



# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

APRIL  
1982

The Journal Of Professional Adventurers

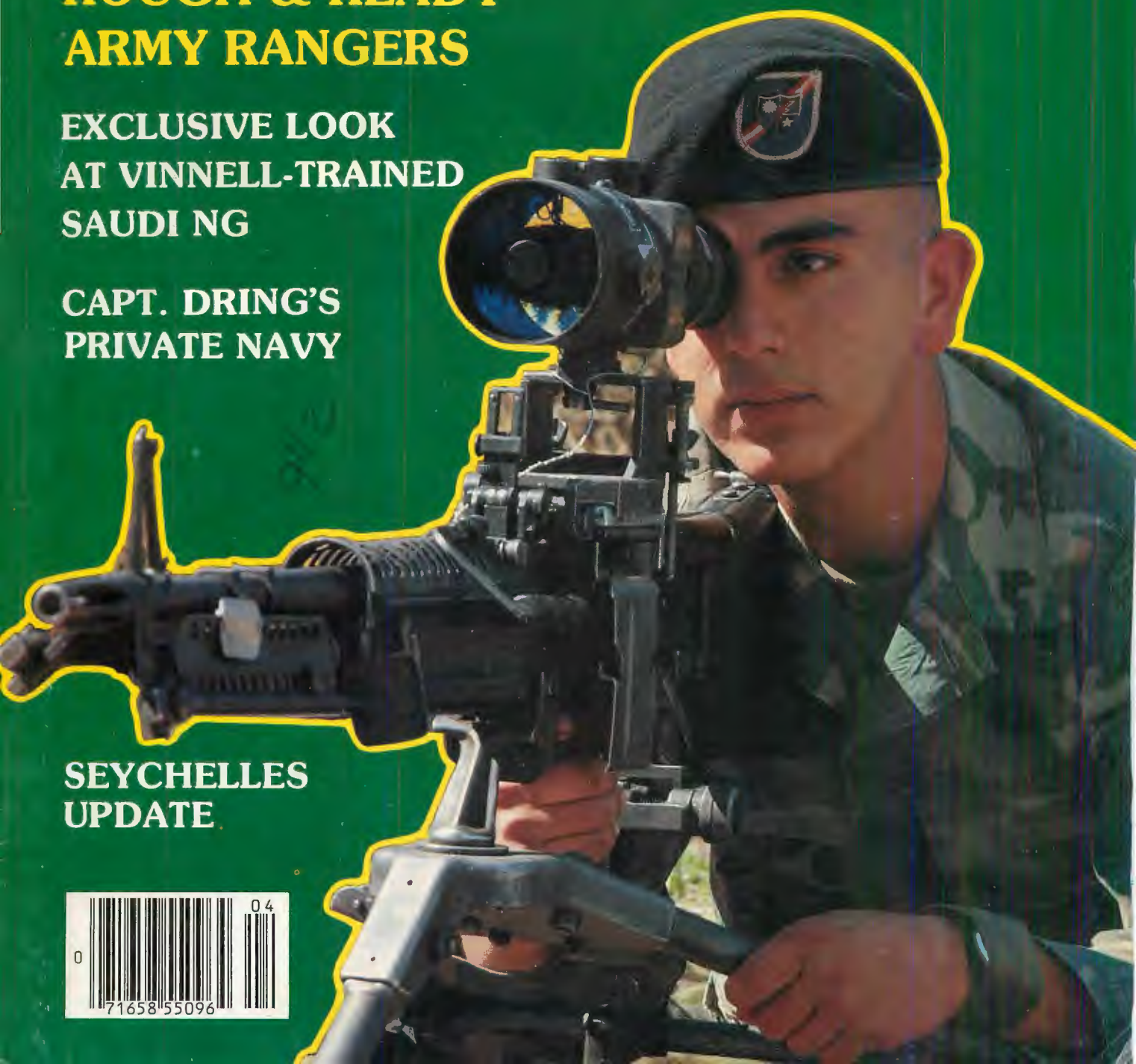
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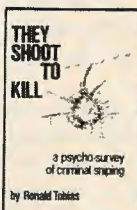
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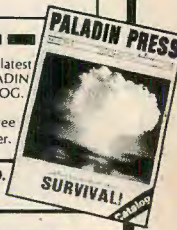
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# EDITOR'S NOTES

**T**HEY apparently didn't have much to do around the United Nations General Assembly awhile ago so they convened an ad hoc committee "against the activities of mercenaries and mercenarism."

But it had a problem. Two in fact. The first was its split definition of "mercenary." There are "good" mercs and "bad" mercs, according to the UN. SOF writes about the "bad" ones. The "good" merc is "a freedom fighter against colonialism" who comes from a communist-bloc nation. The other problem was that several of the nations represented on the committee either have mercenary forces or have not hesitated to use them in the past. This, however, was blissfully ignored in the rhetoric.

Particularly ironic is the fact that the "Draft International Convention Against the Activities of Mercenaries" was submitted by Nigeria — which made free use of Egyptian and East German merc pilots in its genocidal suppression of the breakaway state of Biafra.

SOF, much to its delight, was mentioned by Ukrainian Delegate Vitaly Stepanov: "The convention should envisage [sic] . . . the State responsibility for propaganda of mercenaries, in particular, in such publications as *Soldier of Fortune*." (Up yours, Vitaly. — The Eds.)

Other members of this illustrious group are: Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, France, German Democratic Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Japan, Mongolia, Nigeria, Panama, Portugal, Senegal, Seychelles, Spain, Surinam, Turkey, USSR, United Kingdom, United States, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

Chairman of the ad hoc committee is Algeria's Mohammed Bedjaoui.

The French delegate, perhaps forgetting his country's mercenary Foreign Legion, said piously that it is necessary "to consider not only the activities of mercenaries, but also to cover the activities of those who support them by financing, training or otherwise."

But the Spanish delegate, one Antonio Vinal Casas, apparently had *his* country's Foreign Legion clearly in mind when he said he opposed "denying the status of a combatant and prisoner of war to a mercenary, who should also be granted basic guarantees and rights."

Zaire, which has had lots of experience with mercenaries — and in some cases found them useful, as when Mike Hoare's Fifth Commando established order when Zaire was still called the Congo, and when the French Foreign Legion parachuted in to rescue it from an invasion — was ambiguous on the subject.

The Zaire representative said, "The future convention should establish a distinction between a mercenary and a 'volunteer,' the latter being one who defends a 'just and noble cause.'"

The Cubans didn't have a representative on the committee but nevertheless one of them spoke out (keeping a Cuban quiet is like trying to make a mule smile).

Cuban "observer" Rosa Yvonne Diego brayed: "The activities of mercenaries constitute an international crime and present a threat to international security.

"Imperialist countries have launched attacks against other nations and have used mercenaries in those efforts. There is, therefore, a need for an international legal instrument to condemn the international mercenary phenomenon. The progressive forces of the world will succeed in condemning the activities of mercenaries as the criminal acts of imperialism."

Guess she was talking about Angola and Ethiopia.

Salem Quateen of Libya snarled, "The activities of mercenaries constitute an offense against international peace and security and are a negation of certain fundamental principles of the Charter. It is, therefore, necessary that any draft convention adopted by the committee cover both the actions of individuals and the responsibilities of states in matters regarding the activities of mercenaries."

Right on, Salem. Your Libyan mercs didn't have much luck in saving Idi Amin. In fact, they got wiped out.

The committee meetings went on for 21 days and as is usual in such UN proceedings there was a great deal of similar drivel, chest thumping, speech making and expression of righteous indignation.

But the committee did nothing and that too is like the UN, which has become little more than a rathole down which to pour U.S. taxpayers' money. —Bob Poos

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (ISSN 0145-6784/USPS 120-510) is published monthly by Omega Group Limited, 5735 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, CO 80303. (303) 449-3750. Controlled Circulation Postage Paid at Boulder, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 50, Englewood, CO 80151. Subscription rates for twelve monthly issues: \$26.00 — U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. (Save 20% off Newsstand Price) \$50.00 — 1st Class (sealed envelope) U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. \$70.00 — Airmail. All other countries. \$33.00 — Surface. All countries except U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. Single Issue Price — U.S., \$3.00; United Kingdom, 1.50; Canada, \$3.50.

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

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**COVER:** U.S. Army Ranger Sgt. Pavlov during weapons demonstration at Ft. Lewis, Wash., with M60 machine gun and AN/PVS crew-served night vision sight. Fierce, proud and tough Rangers train hard to develop confidence and leadership skills necessary in combat situations. SOF tells how they do it starting on page 48. Photo: Marv Wolf

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# BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



## MORTON GROVE BANS GUNS ...

A federal judge has ruled that a municipality has the authority under the U.S. and Illinois constitutions to bar both the sale and possession of handguns.

The decision is in the process of being appealed by gun-owning residents of the Illinois village of Morton Grove — which passed such an ordinance recently — with support of the National Rifle Association and the Second Amendment Foundation.

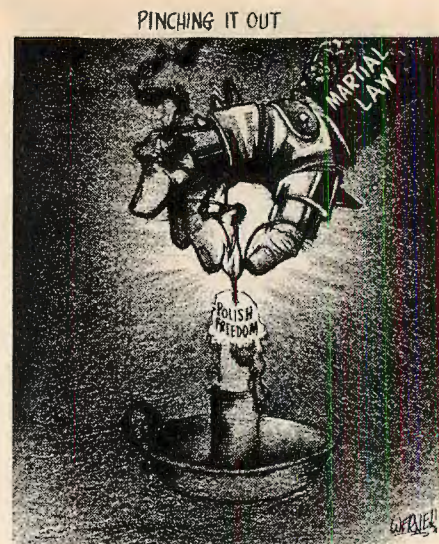
A Morton Grove resident leading opposition to the ruling, Vic Quilici, said the first move will be to seek a motion barring enforcement of the controversial law. Then, he said, an appeal will be made to the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago. Morton Grove is a Chicago suburb.

The law prohibits possession of all handguns in the village except those of law-enforcement officers, security guards, federally licensed gun collectors and members of licensed gun clubs — who would have to keep their handguns at a clubhouse outside the city.

First-time violators would be subject to a fine of \$500 and a second offense would carry a maximum penalty of \$500 and six months in jail.

The ordinance does not set any limitations on ownership of rifles and shotguns.

Opponents of the measure have filed — and will continue to file — suits against it based on the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which says in part: "A well-regulated



militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Watch this column for further developments on this matter, which is of critical importance to all SOFers.

## HAS GOD CHANGED SIDES? ...

People who don't think that Roman Catholic priests and nuns — particularly Maryknoll and Jesuit missionaries — are actively supporting com-

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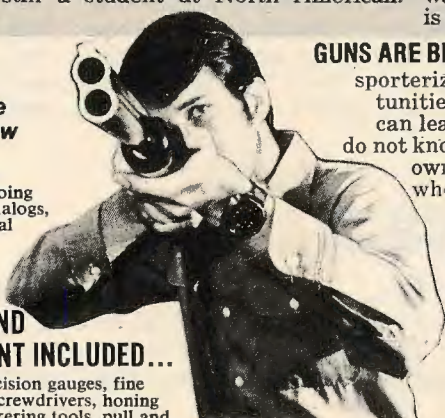
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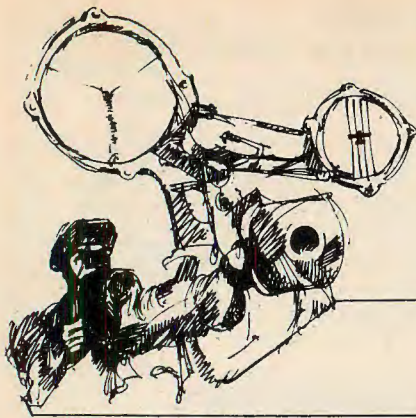
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# FLAK

## MARINE PATCHES ...

Dear Mr. Brooks:

I served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam from 1968-70 in the following unit: 2nd C.A.P., 7th Engineer Bn., 1st Marine Division. I am currently a member of a Combat Engineer Unit, U.S. Army Reserves, in Palmyra, N.Y. Can I wear my 1st Marine Division patch as a combat soldier-sleeve insignia?

James Marsh  
Newark, New York

*Bill Brooks replies:*

*Army regulations stipulate Army insignia for Army uniforms. However, the USMC unit insignia shown in the article are sold today in both subdued (OD & black), and full color. I know of no*

*regulations forbidding their wear. In my home state of North Carolina there are many former Marine members of the U.S. Army Reserve — National Guard. These militia men proudly display their Vietnam-era Marine Corps "combat patches" on the right shoulder of their fatigue jackets.*

## ULSTER AND THE IRISH ...

Sirs:

I feel I must comment on the letter by Raymond Doody of New York (SOF, November '81), who, at the age of 15, feels so strongly about the Ulster Defense Regiment.

First of all, there are no "forces of occupation" in Ulster; there were 50 years

ago during the 1916 uprising when all of Ireland was colonized. This is no longer the situation, as any intelligent person will realize. The UDR is comprised of both Protestant and Catholic personnel working to minimize the violence which is initiated by the IRA.

Lastly, it is the IRA which is making it impossible for peaceful change, and they are assisted by the Soviet Embassy in Dublin and numerous other international terrorist organizations funded by left wing governments who are slowly eroding the West through indiscriminate acts of terrorism. The IRA are not representatives of the Catholics any more than the Mafia represents the Italian community, although they presently have the firepower to say they are.

I would appeal to any Irish American to find out what is really going on in Northern Ireland before believing any propaganda put forward by a cowardly, brutal, and Soviet-backed terrorist organization.

Dave Walker  
HM Forces

## AIRBORNE RECRUITING: SOF STYLE ...

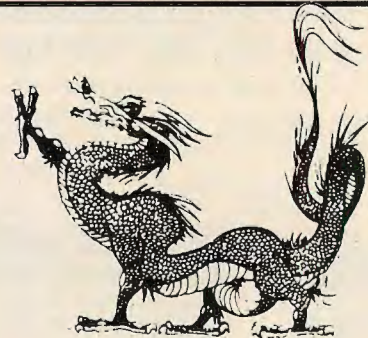
Sirs:

Your fine magazine inspired me to

*Continued on page 83*



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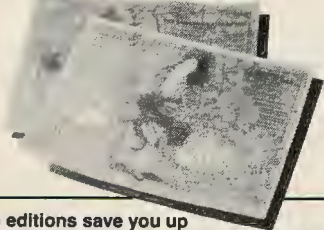
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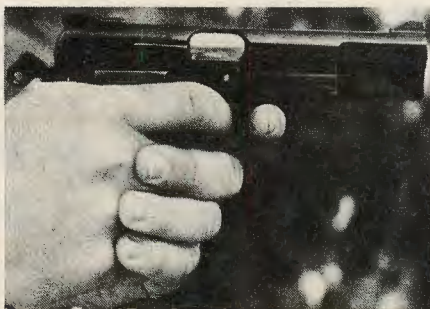
# COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT



Hints for Setting Sights & Timing Shots

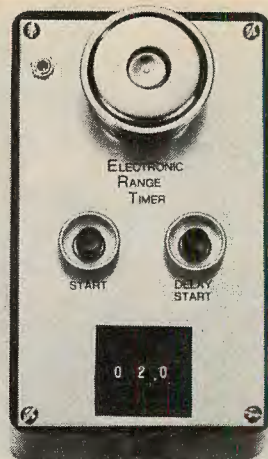
by Ken Hackathorn

**M**ANY companies now carry a line of custom-replacement sights for various popular handguns. One of the best of these new firms is Millet Industries, Dept. SOF, 16131 Gothard St., Huntington Beach, CA 92647. At last year's S.H.O.T. Show, John Williams of Millet showed me the company's complete line of sights. Quality and detail of these sights are outstanding, but since I prefer to wait and see just how well a product works in the field before giving a recommendation, I installed a set of Millet high-fixed sights on a friend's combat .45. They have proven to be both rugged and fast to pick up in combat shooting. Millet sights are now seen regu-



**New Millet prototype adjustable sight gives excellent sight picture and low-mount installation. Weapon is P-35 Browning. Sight should be ideal for 1911 Colt as well. Photo: Ken Hackathorn**

**Rogers' E.R.T. is ideal to time solitary practical-pistol practice and allow shooting instructors to watch their students' performances rather than stopwatches. Photo: Rogers Holsters**



larly on practical shooters' sidearms.

The adjustable Millet sights are used occasionally, but their installation normally places the rear sight in the original dovetail, and the result is that the overall sight installation is still quite high. Millet adjustable sights do stand up well for practical shooting, but many gunsmiths do not use them, since most practical shooters prefer their sights to be low-mounted for easy holstering and a snag-free profile.

In September at the 1981 SOF Convention and Shooting Match, I ran into Mark Lonsdale, an able small-arms consultant from Southern California, who has been working closely with Millet Industries. He showed me a new Millet prototype of an adjustable rear sight. It is just what the doctor ordered. Although it looks like the original, the new Millet sight has a full-width base in the front. It makes an excellent low-mount installation for various auto pistols. Lonsdale showed me his P-35 Browning 9x19mm on which the new Millet rear sight was installed. I saw a smooth, low-mounted sight with all the rugged, but accurate, adjustments so popular with the Millet line. I am sure that this new Millet design will prove to be a winner, because of the demand for quality adjustable sights in the practical shooting game.

**I**T requires constant practice to acquire the skill necessary to become a top IPSC competitor. This means lots of range time and plenty of ammo. By now, most of the popular shooters have found a means of loading their ammo in quantity, but finding someone to run the stages and time the firing sequences for range practice remains a problem. Most of us who train and practice for practical-pistol shooting spend most of our time on the range alone. Although we can practice as we want without disturbing other shooters, we still need someone — or something — to time our shooting stages, since both IPSC and PPC shooters have a critical need to practice under time

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Continued on page 90

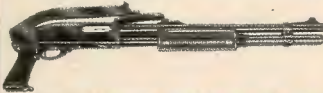
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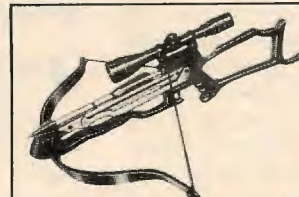
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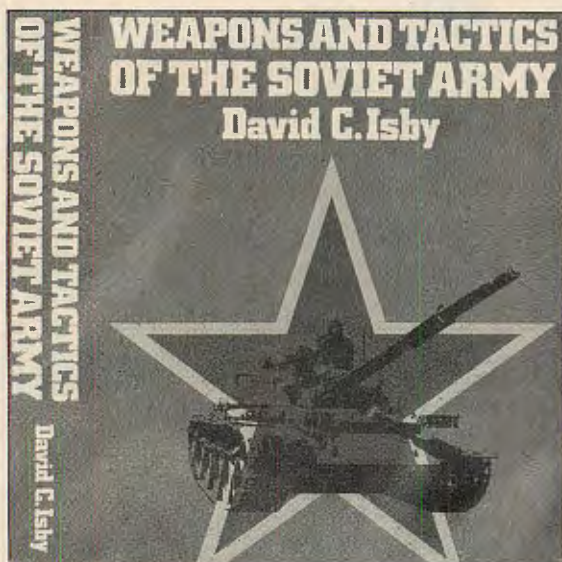
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**WEAPONS AND TACTICS OF THE SOVIET ARMY.** By David C. Isby. London: Jane's Publishing Company, Ltd. 1981. 384 pp. \$34.95. Review by Alexander McColl.

This is a concise, detailed, comprehensive encyclopedia on the Soviet Army. It is really astonishing that such a mass of detailed and apparently accurate information is available in unclassified form. The first 70 pages cover the large picture: Soviet doctrine and basic ideas on war, detailed Order of Battle down to individual divisions, offensive and defensive tactics, logistics, headquarters organization and a fascinating discussion of their personnel problems — including the encouraging fact that less than two percent of their two-year conscripts re-enlist. This has resulted in a serious shortage of good NCOs, and most squad leaders and tank commanders have less than two years service. Combined with the relatively low quality of their draftees and the general background of a paternalistic, authority-dominated, bureaucratic society that does not encourage individual initiative, this shortage of experienced soldiers has had a major effect on their training, weapons design and overall operations strategy.

The rest of the book consists of chapters on individual subjects: Tanks, Armored Personnel Carriers and Infantry Combat Vehicles, Anti-Tank Weapons, Artillery, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Weapons, Air Defense Weapons, Reconnaissance Vehicles, Airborne Combat Vehicles (which in-

cludes discussion of troop-carrying aircraft), Infantry Weapons, Helicopters (even though all Soviet helicopters belong to Naval Aviation or the Air Force), Engineer Equipment, Signals, Intelligence and Electronic Warfare, and Combat Support Vehicles. This is very much more than a "hardware catalogue." For instance, the chapter on tanks, in addition to a very detailed and informative discussion of each major Soviet tank, provides a concise analysis of Soviet tank tactics, organization, development policy, and the results achieved in battle by Soviet-made tanks in Vietnam, in the India-Pakistan war of 1971 and especially the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. It's extremely informative and valuable reading.

The other chapters are equally interesting. Some of them, like the chapters on NBC Weapons, Engineer Equipment, and Signals, Intelligence and Electronic Warfare, seem a bit meager compared to the others; to get a real grasp of Soviet doctrine and equipment in these areas, one would have to get into other sources, probably most of them classified. But at least the general outlines are here. The chapters on Armored Personnel Carriers, etc. (i.e., Motorized Rifle troops), Artillery, Anti-Tank Weapons, and Air Defense Weapons, are especially detailed and informative. For the first time, after reading the chapter on air defense, I think I have some notion of what goes on in that extremely specialized branch of warfare.

Isby writes with clarity, vigor and some wit, and does not belabor the ob-

vious or sink into obscure "officialese." One wishes he would favor us with clearer definitions of two Russian terms he uses with some frequency: "reydy" and "desant." But this is nit-picking. For a professional-level discussion of a technical subject, this book is surprisingly easy and comfortable to read.

Each serious ground-force professional, including Air Force types involved in the "land-air battle," should acquire, read and study this book, first, as a text or manual and, second, as a technical reference resource. The same recommendation is offered to our civilian leaders and to the experts on the theory of warfare in the "think-tanks" and universities. This detailed description of the vast size, modernity and, despite its drawbacks, very great professionalism and effectiveness of the Soviet Army, is alarming reading; it doesn't leave much scope for easy optimism.

*Alexander McColl is a Contributing Editor/Military Affairs for SOF. He is also an investment manager, lawyer, Secretary-Treasurer of Parachute Medical Rescue Service and a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve Special Forces. His first novel, Recon!, based on his experiences in Vietnam, will be published later this year.*

*David Isby, author of Weapons and Tactics of the Soviet Army, is SOF's Soviet Analyst.*

**WARSHIPS OF THE SOVIET NAVY.** By Capt. John E. Moore. Jane's Publishing Incorporated, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019. 1981. 192 pp. \$19.95. Review by John Metzger.

JANE'S Publishing Incorporated has come out with an excellent new reference book by Capt. John Moore, editor of *Jane's Fighting Ships*. In his new book, *Warships of the Soviet Navy*, Moore covers all classes of the Soviet fighting fleet — from nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines to armed icebreakers — all in the exacting detail which is typical of all Jane's books.

Complete with black and white photographs and full technical details, this book assesses the capabilities and weaknesses of the Soviet navy and provides analyses of its ships, equipment, training and operational doctrines.

Concise descriptions of each class of ship include ship displacement, dimensions, aircraft, missiles, guns, propulsion, range, crew complement, radar and sonar — plus other information depending on the class of ship.

Moore presents an up-to-date authoritative assessment and reference to the Soviet navy, and his book deserves a place on the shelf with other fine Jane's reference books.



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# I Was There

by Bill Brooks  
as told to M.L. Jones

Bill Brooks is known to SOF readers for his adventures in the French Foreign Legion (see "The French Foreign Legion Today," SOF, July-November '78), but he first served in the U.S. Army. In 1965 he was a member of B Battery, 1st Battalion, 320th Airborne Artillery, 82nd Airborne Division. On 30 April of that year the battalion was airlifted to the outskirts of Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. The battalion was to provide direct support of the 1st Battalion, 505th Airborne Infantry, during the ongoing Dominican crisis. As Brooks tells it:

OUR immediate mission was to capture the Duarte Bridge, the main eastern artery into Santo Domingo. We also had to take some 10 blocks of housing on the bridge's south side. Our battery was emplaced some three clicks east of the bridge.

Every morning after reveille, 10 or 20 men from each gun battery in the battalion were loaded on trucks and sent to our direct-support unit. Because the 505th

had suffered a number of casualties, some 30 or 40 "gun-bunnies" from the artillery were used to fill the ranks.

During the first part of May, I was assigned to A Company Headquarters as a member of a 10-man Immediate Action Team (IAT) — we were actually the company commander's personal bodyguard.

On that May morning, as I remember, at about 0900 the battalion moved out to clear the eastern approaches to the bridge. Almost immediately the lead platoon of A Company came under small-arms fire. Half-crouching and half-running behind the CO's jeep, our 10-man IAT followed the company HQ unit — which had somehow gotten mixed up with Battalion HQ. We all stopped about 300 meters from the bridge approach in order to untangle the mess. Our team ducked under some trees when we heard the distinctive crackle of increasing rifle fire.

Suddenly an old Daimler-Benz tank, riveted hull and all, careened down a side street, bounced up over the curb and around the corner toward us, machine gun firing and gears grinding. I squatted behind my tree, staring in awestruck disbelief. Where the tank had come from, I didn't know, but it was headed our way.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a group of paratroopers sitting on the opposite side of the street. They had been relaxing in the shade of a cluster of palmetto trees, smoking cigarettes and

drinking Coca Cola®. They were completely out of the tank's field of vision.

As I watched, a sergeant first class jumped to his feet and ran across the street. He approached the tank — in clear view of the driver — and smashed his Coke bottle across the tank's hull. Afraid of a Molotov cocktail, the driver slammed on the brakes. The crew bailed out — right into our waiting muzzles.



Brook's unit rides in Dodge ¾-ton truck armed with M60 MG during approach to Santo Domingo.

The tank remained there for a number of weeks. Then it was shipped to Fort Bragg and placed on display in front of the 82nd Airborne Division Museum.

In September 1965 when I was back at Fort Bragg, I saw a notice on the battalion bulletin board that listed the names of those troopers who had been cited for awards for their action during the Dominican crisis. I skimmed down the list until I came to the name of that sergeant first class from the 1st of the 505th. He was awarded a Bronze Star for the single-handed "destruction" of an enemy tank. There was no mention of the Coca-Cola® bottle — nor that this was the tank now sitting in front of the 82nd's museum.

Three months later the tank was returned to its original owners.

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

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

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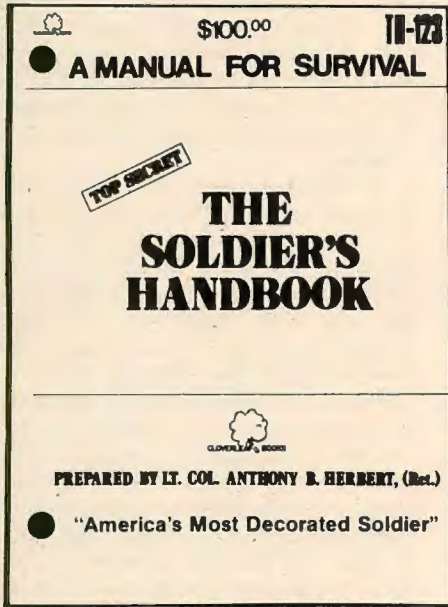
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Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

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

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# It Happened To Me

by Robert Brockman as told to M.L. Jones

In 1970, the U.S. Army had a fleet of tugs, tankers and miscellaneous harborcraft in Vietnam. One GI manned the 45-foot tugs with six Vietnamese as crew. On 3 February SPC-5 Robert "Mick" Brockman was pulling duty on one of these tugs, which was based in Saigon under the 4th Transportation Command and working out of Cogido Harbor, the ammo and ordnance discharge point for Long Binh Base. As he tells it:

I took a commitment over my PRC-25 radio to transport two BC (Barge, Cargo) barges, loaded with 750 pounds of bombs, to the Bien Hoa Air Base dis-

charge point, a normally uneventful trip. Since I had only 30 days left in-country, I figured it would be a milkrun, a good way to spend my last few days. The boat was equipped with one M79 grenade launcher, one M14 rifle, one M16 rifle — and I had my favorite 7.62 ass-kicking Cong-killing M60 machine gun.

At 1300 hours we departed Cogido Harbor — without escort — for Bien Hoa. The ebb tide meant it was slow going. The tropical sun was just beginning to spill colors across the evening sky when we arrived at Bien Hoa's only pier. Since it was shut down for the night and manned only by a 35-man stevedore security force, we delayed unloading until morning. As darkness approached, I secured my tug and its cargo. I felt relatively safe because we were lying between two empty barges, tied to a buoy in the middle of the river. So I secured my radio for the night and settled back for a little night fishing, hoping for a fresh-water shrimp dinner instead of Cs.

At approximately 2230 hours, the sound of two 81mm mortar rounds slamming into the Bien Hoa Harbor compound interrupted my supper. I immediately turned on my PRC-25 radio and heard the frantic transmission of my call letters. When I responded, SPC-4 J. Brown advised me that the compound was taking mortar fire and asked for immediate evacuation for himself and his men. My own combat experience gave me first-hand knowledge of the procedure for securing small-arms ammo dumps (and I

outranked him), so I instructed him to man his perimeter and gun towers and to make an effort to hold the base.

At this point enemy strength was unknown and no direct assault had been made. I radioed the harbor master at Cogido and explained the situation, also requesting the push (radio frequency) for the Air Force at Bien Hoa. He told me that the question of evacuation would be left to my judgment and that he would pass along the situation concerning the stevedore-company commando, the need for reinforcements and possible evacuation. Spasmodic mortar fire pounded the compound, but I seemed to be either undetected or overlooked — and I was going to do my best to take advantage of the situation.

An empty BC barge sits anywhere from 10 to 14 feet above the waterline. I moved to the shoreside barge; from this vantage point, I controlled the complete river bank. The river by now had reached a full ebb tide, which meant the enemy had an 11-foot-high cover for access to the compound by the pier. Having armed two crewmen and placed them at each end of the barge, I radioed for illumination from the Air Force Fireflies. No go: We were too close to the end of the air strip. Then I called the MPs. With their twin 50-caliber machine guns, PBR (Patrol Boat, River) jet boats and new M79 grenade launchers, they had the strongest fire power on that part of the river. They would respond immediately.

The stevedores were gathering on the pier, waiting for evacuation. WHAM! WHAM! Two more mortar rounds thumped into the compound. The stevedores headed for the only underground bunker in the place — leaving the perimeter unmanned and vulnerable. Grabbing my radio, I told them: "Get back to your station! You will defend this base! No evacuation now!"

Small-arms fire began to rattle from the no-man's land around the compound but the regrouped-stevedores' return fire seemed effective. I took my position with my M60 machine gun atop the empty barge. I saw movement below the river bank, out of sight of the compound perimeter. Silhouettes slipped along the river bank about 70 meters away. I waited until they got closer and then let three bursts fly. Tracer rounds showed me several crumpled bodies. The M60 had done its work.

On the river, the MPs roared up with their 50s blazing. They were followed by reinforcements on land. A truck pulled up, carrying a second lieutenant, who would take charge of the compound, and replacements for the stevedores. We took no casualties. Three communist bodies were recovered. They never saw what hit 'em.

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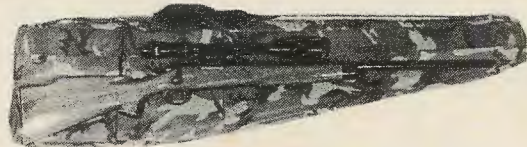
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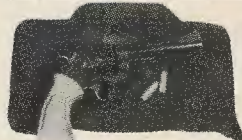
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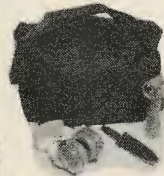
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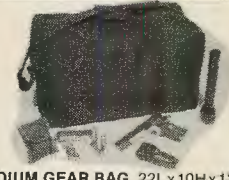
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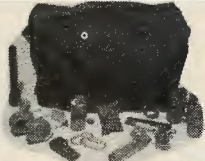
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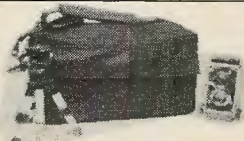
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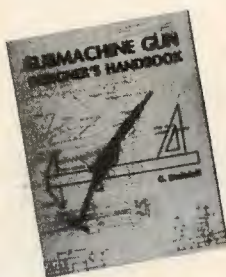


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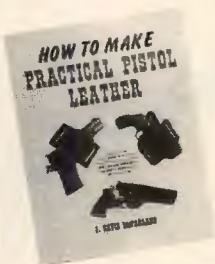


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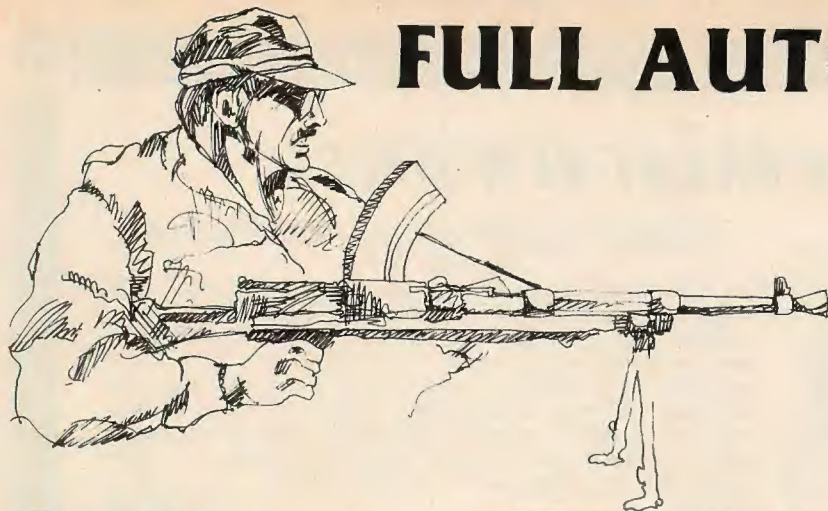
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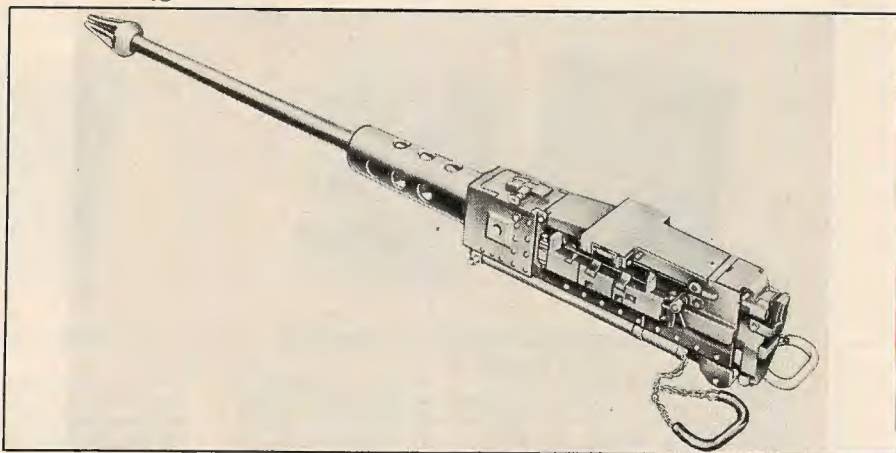
testing. The Army had, however, by this time settled on the M19 cupola for the M60 tank, which required a gun that could be centrally mounted.

The M85 was thus adopted in spite of the following serious design defects: 1. the weapon will not function without excessive lubrication or in dry, dusty environments; 2. the firing-pin-protrusion dimension is extremely critical and difficult to manufacture within the specification limits; 3. there is positive feed control only when feeding over to the ram (chambering) position and the system depends upon a very strong spring return for the feed assembly, which in turn causes extreme bolt friction; and 4.

## The M85 Fiasco and a Building Full of Bureaucrats

by Peter G. Kokalis

**I**N July 1917, John M. Browning began development of a .50-caliber version of his machine gun. Using the facili-



**M85 .50-cal. machine gun as used in M60 main battle tank. Note cocking handles attached to weapon by chains.**

ties of the Colt plant, he tackled the problem of retaining the simplicity and basic operating features of his original design. He spent more than a year from the time of conception to the successful firing of his .50-caliber heavy machine gun, and attributed his success to "one drop of genius in a barrel of sweat." In the form of the famous air-cooled M2 and M2 heavy-barreled machine guns, his brilliant design lives on to this day.

In short, the weapon is a complete failure. Yet, to this day it sits mounted on all of the Army's M60 main battle tanks. In Germany, the M85 is periodically taken out of its wraps, carefully cleaned and lubricated, fired briefly at the range, again carefully cleaned and lubricated, and put away. If the party starts tomorrow, every M60 tank in Europe will be without a combat functioning heavy machine gun.

The Israelis, who cannot afford such games, promptly removed all the M85 machine guns from the M60 tanks we delivered to them, altered the cupola, using the still classified so-called "Israeli modification," and promptly installed Browning M2 HB machine guns.

More than 20 years too late, and 10,000 M85s too many, the government tacitly admitted its error by announcing the adoption of the venerable Browning M2 HB as the heavy machine gun of issue for the new Chrysler-designed main battle tank. This proves only that "one drop of genius in a barrel of sweat" beats a building full of bureaucrats every time.



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ties of the Colt plant, he tackled the problem of retaining the simplicity and basic operating features of his original design. He spent more than a year from the time of conception to the successful firing of his .50-caliber heavy machine gun, and attributed his success to "one drop of genius in a barrel of sweat." In the form of the famous air-cooled M2 and M2 heavy-barreled machine guns, his brilliant design lives on to this day.

In 1956, in anticipation of what was to become the M60-series tank, Springfield Armory began development of a new weapon to replace the .50-caliber Browning. It was initially referred to as the T175E2, and the Aircraft Armaments Corp. of Cockeysville, Md., eventually participated in its design and development.

The specified design features were admirable. They included a shorter receiver, fixed headspace, a metallic link belt fed from either the right or left side, quick-change barrel with flash suppressor, a dual rate of fire (low for ground use and high for anti-aircraft fire), and central cupola mounting, as opposed to the offset position required of the Browning M2 HB.

Three and one-half years later in June of 1959, the M85 machine gun (as it was now called) received Standard A classification. During this time frame, serious deficiencies in the M85 had become apparent to those closely involved in its



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Since the beginning of man's assault on man, target identification has been a problem of major proportions. The defense industry spends billions for the sophisticated little "Black Boxes" that say "IF FRIEND OR FOE" to all those ships, airplanes, missiles — you name it they *HAVE* to identify it or suffer some disastrous consequences. Certainly no more disastrous than the homeowner's mistake above!

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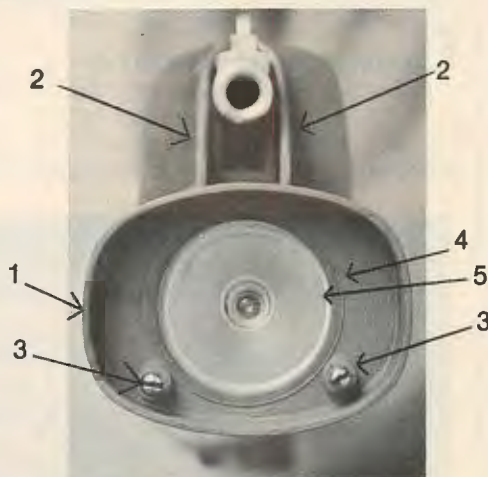
**YES THERE IS — FINALLY!!** Our "Black Box", called BEAM GUIDE, is a specialty lighting device designed to offer to the shooter, in a low or no light situation, the total competitive edge by providing general illumination for IMMEDIATE target identification as well as a bright concentrated center beam which acts as a "beam guide" for simultaneous weapon aiming. BEAM GUIDE uses 2 "C" cells for power and a highly mirrorized angle reflector that will concentrate the center beam from about 9" in diameter at 10' to about 18" in diameter (the width of a man's torso) at 20' feet. Statistics show these to be the distance within which the majority of all confrontations occur.

**THE HUMAN EYE**, as confirmed by our field tests, has an uncanny ability to accurately center one object over another — and do so without consciously thinking about it. Night firing tests, using a Security Six firing 38 wad cutters, conclusively proved that unskilled shooters using BEAM GUIDE could consistently put 5 of 6 shots within a 6" radius from a distance of 30' in less than 10 seconds. Shooters with experience (and we don't mean 'pros' were grouping better than a 3" radius at a rate of 1 shot per second from the same distance, and — FROM BELOW THE HIP! Now that's not bad shooting, and we unconditionally guaranty (your money back!) that you, depending on your shooting skills, will do at least as well!

**SOUND FAR FETCHED?** Try shining a flashlight (it's best if it has a good tight beam like BEAM GUIDE) at various objects around a dark room. Each time you feel the light is centered on a target say "Bang"! It really was within an inch or two of being centered, wasn't it?

Try it from the hip, holding it away from the body, turning around quickly — they're all centered, aren't they? You can also see the ENTIRE target — and aiming is FAST! Imagine if that light were coupled to your gun! Try putting the light on a target with one hand, and with the other line up the front and rear sights of an EMPTY gun and get all this stuff to come together. Difficult, isn't it — and SLOW!

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Don't even think about putting down the flashlight and flipping on the lights! An armed intruder is probably hidden and knows where you are. No sense exposing yourself — it could prove a DEADLY mistake. Keep in mind that a small, moving hand held light is not only distracting, but a darn hard target to hit. Remember — HE'S supposed to be the statistic!

**"NOW I'M IMPRESSED!** But how does it fit my gun, and is it easy to use?"

**LIFE SHOULD BE AS SIMPLE.** First of all you need the right gun — a revolver, preferably a 38/357 design, with a barrel length of 3½" or longer. (BEAM GUIDE was designed to fit and has been used on the following: SW models 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 27, 28, 31, 34, 48, 57, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67 — Ruger Service Six, Security Six — Colt Lawman, Police Positive — Charter Arms Bulldog, etc.) As there are so many revolvers on the market, it becomes impossible to try fitting them all — but many not listed above will fit with no modifications. Many others will fit by sanding or filing down BEAM GUIDE'S barrel yoke. Needless to say, in all cases, there is no modifying of the gun itself.

Adjusting BEAM GUIDE to your gun is simple. First adjust the 2 barrel yoke screws until the barrel slips in nice and snug. Next, with BEAM GUIDE on the gun and with the light turned on, get a good sight picture. Using the 2 beam aiming screws, bring the center of the beam to the ideal sight picture. That's it — you're set. Now every time you slip BEAM GUIDE on your gun, the beam center will come perfectly in line with the sight picture. This is especially nice for you sharp shooters if you like to take long shots using the gun's sights. Either way, the center of the beam is where the bullet will hit! What could be better? Your target is CLEARLY illuminated and — YOU CAN'T MISS!!

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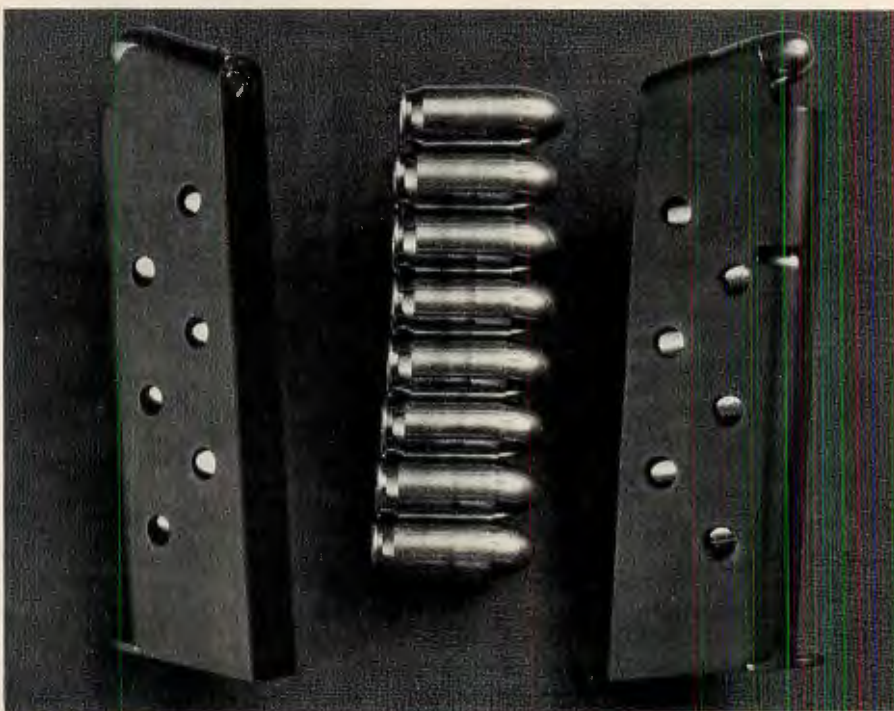
# ADVENTURER QUATERMASTER

by John Metzger



**COOPER COMMEMORATIVE ...**  
*Dornaus & Dixon Enterprises, Inc.*, is proud to announce the issuance of Jeff Cooper's Bren Ten Initial Issue Commemorative. This one-of-a-kind weapon

pays tribute to the distinguished career of the father of modern combat pistolcraft — Jeff Cooper — as well as marking the kick-off of the production of the Bren Ten 10mm auto.



## **N**EW .45 MAGAZINE ...

*Devel Corporation* has introduced its new eight-round magazine for Government Model and Commander Colt .45 ACP pistols.

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rently available for the Colt .45 pistols.

Prototype *Devel* magazines were used by Ross Seyfried and Mickey Fowler to place first and second, respectively, at the 1981 World IPSC Combat Pistol Match held in South Africa last summer.

The new magazine will list for \$18.95. Inquiries should be directed to *Devel Corporation*, Dept. SOF, 3441 West Brainard Rd., Cleveland, OH 44122. Phone: (216) 292-7723.

The weapon has the following standard production model Bren Ten features: selective double/single action, fully adjustable rear iron sight, selective magazine catch, stainless bushing lock, lanyard loop, and large cartridge capacity (12 rounds). Included is owner-reversible thumb safety and owner-replaceable front sight, threaded bushing and standard three-dot sighting system.

Each commemorative will be personally inspected and test-fired by Jeff Cooper. All lettering and detailing on the slide is in 22k gold. The trigger and hammer sides are jeweled and are 22k gold-plated. The barrel, at the ejection port, is jeweled.

Ensclosed on the inside lid of the presentation chest is a custom plaque, on which is inscribed in 22k gold: "Jeff Cooper's Bren Ten Initial Issue Commemorative — Especially Made For ..." with the owner's name. Also within the presentation chest mounted next to the pistol are 12 22k-gold-plated 10mm cartridges (deactivated). Retail price for each commemorative is \$2,000, and production is limited to 2,000 pistols.

For complete ordering information write to *Dornaus & Dixon Enterprises, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, 16718 Judy Way, Cerritos, CA 90701



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Rust Guardit comes in 10-ounce cans at sporting-goods stores and firearms outlets. Suggested retail price is \$3.95. For information write *Schwab Industries, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5705, Santa Monica, CA 90402.

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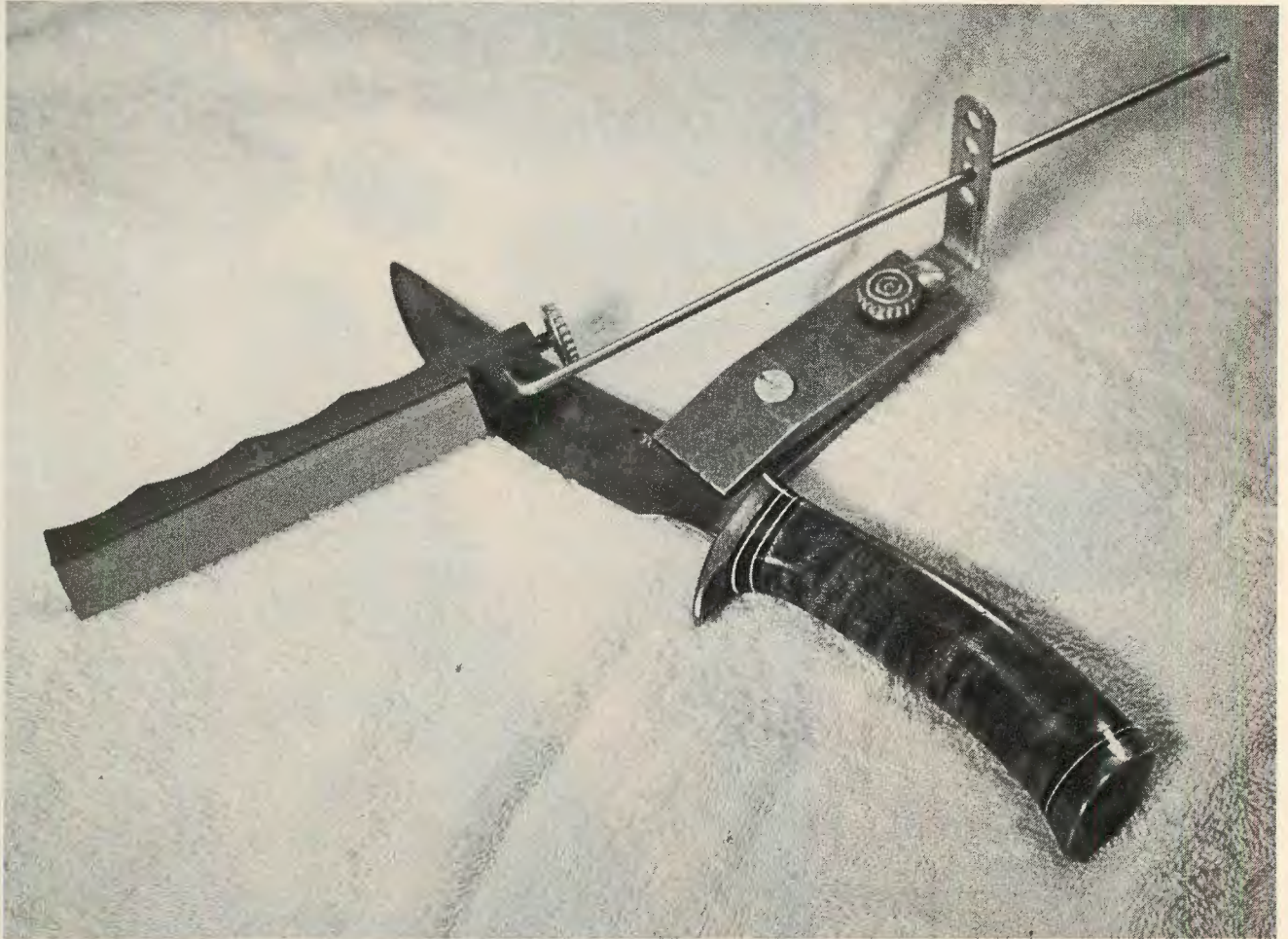
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# COOL TOOL

## A Knife Sharpener That Really Works

by B.R. Hughes



**I**T is genuinely amazing how many people cannot put a good cutting edge on a knife blade!

A friend of mine, one of the most talented do-it-yourselfers I have ever known, can repair outboard motors, wire a house, build classy gunstocks, and fix just about anything that can go wrong with an auto, but he can't sharpen a knife. I can't do any of those things, but when my *amigo* needs a great edge on a knife, he comes to me.

Offhand, I must know at least 15 or 20 semi-serious handmade knife buffs, who own and use two or more pieces of fine, handcrafted cutlery, but only three or four can sharpen a knife properly.

Back in the dark ages of handmade knives — say, 1970 — I used to encourage cutlers to deliver their beauties with extremely sharp blades, because in

all probability, that would be the last time that particular knife would ever be really sharp.

Most of the makers listened to me, and consequently, the new owners would rave about how magnificently their new handmade knives would cut. However, any blade will get dull sooner or later — some sooner, some later. When this occurred, there were many moans and groans, and tales about how tough handmade knives were to sharpen. The truth of the matter was that precious few owners knew how to sharpen a blade.

There is one extremely popular brand of factory knife that is so difficult to sharpen that the rank-and-file owner believes that his knife is made of some type of super steel. Not so. What makes this brand so difficult to sharpen is the

Lansky set up to sharpen Dwight Towell handmade knife. Rod maintains proper angle, making it virtually impossible to botch sharpening chore. Photo: B.R. Hughes

fact that the bevel of the cutting edge is too abrupt. Most of these knives test out at Rockwell C 55-57, which is hard enough, but not nearly as hard as most of today's handmades, which will run 58-62. If the blade bevel of one of these factory knives is reground to a more gradual bevel — which can be done with a good stone and a little patience — the result is a blade that can be sharpened relatively quickly and easily.

A.G. Russell, who for many years has marketed a very good grade of natural sharpening stones, told me back in 1968 that all a person needed to put a good



Lansky sharpening kit does nice job on double-edged boot knives that are usually difficult to sharpen — like this Russell Sting. Photo A.G. Russell

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

B.R. "Bill" Hughes is no stranger to our readers. His SOF articles on knives include "A Blade for Life," (February '80) and "Anatomy of a Combat Knife" (January '81). Hughes has authored and co-authored three books on knives, and is a member of the board of directors of The American Bladesmith Society.

Hughes is also a muzzleloading enthusiast and was editor of *Muzzle-loader* magazine for several years. In 1976 he participated in the first modern black-powder hunt to be permitted by the Rhodesian game department.

Hughes has published articles in national gun magazines and covered the first Texarkana bowling-pin shoot for SOF (see "SOF Trophy Match," September '79). He holds a master of science degree and has taught journalism at the college level.

—S. Max

using edge on a knife was a quality natural oilstone of medium hardness — say, a soft Arkansas — approximately six inches in length, some light oil, a small amount of knowledge, and the ability to exert considerable pressure while maintaining a uniform angle between the blade and the stone.

That doesn't sound so tough, but, in reality, it seems to rank with such feats as running a five-minute mile, hitting a home run with the bases loaded, or shooting scratch golf. Which is to say it is not impossible, but most folks can't do it!

So, for a number of years folks have marketed gadgets designed to permit the average joe to sharpen a knife blade properly. These have been marketed under different names by different people, but they all had one thing in common: They sold better than they worked. I recall one gadget that was introduced back around 1971. You clamped the thing onto the back of the blade, then permitted the tool and the cutting edge to contact the sharpening stone at the same time. In other words, all it did was to permit the user to maintain a constant angle. Well, that's where most people go wrong, so there was nothing really

wrong with that concept. The fly in the ointment was that it wouldn't work very well on the curved section of the blade, and this is really the toughest part to sharpen. You might say that when the going got tough, that gadget quit.

So it was that when, in the early spring of 1981, I was approached by a man named Arthur Lansky Levine, who had come up with — you guessed it — a sharpening tool, I didn't exactly fall all over myself with excitement. Almost against my better judgment, I permitted Levine to send me one of his sharpeners for my inspection.

Well, after using it for approximately two months, I want you to know that the Lansky Sharpener — that's what Levine calls it — has one great advantage over all the other gadgets I've tried in the past: It works!

This tool permits you to put the bevel of your choice on any blade. You may opt for either a general-purpose 20-degree angle, a 25-degree angle for knives that will be given some heavy chores to handle, or a 30-degree bevel, should you elect to use your knife for chopping wood, and other chores. Oh, yes, if you're one of those types who always wants a shaving edge — not really prac-



Lansky sharpening system sells for \$29.99 complete. Olive-drab cases are available. Photo: B.R. Hughes

tical on a knife that is to be used — the Lansky will put a nice 17-degree angle on your favorite blade, and you can remove the hair on your arm to your heart's content — or at least as long as the hair lasts.

The Lansky kit consists of a relatively small box containing either four or five stones, depending upon which set you order, ranging from extra coarse to extra fine, the same number of metal rods shaped in an elongated "L" pattern, a metal clamp to hold the blade, and a bottle of sharpening oil. Each of the stones is mounted on a holder, each of

which is a different color to help you distinguish which one you are using.

Explaining how the Lansky kit works makes it sound complicated, but it is actually very simple. The back of the blade is securely fastened in the clamp; a guide rod is placed in a stone holder so as to form a straight line; the rod is then inserted through one of the holes in the clamp — the exact hole determines the angle of the bevel. Now you're ready to sharpen the blade. This tool enables you to maintain a constant angle and it works on small and large blades alike, even on the curves. You don't need to remove the clamp to sharpen the other side of the blade — there are guide rod holes on both sides of the clamp.

Levine gets \$29.99 for his kit, and this includes postage and handling. Send your check or money order to L.S.

Sharpeners, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 800, Buffalo, NY 14221.

If you're one of those rare lads who can put a great edge on most any knife, using only a stone, you probably won't be interested in a Lansky kit, but if you're a mere mortal, this tool is going to be a real blessing. In a relatively short time you can put a super cutting edge on all your wife's kitchen knives. In fact, this tool works so easily that you can probably talk her into sharpening her own knives, and this will free you to do such chores as hunting, shooting, reloading ammo, admiring your knife collection, or watching the Mandrell Sisters on TV.



THE flight of *Hinds* swung into firing position, blasting guerrilla positions behind the rocks with automatic weapons and 57mm rocket fire. The big, angular gunships, masters of the Afghanistan skies, closed the range, daring even to hover, protected by their thick armored skins and bulletproof glass.

But even the best protected aircraft is not invulnerable. No one knows where the burst came from — from above, where the *Hind's* armor is weakest; a lucky shot from below: the "golden BB" that can claim anything that flies; or mechanical failure rather than gunfire. The *Hind* did not have far to fall.

At least one man survived the crash, and ran clear until the danger of explosion had passed, then dashed back inside perhaps to destroy documents or what remained of the helicopter itself. He was not the only one with that idea. Another *Hind*, diving low, fired a salvo of rockets into the downed helicopter. The destruction was almost complete. Little fell into the hands of the Afghans from that particular *Hind*, although other wrecks had yielded valuable weapons and armor plate for field fortifications. They did recover the identity card of the man whose comrades had not known — or had not cared — that he was their target.

According to Afghan sources of the National Islamic Front, that was how Senior Lt. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Korchagin of the Soviet Air Force's Frontal Aviation met his end in Wardak Province toward the end of November 1980, at the height of the Soviet winter offensive. His identification card (serial number 032987) offers some clues as to how he came to be there. The document is in the form of a small 10-page booklet, less detailed than an enlisted man's Small Book (see "Bulyaev's Background," p. 74, SOF, May '81, for my analysis of such a document); most of an officer's records are kept in his file.

Korchagin, an ethnic Russian, was born on 29 January 1956 in the village of Kuralovo in Kuibyshev *oblast* (state) of the Tatar S.S.R. He obviously kept up some connection with his home town — every Soviet citizen must be carried on the roster of his "official" home — as the registrar of Kuralovo certified Korchagin as being a bachelor on 21 May 1979. This certification — done with a supremely bureaucratic, official rubber stamp — is apparently given to prevent unauthorized collection of dependents' benefits.

Korchagin was commissioned a lieutenant in the Soviet Air Force in October 1976. In the Soviet Union, the army has no aviation branch, as the U.S. Army does. All helicopters belong to the air force and, despite the Soviet emphasis on coordination of forces and service integration, interservice cooperation always has its problems in any nation.

# SOVIET THREAT FROM ABOVE



by David C. Isby

## BATTLESHIP of the AIR

Although Korchagin must have passed the KGB's basic security screening to be commissioned, the card does not indicate whether he was a Komsomol (Communist Party youth wing) member or otherwise politically active. Nor does it yield many clues as to how he received his commission at the age of 19. He was probably a graduate of an officer candidate school or reserve officer training corps-type program. As Soviet citizens enter the military or higher education at age 18, he would have been too young to have been commissioned from the ranks at the end of his two years' service as an

enlisted man, although this is the source for a lot of Soviet helicopter aircrewmen. Air academy graduates (the Soviets maintain several rather than one as the United States does at Colorado Springs) are usually aged 21 to 22 and are largely pilot-trained by graduation. Korchagin received his wings on 21 December 1976, soon after he was commissioned.

Korchagin's commission came through when he was at Unit 75362, commanded by a Col. Polunin, which was probably the OCS-type facility. All Soviet units mentioned in the identity card are re-

ferred to by their code numbers, to reduce the risk of exposing order-of-battle intelligence when such documents are captured. The order awarding him his wings came from Unit 55344, probably a flight school or inspectorate.

By December 1976, Korchagin had arrived at Unit 26208, then commanded by a Maj. V. Bantjukov. This was probably a combat (possibly an operational training) helicopter regiment. The unit was based in the USSR, under the command of military-district authorities. There, on 3 May 1977, Korchagin qualified as a combat crew commander. This was on the orders of Unit 55344, which probably has some flight-examining or supervisory function. Korchagin was issued his personal-defense weapon at Unit 26208, signing for a 9mm Makarov PM pistol, serial number 3757, on 17 August 1978. He carried it through the rest of his career. Korchagin was still at Lt. Col. Bantjukov's unit (the CO had been promoted) when he made senior lieutenant on 17 October 1979, having spent the standard three years in grade as a lieutenant.

On 4 March 1980, orders came for transfer to Unit 97978, apparently a combat unit in Afghanistan, commanded by one Budnikov. From then until that last flight in Wardak Province in November 1980, Korchagin was part of the most powerful component of Soviet forces in Afghanistan — the *Hind* units. But even these powerful gunships have their limitations, many self-inflicted, and Korchagin's was neither the first nor the last to go down. The *Hind*, like the Soviet military itself, may be big and powerful, but it is not invulnerable.

"Our first and foremost need is for anti-helicopter weapons," declared Syed Ahmed Gailani, leader of the National Islamic Front, the foremost and most pro-Western Afghan group fighting the Soviet invaders, as he set his priorities during a recent trip to Washington. Gailani knew what his most important threat was. Reports from throughout Afghanistan show that it is helicopters that are the cutting edge of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan, and that the most effective of these are the Mil Mi-24 *Hind* gunships.

Big, heavy and deadly, *Hind* units were the first Soviet combat forces to enter Afghanistan and were in action long before the December 1979 invasion. Other *Hinds*, supplied to the Afghan armed forces, have been in action with Russian crews. *Hinds* are deployed in East Germany, throughout the Warsaw Pact countries, and in the European USSR as well, ready for use against NATO. The helicopter's capabilities in a conventional war seem no less formidable than they are in Afghanistan. Iraqi *Hinds* have been committed to battle in its continuing war with Iran. The Soviets have even sold *Hinds* to Libya's Col.



Soviet Mi-8 *Hip-C* transport helicopter shot down in Afghanistan by guerrillas of the National Islamic Front. Note Afghan markings. Photo: National Islamic Front



Khadafy, ensuring that those able to fly will be seeing action in the trouble spots of Africa. The *Hind* is one of the most powerful and capable weapons the Soviets have, and it is all the more significant because the Soviets were latecomers to the idea of using the helicopter as an effective weapon of war.

Soviet military helicopters were first used in the 1950s, but these early machines were crude and unreliable, even by Soviet standards. In the 1960s, however, the Soviets carefully watched the U.S. use of helicopters in Vietnam. They saw the tremendous capabilities of helicopters deployed in large numbers — the mobility of airmobile units, the firepower of helicopter gunships, and their use in logistical resupply missions. The Soviets realized they needed to develop both effective tactics and a combat

helicopter that would be able to carry those tactics out.

The new Soviet helicopter tactics were first revealed in the massive 1967 *Dnepr* exercise. The "friendly forces" "won" with a heliborne assault by two battalions of Soviet paratroopers, while their old piston-engined Mi-4 *Hound* transport helicopters armed with anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) attacked "enemy" armored spearheads.

The new tactics were soon followed by a new helicopter. In 1969 the *Hind* first flew in prototype form. Rumors reaching the West mentioned a powerful new helicopter in the Soviet inventory.

Powerful indeed, the *Hind* is unlike any other helicopter in the world. It combines the roles of helicopter gunship and scout ship with a substantial transport capability. To do so, the *Hind*



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is big; the *Hind-A* version weighs 18,520 pounds (maximum weight) and is 63 feet, 4 inches long, compared to the U.S. AH-1G Cobra, 9,500 pounds (maximum weight), 44 feet, 5 inches in length. The *Hind-A* has a crew of four — pilot, copilot, gunner/navigator, and forward observer or crew chief, although the *Hind-D* appears to have the two-seat configuration for pilot and gunner of the U.S. Cobra. The *Hind's* size is important because, unlike U.S. helicopter gunships which always work in close coordination with small, maneuverable OH-6A or OH-58A scout helicopters, *Hinds* operate by themselves and scout for themselves.

The *Hind* has an automatic weapon under its nose — a single 12.7mm machine gun in the *Hind-A*, increased to a four-barreled Gatling type (caliber uncertain, believed to be 12.7mm) mounted in a turret in the *Hind-D*. Unconfirmed reports suggest that late-model *Hind-Es* or *Hind-Fs* may have a 23mm or 30mm cannon.

The two hard points on each of the *Hind's* stub wings can each accommodate a 250-kilogram bomb, a gun pod containing 12.7mm machine gun or a 23mm cannon, or, most frequently, a UB-32 rocket pod containing 32 S-5 57mm rockets. With a range of 1,200 meters and able to penetrate 220mm of armor with its HEAT shaped-charge

version, the S-5 pods are excellent suppressive weapons.

The *Hind's* anti-tank punch is on each stub wing's two wingtip pylons. *Hind-As* normally carry four *Swatter-B* radio-controlled ATGMs. *Hind-Es* and possibly *Hind-Ds* can fire the *Spiral* ATGM, a "fire-and-forget" ATGM much more advanced than anything currently in use by the U.S. Army.

In its troop compartment, a *Hind* can lift eight to 16 troops, depending on equipment carried, or a reload of weapons and ammunition for rearming at forward landing zones. *Hinds* probably will not make large-scale airmobile attacks. They will instead insert small teams behind enemy positions, to ambush reinforcements or attack key installations, actions which the Soviets believe have the potential to disrupt enemy rear areas completely.

All *Hinds* are heavily armored. *Hind-Ds* are reportedly invulnerable to small-arms fire from below, due to their titanium belly armor. Some *Hinds* have been shot down by Afghans firing from above them. The *Hind's* construction indicates there may be two-layer spaced armor around its vital components. All of the *Hind-D's* glass is bulletproof, as are the *Hind-A's* forward glass surfaces. The glass is designed to eliminate sun glint that may give away a lurking *Hind's* position or make it a target for heat-

*Hind-A* in flight. *Hind-As* are the most common type sighted in Afghanistan, although *Hind-Ds* and *Hind-Es* are also in operation. Photo: U.S. Army

seeking missiles. The *Hind* has been designed to absorb punishment as well as inflict it.

### HIND-A VITAL STATISTICS

**Weight:** 10,360 lb. empty, 18,520 maximum.

**Maximum Speed:** 193 mph.

**Cruising Speed:** 183 mph.

**Radius of Action:** 56-225 miles.

**Range:** 310 miles.

**Initial Rate of Climb:** 29 feet per second.

**Hovering Ceiling in Ground Effect:** 14,760 feet.

**Rotor Diameter:** 55 ft. 11 in.

**Fuselage Length:** 63 ft. 4 in.

**Height:** 14 ft.

**Engines:** two 1,500hp Gluchenko GTD-3F turboshafts.

**Maximum Cargo Payload:** 6,400 lbs.

**Avionics:** radar gunsight, VHF and UHF radios, ADF navigation system, radar altimeter, gyro compass.

The *Hind-D* is similar, but has a two-man crew and carries a laser rangefinder and low-light television systems.

The basic *Hind* formation is the four-helicopter flight; one or more flights may be used on a mission. Normally, one pair of *Hinds* will remain at 100 meters' altitude, looking for enemy forces or even hoping to draw fire. They may hover while searching for the enemy. Another pair will cover these ships, remaining at five to 10-meter altitude behind covering terrain when possible. When a target is spotted, these *Hinds* pop up to 20- to 100-meter altitude and open fire while the high ships first take evasive action and then join in the attack.

If you see *Hinds* in the vicinity, it probably means that there are others hiding, waiting for you to make your move. Never expect to encounter fewer than four *Hinds* together.

When their opposition is strong in air defense, *Hinds* will use these pop-up tactics as a matter of course. But when, as in Afghanistan, the *Hinds* are faced by an enemy with great courage but little sophisticated weaponry, the *Hinds* become bolder. Reports from Afghanistan describe *Hinds* closing to point-blank range with guerrilla positions, even hovering, relying on their massive firepower and armor protection. *Hinds* in Afghanistan also use standard aircraft high-explosive and incendiary bombs. *Hinds* may also make diving attacks from 1,000-meters' altitude, firing machine guns and rockets, then making a steep turnaway after bomb release to avoid ground fire. *Hind* flights have been reported flying figure-8 patterns over Afghan villages, bombing and strafing.

Despite the *Hind's* powerful armament, it appears they have had some equally powerful problems. By early 1981, something was wrong in Afghanistan. It may have been the threat of man-carried SA-7 *Grail* heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) — ralliers from the Afghan army have probably turned at least a few of these missiles against their erstwhile Soviet comrades. Whatever the cause, the *Hinds* began to change their tactics. Instead of their tactics of hovering, diving bomb-attacks, and figure-8 patterns, or cruising in stacked-up finger-four formations like fighter planes, the *Hinds* began to operate nap-of-the-earth, flying at extremely low altitude, moving by dashing from cover to cover at high speed. While the *Hind* is extremely maneuverable, it is also heavy and it was never intended for the type of nap-of-the-earth flying routinely used by U.S. helicopter gunships. This sort of flying puts a tremendous strain both on aircrew and aircraft, and the number of *Hinds* lost to operational causes appears to have increased considerably.

Another *Hind* problem seems to lie not with the helicopter, but with the way it is used. Lack of initiative and flexibility,

compounded by a tendency to rely on over-centralization of command and pre-planning, appears to be widespread throughout the Soviet military. Nowhere is it more noticeable than in *Hind* units. *Hinds* in Afghanistan do not seem to have the flexibility to respond to rapidly developing tactical situations or the hit-and-run Afghan attacks. Unless the *Hind* strike has been planned at air force headquarters or called in by air force officers operating with the army (the "Air Force Guides" and "Air Force Representatives"), *Hinds* may not be used at all. Nor are they always used in the close-air support mission in which U.S. helicopters excel. Some Soviet sources even seem to suggest that *Hinds* cannot be effectively used against enemy troops in combat with Soviet ground units. Reports of *Hind* flights in Afghanistan cite their passing up obvious targets of opportunity to attack their briefed target — now obviously empty. The Soviets have long been aware of the problems caused by a widespread lack of initiative, but in recent months the Soviet military press has publicized, in suitably couched, euphemistic language, the lessons from Af-

ghanistan — lack of initiative costs lives and *Hinds*.

A fall 1980 article in the Soviet military magazine, *Aviatsizyai Kosmonautika*, pilloried a *Hind* unit as a bunch of "dummies" who held to briefed flight plans even when it took them into the fire of enemy anti-aircraft guns, who did not take evasive action when fired upon, "because we had not been told to do so." This particular *Hind* unit was still in the Soviet Union, but any force fights the way it trains, and these problems are doubtlessly not limited to a single outfit.

Unlike U.S. Army helicopters, all Soviet *Hinds* belong to the air force and their crews are air force personnel. It is just not as effective to be supported by someone else's helicopters as by helicopters from your own branch of service, trained in your methods and directly under your control. This is the reason why the U.S. Marine Corps insists on using its own helicopters, and why those behind armor-plated desks who unthinkingly demand "commonality" are dead wrong.

The officers in U.S. Army helicopter units are all trained as ground-combat officers, usually in armor, which gives





them an understanding of ground fighting that would be difficult for even the most devoted air force officer to equal. Although all U.S. Army helicopters have standard Army radios and can communicate directly with ground units, this is probably not the case with *Hinds*. Although it is uncertain whether *Hinds* have Soviet army radios aboard (if any readers are in a position to examine *Hinds* or their remains, please let *Soldier of Fortune* know the details), it is known that contact with *Hinds* is not usually made by the army unit the *Hinds* are supporting, but instead through air force personnel on the ground.

Each Soviet division has an air force representative, who accompanies divisional headquarters in a vehicle, usually a modified BTR-60PB APC, that has both ground and aircraft radios. Division is usually the lowest army level of command that has direct contact with the air force in the Soviet armed forces. All requests for air support must be passed up by the army chain of command to division level, where the air force representative coordinates them and passes them to air force command. This cumbersome procedure stands in

The sharp end of a *Hind-A*. Note four UB-32 57mm rocket pods, and gunner peering through bulletproof glass. Photo: U.S. Army

sharp contrast to the more efficient U.S. system, in which any trained officer or NCO with a radio can call in close tactical air support through a Forward Air Controller.

In Afghanistan, the Soviets have had to decentralize this typically monolithic system. Each divisional air force representative has three or four air force guides on his staff, air force officers who direct air strikes. In Afghanistan, air force guides from units in the Soviet Union have been sent in to reinforce those in action there. One air force guide usually accompanies each Soviet troop column or convoy, in a vehicle equipped with an aircraft radio, to call in *Hinds* or fixed-wing aircraft if opposition develops. This system falls short of U.S.-style tactical flexibility, and Soviet airpower has not had the effect in Afghanistan it otherwise might have had.

As the best counter to a tank is usually another tank, the best counter to a heli-

copter may be another helicopter. The U.S. Army's AH-1 Cobra gunships are combat-tested and their TOW ATGMs give them the capability to inflict tremendous losses on Soviet tank formations. In the Ansbach tests in the early 1970s, TOW-armed Cobras chalked up an 18-1 kill ratio against simulated Soviet units. Each U.S. division in Europe will soon have a full combat aviation battalion equipped with AH-1s. To prevent these helicopters from decimating Soviet armored spearheads would be a logical role for an anti-helicopter *Hind*.

The possibility of the use of anti-helicopter *Hinds* could disrupt U.S. anti-tank helicopter tactics which are intended to minimize exposure to ground-based air defenses. The U.S. Army is not as concerned with attacks by high-performance jet aircraft. It is hard to spot a helicopter from a jet, harder still to shoot one down as it dodges around hills and between trees. Another helicopter, however, could follow the Cobra even in its nap-of-the-earth flight.

No air-to-air versions of the *Hind* have yet been positively identified, although the designation *Hind-F* has been unofficially used for such a helicopter. The threat is real enough, however, for the U.S. Army, Air Force and Marines to hold extensive tests to determine the capabilities of anti-helicopter *Hinds* and the best way for U.S. helicopters to defeat them in resulting dogfights. An anti-helicopter *Hind* would probably carry a 23mm or 30mm cannon, big enough to penetrate the armor of an AH-1. It would probably also have an air-to-air computing gunsight, as on a fighter plane, and have its electrical system and pylons modified to use SA-9 *Gaskin* heat-seeking SAMs.

Pilot skill would be crucial in such battles, and here the U.S. would seem to have an advantage, despite the Soviets having the more recent combat experience. Soviet tactics, due to their inflexible nature, do not easily lend themselves to the cut-and-thrust of dogfighting, as has been seen in the heavy losses that those attempting to use Soviet-style fighter tactics have suffered — be it in Korea, Southeast Asia, or the Middle East.

Although the *Hind-F's* existence cannot be either confirmed or denied by Western intelligence, the Soviets have the capability to put such an aircraft into production at any time. The *Hind* may yet add Western helicopters to its list of potential prey.

The *Hind* is heavily armed and armored, with a performance that gives it capabilities beyond that of any other single helicopter in service today. *Hinds* are the most effective single weapon in the vast Soviet arsenal for the war in Afghanistan. Yet Afghanistan has shown that the flaws in the Soviet system can undercut this power. The *Hind* is, like any weapon, only as good as the men and tactics behind it.





# SEYCHELLES UPDATE

by Jim Graves

*“Literally, 30 or 40 well-armed ruthless men can overthrow a stable government, as we have seen recently in Africa, and this constitutes a very dangerous situation for small countries.”*

Col. “Mad” Mike Hoare, 1966

IN 1966, Hoare, who began his military career as an officer in a British armored regiment in Burma during World War II, was — with good reason — excited about prospects in a time he called the “Golden Age” for mercenaries.

In the 1964-65 “Simba” (an African word meaning lion) revolt in the Congo, Hoare became a legend, leading a mercenary group known as 5 Commando. Hoare picked up his nickname, “Mad” Mike, for his daring and courage. He was chiefly responsible for suppressing the leftist Simba revolt, and saving hundreds of white Europeans from torture and death at the hands of the savage and barbaric Simbas and for installing Mobutu Sese Seko as president of what was then the Congo and is today Zaire.

Hoare was the real-life model for the character portrayed by Richard Burton in the best of the mercenary films, *The Wild Geese*.

Had it not been for a young (24), nervous South African named Johan Fritz and a handful of litchi fruit, Hoare might have added another chapter to the legend in November 1981.

Hoare retired to the village of Hilton, South Africa (near Durban), after the Congo situation was settled. His occasional trips out of South Africa triggered considerable nervousness among some less-than-pure heads of state in various “stable” regimes on that continent, but he was not known to have been actively involved in any mercenary activities until 1981. Sometime during that year Hoare was approached to lead another band of mercenaries — and he accepted.

The target was the Seychelles, an 89-island group in the Western Indian Ocean, about 1,000 miles east of Kenya and 2,000 miles southwest of Bombay, India. The Seychelles were a British colony until 1976 when independence was granted. James R.M. Manchem and France-Albert Rene formed a coalition and became president and prime minister, respectively, in the first government. But on 6 June 1977, while Manchem was in London attending a Com-

monwealth conference, Rene, with the backing of Tanzanian troops, overthrew the government and took power in what was called the “The Coup of 66 Rifles.” Rene, who has since described himself as an “Indian Ocean socialist,” did not like Manchem’s pro-Western politics.

While Rene, who turned the Republic of the Seychelles into a one-party state in 1979, drifted more and more to the left and into the Soviet camp, Manchem — living in exile in London — and other Seychelles exiles cast around for the right man or men to stage a counter coup.

Seychelles exiles who supported Manchem formed two groups: *La Mouvement Pour La Resistance*, led by Paul Chow of London, and the Seychelles Resistance Movement, presumed to be controlled by Gerard Hoarau, a former immigration official in the Seychelles, who has lived in both Durban, South Africa, and Australia.

A number of mercenary leaders were approached in 1980 and 1981 and offered leadership roles or parts in a Seychelles coup by the two different groups, but there were no takers until the coup plotters made contacts with Hoare and friends of Hoare who lived around Durban.

Hoare accepted the leadership role of the actual attack force, while Durban-based free-lance photographer Peter Duffy (who was part of Hoare’s 5 Commando in the Congo), Kenneth Dalglish (a former Rhodesian policeman who owns the Riveria Hotel in Durban) and Martin Dolincheck (a senior South African member of the National Intelligence Service) all played key roles in organizing the coup attempt.

Hoare and his recruiters found most of the troops for the operation by passing the word in Durban and Johannesburg, South Africa, in the bars and hotels where mercs congregate. The focus of the recruiting effort and the coup attempt appears to have been the Mainstay Bar in Dalglish’s Riveria Hotel in Durban. On Thursday nights Dalglish held a weekly affair called “Rhodesian Night,” which attracted most of the former Rhodesian soldiers, who left that country after it went leftist, as well as other professional soldiers and South African troops from one of South Africa’s more elite outfits, the 6th Recce, a para commando unit.

Among the 52 men known to have been drawn into the coup attempt were 26 South Africans (De Wet Steyn, Janolof Sydow, Patrick Hendrick, Jeremiah Puren, Johan Fritz, Thodorous van

Huysteen, Kevin Beck, B. de Vos, Desmond Walker, Christo Hillebrand, Louis Boucher, William Paul, Tullio Oneta, Pieter Doorewaard, Vic de Beer, Jochemus Dekker, Frederick Gouws, Patrick Eureele, Alan Mann, Ernest Deetlefs, Keith Macleod, Alex Deacon, Peter Hean, Robert Sims, D. Botes and Lubic Anton). In addition, there were 11 Britons (Hoare, Duffy, Dalglish, Bernard Carey, Richard Stannard, Robert Jones, Kevin Barnes, Nicholas Wilson, John MacKay, Donald Kenny, Michael Webb and Simon Willar), seven Rhodesians (Charles Goatley, Vernon Prinsloo, Stephen Biddlecombe, Jacob du Toit, David Greenhalgh, Roger England, and Aubrey Brooks), two Germans (Peter Rohwein and Kurt Priefert), two Irishmen (Thomas Boarel and Andrew Standish-White), an Australian (Kenneth Kelly), an Austrian (Sven Forsell) and two Americans (Charles William Dukes and Barry Francis Gribbon).

Dukes, 25, of San Francisco, is a 6-foot-7 Vietnam veteran who went to Rhodesia and served with the Special Air Service there in the late ’70s. He was working as the bouncer in the London Town Bar in Durban’s Palm Beach Hotel when recruited.

Gribbon, 26, of Miami served as a lance corporal with the Recce Troop, Support Commando, 1st Battalion Rhodesian Light Infantry, in the late ’70s.

Some of the former South African 6th Recce troops, who joined the plot, joined because the recruiters had convinced them the coup attempt had the backing of the National Intelligence Service and therefore the South African government. Dolincheck, who would be familiar with the procedure followed in “special operations,” is assumed to have been responsible for that recruiting tactic. [A similar tactic was used by former CIA agents Frank Terpil and Ed Wilson to recruit former Green Berets to work in Libya in the late ’70s.]

Dolincheck has denied that he was acting as an agent of the NIS in the coup. But it is easy to see why a pro-Western coup in the Seychelles would be advantageous to South Africa.

The Seychelles are located along the main shipping routes from Africa and the Middle East to the Far East and thus could have been used as a trans-shipment point for goods intended for South Africa. While South Africa is not dangerously short of war materials — due to the United Nations arms embargo against it — getting goods purchased on the open markets around the world into South Africa requires considerable deception at times. The Point Larue Airport would have also been a nice acquisition. South African Airways jets can only land at Ivory Coast and the former Portuguese colony of Cape Verde (now called Isle de Sol) in the West African area, and SAA has to fly direct into the

Orient, which is quite costly.

The Seychelles also lie midway between Mobassa, Kenya, and Diego Garcia, the main United States military facilities in the Indian Ocean, which has led to some suspicion as to the role of the United States in the coup — or, at least, how much some United States intelligence agencies knew about it. Hoare had ties with the CIA which go back to the war in the Congo.

Hoare's plan to take the island was quite simple, but it was one that ignored one of his rules for battle laid out in the book, *Congo Mercenary*: "Don't take unnecessary risks."

Hoare decided to take his 52 men in, in two different groups. A party of five went in in early November to handle the advance work.

The main group of 47 men, including Hoare, took a charter flight from Swaziland, an independent state within South Africa, under the cover that they were members of a rugby team called AOFB, the Ancient Order of Foam Blowers, in the Seychelles for a vacation and to deliver Christmas presents to handicapped children at a local hospital.

Hoare's critical mistake came when he decided to take the weapons in with the troops. The AKMs with three 30-round magazines and the handguns went into false-bottomed suitcases and golf bags. Included with the weapons were toys: dolls, balls and plastic guns for children.

A reconnaissance of the island, which took place before November, had shown that baggage checks at Point Larue Airport on Mahe Island (the 17-mile-by-5-mile main island) were handled on the "honor" system. If you had items to declare you took the "Red Channel" and customs inspectors looked through your bags; if you did not you took the "Green Channel" and just walked through. Instead of bringing his men in and then bringing the weapons in by ship, or bringing both men and weapons in by ship (as was suggested by several mercs who saw the coup plan), Hoare elected to take the risk and bring men and weapons in through the "Green Channel."

One of Hoare's 47 men was a 24-year-old South African named Johan Fritz. The eldest son of the chief of General Mining's gold and uranium division, the former South African paratrooper lived in an area of Johannesburg called Millionaire's Row.

Seychelles custom officer Vincent Pillay claims Fritz approached him and asked if it were necessary to declare a diving mask and flippers, which he had in his bag. Pillay told him no. Minutes later Pillay says he saw Fritz weighing himself on a set of scales normally used for weighing baggage. Because he was acting nervous and sweating profusely, he attracted Pillay's attention. Then, for reasons no one knows, he went through the "Red Channel."

One of the mercs on the operation says Fritz may have gone through the "Red Channel" because he was carrying a small amount of litchi fruit (which cannot be brought into the Seychelles, since the South African plants are diseased) in his bags.

Whatever the reason, Fritz stepped into the "Red Channel" and Pillay gave his bag a thorough check. Its weight and shallowness bothered the customs official, so he called over another inspector. When he ran his hand along it, Pillay claims he felt the barrel of a gun. Ripping open the bottom of the suitcase, he came up with an AKM. Policeman Sgt. Kerchen Esparon collected Fritz and the AKM and took both just outside the arrival hall to the police station. While another policeman wrote out a receipt of seizure — a normal procedure — Pillay, realizing other members of the "rugby" team might have guns, said something in Creole to fellow customs officer Hansel Laljee about stopping the few men who had not yet cleared through the "Green Channel." At that point, everything fell apart. One of the mercs pulled a gun and shot Sgt. Esparon. Fritz burst out of the police station and was killed in the cross-fire.

Hoare, who was outside the main building, standing and talking with Dolincheck, beside a bus which his men were boarding, took control of the operation quickly. The mercs outside rushed to pull guns from their bags and take control of the airport.

As one tore apart his suitcase, he was heard to mutter, "Lovely, lovely." A pitched battle for the airport immediately after arrival was not in the plan. Hoare had intended to get at least one

night of rest at a Mahe hotel before hitting the targets (Rene's office, the Seychelles military bases and police stations) in Victoria, the capital city.

In the brief battle that followed, Hoare's mercs took control of most of the airport buildings, but Seychelles military units knocked out the Fokker F28 they came in on and the runway was partially blocked when Hoare's men shot up two armored cars.

In fits and spurts, the battle for the airport went on until 12:45 a.m. on 26 November. An Air India 707 had landed at 10:30, and after some negotiation Hoare talked the pilot into attempting a takeoff in the damaged aircraft. (The 707 had struck one of the disabled armored cars while landing and flaps were jammed in a 40-degree down position.)

The pilot got it off and once airborne, Hoare directed the plane to South Africa. He wanted to land in Johannesburg but South African officials had the plane set down in Durban.

Hoare, sporting a Van Dyke beard, and using the alias "Tom," then negotiated the surrender of the mercs/hijackers to South African authorities.

The government's initial response to the events in the Seychelles caused a flurry of negative reaction both abroad and within South Africa. After a quick investigation, 39 of the 45 who returned on the Air India 707 (Fritz' body came back in the baggage compartment) were released without charges being filed, while Hoare, Duffy, Moneta, Goatley and Dalgleish were charged with kidnapping, not hijacking. Dukes, who was wounded badly, was kept in a hospital.

The initial charge was significant, because a charge of kidnapping is difficult to prove under South African law — and it carries no minimum sentence. Hijacking charges carry a minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 30.

In the Seychelles, the six coup members, arrested by the Seychelles police, faced "people's courts" and public hangings.

As of press time, it appears that some deal has been struck. The terms are unknown, but South Africa charged all 45 under the Civil Aviation Act of 1972 with three charges each. If convicted on all three counts they could receive a minimum of 15 years and a maximum of 90 years.

One source in South Africa, who has contacts with authorities in the Seychelles, said that while no charges had been filed, there was talk of an intention to abandon the "people's courts" and public-hanging approach.

If a deal has been struck, uncovering the complete story behind the coup attempt, particularly Dolincheck's role and the possible involvement by South Africa's NIS, is unlikely.

## SEYCHELLES

**Official name:** Republic of Seychelles

**Population:** 64,000 [1979 estimate]; mostly Creoles (mixture of Asians, Africans, and French)

**Geography:** 86 islands totalling 171 square miles land area, three-fourths the size of the city of Chicago

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 90 percent; Anglican 8 percent; some Hindus, Moslems

**Languages:** Creole [a pidginized version of French and English] 94 percent, French 5 percent; French and English are official

**Head of state:** President France Albert Rene

**Literacy rate:** 60 percent

**Per capita income:** \$1,400 [1979] (U.S.: \$8,728 [1979])

**Capital:** Victoria

**Major industries:** Food processing, tourism, fishing; guano, shark fins, tortoise shells

**Chief crops:** Copra, cinnamon, vanilla, patchouli



# SECRET SOG MISSION DRAWS FIRST TET BLOOD

## With Lo Ball in Laos

by Charles W. Sasser

*For other material on SOG Spike Teams see "SOG's Secret War," SOF, June '81.*

**I**N Vietnam, rumors about big offensives were as common as fleas on a Saigon cur. But in late 1967 they began to gain validity. Intel filtering in from the tri-border area — where Vietnam borders Laos and Cambodia — revealed that the network of trails and roads known collectively as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, swarmed with enemy. Apparently, troops and supplies were staging across the borders in preparation for a sweep in force into South Vietnam.

Most of the intel about what went on inside Laos and Cambodia was provided by a secret unit originally organized in 1964 as Studies and Observation Group (SOG), and now known simply as Command and Control. C&C was divided into three operational areas: C&C North [Danang]; C&C Central [Kontum]; and C&C South [Ban Me Thout]. Although the neighboring nations of Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, as well as North Vietnam, were officially off-limits to American forces in Vietnam, SOG Spike Teams (SOG cross-border patrols were called various names — Recon Teams [RTs], Snake Bite Teams, Spike Teams — at various times in the war; teams usually consisted of six to 12 men), composed of Nung tribesmen and Montagnards led by Army Special Forces soldiers, had been making forays across the borders since President Johnson approved them in June of 1964. The missions into Laos were known as PRAIRIE FIRE, while those into Cambodia were called DANIEL BOONE. Even in Vietnam, few outside C&C knew of the unit's missions to take subversion, sabotage and psyops directly to the enemy. Its missions were, and still are, SECRET.

Because of the clandestine nature of their activities, the Green Berets of C&C wore no markings and carried no personal identification whenever they went on mission. Most wore jungle camouflage suits, some dyed black in the man-

ner of the VC "pajamas." The teams could choose to carry personal weapons, which ranged from U.S. M16s or CARs to 12-gauge shotguns with .00 buck and AK-47s. The Americans of C&C knew that if they were wasted across the borders the United States would disavow all knowledge.

Staff Sgt. Gene Adcock, 5th Special



Sgt. Adcock trains Montagnards in use of 40mm M79 grenade launcher (bloop tube). Lo Ball stands behind him with an M16.

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Orient, which is quite costly.

The Seychelles also lie midway between Mobassa, Kenya, and Diego Garcia, the main United States military facilities in the Indian Ocean, which has led to some suspicion as to the role of the United States in the coup — or, at least, how much some United States intelligence agencies knew about it. Hoare had ties with the CIA which go back to the war in the Congo.

Hoare's plan to take the island was quite simple, but it was one that ignored one of his rules for battle laid out in the book, *Congo Mercenary*: "Don't take unnecessary risks."

Hoare decided to take his 52 men in, in two different groups. A party of five went in in early November to handle the advance work.

The main group of 47 men, including Hoare, took a charter flight from Swaziland, an independent state within South Africa, under the cover that they were members of a rugby team called AOFB, the Ancient Order of Foam Blowers, in the Seychelles for a vacation and to deliver Christmas presents to handicapped children at a local hospital.

Hoare's critical mistake came when he decided to take the weapons in with the troops. The AKMs with three 30-round magazines and the handguns went into false-bottomed suitcases and golf bags. Included with the weapons were toys: dolls, balls and plastic guns for children.

A reconnaissance of the island, which took place before November, had shown that baggage checks at Point Larue Airport on Mahe Island (the 17-mile-by-5-mile main island) were handled on the "honor" system. If you had items to declare you took the "Red Channel" and customs inspectors looked through your bags; if you did not you took the "Green Channel" and just walked through. Instead of bringing his men in and then bringing the weapons in by ship, or bringing both men and weapons in by ship (as was suggested by several mercs who saw the coup plan), Hoare elected to take the risk and bring men and weapons in through the "Green Channel."

One of Hoare's 47 men was a 24-year-old South African named Johan Fritz. The eldest son of the chief of General Mining's gold and uranium division, the former South African paratrooper lived in an area of Johannesburg called Millionaire's Row.

Seychelles custom officer Vincent Pillay claims Fritz approached him and asked if it were necessary to declare a diving mask and flippers, which he had in his bag. Pillay told him no. Minutes later Pillay says he saw Fritz weighing himself on a set of scales normally used for weighing baggage. Because he was acting nervous and sweating profusely, he attracted Pillay's attention. Then, for reasons no one knows, he went through the "Red Channel."

One of the mercs on the operation says Fritz may have gone through the "Red Channel" because he was carrying a small amount of litchi fruit (which cannot be brought into the Seychelles, since the South African plants are diseased) in his bags.

Whatever the reason, Fritz stepped into the "Red Channel" and Pillay gave his bag a thorough check. Its weight and shallowness bothered the customs official, so he called over another inspector. When he ran his hand along it, Pillay claims he felt the barrel of a gun. Ripping open the bottom of the suitcase, he came up with an AKM. Policeman Sgt. Kerchen Esparon collected Fritz and the AKM and took both just outside the arrival hall to the police station. While another policeman wrote out a receipt of seizure — a normal procedure — Pillay, realizing other members of the "rugby" team might have guns, said something in Creole to fellow customs officer Hansel Laljee about stopping the few men who had not yet cleared through the "Green Channel." At that point, everything fell apart. One of the mercs pulled a gun and shot Sgt. Esparon. Fritz burst out of the police station and was killed in the cross-fire.

Hoare, who was outside the main building, standing and talking with Dolincheck, beside a bus which his men were boarding, took control of the operation quickly. The mercs outside rushed to pull guns from their bags and take control of the airport.

As one tore apart his suitcase, he was heard to mutter, "Lovely, lovely." A pitched battle for the airport immediately after arrival was not in the plan. Hoare had intended to get at least one

night of rest at a Mahe hotel before hitting the targets (Rene's office, the Seychelles military bases and police stations) in Victoria, the capital city.

In the brief battle that followed, Hoare's mercs took control of most of the airport buildings, but Seychelles military units knocked out the Fokker F28 they came in on and the runway was partially blocked when Hoare's men shot up two armored cars.

In fits and spurts, the battle for the airport went on until 12:45 a.m. on 26 November. An Air India 707 had landed at 10:30, and after some negotiation Hoare talked the pilot into attempting a takeoff in the damaged aircraft. (The 707 had struck one of the disabled armored cars while landing and flaps were jammed in a 40-degree down position.)

The pilot got it off and once airborne, Hoare directed the plane to South Africa. He wanted to land in Johannesburg but South African officials had the plane set down in Durban.

Hoare, sporting a Van Dyke beard, and using the alias "Tom," then negotiated the surrender of the mercs/hijackers to South African authorities.

The government's initial response to the events in the Seychelles caused a flurry of negative reaction both abroad and within South Africa. After a quick investigation, 39 of the 45 who returned on the Air India 707 (Fritz' body came back in the baggage compartment) were released without charges being filed, while Hoare, Duffy, Moneta, Goatley and Dagleish were charged with kidnapping, not hijacking. Dukes, who was wounded badly, was kept in a hospital.

The initial charge was significant, because a charge of kidnapping is difficult to prove under South African law — and it carries no minimum sentence. Hijacking charges carry a minimum sentence of five years and a maximum of 30.

In the Seychelles, the six coup members, arrested by the Seychelles police, faced "people's courts" and public hangings.

As of press time, it appears that some deal has been struck. The terms are unknown, but South Africa charged all 45 under the Civil Aviation Act of 1972 with three charges each. If convicted on all three counts they could receive a minimum of 15 years and a maximum of 90 years.

One source in South Africa, who has contacts with authorities in the Seychelles, said that while no charges had been filed, there was talk of an intention to abandon the "people's courts" and public-hanging approach.

If a deal has been struck, *uncovering* the complete story behind the coup attempt, particularly Dolincheck's role and the possible involvement by South Africa's NIS, is unlikely.

## SEYCHELLES

**Official name:** Republic of Seychelles

**Population:** 64,000 [1979 estimate]; mostly Creoles (mixture of Asians, Africans, and French)

**Geography:** 86 islands totalling 171 square miles land area, three-fourths the size of the city of Chicago

**Religions:** Roman Catholic 90 percent; Anglican 8 percent; some Hindus, Moslems

**Languages:** Creole [a pidginized version of French and English] 94 percent, French 5 percent; French and English are official

**Head of state:** President France Albert Rene

**Literacy rate:** 60 percent

**Per capita income:** \$1,400 [1979] (U.S.: \$8,728 [1979])

**Capital:** Victoria

**Major industries:** Food processing, tourism, fishing; guano, shark fins, tortoise shells

**Chief crops:** Copra, cinnamon, vanilla, patchouli



# SECRET SOG MISSION DRAWS FIRST TET BLOOD

## With Lo Ball in Laos

by Charles W. Sasser

*For other material on SOG Spike Teams see "SOG's Secret War," SOF, June '81.*

**I**N Vietnam, rumors about big offensives were as common as fleas on a Saigon cur. But in late 1967 they began to gain validity. Intel filtering in from the tri-border area — where Vietnam borders Laos and Cambodia — revealed that the network of trails and roads known collectively as the Ho Chi Minh Trail, swarmed with enemy. Apparently, troops and supplies were staging across the borders in preparation for a sweep in force into South Vietnam.

Most of the intel about what went on inside Laos and Cambodia was provided by a secret unit originally organized in 1964 as Studies and Observation Group (SOG), and now known simply as Command and Control. C&C was divided into three operational areas: C&C North [Danang]; C&C Central [Kontum]; and C&C South [Ban Me Thout]. Although the neighboring nations of Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, as well as North Vietnam, were officially off-limits to American forces in Vietnam, SOG Spike Teams (SOG cross-border patrols were called various names — Recon Teams [RTs], Snake Bite Teams, Spike Teams — at various times in the war; teams usually consisted of six to 12 men), composed of Nung tribesmen and Montagnards led by Army Special Forces soldiers, had been making forays across the borders since President Johnson approved them in June of 1964. The missions into Laos were known as PRAIRIE FIRE, while those into Cambodia were called DANIEL BOONE. Even in Vietnam, few outside C&C knew of the unit's missions to take subversion, sabotage and psyops directly to the enemy. Its missions were, and still are, SECRET.

Because of the clandestine nature of their activities, the Green Berets of C&C wore no markings and carried no personal identification whenever they went on mission. Most wore jungle camouflage suits, some dyed black in the man-

ner of the VC "pajamas." The teams could choose to carry personal weapons, which ranged from U.S. M16s or CARs to 12-gauge shotguns with .00 buck and AK-47s. The Americans of C&C knew that if they were wasted across the borders the United States would disavow all knowledge.

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Adcock's team was one of four selected to be "slicked" into TAORs (Tactical Areas of Operations) at or near A Shau in January 1968, after ARVN blocking forces came under attack from NVA regulars. First reports indicated that at least a battalion of enemy regulars was exacting a heavy toll from a company of ARVN "advised" by Americans from the SF.

"They're getting the piss kicked out of them," was how Adcock heard it at a pre-infiltration briefing when he discovered his team was being assigned the hairiest of the four TAORs. "The ARVN have asked to be exfiltrated. We're going to drop your team in with the choppers that are bringing out the ARVNs. Run an area recon and see if you can find out about a buildup in Laos. Some of those trails in Laos are so well-used that Charlie is bringing his convoys down them at night with their lights on."

Hueys (UH-1F helicopters) were in the air when the ARVN company, or at least what was left of it, broke contact and beat a hasty retreat to secure an LZ (Landing Zone) for extraction. Adcock's orders were to drop off in the confusion of the exfil and disappear into the jungle on a stay-behind operation. It was risky business. Adcock's only real hope of avoiding contact rested on the supposition that Charlie wouldn't expect

ops to be run against him so soon in the same area in which he'd just given the ARVN such a beating. At least, C&C was betting the lives of Spike Team *Game Time* that the NVA wouldn't be expecting them.

The Hueys hovered briefly at a thousand feet while two of their number went down to buzz a burn on the side of a mountain the ARVN had selected as an LZ. In their anxiety to be rescued, ARVNs abandoned their defense posts and swarmed into the middle of the burn.

Adcock checked his CAR-15. Around him and in a second chopper, the other members of *Game Time* were doing likewise. The team consisted of team leader Adcock, one other American — radioman Ron Cochran, a buck sergeant — and 10 Montagnards, including an interpreter whose name sounded like Lo Ball. Most of the 'Yards preferred M16s, except for one who carried a Chinese AK-47 taken from a dead Charlie three missions ago.

As a team leader, Sgt. Adcock possessed several traits which had earned

The Hueys swept down. ARVNs swarmed the choppers in their desperation to be evacuated. Adcock's team had to fight its way out of the choppers. The weight of bodies nearly turned one Huey over on its side. The pilot lifted his craft into the sky. One man hung on for nearly a hundred feet before falling off, screaming.

Adcock glimpsed black body bags stacked up like cordwood. American SF advisers wearing sterile cammies stood in the treeline. They had given up attempts to maintain order. Small-arms fire rattled and an M60 machine gun pumped off to the edge of the LZ, near the cliffs.

Adcock rushed his men into the jungle and found a game trail which seemed to lead where he wanted to go. He ran the trail, his team spread out behind him, trying to put as much distance as he could between the burn and themselves before the choppers left and the NVA swarmed in to assess the situation. He was sweating almost instantly, even though it was still early in the morning, and the triple canopy filtered out most of the sun's rays. As he ran, he could on-

thorn forests, bamboo thickets and man-tall elephant grass impede progress. It is a hostile land of leeches, malaria mosquitoes, venomous snakes, tigers and elephants. The climate is a bit like being boiled in a tub of water.

Adcock planned on covering the several hundred meters to Laos by early afternoon. He knew a place on a mountain where he could look directly down on several roads and trails that intersected before branching off to cross into 'Nam. Besides, Charlie in Laos tended to be lax, knowing Americans were officially forbidden to cross over.

But Charlie wasn't *that* lax.

Within an hour after insertion, word was passed up to Adcock, interpreted by Lo Ball: They had picked up NVA trackers on their backtrail. The hills must be swarming with enemy to have picked up trackers so soon!

Charlie was good at tracking. The way he liked to work it was to tag along until nightfall. Then he called in reinforcements. Most patrols discovered like this never made it through the night.

Like everyone else, Adcock dreaded the terrors of a jungle night filled with Charlie. He knew something had to be done within the seven or so hours of remaining daylight. They could either call for extraction or attempt to evade the trackers. He opted for the latter because he never relished the idea of being driven out of a TAOR without at least a fight.

The sergeant mentally took stock of their defenses in case his option failed. His CAR. Ten M16s. An AK. Fifteen mags of ammo each. Nine frags (fragmentation grenades) per man. Twenty claymore mines. What he wouldn't give for a little 60mm mortar and an M60 machine gun.

A game of hide-and-seek began in the jungled mountains along the Laotian border. Adcock called out every dirty fighting trick he knew to try to kill, maim or lose the trackers. He set up hasty ambushes, which the trackers refused to spring; he came around on his backtrail, only to find himself outsmarted; he left claymore booby traps and listened for explosions that never came. As a last resort, he lined out and double-timed straight for the Laotian border. Few NVA could keep up with the American SF men and the wiry 'Yards in a contest of sheer endurance.

With some three hours of daylight remaining, *Game Time* managed to lose its trackers. They found themselves ascending a mountain ridge to look down upon a section of jungle road in Laos. The road appeared well-tended. While the team watched, a convoy of Chinese-made trucks high-balled it down the trail, leaving rooster tails of dry-season dust in its wake. The convoy stopped before crossing the border. Glassing an encamped area, Adcock made out straw hooches and canvas tents partially con-



him a special place among the 'Yards. First of all, he genuinely liked the little mountain people; second, the 'Yards respected tough fighters, and Adcock was one of the toughest; and, third, unlike most Americans, Adcock was the 'Yards' own size. At five-feet-four and garbed in tiger stripes, at a distance Adcock was often mistaken for a 'Yard. Lo Ball, for one, refused to go on mission unless it was led by his favorite American sergeant.

Adcock quickly oriented the terrain spread out below him with his map, noting a ridge of cliffs dropping off to the north of the burn. He thought he detected movement some 400 meters below the cliffs. A mortar round exploded in a minute puff of smoke off to one end of the LZ. Adcock determined to run his team east of there, then pick up a game trail heading south before flanking the NVA and probing into Laos. He pointed out his intentions on the map to Cochran and Lo Ball.

**Of the 10 Montagnards of Spike Team *Game Time*, these seven survived and returned to duty after a night of action during which all were wounded. Two others died and a third lost an arm. Lo Ball is third from right, wearing green beret bearing 5th Special Forces crest.**

ly hope they didn't round a curve and collide with a company of NVA.

Behind them he heard the Hueys settling and rising and buzzing back to safety with their human cargoes. Firing ceased. Soon, the only known friendlies remaining along this particular stretch of the Ho Chi Minh Trail were Adcock, his American radioman and 10 Montagnards. They were relatively safe only as long as Charlie remained unaware of their presence.

It was tough going, even on the game trails. The terrain along the Laos border is some of the roughest in the world. Nothing is level. Everything either runs uphill or down. Jungles of creepers,

cealed by the forest. Astonished, he estimated that at least a battalion of NVA occupied the area, with more troops and equipment arriving daily. Security, he observed, was almost nonexistent. It galled him that conventional American Forces had to observe the neutrality of the bordering nations while Charlie traveled wherever he desired.

Unknown to any of the Americans on the mountain top, Tet was about to be launched.



Montagnards prepare water buffalo feast.

Adcock knew he needed to place the trail under surveillance for a day or two; but to leave men behind meant their deaths. It would be only a matter of hours, a day at the most, before the enemy trackers overtook them. For the first time since arriving in-country more than a year earlier, Adcock found himself wishing for the monsoon season, which would turn the earth into goopy slop and hide their passage through the forest.

Adcock led his men back into Vietnam. Cochran warmed up the PRC-25 and radioed a SITREP (Situation Report) to C&C. C&C requested that the team continue its recon.

Nightfall in the jungle comes instantly — it's like standing in a closet when the door is slammed shut. By then, Adcock knew NVA trackers had found their trail. 'Yard scouts had picked up sounds following them in the jungle. All the team could do was to establish a perimeter in thick forest and hide, hoping to be overlooked.

Adcock put the team on 50-percent alert, then dozed off when Cochran volunteered to take the first watch. He started awake later when Lo Ball nudged him. There was movement all around them. Crawling to Cochran, he whispered: "See if you can wake up arty on the radio."

Cochran ran through his frequencies and managed to contact a battery of 155s. Adcock called for a fire mission and walked the artillery fire to within 200 meters of the team's defenses. Char-

lie withdrew to wait. The intermittent night-long whump of HE (high explosive) was a comforting sound to the 12 men in the jungle, although it also had its dark side: The artillery was telling every NVA within 20 clicks about the team which it protected.

The team moved out an hour before dawn. Each man grasped the LBE (Load Bearing Equipment) of the man in front of him to prevent separation in the blackness. They moved like a giant caterpillar and managed, as Adcock put it, to "skip out on their hotel bill." It took trackers until mid-morning to pick up their spoor. After that, the second day was almost an exact replay of the first.

*Game Time* feinted off to a valley, then circled and made a beeline for Laos, again outdistancing its hounds. C&C wanted to know specific strengths, weapons, units and composition of enemy troops, if possible. Adcock led his tiny band back into the enemy's maw. The team ran a ridge line above the trails while Adcock glassed and took notes.

Well before darkness fell, the sergeant and his men fled back into Vietnam in order to utilize the protection of American artillery and aircraft. He ordered Cochran to radio for their extraction. It was time to get the hell out. By now, he was convinced NVA troops were coordinating with their trackers to surround the team and annihilate it during the night.

The PRC-25 wouldn't work properly. Cochran desperately elicited a few squawks and screams from the set. Nothing else.

"I can't get the range," he explained. "Maybe it's the hills or something blocking waves. Maybe we're being jammed." Sweat ran off his face.

They decided to change locations. It was nearly dark by the time the team reached a low plateau and set up for ammo. Still, Cochran was unable to raise anyone.

Grimly aware of the trackers on its backtrail, *Game Time* double-timed through the forest until darkness forced it to set up a defensive perimeter in the thickest brush available. Each man knew that tonight would find him battling for survival.

Adcock supervised placement of the claymores. He placed one ring of mines 200 meters outside the team's perimeter, rigged to trip wires to give the team advance warning. A second ring was set within 50 meters of the perimeter. The inner claymores were strung together with det cord — enabling them to be command-detonated.

The sergeant withdrew to wait. He wouldn't be dozing off tonight. Nothing can spook the imagination more than lying in total blackness waiting to kill or be killed. Twelve men had little chance of holding back the waves of commies Ad-

cock knew were concentrated along the border. The SF team was doomed without support. Still, that didn't mean the 'Yards wouldn't give a good accounting for themselves.

The NVA almost always attacked in a pattern. First would come probes in force to locate the team's exact position. Then Charlie would mortar, if he had mortars. After that, the attacks started. Adcock had coordinated with the 'Yards to form their night caterpillar and move if accurate mortar fire began.

Cochran continued to sweat over his radio, lying on his stomach on the jungle floor, holding the mouthpiece to muffle his voice. He had about given up on Mother Roost, their base, and was now concentrating on trying to raise an artillery battery or SPECTRE, a C-130 gunship, heavily armed with 7.62mm miniguns and 20mm Vulcan cannons. Able to remain aloft for hours, the big plane, which sometimes flew the skies over South Vietnam all night long, had proved to be the salvation of many a hopelessly outnumbered Special Forces team. The radio was their only hope.

The team didn't have long to wait before one of the outer claymores exploded. The explosion, Adcock knew, would concentrate the NVA probe. Charlie liked to draw blood before he withdrew to let the mortars soften up the enemy.



Staff Sgt. Gene Adcock on mountaintop overlooking Laos (in background). This photograph was taken during one of Adcock's earlier PRAIRIE FIRE missions when Spike Teams strolled casually along Vietnam/Laotian border with little interference from VC or NVA. His weapon is an M16.

Another mine blew. The team heard Charlie rustling in the bush on two sides. Adcock waited to detonate the inner ring of claymores until he guessed the enemy was close and the mines could do the most damage. Once he fired the claymores, the team was left with only its personal weapons.

He triggered the inner ring when Charlie sounded as though he were actually walking into their midst. For several seconds the team was surrounded by a ring of fire. Men screamed. Then,

muzzle flashes blinked in the darkness as the clatter of small-arms fire sent bullets cutting swaths back and forth.

Adcock scurried from man to man, directing fire toward areas where he saw the most muzzle flashes. "Slow fire! Slow fire! Conserve ammo! Shoot there! There!" Lo Ball was right behind him, bumping into him, translating, directing fire himself.

The sergeant emptied one magazine, slapped in a fresh, heard Charlie maneuvering to surround them. Outer perimeter claymores continued to explode as more NVA rushed into the fray and stumbled over trip wires. Adcock and his men fought with a fury born of desperation.

"Let's move!" Adcock roared above the battle when it became apparent that the probe had become an attack intent on overrunning them. Their only chance for survival was to fight and run, fight and run.

Heedless of his own safety, Adcock ran, stumbling around the perimeter, tapping each man to his feet. Grabbing the LBE of the man ahead, the team lined out and crashed away through the night, the sounds of their movement concealed by the NVA themselves, who now seemed to be fighting each other. The team left most of its equipment behind, taking only weapons, ammo and the radio.

Adcock wormed into a particularly dense thicket 100 meters to the rear. He dared not go farther, lest their movement be detected or they stumble head-on into more of the enemy. Behind them, grenades exploded as Charlie continued the fight all by himself.

Cochran threw an antenna into a tree and began fussing over his radio while Adcock placed the 'Yards on defense. "Conserve ammo," he warned. "This may go on 'til daylight."

Although chances were good the 'Yards would die tonight, not one of them showed panic. Despite their desperate plight, Lo Ball managed to quip, "Gene, you mebbe say we circle for Indian now?"

Like all the Montagnards who had never seen movies until the Americans came, Lo Ball liked Westerns best. The 'Yards stood as a body to cheer whenever the cavalry raced to the trapped hero's rescue.

"I'd say the wagons are circled," Adcock agreed.

When the team leader returned to Cochran, he found the radioman chattering excitedly into his headset.

"It's the Air Force!" he said. "An A-1E picked me up. He said he had napalm. I gave him our coordinates. He'll be here in five minutes."

Adcock felt hope for the first time since nightfall. He grabbed the radio headset just as Charlie was discovering his prey had vanished. Rifle fire spat-

tered into isolated shots, then into a stunned silence. The A-1E pilot wanted Adcock to throw a grenade to pinpoint the team's location, although he admitted he probably wouldn't be able to spot it in the dense foliage.

"Airplane! Airplane!" Adcock growled in exasperation, momentarily forgetting that the craft had introduced itself as Eagle. "A grenade right now would draw Charlie a roadmap to us."

"Game Time, I don't have a FAC to spot for me!"

A FAC, a slow-flying O-1, is used by fighter-bombers to find and pinpoint ground targets. Without it, the best an A-1E could do was bomb a general area.

Adcock and the Air Force pilot finally worked out a dangerous compromise. The pilot would drop a napalm round within the general coordinates occupied by the team. Adcock would direct further rounds from the first. If the first round landed on *Game Time*, well . . . It was better than doing nothing and waiting for Charlie to regroup.

Tense minutes passed as Adcock waited for the first round to explode.

"Game Time, this is Eagle. Did you see the round?"

"Negative, Eagle, negative. Try again."

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## Explosions Whumped Through The Darkness

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A hundred meters away Charlie was rummaging through the team's discarded equipment. Adcock wished he had had time to rig grenade booby traps.

"Game Time, did you see it that time?"

"Negative, Eagle. It was still out of our area."

Charlie obviously had not seen the rounds fall either. From somewhere off in the jungle Adcock heard the telltale *whoosh! whoosh!* of mortar rounds leaving tubes. Charlie had probably figured out that his prey could have gone in only one direction, and not far. Explosions began whumping in the jungle several hundred meters off the team's flank. Adcock lost no time in getting the A-1E back on the radio.

"Eagle, can you see the mortar blasts? That's them firing at us!"

"I'll make a pass. I think I can see 'em!"

Adcock quickly gave the pilot his azimuth and the suspected azimuth of the enemy from the known location of the exploding mortar shells. The mortars were walking nearer. Some of the explosions were less than 100 meters away when the A-1E came shrieking in, making the tree tops tremble. Adcock thought the 'Yards were going to stand

up in a body and cheer.

The plane made another pass and dumped napalm. It flared into liquid fire. Adcock got back on the radio and directed the plane on several more passes until it had exhausted its arsenal. Then the plane climbed back into the night sky, radioing: "*Game Time*, I'm empty. We have a FAC and another A-1 en-route, ETA in 30 minutes. Can you hold out?"

"Do we have a choice, Eagle?"

"Good luck, *Game Time*." And the aircraft was gone.

Napalm fires quickly died down to an occasional distant crackle of burning wood. Adcock doubted the A-1E's bombing runs were accurate enough to be really effective. He was right. Minutes after Charlie realized the team had been abandoned, he began closing in on the trapped Americans and their brave 'Yards. From the sounds in the night, Adcock estimated the enemy had brought up perhaps a company and strung it out on a line 10 meters between men. He rolled over on the ground and pulled the pin from a frag. He held the spoon closed and the grenade at his side, waiting, attempting to pinpoint Charlie's advance. Thirty minutes was a helluva long time to wait for help.

Adcock waited until the enemy was literally breathing down their throats before he gave the signal to fight by springing to one knee and hurling his grenade at the nearest sound. A scream accompanied the explosion. The battle was on!

Other grenades popped. Small-arms fire rattled. Adcock sprayed the jungle in front of him with his CAR, and then moved almost casually from man to man, directing fire at enemy muzzle flashes. It was almost as if they were fighting phantoms. In an entire night of fighting, not one enemy actually saw another. Somewhere to Adcock's right a 'Yard moaned and fell thrashing in the brush.

When Adcock thought they were going to be overrun, whistles sounded and Charlie withdrew. Crawling, Adcock quickly checked out his men, finding one 'Yard WIA with a round through his stomach. The American bound the wound but withheld morphine. He was contemplating a night composed of movement and wanted the wounded 'Yard able to get to his feet.

The vicious mortaring resumed. The first mortar round ripped up a tree and sent it crashing down on top of the team. Adcock and the others gripped the trembling earth with clawing hands. The NVA gunners had their range. Adcock knew he had to do something fast or risk losing the entire patrol.

"Move it! Move it! Move it!" He was on his feet, shouting as he raced around in the darkness dragging men to their  
*Continued on page 75*





# Rainbow Chasing 'Nam Vets

# OIL PATCH PILOTS

by Galen L. Geer

**T**IME was against them. Hurricane Jeannie gained in force and fury by the hour as it churned its way toward the helpless oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. At Pearland, Texas, messages crackled in the radio room of Houston Helicopter (HH). Men plotted the storm's position on the map and instructions were radioed to pilots flying out to the rigs.

Bill Christopher, director of Houston Helicopter, was nervous. "There aren't enough helicopters or pilots in the entire Gulf area to get those men to shore fast enough. As the storm moves in we'll run out of time. Soon those pilots will be flying right into the storm to get the crews to safety.

"By the time they are plucking the last men off the rigs, you can expect the waves to be breaking over the landing pad and the wind blowing like hell. There is no place more dangerous for a helicopter and pilot than a rig in the face of a storm. The painted metal gets wet, the wind blows, men try to climb on the chopper, cables are blowing and the pilot can't afford to lose any power. If something goes wrong, he's got to have that chopper up to enough power to start flying right then — a few seconds could kill him or the men around him."

Christopher could feel better about one detail, however. Today oil companies don't wait until the storm has hit to begin evacuation of crews. Five years ago, they waited. Often it was too late. Delay proved to be too costly.

While the on-duty pilots along the coast were busy flying between shore and the rigs, others were shuttling choppers around the Pearland base to more secure moorings. Urgency pervaded the complex. Everyone there had experienced hurricanes before.

Houston Helicopters is one of a handful of firms scattered along the Gulf States which specialize in providing helicopter service to the oil companies.

Pilots who fly for these firms have become known as "patch pilots." They are among the few in domestic America whose daily jobs are filled with a sense of urgency, the element of danger and adventure.

"When you're a patch pilot," explained HH pilot Rob Robinson (nicknamed Ugly Rob), "you're sure as hell not a bus driver. You never know what you're going to be flying for, or to."

That is some consolation for these men who traded their military uniforms for the drab blue of civilian flying. They get little respect away from the oil rigs. They are called cheap-rent rainbow chasers, and they have to spend half of their time away from home and family.

"Hell," explained Ugly Rob, "I've got aviation fuel for blood. What else could I do but fly?"

A dedication to flying is not enough to join one of these specialized firms in oil country. It is demanding work and often dangerous.

"We've got a lot of job openings," Christopher explained, "and a hell of a lot of pilots have applied. But very few of them qualify and so we are always short of pilots."

Most of the pilots at HH and other flying companies have been trained by the military. Christopher ran down a long list of reasons why former military pilots have the edge over civilian-trained pilots.

"First off is who we are flying for. The oil companies want so many hundred hours of flying. Then the insurance people don't give us a premium break on a man unless he has 1,500 hours of flying. Because civilian helicopter flight training costs as much as five times more than learning to fly a fixed-wing aircraft, very few people can afford to rack up enough hours to get a job."

Those are not the only reasons. Houston Helicopters has 34 helicopters in service. These range from Bell Jetrangers through Bell 47Gs, 206Bs and Sikorsky S-76s. Unless a man is experienced in flying several different choppers, the companies are not interested in his services.

"A guy could crawl into one of our 206s and do \$75,000 worth of damage in 60 seconds if he didn't know what he was doing," says Christopher. "I can't afford the risk."



BACKGROUND: UH-1 Huey gunship on ground in II Corps, RVN, in 1966. LEFT: UH-1 Huey choppers make attacking run in Mekong Delta in 1968. ABOVE: UH-1 Huey gunships return fire during night attack at forward field post in II Corps area in 1966. Photo taken by flare light from inside perimeter. Photos: Wayne Geer

Compatibility is another necessary factor in patch-flying. Over the years, the pilots have developed their own work schedule in which they fly for seven days straight and are off for seven days. During the seven flying days they

usually live with other pilots. If they are flying from one of the company's remote bases along the coast they also share a cramped apartment or trailer with the other crewmen.

"I don't care if a man has the softest

flying touch in the business," Christopher says, "if there is a personality conflict with other pilots he's out. Military men have learned to live with each other — civilians don't have to. For

## THE BLADE AND WING BAR

*Stories about helicopters and their pilots have become legendary — and the Blade and Wing Bar in Mineral Wells, Texas, is a part of this flying legend. There is not a chopper pilot alive who was trained in Mineral Wells at Fort Woulters who has not visited the bar at least once — and many who trained there will return for a visit. They sit and talk with one of their own, Pat Malone, or leave messages for friends they are trying to find. They know the message will get to him. Pat will see to it. He's one of their own — a legend.*

On 8 June 1958 at 0900, Army Chief Warrant Officer Pat (Leroy) Malone and his co-pilot, 1st. Lt. Mike Ellis, began their pre-flight check under gray skies. They were to fly seven officers of the Third Armored Division's DIVARTY from Frankfurt to Grafenwohr, West Germany. Ranking officer among the passengers was Maj. James Zeller, artillery training officer for the Third Division. Arrival time in Grafenwohr was 1130. The helicopter never made it. Pat Malone and the others got there 42 days later.

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was at its height. The Russians were trying to force the United States to recognize a communist government in East Germany. America refused, insisting upon the agreement put together in the final months of WWII, an agreement that would reunite Germany after occupation. Tensions mounted.

As Malone piloted his Sikorsky S-55 through the storm-tossed skies, he had to rely on his instruments. They picked up a new radio beacon. Thinking it was Grafenwohr, he followed the signal. Suddenly he found himself surrounded by communist aircraft which were forcing him down in East Germany. On the way to the ground, he and his passengers destroyed what classified material they could.

The nine Americans were seized by the communists and marched off to a prison near Leipzig, East Germany. The helicopter was left near Zwickaw, in the field where Malone had made his forced landing.

The communists used Malone and the others as pawns in an international chess game. They wanted the

United States to deal with the East Germans for the men's return, as a signal to the world that the United States recognized the communist government. American officials refused. After 42 days of haggling, during which time the Reds pumped the Americans for information about their jobs — with no success — the East German Red Cross and European Red Cross signed an agreement for their return. The United States had to pay the East Germans \$1,748 to cover the expenses of the Americans' imprisonment.

Pat Malone went right back to flying. When the Vietnam War exploded, he found himself in the thick of it, making two tours as a pilot. In 1973, after 20 years of flying, Malone retired. Like many other pilots, he had fond memories of Mineral Wells. As an instructor, he had led thousands of young men through the demanding training program at Fort Woulters. He returned to the town and worked for a few months at the fort. When it began to close down, he became a truck-driver. One day, a few years later, as he drove past the Blade and Wing Bar, he started dreaming about owning it — and soon after he fulfilled his dream and bought the bar.

The Blade And Wing, during the height of the Vietnam War, was the place where pilots and would-be pilots hung out. Its entrance is marked by two crossed rotor blades — and for Malone it is home.

The men who crowd into the bar today are a younger breed. Many learned about the bar from their fathers, who have retired from the Army and returned to Mineral Wells. They don't have a chopper pilot's cocky gait and their hair is longer. They wear cowboy hats and boots. None are pilots and most can't ride a horse. They respect the bar's history and Pat Malone. They hear the stories of what the town was like during the war.

"When the dinner bell rang at the end of the day," Malone says, "the skies would be full of choppers. Sometimes as many as 800 of them all heading home at the same time. That night the men would get together and head for town. A lot of them came here. They knew when they finished their training they were going to war."

Today the Blade And Wing is one

of the few operational areas left at Fort Woulters; the rest of the fort is abandoned, with run-down buildings and a huge, cracked air field overgrown with weeds. Some buildings, however, have been turned into factories. Still, the chopper pilots who fought in Vietnam drift back into Mineral Springs and find the bar. They sit and talk with Malone, meet old friends and leave word for others. Some are looking for flying jobs; they leave their names, hoping someone will call. Men who have jobs available come in looking for pilots. They need the best. Malone knows where to send them, who's out of work and who can do the job.

Others come in to try to find out what went wrong with their lives. They remember too much and can't understand how they could be heroes one day and bums or rainbow chasers the next. Too many of them drink their troubles away, surrounded by the memories of their flying years.

To the casual visitor the Blade And Wing may look like a dive, a honky-tonk filled with meaningless flying junk. To thousands of combat-hardened pilots, it is a home filled with memories.

On Saturday night, while too-loud music from a country-and-western band blared and vibrated the wooden walls, I sat with a small group of retired pilots and toasted the war. As I stood to leave, one of them reached out and grabbed my arm. I looked down at him. He had been drinking too long, too much.

"They've forgotten, you know," he said slowly.

"Who?" I asked.

"All the grunts, the American people. They've all forgotten."

I knew what he was talking about. I didn't want to say anything. Another pilot, Maj. Cleve Clark, took his hand away and passed the man a beer.

Clark looked up: "He flew medevacs for three tours. Then he came home and found out no one wanted him. It's the same old story."

I nodded and turned toward the door. Outside the Texas sky was filled with stars. I could still hear the music. I tried to think of the stars as helicopters ten years before, couldn't and got into my car. The crossed rotor blades disappeared in my rear-view mirror as I drove into the night.

—G.L.G.

us it is just another reason why we prefer them.

Patch-flying is fairly new to aviation. For that reason helicopter pilots must bear the brunt of flying jokes. One of the most popular tells the way to find a helicopter pilot who flies the patches in a supermarket: "He's the guy wearing sunglasses, a hundred-dollar watch and trying to buy a six-pack with a two-party check."

Patch-flying seems to attract pilots who learned to fly during the Vietnam War. It is flying that attracts them, and the chance to get paid for it, even if the pay is low by most standards.

"A good pilot, as hard as it is to find him," Christopher says, "is worth a hell of a lot more than \$1,525 a month to start. But, that's what we pay them. We can't get enough out of our customers to pay any more. That is not much for pucker-factor flying when a pilot in another field of flying may make that much or more in a single week."

Pucker-factor flying is routine in the oil patches. Jim Watson, a former Army pilot, who took up patch-flying because it was one of the few non-bus-driving flying jobs he could find, told SOF about his first flight over water.

"There're no landmarks out there. Nothing to mark your location with. The first time I flew out to a rig they gave me the heading to fly and the speed I was to fly. The rig, I was told, should be out there if I followed those instructions.

"I took off, crossed the coast and kept flying. It wasn't long until I was surrounded by water. I kept going on that heading at the indicated speed, and every few minutes I'd look at my watch. Finally I'd flown the right amount of

time and I began to look around. Sure enough, there was the rig. But that doesn't work every time."

If a pilot takes off, and if a crosswind develops of which he's not aware when he is halfway to the rig, or if his instruments are slightly off, he can miss his target.

"When that happens," Watson says, "you turn around and go back. With luck you'll make it."

*Continued on page 78*



**TOP:** Bell twin-turbine helicopter on oil-rig platform in Gulf of Mexico. **ABOVE:** Barge stands by while chopper retrieves downed bird after pilot safely crashlanded in Gulf. Pucker-factor flying is routine part of patch pilot's job. **RIGHT:** Pilot and ground crew monitor progress of Hurricane Jeannie from radio room of Houston Helicopter. Photos: Galen L. Geer





SOF's Big John Donovan: unofficial point man for windowless bars.



"The hell with parachutes; where are the girls?"



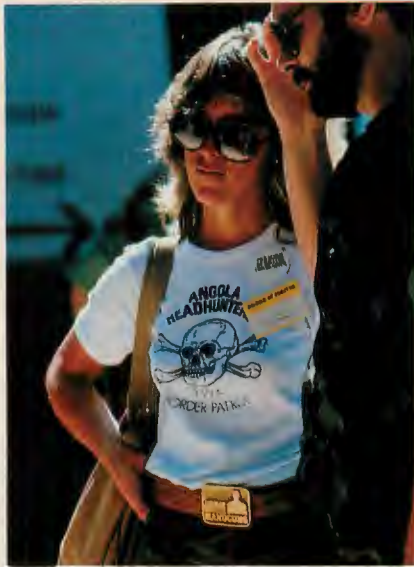
It may be long and formal but we doubt you'll see this dress at any debutante ball.



One of the more attractive items on the DZ other than parachutes.



Registration fee was waived for this conventioneer.



"Combat Handguns" Associate Publisher Ginny Commander and SOF's Jim Coyne ponder why they are in Scottsdale.



SOF Publisher Bob Brown and Match Director Jake Jatras discuss functioning of .45 under water.



"Sorry! Thought it was the harness I was tightening." We should be so lucky.



SOF's Martial Arts Editor Bob Taylor does his thing.



And a few bikers showed up, in cammies, naturally.





1st Airborne personnel give personal attention to student. It's not difficult to figure out why.



Medal of Honor recipient Fred Zabitovsky gladhands Special Forces Reserve HALO (High Altitude, Low Opening) team that jumped into area behind convention hotel.



A hell of a way to get to your beer.

# SOF '81 Convention Random Shots

*Continued on page 86*



SOF's Publisher Bob Brown leads off early morning beer run for those few souls without hangovers.



"Do I really have my feet together?"



Don McNabb, head of M-S Safari Arms, congratulates Ray Neal, winner of pistol phase of SOF match.



Two law-enforcement officers look forward to their turn to bail out of a perfectly good airplane.



"And, yes, Virginia, there were some ladies at the second convention."



Wide variety of T-Shirts were for sale in the exhibition hall.



SOF banquet was attended by 875 conventioners.

# MAKESHIFT MAYHEM

## Unarmed Combat With Combs & Keys

When caught in the open, throw debris such as grass or sand in assailant's face and follow up with kick.

Text by Ken R. Pence  
Photos by Tim Allen



Police officers can use ticket book as well as pen to fend off attack. Jab at face, throat, solar plexis or groin.



Pen becomes ready-made weapon when assailant goes for police officer's gun. Jab at eyes, face area or under jaw at neck.

**T**HE more sophisticated a weapon becomes, the more parts can fail. The weapon then becomes a near-useless piece of metal, wood and plastic. If you have ever been involved in a life-threatening situation where you depended on a firearm that failed to fire, then you understand the fear and frustration such a situation can cause. The mere thought of it can provoke a nightmare. (Many clean and oil their weapons right then.)

Remember, men killed men before the invention of fully automatic weapons (though it is hard to conceive). Indeed, knives, clubs and other non-firearms still kill scores of people. This article is dedicated to individuals who do not have "proper" weapons and must make do with what is at hand. Makeshift weapons offer a means to survive or initiate an attack without skill in the martial arts or physical strength. Since hand-to-hand combat training has been nearly eliminated in many branches of the U.S. armed forces, knowledge of makeshift weapons has become as vital to the soldier in the field as it is to the businessperson on the street.

For the purposes of this article, assume your boot knife is in your other boots and your back-up gun is in your other trousers. Imagine you have been taken prisoner or, for some reason, you cannot get to your main armament. If you are a police officer, imagine you were writing someone a ticket when you were knocked down and had your gun jerked from its holster. If you are a housewife, imagine you are fighting an intruder who is larger and stronger.

### **A Pen In Hand Is Worth Two Knives In Their Scabbards**

If you were writing a traffic ticket on the street or simply writing a letter to mom, you are already armed. A pen in the hand is worth two knives still in their scabbards. Plastic ballpoint pens are best used in a jabbing motion that produces a straight-line thrust. The cheapest pen usually holds up for two good jabs before it breaks. Hold the pen like a classroom pointer with the fingers curled around the pen and the thumb on top. Hold the length of the pen parallel to the forearm with the wrist locked. Jab the pen or pencil at the assailant's eyes, throat, general face area or, up, under the jaw at the neck, aiming the tip up and into the skull. Any strike to the face will cause an attacker to snap his head back and bring the hands up to protect the face. (Imagine a "writes first time, every time" commercial using this jab test.) The top of the hollow in the throat is also an excellent place to strike and is sometimes called a "layman's tracheotomy."

Jabbing to the exposed back of the hand or wrist will make almost anyone let go of you. Sometimes you can use the pencil (or pen) to the armpit, groin or thigh. All jabs are an excellent means to get your attacker's undivided attention. Heavy winter clothing such as jackets can prevent a pen from penetrating. If you are really tough, try a pen in all the body's nerve centers and see where it hurts most.

Keys held in the hand are also a good, though unobtrusive, weapon. If you place the keys between the fingers in the webbing of your hand and then punch your assailant, you may tear the webbing of the fingers. A better technique when leaving a building to go to your car is to take the door or car key and place it under your index finger. This mentally prepares you for attack and puts a weapon in your hand. It eliminates fumbling for keys at your apartment or car door. (If you can't unlock the door easily, then you are not sober enough to drive.) The key is used to jab or slash to the eyes or general facial area.

A coat hanger can be held by one end and whipped across the face. It leaves a stinging, near-blinding welt that often cuts the skin. If facing an attack when caught out on the street without weapons, search for rocks or other debris to throw. Because some urban areas provide only concrete, you may have to find another alternative. Search through your possessions for a comb. A nylon comb is stiff but not sharp — and it is a decent weapon. The comb is held with the teeth facing outward from the palm. Even a 25-cent comb will do. Jab the stiff end into your assailant's face, throat or groin. By bracing the back of the comb, you can slash across the face near the eyes to leave a shallow, stinging cut. Cuts from a comb are similar to bites by a human: Both frequently become badly infected. If the comb is a rattail, simply use the long, pointed end.

No weapon is useful if it is buried in the bottom of a purse, pocket or drawer. When you need a handy weapon, you are going to need it badly — have it at hand. Many women carry hatpins or knitting needles. Would-be muggers do not relish meeting anyone so armed. A soldier on leave may be without weapons in foreign cities where Americans are liked only as targets for terrorist beatings and assassinations. A soft-drink, catsup, wine or liquor bottle across an attacker's temple, behind his ear, across the bridge of his nose or at the base of his skull will often make him see things more your way. Glass ashtrays jabbed at the same points or across the back of the hand can work wonders.

Many people carry weapons without knowing it. A co-ed on the way to class and a supply sergeant are similar: They both are carrying weapons. Textbooks can be held with both hands and the cor-

ners jabbed into the face, throat (works great), solar plexus or groin. The sergeant's clipboard is one heck of a weapon when deployed to the same areas. Legal pads, newspapers or magazines can be rolled up so you can poke with their ends.

A belt with a buckle is handy but takes skill in close quarters — you better practice if you think you might miss on your first try. An ammo pouch filled with dirt, sand or rocks at one end of a web belt is also effective. Wet sand or a bar of soap tied in a sock makes a good sap.

If near an assailant's vehicle, break off his radio antenna and stab or whip with it (to add insult to injury). Street gangs have used this technique for years.

Spit in your attacker's face. Spit chewing gum or tobacco to enhance the effect and, as his head jerks back, hit him with a follow-up strike (see "Poking Fun," SOF, January '81).

### **Bash With A Belt Or Hit With A Helmet**

Throw your cap at your target or hit him with your helmet. Entrenching tools (small shovels to you civilians) are great to hit with and require little skill. If you don't injure yourself when opening the current U.S. issue, you will notice that they are quite heavy. Hold the tool by either side of the triangular base handle and slash, chop and jab toward body nerve centers. A note of warning: Your arm will tire if you have to hack many infidels.

Use liquids to disorient or temporarily blind an attacker. Throw hot coffee or grease on him and then hit him with a follow-up kick. Liquor or wine (although wasteful) can be thrown in the face to temporarily blind a person. Then hold the bottom of the now-empty glass and poke with the top rim. Save your beer pop-top tabs and slash an attacker's face with them. Throwing gas, lighter fluid or kerosene on an assailant and threatening to light it is quite effective. (I know a woman who prevented a rape with this ploy. She was hauling a jug of gas back to her car when she was *kindly* offered a ride.)

Use whatever weapons you can get your hands on. If you are a woman on the way to work, *you must remember that you are never defenseless*. There are weapons all around you. Experiment with them.

If you do nothing else — put your key under your index finger when you go out. Nobody said you had to fight fair.







Omega Group Secretary/Treasurer Alan Brown shooting machine-carbine version of AUG (Army Universal Gun) with 16-inch barrel length. Note 1.5x optical sight built directly into carrying handle on receiver housing.



# STEYR'S FIRING LINE

## SOF Staffers & Cops Shoot New Egyptian AKM

The International Sportsman's Club in Broomfield, Colo., 10 miles south of Boulder, was the recent site of a law-enforcement weapons demonstration jointly sponsored by SOF and the Steyr Daimler Puch of America Corporation. More than 50 participants, including SOF staff, Steyr personnel, FBI agents and local law-enforcement officials braved blustery, bone-chilling high winds to send more than 3,000 rounds down range through 18 weapons representing Steyr's entire police and military product line.

Most of the attention was focused on Steyr's latest coup, an Egyptian-made AKM assault rifle. Two models will be offered: a full-auto variant, available to law-enforcement agencies only, and a redesigned semi-auto version, already approved for importation by the BATF, which will finally put a genuine Kalashnikov assault rifle within reach of all military-weapons collectors. The

laminated wood-stocked version of the semi-auto AKM, which is available right now, carries a fairly hefty price tag of \$1,275. A folding-stock AKM-S will be available in the future, and its projected price is \$1,525.

First produced in 1959, the AKM is an updated version of the AK-47. The forged and milled receiver of the AK-47 has been replaced by a sheet-metal U section that makes extensive use of riveting to hold the internal components in place. The slides on which the bolt travels are pressed out and spot-welded inside the receiver walls. These changes have resulted in reduced manufacturing costs and a reduction in weight of more than 2½ pounds.

A complex rate reducer of dubious value was also added to the AKM. Externally the AKM is most readily distinguished from its AK-47 predecessor by the following: 1) omission of the four gas-escape holes on each side of the gas-cylinder; 2) the lower handguard has

prominent finger swells on each side; 3) a compensator has been fitted to the muzzle; 4) there is a small recess on each side of the receiver directly over the magazine which acts as a magazine guide; and finally, 5) the riveted sheet metal receiver itself.

For all intents and purposes the new Steyr-distributed AKM is an example of a Russian-manufactured Kalashnikov. Produced by the Maadi Company for Engineering Industries, Maadi, Cairo, Egypt, the plant was built by the Soviets before their abrupt expulsion from Egypt. Key Egyptian personnel were trained in the Soviet Union and the plant was initially supervised by the Russians. A similar arrangement with Sweden resulted in the well-made Hakim rifle, a 7.92mm version of the semi-auto Ljungman. Swedish machinery from the Carl Gustaf arsenal was set up in Egypt and used in the manufacture of the Hakim.

The Egyptian AKM is in caliber



UPPER LEFT: SOF Art Director Craig Nunn fires full-auto version of Steyr's latest: Egyptian-made AKM. Weapon is also available in semi-auto version. Cyclic rate is 600 rpm. LEFT: SOF Mail Foreman Reg Houlihan about to let loose with semi-auto version of Egyptian-made AKM. Test weapon possessed usual smooth, crisp trigger pull characteristic of all Kalashnikovs. ABOVE CENTER: SOF Associate Editor John Metzger fires full-auto AKM. Weapon manufactured by Egyptian Maadi Company in plant built by Soviets before their expulsion from Egypt. An updated version of the AK-47, AKM uses same 30-rd. magazine. ABOVE: Robert K. Brown fires FNC Carbine in full-auto mode. Typical state-of-the-art assault rifle in 5.56mm NATO, FNC is gas-operated and has two-position gas regulator for normal and adverse conditions. Unique spring-loaded cocking handle bounces open and closed during firing sequence. BELOW: Approximately 50 participants, including SOF staff, FBI agents and local law-enforcement officials, observed and fired Steyr's complete line of police and military weaponry at International Sportsmen's Club in Broomfield, Colo.

7.62x39mm ComBloc and its official Egyptian designation is ARM (Automatic Rifle Mizr). Until recently, owners of the thousands of SKS carbines brought back from Vietnam and the very small handful who possess registered AK-47s and RPDs have been relegated to using Finnish Lapua ammunition in these weapons. Although high in quality, it is expensive (45 cents per round) and difficult to reload as it is Berdan-primed. Norma sells Boxer-primed ammo in this caliber for almost 85 cents per round (but, do they really sell any at this price?) and Midway Arms Inc. (Dept. SOF, 7450 Old Highway 40 West, Columbia, MO 65201) is now marketing un-primed 7.62x39mm brass at a cost of 45 cents per case. Attempting to overcome this dilemma, Steyr is importing Hirtenberger brand, Austrian-made, reloadable Boxer-primed 7.62x39mm ammunition which will sell for \$10.25 for a box of 20 (51¼¢ per loaded round).



by Peter G. Kokalis

The Egyptian AKM is well-made in all regards. Wood-to-metal fit (what little there is on a rifle of this type) was quite excellent for a military rifle. The laminated wood stock and handguards, so typical of Russian-made Kalashnikovs, are more appealing than the "orange crate" grade wood found on Chinese and North Korean variants. The exterior metal surfaces of the rifle and magazines are painted black by a hot dip process, so common abroad and so offensive to American sensibilities. A cleaning rod and one magazine are standard. Options include a sling, butt-stock cleaning kit, plastic oil can, bayonet, extra magazines and a three-magazine pouch.

The AKM weighs slightly less than seven pounds empty and 8½ pounds complete with bayonet and loaded magazine. It is short, light and easy to maneuver. Its impact on contemporary military small-arms designs has been enormous.

Operation of both the semi-auto and selective-fire versions was flawless. The smooth, crisp trigger pull, so characteristic of almost all the Kalashnikovs I have fired, was much in evidence. With a theoretical cyclic rate of 600 rounds per minute, the actual attainable firing rates are about 100 rpm in full-auto and 40 rpm in the semi-auto mode. Continuous full-auto firing up to a maximum of 200 rounds is possible before cook-offs will occur as a consequence of overheating. Extremely tight lock-up is inherent in the Kalashnikov design. The contemplated rifle and barrel life is in excess of 15,000 rounds, which is about the norm by current military small-arms standards.

Because of the high prevailing winds during our firing, bench-rest accuracy testing was not possible. In spite of its short barrel and short sight radius, the Kalashnikov rifle offers the average user accuracy comparable to current competing weapon systems out to 300 yards. In the hands of an expert rifleman, its deficiencies are more apparent. Firing short full-auto bursts, the common soldier will usually produce smaller groups with an AK than he could achieve with an assault rifle in 7.62mm NATO, but larger than those possible with a weapon in 5.56mm NATO. The compensator effectively controls both muzzle climb and the normal tendency of the rifle to slide off to the right during recoil (when used by a right-handed shooter).

Overall, this Egyptian AKM is pleasant to shoot, loaded with mystique, and sure to become an instant

success in its semi-auto version.

Odd in appearance, Steyr's entry in the assault sweepstakes, the AUG (*Automatisches Universal Gewehr*: Automatic Universal Rifle, or Army Universal Gun) nevertheless represents a thoughtful design effort that has been well-executed. Developed over a period of eight years in close cooperation with the Austrian army, the AUG is of the so-called "bull-pup" configuration. Bull-pup designs, which place the chamber, ejection port and magazine directly under the firer's face, offer a short overall length at the expense of viable left-handed use. Since as many as 20 percent of the world's population are thought to be left-handed, this is no small consideration. Left-handed ejection can be achieved with the AUG by changing the bolt and ejection port, hardly a practical solution for a general-issue battle weapon.

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### STG 77: Simple Design, Light Weight, Easy Maintenance

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Placed in production by the end of 1977, it is called the STG 77 (*Sturmgewehr*: assault rifle) in the Austrian army where it replaced the STG 58 (FN FAL). Compulsory military service is only six months in Austria. When war comes, the Austrians feel it will be only a matter of days for them. Simplicity of design and a short training period are therefore important design specifications. Austria's mountainous terrain enhances the importance of light weight and ease of maintenance. The AUG design and the change to caliber 5.56mm NATO complement these requirements. Training with the AUG requires only 60 percent of the time formerly required to produce proficiency with the FN FAL. However, I suspect this is largely a function of the change to the smaller caliber. The Austrians further contend that two heavy-barreled AUGs are more efficient at 600 meters than one MG 74 (the MG 42 in caliber 7.62mm NATO), a statement guaranteed to elicit loud howls from many corners.

Gas-operated, the AUG features an eight-lug bolt and extensive use of plastics, not only in the stock and magazine, but the hammer mechanism as well. Four interchangeable barrel systems are offered: a 14-inch Commando version, a 16-inch ma-

chine-carbine length, the normal 20-inch assault-rifle configuration, and a 24-inch heavy barrel for use as a Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW). The barrels have a twist of 1:9 inches. This is a compromise between the 1:7 inches now used in the M16A1 and the 1:12 inches which will be required for use with the new Belgian FN SS109 bullet. The see-through type ribbed-plastic magazine holds 30 rounds. While I am not an advocate of plastic magazines, Steyr insists theirs passed a 1½-year spring-load test with no evidence of deformation.

The integral 1.5x optical sight, which also serves as a carrying handle, can be replaced with the 6x Kahles scope for sniping use. The AUG utilizes no selector level but instead a "pull-through" trigger system. Initial engagement of the trigger produces semi-auto fire. Continued rearward pressure on the trigger yields the full-auto mode. The cyclic rate is about 700 rounds per minute. The safety can be disengaged by the basal portion of the trigger finger without removing the finger from the trigger. This permits the weapon to be placed in operation quickly. As we might expect from an alpine people, the trigger guard will accommodate an entire gloved hand.

In addition to Austria, the AUG will be encountered in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Yeman and several other Middle Eastern countries.

Looking like a cross between a MAC 10 and the Uzi, the 9mm Steyr MPi 69 submachine gun is internally a much simpler weapon than the Uzi. The receiver is constructed of sheet metal welded into a hollow box. The lower receiver is a nylon molding which contains the trigger housing and the magazine well. The top of the receiver is fitted for the Single-point sight. The 10-inch barrel is cold-forged on a rifling mandrel, a much cheaper process than the usual button rifling. The bolt is of the wrap-around type, as in the Uzi, and has a slot cut on the right side for ejection. Firing from the open bolt, the MPi 69 has a fixed firing pin for advanced primer ignition as found on most modern blowback submachine guns.

The cyclic rate is a very comfortable and controllable 550 rounds per minute. In fact, its favorable handling characteristics are the MPi 69's most salient feature. The absence of muzzle climb during sustained bursts is remarkable. As with the AUG, the MPi 69 makes use of the unique "pull-through" trigger concept. Slight pressure on the trigger gives a single shot and a longer



Local law-enforcement official fires Commando version of AUG with 14-inch barrel.



Robert K. Brown fires AUG Heavy Barrel Automatic Rifle with 24-inch barrel and 6x Kahles scope.



LEFT: Steyr Product Manager Karl Walter demonstrates one-handed firing technique with 20-inch barreled AUG. RIGHT: Closeup of FNC fire selector set on three-shot burst. BELOW: Closeup of FNC bolt. Note similarity to that of Kalashnikov.



Mary Scrimgeour Jenkins, apparently in excruciating agony, fires Steyr MPI 69 submachine gun in 9mm Parabellum.



SOF Associate Editor Jim Coyne fires MPI 69 submachine gun with unique "pull-through" trigger concept.



pull results in full-automatic fire. This trigger mechanism is mechanically simple, but ingenious.

The method of cocking the MPI 69 is unusual. The sling is attached to the cocking knob and the gun is cocked by simply pulling back on the sling. A final unaccustomed feature of this weapon is the presence of three safety catches on the bolt. The first catch prevents accidental discharge in the event that the hand should slip during the cocking process. The second catch is one-half-

inch further back and prevents runaways with low-powered ammunition. The third catch is the normal full-cocked position. It is impossible to bounce any of these three catches off the sear. Again, simpler than most safety systems, yet quite safe.

Used by the West Germans and many other countries throughout the world, the MPI 69 was purchased in quantity by the North Dakota State Police during the Wounded Knee riots.

Steyr is also the sole U.S. dis-

tributor of the legendary FN military rifles, including the new FNC 5.56mm light automatic carbine. A typical state-of-the-art assault rifle, the FNC has a welded sheet-metal receiver and a few borrowed features, such as the Galil SAR hand-guard and a bolt more than vaguely reminiscent of the Kalashnikov's. However, innovative qualities abound on the new FNC. Gas-operated, it has a two-position gas regulator for normal and adverse condi-

*Continued on page 68*



# U.S. ARMY'S ROUGH & READY

# RANGERS



**Airborne! Ranger! All the way! Ranger rappels Australian style while firing suppressive bursts from slung M-60. Note: blank training adapter.**

## Text & Photos by Marv Wolf

**B**RIDGES of half-inch-long ants infiltrated our tiny perimeter on the forest floor. Or perhaps we had slipped through *their* perimeter. No matter. The ones that came to interest me most were the soldier ants, red-headed horrors with huge mandibles that injected something into their adversary. Probably formic acid, the doc said later, lancing a few of my swollen bumps.

The soldier ants are not only fierce, they are proud. Or maybe just highly specialized. They don't forage for food — they fight. I killed one of the bold but clumsy woods mosquitoes — about the size of a horsefly (I have witnesses) — and laid the bloody corpse out on a moss-covered *stone that* lay within an arm's length of my sprawled-out body. A soldier ant came by, and cautiously made his recon, sweeping the whole flat part of the stone before marching up to the

**Heavily armed Ranger humps U.S. M-67 90mm recoilless rifle now widely replaced by U.S. M-47 MAW Dragon system. 90mm is effective for "soft" and "semi-soft" targets. Note: U.S. Colt Commando preferred by gunner, M-60 with blank adapter in background.**

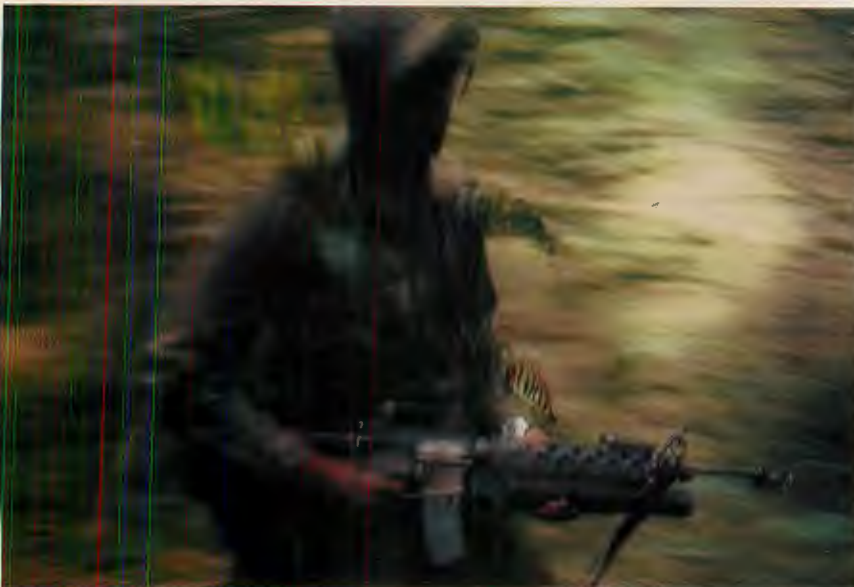
# RANGERS

'skeeter. Then he withdrew by his previously reconned route. In a few minutes he was back — I'm sure it was the same one — with a worker. The smaller ant tugged on the dead bug a time or two, walked around it, tugged on it again, then went over the side. The soldier waited. In minutes there were a half dozen, then a score of workers, tearing the 'skeeter apart, then carrying it off. The soldier had disappeared.

I raised my head a little, and peered around. It hadn't rained for days, but everything beneath the triple layers of luxuriant forest growth was damp, or still wet. Moss covered everything. It was near midday, but only a few rays of

sunlight filtered down through the leaves to our position. Though the next Ranger was only a few feet away in the dappled gloom, I had to strain to make out the outlines of his head, which was alertly resting on the coverlatch of his M60 machine gun. The others, eight in all, were within a dozen yards, but so perfectly still and camouflaged that I had to guess where each lay.

A tiny movement caught my eye. A small spider had dropped its fine silken line from an overhead branch and was rappelling down in cautious spurts, eventually landing just inches from my nose, without a sound. Equally noiselessly the patrol leader materialized from behind the uprooted, rotten trunk of a fallen forest giant. With hand and arm signals he motioned us to our feet, and set us on a route toward the edge of the forest.



**TOP:** Rangers dressed in wet suits emerge from water armed with AK-47s. All Rangers are trained on foreign weapons: Soviet-bloc AK-47 and RPG, NATO MP-5 submachine gun and G-3 7.62mm assault rifle. **ABOVE:** Rangers make river assault in inflatable rubber boats. Rangers travel to Naval Amphibious Warfare School at Coronado, Calif., for small-boat assault and pickup training. **LEFT:** Ranger student with M203 40mm grenade launcher on M16A1 rifle. Continuous "blur" of patrolling, patrolling, patrolling develops and sharpens soldier's survival sense. They won't break in combat.

We were headed for an ambush site near Little Remagen Bridge across Nisqually River on the huge Ft. Lewis, Wash., reservation. The ambushes were reservists from one of the British Columbia regiments that often cross over from Canada to train with their NATO allies.

Ahead of us lay another half hour of movement through some of the thickest rain forest in North America. It was a movement made with little noise, almost no conversation, and a tremendous expenditure of human energy. We moved, Indian-file, through the gloom, stepping over fallen trees, picking a path across steep, narrow ravines, working swiftly down the treacherous, loamy side of a bushy cliff. We paused for a moment while the patrol leader slipped ahead with one of his men, and an angry bee did his kamikaze number on my right hand. I was too surprised to call out, but I did move a few yards further down the hillside.

The Rangers I accompanied were members of the 2nd Battalion, 75th Infantry, one of two airborne Ranger battalions in the Army. Like their sister battalion, the 1/75, at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., they are the lineal descendants and heirs to the traditions established by such units as Merrill's Marauders, and Rogers' Rangers. They are probably the finest light-infantry units of their size in the entire U.S. military establishment, perhaps in the world. They spend almost all of their time in the field, and they accept into their limited numbers only the very few that have the skills, attitude and dispositions to make a contribution to the unit's mission.

Just what that mission is remains a little hazy. Ranger officers and senior noncoms clam up or change the subject when the question is asked. Possibly to keep me from asking certain questions, I was shadowed by a Ft. Lewis Public Affairs Office escort virtually every minute I spent with the Ranger battalion. This gentleman eventually confirmed my suspicions that the battalion had both classified and unclassified missions.

One of those classified missions undoubtedly has to do with the contingency of an Entebbe-style raid on an airport. This much can be gleaned from press reports of an incident that occurred in mid-1981 at the remote Central Washington hamlet of Ephrata, which just happens to have a jet-sized airport, lord knows why. On that occasion, elements of the battalion took the airfield — with prior FAA permission — by helicopter and parachute-launched night assault. Two local civilians who strayed into the midst of the operation — one was on his way to work in the small hours before dawn and cut across the runway, as was his

habit — were detained for several hours by battalion security outposts. Both were released unharmed, but without explanation or apology.

The unclassified missions are in the classic Ranger tradition: raids, ambushes, long-range patrols. The battalion is nominally attached to the I Corps, at Ft. Lewis, but it takes direction from the Army's Force Command. It is a pretty fair assumption that in any sort of situation short of an all-out war, the two Ranger battalions would be used to seize small but strategic objectives. If things went so far that divisions were being committed, the Rangers would probably be held in reserve for specific "dirty jobs" calling for their capabilities to cross virtually any ter-

### RANGER MOUNTAINEERING: HARD WAY UP, EASY WAY DOWN

When Hitler's forces invaded France, they went around the suddenly-useless Maginot Line of fortifications. Instead of slugging it out with well-entrenched defenders, the Germans went through very rough terrain that the French had regarded as impassable. The result, in short order, was the fall of France. The lesson learned: If you can put your forces through undefended territory, you can strike virtually anywhere you want.

Of course, the Germans didn't discover this principle. Remember that Hannibal put an army over the Alps — and took fighting elephants with him.

So it is small wonder that the Rangers find themselves learning and practicing mountaineering. They begin with such basics as tying knots, then move on to making a Swiss seat for crossing deep ravines and such. Then it is on to rappelling, a useful device for getting down sheer cliffs.

Finally they are ready for more advanced techniques, including rock climbing with pitons and chocks. Since little of this highly specialized equipment is used elsewhere in the military, most of what the Rangers use is straight out of civilian mountaineering stores.

"We try to teach basics," explains Lt. Col. Powell. "We like to give everyone a sense of confidence about himself, a familiarity with the equipment. And this lets us identify the goats — the few men in each unit that have a real talent for working in the mountains. These are the guys that we may have to turn to in a pinch, to scale some cliff or peak, and get a rope up there for the rest of us."

—M.W.

rain, do their number and get out.

The training for this kind of mission requires that the battalion is always on the go. They split the year into two 5½-month training cycles, followed by two weeks of block leave when virtually everyone signs out. While on leave, however, all are subject to immediate recall; they are required to stay close to a telephone. During the two cycles, the battalion travels to such places as Puerto Rico, for jungle and island-hopping exercises, usually in conjunction with the Navy and/or Marines; to the Naval Amphibious Warfare School at Coronado, Calif., for small boat assault and pickup as well as SCUBA training; to Alaska for arctic warfare; to Panama's Jungle Warfare School; and to a desert location, such as Ft. Irwin, Calif., or the Marine base at 29 Palms, Calif.

On a trip to the latter a year or so ago, the battalion learned about rattlesnakes. "The first day we spent in some old Marine barracks, it was Rattlers 1, Rangers 4," chuckles Lt. Col. Bill Powell, the 2/75 commander. "One of our enlisted medics, Doc Hill, got bit, and it was touch-and-go with him for a while. We got him to an intensive care unit, but that wasn't the end of the ordeal for him. Seems that with all the things modern medicine knows about snakebite, they still don't have a way to figure out exactly how much antivenin to give. The way they do it is to give a snakebite victim a little at a time, and monitor his vital signs closely. They keep giving it to him until the effects of the venom are counteracted. *Then* they have to treat him for the effects of the antivenin. It took a couple of weeks before he was ready to return to duty," Powell remembers.

"But having one man get bit made the rest of us aware of the problem. They say that the diamondback rattler is on the endangered species list; well, with my Rangers around they were *really* endangered. I'll bet we bagged about 200 of 'em by the time we cleared out. Just about everyone left with a snakeskin hatband or belt. And that's how I got to meet the fellow who shares my office — Jake." Jake the Snake is a six-foot diamondback that Powell took back to Ft. Lewis in a five-gallon mayonnaise bottle. It now resides in a special cage in the commander's office.

Like the red-headed soldier ant, the Ranger soldier is not only fierce, proud and tough — he is highly specialized. The original Army Rangers were a band of mountain *men* and frontier scouts organized by Maj. Robert Rogers. They fought with distinction during the French and Indian War, using tactics and techniques adapted from those of the native Americans against the highly stylized and inflexi-



ble methods of European armies of the time.

During World War II, Ranger regiments like Merrill's Marauders were formed for especially hazardous operations. During the Korean conflict, a few Ranger companies were resurrected, and they fought with distinction. Shortly afterward, the Ranger units were demobilized, their colors mothballed. Many of the traditional Ranger missions were assigned to Special Forces outfits, which also had training and indigenous-force recruitment and leadership duties. The Special Forces were much admired by President John F. Kennedy, and they played a major role in the fighting in Indochina throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. But there were some in the Regular Army establishment that began to perceive the Special Forces as virtually an army within an army, as answerable only to their own officers,

and as a possible threat to civilian control of the military. Coincident with the communist takeover of South Vietnam following "Vietnamization" and the withdrawal of U.S. conventional forces, the Special Forces mission was cut back. The Ranger-type missions that they often carried out in Vietnam were transferred to the two new Ranger battalions created in that same year, 1975.

The Army has operated a Ranger School at Ft. Benning for decades, since WWII (see Fred Reed's article on this school, *SOF*, October '81). It remains a supremely challenging, eight-week course which teaches Ranger techniques for land navigation, patrolling, weapons employment, hand-to-hand combat, wilderness survival, mountaineering, confidence building and, above all, leadership. But most of its graduates go on duties which often have little connection with traditional

Ranger missions. They are dispersed throughout the Army, with a few going to the Air Force and Marine Corps, where they bring with them the hard lessons learned and the personal confidence that are so important to military leadership.

The Ranger battalions take up where the Ft. Benning course leaves off. The men of the 1/75 and 2/75 put into daily practice the skills of a Ranger. And more. Airborne qualification is not required for attendance at Ranger School; it *is* required for service in the Ranger battalions.

Service in the Ranger battalions is an enlistment or reenlistment option. Since the 2/75 is stationed at Ft. Lewis, along with the Ninth Infantry Division, it is not unusual for grunts assigned to the latter outfit to request a transfer. If they are airborne-qualified





# RANGERS

and can measure up to the outfit's exacting standards, they're in. If not, they go back to their original outfits.

Most officers and NCOs find their way to the battalion after completing Ranger School, sometimes immediately afterward, sometimes years later. "Every man in the battalion is a triple volunteer," explains Lt. Col. Powell. "They volunteer to join the Army, they volunteer for jump school, and they volunteer for the battalion. Anytime they want out, they're out. We don't want anybody who doesn't really want to be here."

All new arrivals, including Ranger School graduates, go through a three-week course designed to find out if they are Ranger battalion material. "We get new soldiers who are qualified in various infantry skills," explains Powell. "We don't want men who are just qualified. We want them to be expert marksmen, expert patrollers, expert with demolitions, with communications, with first aid, with land navigation, with everything the Ranger has to do to survive on the battlefield."

The three-week Ranger Indoctrination Program (RIP) is under the supervision of Platoon Sgt. Ronald Kluemper. "First thing we do to newcomers is give them a PT (Physical Training) test," he says. "This is primary, because if you're not in real good shape when you get here, you're not going to make it. We require them to get 60 points each on the two-mile run, the situps and the pushups. They must pass this, and most do, but more importantly it gives us an idea of how the class rates on PT. If they're weak, as a group, then we'll program more PT into their daily schedule to try to make up for it. If they're pretty strong, we'll just give them the usual amount. Then they have to take a water-safety test — they don't have to pass it, they just have to take it. We toss 'em in a pool with their load-carrying equipment (LCE), in boots and fatigues, and with a weapon, and see if they can swim 15 meters. If they can't, they're still okay, but we expect them to use their own time in the coming months to go down to the pool and get water-safe. In the meantime, we know for sure who's a good swimmer and who isn't," says Kluemper.

The RIP class never starts with less than 10 students; often there are as many as 30, according to how the replacement system funnels them in. "They then get a briefing by the commander. We want them to know just what they're expected to do, right from the horse's mouth. He tells them what

the standards are, what the outfit requires with regard to uniform policies and so forth. Then we try to solve whatever personal problems they might have, such as looking after their families or perhaps their pay problems, whatever," says Kluemper. "The first couple of days we teach them our SOPs on jumping. We try to get them about eight jumps, usually out of a CH-47, with the MC1-B steerable parachute.

The RIP course consists of a review of basic infantry combat skills. "We go through an airmobile operation, then movement to contact, raids, ambushes, a recon patrol, recon operations, rappelling. And we push them. We put them under stress. We want to find out what they'll do. Some never make it to the field. Some drop out the first day, after the commander's briefing. But if they get to the field, about 95 percent or maybe a little more will make it, they'll graduate. On the other hand, the last class started with 26 men and six quit in the first three days. I guess overall, about 70 percent make it through RIP and join the battalion," says Kluemper. "The rest are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Some of them will be sent to non-airborne outfits.

## HOOAH, RANGERS

Life in the Ranger battalion is tough. Men are separated from their families for weeks or months at a time. Much of the Ranger's time is spent crawling through bushes, wading through swamps or climbing mountains. Yet morale is universally high; there is a cheerful willingness to give most anything a try. If there are dopers or smokers, they keep a very low profile.

One reason for this, surely, is the leadership. The officers, from commander on down, as well as the non-coms, lead by example. They are close to their men, sharing the same hardships and privations. Rank has few privileges and many responsibilities in the 2/75. When the unit jumps into, say, a desert DZ near El Centro, Calif., the first man out the door might very well be the battalion commander. When the units go into the mountains for suspension-traverse training, the first guy in the Swiss seat is usually the company commander.

The battalion has an unofficial motto: HOOAH. You hear it when two Rangers meet; when an order is given and responded to; when a Ranger goes over the side of a hundred-foot cliff on the end of a rope. What does it mean? "It means any damn thing you want it to mean," grins Lt. Col. Powell. "As long as it's a positive statement."

—M.W.

Some will be allowed to remain on jump status, and be reassigned elsewhere. It depends on their attitude, and what we've observed from the time they're with us."

After six to nine months in the battalion, most of the newcomers will be considered for Ranger School. "The problem is that Ranger School is primarily a leadership course," says Lt. Col. Powell. "Nearly all who attend are noncoms or officers. A young soldier in this battalion just doesn't have the experience to compete with them. He tends to be quite young, 18 or 19, and he doesn't have much experience in anything, including living." Ranger School admittees must be in grade E-5 or above, though there is provision for a waiver. "So what we do is try to prepare the young soldier for the stress and demands of Ranger School. We give a pre-Ranger course right here, three weeks long. It's a miniature version of Ft. Benning's program. They go through the slide-for-life, for example, just like at Benning.

"The remainder of the course is basics. They learn more about map reading. A lot more about land navigation. And patrolling, patrolling, patrolling. We keep them out all night, give them very little sleep, stress them, rotate jobs on patrols, grade the leadership. About 90 percent of those that take the pre-Ranger course will go to Ranger School, and about 90 percent of those that go will graduate, which is much better than the school average," he adds.

A Ranger battalion soldier who fails to make it through the Benning program is not automatically dropped from the battalion, though most are. Again, individuals are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. After successfully completing Ranger training, many battalion soldiers are sent on for special schooling at Ft. Bragg. The battalion's authorized strength is about 600; because less than half those assigned as new replacements will stay for the full 24-month tour (a six-month extension is possible with the battalion CO's permission) and most of those that don't make it drop out in the first few weeks, there is a constant stream of newcomers. They are distinguished from those that have made it into the outfit by their uniforms. Full-fledged members of the Ranger battalions wear a black beret and cammies; others wear conventional jungle fatigues and the patrolling cap.

The unit carries nothing heavier than 90mm recoilless rifles, or in some circumstances the Dragon antitank missile. Each squad is armed with several M16A1s, an M60 machine gun and an M203 grenade launcher. There are three infantry companies and a headquarters company, which has a small

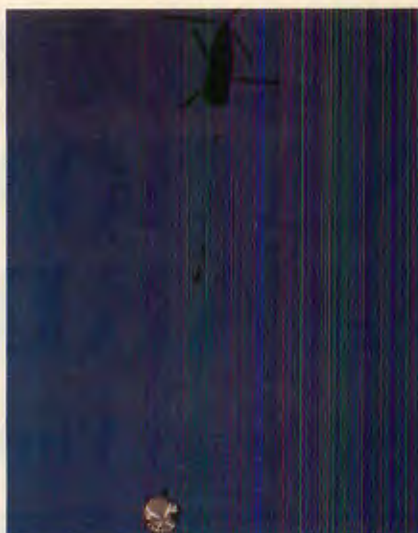
but highly efficient mess hall. Each company also has the new M224 60mm mortar, which has range effectiveness comparable with the 81mm mortar but is considerably lighter, at just 45 pounds. Certain individuals — radio operators, key NCOs and officers — carry the short-barreled CAR-15. All Rangers are trained on foreign weapons such as the Soviet-bloc AK-47 and RPG, and the NATO MP-5 9mm submachine guns and the G-3 7.62mm assault rifle.

For mountain training the 2/75 stays closer to home. They use National Park Service facilities near Leavenworth, Wash., in the Wenatchee National Forest. They usually live in the field, with some support — water purification and some transportation — provided by Ft. Lewis units. Otherwise it's camping out, Ranger style, with Cs and LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) rations, ponchos and air mattresses. Because of the civilian nature of the area, which is filled with vacationing families, no weapons are taken along. As a matter of fact, very little nonessential equipment is in evidence. "Travel light, freeze at night," smiles a Ranger.

With so much travel, the 2/75 must be dollar conscious. It has a generous — by the standards of an ordinary battalion — annual travel budget. But this is no ordinary battalion. "If we jump into the area where we're going, we get what amounts to a free ride," confides Powell. "If the Air Force doesn't have to land at our destination, they can fund the flight themselves as training. If they must land, then we pay for it. So we'll just bail out and save all that money." Most of the drops are so-called admin drops, though of course they are made in full combat gear, with equipment bags and weapons. But once on the ground, the units recover their chutes and their gear and assemble for a bus ride to wherever they're bound for.

And because there is so much training involved, Powell is anxious to make sure his men do get to see the sights when they travel to distant locations. "They usually will line up a couple of tours for us," explains a Ranger troop. "That way we have something to remember the place by, besides the jungle or the side of a mountain."

*Continued on page 70*



**ABOVE:** Airborne! Ranger hopefuls during RIP (Ranger Indoctrination Program) jump from CH-47 with MC1-B steerable parachutes. RIP course concentrates on review of basic infantry skills. **BELOW:** Camouflaged Ranger carries M203 40mm grenade launcher on M16A1 rifle during assault. Most Ranger graduates are dispersed throughout the Army, bringing with them lessons learned and the personal confidence so important to military leadership.



# SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL GUARD

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

R.A. Hasselmeyer is the *nom de guerre* of a former U.S. Army infantry officer. He was recruited as a contract employee of the Vinnell Corp., first as a TOW instructor for the Saudi Arabian National Guard and later as an adviser to the SANG.

## The Army Vinnell Built

by R.A. Hasselmeyer



ABOVE: Dual Machine Gun — note 7.62mm FN rear-mounted in anti-aircraft role.

BELOW: Browning .50-cal. machine gun on recovery vehicle.

By possessing the largest proven petroleum reserves in the world, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has established an enviable position in the international community. Given the West's reliance on continuing production of those reserves, the security of the Kingdom is of paramount importance to free world economies, especially the United States. Despite the economic leverage that their petroleum provides, the Saudis have remained loyal to the United States.

The continuing flow of Saudi petroleum and the military security provided by the United States keeps this relationship mutually advantageous.

Saudi Arabia never has been and probably never will be a great military power. The Kingdom's military capabilities have been historically limited by





V150 with Vulcan Air Defense system in operation.



20mm Oerlikon — note Wegman grenade launchers on turret.



90mm Mecar — note SANG symbol on side of vehicle.



TOW missile system carrier.



The V150 Commando Armored Car deployed by the Saudi Arabian National Guard is a versatile all-terrain vehicle currently in the service of armed forces in more than 20 countries. Produced as a private venture by the Cadillac Gage Company of Warren, Mich., the Commando saw service in Vietnam as a convoy escort vehicle and in internal security missions. Modifications based on combat and geographical conditions have been incorporated into the current model of the vehicle.

The V150 Commando has an all-welded steel hull with firing ports and vision blocks on the sides and the rear permitting the firing of weapons from within the vehicle. Two-piece doors are provided on the sides and the rear of the hull in addition to the overhead hatches. A winch is mounted on the front of the hull enabling self-recovery. The tires on the vehicle are capable of running for 100km following puncture.

The SANG deploys several versions of the basic V150 containing various armament configurations. The following are the vehicles currently in service in the combined arms battalions:

1. The basic APC is armed with the Browning .50-cal. machine gun and is the standard rifle squad carrier capable of carrying 11 infantrymen. The SANG has fitted the APC to serve the additional roles of medical evacuation and communications vehicles.

2. The Dual Machine Gun (DMG) is utilized by the platoon leaders and the battalion reconnaissance platoon. It's armed with a .50-cal. Browning and a 7.62mm FN mounted coaxially in the turret, and a 7.62mm FN pintle mounted on the rear of the vehicle for anti-aircraft. As is the case with all the turret models, 12 Wegman grenade launchers are fitted on the turret and are activated from inside the vehicle.

3. The 20mm Oerlikon cannon vehicle has a 7.62mm FN MG mounted coaxially and a 7.62mm FN mounted on the turret as anti-aircraft. The 20mm Oerlikon is capable of +60° elevation and a depression of -8°. It traverses 360° and carries a basic load of 400 rounds.

4. The 90mm cannon carries a crew of four and has a 7.62mm FN MG

mounted coaxially and a 7.62mm FN pintle mounted. The 90mm Mecar cannon originally fitted is currently being replaced by an "upgraded" cannon. The vehicle carries a basic load of 40 rounds of 90mm.

5. The TOW anti-tank missile carrier has a five-man crew and a 7.62mm FN for local defense. The TOW system is pedestal-mounted and is covered by the retractable roof when not in use. The TOW carrier has a basic load of six missiles.

6. The 81mm mortar carrier has a five-man crew and is also provided with a 7.62mm FN for local defense. It can carry a basic load of 60 to 80 rounds and is covered by a retractable roof when not in service.

7. The command version of the V150 is essentially the basic APC with a raised superstructure providing a small operations center. It contains increased communications equipment and is armed with the Browning .50-cal. machine gun.

8. The recovery vehicle is armed with a Browning .50 cal. and has the same raised superstructure as the command vehicle. It carries a wide range of maintenance equipment and an "A" frame attached to the front which, when erect, is capable of changing transmissions and engines.

9. The SANG has recently mounted the 20mm Vulcan Air Defense System (minus radar) on the V150. The mounted VADS is capable of 360° traverse and will undoubtedly be deployed in the ground support role.

The V150 Commando provides the Saudi Arabian National Guard with a superb wheeled vehicle of almost unlimited capability for operation on the Arabian Peninsula. Its ease of maintenance and extreme reliability have impressed the Saudis who are continuing to build their fleet of the cars. Dependable, durable, and easily maintained, the V150 is the logical successor of the original "Ship of the Desert."  
—R.A.H.

#### SPECIFICATIONS

Armor: Approximately 12mm maximum.

Length: 20 ft., 8 in. (5.689m)

Width: 7 ft., 5 in. (2.26m)

Height: 8 ft., 4 in. (2.54m)

Weight Loaded: 20,054 lbs. (9,550kg)

Engine: Chrysler 8 cylinder petrol (210hp)

Speed Road: 55mph (88kph)

Speed Water: 3mph (4.8kph)

Range: 600 miles (965km)

Fuel: 80 gallons (303 liters)

Fording: Amphibious

Vertical Obstacle: 2 ft. (.609m)

Gradient: 60°

LEFT: V150s threading across desolate Arabian landscape.

geography, technology and the quantity and quality of its armed forces. Over the past decade the Saudis have begun to modernize their armed forces, but with a population estimated at anywhere from five to eight million people, many of them nomadic Bedouin, personnel shortages will always restrict the Kingdom's military effectiveness. Thus there will probably always be a reliance on the United States, or another comparable super power, for support against an external foe. Internally, the Saudis remain one of the few surviving monarchies of modern times. The continuing success of this system is due, in no small measure, to the distribution of the nation's petroleum revenues among the populace, and the protective support provided by the Saudi Arabian National Guard.

The traditional bodyguard to the royal family, the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG), serves as the national internal security force and is the main deterrent to a political or military coup. Commanded by Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz, third in succession to the throne, the SANG consists of approximately 26,000 Bedouin tribesmen stationed in battalion-sized formations throughout the Kingdom. The SANG had been under the guidance of the British army, but years of disappointing results brought Saudi disillusion-



**ABOVE:** American instructors pause astride V150 Commando.

**BELOW:** Bedouins of 1st CAB at morning formation in Khashm al An wear traditional headdress.



Guardsmen prepare noon meal during operations south of capital. Lamb or goat and rice are staples of SANG.



CAB is sustained by fleet of fuel and watertankers, permitting long-range operations by units.

sionment with the entire British military assistance effort, which resulted in the development of an agreement with the United States to modernize the SANG. Politics, however, limited direct U.S. military involvement, and as a result the Vinnell Corp. of Alhambra, Calif., was awarded a contract to reorganize, re-equip, and retrain four SANG battalions into light cavalry units with the possibility of further contracts for additional units in the future.

Vinnell began the modernization program in 1975 encamped outside the capital city of Riyadh. Importing an array of impressive military talent, the original Vinnell contingent in Arabia comprised former U.S. Army veterans with a sizable base of ex-Special Forces personnel, South Korean and Royal Jordanian Army veterans, and even a few Palestinians. Best characterized by one of the early program general managers, Brig. Gen. Jack Hoefling (ret.), the Vinnell Corp. in Saudi Arabia "is the first American Foreign Legion since the Abraham Lincoln Brigade." Although not a completely accurate analogy, it is, nonetheless, appropriate.

Within the military complex of Khashm al An located east of Riyadh, the four SANG battalions underwent successive annual training programs that essentially re-equipped and retrained the units with basic military skills all the way through battalion-level tactics. The training program had to be constantly adjusted to accommodate the customs and climate of Arabia, but the SANG battalions eventually absorbed the program and have proven to be increasingly proficient in the tactics and techniques of modern warfare.

### **"The first American Foreign Legion since the Abraham Lincoln Brigade."**

Following the formal SANG training program, the modernized battalion is returned to the line to continue training with the advice and assistance of a Vinnell advisory team assigned to the unit. Predictably, the advisory team resembles a Special Forces team, with each American specializing in a particular military skill. The advisory team operates within the battalion and assists the Saudis in operations and in the development of their own training program.

The modernized SANG battalion is structured as a Combined Arms Battalion (CAB), a completely motorized tactical combat unit similar to a U.S. Army cavalry squadron. The CAB is organized into a command group, three rifle companies, a field artillery battery, and a headquarters and headquarters company.

Each rifle company contains a com-

mand group, three rifle platoons, an 81mm mortar platoon, an anti-armor platoon containing a 20mm Oerlikon cannon, three 90mm cannons, two TOW anti-armor guided missile systems, and a support platoon of supply, maintenance and communications. The field artillery battery provides indirect fire support with five 105mm howitzers, and an air defense capability utilizing six 20mm Vulcan Air Defense Systems. Headquarters and headquarters company contain the battalion reconnaissance platoon and the medical, maintenance and communications platoons, and they support the CAB with a fleet of cargo trucks and fuel and water tankers. The CAB's organic support elements are capable of providing the unit with near self-sustainment during tactical operations.

The ranks of the CAB are comprised of approximately 800 officers and men. The majority of the Guardsmen are pure desert Bedouin, many of whom enlisted in the SANG directly from the nomadic life that they have followed since Biblical times. They rank in age from 14-year-old children to octogenarians that could easily have fought with T. E. Lawrence. Enlistment within the Guard is virtually a lifetime commitment. While the majority of the officers have received a formal education and military training at either British or U.S. Army schools, the soldiers themselves frequently lack even the basics of a modern education. For many, witnessing the maintenance of an automobile is a tremendous revelation.

*Continued on page 91*

## **PERSONNEL PACKAGE**

The following is a brief synopsis of the package provided for Vinnell personnel (U.S.) engaged in training the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG):

1. Vinnell Corp. (SANG) is based at 1145 Westminster Ave., Alhambra, CA 91803 (213) 289-6281. Vinnell is mainly a construction firm but has in the past been utilized as a front for other projects. It was active in Vietnam, performing construction and security work.

2. Vinnell acquires U.S. personnel both by word of mouth and by recruiting outside U.S. military installations, most notable Ft. Bragg, Benning and Lewis. It has been known to occasionally run advertisements in the *Army Times*.

3. U.S. personnel are primarily ex-Army with a couple of USAF and USMC types occasionally showing up. Initially the program in Arabia was built on a base of former Special Forces folks, but has gradually shifted toward basic combat-arms types and the more technical fields. There is generally an even split between senior NCOs and commissioned officers, most having combat experience. Former rank accounts for little except in specific cases.

4. U.S. personnel contract with Vinnell for a standard 18 months with a bonus upon successful completion of contract ranging from 8 to 15 percent of base pay. Base pay varies with the position. U.S. personnel are assigned pay grades ranging from 10, which is the lowest, to one, which is the program general manager. It is possible to advance into higher pay positions. There are six-month step increases for longevity.

5. The Vinnell contingent is based

in an established encampment outside of the capital of Riyadh. While initially quite stark, the camp over the years has evolved into a reasonably adequate facility. Medical facilities are fair; X-rays and other basics are available at the camp. Services are rendered by ex-medics and some not very skillful doctors.

6. Food, lodging and recreation facilities are provided for at the camp and are adequate. (When I was there, many of us lived downtown in villas provided by Vinnell with a food allowance, based on a seniority system. Most everybody lives in the camp now.) Recreation facilities are about what Uncle Sam would provide in similar circumstances, with a recreation center of pool and table tennis tables, weight rooms, TV (taped), etc. and tennis courts, a swimming pool, library and outdoor movies.

7. Vacation policies vary as each contract is negotiated with the SANG. During my time it was seven days every three months with a paid round-trip airfare to Athens included. Now I understand it's every six months for 14 days with round-trip airfare to London. (Most men, however, wind up in Bangkok.)

8. There is a U.S. Army DARCOM contingent in Riyadh that more or less monitors the program. Some of the Army folks have resigned or retired and joined Vinnell.

9. Foreign personnel are mainly Jordanians and South Koreans. Although most have military backgrounds, they are generally assigned to the roles of interpreter/translator and maintenance, respectively. Interestingly enough, many of the Jordanians are in fact Palestinians and are required to have PLO cards.

—R.A.H.



# A BASH WITH SPLASH

## Capt. Larry Dring: Mike Force Magician

*PART 1: Jim Morris first met Staff Sgt. Larry Dring in Korea in 1962. In 1968 the two men met again in Vietnam. Dring was by then a captain and leader of a Mike Force company of Montagnards. Last year, Morris arranged to interview Dring for SOF. The two met in the university town where Dring and his family now live—and Morris learned the story of the Drings' unusual courtship.*

*Dring and his company were in Pleiku during Tet '68. On 10 January, Maj. Justin McCarty, CO (commanding officer), asked Dring to investigate a report of small-arms fire in the vicinity of the POW compound. Dring discovered the "shots" were firecracker reports that were masking actual gunfire. He led his men toward the missionary compound at the edge of town.*

*When they reached the last street, Dring saw at least a company of NVA regulars. The two groups stared at each other across the street — and then the shooting started. Dring was hit in the back by a grenade. His steel canteen saved his life by deflecting most of the blast. After he fell, an NVA rushed him, AK in hand, and shot him in the leg, severing an artery, before Dring killed his attacker.*

*The wounded were dragged into a nearby house — the home of a missionary doctor and four nurses, one of whom was Becky, who is now Dring's wife. After receiving first aid, Dring got on the radio to report the ongoing battle. The missionaries and the wounded were later evacuated to the American hospital. Becky visited Dring every day before he was evacuated — and he proposed to her on the medevac aircraft just before takeoff.*

*PART 2: Dring joined the Army when he was 17. Two years later, he completed Ranger School, and when he was 20, he joined the 77th Special Forces Group and became a medic on a team that rotated between Korea and Okinawa.*

*During his Korean service, Dring studied the country's history, customs and language and became friendly with several Koreans. His best friend was a Capt. Kim, and when Dring was transferred back to Okinawa, he spent most of his leaves as Kim's houseguest. At one party he and Kim attended, Dring met Gen. Chou Moon Huan, commander of the ROK Airborne Brigade — and the general conversed with the sergeant in Korean, ignoring what Dring described as "a couple of carloads of colonels."*

*In 1961, Dring returned to Korea to make his fifth — and qualifying — jump for his Korean wings. He and a friend donned Korean cammies and joined what they thought was an airborne operation. They discovered they'd joined the military coup which would install Chung Hee Park as president of South Korea. As soon as they could, the Americans left the convoy and reported to U.S. military headquarters.*

*They were ordered to find out what was happening. In downtown Seoul, they met Capt. Kim, who had arrested the minister of agriculture — and Kim jokingly gave Dring the title. But when the two Americans reported back to HQ, the situation had changed. They were ordered out of country and Dring found himself on the first cargo plane leaving Korea.*

*Sgt. Dring met Gen. Huan once more, when the general attended a SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty*





by Jim Morris

Organization) conference on Okinawa. Dring was ordered to drive incoming brass from the airport. When Gen. Huan stepped off the plane, he ignored the CO and greeted the sergeant instead. He also gave Dring his ROK wings — despite the missing jump.

In 1962, at the beginning of his first patrol in Vietnam, Dring treated everyone in a Bahner village. When his patrol returned five days later, they found the VC had massacred all the villagers for "collaboration." When the local security patrol brought back a smirking VC prisoner, Dring went wild.

He picked up a BAR and emptied a full magazine into the VC and then beat the corpse with the weapon. "It wasn't right. It shouldn't have happened," Dring said — and for the next five years he battled to keep it from happening, as the conclusion to his story shows.

LARRY DRING gained his greatest fame in Vietnam as a Mike Force company commander. Not only was he the finest small-unit leader I have ever known, but he had a unique ability to get along with indigenous troops. Highly loyal to them, he is amused by American notions of superiority.

"I'll tell you a nice one about 'superiority' I think you might get a bang out of," Dring told me. "I was out with the 1st Cav, Bong Son. The Americans were headin' up this big valley. It was back in about '67. There were little fingers coming into the valley and the Americans were goin' straight up. There was about a mile difference between us. I was ridin' the ridgeline. I was supposed to be flank security. I had about 100 to 150 guys. The Americans had a battalion, and I had a company.

"This'll bring joy to your heart. You remember *Pok* time — from 11 or 11:30 a.m. to about 2 when it got too hot and you knocked off. We always figured if the Americans wanted to do their stuff, we'd catch up. (We walked faster then they did anyway.)

"We were buzzin' along at about 10:30 when we bumped into big bunches of blackberries — all over the place. So we stopped to eat

**Mike Force** evacuating wounded Montagnard after long-range patrol. American in rear (without hat) is doctor, not medic. Doctors were much appreciated on extended operations.

them. What's the difference: 10:30, 11:30? I sent out security and told them, 'I'll rotate and you can come back and get your share of blackberries.' In fact some of my guys brought 'em along for supper, there were that many.

"We plunked down at the head of a little draw. (If we'd walked for another hour, we'd have been five clicks out of there.) I heard gunfire. I got a pair of glasses and I looked down in the valley. Along came an American bunch pushin' about 20 VC up the draw. I got on the radio. I figured, 'Hey, man, we'll just horseshoe this thing.' I finally got the message through that we were sitting at the top of the draw.

"So we horseshoed it, and some of the guys were still eatin' blackberries. We just sat there, and when Charlie came up we caught 'em. Twenty of 'em: **Bang, bang, bang, bang.** None of 'em walked out of that valley. We Xed 'em out and the battalion CO was ecstatic.

"Finally the Americans came up, and — hey, wonderful thing — they were telling everybody how they did this good deed. My people were the ones who really hosed Charlie down, because we just let 'em walk right up the barrel, and Xed 'em out. We had really good fire discipline.

"I armed my men, trained 'em, led 'em and paid 'em. So if someone did something wrong, at the wrong time, that cost him half his paycheck. And his squadleader, and his platoon sergeant, and his platoon leader. We'd use the money for incense or a party. A guy'd light a cigarette after dark, and it'd be the same act.

"So we hosed the VC down, and the Americans were overjoyed. They policed up the brass and they brought the bodies and the guns out and all that stuff. They were really superheroes. It was a nickel-and-dime operation. That was about the only contact we had during the week and a half to two weeks we were out.

"Came back in later and one of the guys told me that the battalion commander of that outfit got the Legion of Merit for planning this intricate hammer-and-anvil operation. The company commander got a Silver Star.

"And the only reason we were there was because of a blackberry bush."

One incident still bothers Dring though. "You run around and you do your thing and then you ponder later," he told me.

"I'd gone a month without bread.

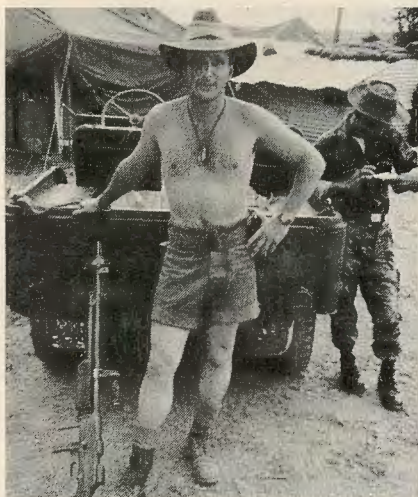
Rice twice a day is not bad, but I wanted to eat some bread, and we were five kilometers from some Americans. So I took a squad and whizzed on over.

"I was talking to the company commander in a clearing. Just us two. 'Course he had on his iron hat and his flak jacket and all that, and I was in my tiger stripes.

"Y'know, people abuse the word, 'sniper.' I used to ask the question: 'If you saw three guys in a clearing and one had a radio, who would you shoot at?' Everybody answered, 'The guy with the radio.'

"'No, you shoot the guy next to him. He's the guy you want, not some PFC. You want to shoot the platoon leader.' A sniper knows that kind of stuff. He usually picks on somebody different.

"Well, I was standin' there rappin' with this guy. And a young kid, about 17 or 18, walked right in front of me. Just happened to be walking by. And one shot rang out.



Second Lt. Dring at Loung Son, 1966, with Aussie hat and cut-offs. Weapon is Browning Automatic Rifle. "I swear by the BAR," said Dring, "always had one close — I got my first man with one. When they slow down, you open the gas port and fire away."

"**Bango!** Just one shot. The kid had a steel pot on. Got it canted. The round caught him right under its lip. Hit the helmet, spun back and killed him. Dropped him and he fell right in my arms. I was standing there talking and I just put my arms up.

"The kid did it inadvertently but Christ Jesus would have done the same thing for me with both eyes open. And here's something else — it was Thanksgiving. How do you give thanks? Do you say, 'Thank you, Lord, I'm alive and he's dead?' It's a soul-crusher. I appreciated being alive but I wanted that little dude to be alive

too."

Both Dring and I have great admiration for one American commander, Col. Francis J. Kelley. Kelley, a former New York City cop, was a staff officer with the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) in WWII. He looks a little like Raymond Burr and is, I think, the smartest man I ever met in the Army.

He earned his nickname, Splash, due to a fondness for water jumps (he did not want to splatter his corpulent, middle-aged body all over a hard drop zone) — but you never let him hear it if you wanted to stay in Group. Kelley came to Special Forces from the Pentagon, went to jump school just before coming to Okinawa and broke his leg on the second jump. They gave him the wings anyway, which did not endear him to a unit which had 60-percent master parachutists. That didn't bother Kelley, and he didn't hesitate to run the Group as he wanted to. After Okinawa he commanded the 5th in Vietnam.

I believe Kelley knew more about unconventional warfare than any other senior officer I ever met. He had all kinds of majors and colonels running scared all the time — but he liked Dring.

"Kelley's a funny guy," Dring told me. "Old Irish policeman. If you were on the right side of him, you had it made — but you'd better be right.

"I was down at Lung Tan and we were bein' shelled. I was the only officer — a second lieutenant. A camp was being put in there, and our Mike Force company was watching the store while the camp was being built. It was in the middle of noplac, and Charlie had come in on it.

"**WHAM!** We returned fire with the four-deuce until I noticed fire coming out of the bottom of the mortar. I said, 'Whoa! Cease and desist. That's it, pal.' But the 81s didn't go out far enough. Charlie was being cool. We didn't broadcast the fact that we were out of four-deuce to him, but the sitreps that I sent in said, 'Hey, we really are in a bag, because Charles is gonna come in on us without a four-deuce.'

"When the four-deuce went out it really got serious. The Cong started to come a little closer, and we couldn't keep them out. They couldn't get at us, because the 81s would still do them a job, but there was a little town next to us, and they did a number on it. Dependents lived there.

"It was a murky night with a



**ABOVE:** After classroom instruction in Poi Pet, Cambodia, SF sergeant takes Cambodian troops to nearby field for practical instruction with 81mm mortar. There were some women in Cambodian forces, who trained along with everyone else. Photo taken in 1972. **BELOW:** Mike Force Montagnard practices with Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). Depending on unit, the BAR or M60 was basic squad weapon for Montagnard troops. Dring preferred the BAR since it could be easily operated by one man. Principal weapons used by Dring's "little people" were BAR, .30-cal. MG and M1 or M2 carbine.



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slow drizzle. Plenty of flares. We had a few people Xed out but the horror was done to that village. The VC came in and they knocked the livin' — they shelled the life out of it, and there was nothing our people could do.

"Charlie figured they'd get the dependents, not us. They didn't have holes to get into or anything. And all we could do was fire the 81's. We could only get about 1,000 meters out from the town. With a 60mm they could hit the town and we couldn't hit them. With the four-deuce we could have done 'em a job.

"Because I was a medic, had a medical background, I used to monitor equipment. We were treating the indigenous people, and all we had left was a couple of M5 kits. I had been putting my requests in marked 'Emergency.'

"So now I got on the radio, and I started, man. I got unhappy. I got on the voice single-sideband. I got some guy on the other end — I didn't know who he was and didn't care. I told him in no uncertain terms what I thought of him.

"He said, 'What's going on?'

" 'Whattaya mean, what's going on, you sorry (fill in the blanks)! Don't you people read sitreps? The last 20 days I've been sending these things in 'Emergency.' Don't you idiots read? Don't you ever get off your dead butts and go to the S-3 and read? These people down here are out of medical supplies. And they're out of four-deuce. If we'd had the four-deuce in the first place it wouldn't have happened. You sorry people up there!'

"I was talkin' to Splash. I didn't know that. At the time I didn't care. 'Cause I figured I might not make it to breakfast. I was comin' on strong.

"Splash put another couple of people on and I told 'em what I thought of them. I said, 'You people go and read your sitreps and you'll find out what the problem is.' I told 'em the VC were hitting us from the other side of the local village and if we'd had the four-deuce we could have stopped them.

"I said, 'We're in a bag. We're tearing sheets up for bandages.' We didn't even have compresses. Man, I was hot. Absolutely empty and requests, itemized and explaining why right down the line, going in.

"That night Splash went and looked up those sitreps: They started Routine; then we needed a little more; then it got serious and then it went Emergency. The para-



graphs got fatter and fatter. And Splash went back and put his S-4 on the first airplane and sent him out to us. He didn't just tell him; he put him on the plane — and Splash was on the first plane out the following morning.

"When we heard the planes were coming in, we had to put out gas pots in a square on our landing strip. It was a 1,000-foot dirt strip — and the rain really put the skids on it. The later it got the muckier the runway got. And every now and then some little guy with a 60 was sayin', 'Whoo-hoo, we're still here.' Three aircrews got air medals that night, and they earned them. Particularly the last pilot in.

"We had five litters and 42 litter cases. We were putting them on in ponchos. The five litters had two people per — we were throwing them on. Instead of one four-deuce, they sent us four. We didn't have crews for them. We had the ammunition but we didn't have crews. All we had was one team.

"Like I say, with Splash, if you're right you're right. He came out the next morning and saw the place. We had earned our money that

**ABOVE:** CIDG troops at Pleiku SF headquarters rush Huey for Mike Force wounded after battle in A Shau Valley. **BELOW:** Company Commander Larry Dring sets up shop on back of ¾-ton truck in Bong Son Valley, 1967. As company commander, Dring served as backup medic since he had the training. Medical treatment of indigenous personnel was effective method of winning hearts and minds.



night. I showed Splash the four-deuce. It had a hole about the size of a dime in the base of it. I don't know how long the hole had been there. I don't know how much longer it would have gone before blowing us all up. You could almost miss the hole. It was a zigzag but you could put a medical probe through it.

"I showed Splash and he got the message about how many people we'd sent in. We only sent litter cases. We had walking wounded all over the place. You know how it is in a battle. We were in the process of cleaning up.

"We had a gun that fired a hundred rounds and there were cannisters all around. That's a lot of ammunition. I used to teach my men to keep a couple of five-gallon water cans in the mortar pit. If somebody says you can only shoot so many rounds per minute that's baloney. You take the water cans and start pourin' water not in it but on it. And you cool it down.

"They talk about minimum range. I'll give you minimum range. Take all those increments off and jack it up. Put out a couple of ammo boxes and stand that thing on end. Even with a four-deuce I've done it. I've had rounds wobble up, and some of 'em didn't even get to nose down. They came down sideways and didn't go off. Tell me about minimum range. And a four-deuce is worth a lot more than one lousy rifle. You have to drum that into the heads of the people on the crew-served weapons.

"When Splash came out there were still a couple of 81 rounds layin' out sideways. He was a sketch. I was telling him the story and he didn't say a word about it being him on the radio. The poor S-4 officer was looking for a hole to climb into. He didn't want to be around.

"Finally, Splash asked, 'Was that you on the radio last night?'

"I said, 'Yessir!'

"'Kinda disconcerted, weren't you?'

"I didn't want to say too much, because I didn't want to use the ugly words. But I was still hot. I said, 'Whattaya gonna do to me? Shoot me? Send me to Vietnam? Whattaya gonna do — have me look at this?'

"He said, 'You know you were kinda brisk out there.'

"'You know how it is, sir,' I said. 'Sometimes you run into dummies.'

"'I was on the radio. You were talking to me.' He thought it was funny. He never said another word about it.

"I had to deal with him one other time. This is a long story — so hang on.

"I had a Mike Force company at Song Mau, and I was going to pick up a payroll. I missed the airplane. Saturday afternoon, I was sittin' by the runway on my rucksack in a camouflage suit, scratchin' my head. No rank on or anything like that. I was a captain then.

"I didn't know what to do. The next scheduled run was Monday. Some dude walked up in a khaki shirt, khaki pants and a leather belt. I thought he was a bulldozer operator from one of the civilian companies. He came up and looked at me and said, 'How'th the war goin', tiger?' (I believe he had false teeth; his jaw was going from side to side.)

"I thought, 'What a banana,' and I said, 'Well, it's the only war we've got.'



**Dring hired this Thai guide to show his troops around Thai-Cambodian border. Cambodian soldier in background carries M16. Dring was hesitant in trusting this shotgun-toting farmer with his life. "You really should know where you are when you're meters from a national boundary," said Dring. "There are no signs in the bush."**

"He said, 'Well, keep up the good work, tiger,' and walked away.

"'Who the devil was that?' I thought. 'Is he mentally maladjusted or something?'

"Then a little Air Force guy came out: 'Did you see Robert Mitchum?'

"'Who?' And then it dawned on me. Yeah, that was Robert Mitchum, going around, inspiring the troops — by wiggling his jaws.

"While I was sitting there, gettin' over that one, along came another guy in khakis, a kind of a uniform that looked like he ironed it with a hot rake. He walked over and he had some brass that I'd never seen — crossed leaves. He was a

Seabee or Navy engineer or something.

"He stopped and looked at me, and I thought, 'What is this, a Halloween party?'

"I said, 'What are you?'

"'I'm the Navy, champ.'

"'Whose navy?'

"He said, 'I'm in the junk force.'

"'What's the junk force?' I asked.

"He sat down and told me. He had a little boat and a Vietnamese crew and they drove up and down the coast and looked for smugglers and suspicious boats.

"'You wanta come with me?' he asked. He added that every now and then he got into a little fire fight. 'What do you know about a 60mm mortar?'

"I looked at him. 'What do I know? I invented it. Whattaya mean, what do I know?'

"He told me that every time his boat went by one spot it drew fire from the beach. The beach was flat as a pancake for a couple of hundred yards, maybe 50 feet of sand dunes and then you got the Sahara Desert. He said when the shooting started he'd get in close and shoot back. He'd get on the radio, because he had a friend who was captain of a little minesweeper in the U.S. Navy and it had a 40mm on the front. The junk boat would go in and play target. Then he'd call his friend with the minesweeper and it would go in and **bang, bang, bang, bang** into the beach.

"He asked me to come look at his boat and meet his crew. It was a little wooden boat like an oversized rowboat and its gunnels were 10 inches high. Outstanding. There was a little square plate with sand in it, and the 60mm mortar — hand held — sat in it. He got me to run the 60.

"I saw a couple of holes in the boat, so I knew the people on the beach were not actually blind. They did hit something every once in a while. And the man told me his predecessor got Xed out — not killed, but bent outta shape.

"I asked, 'How often do these shootings happen?'

"He said, 'Oh, once a week.

Whenever we go by this spot it happens. Must have been 15, 20 times.'

"He had on his flak jacket and helmet. I was running the 60, and of course I didn't have a flak jacket or a helmet. The Vietnamese guy underneath the waterline had one. I asked, 'Why don't you go into the beach and run those guys out?'

"'Well,' he said, 'we don't have

any troops.'

"I said, 'Get some troops. Go in there and wipe them out. Just go in there and clean house.'

"He said, 'We've got the boats but we don't have any men.'

"A light bulb went on in my head. I said, 'Well, if I had about 170 people here, could you do it? Could you get them to the beach?'

"The guy said, 'Are you serious?'

"I said, 'Yeah, man. I'm like Hertz. Rent-A-Company. A company of 'Yards. We could take off, like we were on a beach party or something. The whole company could disappear for two days. We'd take some trucks like we were going to a beach party — and we'll throw our own war. I've got a company up there, and it's not too far away. Can do easy, GI.'

"The guy started thinkin'. 'Well, I got a friend who's got a destroyer.' He told me this destroyer ran up and down the coast and never pulled into port. The minesweepers did. But not the big ships. They helped with gunnery. They'd always been hot to trot, but they never had the opportunity to get in and see people.

"When the lieutenant commander running the minesweeper told the captain of the destroyer, he said, 'Hey, I'd love to get in. We could meet you down at Song Mau and run you out in the junk boats.' See, he had a very flexible mission of running up and down the coast — unless he was called in for fire support somewhere (and in II Corps there was very little of that).

"I went to Clyde Sincere, who ran the Mike Force then, and borrowed the company. It was just like taking them out for a two-day beer bust.

"Then I went to the 'Yards and said, 'Hey, we're gonna go on a boat ride.' Most of 'em had never seen the ocean. Now we were going to a beach party, bag and baggage, three basic loads. Sincere just turned his head. We had a company plus, a whole menagerie.

"We showed up at Song Mau. Everybody who knew anything about it was kind of lookin' the other way. They didn't think it was going to happen. When we got there, sure enough, there was the captain of the junk force with his little boats.

"Some of the 'Yards who had never seen the ocean ran down and tried to drink the water — and got irate because it was salty. They'd never heard of saltwater. They figured the only person low enough to put salt in water would be a

Vietnamese.

"Their concept of water was a creek. It was funny later to watch one of them telling somebody in the mountains about the ocean. You know the word for water is *nuk*. He was trying to describe the breakers: '*Nuk nuk nuk nuk WHOOOM! Nuk nuk nuk nuk nuk nuk WHOOOM!*' The other guy shook his head. 'Everybody knows there's not that much water in the world. You been hittin' the *numpai* jug, pal.'

"So help me, all this is the truth. Kelley will back me up on this. The guy with the destroyer had a friend who was also captain of a destroyer, and he had nothing else to do and he happened to be going by at the time, so he took half the 'Yards, and the other half went



**SSgt. Larry Dring and Cpl. Cooper — soon to be WIA — near Phan Rang in 1964 with Browning 1919A6 .30-cal. MG. Dring and Cooper were participating in first Special Forces Temporary Additional Duty to Combined Studies Group from Okinawa. Jeep is civilian. Cammies are Sears & Roebuck. "War on the economy plan," said Dring.**

with me. They put the 'Yards on the fantail and the Navy was trying to get rid of all their soup, chicken-noodle soup and crackers, and the 'Yards were eatin' it like it was going out of style.

"Lots of funny things happened. For instance, one little 'Yard came up to me with a \$5 bill. (Some of the guys couldn't read or write, but they knew what size and color money should be.) This kid wanted to know: '*Pourquoi? Changez, mon capitain.*' He'd traded five piasters for five bucks with some sailor who didn't know anything because he'd never been in country and who wanted a souvenir. The kid didn't want the \$5 bill; he wanted his five piasters back. I reached into my pocket and gave him a five-piaster note. Who was I to make both of them unhappy?

"Of course, there was trading going on. I told the captain of the ship I was on, 'Tomorrow you can trade anything you want. I'll give you my rifle. But I don't want any of these dudes hitting the beach

without a rifle or missing a grenade or something.' He put out the word, but they traded on the other ship.

"When we hit the beach the next morning there must have been 20 of my guys with white sailor hats on. It's not that my guys wanted sailor hats but those sailors were going out of their minds to have tiger fatigue caps for souvenirs.

"And this all started from missing an airplane. The captain of the second destroyer was a lieutenant colonel, what the Navy calls a commander. He came aboard — and they were having their jollies with me. He called me 'Mr. Dring.' So I told 'em the only mister in the Army is a warrant officer. Then they started calling me lieutenant — and I started using the term, 'captain.' So I pulled their chain too.

"The destroyer captain started talking about gunfire support. I said, 'What? Hey, there can't be but a platoon of them in there. What do you think this is, the battle of Iwo Jima?'

"He said, 'We're going to open up from 10,000 yards.'

"They were *what?* This was a scout company. (You know, tiptoe through the tulips.) I didn't even have a helmet.

"I said, 'If I need you I'll call you.' But they wanted to prep the beach.

"Well, it was a free fire zone. They could do anything they wanted. I couldn't talk them out of it. So the two ships came in turned sideways, and they turned all their tubes to the beach. And they started shelling it. First they'd sent the minesweeper into a little cove by the beach. He parked where he could shoot his 40mm but still be out of range. Then the two ships picked him up on radar and guided in on him. They profiled the beach and started shootin' VT [variable-time fuses]. They were gonna get the guys in the trenches — like they were the Japanese or something. You couldn't see a sailor above deck on the beach side. The VT was blowing from the tubes to the beach. It looked like somebody was throwing truckloads of gravel. All the tubes were firing and they were setting each other off.

"The cox'n in my boat said he was gonna run by there. I said, 'Whoa, pal. Cease! Desist! You ain't goin' noplac or I'll blow your head off.'

"I got on the radio and said, 'Whoa! Stop the gunfire. You want to shoot HE and WP [high explosives and white phosphorus],

have an orgasm, but do not shoot the VT. You're gonna clean me out, pal. I'm not gonna put any of these boats forward until you start shootin' HE or WP.'

"They switched to WP.

"We started forward. Some of the 'Yards got to the front of the little, flat-nosed landing barge and held on to the grate. They really loved it until they hit the surf — then it didn't seem like such a good thing.

"I had a SFC named William T. Mitchell with me, big black guy; he must have been six-foot-seven. He was good luck — he'd saved my butt on a previous operation. He was good people. Billy Mitchell stepped out of the boat when the ramp went down into water that was about four or five feet high. We were 20 feet from the beach. Suddenly six-foot-seven disappeared. He'd stepped in a chuckhole or a shellhole or something. And they wanted guys who were four-foot-five to get off there? Nooo!

"Mitchell came back up and moved forward another five feet to where the water was knee deep. But it was still hard to get the other guys out.

"Before we got to the beach, I looked up. I knew we had the minesweeper and two destroyers. But now we had another boat going in with us, dark-gray, black letters: U.S. Coast Guard. A Coast Guard cutter. They didn't have anything else to do either. The cutter had a breech-fed 81mm on its bow and a dude on the side was firing a 20 mike-mike. He wore an oversized gray helmet, an orange life jacket, a white T-shirt and a pair of shorts — and was holding a cup of coffee. If you gotta go to war that's the way to do it, with a cup of coffee and a pair of shorts. That Coast Guard cutter took us almost into the beach. It came in almost as far as the landing barges did.

"There were about 20 home-grown VC on the beach. We went in and shot the place up. Resistance was spotty. We pretty well cleaned the place out. It was a little village that had been evacuated. We threw a satchel charge into a cave after a VC — out came about 500 bats but he stayed. There were two wells. We filled 'em up with phosphorus and threw a satchel charge down so the place was no longer usable. The junk boat never got shot at again.

"We got back aboard and returned to the destroyers and then

the people really had a good time.

"After two or three weeks, I went down to Nha Trang to pick up a payroll for my guys. I got to the S-3 shop. I had a friend there, Master Sgt. Julian C. Haleamau. When I walked in, it dawned on me that it was too quiet. I looked up and everybody was standing at attention.

"There was Splash. He was very unhappy about something or other. I said, 'Oh, oh,' because I wasn't neatly dressed, as usual, and I quietly tried to tiptoe to the rear.

"'Come here, young Dring!' And he didn't smile at all. 'I want to tell you something.'

"I said, 'What have I done?'



**Cambodian Special Forces trooper receives American Special Forces scouting and patrolling training in Thailand before going back to fight in Cambodia in 1972. Weapon is .30-cal. M1 Garand.**

"He said, 'I just got a congratulatory message from MACV. They wanted to congratulate Special Forces on their fine conduct on a combined operation.'

"I was trying to figure out what he was talking about.

"'Would you know anything about that combined operation?' For the life of me I couldn't figure out what he was talking about. 'Did you take it upon yourself to borrow the United States Navy?'

"And then it sunk in. To me it was just a trip to the beach, but the Navy had put it in and some Air Force guy had flown over and they'd put it out as a combined operation. The Navy was giving out medals and they wrote it up as the Normandy invasion.

"Splash started to grin. He said, 'Where did you get the idea for this invasion?'

"I really didn't know what to say. 'Well, sir, I once saw a movie about World War II.'

"That broke him up. He said,

'The next time you borrow the U.S. Navy, at least have the goodness to notify my headquarters ahead of time. I could have got you a medal if I'd known about it.' He could have got me the combined services something or other.'

Dring has plenty of medals, including two Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars, the Cambodian Medale Militaire and four Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry. He also has the Soldier's Medal.

"I got that," he said, "for fishin' a couple of guys out of a river one night. Two of my little guys walked off a log into deep water. I went under and stuffed them and their packs and equipment up, hoping that somebody else would get 'em, because I was on the bottom. Then it was my turn and I came up, then went back under and shoved them up again. Somebody got 'em about the third time.'

His ARCOM (Army Commendation Medal) with a "V" is another story. Dring told me it happened when a colonel told him, "I'm going to put you in for a Bronze Star."

Dring said, "I told him, 'Thank you.' He looked at me and said, 'You don't seem too happy about it.'

"I said, 'I've never been in a place where I could get an ARCOM. Why don't you put me in for it?' It's a lesser decoration, but I told him, 'Look I already got four of the red ones. This green one would go great with my khakis.'

Dring also has five Purple Hearts. He told me, "I was one of the first 50 guys to get a Purple Heart in Vietnam. President Kennedy letter orders. That's had my records screwed up because there's no order number from the unit. It's a letter order from the President. I was a staff sergeant when I got it. They had a big ceremony up at Fort Buckner. The general gave it to me. He pinned it on and said, 'Well, sergeant, I'm sure glad to be giving this to you rather than your parents.'

"I said, 'Me, too.'

'I got into a fight with a Marine over that Heart, because at the time there was no campaign ribbon for it. All I had was a Good Conduct Medal and a Purple Heart.

"The Marine asked, 'Where were you?'

"'Vietnam.'

"He wanted to know where that was. I said, 'You go to China and turn left and you'll run right into it.' He didn't believe me."





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# STEYR

Continued from page 47

tions. An optional gas port blocking lever provides maximum bullet velocity. The fire selector includes a three-shot burst position in addition to safety, single shot, and full automatic. Apparently in answer to the FN FAL's poor performance record under conditions of sand and dust, a spring-loaded sealing cover on the cocking handle bounces open and closed during the firing sequence. Easily field-stripped without tools, the weapon uses the standard M16A1 30-round magazine.

A poorly designed tubular handle bayonet that serves no function aside from sticking people, and therefore will be immediately disregarded by troops in the field, supplements this intriguing new assault rifle. The FNC is available with either a folding or rigid stock. The Canadians are on the verge of adopting either the FNC or the M16A2 as their new infantry rifle. My guess is they will choose the FNC, based on their past familiarity with the FAL.

A non-firing prototype of the new Steyr GB 9mm auto pistol was present for examination. As a result of its gas-delayed blowback action, recoil and muzzle climb of this pistol are supposedly extremely low. Its 18-round magazine is but another escalation in the current fetish for totally unnecessary and ever increasing capacities in 9mm auto-pistol magazines. Anyone who requires 19 rounds of 9mm Parabellum pistol ammunition for a single fire engagement should be using a sub-machine gun. We seem to be evolving backwards to the Luger snail drum. The Steyr GB pistol is, of course, double action also.

The Steyr SSG 69 sniper rifle with the 6x Kahles scope was also at hand during the SOF-Steyr demonstration. It has been thoroughly discussed in the April, 1979 issue of SOF. Karl Walter, Steyr's product manager, brought three FN LAR rifles with him, one of which was equipped with the fine Leatherwood ART II scope and FAL mount. The whole FN FAL series will be tested and evaluated in a forthcoming SOF feature article.

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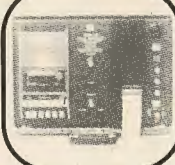
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## RANGER

Continued from page 55

Belonging to a Ranger battalion is tough on both the men who serve and their families. "Two years is about all most wives can stand, without having a chance to see their husbands more than a couple of times a month. It's a lot like an unaccompanied overseas tour, we spend that much time in the field. So guys start to burn out. Unless they're single, or they've got a good Ranger wife, I normally don't approve extensions," explains Powell.

The 2/75 also has a full-time Air Force attachment, three teams of two Forward Air Controllers (FACs). Two teams stay with the unit at all times, on a rotating basis. Each team has an officer, usually a captain, who is a qualified fighter or attack-plane pilot, and an enlisted RTO. Both are air-borne-qualified, but the Air Force doesn't like to send them to an eight-week school for a one-time-only two-year tour with the Rangers. "But we have to be able to go wherever they go, and we also have to learn about being a Ranger. So what we learn, we learn here. This has to be the toughest air liaison officer job there is," says Air Force Capt. Buddy Knox.

"One of the reasons, I guess, that ALOs don't get formal Ranger schooling is that you're not going to find many fighter pilots who'll volunteer for eight weeks of hell," he adds.

In the deep shadows beneath the rain-forest canopies, the Ranger patrol leader picks his way to the very edge of the tree line. One at a time he places his men, four on one side, four at about 90 degrees to them. In the arc of that angle is a brushy clearing that parallels the nearby road. This is the killing zone. To the rear of the ambush site, perhaps 300 meters distant, is the rallying point. It is totally invisible from the tree line, screened by a tangle of fallen limbs, wait-a-minute vines, scrub oak and assorted hillocks. At the rallying point the patrol will assemble, briefly, after their ambush is sprung.

For now they will wait, silent as death. They will disregard the dampness of the soil beneath their prone bodies. They will ignore the ants, scurrying and foraging for the dead or dying of their own mindless world.

In an hour, perhaps a little more, the first of the Canadian reservists will appear. They will be expecting an ambush, but it will make little difference. If this were the real thing, the point squad would be as good as dead. But this time the Rangers will fire only blanks. This time the Canadians will take a clinic on ambush. They will get some idea of what it's like on the wrong end of a Ranger surprise.

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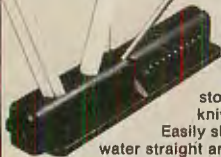
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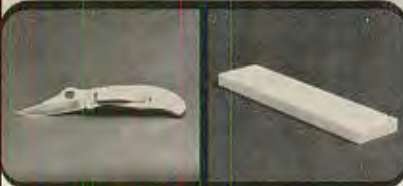


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And this time the Rangers will learn, too. Back at their assembly area the patrol leader will go over each man's performance. Mistakes will be pointed out. Questions will be answered. The unfit or unwilling will be weeded out.

Because next time, it might not be Canadians and blanks. It might not be in the friendly bushes of Washington State. And if it isn't, when the ants appear, camouflaged to blend with their environment, stealthy as Rangers on patrol, they will have themselves a proper feast.

## FIRE FIGHT

The occasion was a reunion of the few remaining survivors of Merrill's Marauders, the WWII forebears of the present Ranger battalion. The retired warriors, with their families and a gaggle of Ranger civilian guests and off-duty Rangers, were in a small bleacher at the edge of a grassy DZ at Ft. Lewis.

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and armed with a motley collection of foreign arms, would come out of their camouflaged spider holes and engage the platoon.

Then there would be a fire fight, and the Rangers would win, of course. This was a demonstration, and everyone would feel terrific and all fired up, and the old-timers would go back over to the O Club and sop up a few more drinks.

It didn't quite work that way. The reason was the weather. Normally it rains nearly every day at Ft. Lewis, especially in late summer. But it hadn't rained in several days. When the grenade simulators went off, they started a small fire in the grass. The leadership echelon of the assaulting Ranger platoon was the first to notice it. A couple of soldiers were pulled off the assault line, and started to tromp out the blaze. It just got bigger. Fast. Then an usher or two raced out through the mock assault with canteens to sprinkle on the blaze. It was like peeing on a bonfire — not much help.

Suddenly the fire line blossomed into a huge flare. The assaulting Rangers slung their weapons and took out entrenching tools. "Dead Soviet-bloc defenders" came to life and ran out into the field to fight the fire. The bleacher emptied as every off-duty soldier went out to help, including one in one of those silly horned hats superfans

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wear to Seattle football games. For several minutes the grassfire was surrounded by a flailing melee of "good guys," "bad guys" and sports fans. Then the fire was out. The "dead Soviet-bloc defenders" went back to their spider holes and lay down, like they were supposed to, mock blood and all. The assaulting platoon lined up by squads and marched away.

And the narrator, a Ranger company commander, proceeded to tell the audience about the fire fight they were supposed to have seen, not the fire fight they saw. As he wound up his spiel, a "dead Soviet-bloc defender" crawled to his feet, picked up a handy AK-47, and quietly went after the narrator — who turned, just at the right moment (they rehearse these things, you know) and dispatched him neatly with a little fast Ranger footwork and a couple of not-too-mock blows.

Then everyone went over to the club for a few drinks. —M.W.

**SALUTE TO A  
RANGER WARRIOR**

The news was on all three TV networks, just a fragmentary report, and yet when I caught it I just knew, somehow, that Powell had bought it. The first details were sketchy: An Air Force transport plane had crashed at night at a remote airfield in Nevada. Seven were dead, a bunch injured. The next day some more details were fleshed out, and what I heard told me more than I wanted to know: The dead were soldiers from Ft. Lewis, Wash.; they had been on a night training mission; the plane was a C-130; it was carrying pyrotechnics as well as troops; and when it crashed the flash-and-bang goodies had gone up. As a respectable newsman, I wanted to call Ft. Lewis Public Affairs Office and find out if I was just spooked, or what. I couldn't bring myself to make the call.

So Steve Stromvall, a civilian PAO

at Lewis, called me. And sure enough — call it intuition, call it a sixth sense, call it what you will — I was right. Among the seven Rangers killed on that C-130 was Lt. Col. Bill Powell, the battalion commander.

This is not an obituary. While I spent several days with Powell, shared his water bottle, flew with him, climbed a mountain with him, traded war stories and bits of personal history, I'm not qualified to summarize his life. Someone else will do that.

But. I did get to know him, a bit, and I liked what I saw. He was one of those warriors who confounded the experts that told him his outfit could never do such-and-such, and gloried in it. He was the kind of man who wouldn't have wanted to die in some rest home. He was on the promotion list for full colonel, and with that elevation would have come a new job, likely at a desk somewhere, and he plainly wasn't happy about that. He was only 42, and he knew that in a couple of years, five or six at the most, he'd be retiring, and while he'd already begun to plan for it, it was clearly something he wasn't looking forward to. His whole life was in the Army, and more specifically in the Rangers. His idea of heaven was a place where everyone wore cammies, slung a rope over his shoulder, lived off the land and kept moving, no matter what kind of terrain got in the way.

He died as he lived. The C-130 was landing, lights out, on a combat assault exercise at a place called Indian Springs Air Field. No runway lights. Not much of a moon. Sixty-eight men aboard, including the crew. The plane nosed into the desert about a mile short of the runway, and broke in two. Some Rangers were spilled out; others in the tail section were thrown about. Just what happened to Powell will probably never be known, but some details were filled in by Stromvall.

Among them was the fact that the battalion surgeon and the senior medic, Capt. Gardner and SSG Bynum, went into the flaming wreckage to rescue their comrades. Flames leapt 25 feet or more into the air, but the rescuers went back several times. Finally, they went back one time too many, and were trapped by an explosion in the wreck. Was Powell one of those who went back? Was he working amidst the flames to save some of his men? No one living can say. I kind of think that's what went down — he was that kind of a man.

So, this isn't an obituary. It's a personal salute to a fallen warrior. Powell was a friend of mine, though I never knew him well. So long, Bill. Your outfit and your country will miss you. And so will I. —M.W.



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Continued from page 35

feet. Many of them were hit, but they had to move, even if it meant running directly into Charlie's hands.

So far, Adcock seemed to live a charmed life. On 13 previous missions, he had not received so much as a scratch. But tonight his grace period was about to expire.

A blinding flash as a mortar rocket landed nearly on top of him! It ripped his legs out from under him and slammed him to the ground. He felt no pain at first, although he realized he had been hit, perhaps fatally. Most of his trousers had been torn away in the blast. One jungle boot was gone.

Cochran was the first man to find him. Adcock heard the radioman cursing.

"Get me to my feet!" Adcock ordered, to Cochran's surprise.

"God, I though you'd bought the farm! Can you stand?"

"I can run!"

The little sergeant reached to touch his wounds, finding both legs riddled masses of flesh. But they still worked.

Grabbing a 'Yard by his harness, Adcock slung him into line and then led the caterpillar from the mortar zone. After setting up a new perimeter, the team leader checked and found that only Cochran and Lo Ball were so far unscathed. Several 'Yards appeared to be in critical condition. One had a chunk of his biceps missing. Another had a sucking chest wound. The team members bandaged each other as well as they could under the circumstances.

Charlie was so confident now that he wasn't even practicing stealth in organizing another probing attack. From where Adcock lay on his belly on a slight knoll overlooking another where the forest thinned out a little, he could see lanterns lit. They fanned out in a long line and started to move toward him. Then they were doused and another probe was underway.

The Spike Team repelled the first wave at the expense of the last of its grenades and at least half of its reserve ammo. Some of the 'Yards were wounded a second and third time. Lo Ball took a bullet across the stomach. It wasn't much more than a scratch.

Lanterns glowed again on the opposite knoll as Charlie regrouped. Adcock hobbled among his men, muttering encouragement. The end, he felt was near. As for himself, he swore not to be taken alive. He had seen what Charlie did to captured SF men: He hung them upside down and gutted them like butchered hogs; he slit off their penises and rammed them down their throats. Dying or not, Adcock was determined to take as many enemy with him as he could.

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He was having a difficult time getting the wounded and exhausted 'Yards back on their feet. Even the threat of another mortaring failed to rally the little men. Mortar rounds began thudding to earth 100 meters short. Cochran came running around the perimeter, looking for the boss. When he found him, he thrust the PRC-25 headset into Adcock's hands.

"Game Time, this is FAC-ONE. I have the Eagles with me."

Ordinarily, a FAC doesn't fly at night, because his visibility and thus his usefulness are limited. The first Eagle must have passed on a strong appeal in the team's behalf. The voice on the radio was the most beautiful any of them had ever heard.

"Game Time, we have SPECTRE enroute. Can we help until he gets here?"

"Charlie has lit lanterns. Can you see 'em?" Adcock blurted out, wasting no time. "The little bastards are all around us."

"I roger your transmission that the little bastards are all around you. I'm over your position now. I can see mortars."

Adcock gave him the enemy's position on an azimuth from the mortars and then rolled over on his back with a tired sigh to listen to the sound of the slow little prop circling above the thud of mortar rounds being walked toward them. Cochran was actually giggling from relief. Their heads together over the headset, the two Americans listened as FAC-ONE coordinated with the Eagles, dropping a flare to pinpoint Charlie's location.

The A-1Es came screaming in low and fast to dump their loads. The jungle glowed. The mortaring ceased. Terrible death moans drifted through the night. This time the planes were scoring.

After a few passes, the planes pulled off. "Game Time, we're pulling out," FAC-ONE explained. "SPECTRE is taking over."

"FAC-ONE, you and the Eagles are goddamned dolls!" Adcock radioed back.

Adcock felt like cheering when SPECTRE dropped down on command to strafe the enemy. He suddenly knew they were going to make it.

Their big guardian protected *Game Time* for the rest of the night. Apparently demoralized, Charlie kept his distance, content with merely lobbing a RPG from time to time. Adcock used the time to move his team several hundred meters to the rear where they waited for dawn and rescue.

Hueys arrived at the first break of day to blast an LZ for the team's evacuation. Covered by fast Cobra gunships, a pair of choppers darted down and settled on the LZ. From the jungle emerged a dozen haggard, bloody men. Cochran half-dragged, half-carried two 'Yards with

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shrapnel in their guts and faces. Adcock and a 'Yard with a dirty bandage wrapped around his middle struggled along together toward the end of the procession. The last man out was Lo Ball with an M16 in each hand. Every few feet the little 'Yard turned to fire a burst into the jungle, from which came half-hearted sniper fire.

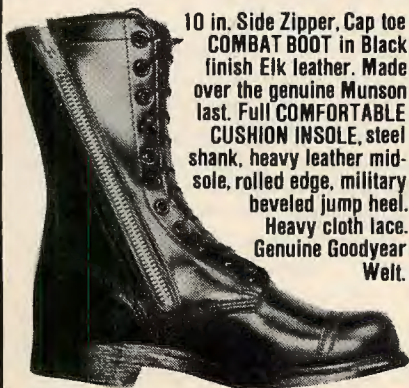
Sgt. Gene Adcock was in a hospital at Saigon recovering from his wounds when the 1968 Tet offensive was launched on 30 January. He could hear the firing from his hospital window. By then he had learned that two of his 'Yards had died from their wounds. Another had lost an arm. But he received some satisfaction in knowing that another unit which infiltrated into his area had estimated that *Game Time* had accounted for 60 enemy KIAs in the fighting of that dark, terror-filled night. They were probably the first enemy killed in the Tet offensive.

The little sergeant returned to Kon Tum in less than a month. There were no medals, no bands playing. C&C was, after all, *classified secret*, and the Special Forces soldiers were simply doing their duty the best they knew how. Lo Ball was still there and he still refused to go on any missions not led by his favorite American sergeant.



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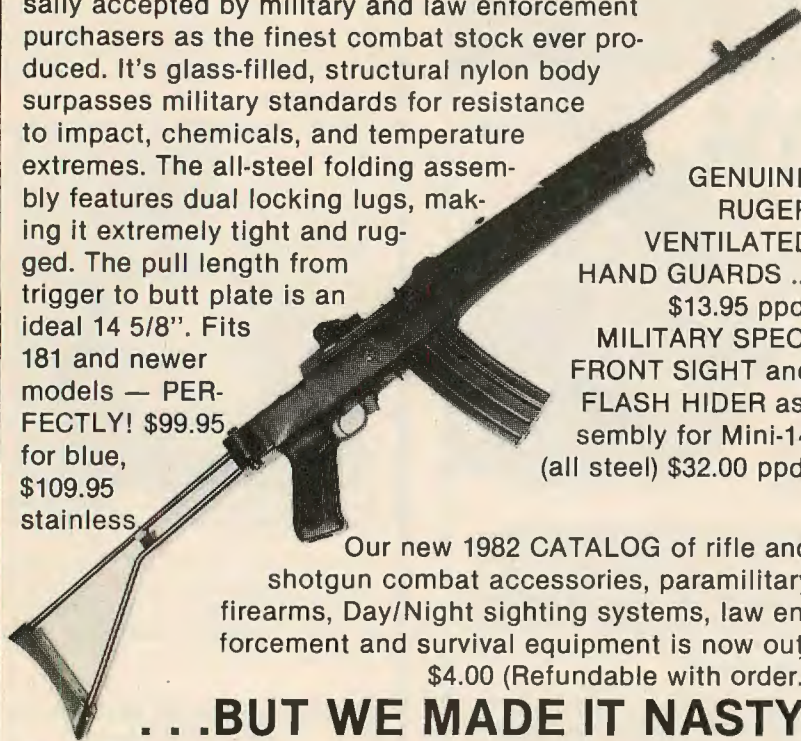
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# PATCH

Continued from page 39

Not everyone does. One patch pilot, called out to fly an injured oil-rig worker to the hospital, fought a head wind all the way to the rig. He had only enough fuel to reach the beach on the return trip. An ambulance picked up the injured man for the remainder of the trip, and the pilot had to wait until the next morning for a fuel truck.

The danger of something going wrong with a helicopter over open water is always present. When that happens the pilot (and his passengers) can only hope that the chopper will float. Once, I was told, a helicopter lost power and had to autorotate into the water. The pilot calmly popped the flotation devices and said: "Don't worry, it'll float." A passenger reminded him that it was supposed to fly.

Patch-flying is not restricted to the Gulf States. Many companies operate throughout the continental United States, Alaska and overseas. Because the number of qualified pilots is limited and job openings are available, the pilots have earned the name of "rainbow chasers." All of them agree that their present jobs are only good until the next one comes along. If that one doesn't pan out they'll drift back to Texas and start patch-flying in the Gulf again.

Explained Ugly Rob: "What are we supposed to do? We flew in the Army and fell in love with flying. A lot of these guys were hot-shot pilots in the Army. Some of them are real honest-to-god heroes. They got out, expecting to find a job — only to discover it wasn't there. So we started patch-flying. At least here we're appreciated for our skills."

He is right. As hurricane Jeannie churned toward the Texas coast, nerves tightened on the hundreds of rigs dotting the Gulf — if the helicopter pilots didn't show up in time, the men would have to ride out the storm on the rig, something none of them wanted to do. If the pilot reached them in time, they would have to fly them back to the rigs after the storm. I asked Ugly Rob if they ever returned the favor.

"Sure," he said, "they'll feed us steaks on the rigs, slap us on the back and say thanks. They know that if one of them gets hurt one of us will climb in to a chopper and go after him day or night, storm or calm. We'll get him back — or die trying."

"And the rest of the people — other pilots?" I asked.

"They call us rainbow chasers with two-party checks — until they need us. Then we're good guys again."

Patch-flying is a hell of a way to make a living!



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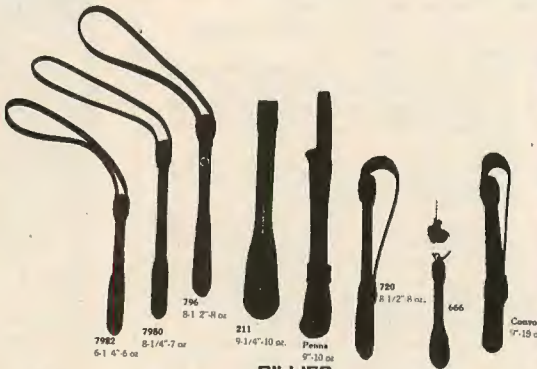
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# BULLETIN BOARD



Continued from page 4

munist uprisings in Latin America should take heed from a recent declaration by Father Luis Eduardo Pellecer, who defected from Guatemala's so-called "Army of the Poor."

When Pellecer, a Jesuit, vanished some months ago, the Jesuit Mission headquarters in Washington, D.C., issued a press release saying he had been engaged only in youth work with refugees from El Salvador, slum dwellers and the news media.

The release intimated that the Guatemalan government had Pellecer killed — saying he had been kidnapped and was not expected to be found alive.

But Pellecer turned up alive and well and gave a news conference in Guatemala City. He said he had been working for 17 months with communist terrorists but had grown disillusioned with them and arranged his own "kidnapping" by security forces to escape the terrorists.

He said some 15 to 20 other priests are still actively supporting the communists.

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## CENTER SEEKS VIETNAM HISTORY . . .

A new organization of Vietnam veterans has established a center at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., to document the daily lives of GIs in Vietnam.

The Vietnam War Veterans History and Archives Center is being set up within the Department of Manuscripts and Archives at Cornell and has launched a nationwide drive to find and obtain photographs, diaries, manuscripts, letters, drawings, tape recordings and any other materials which record the experiences of soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen who fought in the war.

People interested in donating material to the archives should first write to the center. Its personnel will then send a brochure explaining how the material should be labeled and packaged.

Write: The Vietnam War Veterans History and Archives Center, P.O. Box 4733, Santa Rosa, CA 95402.

## A PACHE HATCHET JOB . . .

Pentagon officials say that both Army and Navy weapons programs planned for next year may be canceled in the 1983 defense budget in an effort to hold down military spending.

Under consideration is a decision to kill the Army's AH-64 Apache attack helicopter program (supposed to replace the Huey Cobra, which saw much duty in Vietnam).

The Apache program would have cost \$8 billion for 536 choppers. The Army already has spent \$1.5 billion on research and development of the Apache.

And the Navy has told Lockheed Corp. it will postpone further purchases of its P-3C Orion anti-submarine aircraft for five years in an effort to save \$2.4 billion.

The cutbacks are in line with Pentagon molding of the defense budget for fiscal 1983 — the financial year beginning 1 October — that is estimated to run about \$245 billion, a record for military spending.

## NICARAGUAN LIBERATION ARMY ATTACKS SANDINISTAS . . .

On 20 December 1981, troops of the Nicaraguan National Liberation Army under Commandante "Tupamaro," attacked Sandinista government installations at Dipildo Palo Verde and Agua Caliente in an operation code-named "St. Nicholas."

A spokesman for the attacking force told SOF that the Sandinistas lost about 17 killed. He said the NLA captured 13 M16 rifles and seven Czech rifles plus a large amount of munitions.

A helicopter sent by the Sandinistas to recon the area was shot down by heavy machine-gun fire.

The NLA guerrillas also blew two bridges named El Carrizal and Las Marias.

## CLEAR CALL TO COMMUNISTS . . .

The U.S. State Department has welcomed the recent Organization of American States' support for El Salvador's election plan. State termed it "a clear call" by Latin America for leftist guerrillas to renounce violence and join in the election process.

Department spokesman Alan Romberg said the Reagan Administration is "extremely pleased" with the 22 to three vote of OAS foreign ministers.

Romberg said: "We see the overwhelming support for this resolution by 22 countries representing a wide range of Latin American concerns as an important endorsement of the electoral process now under way."

The civilian-military junta in El Salvador is holding elections for a constituent assembly at this time with presidential elections to be held subsequently.

The OAS action contrasted sharply with a resolution approved earlier by the United Nations, which deplored

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alleged human rights violations in El Salvador and called for a negotiated settlement of the civil war there prior to any elections.

El Salvador — with strong backing from the Reagan Administration — has refused to negotiate a settlement with the communist insurgents on the grounds that such an agreement would give the rebels a share of power they have been unable to win on the battlefield.

The only OAS nations opposing the resolution were Mexico, Grenada and Nicaragua, all either leftist leaning or outright communist.

## HELP STILL NEEDED . . .

Nicaraguan exiles based in Honduras and fighting the communist Sandinistas in Nicaragua still need serviceable boots and fatigues. If you have old ones and don't think you'll be using them, send them to: SOF, Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters' Relief, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. We'll pass them on. . . . The Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund can still use contributions. The Afghan resistance is somewhat better-armed now than it was last year, but needs anything it

can get. Send contributions to Afghan Freedom Fighters' Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Not tax-deductible. Funds will be donated to pro-Western resistance groups of SOF's choice. Every cent goes to purchase of arms and medicine; none goes for administration, paperwork and so on.

## VA TOKEN . . .

Former Green Beret — and Silver Star winner — Allen Clark Jr. resigned after serving only 22 days as Deputy Administrator of the Veteran's Administration in Washington.

Clark — who lost both legs in Vietnam — said he took the job in the first place because he felt the gravity of his wound and his long stay in a VA hospital would help him bring "a special sensitivity and compassion to the veterans of this country's wars."

But, he said, he found he was to have "no direct-line management responsibility of any type." He felt his VA position was a token.

## SOVIETS SMEAR MARINES . . .

The Soviet Union's press, which frequently has nasty things to say about SOF, has now turned its attention to the U.S. Marines.

The Soviet Defense Ministry's newspaper, *Red Star*, first criticized President Reagan's plan to boost appropriations for the 200,000-man Marine Corps in order to finance expanded duties.

The newspaper charged that the Marines have "wrought havoc and practiced brute arbitrariness everywhere."

Although the Marines are an all-volunteer outfit, the paper claimed its men are "conscripts trained for criminal acts."

## BRITISH VOLS IN FINLAND . . .

A British author seeks to contact Americans and Canadians who served in a unit known as the British Volunteers in Finland, 1940. Men who served in it or people who know them can contact Justin Brooke, Chymorval Vean, Marizion, Cornwall, England, TR 17 ODQ. Brooke needs photographs, diaries and other docu-

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. . . Knife sheath specially designed pouch on front contains medium grit sharpening stone. Wide belt loop. Snap down safety strap.





## FLAK

Continued from page 6

become what I am today: a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division. For that I thank you. Instead of dreaming, I'm doing. I was lucky enough to be with Task Force 2/540 in "Operation Bright Star 82." And I really feel proud of our demonstration to the world.

Pvt. Jeffrey A. Groves  
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

*Airborne! All the way! — The Eds.*

## SOF DOES IT AGAIN ...

Sirs:

You guys are incredible! First you scoop the government's so-called professionals on the AK-74, and now I find out in the January issue of SOF that you brought out the first hard evidence of Soviet use of chemical agents in their wars of "liberation." (I now understand why our "objective" — read "liberal" — media didn't mention the source of the information. They couldn't bear the thought of showing SOF staff or readers as anything but bloodthirsty, warmongering psychopaths.) It's easy to see why Ivan is asking the UN (of all things!) to shut you down. With an organization like yours who needs the Agency? What are you doing for an encore, stealing an SS-20? I can hardly wait 'til next month's issue to find out. Keep up the good work. Kick their butts!

Sincerely,  
Chris Pasqualini  
West Haven, Connecticut

P.S. Take up a collection and buy Brown a cap that fits, willya? The one he's wearing on the cover of the January issue looks ready to fall off any second!

*It does, we did, but he won't. — The Eds*

## PEACE IN OUR TIME? ...

Sirs:

The drift-to-the-left is about to hit us again. In the 30 October issue of *National Review* is a worrisome interview with Private Citizen Ian Smith. We hear: Mugabe proposes one-party state. Zimbabwe government takes over media, and all government officials are now called "Comrade so-and-so" by the media. Mugabe imports advisory staff from East

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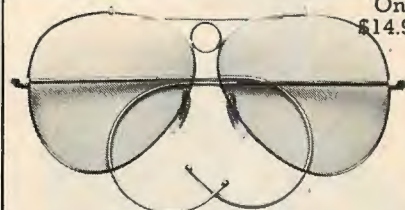
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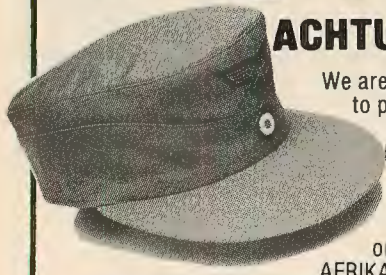
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bloc nations. Mugabe imports North Korean military advisers to train a "special elite force" (the Fifth Brigade) whose future role is not specified. Whites emigrating out of Zimbabwe cannot take any personal property whatsoever with them.

Meanwhile, all the Western wimp State Department types smile at how wonderful a peace settlement they brought about.

If the Reds should take over (with or without Mugabe, who they may consider too "western"), look for a state trial of Ian Smith first thing, with the death sentence announced before it even starts. Our liberals will love it, of course.

Sincerely,  
Harry Adams

## FREE AFGHANISTAN! ...

Dear Robert K. Brown:

I am writing to thank you for *Soldier of Fortune's* generous contribution of \$2,000 to support our activities on behalf of a Free Afghanistan.

The leadership you and *Soldier of Fortune* have taken on this vital issue are an inspiration and a model for all those who treasure peace and freedom.

In your intensive coverage of the Afghanistan story you have contributed much to piercing the media blackout — a blackout tempered only by disinformation. These last couple of months have seen a number of major media give fair and objective — and thus favorable — coverage to Afghanistan and the freedom fighters. Not much coverage, but it's a step in the right direction. We'd like to think that eventually they will follow SOF's tracks into the Hindu Kush.

You're to be further congratulated on your key role in this nation's building a case against the Soviet Union on chemical and biological warfare. Your selflessness in ensuring that the gas sample you brought out of Southeast Asia would be put to best use is testament to your commitment to justice. I am proud to have had a small part in processing the sample.

For SOF, in the person of Jim Coyne, to testify in hearings before the United States Senate is just recognition of the service you have done in collecting and disseminating invaluable intelligence on Soviet and Soviet proxy activities. Congratulations on your great leap into respectability!

It's an honor and a privilege to be associated with you, and I look forward to continued collaboration.

Best —  
Karen McKay  
Committee for a  
Free Afghanistan

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Continued on page 87

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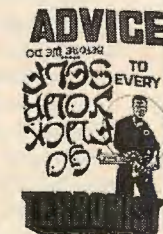
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# CONVENTION

Continued from page 41

## WARRIOR WINNER

Etched on the gleaming blade is the inscription: "1981 SOF Convention — Commemorative Dagger No. 001." SOF Conventioneer Jerry Chadwick of Aurora, Neb., went home with it.

This creation by Colorado knifemaker Kuzan Oda was a door prize at the SOF banquet at our convention in Scottsdale, Ariz., on 19 September 1981. Chadwick's banquet invitation number was called, making him the proud owner of number one of 50 specially made and engraved Kuzan Oda "Warrior" fighting knives.

The six-inch Warrior comes in a special walnut case with Kuzan's hand-made leather sheath. Knives with serial numbers 17 through 50 are still available at \$500 each. (The standard Warrior sells for \$450.)

The knives with serial numbers 37 through 50 are available through Al Mar, 8600 S.W. Salish Lane, Wilsonville, OR 97070, phone: (503) 682-1608. Kuzan says, "Al Mar is probably the world's best salesman, and my good friend — so



SOF Commemorative Dagger and sheath in walnut case with certificate of authenticity.



Kuzan Oda's special SOF-edition "Warrior" dagger. Inscription: 1981 SOF Convention, Commemorative Dagger No. 002.



Kuzan Oda — Colorado knifemaker and Samurai sword polisher.

he helps me sell them. And he'll help me sell more in the future."

The convention knives come with a stainless-steel hilt and African Wood handle. All Kuzan's knives are available with African Wood, Iron Wood, Cocobola Wood or Micarta handles (Ivory by special order) and all blades are armor-piercing 154 CM stainless-steel with a Rockwell C-scale hardness of 62. The Warrior's blade is 1/4-inch thick, making it one of the world's strongest designs.

"Combat is very serious," said Kuzan. "You don't want your knife to break and mine are almost impossible to break. My knives are simple and functional with no unnecessary frills."

Kuzan is quickly becoming an established American knifemaker, and SOF recommends his products. He offers nine different knives in an assortment of fighters and hunters — all with a lifetime guarantee. (Order early. It takes Kuzan approximately three months to get a Warrior ready for sale.) For more information on the Warrior and other Kuzan Oda knives (he also polishes Samurai swords), contact him at: Kuzan Oda, Custom Knifemaker, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 15795, Colorado Springs, CO 80935, phone: (303) 597-3408.

— John Metzger

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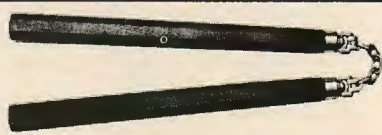
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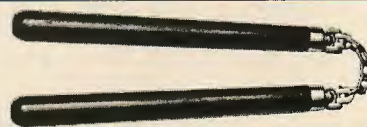


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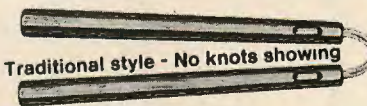


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## FLAK

Continued from page 84

SOF's donation to the Committee for a Free Afghanistan was a contribution of our own, not a donation from the Afghan Freedom Fighter's Fund. All donations from the Afghan Freedom Fighter's Fund go directly to those fighting in the field. — The Eds.

## CONGRATS FOR VIETNAM VETS ...

Dear Colonel Brown:

I want to extend to you my congratulations and appreciation for the outstanding training programs and convention you conducted at Scottsdale in September.

I went through the combat-pistol course and was very pleased at the quality of the training. The men from International Shootists really know their business and how to put it across. I have carried a side-arm for 30 years and have undergone a lot of training in that time, but they taught some techniques I had neither seen nor heard of before. My gun handling and accuracy improved substantially as a result of their efforts.

As to the convention, I have not enjoyed anything so much in years. The seminars, shooting matches, displays and especially the banquet were well presented and showed a great deal of careful planning and organization. Accolades are due to John Metzger for doing a truly outstanding job.

The main source of enjoyment, however, was the fellowship with the veterans of Vietnam. Like most of those who served there, the War has been a very sore subject with me. Since April of 1975 I had kept a lot of bitterness and frustration bottled up inside. The convention was pure catharsis for me. I came away feeling better than I had in over six years. So again my sincere appreciation. You are performing a real service to a great many deserving people.

Sincerely,  
Wm. T. Lockett, Lt. Col.  
USAF (Ret)

## LAOS AGAIN ...

Sirs:

As a military historian whose specialty is guerrilla warfare, particularly the variety practiced in Southeast Asia, I was fascinated by your article in the January 1982 edition of SOF. "The War That

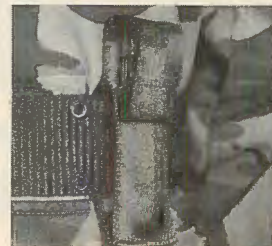
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Never Ended" by Jim Coyne certainly refocused the West's attention on an area all too soon forgotten by our media, governments, and general populace. I most heartily commend your dynamic effort to cover a virtually impossible story.

Sincerely,  
Darrell J. Noakes  
Steinbach, Manitoba  
Canada

## HARD CHEESE FOR NAZIS! . . .

Mr. William L. Pierce, Editor  
The National Alliance  
PO Box 3535  
Washington, DC 20007  
Dear Mr. Pierce:

I read your letter addressed to me as a *Soldier of Fortune* subscriber with great interest. You invited me to subscribe to the *National Vanguard*, a periodical which appears to be an incredibly old-fashioned hate sheet, exploiting ignorance and fear of identifiable minority groups for profit. Blacks, Hispanics, and Jews have been used this way to make fortunes for a century or more.

What surprised me was your use of the SOF subscription list. Most SOF readers are veterans of one or more wars with cosmopolitan military experience. Most of us have learned that with adequate training, equipment and motivation, one soldier, of any race or ethnic background, is about as good as any other. We are all pretty much alike, a lesson very expensively taught to Americans in the past 30 years. For this reason, setting aside all considerations of decency and morality, I am sure your campaign directed to SOF subscribers will not pay off.

Very truly yours,  
Edward P. Good

*SOF does not support the National Alliance and our subscription list was obtained by them through error. — The Eds.*



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# COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT



Continued from page 8

limits. Also, the ability to check reaction speed at various firing drills is necessary to know overall competition performance.

Like most other shooters, I usually practice on the range by myself. We have all practiced for a match or shooting stage without proper timing so that we haven't really known whether we were meeting the time limit, or shooting too fast for the time involved.

About a year ago, Bill Rogers of Rogers Holsters told me about a new timer device that he had come up with. Rogers called his new device the "ERT" (Electronic Range Timer). Encased in a plastic box that measures 3 3/4 inches wide by 6 1/4 inches long and 2 inches deep, this handy little timer is designed with a time adjustment so that time can be set from .2 second to 99.9 seconds in 1/10-second intervals. Simply dial up the time limit desired and then select either of two start buttons. They are marked for either instant start or a random delay start of three to eight seconds.

The random delay start is ideal for someone practicing alone. The start-and-stop signal is sounded by a smoke-alert horn that produces 85 decibels at 10 feet. Also included is a mini phone jack that supplies eight volts at 200 milliamps for a 1/4-second pulse to operate external sound, light or moving devices. The ERT operates on a nine-volt transistor battery which supplies it with up to 20 hours of continuous use.

I have been testing an ERT prototype for about six months — it is the answer for my solitary practice. I also use the ERT for training sessions. Instead of staring at the stop watch and missing what the students are doing, I now use the ERT to set the time sequence. I then give the range commands and simply push the start button. From then on my attention is on the students and their performance.

Rogers' ERT will solve many IPSC shooting clubs' problems. The shortage of capable range officers has caused club administrative problems, and not having persons with the necessary skill to run close time-limit stages has often led to unfair scoring. Ensuring that every contestant gets a uniform 1.5-second time limit in a fast shooting stage can be critical in a match's final outcome and questionable calls on late shots can compromise it.

The ERT sidesteps these problems. Suggested retail price is \$150 (catalog number 25014). Although the device is not cheap, its benefits to the serious pistol shooter or club are worthwhile. Many clubs have already started to use the ERT in their shooting programs. They find it a positive aid. I also know of a number of top shooters who are now using it in practice. I keep mine in my shooting bag, and it goes to the range with me every time. I use it regularly. Interested parties should contact Rogers Holsters, Dept. SOF, 1736 Johns Bluff Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32216.



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# SANG

Continued from page 59

Basically undisciplined, technically deficient, devoutly religious, and rarely accused of being either industrious or energetic, the Guardsmen possess virtually all the criteria for being the world's worst soldiers. However, they compensate for their shortcomings with a fierce sense of pride and desert savvy that their Bedouin heritage has ingrained within them. They are capable of operating and navigating in the uncharted wasteland that covers the Arabian peninsula with relative ease and are unmatched in their ability to endure the harsh conditions of the desert. Tribal and family ties bind the Guardsmen closer and stronger than any form of conventional discipline, and when the situation dictates, as it did during the insurrection at the Sacred Mosque of Mecca in November 1979, the Guard responded with a determination and fervor that even the most cynical observer had to respect.

Equipment within the CAB is diversified but leans towards the TO&E of the United States. Small arms consist of the 9mm Browning pistol, the 9mm MAC10 and MK-V Sten machine pistols and the 7.62mm FN rifle. Crew-served weapons include the 7.62mm FN MAG and Browning .50-caliber machine guns, and the 90mm recoilless rifle and the vehicle-mounted weapon systems.

The primary combat vehicle of the CAB is the V150 Commando armored car. (See accompanying article on the V150 Commando on p. 57). Each battalion contains 96 V150s which, in addition to serving as troop carriers and firing platforms for the crew-served weapons, provide the CAB with a flexible, armored backbone. Rugged, versatile and capable of long-range operation, the V150 allows the CAB complete maneuverability over the desolate terrain of Arabia, an ability often denied to conventional armored vehicles. Thin-skinned support vehicles of the Series III Land Rover type and the Dodge W200, 300 and 600 cargo-truck series provide for the necessary logistics train.

It is difficult to accurately evaluate the combat effectiveness of the CABs because they are still a relatively young and emerging force, and there can only be one true test of combat effectiveness — combat. As tactical combat units on a conventional desert battlefield, the CABs are restricted to the role of a light cavalry unit. Despite the fact that the CABs possess the TOW guided missile system, they are too few in number to provide the adequate long-range anti-armor capabilities which are essential in desert warfare. Even with the new "upgunned" version of the 90mm cannon, the effectiveness of the CABs in conventional desert operations against an armored enemy would still be limited.

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The greatest strength of the CABs lies in their extreme maneuverability and the versatility of their soldiers. The CABs are quite capable of conducting a highly mobile defense and engaging in long-range desert offensive operations. The value of a military force that can vanish into the vast reaches of the desert and emerge to fight at will is immeasurable. Alone, such a capability provides the Saudis with a deadly ace up their sleeve in all desert operations.

In internal security matters, or in combat in built-up areas, the protection provided by the V150 Commando and its weapons are more than adequate for the task, as was decidedly demonstrated in the recapturing of the Sacred Mosque of Mecca.

Despite their low educational level, the Guardsmen have quickly acquired a high degree of proficiency with their equipment and in many instances, such as with the TOW missile system, equal or excel their American contemporaries (they can afford to practise with live rounds!). The continuing training of the officers and men of the SANG, and the stability of personnel within the CABs, has and will continue to increase the operational effectiveness of the SANG.

As the Saudis continue to modernize further SANG battalions, they will build one of the more increasingly potent military forces in the Middle East. At the same time, they are providing the opportunity for skilled American veterans to parlay their almost unmarketable military talents into substantial salary benefits doing what they do best.

## SACRED MOSQUE SEIZURE

The main role of any National Guard is to provide security for its country. Rarely deployed in combat — except in a major war — the guard is most often used as an imposing presence in times of civil disorder or dubious security situations.

The Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) is an exception to this basic role: They are combat-ready light cavalry, considered by some to be better than the regular army. And the SANG has seen combat.

On 20 November 1979, some 250 followers of Mohammed al-Quraishi (a fanatic Moslem who believed the Islamic revolt in Iran was the beginning of a new era for his faith) brought coffins into the Sacred Mosque in Mecca. Coffins are a common sight at the mosque, where families pray over dead relatives. But Mohammed's followers quickly produced a mixed bag of weapons from the coffins — from AK-47s to American hunting rifles. They proceeded to spray the praying pilgrims with gunfire, killing dozens and taking hundreds hostage.

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Many Saudi army troops, rejoicing at the chance to lay down their lives for Allah and enter Paradise, died needlessly. Then the Guard was called in, and rapidly airlifted 28 V150 armored cars via C-130s from Riyadh. After the Guard got clearance to fire on the holy mosque, they quickly neutralized fanatic rebel snipers in minarets with 20mm cannon and TOW rounds. Then they blew open the gates with 90mm cannon fire.

Buttoned-up V150s rolled into the courtyard and sprayed the South Yemen-trained rebels with machine-gun fire — principally from DMGs (Dual Machine Guns) to avoid damaging the mosque as much as possible. After eliminating resistance on the lower levels, SANG troops proceeded to drive the V150s upstairs to the upper floors of the mosque, and blasted rebel fire teams that had been deployed on different levels.

The remaining intruders left alive made their way into the mosque's catacombs, only to be forced out by hunger, lack of ammo and CS gas eight days after the uprising. As is standard, Saudi justice was swift, and 66 captured rebels were summarily beheaded publicly in various cities within the week.

The role of the SANG in the Sacred Mosque takeover was not an example of fanatic Moslems laying down their lives for Allah, as many Westerners would expect. Instead, it was a demonstration of the SANG's ability to rapidly deploy men and equipment to a trouble spot, utilizing U.S.-style strategy and tactics with as little loss of their own resources as possible. A fervent devotion to Allah they have, but they have been trained that this devotion does little to stop a bullet.

The SANG proved itself to be a crack combat team, able to adapt its men and equipment to a very difficult situation. —John Metzger



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*"The Iwo Jima Commemorative Fighting Knife, with 24-karat gold-covered hilt, deeply etched battle-worthy blade and rich scarlet velvet-covered case. Overall knife length: 12 inches."*



*"We have never failed, and I don't believe we will fail here."*

**Iwo Jima Commander  
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On the morning of 19 February 1945 on the tiny island of Iwo Jima was launched one of the bloodiest and most renowned battles in American history. The Emperor had sent 21,000 of his best soldiers. They had dug in and vowed to fight to the death.

The island would have to be taken, as Navy Secretary Forrestal said, "by force of arms, by character and courage."

Over 25,000 Americans would give their lives or be wounded to take the eight square miles of this volcanic island. But nearly all of the 21,000 Japanese defenders would be killed in their path.

Twenty-four Americans would earn the Congressional Medal of Honor. It would be one of the most savage struggles in the annals of American arms—and the costliest operation in the history of our United States Marine Corps.

But Iwo Jima would be won—and immortalized in the hearts of all Americans as the symbol of valor, courage and devotion to duty.

## Knife Honors Battle

The American Historical Foundation, in cooperation with military associations and historical societies, is proud to pay tribute to this heroic victory through the issuance of the Invasion of Iwo Jima Commemorative Fighting Knife.

If you choose to be among the few who reserve this tribute, you will own a legacy of one of the proudest moments in American history. It will serve as a constant reminder of the gallantry of our combat men on Iwo Jima. To future generations of your family it will serve as a lasting reminder of your interest in military history and quite possibly of your participation, or the participation of one of your relatives, in the heroic Iwo Jima assault. It will be a source of pride today—and to those who follow in the future.

Old Glory being raised high atop Mount Suribachi is deeply etched in the center of the presentation face of the blade. Flanking this are elaborate laurel-wreathed banners inscribed: "In Honor of the Invasion of Iwo Jima, 11 November 1944—16 March 1945." Matching etched banners on the blade reverse proclaim Admiral Nimitz's

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## Authentic World War II Fighting Knife

A fighting knife was selected for this tribute because it represents Americans' willingness to close on their enemy. The classic Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife was selected because it was one of the most famous knives of World War II. A former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps who carried one called it "the finest military knife ever made." Originally designed in 1940 for British Commando raiding parties, this deadly knife was carried by Commando-trained U.S. Marine Raiders, U.S. Army Rangers and numerous elite combat units of many Allied nations.

This is *not* simply a reproduction, but a genuine handmade F-S Fighting Knife reissued in a limited edition by one of the oldest knifemaking firms in England—H.G. Long & Co., established in 1846. Long & Co. of Sheffield has a rich tradition of excellence in edged weapons for front-line fighting men, and each knife will bear their famous crossed daggers trademark. Experts agree that the historical significance and the high quality craftsmanship will make this knife greatly sought after by military men and collectors.

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This issue is strictly limited to 2500 worldwide. Each knife will have its own registry number engraved on the blade. The Certificate of Authenticity will also bear this number and attest to the edition limit and the purity of the 24-karat gold.

To display your knife, you will receive one of the most elegant cases ever created for a weapon. It is covered, lined and fitted with rich scarlet velvet and mounted with two brass slide locks and hinges. The inner lid is white satin, gold tooled with the Iwo Jima commemorative inscription. Included in the case you will also receive an actual photograph of the flag-raising at Iwo Jima.

In addition, you will be made a member of The American Historical Foundation and have the opportunity, prior to the public, to reserve subsequent limited edition issues in this series, with matching registry numbers. These knives, with different spectacular finishes and materials, will honor other major World War II Allied victories. As a member you will also receive, at no expense, hard to obtain expert information concerning military history and the care, display, history and collecting of knives and militaria.

## 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 in writing. Requests for special registry numbers will be honored if possible. You may send a deposit or payment in full. After you receive your knife you may inspect it for a full 30 days prior to deciding to keep it. Satisfaction is guaranteed.

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