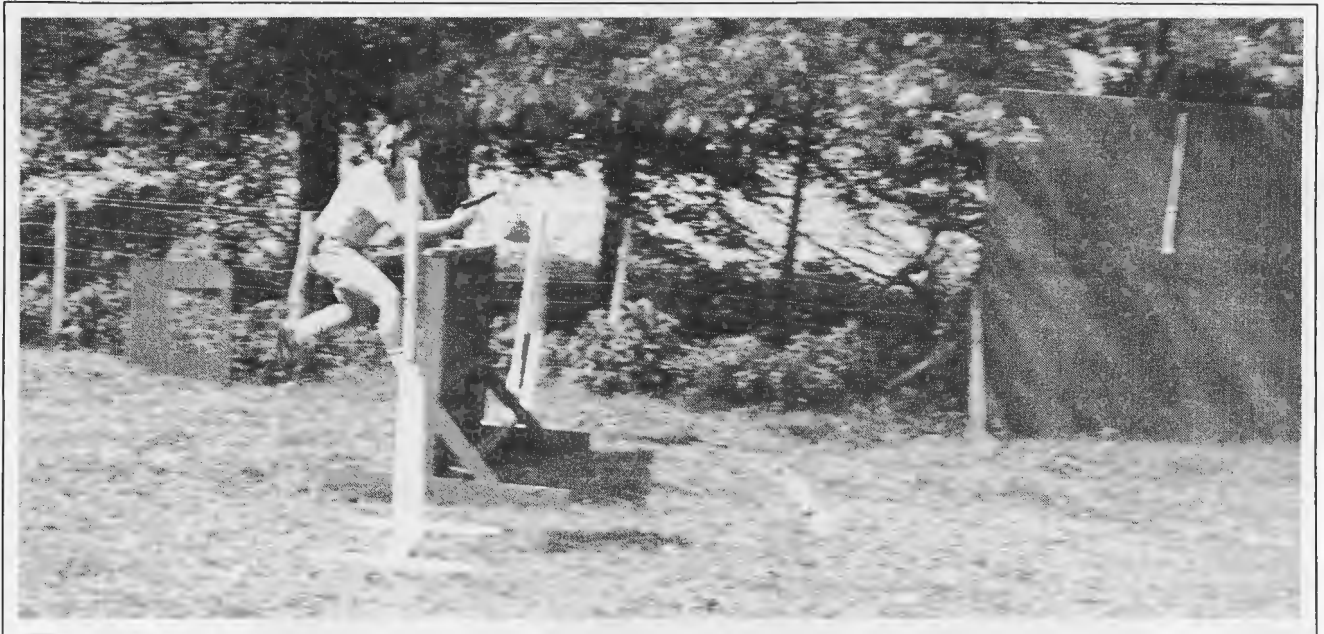
pages, Cooper discusses each principle in the clear, easy style of an experienced expert. It is not enough to read or even memorize these principles, for without living them, they are useless. By heeding these words and adopting the Cooper philosophy, these principles can provide the advantage necessary to stay alive when the lead starts to fly.

Next, train yourself to be a practical shooter and not just a target shooter. Most police departments train their officers with the Practical Pistol Course (PPC), developed by the FBI in the

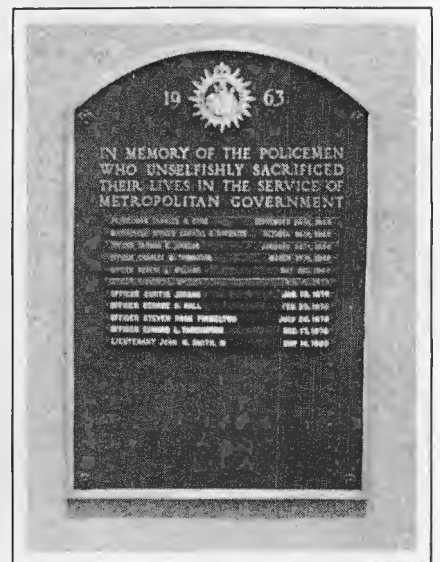
1930s. This course was revolutionary in its day, but it is as outdated as the pearl-handled, nickel-plated, .32-caliber revolver when compared to modern handgun training methods. Even the FBI has discontinued its use.

If your department offers no handgun training program beyond range-firing a

Police officer negotiates barricade problem with .45 auto. Officers may save their lives or others' with skills learned in realistic combat pistol training.



LEFT: Supervised police punching paper in line is not author Olson's idea of realistic arms training — may contribute to on-duty death toll. BELOW: Granite marker names and commemorates dead policemen.



couple of times a year, I suggest you drop a line to Jake Jatras, P.O. Box 626, Sioux City, IA 51102, and find out the location of the nearest International Practical Shooting Confederation-affiliated club in your area. By participating in IPSC matches you can acquire many of the shooting skills that are needed to survive a gunfight.

The International Practical Shooting Confederation was founded in 1976, continuing the tradition of combat-pistol shooting developed during the early 1960s by the Southwest Pistol League in southern California. The IPSC logo reflects the fundamental doctrine of the sport: *Diligentia, Vis, Celeritas* (Latin for Practice, Power, Speed).

The IPSC U.S.-Region Handbook says, "Combat Pistol Competition, as conducted by the U.S. Region of IPSC, is pistol competition which approximates as closely as possible the actual conditions under which the handgun is used as an instrument of self-defense. Thus, such competition requires power and speed, as well as accuracy. Matches are shot freestyle and they are held rain or shine. Handgun requirements are simple: revolvers and auto pistols suitable for service use, of .38 Special or 9x19mm and larger calibers are permitted. Holsters must be practical, safe, suitable for continuous wear and should retain the handgun if the wearer were to perform a somersault.

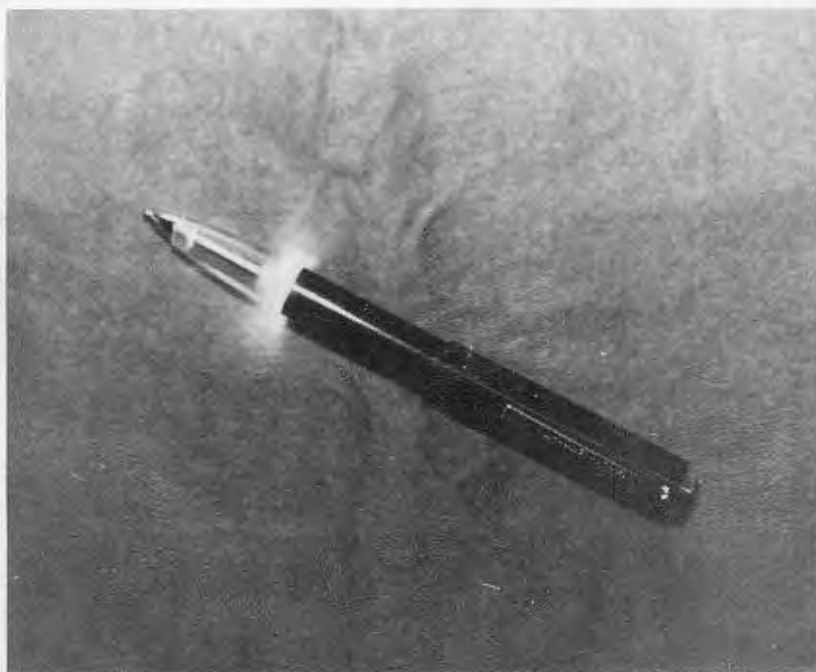
"Ammunition used in competition must be equivalent to full-power service ammunition, as scores are based in part on the power of the ammunition used. New shooters are always welcome. It is only asked that the new contestants follow the IPSC Club rules and safety regulations to the letter."

Through participating in IPSC matches and by reading magazine articles and books on combat shooting, one can develop a personal training program which is both practical and enjoyable. The reward is obvious: skills that can save your life in a gunfight.

Finally, there is survival-tactic training. For expert advice on this subject, read *Street Survival: Tactics for Armed Encounters* by Ronald J. Adams, Thomas M. McTernan and Charles Remsbert, available through Calibre Press, Dept. SOF, 1521 Kirt St., Evanston, IL 60202. Its authors have more than 50 years experience and bring to law enforcement a provocative work which begins with the theme, "Ask yourself, 'how many people could have had me today, if they'd really wanted me?' And then ask, 'What would I have done if they'd tried?'"

This 416-page volume is well-written in a non-technical style with more than 480 photographs and diagrams. The book will improve the survival skills of

Continued on page 71



NITEWRITER: SURVIVAL PEN by Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston

How many times have you needed to write in the dark? If you're a police officer, I'll bet the answer is plenty. What you do in such cases is either use a flashlight or move to where there is light. Right? If you're in a car, you probably turn on the interior light or, again, use your flashlight. There was a time when a policeman who illuminated himself at night was not likely to have problems. Can you remember it? If you can, I know about how old you are.

I was there too, in the tail end of that era before everything seemed to go to hell. When I was a young policeman with the LAPD, we didn't have to worry much about being a silhouette target at night, even in places such as Hollenbeck and University Divisions, where I was assigned. Then came the Watts riot. With similar civil abscesses erupting across the country, the urban sniper came into his own. Even though things tapered off somewhat after the big riots, it was obvious that taking pot shots at police was going to remain popular for a long time. Very quickly we learned to write with one hand cupping our flashlights to reduce our visibility. If we were lucky, our partner held it for us. I didn't find a better solution to this problem for years — that is, until I attended a seminar called "Street Survival."

I thought it would be just another police seminar, and I planned to drink a lot of coffee to keep awake. I

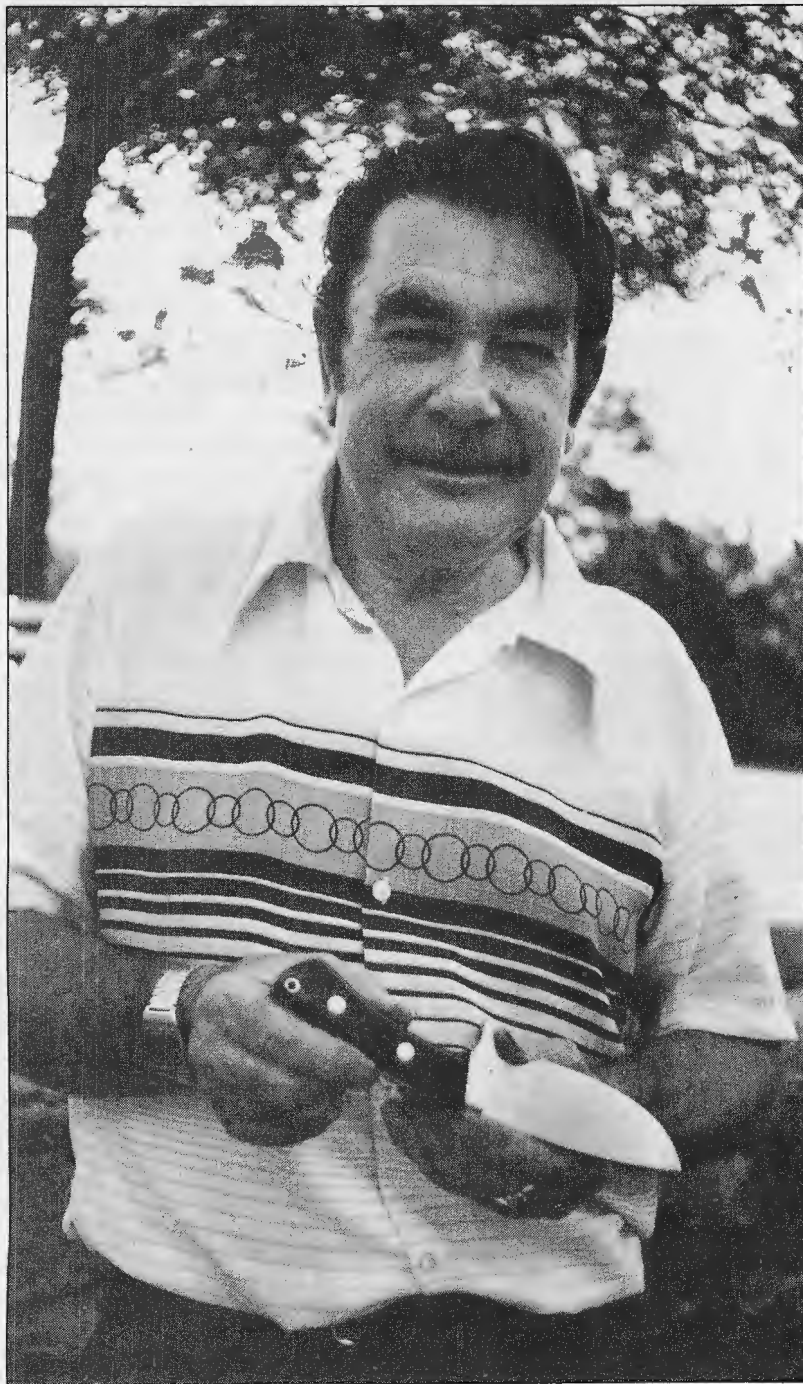
was pleasantly surprised. "Street Survival" is an excellent two-day seminar presented by Charles Remsberg and Dennis Anderson, of Calibre Press, publishers of their well-known book, *Street Survival*. The seminar covers a multitude of deadly situations which can occur in police work, and shows how a police officer must respond to them in order to survive. Remsberg and Anderson are always looking for new input, and the course is constantly updated, as they travel around the country.

With the seminar, several survival-oriented tools are demonstrated and made available to attending law-enforcement personnel. One such item is the "Nitewriter," a unique ballpoint pen which provides its own narrow-focus light source that illuminates only what the officer is writing on. With this pen, an officer can sit in his vehicle at night and issue a traffic citation, keeping the violator's vehicle completely illuminated, while the interior lights of his patrol car remain out. Even if some opportunistic neighborhood sniper should decide to fire on the officer, there is less chance of his being hit since he can't be seen.

The Nitewriter is powered by two AAA batteries, and uses a No. 222 bulb. It is obviously larger than a regular pen, but is intended to be used in the many tactical situations which require minimal light. A good investment for any police officer, the Nitewriter comes with batteries and an extra ink refill. It costs \$10 (extra refills are five for \$4.00), and is available from Calibre Press, Dept. SOF, 666 Dundee Road, Suite 1607, Northbrook, IL. 60062.

ANGUS ARBUCKLE

In Memoriam



by Al J. Venter

ANGUS Arbuckle, the South African knifemaker, is dead. He died of a heart attack in early June while boating with his family. "Buck" made a name for himself making custom fighting knives with the "ARA" label. For a time, Al Mar sold his knives in the United States, and advised Buck on design. These knives were snapped up by American collectors.

Angus Arbuckle's forte was the combat blade, and he reinvented the fighting knife for southern Africa (see "Angus Arbuckle's No-Nonsense Knives," SOF, December '80). After Gerber banned the sale of knives to Southern Africa, Arbuckle set up a small workshop at home and started making revolutionary knives, including tiny dirks, buckle knives and the Arbuckle boot blade, the majority of them blacked for night work.

One of the first Americans to receive Arbuckle's custom knives was SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, who took a variety of them with phosphated black finish — all with serial number 007.

Angus Arbuckle's craft won't die. Several years ago he invited his son Tony into the company. In the past year Tony Arbuckle (who also works under the ARA logo) has made a series of magnificent Japanese fighting swords. Tony will continue the family line.

Angus's wife, Dee, and two other adult children have survived the great modern cutler. ☒

BIANCHI CUP

Text & Photos by Evan Marshall

The winners: Mickey Fowler brandishes
Nygord's .45.



BIANCHI Cup IV promised surprises, but delivered none. Technology comes and goes, but a good gunman is what's needed to win a pistol match. In the face of bull-barrels, scopes, illuminated dots and everything an armorer can do to a pistol, an old-fashioned, practice-makes-perfect campaigner still won.

Mickey Fowler swung his Don Nygord customized Colt .45 long slide semi-auto to defeat a pack of hungry competitors. The margins of victory and defeat were so narrow that Fowler, had he not cleaned the steel plates and the barricades, would have fallen prey to a high-tech youngster named Brian Enos.

Worn blueing shows hours of practice on Mickey Fowler's Don Nygord customized Colt Mark IV.



ABOVE: Optical sight in frame mount on experimental S&W .45 auto makes Tom Campbell's piece a real exotic. **RIGHT:** Take the money and run: Mickey Fowler (right) holds up Ray Chapman (left) and John Bianchi (center). **BELOW:** Mike Dalton assaults metal targets in speed shoot qualifying round.



Although this will enrage the purists, Enos' uncanny speed and accuracy with an Aimpoint®-equipped S&W revolver made him nearly the equal of the veteran Fowler. Practical pistol shooting won't see the end of the argument for some time. It may be that sighting is more instinctive with new optics, but it is hard to imagine a bulky scope on a duty-cop's gun. At least I haven't seen one so far.

Aside from any argument of politics, theory or current practice, there are three important facts concerning Aimpoint's® showing at Bianchi '82: 1) An iron-sight gun won. 2) Ray Chapman didn't have to pay out the \$200 he had bet against an Aimpoint® victory. 3) The Aimpoint® gun didn't lose by very damn much.

It is also interesting to note that a scoped .45 auto wielded by Bill Wilson took fifth place overall.

While Fowler swept the barricades, Enos tore up the falling plate event, Vance Schmidt took the mover and Fred Romero won the practical match. The





ABOVE: Gunfight at Bianchi Corral: Chip McCormick (left) and Ross Seyfried in Colt Speed Shoot. **RIGHT:** Colt speed shoot qualifiers: (left to right) Gavin Carson, '81 SOF winner Craig Gifford, '81 IPSC world champ Ross Seyfried, Chip McCormick, Mickey Fowler and Bill Wilson. **BELOW:** Fast and aggressive South African Edith Almada, shooting from barricade, was top woman.

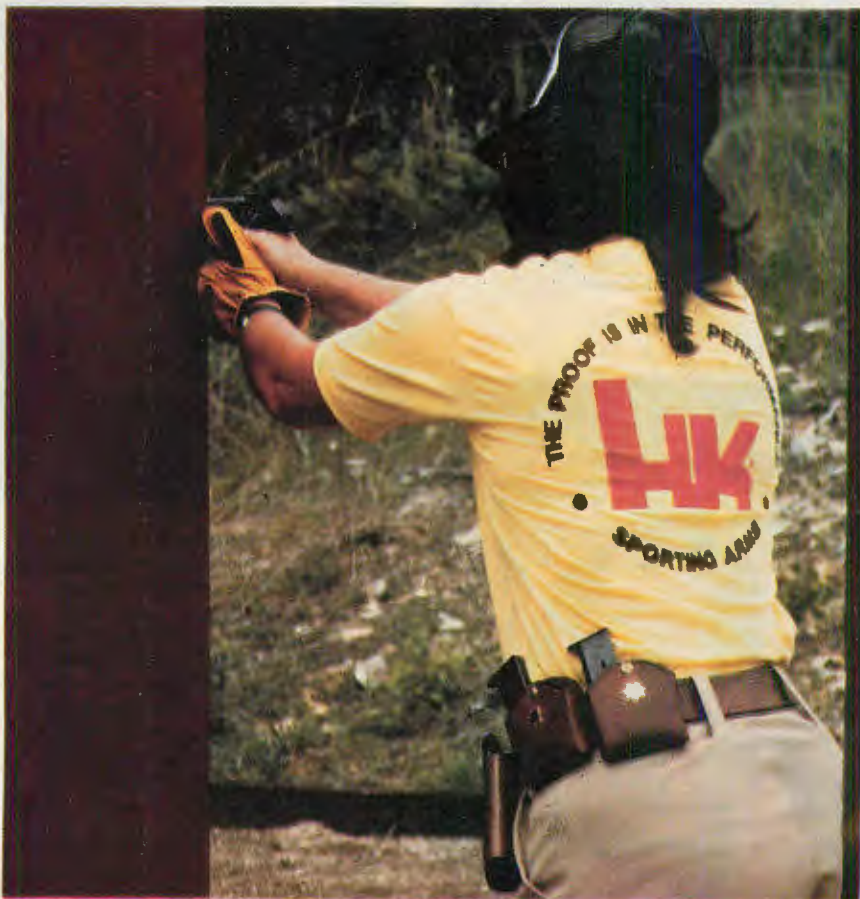


'82's high-tech favorite was a tuned Gold Cup with Aimpoint®.

fifth match was a new sponsored event worthy of special mention.

The Colt Speed Shoot allowed the top sixteen finishers from the other four events to shoot a preliminary round on "pepper popper" targets. The top six qualifiers from this event gunned for a \$5,000 bounty. Competition was fast and furious, and nobody was surprised when Fowler stood there with five Gs when the smoke cleared. Ross "No-introduction-needed" Seyfried lost, but unlike real gunfights there are second-place winners in pistol matches, and Seyfried carried off \$2,500.

The 1900 Club went to Mickey Fowler, Fred Romero took International, Nick Stamatiadis was Top Lawman and High Revolver was, obviously, Brian Enos. Top Team included overall winner Mickey Fowler, Mike Dalton, Mike Fischmann and Craig Gifford. ☒



SOF'S SUCCESSFUL SEYCHELLES COUP



Camouflaged, but hardly low-profile, side of *Seychelles Taxi* shows SOF logo and linked-belt 7.62 NATO ammo (discharged).



Pac-man fever broken by Boulder Reservoir. Electronic-game-inspired entry included Pac-man on pontooned sled to be towed as skier.



Medics haul Monster from Boulder Reservoir after Alleged Ramming.



From starting splash to finishing gurgle the SOF-sponsored *Seychelles Taxi* was a force with which judges, photographers, other racers, parents of children and owners of small dogs had to contend. SOF Art Director Craig Nunn and editorial waif Dave Jones paddled and pedaled the outriggered, camouflaged and armed combination of projectile-resistant Kevlar canoe and gimbaled bicycles around a 13-mile course that would have challenged a pontooned helicopter. Together with SOF editors and pit-crew Bill Brooks and Bill Guthrie, Nunn and Jones surfed, waded, swam, climbed, fell,

slogged, cursed, cried and drank their way to fourth place in the Wano-Coors Kinetic Conveyance Challenge.

SOF took the 1 May race as an occasion to reclaim that day from the Commies, with its own version of May Day in Red Square. Military paraphernalia, SOF t-shirts, camouflage shorts and competitive *savoir-faire* drew cheers and jeers from the Boulder crowd. In spite of predictions of trouble with the natives from the hometown of Mellow, there were only two incidents of shouts of "warmongers" and one alleged ramming . . . by the *Seychelles Taxi*. ☒



ABOVE: "Demonstratin' in front of a church!" Old Country Joe song acted out by SOF team and tagalongs in parade. LEFT: SOF Art Director Craig Nunn displays his greatest work: himself. Merc Michaelangelo sports USAR web gear, lenseatic compass, red-lensed suppressed-light night flash, Randall combat knife, plastic canteen contaminated by alcohol, Green Beret and dark circles under eyes from training for party. RIGHT: "There's no intelligent life down here, Scotty. Beam me up."



Photos by David Bjorkman



Replete with kilts, bagpipe tapes and foreign beer this entry did its best to start a Boulder monster myth.

Alleged ramming incident. Nunn says instruments failed in fog. Jones says Dragon yelled "Prepare to Ram!" and attacked with flank.



ABOVE: Some look in stunned silence as others wave at distant racers when *Seychelles Taxi* passes by. LEFT: Bearing what could have been the event's motto, this vehicle rolled with 76 other conveyances in Boulder's yearly contest of man-powered all-terrain vehicles. BELOW: Nunn and Jones contemplate strike as pit-crew prepares *Taxi* for re-entry into Boulder Reservoir. Yielding to promises of immortality and beer the racers whipped their complaining bodies onward.



The day we were supposed to pull a flip-flop with another Marine patrol in Vietnam, I got the good news. "You'll have an easy patrol," said the leader of the unit we were relieving. "Ain't no one else around."

I had just finished scraping the whiskers off my face and started to blot up the blood when "Peppy" popped into the tent. Peppy had been my patrol leader since I had joined Recon. He was small as Marines go, but his heart and spirit more than made up for it. When he started talking, I really had to listen close or get lost in his heavy Mexican accent.

"Get everyone together," he said. "We're going out on patrol today. I'll be back as soon as I get the information about it." I understood that just fine. I woke the closest man and told him to pass the word. Soon there was a lot of hurried activity going on. Our packs were stuffed with the necessities for a five-day patrol: food, ammo, water and those miscellaneous items we couldn't do without. Then each man made a check on the weapon he'd be taking out.

In less than 20 minutes, Peppy had returned. Upon entering the tent, he found us sitting on our cots, looking thoroughly bored. We asked him in unison, "What took you so long?"

There were times he didn't appreciate our humor, and this may have been one of them. He started speaking in a monotone. "We're going on a flip-flop with Thunder Legs' team," he informed us. "The 46s are down, so we'll be using the 34s. We leave at 1500. Any questions so far?" The silence around me was very noticeable. I didn't know what to say with so much bad news compressed into so few words.

Roy, who always seemed to say just what we were all feeling, summed it up perfectly: "That's a real crock, Peppy."

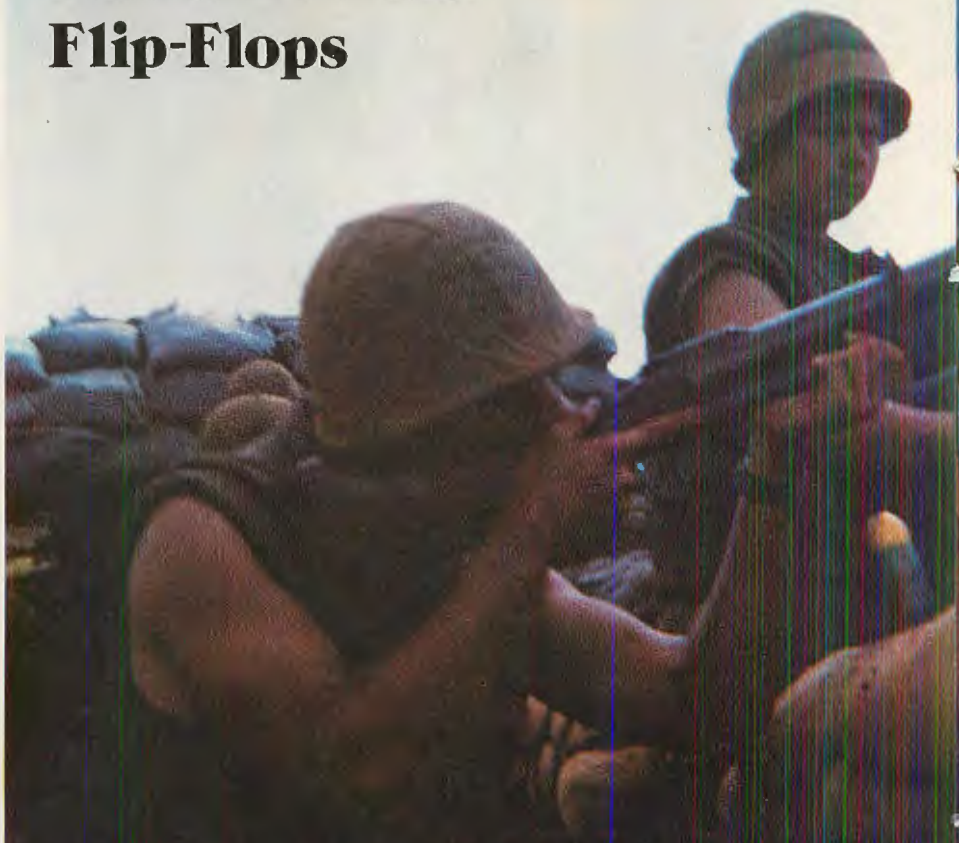
Peppy smiled his big, toothy smile: "You're right, it sure is."

Roy was our point man. He had been raised near the Everglades and was good in the jungle. His rank at the moment was private, but that was subject to change. He was the best point in the company, and had been promoted several times. In each case, he always ended up saying or doing something to get busted right back to private. He was great on patrol, but I wouldn't have wanted to be responsible for him in the rear area.

"What's a flip-flop?" I turned to see who was talking. It was a skinny guy named Rob who was new to the team. This was to be his first patrol.

Before Roy could answer, Peppy explained, "A flip-flop is when the choppers put you at a landing zone to ex-

Routine Marine Recon Patrol in 'Nam Flip-Flops



AIN'T NO ONE ELSE AROUND

Text & Photos by Ernie Husted

change places with a team which is finishing up in the area. The bad thing is, if there are any North Vietnamese around, they'll have followed the one team and be waiting for the next one. The chopper landing always draws the enemy out to see what's happening."

Someone asked what had happened to the 46s. The huge-bladed choppers were my favorites because the entire team could go out on one. The older, smaller 34s could carry only half of our team on one bird. None of us liked to see the team split up.

Peppy's voice interrupted my thoughts. "The 46s are all grounded for safety checks. During the last week, four of them lost a blade in flight and crashed. They don't know why yet."

Bill Messener wanted to know why the patrol was starting at 1500. "That's pretty late in the day to be just getting into a new area. There won't be too many hours of light to become familiar with the terrain." Messener would be running "Tail-end Charlie" for the team, spending most of his time glancing over his shoulder to make sure we weren't hit from behind. Getting in that late didn't set well with him.

"I bet Thunder Legs had something to do with the 1500 time, didn't he?" asked Frank.

"Yes, he did request that time so his team could put in a full day and . . ."

Peppy was drowned out by moans and groans and a few boos at the mention of the notorious Thunder Legs. He was a



Author Ernie Husted skeet-shoots enemy in tree line with M79 grenade launcher (tound in front of arm) during siege of Khe Sanh.

staff sergeant who could teach classes on jungle patrols better than anyone. Things had been fine as long as he just taught classes, but someone who must have hated us decided that with all of his knowledge, Thunder Legs should run patrols. So, he was given a team and he ran patrols. Instead of moving slowly and quietly through the jungle, he turned them into marathon races. That's how he got the name Thunder Legs, by the amount of ground his team covered while on patrol.

All the classroom knowledge vanished when he hit the jungle. He was always lost. It had gotten so bad that the team's radio man started keeping two different sets of coordinates on where they were. The first set was Thunder Legs', which

was never right. The other set was the actual location. It was this set of coordinates which was sent to the base. Thunder Legs' team had yet to be in contact with the enemy. He was harmless, so the enemy must have known it and let him streak on by, but every team that followed his ran into trouble. This time it would be us. Wonderful.

After Peppy finished, Bill, Louie and I went to get our radios. The three of us were really close friends. No matter how bad things got, we could end up laughing or joking about it. We did everything together. Louie was from New York. Listening to his accent was a scream. The first time he said "erl" for "oil" and "terlet" for toilet, we went crazy.

Louie would say something funny or ornery in formation to make us laugh, then would put on his "straight and honest" face and never crack a smile himself. Louie could also imitate people's expressions and movements. When he mocked someone who was facing us and he was behind, we usually heard, "What's so damn funny? Are you laughing at me?" Bill and I were always catching it for Louie's antics.

Bill was the primary radio man while I carried secondary. We dragged our radios on patrol after patrol, sharing the same pain and frustration from those hunks of metal and wire that we were burdened with. Bill was easygoing; he never let anything bother him. I guess it must have been because the California sun baked his brain while he was growing up.

I was a Midwest boy from Ohio. My overactive imagination supplied the bulk of the ideas that were turned into mischief for the three of us. I had joined the Marines to prove to everyone that I was good enough to make it. After arriving in Vietnam, I became swept up in the deadly adventure and excitement that war brings. My sense of humor helped me to keep my sanity when things got really bad. My sense of humor and my friends, I should say.



Grunt's-eye view of too-close napalm attack.

The time finally came for us to leave for the landing pad. On the way, Louie gave his best impression of Thunder Legs' walk. Even Peppy admitted it looked like him. Of course, people who saw us must have been sure we were suffering from advanced combat fatigue.

The old 34s settled roughly on the ground near us. Peppy, Roy, Frank and I made our way out through the swirling dust to board while the remaining four got on the other chopper. We'd have two Huey gunships flying escort, but no jet support going in. Our landing zone was considered secure because Thunder Legs' team was there.

The flight wasn't long, but it was bumpy. The choppers circled several times to give us a good look before landing: Steep hills towered over our landing zone — a very narrow ridge in the center of a valley. Leave it to Thunder Legs to pick an LZ in the valley. The whole world could look down on us.

I looked over at Frank, who was carrying the M79 grenade launcher. When he saw where we were to land, he closed his eyes, bowed his head and started shaking it in disbelief.

We started down. Our pilot hesitated momentarily, then landed. As we bailed out, half of Thunder Legs' team got on. I noticed Thunder Legs himself standing outside and moved next to him. I had to

FLIP-FLOP FOR THUNDER LEGS

Ernie Husted joined the Marines in 1966, and spent his 19th, 20th and 21st birthdays in the bush. One tour and two extensions were spent with Bravo Company, 3rd Recon, 3rd Marine Division. He was at Khe Sanh before, during and after the famous siege. SOF readers will recall his tale of battle during the Great Rat Hunt of Khe Sanh (see "Rattus non Gratus," SOF, June '82).

In late 1967, Husted and his team were on a routine patrol. It promised to be an easy one, since there was no one else around. — John Metzger



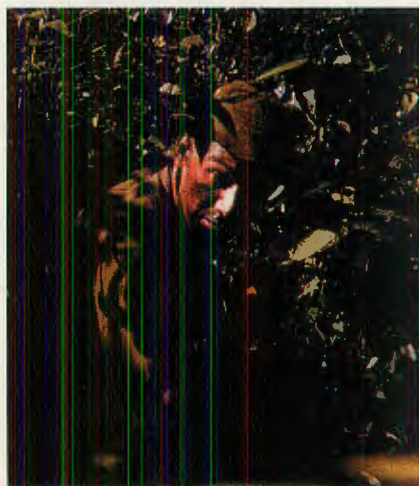
Author Ernie Husted at Second SOF convention.

vell over the noise of one chopper taking off and the other landing. "Have you seen anyone? Were you followed?" I'll always remember his reply.

"You'll have an easy patrol," he said. "Ain't no one else around."

I called the gunships to let them know we were okay. At the same time, Bill contacted the base and informed them that the flip-flop was complete. Peppy, using silent hand signals, motioned for us to get ready to move out quickly. Everyone on the team knew his position as we gathered in a staggered column to leave the I Z. Roy was point man, followed by Peppy and Bill, on the radio. Frank had the M79 grenade launcher. Then came myself, Louie, Rob — the new guy — and Messener running tail end. We spread out and started moving.

The stretch of land we were on was covered with six to nine-foot elephant grass. I looked up at the surrounding hills and felt very exposed. My radio pack had chosen that exact moment to become uncomfortable. I had taken only



Roy keeps low profile on bush patrol.

a few steps when Roy, our point, froze. He made a signal with his hand that said it all: Freeze. Enemy. Take cover. We all melted quickly to the ground.

Peppy inched up to see what Roy had spotted. As I sat there waiting to learn what was going on, I glanced back down our column. We blended into the grass so well you could hardly see anyone.

Word came back that Roy had spotted two North Vietnamese up on the hill about 200 yards from us. I saw where they were when the sun reflected off their binoculars like mirrors. They had to have seen us land. So much for the element of surprise.

Bill notified the base that we were being observed and I gave the choppers a call. Peppy decided that the only thing to do was to move in a direction away from the enemy, then try and circle behind them. The instructions were whispered back through the group. A thumbs up signal from Messener meant the everyone had gotten the word.

We all rose and cautiously moved for

ward. Turning back on the enemy once they had seen us gave me a cold feeling inside. If I'd had a huge bull's-eye painted on my back, I wouldn't have felt any more exposed. I pulled the tape antenna for my radio over my shoulder and down into the front of my harness. The handset was clipped to the inside of my collar. If you advertised the fact that you were a radio man, you wouldn't have a chance to grow old as one. My nerves tensed as I waited for something to happen. It was a very short wait.

We had moved less than 30 yards when I heard gunfire. I saw bullets kicking up dirt around Roy, Peppy and Bill, and saw them fall. They must have been hit, I thought. The enemy had opened fire at less than 100 yards.

Everything happened at once. Dropping to one knee, I fired a full magazine at the enemy. Before I reloaded, I keyed my handset and yelled into it, "This is Broad Weave II, we are in contact!" Meanwhile, the rest of the team had moved up and started blasting away. Between the M16 and M79 grenade fire, the four North Vietnamese who had started the fight were blown apart.

When Peppy yelled over the noise, "We're okay. Get back to the I.Z.," I was surprised no one was hurt. Marine training had paid off. We had reloaded, stood up and turned around to move back to where we had come from in a matter of seconds. Our positions were now reversed. Messener was point with Roy bringing up the rear. As we moved, Bill was notifying the base of our situation while I was trying to raise the Hueys for some help.

I finally got them. "Roger, this is Broad Weave II. We have made contact with an enemy force. We wiped them away, but have more in the area. Can you fly some gun runs for us? Over."

"Roger, understand your situation, but you'll have to hang on. We're both low on fuel and have to land for a fill-up. We'll be back as soon as we can."

"Understand. Hurry back. Broad Weave II out."

Messener had just entered the I Z, and we were right behind him. I dove for cover even before my mind translated what I had heard. A heavy machine gun opened fire from the hill on our right, and a few moments later a second machine gun joined in, sending more bullets whizzing over the grass, searching for us.

Several hit very close, but none of them found their mark. For about 20 seconds, the machine guns continued firing; then it was our turn. We popped up and started blazing away at them. Frank fired several grenade rounds close enough to make them worry, and then we all dropped back into the grass. Both machine guns remained silent. I couldn't understand why, since they had us out-gunned. The only thing I could figure was the sight of us popping up like that

and firing, then disappearing, might have unnerved them a bit.

Peppy motioned for us to form a tight circle; this way we'd be covered in all directions. I moved very slowly so the elephant grass wouldn't wave and give away my position. It became quiet. The only sound was the breeze blowing the stalks of grass together.

Funny, I thought: Here we are pinned down by two machine guns, with four of the enemy dead in a fire fight and us still being watched by others. We have no jets, the Hueys are out of gas and only five minutes have passed since Thunder Legs assured me that there "Ain't no one else around." The sudden voice over my radio startled me. "Broad Weave II, we've gunships on the way with jets."

Our spirits perked up upon hearing the radio transmission. We were no longer alone. When I heard the gunships in the distance, I quickly warned them that we had two active heavy machine guns in the area.

The choppers hovered in the distance, waiting for us to mark the target. Frank fired an illumination round at one machine-gun position. This broke the unofficial truce and both guns started firing at us hot and heavy. The Hueys saw the muzzle flashes and started in.



Peppy hoists 40mm shells in clip for Bofors-type AA gun.

Both guns shifted from us to pay full attention to the choppers. Twice the gunships had to veer off from their attack because of enemy fire.

We decided to triple-team them. We popped up and started cracking off rounds at the enemy. The one chopper started firing while he hovered and his wing man made his run. Whoosh, the white phosphorus rocket leaped from the helicopter into the enemy position. A message crackled over my radio: "Hug the ground, Marines, we're coming in."

The Phantom jet came in full throttle

down the ridge line. I looked up and watched the bombs as they glided down. I saw them approach, then felt the force as they swept over us. The explosions sent out shock waves like ripples in a pond. The second jet started down for an instant replay. The machine guns were no longer around to bother us.

Now that we had some friends overhead, it was time to take care of the enemy soldiers who had been watching us. Peppy motioned for me to let the choppers know what was going on and for the rest of us to take cover. Peppy, Roy and Frank started crawling through the grass to get close enough for Frank to mark the enemy location.

Waiting is always hard, and this time it was especially so. I heard the *crack, crack, crack* of an M16 and the *bloop* of an M79 round into the target area. Smoke started pouring up when it hit. Then I recognized the heavy boom the enemy AK47s made when they cut loose. The enemy fire was hitting in front of us and chasing our guys right back up the hill. All three of them broke back into our circle at almost the same instant. They were out of breath and all jabbering at once.

"There were seven more enemy with those first two we saw. We shot the one that looked like an officer, then things got too hot and we had to leave. Call the Hueys quick; those seven were setting up mortar tubes. If they get them in operation, things could turn out very fatal."

I had been holding the choppers back until our guys came in. Now I turned them loose. "Roger, I saw your mark; I'm coming in." The Huey started his run with guns blazing, followed by the whoosh as the marker rocket hit.

The Phantoms must have been eager because they had already started on their run before the Hueys fired their rockets. Just moments after the smoke started pouring up, the jets were letting go. As we hugged the ground, bombs exploded; then there were secondary explosions as the mortar tubes went off.

The jets, low on fuel and dry on ordnance, had to leave. We didn't think it mattered. We were feeling pretty sure of ourselves with the mortar tubes destroyed, 13 enemy killed, and two machine guns and crews wiped out. Then things got bad again. I caught movement out of the corner of my eyes; I glanced over to Bill and Louie, who were listening to the radio handset.

They were smiling and bopping their heads back and forth as if they were listening to rock 'n' roll music. Bill motioned for me to listen in. I put my ear close enough to hear and, sure enough, rock 'n' roll music was coming over loud and clear, with some Vietnamese talking in the background. The enemy was jamming our frequency.

We tried our secondary frequency, and it was still clear. Bill stayed on primary to keep them busy while I



The cast: Top row, left to right, Louie, Roy, Frank, Peppy, Bill; bottom row, left to right, Messener, author and Rob. Costume is largely conventional for period except for Louie's M14 barrel sticking up over Messener's head and non-issue Sense of Humor prompting Frank to point M79 grenade launcher at camera.

manned secondary. I called the base and told them our problem. Because we were down in a valley, our communications hadn't been all that good to start with. Now they could hardly hear us and requested that we both use our whip antennas. That wasn't what we wanted to hear, but I "Roger'd" the message.

True, a whip antenna does give you much better reception and transmission, but it has a drawback. When put together, it's 10 feet tall. When you're in six-foot elephant grass, it sure gives the enemy something to shoot at.

Very reluctantly, we put the whips up, extending beyond the top of the grass. I put my radio in front of me, facing the enemy. My handset had a cord on it like



a telephone. With it in my hand, I proceeded to crawl backwards and stretch the cord as far as it would go. My object was to put as much distance between me and my faithful radio as possible. Great minds work together. I looked over to see Bill doing the same thing. Of course, with Louie helping, it was much funnier to watch.

Roy had spotted movement coming toward us in the grass. Roy and Peppy waited until the swaying was close before pitching grenades into it. The explosions went off near us. Roy went out and found three more bodies. As he told us the news, another machine gun sent bullets whizzing into our position.

We all had our packs in front of us and were doing a fair job of hiding behind them. Then, my radio came to life. "Broad Weave II, come in. Have you any use for two gunships?"

Did we have any use for them! Frank got into position and we waited for them to show. When I heard them overhead, I felt we had a chance.

"We'll mark their position," I said. "Then they're yours, over."

Frank fired a spotter round right over the gun position. When it went off, the enemy jumped up and tried to run. That turned out to be a bad choice. Like hounds chasing a rabbit, the gunships swooped down with rockets and machine guns going. Both choppers went low over the area in a zigzag pattern. They had to leave when they ran out of ordnance, but not before seven more North Vietnamese stopped living.

Starting into the third hour of our patrol, I felt like we had just about used

Khe Sanh awards formation for Peppy's Navy Cross and Roy's Silver Star and Purple Heart.

Continued on page 66



**Rare
Opportunity
With Royal
Thai Air Force**

SOF STAFFERS BLAST THE BALLOON

by Jim Morris
Photos by
K.E. Evans-Morris

Royal Thai Army Special Warfare Center barrage/jump balloon attached to thousand-foot cable. Balloon was purchased in England; winch is Belgian.



SOF Staffer Jim Coyne said it first. "I'm ready to jump the balloon!" Actually he screamed it from the balcony of the palatial SOF penthouse that overlooked the Chokchai Steak House in beautiful downtown Bangkok. Traffic noise from Sukhumvit was so loud, even on the eighth floor, that all conversation had to be bellowed. When agitated, Coyne screamed.

We had first become aware of the balloon on the Mitrapab jump at Hat-Yai (see "Buddha on the DZ," SOF, September '82) when a

couple of guys from Maj. Mark Smith's U.S. Special Forces Advisory team (Korea) showed up wearing a pair of weird wings.

"They're Thai balloon jumper's wings," Smith said, chuted up, one foot propped on the tailgate of an Royal Thai Air Force C-123.

"They're what?" I bent over to ease the strain of the parachute on my back.

"It's a system they adopted from the British. The Belgians have one too. They use it like the 280-foot towers at Benning, only it's better and cheaper. They have a barrage balloon on a thousand-foot cable. They winch it down; six jumpers climb in the gondola and hook up.

They run it back up to 800 feet and go out on individual tap-outs."

"How was it?"

He shrugged. "There's no wind blast. You just float out of the gondola. It takes a 6,000 count to open, which scares the shit out of you, and by the time you open you're at 500 feet, which leaves you with about three seconds to get your reserve deployed if something goes wrong. I've got more than 350 jumps and this was the worst."

Thus spoke Mark Smith, holder of the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star and many other decorations. If it bothered Smith that much, it had to have a pucker factor of about 9.6.

Coyne and I had the same thought simultaneously: "Brown. Brown has to jump the balloon."

Almost the first thing I did after Robert K. Brown, Editor and Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune*, arrived in Bangkok was call Col. Rut Komolvanich, G-3 of the Royal Thai Army Special Warfare Center. Col. Rut is a terrific guy who will do anything he can for the Special Forces old-boy network. He put us on the manifest for the following Wednesday.

But that jump was pre-empted by the first of our long-range strategy sessions/interviews with spooks, would-be spooks and simple criminals.

We had many projects we were working on (some of which you will read about in following issues) 1) the POW/MIA issue, 2) Yellow Rain, 3) the Lao and Cambodian resistance, 4) combat areas in Thailand itself and 5) Khun Sa, the "Opium Warlord."

When we cancelled out the first jump, Brown decided we'd jump the last thing before we closed out, so as not to take a chance of missing a combat patrol because of an injury like a broken leg.

We mostly wanted to get into Laos and Cambodia with the resistance elements. Brown and Co. got in last year (see "The War that Never Ended," *SOF*, January '82), but the border is a lot tighter

Thai jump balloon holds six jumpers in gondola. Right: Thai jump master, Publisher Robert K. Brown, Tom Reisinger. Left: Author Jim Morris.



BALLOON FACTS

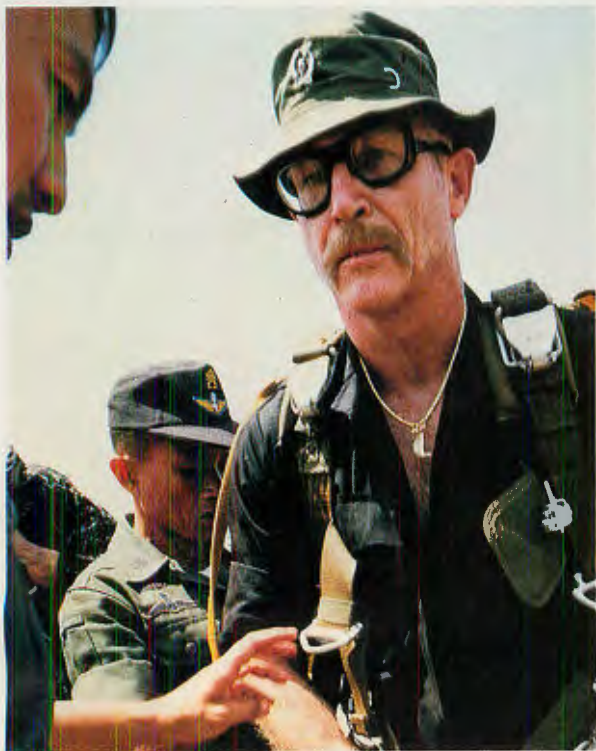
The balloon, we were told, had been installed in September 1981, and so far had jumped 5,000 jumpers. The first two of their five qualifying jumps are from the balloon. The Thais figure they save eight to ten million baht a year, about half a million dollars.

Thailand is a country that is pretty much run by paratroopers because the military runs the country and the military is run by jumpers. One Thai general, who takes his paratrooping seriously, does not like the balloon because the exit procedures do not adequately simulate those of an aircraft. (There is nothing about it that is like jumping from an aircraft.) On the other hand, I like it as a training device because once you're in the air it's the same as a normal jump, without any interference while the trainee learns the chute.

It does one of the basic things that parachute training is good for: It teaches the soldier to perform simple mechanical tasks while scared shitless, which is pretty much what soldiering is about.

—J.M.

BELOW: SOFers Tom Reisinger, Jim Morris, Jim Coyne and Robert K. Brown all received Balloon Wings and, later in the afternoon, jumped a Thai C-130 with cadets.



LEFT: Robert K. Brown, SOF Editor/Publisher, chutes up for balloon blast. Brown was leery of jump, but once he found out the Crown Prince had jumped he felt he had no choice. SOF honor, you know!

now. With each disappointment Coyne yelled, "I'M READY TO JUMP THE BALLOON." This became the *leitmotif* of our expedition.

We used up two months, holding secret meetings over guttering candles in hotel rooms cooled by ceiling fans. We accumulated lots of secret information, but none of it was anything we can print in the magazine without getting people killed — which is not our policy.

"I'M READY TO JUMP THE BALLOON," Coyne bellowed.

I called Col. Rut.

"Sure," he said. "Come tomorrow. In the morning we jump the balloon, and in the afternoon you can jump C-130 if you want."

"Good, we'll do it," I replied.

The next morning I rented an air-conditioned taxi for the day, to drive Brown, Coyne, Tom Reisinger (Brown's administrative assistant), Kat (my wife) and me to Lop Buri and back. Coyne, who has worked on several motion-picture documentaries, decided to take his video tape recorder so we could show the jump at the convention. That left Kat to shoot the stills, forcing us to fit six people, counting the driver, and our gear in the car. It was a squeeze.

Thailand shot by outside: flame trees, houses on stilts, the entire population of a small village on single motorcycles.

At Lop Buri we were placed under the guidance of Capt. Kitti Patummas, who had only recently returned from the States where he had attended the Ranger and Special Forces officers' courses for two weeks. His English was better than Coyne's. He led us into the balloon hangar, where it bulked against the ceiling like a fat, friendly fish.

A young Thai sergeant gave us gondola training in excellent English; he taught us the difference between a balloon and an aircraft exit. You just step out of the balloon. If you jump up and out you risk running smack into a wire.

Brown yelled when he went over the edge. He claims it was a battle cry, but it sounded like terror to me.



While we were doing some refresher PLFs (parachute landing falls), the British-made balloon was towed out by a two-and-a-half ton truck with an enormous Belgian-made winch on the back.

The most startling thing about riding in a balloon occurred the moment the gondola swung free and the ground dropped away. Then it was so quiet and the breeze so pleasant that I couldn't believe it was dangerous. Our jumpmaster — or "dispatcher" as he called himself after the British jump system — said they had never had a malfunction. He was the same happy master sergeant who gave us gondola training. He wore Thai, U.S. and British jump wings. "How often do you jump balloon?" I inquired.

"Almost every day," he said, grinning. "It's my balloon."

Brown yelled when he went over the edge. He claims it was a battle

cry, but it sounded like terror to me.

Then it was my turn. I wheeled into the door and assumed a standard door position. The DZ was way down there, stationary, almost like a sand table.

"Ready!" said the dispatcher. I came to something resembling attention, grasped my reserve at the sides and took one step forward, like a tin soldier.

It wasn't like skydiving, where you don't feel weightless until you get away from the aircraft. There was a feeling of instant buoyancy, like the Moonwalk or the Big Slide, only longer and better. My legs just sort of floated up until I was sitting in midair in an L. Then I felt the first little tug at my back, my trash

streamed out and ever so slowly billowed and inflated.

I reached for the right toggle, as I checked my canopy. The plan was to hold against the wind, saving a long walk to the turn-in point. For a while I seemed to be dropping straight down on one of the two trees on the DZ, but I drifted away without correction. Then the ground got close and I locked my eyes on the horizon and got my feet and knees together. For most jumpers the moment of truth is the exit; for fat boys it is the PLF.

Crump! No sweat, good one. I



Thai paratroops in field. Brown leads stick on right.

was up and running to collapse the chute but two little boys beat me to it.

Meanwhile, in the air, Coyne could not find his toggles. He still swears he was jumping a blank T-10. He got his feet and knees together and crashed in for a right front PLF, moving at about ten knots, hitting his left heel and twisting the ankle. No more jumps for Mekong Jim that day.

A little over an hour later, Brown, Reisinger and I sat on the tailgate of an airborne C-130 staring out at a sea of eager young faces. It was

the fourth of five qualifying jumps for a class of junior cadets at the military academy. Being lighter, the Thais can put about a hundred jumpers on a C-130, but to do it they leave the seats up and everybody sits crosslegged on the floor.

I was the first man in the right door, with T.R. right behind me. Brown was first in the left. I love being first man, especially that moment when the door is opened and below the paddies start going by close enough to send a skydiver out the door, doing "Hail, Marys."

The light went green. The jumpmaster didn't tap me out and I took a quick peek. The third man was going out the left door. Bye-bye.

Out and open I grabbed and pulled, turning to make a surprising discovery. The cadets were in T-10s. They had no directional capability, other than a slip. As I held into the wind, the entire stick from the left door drifted directly toward me, a ragged, solid line of olive-green parachutes. I wonder what the kid below thought when he saw the imprint of my size 12s sprinting across his canopy.

Brown and I landed fine, but T.R. sat flat on his ass and did mischief to his spine. Nothing serious, but several days of twinges and awkward movement, plus a football-sized bruise on his hip. I think it is no coincidence that the two old farts who run every day got away clean, while our two young *bon vivants* were mangled.

"Well, we finally did something." Brown grinned as he walked off the DZ. ✕



LEFT: Robert K. Brown is congratulated by Col. Rut Komolvanich, Royal Thai Army Special Forces G-3, after receiving wings. ABOVE: Thai balloon wings awarded to SOFers. SOF crew were 13th through 16th foreigners to have jumped the balloon.



BULLETS & BALLOTS

El Salvador From All Sides

Text & Photos by Steven Salisbury

AT 0700 on 12 January, a detachment of 20 National Guardsmen and 33 militiamen in the small northeastern Salvadoran town of Jocoaitique radioed for reinforcements against a guerrilla attack, then lost contact with the rest of the Salvadoran security force.

Fifteen National Guardsmen 40 kilometers south in San Francisco Gotera were dispatched as a relief force. Because the guerrillas could ambush military convoys along the road to Jocoaitique, reinforcements had to be ferried in by helicopter.

I jumped into a jeep full of Guardsmen going to an air strip at the edge of Gotera, where they would catch a UH1 Huey helicopter to Jocoaitique. Guardsmen assumed I was cleared and I acted as if I were part of the group.

Only one helicopter was available. The Guardsmen divided into groups of six and nine. The smaller group carried munitions and left first. I climbed aboard the second shuttle.

The guerrillas have tried unsuccessfully to shoot down helicopters by setting their FN FALs on full-auto. As we flew over the mountains surrounding Jocoaitique, we encountered heavy machine-gun fire.

Salvadoran guerrilla field officer confers with part-time guerrilla — irregular equivalent of militiaman — in doorway of typical rural bamboo hut in Yoloaiquin. Guerrilla "officer" (there are no real officers or formal recognition of rank) is equivalent of army lieutenant, and unusually well-armed with captured or stolen Salvadoran Army issue H&K G3. Non-standard weapons in variety of calibers complicate guerrilla supply.



EL SALVADOR

"You have to get out Vietnam-style," shouted the pilot in Spanish. So, as a guerrilla machine gun banged away, the helicopter hovered 10 feet above ground and dropped us. We were two kilometers from Jocoaitique.

Under fire, we dodged to the nearest cover — scrub brush, rocks, dips in the ground—then moved to higher ground.

After a brief silence, the insurgents resumed shooting. The Guardsmen fired back and threw a couple of hand grenades. I maneuvered to photograph the action. The guerrillas fired, and I sprawled. When I re-oriented myself, my left shirt sleeve was bloodstained and torn and my forearm nicked.

The leader of our patrol, a lieutenant,



Army fatigue-clad militiaman carrying .30 M1 carbine on patrol with regular troops. Mortar team picked him up in Osicala.

WAR CORRESPONDENT

Steven Salisbury, aided by his fluency in Spanish, went to El Salvador on his own in mid-December to work as a freelance journalist and combat photographer. He was in El Salvador through April 1982. During that time he covered the fighting in the northeast province of Morazan, and the chaos surrounding the elections in March.

Salisbury is a native of Ann Arbor, Mich. He has sold his photographs and articles to UPI, the *Miami Herald*, Cable News Network and other news organizations.

ant, decided to try to hook up with one of the National Guard outposts forming the perimeter around Jocoaitique. We walked in a crouch through high grass, woods and streams until we reached a little mud house. The Guardsmen called out, but there was no response. They assumed that guerrillas might be hiding inside and opened fire.

"Vietnam, huh?" remarked one soldier. We entered the hovel and found a crudely-made stretcher the guerrillas had left behind.

We continued to another mud house built on the slope of a hill — also abandoned. While scanning the surroundings to plot our next move, the lieutenant spotted two guerrillas atop a hill and opened fire. The guerrillas shot back. The mud walls prevented the guerrillas from seeing us, and although the bullets came through, no one was hurt. Our return fire drove the snipers off.

At the other end of the valley there was a National Guard outpost. The lieutenant led us into the valley and we split into groups of twos and threes.

As we neared the one-room concrete building, the lieutenant saw a phalanx of what he thought were Guardsmen or soldiers. "We're Guardia!" he shouted to them. "We're with you. We're here to give you support. Acknowledge us. Don't shoot!"

There was a pause and the lieutenant shouted again.

Someone from the still unidentified group (the lieutenant later guessed there were 20 men) yelled, "We're not going to shoot!" But as we moved closer to the building, they laid down a fusillade. It was a band of insurgents in uniforms. We knew we were in trouble.

Amazingly, no one was hurt. I had dropped into a ground depression with two Guardsmen.

The guerrillas approached so close that I could hear their commands. They screamed insults: "Son-of-a-bitch Guardia! Faggots! Why don't you kill the cow [a cow was grazing nearby], since you're not going to kill us!"

The two Guardsmen and I feared a guerrilla charge. We slid under a barbed-wire fence next to us.

Pockoom! Pockoom! Bullets landed all around, throwing dust in my face. One grazed the ankle of the Guardsman beside me. We were surrounded. We pushed back through the barbed wire to the place we had just left. A guerrilla grenade exploded.

"We're going to the shit," griped the Guardsmen. They left me for better cover. A helicopter flapped overhead. I wasn't wearing military dress, and because I was so close to the guerrilla positions, I feared that the chopper might dice me with its M60s.

I sprang from my cover and sprinted under fire to the nearest trench. The



Guardsmen already there cheered me.

Dusk fell. The guerrillas fired an illumination mortar round. Pairs and trios of launched grenades and bazooka shots followed.

Two helicopters tried to take the heat off us. One of them mistakenly fired at our position. The incandescent tracers seemed to float harmlessly in the distance, but when they zipped over the trench, they became more menacing. Fear of bullets had Guardsmen pulling other Guardsmen on top of themselves. The helicopters made a couple of passes, then left. The strafing had been pretty but ineffective.

We abandoned hope of reaching the lost detachment. The lieutenant regrouped the Guardsmen in my trench.

We began our escape when night came at 1830, bolting from the trench and running in column up a slope. The lieutenant halted to pick a destination. Guardsmen fell over one another at the sudden stop. I heard a rushing sound and turned around in time to see two or three RPG rockets explode next to the trench we had just left.



Jocoaitique would remain under guerrilla control for eight days.

The Guardsmen and I walked unmolested along obscure pathways for the next three hours until we arrived at the village of Meanguera, 10 kilometers south. The lieutenant huddled the Guardsmen together to thank God for suffering only superficial wounds.

We received news about the Jocoaitique detachment: eight militiamen and seven Guardsmen dead, five Guardsmen wounded and two Guardsmen captured (both of them later escaped). The detachment's other 53 men fled or dropped their arms and pretended to be civilians.

The Guardsmen ate rice, beans and tortillas, then went to sleep in the street. They were awakened at 0600 and took part in an army mission to retrieve two dead Guardsmen.

The day before, guerrillas had tossed a couple of grenades into a National Guard outpost along the Sapó River four kilometers south of Meanguera and killed the two inside.

An army probe failed to recover the

bodies. The guerrillas were stubborn.

I hiked with a unit of Guardsmen and soldiers to a hill overlooking the outpost where the dead men lay.

A Salvadoran soldier began to descend the slope and I followed him, intending to photograph the bodies before anyone touched them.

I had walked about 10 meters when the guerrillas opened fire from a hill across the river. I flung myself to the ground and sought cover under the sparse, dry vegetation.

The soldiers and Guardsmen responded with M60 machine-gun fire and G3 rifle grenades. An army mortar team a kilometer away pounded guerrilla positions with 60mm rounds.

When I moved, the scrub brush also moved, drawing guerrilla fire. I called to the soldiers and Guardsmen, "Hey, what do I do?" There was a murmuring and I thought they wanted me to stay quiet so I wouldn't attract fire. The sun was harsh and ants ate away at me. Mosquitoes buzzed around my ears and up my nose. It was hard not to scratch.

Existential angst: Salvadoran soldier pinned by gunfire on Cerro Tigre (Jaguar Hill) wonders what he's doing and why he's there as he figures odds of making it back to better cover.

The shooting stopped and I called to the soldiers and Guardsmen again but there was no answer. I figured both sides were waiting for someone to move so they could pick him off.

A helicopter circled overhead and then veered away.

Someone called from across the ravine: "Comrade! Comrade, come! Come here! Come with us, comrade!" The soldiers and Guardsmen didn't speak like that; the guerrillas did.

I anxiously clambered back up the hill, leaving behind a notebook containing press credentials, a letter of authorization from the Salvadoran military and a copy of a letter of recommendation from my congressman. The climb took about five seconds, but it seemed like five minutes.

EL SALVADOR

To my surprise, the soldiers and Guardsmen were gone. I headed for Meanguera.

My rustling through high grass drew a shot, probably a soldier's or Guardsman's, since the rifle sounded like the government-issued G3. "I'm a journalist," I shouted. Another shot followed.

I bumped into a *campesino* making rope. He came with me to Meanguera.

I asked a returned Guardsman what happened. "Oh, we thought you were wounded," he answered. "We were going to come back and get you after we went around the valley and recovered the dead."

I was still in El Salvador on election day, 28 March. Early that morning guerrillas battled Salvadoran troops and seized hilltops overlooking the sleepy town of San Francisco Gotera, the capital of the northeastern Salvadoran department of Morazan.

Townpeople barricaded themselves inside their homes. The guerrillas had already taken the airstrip two kilometers north of Gotera and were threatening the modern three-wing hospital on the edge of town.

Five soldiers from the Sixth Infantry Brigade stormed toward the fray. I grabbed my camera and ran into the street to join them. Several guerrilla snipers, holed up in Gotera's adobe structures, opened fire. The soldiers and I ducked into an alley. We drew more fire when we emerged in front of the hospital. Its gate was locked.

The soldiers yanked at the bars and screamed for someone to open up. I scaled the grating and jumped, my left knee buckling as I fell. A custodian rushed out and let in the soldiers. I limped into the hospital. The soldiers took up positions there.

An army ambulance shuttled in and out of the hospital compound, bringing in wounded troops and civilians. Medics and nurses hustled to their aid.

A corporal had been shot in the back. A bulge the size of a Bermuda onion protruded from his chest. The pressure of the entering bullet had pushed his heart forward. There was no anesthesia. Doctors immediately cut into the chest. The corporal writhed and groaned. His face knotted. A bullet shattered a window next to the operating room. The doctors flinched. The corporal howled.

Soldiers, listening to their buddy's agony, bunched together and cursed. I hobbled over to the group. One soldier pulled a severed ear out of his knapsack. "The son-of-a-bitch guerrilla was burning houses," he sneered.

Operating space was choked. A woman and her young daughter lay on dollies in the corridor; they had suffered abdominal and leg wounds in a crossfire. The child was hysterical, "Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!" Doctors treated them in the recovery room.

Orderlies stood in the halls and cracked vulgar black humor, but their taut faces belied their joking.

Medical staffers and soldiers craned out windows and doorways during lulls in the shooting to check the fighting — until renewed gunfire forced them to jerk their heads back inside.

A unit of the elite American-trained Atlacatl Battalion and an American-made armored personnel carrier mounted with a .50-caliber machine



Waiting for army counterattack, guerrilla relaxes during brief rebel occupation of Yoloaiquin.

gun pushed the guerrillas back. A U.S.-made UH1 Huey helicopter banged away, "cleaning up."

A vehicle filled with election officials drove beside an army jeep through town, urging people to vote. "While there are skirmishes on the outskirts, the bullets aren't hitting town. It's safe to vote," officials and soldiers shouted through megaphones.

In the early afternoon gunshots continued to echo in the hills, yet civilians came from their houses and queued in

the streets to vote. (Military personnel were barred by Salvadoran law from voting.) The lines of voters stretched for blocks at each of Gotera's three polling locations.

Election officials checked each identification card for voting eligibility and returned it (unmarked) with a slip of paper to its owner. The voters moved on to tables where they exchanged these slips for ballots. Election officials then used devices that looked like garage-door openers to mark the voters' hands with an indelible, invisible, ultraviolet light after checking to verify that the voters hadn't been tagged already. Voters moved to partitioned stands to mark their ballots before dropping them in a box.

Foreign observers and representatives of the parties participating in the elections supervised the polling procedure. The International Red Cross and church people watched for coercion.

"Go and tell the people in the United States that we're voting, that we want democracy," urged a *campesino*, waiting in line at a polling station. "We don't want a change of power through the gun. We don't want communism. We want peace. We want democracy . . . We're demonstrating our desire for democracy and they [the guerrillas] are shooting at us."

A distraught woman knocked on the door of a house around the corner from the polling station, where I was visiting. My hostess excused herself and went to the door. After a few minutes of conversation, she returned to her seat. "That poor little woman," she sighed. "The guerrillas killed her husband

81mm mortar pelts guerrillas at 2000m after sighting on Cerro Tigre. Patrolling hill later, squad found beaten soldier, killed by bullet through neck, fingers and nose cut off, abandoned as ambush bait by retreating rebels. Guerrillas then fired on squad from 250m.





Cunning and panache mark rebel leaders without rank. This field officer sported U.S. flag on beret (not visible), claimed taken from adviser's body.

while he was going to vote. She asked me to help her get limestone to put on the body."

The army burned the corpse of a guerrilla. "He was light-skinned," a soldier told me. "He was wearing a guardsman's camouflage shirt and cap, and was carrying an FAL [a Belgian-made automatic rifle]." The description matched that of a guerrilla I had talked with four days earlier.

On 23 March, guerrillas had overrun the detachment of 20 soldiers and mili-

tiamen in Yoloaiquin, eight kilometers north of Gotera. I walked alone into the village the next morning and met 15 guerrillas, most of whom were in their middle to late teens. They told me that many more of them were patrolling the surrounding area.

One guerrilla held a Chinese rocket. The rest carried either carbines, FALs, German-made G-3 automatic rifles or the American-made M16s.

"The struggle is going well," said the leader of the band. "In Meanguera we

killed 14 soldiers and captured seven. We took a bazooka, a mortar and three machine guns with ammunition."

"What's your opinion of Guillermo Ungo?" I asked.

"Who's he?" asked the leader.

"The leader of the Democratic Revolutionary Front," I answered.

"Don't know him." The guerrilla blushed.

"What do you think of Cayetano Capiro [a guerrilla leader frequently mentioned in the Western press]?" I was persistent. The guerrilla shrugged, not recognizing the name.

Another guerrilla escorted a prisoner into the encampment. A gunshot had blown out most of the man's left wrist and his hand was close to falling off. The guerrillas kept me from photographing him.

"Look, I'm a militiaman," stuttered the prisoner. "But I didn't shoot at you," he added.

"Then why did you have a gun in your trench?" asked a guerrilla.

"I sincerely tell you that there wasn't another place where I could put it. They [the armed forces] gave me a carbine and told me to patrol. Still I didn't shoot. I have no quarrel with you. You shouldn't have shot me."

"We thought that you were fighting," a guerrilla said, smiling sheepishly.

"Can I go to Gotera for my wrist?" asked the prisoner.

"No," answered the guerrilla leader. "We can't let the army see you."

"I know a woman in the village," said the militiaman. "Can I go to her house to fix up the wound?"

"Accompany him to the woman he knows," ordered the guerrilla leader.

Several guerrillas followed the militiaman to a mud hovel. The woman denied knowing the prisoner. "Crap!" cursed a girl guerrilla, stalking away. "This old woman doesn't know him."

Yoloaiquin's telephone office and police station had been gutted. A child squatted in front of the burned-out mayoral building and ripped the Salvadoran flag with a sickle.

"We are all Salvadorans," a guerrilla declared. "We are fighting against the repression and the imperialism that put the people in poverty. The bourgeois elections aren't going to do a thing. There will be a popular uprising."

Close to 1.5 million Salvadorans went to the polls country-wide on 28 March — more than 80 percent of the electorate. Guerrilla hostilities in various parts of the country kept that figure from being higher. ☒

DEATH ON THE SKELETON COAST

AS fire fights go, it proved a hot one. The location was the extreme southwestern corner of Angola, whose desolate terrain looks like the Sinai with its dry river beds and ragged, jagged mountains.

Contact began at dawn. When it was over eight hours later, there were 201 SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) terrorists dead. An undisclosed number were captured. Of the South African force of 45 officers and men, three were lost, all members of 32 Battalion, an elite unit which has taken the brunt of this ongoing guerrilla struggle in the past couple of years.

I suppose I should have spotted something in the wind the last time I visited 32 Battalion's temporary base on the Kunene not many weeks before Operation Super — as the attack was code-named — took place. Then, on my way back to South African lines from an extended external operation further to the east — toward the Angolan town of Ongiva — I stopped briefly at a Helicopter Administrative Group (HAG) just north of Kaokoland.

Here, the terrain turned abruptly arid, even alongside the broad Kunene, by then in full flood. Sections of 32 Battalion troops were being heli-lifted in and out of camp. The place smelt of action and I



would have liked to stay on.

Yes, there was something happening, the commanding officer (OC) — a youthful-looking Major "John" — admitted.

A SWAPO unit was active in the region; John's job was to find it and, if possible, "take it out." Not an easy task in the kind of terrain whose limited cover consists of a few scraggly thorn trees that interrupt the rock-covered terrain under the clear desert air.

We now know that the unit carried out probes and feints for three or four weeks. It was, apparently, for a short while hassled by an armored-car squadron, supposedly commanded by Cubans and deploying Soviet five-man BRDM reconnaissance cars — which seem to have found much favor among Russian satellite forces operating in Africa.

Deployed in groups of three or four vehicles, the BRDMs moved at great speed (because of the landmine threat and fear of ambush) between Lubango, SWAPO's military headquarters in the southern region of Angola, and Chitado. The latter is a former Portuguese village near the South West African border (for an account of a previous South African strike against this town see "SWAPO Strikes Out," SOF, January '81).

32 Battalion Scrubs SWAPO's End Run

Text & Photos
by Al J. Venter



Mounting up at dawn, black South African heliborne troops from 32 Battalion somberly prepare to load French-made Aerospatiale SA 330 Puma military-modified variant.

Gradually, the sphere of operations moved further toward the sea and a part of Africa known for centuries as Skeleton Coast. SWAPO apparently believed that by moving into the desert it would sidetrack any South African units, badly underrating 32 Battalion's verve.

The object, basically, of moving so far to the west was to try to force a new passage into South West Africa.

For years SWAPO has tried to dominate Ovamboland, and in recent months has been trying to infiltrate the rich farming lands just south of the embattled zone. So far, its attempts have met with disaster.

A sortie too far south, without local support, has usually resulted in the entire unit's being wiped out by South African security forces. Those survivors who have managed to return to Angola have spoken of hunger and thirst — lack of water and having to eat grass and twigs to survive.

With this in mind, SWAPO's leaders, obviously in conjunction with Russian and East German planners, decided to open a new front.

They would enter South West Africa — hopefully undetected — through the desert and head south. It was with such a team that a tiny 32 Battalion reconnaissance group made contact. Watching from a distance after weeks of trail hunting, it led in the major strike force — all 45 of them. At that stage, they didn't realize there were more than 200 of the enemy.

Referring to Operation Super afterward, the strike force commander, Capt. Hans Donkelaar — a tough, bearded veteran of about 25 — said it was accomplished by a distinctly "bargain basement operation." He was contrasting it to earlier, larger cross-border operations involving hundreds of men and scores of vehicles, including armored cars and infantry fighting vehicles which moved after weeks of intensive planning (see "Battles Beyond Angola's Border, SOF, May '82).

This one, he said, "just happened when it did."

While the South Africans never disclose much on operational detail, it is known that a stage was reached when a strike would be launched if the main enemy force could be pinpointed.

When this happened, a HAG was established in a mountain valley in a remote corner of Kaokoveld, a region directly south of the

Angolan frontier. This desolate, isolated area once held game, including elephant, rhino, giraffe and dozens of varieties of buck and other animals which ran wild by the thousands; it has been badly decimated by a seven-year drought.

Choppers were brought in as well as enough ammunition and supplementary equipment for the

Dirty and determined, helicopter-borne SA "troopies" head back into battle bristling with 5.56mm R4 rifle and FN MAG machine gun.



type of operation envisaged. In command of the air force detachment was Capt. Sean Krill, another young veteran of dozens of airborne campaigns in this continuing bush war. Krill disclosed that he and his fellow pilots found the rough terrain disconcerting after the pancake flatness of Ovamboland.

Around Marienfluss — which is largely a dry river bed surrounded by mountains a couple of thousand meters high — the land is spotted

SOUTH AFRICA'S ARMORY

One of the more controversial aspects of the ongoing war along the border with Marxist Angola is that South Africa is still being subjected to a United Nations-imposed arms embargo sponsored by the communist bloc and supported by the United States.

In theory, South African forces should be crucially short of equipment and ammunition. And, while there are gaps and shortages of more sophisticated materiel for this kind of ongoing conflict — South Africa, for example, could do with more advanced types of electronic equipment, warships and especially choppers — it seems ironic that the Soviet Union has inadvertently become the major supplier of war materiel to South Africa.

In the past year, the Springboks have captured many thousands of tons of sophisticated Soviet

materiel. South Africa lacked a good conventional anti-aircraft system, but captured so many Eastern Bloc triple-barreled M55 anti-aircraft guns during Operation Protea last year that the country is now self-sufficient. Ammunition — good-quality Russian stuff in 20mm — was taken by the truckful, enough to last South Africa for years.

Similarly, most South African units are now armed with Soviet rocketry. RPG-7s have been captured by the warehouseful. Although not the most sophisticated weapon on the market, this system is adequate for ground defense in routine action and is used by most operational South African units. So are a variety of Ivan's other products.

There is, in addition, much captured weaponry which Pretoria holds in reserve in the tens of thousands because it has no application in the current phase of the bush war. This includes Soviet

by dozens of precipitous gullies and ravines, some of them so sheer that they bar movement by troops on foot. (It's an awesome, primeval land — I know, I've just been there.) Furthermore, there was the fine desert sand, which with the slightest breeze pokes into every exposed human orifice — and plays havoc with aircraft. It would be chopped up by the helicopter rotors, sand-blasting engines and canopies.

For a while, conditions remained static while the recon team moved across the border undetected.

Then, on Thursday, 11 March, came the first contact. An advance party of 32 Battalion troops found and trapped a couple of dozen SWAPO terrorists doing a recon of their own.

In the brief but bloody battle which followed, the SWAPO platoon was wiped out. Simultaneously, another unit spotted what was thought to be a large camp only a few kilometers away. It had, in fact, found the main concentration, but its inhabitants had inadvertently been alerted by the sounds of the initial fire fight.

Krill and his No. Two, Capt. Thomas Harrison, circled the main area briefly before reporting back to base. The camp was big, they said. They saw tents and the belongings of what was obviously a large force. There also seemed to be evidence of vehicles hidden in



Native South African soldier ready to go with ammo vest, linked 7.62 ammo, FN MAG. French-made Allouette IIIs in background.

the bush — though this later turned out to be an ammo dump.

Instructions came back quickly from base. Krill was allocated 45 men from 32 Battalion. "Hit the camp with all you have." The order was terse and succinct.

Time was crucial. Obviously the enemy would remain on maximum alert, but since it was late in the day it would be impossible to move before the next morning. Then fate

intervened in this region that had seen no proper storms for almost a decade — it rained furiously all that next day. Another delay.

Capt. Krill took off from Marienfluss shortly after 0700 on Saturday, 13 March.

He had half-an-hour's flying time to get to the target with the rest of the gunships in his squadron. Capt. Harrison, again, was his No. Two. Troop carriers were 15 minutes behind; they would drop the main assault force and the stopper groups on all likely outlets.

The area was small. It measured perhaps 600 by 400 meters and lay barely an hour's flight — by chopper — from the coast.

Capt. Donkelaar said his men — after being dropped — encountered the first resistance about two kilometers from the target area, shortly after being put down at about 0800. Counter-action intensified as they moved forward. By now Capt. Krill had spotted dozens more tents from the air, many of them without camouflage. There were also dozens of pieces of washing hung up on improvised lines, obviously drying after the previous day's rain.

By now, SWAPO insurgents in and around the camp were searching frantically for cover. Some ran down dry riverbeds which traced irregular patterns across the terrain; others stayed and fought. Either way they came short, for the stopper groups picked off fleeing terrors from the start. A mortar team which had been dropped earlier went about its business with the aplomb of experts, dropping clusters of shells at targets predetermined by chopper spotting crews.

Fire toward the aircraft was heavy. Capt. Krill recounts that at least two SAM-7 missiles were shot at his command chopper and another at Capt. Harrison's craft; they avoided them easily, though they didn't elaborate how. Other pilots said they saw the launching of a fourth SAM-7 which also didn't reach a target.

By now, the battle raging on the ground reached a crucial point. Firing was often at point-blank range as the South Africans moved forward toward the base. At one stage, mortars, fired in support of the main sweep line (which was coming in from the southeast), had to cease for fear of hitting their own men. Meanwhile, another two stopper groups were brought in from Marienfluss, and the commander of one, Lt. Bek, was killed.

82mm mortars and 82mm recoilless guns with ammo. There is enough artillery to start another war. South Africa has also taken tanks, hundreds of brand-new Russian vehicles, including Gaz-66 and heavy-duty Ural trucks and armed reconnaissance vehicles in the BRDM range.

So, while the majority of Third World nations — with the tacit support of Moscow — continue to argue about the best way to isolate South Africa and perhaps bring the country to its knees, the South Africans go quietly about their business. What they cannot buy through the back door, they make themselves. The Springboks have acquired Italian and French warplanes, Israeli gunboats, Belgian rifles, Finnish artillery, British electronic equipment, Canadian high-explosive shells, West German small arms and a variety of American items of war from third parties. And that's only part of the entire list.

The South Africans took apart a Russian BM21 vehicle-mounted 122mm rocket system after capturing one in 1975, and set about making one themselves. Now they've got their own 127mm rocket system — also 40 tubes mounted on a vehicle, but with a bigger payload that goes further, faster and hits the target substantially more accurately than before.

Then the country built the Ratel Infantry Fighting Vehicle in 1976-77 — and it's so good that Belgium started producing a similar one shortly afterward.

In the same way South Africa developed — with, it is said, clandestine Western aid — a new 155mm artillery piece called the G-5. Word has it that the weapon was partly and unknowingly developed and tested with NATO connivance.

The story has all the makings of a good plot for a novel. Certainly the intrigue is there. . . . — A.J.V.

Dislodging terrorists who had ensconced themselves in gullies and dry-riverbed overhangs became a highly precarious task.

But it had to be accomplished as the strike force moved forward. It was during this phase that most casualties were taken by the attackers. By now the battle had become a slow, tedious, extremely dangerous task with supporting fire sometimes brought in within a few meters of the advancing South Africans.

By noon, the first 32 Battalion troops entered the main SWAPO camp on the

southern side and mopped up the remaining resistance there.

At this point, Capt. Krill landed to consult with the ground commander about further advances, only to find himself and his aircraft — to his horror — in the middle of an ongoing skirmish. Some insurgents, lying low to the north of the camp, opened up.

As Capt. Krill tells it, the event was almost comic: "There was Capt. Hans Donkelaar telling me to get the hell out of there, my flight engineer going mad and me sitting tight, because to have lifted off just then would have been suicide."

So he waited until the pocket of resistance had been overcome.


Altogether there were almost a dozen arms caches found in the area. The biggest find yielded about 1,200 PG-7 grenades, a supply of launchers, 16 SAM-7s and dozens of new AKs. All of this was brought back.

Among the items destroyed "in situ" were hundreds of Russian mortar shells, more than 500 Eastern Bloc anti-tank rifle grenades and 250 anti-personnel rockets. Most of this weaponry had apparently been brought into the area through the south Angolan port of Mocimedes. All of it came directly from the Soviet Union.

Though Operation Super is a relatively small strike compared to some others in the past year, the killing of a couple of hundred more SWAPO cadres does help lower morale and discipline within the revolutionary movement. In a region even Angolans regard as uninhabitable, a large force of SWAPO terrorists had been detected and wiped out.

This action must affect SWAPO.

Until the next strike comes along: Wait for it — it, too, will be featured in SOF. ☒



Blades still spinning, Puma chopper hesitates near stacked linked-belt HE ammo cases to take on laden troops headed for patrol.



MAY BUDDHA BLESS BOBBY

Elegy for Echanis' Vietnamese Comrade



by

John E. Padgett

Qui Nhon Mike Force troopers simulate "check canopies" while undergoing ground week of parachute training. Man facing camera in foreground next to SF trooper is Bobby. Photo: John E. Padgett

FOREWORD: This article deals with the life and death of one of the men who went down over Lake Nicaragua with Mike Echanis. It was written by a former Special Forces senior medic who spent five years in Indochina during the Recent Unpleasantness, and who has done international-development work in rural health. The author spent a year in Nicaragua working with professionals in the health field, as well as with the populace in the countryside. His opinions of the fighting in Nicaragua may differ from those of the reader, but they were gained from harsh exposure to the facts and time "on the ground." These opinions are not intended to dishonor the memory of the men who went down over Lake Nicaragua — and they may shed some light on the story. The author has waited before telling it to allow time and distance to give safety and perspective.

The article on Echanis' death ("In Memoriam: Mike Echanis," SOF, February '79) mentions "a mysterious Vietnamese merc named Nguyen van 'Bobby' Nguyen" killed with Mike Echanis and Charles Sanders. This epitaph is for Bobby.

WHERE Bobby was born — and when — are unknown to me. I do know that he alluded once to having been born in the Mekong Delta, and that his parents had both been killed by the VC. He did not fit the physical make-up of the Southeast Asian, as his skin was lighter, with freckles around the nose and eyes, and his eyes had a gentler almond shape than those of his countrymen. I suspected French ancestry, but this he would neither confirm nor deny.

When I first met Bobby, he looked like a little boy playing at war. He was thin to the point of looking malnourished, about five feet, three inches tall, and had a boyish look.

When orphaned as a child in the early '60s, he was taken in by the members of Special Forces A-Team; since then he had identified more closely with Americans than Vietnamese. He learned English — or American — quickly and used slang and cuss words along with the rest of us. He became an interpreter for his SF benefactors, and would translate the sense of statements, as well as the words.

Some of the Vietnamese, especially the LLDB (VN counterparts to USSF),

disliked him intensely, as he was quick to spot corruption — especially when the troops were being cheated — and point it out to the Americans. It is to his credit that he was one of the few Vietnamese the Montagnards trusted or listened to — they did not give their trust lightly.

It was in mid-1967 at the B-Team headquarters in Qui Nhon, and Bobby had come in from Van Canh A-site with some SF types, one of them a friend of mine from Ft. Bragg dog-lab days. I thought the skinny kid was one of their CIDG troops along for security until I heard him tell one of the "hearts and minds" jokes. Later that night, he came back to the "Surfside 22" club, the B-22 team bar, with five — count 'em — five very attractive Co Dep. The best, of course, he kept for himself.

For the better part of a year, I heard nothing of Bobby, although I remembered him as a flamboyant character. Then came the Tet offensive.

After the smoke cleared and the 'Yards took back Qui Nhon, which the ARVN and bad-assed Koreans had failed to do, the Powers-That-Be decided that Qui Nhon had better have its

own unit of Mike Force (Mobile Strike Force) troops to react to enemy activity in the vicinity. I joined the cadre of this new unit and Bobby came in as interpreter.

There followed months of hard work. Bobby stayed in Qui Nhon with one half of the team to help in recruitment and training of one company from the Qui Nhon vicinity, while four of us went into the mountains near the SF camp at Phu Tuc to recruit and train Montagnards from the tribes there. The Mike Force units did not have to put up with the "adviser" pretext or deal with the problems of LLDB corruption and indecision. Their troops were mercenaries, motivated, hardcore anti-communists, who were paid to fight. They were commanded, not advised, by the SF troops assigned. Usually an A Team of 12 men or less commanded a battalion of about 350 troops. In contrast to conventional units, an SF NCO was a company commander and the battalion commander was the A-Team leader, a lieutenant or captain.

In June 1968, as its first mission as a fighting unit, the new Qui Nhon Mike Force drew an assignment to raid an enemy support and staging area east and a little north of the new SF camp at Ha Tay. Hoi An Province was the birthplace of the National Liberation Front, a fertile area lying between the southern tip of the coastal mountains that enclosed the Bong Son Plain and the South China Sea. ARVN and the U.S. Army had declared our area of operations (AO) a free-fire zone, and prior to our insertion, the Ha Tay LLDB comman-

der gave us a briefing: "Everything that walks, crawls or flies — dies!" We went in with a company of Mike Force, loaded for bear.

We caught the enemy by surprise. Resistance was in the form of Home Guard-type VC with old MATs and carbines. Shocked to see us in their sanctuary, they would usually pop a few caps at us and flee. We captured large amounts of supplies, ammo and documents, and took some prisoners who were helicoptered out. We also ate well on recaptured U.S. rations we liberated from VC stockpiles. Our raid was initially successful.

When I First Met Bobby, He Looked Like a Little Boy Playing At War

That kind of luck does not hold for very long, however, and we knew that sooner or later we would have to deal with VC or NVA main-force units who would be mad as hell at us for raiding their home territory. But it didn't happen the way that we thought it would.

We were resting after overrunning a small VC supply cache and dispatching its two guards. The world seemed pretty good: We had had no friendly casualties so far, and we were stopped beside a clear cool stream, feasting on recaptured tins of U.S. corned beef. Bobby was making coffee, using his mysterious

talent for making that terrible stuff in the packets drinkable. The PRC-25 crackled and Bobby answered it, then handed it to the company commander. Camp Ha Tay was taking heavy incoming mortar fire and they wanted us back as soon as we could get there, as they expected a ground attack in force.

Our company split into two groups, each taking a different route back to the An Lao River, where we would reunite and make a crossing at dusk. A couple of hours of forced marching after dark would take us into camp, provided we met no resistance. Once across the river, we would be well within range of the camp's artillery — which I knew how to work — so we would have that advantage should we meet any of the attackers on the way in. By splitting up, we hoped to lessen the opportunity for ambush, to be able to react if we were ambushed and to confuse those whom we now knew to be watching and tracking us.

To give the enemy his due, he hit us at the most opportune time.

Our two groups were separated by a small range of hills, not over a kilometer apart, when my unit heard the sounds of mortar shells exploding. We were the farthest south, Bobby in the front of the column with the platoon leader, me bringing up the rear with another SF NCO. By the sound of it, the northern unit was catching hell. We contacted them by radio, and the enemy was apparently on the opposite slope of the hills from us, firing down at them. We decided to work our way across the paddy and up the hills, to come at the enemy from behind and on top.

Then we got hit.

Half of our column was across the open paddy at the base of the hills, or almost there, while the rest of us were in a small stand of coconut palms next to a rise of ground on the opposite side of the open paddy. Most of the fire came from the base of the hills to our left, the ones we were going to scale to relieve our friends, and a few shots came from the rise to our right. The troops showed their training, and immediately rushed the sniper on the right, who fled. Most of us in the palms used the paddy dike for cover and fired, and moved across to the base of the hills to join the balance of the platoon.

Two men were hit, but were still able to walk and fire. Then came the news that the remaining American was hit and down. I worked my way back across, found him and bandaged his chest while pieces of palm tree exploded around me.

Author (foreground) and fellow SF trooper sort through captured VC documents. Note VN communist flag in foreground. Some 24 hours later, trooper in background would be wounded and carried through enemy fire by author. Photo: John E. Padgett collection



Then I put him on my back. There was nothing for it but to run back across the paddy with him aboard. The enemy tried hard to bring us down, but they couldn't.

When it was all over, including the heroic dive-bombing and strafing by a good friend who had come to help us in his little observation plane (the bombs were smoke rockets, the strafing done with an M16), and the shooting up of a medevac chopper by the VC, with the wounded co-pilot flying himself and the more severely wounded pilot and crew chief safely back to base, our unit was reunited. It was well into dusk — and we still had to cross the river.

A squad went to secure the opposite bank, and Bobby slipped into the water directly ahead of me. We were mid-stream when a VC opened up from the tree line on the bank we'd just left. The bank curved so we couldn't have seen him from that side, but he had a clear shot at the center of the river.

I saw Bobby get hit, staggering backward with the bullets' impact.

From the side of my eye, I saw Bobby get hit, staggering backward with the bullets' impact. He regained his footing, motioned me back and let off a burst with his carbine. Using my M16 semi-automatic, I laced the area where I had seen the flashes. We might not have hit the SOB, but we got no more fire while crossing the river.

When we reached the opposite shore and established security, I insisted on tending to Bobby's wounds. He laughed and showed me where he was hit: He had two .30-caliber carbine bullets lodged in magazines in the pouch on his left hip. It was just not his time to go.

Bobby survived several close calls. He was aggressive in combat, a regular little ass-kicker, and sometimes had to be reminded that he was to stick close to the Americans and not go chasing VC/NVA into the hills. Back in garrison, he relaxed like his American friends: causing mild inflation at local watering holes and winning the hearts and minds (and more interesting parts of the anatomy) of the local lovelies.

Because of his size and boyish appearance, he *was* occasionally taken for an easy mark by some of the slicky boys, the ARVN garrison troopers with tight pants and purple scarves. Noticing his tiger fatigues and American preferences, they were apt to give him a ration of

crap — and wake up later in the alley with their pretty uniforms mussed.

I lost track of Bobby when I left RVN in 1969 for a tour in Thailand. Returning in 1970 to CCC, I saw him briefly in Kontum, and then lost him again.

In 1975, when South Vietnam fell, I was working in rural health training in Micronesia. I took Air Micronesia into Guam to see if I could help Project New Life, the massive refugee resettlement effort on Guam, a way station for more than 100,000 Vietnamese fleeing the "People's Democratic Revolution."

I offered my medical talents and knowledge of Vietnamese (some of

which Bobby had taught me). I kept my eyes and ears open for news of my friend, but there was little time to look for him. There were thousands of sick people, and I was one of the few individuals on the island who could speak both English and Vietnamese. I did meet one interpreter I'd known from Saigon, but he knew nothing of Bobby.

I found out later that, after the U.S. Special Forces left and the phony peace accords were signed, Bobby joined the one unit where he still had an opportunity to aggressively take the fight to the enemy: the ARVN airborne. He worked up from NCO to warrant officer to





lieutenant, and was commanding a company that held out as long as possible at Ton Son Nhut airport. I remember the dispatches from Saigon at the time of the fall said that the North Vietnamese who entered Saigon were generally unopposed, but there was heavy fighting at Ton Son Nhut. That was Bobby's unit.

Surrounded and cut off in a nation that had given up, Bobby then led the remnants of his company in a breakout. They fought their way to Vung Tau, taking advantage of the confusion, and "liberated" a fishing vessel, which they sailed out to meet the Seventh Fleet.

By June 1978, I had been in Nicaragua

for seven months, working on a private contract in rural health development, trying to train paramedical personnel for a country that desperately needed them and a government which couldn't have cared less. I had been contracted to train the personnel who were to staff more than 100 rural dispensaries to be built, using a World Bank loan. What I found out when I got there was that there was absolutely no administrative or support system set up for these new medics, or a list of medicines — or even a list of communities where they were to be located. Somoza regime officials were eager to construct the dispensaries, as they and the dictator himself owned the construction companies.

Provision of health services from these structures was something they had not bothered to think about. So, it turned out that my contract was not only for training, but for the whole system: providing health care and supporting the new personnel in the rural areas. It was made more difficult by the fact that the honchos in the health field were political or military appointees, who viewed rural health care as a leftist plot. The health sector itself was fragmented into five agencies which competed jealously with each other for available monies and personnel in this country of three million. Meanwhile, in the countryside, the infant mortality rate approached 60 percent, and life expectancy was about 40.

Late one tropical afternoon, I was standing in front of the conveyor belt in the arrival area of Managua Airport, waiting for the damn thing to burp out my baggage. I was returning from Miami where I had tried to interest university types in coming to Nicaragua to help me train instructors for my rural health workers. They weren't buying the proposal because of the climate: too much lead in the air. I was sweating, tired and needed an attitude adjustment. I was totally unprepared for what happened next.

"Doc! Hey, Doc!"

The voice was vaguely familiar. Turning, I saw the shy grin and those freckles.

"Bobby! It's you! You're alive. But what the hell are you doing here?"

"Yeah, Doc, I thought I recognized you. Damn, but you haven't changed much. You look like you did, what, eight years ago?"

"Well, thanks. You look pretty good yourself. Looks like you put on a few pounds, thank heavens. You don't look like the poster boy for UNICEF anymore. But what are you doing in Managua?"

"Right now, I'm waiting for a friend to come in on the airplane."

After the initial good-to-see-you's were over, he told me that after leaving Vietnam, he had been sponsored by a church group in New York, which found him a job in a restaurant on Long

Island. He had become a decent cook, he said, and was in Managua at the behest of a friend who planned to open a new restaurant featuring Chinese and continental cuisine.

I believed that about as much as I believed that pigs can fly, knowing what I did about the situation in Managua and the disposition of my old friend. I didn't press him, however, and gave him my address and phone number in the city. I told him I was in the rural areas a lot, and he promised to try to get in touch so we could do some serious drinking together.

It was about a week later when we finally sat down in front of my apartment with a couple of Tona beers and started to talk about old times. It was a good feeling, two old friends who had faced death and danger together more than a few times, catching up on each other's news and that of mutual friends and acquaintances.

The afternoon shadows lengthened,

**"Bobby! It's you!
You're alive."**

and other shadows of the past — fire fights, half-remembered names and distant places formed and then vanished. He showed me a picture of his latest girlfriend and indicated he was serious about her. She was an attractive blonde, bikini-clad and smiling.

Bobby visited once more, and then showed up at my place of work in Managua. I was glad for the interruption. I was in the process of arguing the need for good basic curative medicine in the rural areas. (Not the first such argument.) The pleasantries were made more enjoyable by the fact that Bobby had brought a lady with him, the blonde in the photograph he'd shown me. She'd come all the way from North Carolina.

She was attractive and pleasant, but seemed somewhat withdrawn. I put it down to a flaw in my usually charming demeanor. They stayed only a few minutes and then left for a tour of the city. I noticed that Bobby had a lump in his Levi jacket pocket that resembled a medium-framed automatic pistol, just as he had when I'd seen him in Managua.

Bobby came by once more, and we went to lunch. Sitting in Los Antojitos, a Nicaraguan restaurant across the street

Continued on page 72

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AIN'T NO ONE AROUND

Continued from page 41

up all the luck we could hope for. We'd dealt death to the enemy and had not suffered any in return — yet. But we were no closer to getting out than when we started.

I looked over to check out Louie. He was making silly faces at Bill who, of course, didn't see him. In a flash, Louie raised his rifle and fired right at Rob. At least, that's what I thought I saw. He really fired right next to Rob's head. The loud blasts from his rifle almost deafened Rob, who grabbed his ears in pain. He was ready to give Louie hell when he noticed the bodies of two North Vietnamese just yards from him. It was one of those times when "thanks" just didn't seem enough.

Things turned deadly quiet once again as we hid in the tall grass. There were no jets or gunships overhead. The shade of several clouds, covering the sun, was almost pleasant. A cool breeze started blowing up the hill and with it came the smell of burning marijuana.

As I looked around I noticed everyone smiling. None of us had ever smoked pot, but we had all been around people who did. Noises from the bottom of the hill confirmed that the enemy was lighting up down there. I wondered if they were trying to get their courage up before paying us a visit.

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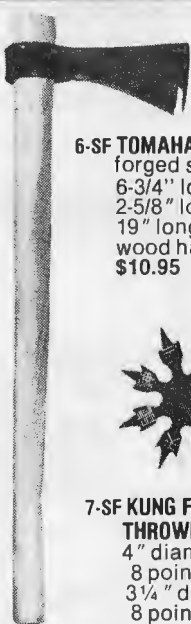
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Peppy motioned Roy to follow him, and the rest of us to put on our gas masks and cover them. They disappeared into the elephant grass in front of us. What seemed like a long time passed. Finally, we heard the tear-gas container explode, followed by yelling, screaming and M16s firing.

Peppy and Roy came running back up the hill. After they pulled off their gas masks they told us what had happened. The enemy were all sitting down, smoking their pot. Our men had gotten up close and thrown the tear gas right into them. The enemy started shooting back, but the gas had them crying and throwing up. I asked what all of the yelling and hollering had been about. Peppy replied that he and Roy had run at them, yelling and shooting, to shake them up. "We got all six of them," he said.

When everyone had settled down after the latest excitement, I looked over at Bill. He was white and his hands were shaking. I took into consideration that we were in a bad spot and that keeping the radios going was a real hassle, but something was still wrong. The famous "Bill smile" was gone. I crawled over to him. "Hey, what's wrong?"

At first he didn't answer me, then he said in a very low voice, "I'm going to die, and I know it."

"What? We're all going to die sooner or later."

"No, it'll be soon. I can feel it. There's someone out there close and they're going to kill me, I know it."

I motioned for Louie to watch him and went over to Peppy. I told him what Bill was feeling and that I wanted to crawl out and check things. Peppy told me to stay put, explaining, "If Bill is right, I'm going to need you on the radio more than ever. Stay put."

He sent Roy to check. Roy had been out several minutes when I heard him yell, "Grenades!"

We hit the deck as two of them exploded. The blast was just 20 yards in front of Bill. His feeling had been right. That's where the two North Vietnamese had been getting ready to shoot him. Roy came back in and told Bill to relax. Word came over my radio, "We have choppers on the way to pick you up. What's the situation like at the LZ?"

"Roger, we have engaged enemy troops and positions in a 360 around us. Things are quiet at the moment, but you can expect a hot LZ coming in."

"Can you use more jets? We have some and they're standing by."

"Yes, we can. How about close rounds down each side of us before the choppers land?"

Peppy motioned to me. "Tell 'em the Vietnamese are starting to close in on both sides. Have them come in close. We'll throw smoke to show them where we want the ordnance." I repeated the message into the radio.

"Throw the smoke when you're ready," they answered.

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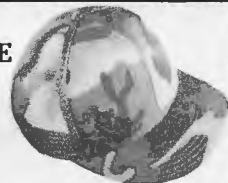
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I had everyone get down as close to the ground as possible. Bill threw smoke far to the left and I pitched to the right.

"Do you have our smoke?"

"Yes. Is that where you want it?"

"That's it; we realize it will be close."

"Stay down, they're coming in."

The sound of the jets was distant but grew an almost unbearable roar. Then came the explosion. It picked me up and slammed me back into the ground. The air seemed to be pulling out of my lungs. So much stuff flew through the air I couldn't open my eyes. Heat rolled up the hill from the explosions.

I could vaguely hear Peppy yelling, "No more!"

It seems I'd made a small oversight concerning the jets. I had called them in at a range I figured was close but safe for the size bombs they carried. What I hadn't known was that the jets had been rerouted from a mission of bombing built-up areas. Their bombs were three to four times the size I'd expected. I couldn't hear anything over my radio so I called out, "No more, wave off!"

The pilots thought I wanted more. "Roger, the other jet is coming in." I looked up just in time to see the plane release its bombs. "Stay down!" I screamed. Then it all happened again. The ground moved under me. I tried to protect my face from the heat and swirling dirt. My left hand felt like it was on fire. When I looked, I saw a piece of hot metal from the bomb on the tip of my

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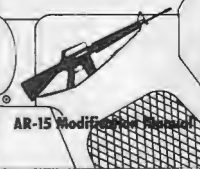
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hand, burning it. I flicked it off.

"WAVE OFF! NO MORE BOMBS! Do you hear me? No more bombs!" The planes Rogered my message, but I still couldn't hear, so I kept repeating it. The air strike had come close to doing what the enemy had not been able to accomplish — killing us all. After about five minutes, my hearing returned enough to carry on a conversation with the jets. They were very concerned that they had almost blown us away.

I checked to see if anyone in the team had been hit. Peppy mentioned that he'd never tell me to bring jets in close again,

but he was smiling as he said it. Bill and Louie gave me some pretty fierce kidding that was to go on for some time. The important thing was that no one had been hurt.

"We have a pick-up chopper on the way. Get ready." That was the best news that had come over my radio yet.

The jets had napalm that they were saving for our pull-out. Louie pulled out his camera and motioned for Bill to snap me. Not to be outdone, I pulled out my Kodak. The two of us decided to see who could get the best pictures of the jets dropping napalm. The contest was on. I called the jets in close to burn out any unwanted visitors. We in turn got some great pictures. Six people were covering while Louie and I were snapping away. The strikes were spectacular. Peppy just kept shaking his head and wondering where he had gone wrong.

Overhead, we saw our ticket out. Not a 34 but one of the 46s. The pilots had to get special permission from the base commander to take their bird up in spite of the safety checks.

The 46 came in fast and hard. The moment it touched down, we started boarding. The enemy still hadn't given up. The chopper gunners killed two more with their .50-caliber machine guns as we lifted off.

Back at the base, we got quite a welcome. We had more officers than I thought were on the entire base come to our humble tent to hear our report. Peppy was promoted to sergeant and awarded the Navy Cross. Roy was once again promoted to Pfc and awarded both the Silver Star and Purple Heart (he had picked up a slight wound in his leg). We were credited with 39 confirmed kills. Not bad for eight people. The enemy had tried their best, but it just wasn't good enough. All in all, it had been one hell of a day.

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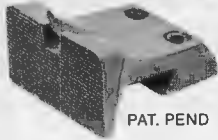
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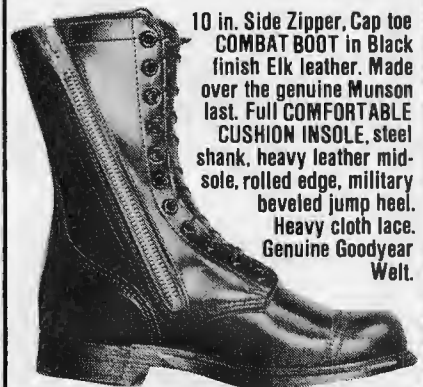
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COMPLACENCY KILLS

Continued from page 31

anyone who studies it. The "weapons system" developed in the book coordinates mental and physical conditioning, tactics and shooting skills into survival readiness which may some day save your life. As a bonus the text's last few pages contain a list of other books, manuals and magazine articles which may aid the student who wishes to study street survival further.

Dennis Anderson, the publisher of *Street Survival*, and Chuck Remsberg, one of its co-authors, are now giving seminars around the country to augment the lessons in this book. The \$50 tax-deductible fee is a small price to pay for their invaluable two days' training. Write to Calibre Press for a seminar schedule in your area.

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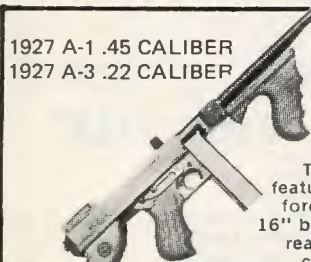
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Project Freedom is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to the task of finding out, beyond any reasonable doubt, the fate of those brave men who so nobly risked their lives.

Project Freedom's National Chairman is Col. Lewis Millett (USA, Ret.), a Medal of Honor recipient; Honorary Chairman is Gen. William C. Westmoreland; the Executive Committee includes Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub (USA, Ret.), Col. Charles W. Scott, the highest-ranking military man among the hostages in Iran, and Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown (USAR), Project Freedom's Coordinator of Activities in Southeast Asia and Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*.

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Funds are needed to conduct and support information-gathering efforts in Southeast Asia — projects aimed at establishing the truth.

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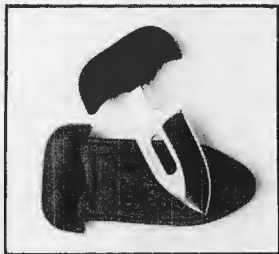
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BOBBY

Continued from page 63

from Managua's Intercontinental Hotel, he finally started to fill me in on what he was really doing in Nicaragua.

He was part of a team of specialists in unconventional warfare who were training an elite unit of General Somoza's National Guard. He was training in hand-to-hand and basic combat, and there were specialists in knife, small arms, tactics, operations, intelligence and communications. The team was small, he said, but they did good work and had good troops to work with, just like the old days. Tiger fatigues and all.

"But why I really wanted to talk to you, Doc, is that you have been here for a while. You go out in the country, you speak Spanish and know the people."

"I've only been here a little over seven months, but I guess I do know them pretty well," I responded. "Why do you ask?"

He paused and took a swig of beer. "When I came here, I thought that I was coming to fight another communist insurgency. You know, like those damn VC. I thought that it was a chance to help a free country fight a takeover by the same enemy." He paused again, took another drink. "But now, I'm not

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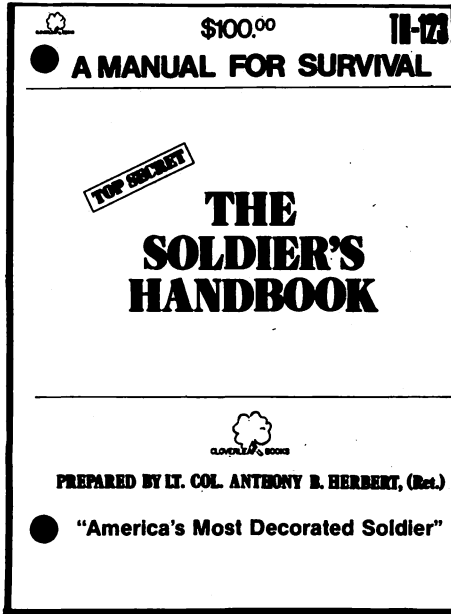
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Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

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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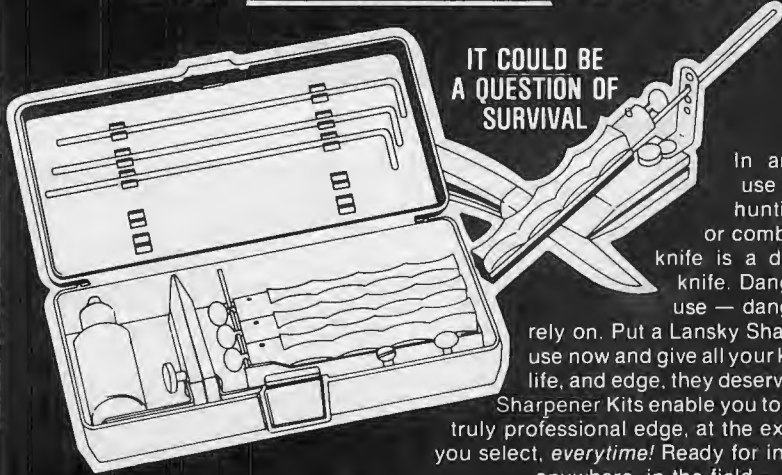
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so sure. It seems different than what I was told before I came here. I want you to tell me what you know about the situation here."

I took a sip of my own beer, then ordered two more. The food came, and I let the waiter get out of earshot before beginning. Our table was away from the other patrons. These simple precautions were necessary in Nicaragua.


"Bobby, it is probably true that the guerrillas get some support from the Cubans. Maybe money and maybe advisers, although none have yet been captured. And maybe it's true that some of the people see absolutely no chance for freedom or economic improvement under Samoza. The Samoza family has been running this country like its own plantation for the past 40 years. The National Guard is Samoza's private army, his police power as well, and no matter what their constitution may say about a trial, justice is what the Guardia says it is, because they have the guns.

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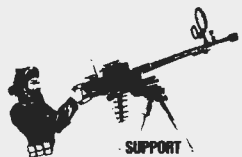
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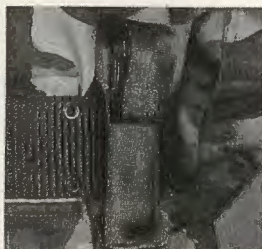
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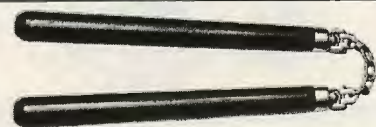
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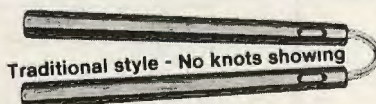


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officer lays claim to. I've seen people on the street beaten by soldiers. It happens all the time."

"But how about the big demonstrations in favor of Somoza, all of the people who turn out to hear him speak?" he asked.

"There are two types of people who show up for those rallies," I told him, "the Guardia in civilian clothing, and their families, or the poor Nicaraguan civil servants, those people who have government jobs, and whose attendance is checked at every so-called spontaneous demonstration."

My old friend looked at me and was silent for a long while. Then: "Doc, what you say about the revolution here, it being supported by the people and maybe even necessary, may be true. But you know what happens to a revolution when the communists are involved. During the confusion that follows the overthrow of the old government, the leaders of the democratic opposition somehow disappear, the different groups can't agree, and the communists, even if they are outnumbered, end up taking over."

My friend may have been a kid from the Mekong Delta, but he was no dummy. And he knew his politics.

He was right, of course. How often had well-meaning and courageous freedom fighters been betrayed? It had

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happened just across the Caribbean in Cuba, in post WWII Indochina, in Russia and China and Africa. Why not Nicaragua?

But by helping to prop up a corrupt, arbitrary dictatorship, which must eventually fall of its own weight, was he helping to prolong the agony and further polarize the people? Already there were reports of people joining the communists because they viewed them as the only way out.

It was getting late, and both of us had to go. We agreed that the decision to stay or leave was one that only he could make. I could only tell him the facts as I knew them, but I wouldn't try to tell him which way to go.

The records show that Bobby made his choice. Perhaps he had access to information about communist infiltration not available to me; perhaps he felt that the time had come to make a stand, no matter who the allies were. I respect his judgment.

There are two postscripts to this story. One is that Bobby's name was not really Nguyen van Nguyen. Wherever he is, he's having the last laugh on us. When we were together in the Qui Nhon Mike Force days, we were amazed at how many of our VN recruits' names began with "Nguyen van." The name was 10 times more common than Smith is to



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Americans. We got to calling the Vietnamese troops "Nguyens," and our version of Sad Sack we called Nguyen van Nguyen. Bobby must have bit his tongue to keep from laughing when he filled that out on his immigration papers.

The second postscript is personal. I did not want my old friend to pass into the next life without sustenance so, as I had too often seen the Vietnamese do for their honored dead, I set a table for him. I lit two candles, and between them I arranged fruit, cheese and a glass of the best wine I had in stock. Having no sword, I unsheathed my Buck knife and placed that near the food, so that my warrior friend would not cross over unarmed.

It was perhaps only a shift in the wind that brought on a momentary stillness after I had said my poor prayer in front of the improvised altar. But, I knew that the spirit of a warrior — a friend — had passed. ☒

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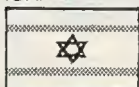
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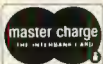
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Continued from page 4

and M79 grenade launchers, with which the men were armed when they returned home.

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ZERO RECRUITS . . .

Eleven Nicaraguan border guards recently fled to Costa Rica and said they wanted to help overthrow the pro-communist government in their homeland.

They said they wanted to join the forces of Eden Pastora, a hero in the revolution against the former rightist Somoza government, who turned against the presently ruling Sandinista junta when it allied itself with Cuba and the Soviet Union.

The 11 sought political asylum. Pastora was known as Commandante Zero during the revolution. He surfaced in Costa Rica last April after a 10-month absence.

TASS TALKS . . .

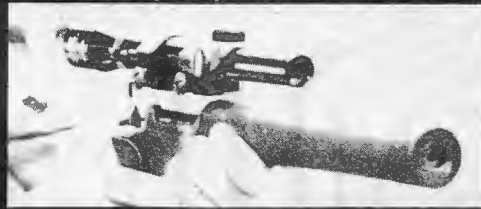
SOF has made the wires of the Soviet government "news" agency TASS once again.

A recent commentary by TASS political and news analyst Askold Birukov says:

"Washington will not quieten [sic] down, despite the obvious failure of the insinuations coming from representatives of the U.S. administration on alleged use of Soviet-made chemical toxic agents in Laos, Kampuchea [Cambodia] and Afghanistan.

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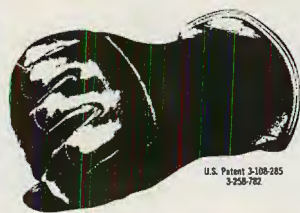
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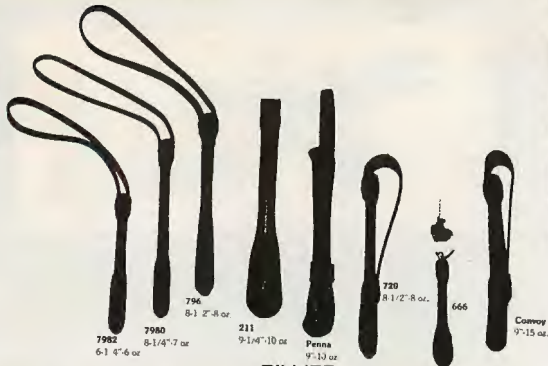
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fantry, 82nd Airborne Division, have been ordered to the Sinai for a six-month tour with the Multi-national Force and Observers. They replace the First Bn., 505th, from the same division.

Some 800 soldiers of the 502nd will serve in the Sinai area in the Middle East in support of a United States commitment to the peacekeeping force established under terms of the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty.

The men have already been issued their desert-pattern camouflage uniforms.

NEW SPY CENTER ...

The Republic of Panama's concentration of international shipping interests, finance and drug smuggling has turned the country into a world center of espionage, according to a Brazilian newspaper.

A Panamanian colonel was quoted as saying that Cuba, the Soviet Union and the United States are the most heavily represented in the spy community but there are agents of virtually every nationality.

Cuba's embassy, which is staffed far out of proportion to its trade relations with Panama, provides a window on U.S. military shipments and Army training camps.

In turn, U.S. agents track Cuban and Soviet arms shipments.

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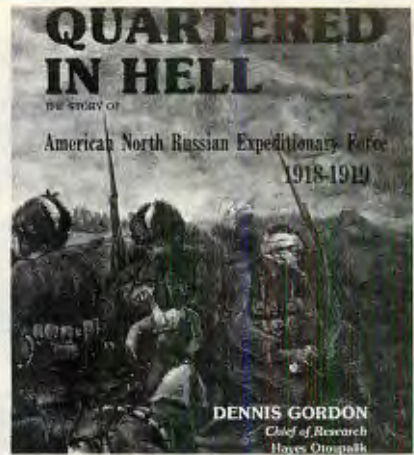
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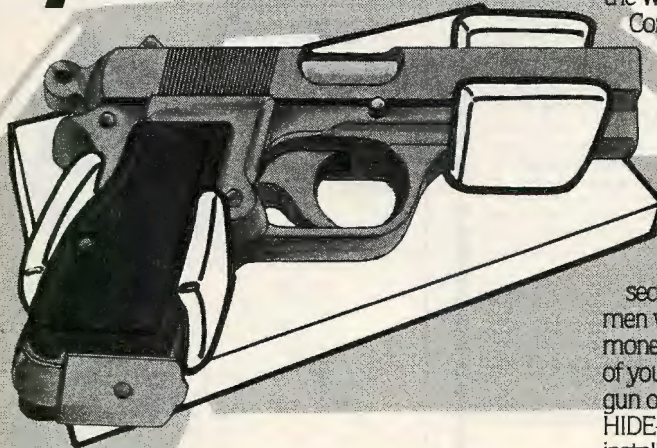
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A FIO CONVENTION ...

Preparations for the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO) 1982 convention are underway. It will be held at the Springfield, Va., Hilton Hotel on 1-2 October.

Panel theme for the meeting will be "Soviet Penetration of the Americas."

ELITE UNIFORMS CORRECTION ...

Readers interested in purchasing the book, *Uniforms of the Elite Forces*, by Leroy Thompson and Michael Chappell, which SOF reviewed in its August '82 issue, should write to another address from that which was printed in the magazine. SOF gave the address of the English publisher. To order the book in the United States, write to: Sterling Publishing, Inc., Dept. SOF, 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016. We apologize for any inconvenience we may have caused.

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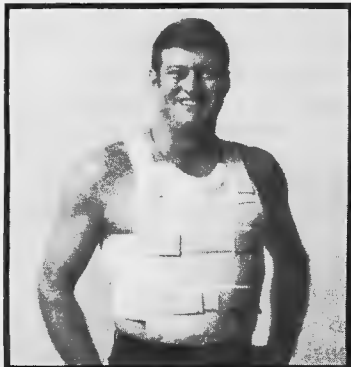
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Brinks armored-car shootout last October were "aided and abetted" by Cuban agents.

Claire Sterling testified before a Senate committee, saying the thugs who staged the stickup got arms, training and daily assistance from Cuba, which even furnished them an "ambassadorial answering service."

Miss Sterling is author of the book, *The Terror Network*.

NEW 82ND HELMETS . . .

Paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division will bear some resemblance to the old German army when they soon begin to receive a new style helmet.

The headgear looks like helmets worn by the German army in World Wars I and II. It is made of Kevlar® fiber.

Said Maj. Gen. Hal Pullam, a logistics officer, the new helmet is "ballistically superior" to the old steel pot. He said, "Its shape protects the head better."

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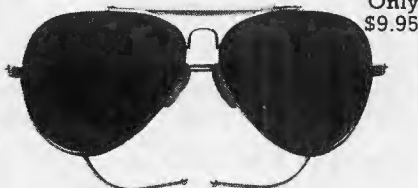
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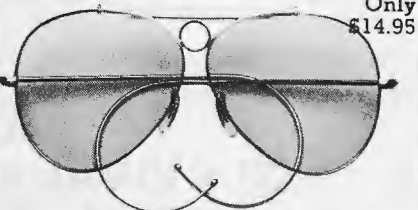
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David B. Miller asks, "Did you take personal movies in Vietnam? If so I'd like to hear from you." The project is a straightforward historical documentary about American involvement in the Vietnam War. It will consist mainly of first-person accounts by former soldiers, who will use their own super-8 movies, slides or pictures to describe what it was like for them in Vietnam. No names will be used. If you are interested in participating in this project please contact David B. Miller, at 1311 N. Troy St., Arlington, VA 22201, or call (703) 528-4806.

TV SLANTS ...

An investigation by *TV Guide* Magazine alleges that CBS had "journalistic lapses" and presented "distorted accounts" in the network's documentary, *The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception*.

A 90-minute program narrated by Mike Wallace created the impression that American military intelligence under Gen. William C. Westmoreland had deliberately misled Washington in enemy strength estimates.

Two *TV Guide* reporters spent two months reviewing tapes and transcripts, talking with officials interviewed in the documentary and with CBS officials, at least one of whom blew the whistle on his own network.

The investigation declared that "CBS began the project already convinced that a conspiracy had been perpetrated and refused to listen to contrary evidence."

McCOLL COMMANDS ...

SOF contributing editor for military affairs, Alexander McColl, who is a U.S. Army Reserve colonel, spent three weeks, starting 3 May 1982, as assistant brigade commander, 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.

He went with the Brigade to Fort A.P. Hill, Va., on Operation "Golden Lanyard." This included a predawn mass tactical jump into A.P. Hill at 0500 on 11 May, followed by 10 days of battalion and company-level tactical training, weapons firing and other intensive training.

The Active Army brigade commander is Col. James H. Johnson and the Command Sgt. Maj. is Bobby V. Teague.

Major units of the "Golden Brigade" for this operation were 1st Bn. (Abn.), 508th Infantry, and 2d Bn. (Abn.), 505th Infantry. The third battalion of the brigade, 1st Bn. (Abn.), 505th Infantry, was the U.S. battalion in the Sinai with the Multi-national Force and Observers (MFO). ☒



FLAK

Continued from page 6

To be sure, velocities over Mach 2 and the accompanying hydrostatic shock increase power; witness the 303 British MK I vs MK VI. However, kinetic energy is not the reason; witness the .45 ACP vs. the 9mm (95 percent vs. 48 percent). There are several physical properties which affect the terminal ballistics of small arms projectiles such as velocity, weight, cross sectional area, shape, jacket thickness, alloy of the core, shock induced at velocities above Mach 2, shock induced at velocities above Mach 3, projectile upset and time dwell. Not to mention the size and composition of the target. All of these things are tangible properties. Kinetic energy, a function of the square of velocity, as a measure of the power of either pistol or rifle is an intangible pipe dream. Perhaps Newton allowed too many heavy objects to fall on his head.

Whether or not stopping power or wounding ability or the amount of weight the soldier has to carry is more important is open to debate but the relationship be-

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Dear Fellow Adventurers,

I want to personally invite you to our Third Annual Convention in Charlotte, N.C. The convention is being held in conjunction with the Third Annual Three Gun International Combat Shooting Match — a shotgun, pistol and assault rifle shoot to choose the top all-around combat marksman in the world: 150 expert shooters will compete, by invitation only, for \$5,000 first-prize money and over \$50,000 in cash, guns and gear. (Competitive shooters write for an application.)

The theme of this year's convention will be "SOF Salutes Project Freedom," with a very special seminar conducted concerning our POWs and MIAs still held in Southeast Asia. The Colonel "Bull" Simon Memorial Award will be presented in their interest.

The 1st Airborne will conduct a Jump School beginning on Wednesday, 13 October. Interested candidates may apply.

The 1982 SOF 400-table Gun Show and Exhibition will begin at 0900 hours Thursday, 14 October and run through Sunday, 17 October.

Firepower demonstrations and competition shoot-offs will occur on Friday. The 1982 SOF Convention has a great lineup, and there will be more to come!

All of you who wish to attend must arrange your own accommodations. The HQ-Hotel will be the Holiday Inn — Woodlawn located at I-77 and Woodlawn in Charlotte. Reservations may be made by contacting Pam Stoltenborg at (704) 525-5007. Be sure to identify yourself as an SOF Convention delegate. Room rates are: Single — \$45.76 per day and Double — \$50.96 per day, taxes included. Rooms are also available at the Howard Johnsons — Woodlawn at \$38.48 per day Single and \$44.72 per day Double. Contact Linda Geer at (704) 525-6220. Days Inn — Woodlawn also has rooms at \$34.20 Single and \$39.40 Double — Contact Shirley Brown at (704) 527-1620. Howard Johnsons is located across the street and Days Inn is directly adjacent to the Holiday Inn, so you won't miss a thing. (ROOM CANCELLATIONS: No refunds will be given without 72 hours notice prior to date of arrival and by 1800 hrs.)

This will be one convention you will never forget. See you there!

DEATH TO TYRANTS,
Robert K. Brown
Editor/Publisher

* TENTATIVE CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Pre-convention courses (Combat Pistolcraft; Practical Shotgun Shooting; Survival Medicine — these courses will be held only if 20 or more students sign up) . . . 9-11 October
Three-Gun Match 12-15 October
Jump School 13-15 October
Main Convention 14-16 October
Exhibition Hall 14-17 October

1982 SOF CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION FORM¹

Mail To: CONVENTION DIRECTOR
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¹Pre-registration ends 15 September; after that the fee is \$125.00.

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tween power and energy is not. History has never shown the two to be related when it comes to firearms.

I must also disagree with my friend Ken Hackathorn, slightly. I feel that the M16 is a nice rifle but the .223 (military load) is only a mediocre ground hog cartridge at 100 yards and under. It takes frangible bullets to make it a 90-percent stopper on these little critters (figure based on approximately 300 personal kills). For two legged varmints I would prefer the M16 in .458 Winchester Magnum.

As for your editors, I will file their comments with my other works of fiction like the LEAA Relative Incapacitation Index.

Jim Higginbotham
Defense Firearms Consultants

Kokalis Answers:

Wow, in one fell swoop Jim Higginbotham rolls over three hundred years of classical physics.

Recoil in a firearm is a function of three separate components. The first is the rearward momentum which accompanies the acceleration of the bullet from a state of rest to its muzzle, or exit velocity. The second is the rearward momentum which accompanies the acceleration of the propellant charge in the form of a gas to a velocity somewhat slightly less than half the muzzle velocity of the projectile. The third, and smallest component, is the rearward momentum due to muzzle blast.

The physics of these reactions are best explained by first defining a quantity P, known as the linear momentum of a body, as the product of mass and velocity:

$$\text{Linear momentum} = P = mv$$

When two bodies interact with one another in the absence of any net external influence, the loss in the momentum of one body equals the gain in momentum of the second body. Or, stating this differently, the total change in momentum of the two bodies is zero. This is the law of the conservation of momentum and is expressed as follows: $P_1 + P_2 = \text{constant}$ (in direction and magnitude).

Forces always act in pairs and thus again, when two bodies interact, the instantaneous force on body 1, representing the influence of body 2, is exactly equal in magnitude but opposite in direction to the instantaneous force on body 2, representing the influence on body 1. Using the calculus, we can prove this formally:

$$P_1 + P_2 = \text{constant}$$

$$\frac{dP_1}{dt} + \frac{dP_2}{dt} = 0$$

$$\frac{dP_1}{dt} = - \frac{dP_2}{dt}$$

$$F_2 \text{ on } 1 = - F_1 \text{ on } 2$$

This result, which is known as Newton's Third Law of Motion, is a direct consequence of the conservation of momentum law and the definition of force. Thus a firearm's recoil energy is

determined by the recoil velocity of the weapon which is a function of the rearward momentum in the system. This is most emphatically not the same as the kinetic energy of the projectile.

A useful ballistic interpolation of Newton's third law is that of Powley which uses the first two — and most easily measurable — elements of recoil:

$$\frac{(W_1 + W_2)W_1}{(W_3)80} = \text{Recoil energy (foot pounds)}$$

Where: W_1 = weight of powder charge in grains

W_2 = weight of bullet in grains

W_3 = total gun weight in pounds



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Using this formula we find that a seven pound rifle in caliber .22-250 will yield about six ft./lbs. of recoil energy, while the same weight rifle in caliber .45-70 will give us about 40 ft./lbs. of recoil energy. Calculated results which certainly correlate with our experience.

Higginbotham has empirical experience down pat — as he should — but ought to stay away from physics if he's unwilling to do his homework. Furthermore, he has entirely forgotten the issues of economics and wound ballistics that might have been relevant to the controversy addressed by Guthrie and myself.

Peter G. Kokalis, B.A., M.S.
Military Small Arms Editor

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 22

Col. Donahue had arranged for the delivery of the partial remains of an American pilot, and I received them into my hands from a representative of the Laotian resistance as we stood on the Laos-Thailand border. *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine staff-members Jim Morris and Tom Reisinger accompanied me to witness and document the conveyance of the remains. *Soldier of Fortune* Publisher Lt. Col. Robert K. Brown also provided my expenses for this journey to restore a dead American soldier to his people. At that time, in late February, the JCRC told me the remains were identifiable. At this writing they have yet to give me or the Forget-Me-Nots any more information. But this is only the second set of remains they have seen from Laos. The second man out of 550.

Past administrations have bent every effort to avoid the problem of our unaccounted dead and missing in Southeast Asia. Fortunately, the current administration is more sensitive to the issue. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Richard Armitage, was recently sent to Vietnam. Mr. Armitage is my close friend and former business associate. He is an ideal man for his position since he has a wealth of knowledge and experience of Southeast Asia and an excellent record of combat in Vietnam.

Our government has issued reports on American POW/MIAs that hew the line of their vested interests in presenting the government as the benevolent caretaker of all Americans. I have information from other people that tends to contradict the government reports. I wish I could tell you, now, who those people are, but they work for the United Nations, various charitable groups and government agencies. These good people report to me secretly, knowing that I will put their information to good use without revealing my sources. They report indigenous resistance movements, politics across the borders, refugee movements and information gleaned from refugee testimony. All these people confirm my belief that American

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from "Still in Saigon"
by Charlie Daniels

From the gun turrets of swift river patrol boats to the flight decks of huge aircraft carriers. From the cockpits of fighter-bombers to the landing craft of the Seabees and the Beachmasters. The deep-sea Navy and the "brown water" riverine operations of the U.S. Navy waged the longest war in American naval history.

Now, in the tenth anniversary year of the last American combat patrol in Vietnam. The American Historical Foundation is proud to pay tribute to those who served in the struggle for the preservation of freedom in Southeast Asia.

It was a commendable crusade by a powerful nation to help a small, aspiring country win and hold a free and dignified way of life.

History — and time — will judge the Americans who served there to be the heroes of that decade. Most had other lives to lead. But when duty called, they served.

They can take pride in their many accomplishments. They did what the leadership of our nation asked them to do, and they did it well.

A Lasting Tangible Tribute

Now the largely unsung men and women who served — and, in a sense, the noble motivations and the American spirit that caused us to enter the conflict — are honored through the issuance of this lasting, tangible tribute.

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The Gerber Mark II Combat Knife was selected because it was the most famous knife of this war. This knife first saw use in Vietnam, having been created for combat there. It quickly became the chosen knife of many men of the SEAL/UDTs, Special Forces and Marine Recon, and it was privately purchased by men in all branches of the U.S. military.

The original Vietnam-era "wasp body" blade shape — no longer produced — will be reintroduced especially for this series. This blade is hardened, tempered and sharpened by hand to a razor's edge. The overall knife length is 12".

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This is a genuine battle worthy Gerber Mark II Combat Knife — not a reproduction or a stylized display piece — authentic to Vietnam and specially embellished for this tribute — the first limited edition Gerber combat knife ever made.

ments designed with the assistance of U.S. Navy combat veterans of Vietnam.

The hilt is duotone Armorhite. The gray crossguard and pommel are symbolic of the deep sea Navy; the olive drab grip represents riverine operations. A double strand of 24-karat gold overlaid brass wire, custom made in a nautical rope pattern, forms a ferrule fore and aft of the grip. A gold-plated fired enamel cloisonne medallion of the U.S. Navy insignia is mounted amidships in the hilt.

The combat scene etched on the mirror-polished steel blade permanently records a coordinated naval air/sea attack in Vietnam. A U.S. Navy river patrol boat and Monitor attack a fortified enemy position. Overhead, carrier-based A-7A Corsair II attack bombers commence a low-altitude bomb run. In the background, the U.S.S. New Jersey fires her huge 16" guns while a flattop catapults more jets into action.

On the blade shoulder is etched the insignia of the U.S. 7th Fleet. Or, if you prefer, the insignia of your choice — such as U.S. Navy-Vietnam, Seabees, SEAL/UDT or a fighter group — may be specified.

Booklet By General Westmoreland

As an important reminder to present and future generations of the significant sacrifices made by Americans who served in Southeast Asia, you will also receive a copy of "Vietnam Tribute." This was written by General William Westmoreland, former commander of all U.S. military forces in Vietnam; it is being published by the Foundation as part of this project.

To display and preserve your U.S. Navy/Vietnam Tribute Combat Knife, you will receive a specially designed, furniture-finished solid mahogany case of military design, with olive drab Certificate of Authenticity, recessed and fitted into the inner lid.

But only 2,500 of each knife will be made — one to represent each one thousand Americans of the 2,500,000 who served. This limited edition serial number will be engraved on the reverse of each blade, inscribed on the Certificate of Authenticity, and registered with The American Historical Foundation.

First Option, Without Obligation

As an added advantage, you will be guaranteed the opportunity, without obligation, to reserve subsequent knives in this series with the same serial number — so you can systematically acquire a complete matched set. These tributes — one to the Marine Corps, one to the Air Force and one to the Army — will be announced to you privately, one knife at a time, in the months ahead.

You will also be made a member of The American Historical Foundation, with members across the U.S. and in 27 other countries worldwide. You will receive, at no expense, hard to obtain information concerning military history and the history, care, display and collecting of knives, swords, and militaria.

Whether or not you or a member of your family served in Vietnam, this tribute will give you a renewed sense of pride in the Americans who answered the call to duty in the defense of freedom in Southeast Asia. Contributions will also be made by the Foundation to Vietnam veterans associations, to help them to continue to perpetuate the memory of the Americans honored by this tribute.

How To Reserve

This is available only through The American Historical Foundation. You may write, call, personally visit or use the reservation form below. Reservations will be acknowledged immediately. Write or call about having your name, service number, dates, etc. etched on the blade reverse. You may send a deposit or payment in full. You may inspect your knife for a full 30 days prior to deciding to keep it. Satisfaction is guaranteed.

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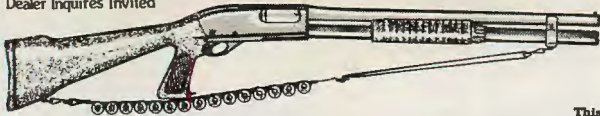
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soldiers are still held by the enemy in violation of international law and our agreements. From personal contact with Mr. Armitage and American diplomats in Southeast Asia it is apparent to me that all who have lived here and worked with the problem of our unaccounted missing and dead believe that the communists are withholding the information, remains and living prisoners that are our right and due.

I address two issues here. First: the U.S. government will not approach the POW/MIA problem except by the obviously unreliable channels of official and direct negotiation with the Vietnamese government. At this late date I do not advocate a military solution to the POW/MIA problem, but we should encourage our allies to apply all possible pressure on the DRV to honor the original agreement to provide an accounting of the imprisoned and missing. This is the appropriate diplomatic course and we should pursue it.

Frankly, I expect little from that course. But we do have an alternative or augmentation to normal diplomatic channels: Bounties.

Several resistance groups move regularly through the jungles along the trails of Southeast Asia. From years of trying we know that the only way to inspect a jungle is from the ground, and we are not equipped to do that in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. The resistance, refugees or mercenaries could be enlisted as our agents searching for graves or camps with American soldiers in them by the

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simple act of offering pay. Money for information, money for remains, more money for live prisoners could change the character of our search.

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Unaccounted American POW/MIAs have been on my conscience for a long time. It is an ancient point of honor that a soldier should not abandon his comrades to the enemy in a retreat. We did just that and it troubles my sleep. ☒



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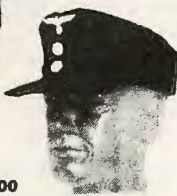


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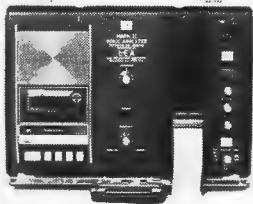
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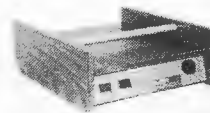
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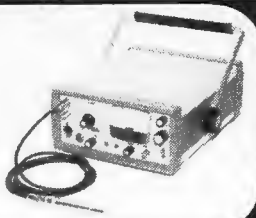


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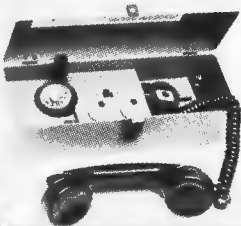
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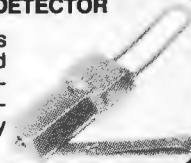
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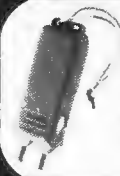


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