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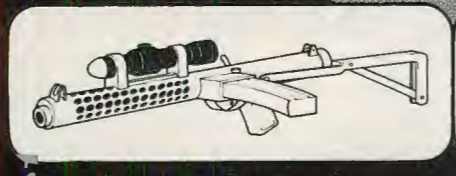

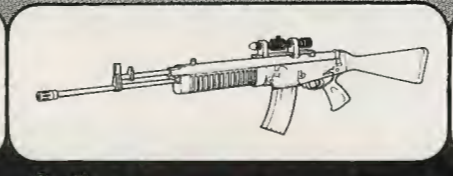

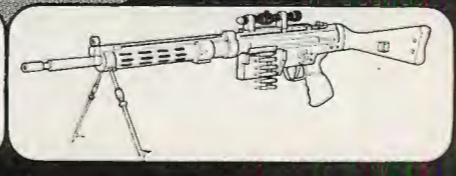

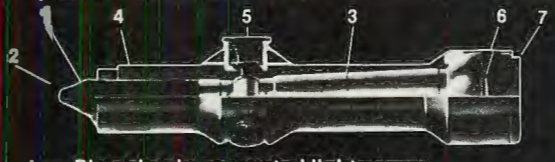

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EDITOR'S NOTES

HUNTING cartridges are a relatively free and easy field of rhetorical combat. Distances of engagement are short, game varies, few cartridges are carried or used, and there is no reason for standardization, so personal taste or the weight, sex or marksmanship of the shooter can be more important than terminal ballistics. But the game of discussing military cartridges is an entirely different matter. Physics and economics are the final arbiters of any argument about military ammunition.

Newtonian physics were superseded in the arenas of particle and cosmic physics by the quantum revolution at the turn of the century, but don't worry; nobody has developed anything that better describes the behavior of macroscopic objects in motion than the Newtonian model. When scientists say that kinetic energy is equivalent to one-half the multiplication of mass by the object's velocity squared, you had better believe it, because it has been verified uncountable times under the most controlled conditions imaginable by believers and skeptics alike during the 300 years the idea has been around. Notice that the velocity is squared. That means that speed is by far the greater factor.

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Secondly, and more importantly, economics controls the selection of the ideal military cartridge. Smaller cartridges use smaller amounts of strategic metals, take up less room in transport, and their lower weight requires less energy to move the cartridges from place to place. (Newton strikes again in logistics!)

Small, light, fast, impact-unstable bullets have one other great economic advantage. Wounds. This is a hard and heartless thing to explain to a grunt who is trying to establish mystical union with the grass-roots because a sniper has him pinned down in the open and all he wants is to exchange his battle rifle for a tactical nuke, but wounding is more economically useful than killing. A fast bullet's hydrostatic shock and instability on impact is more likely to make an incapacitating wound in an extremity than a slow bullet.

A dead man is just dead. A wounded man — if you don't kill your wounded — requires expensive transport, expensive drugs, expensive facilities and expensively trained medical personnel.

All of the above is hard, inhumane and not nearly as much fun as the cracker-barrel, but Newton and money have won more wars than all the world's hearts and minds together.

— Bill Guthrie

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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 and all weapons, vehicles and materiel in general must be accurately identified. Payment will be made at rates current at time of publication.

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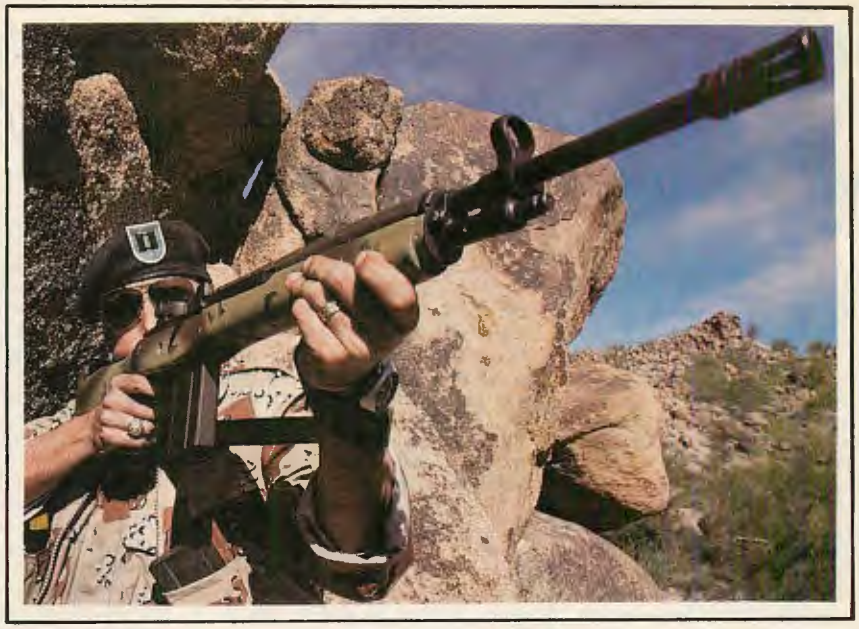

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COVER: This Russian T-72 tank attacks American armor in southern California's Mojave. Don't panic: He's on U.S. payroll. Tanker sporting elite Soviet army black beret helps assure visiting units a memorable and realistic experience at the Army's National Training Center. Photo: Bob Caldwell.

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PROJECT FREEDOM . . .

Project Freedom for American POWs/MIAs, which is supported by SOF, has some critical comment on a trip to Hanoi by four members of the Vietnam Veterans of America, headed by former Marine Bobby Muller.

The trip, sponsored by *Penthouse* Magazine, has been criticized also by most veterans organizations and has divided the VVA. One of its chapters shut down its operations and several individual members dropped out of it.

Muller claimed that the trip had a two-fold purpose: To "establish a dialogue with the Vietnamese on the POW/MIA issue" and to gather information about possible injurious results from the dropping of "Agent Orange," a defoliant.

Project Freedom contends that the real purpose was "to make some propaganda against the U.S. government on the Agent Orange issue with the POW/MIA issue thrown in to soothe the feelings of people who are sensitive to that subject."

The group has concluded that if the U.S. government were determined to force an accounting of the POW/MIA issue, "we would hear less from the self-serving and the sensation-seekers," and that the Muller trip to

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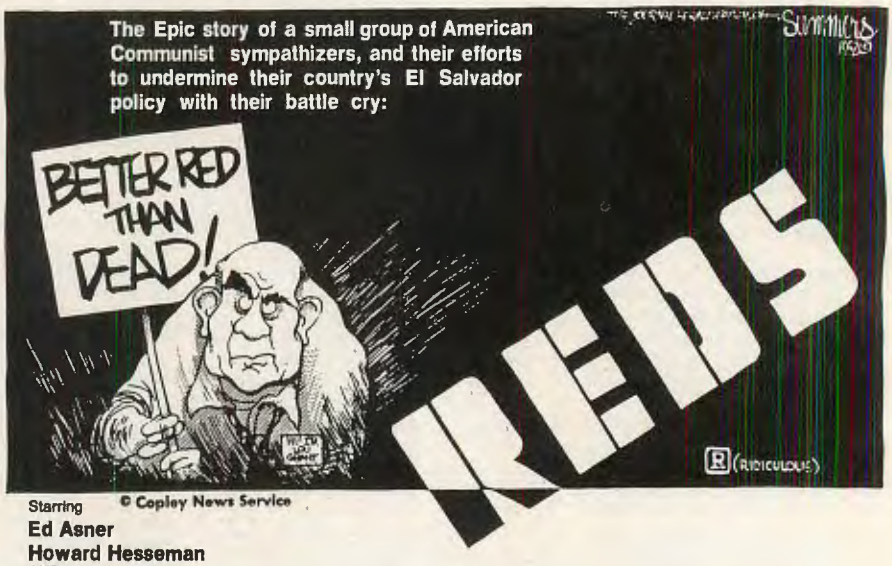
by Bob Poos



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

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

A Lasting, Tangible Tribute

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

As an appropriate counterpart to the ceremonial swords awarded to American military heroes of the 18th and 19th centuries, a presentation military knife was selected for this 20th century tribute. Each branch of the service will be honored with a separte knife, with inscriptions and embellishments appropriate to that service branch. The first knife—now available—honors the men and women of the United States Army in Vietnam.

Authentic To Vietnam

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

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

But unlike any knife ever made prior to this, this limited edition tribute has been given distinctive embellishments designed with the assistance of U.S. Army combat veterans of Vietnam.

The hilt is produced in the four colors of the Vietnam-era, woodland leaf-pattern camouflage developed by the U.S. Army for jungle fighting. A gold-plated, fired enamel cloisonne medallion of the U.S. Army insignia forms the focal point of the grip.

The combat scene etched on the mirror-polished steel blade permanently records American troops making an airmobile assualt on the enemy—a tactical innovation developed in Vietnam.

Riflemen with their M-16s jump from Huey "Slicks," while in the foreground M-60 machine gunners, riflemen and a radioman move out to secure the hot LZ (landing zone under enemy fire). You can almost hear the "whump-whump-whump" of the choppers' blades overhead, the cracking of M-16 fire, the staccato of the M-60's and, in the background, the thud of mortor fire and the enemy's Russian-made AK-47s.

On the blade shoulder is etched the insignia of the U.S. Army—Vietnam, representative of all Army units that served in Southeast Asia. Or, if you prefer, the unit insignia of your choice can be etched in this position.

Booklet by General Westmoreland

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

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

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

First Option, Without Obligation

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

You will also be made a member of The American Historical Foundation and receive, at no expense, hard to obtain information concerning military history and the history, care, display and collecting of knives, swords, and militaria.

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

How to Reserve

This is available exclusively through The American Historical Foundation. You may write, call, personally visit, or use the reservation form below. If you wish, the balance may be paid over a period of time.

Reservations will be honored in the order of receipt. Prompt action will result in securing the lowest serial numbers. Requests for special serial numbers will be honored, if possible. This is a strictly limited edition; early action is suggested to avoid the inevitability of the completion of the reservation roster.

RESERVATION

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return in 30 Days for Full Refund

To: The American Historical Fondation
1316 West Main Street, Dept. SF-10
Richmond, Virginia 23220
Telephone (804) 353-1812
24-hour toll free reservations (800) 558-8133

I wish to reserve the serially numbered limited edition U.S. Army—Vietnam Tribute Combat Knife, with solid mahogany presentation case, "Vietnam Tribute" booklet by Gen. Westmoreland, Certificate of Authenticity and Foundation membership. No shipping charges.

☐ My deposit of $39 is enclosed. Please invoice the balance prior to delivery...
  ☐ at the rate of $75 per month, for two months.
  ☐ in full.
☐ I enclose $189 as payment in full.

(I wish the following unit insignia to be etched on the blade shoulder, *in place of* the U.S. Army—Vietnam insignia: _____. I am also enclosing $25 to cover the cost of the special handling of this.)

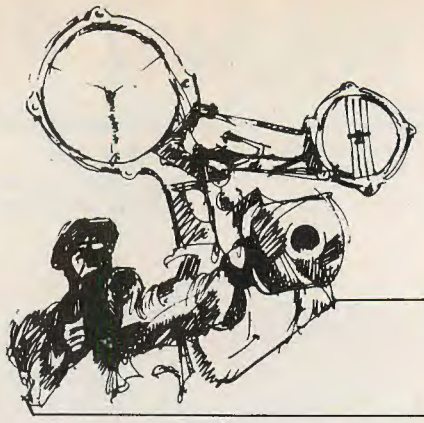
Please send information about the Vietnam Tribute for the:
☐ U.S. Marine Corps. ☐ U.S. Navy. ☐ U.S. Air Force.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

For Visa, MasterCard, or American Express, please send account number, expiration date and signature. Virginia residents add *tax.*



FLAK

DEAR VVMF ...

SOF has received so many letters on the "Black Gash" that we are going to print only the best excerpts, rather than whole letters. Otherwise, few of these concerned citizens would be heard in this public forum. — The Eds.

Sirs:

...The sunken memorial resembles an open mass grave awaiting those soldiers who were killed in Vietnam but are yet unaware of their doom ... exposed to the poison rainbow of defoliants and herbicides such as Agents Orange, Blue, White, Purple, Green and Pink.

Pamela Lacey
Carbondale, Illinois

...A disgusting way to show the country's respect for the Vietnam vet.

Russell Schenk
Athelstane, Wisconsin

...The vets and their families should meet on the proposed site and protest this cruel joke.

Bert Madison
Fairbanks, Arkansas

...I'm 100 percent behind a memorial for Vietnam veterans, but let's get something that won't be used as a "wailing wall" by future generations.

Jay L. Joseph, Sr.
Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

...Memorials [should] remind and inspire the living as well as honor the dead.

Ty Yadouga
York Haven, Pennsylvania

...SOF had a section devoted to art by vets of the Indochinese war ("Vietnam Experience," June '81). Michael Arlen Boyett had sculpted a GI with his buddy slung over his shoulder. THAT is what the memorial should be. THAT is what the war was.

Jan Larre Dutra/J.C. De Julius
San Rafael, California

...My father's greatest moment of pride came when we stood before the monument commemorating the raising of the flag at Iwo Jima. It was that memorial that inspired me to understand the true meaning of patriotism. No, we didn't fight in the "Big One," but by god we did fight and I'm proud to say that I was there. I am fed up with the mistreatment of the Vietnam veteran and it's sad to think that this "Black Hole of Death" is to be the memorial to honor and enshrine the Vietnam veteran.

I always dreamed of the day when I could take my family to Washington to allow them to observe first-hand the honor and traditions that have built this country. But I will not stand before the Vietnam Veterans Memorial beaming with pride as my father did with his children.

David A. Leibensperger
Frankfort, Minnesota

...After reflecting on the honor guard at Arlington and monuments to other wars I have nothing but scorn for the peo-

Continued on page 91

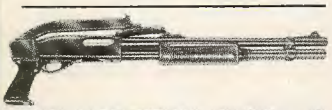
PARELLEX CORPORATION

BUY DIRECT AND SAVE

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR YOUR MONEY BACK!

MILITARY KNIVES

#5684 U.S. MARINE CORPS COMBAT KNIFE 7" blade with leather sheath . . $14.95
#5733 U.S. AIR FORCE KNIFE with leather sheath & sharpening stone. 5" blade $14.50
#22279 GENUINE BRITISH COMMANDO KNIFE with leather metal-tipped sheath. Made in Sheffield, England $24.95
#70000 GERBER MK I SURVIVAL KNIFE 5" blade with leather sheath . . $42.50
#70002 GERBER MK II SURVIVAL KNIFE 6 3/4" blade. Black leather sheath $49.50
(Add $2.00 per knife for shipping.)



S.W.A.T. COMBAT MAGAZINE EXTENSIONS FOR YOUR SHOTGUN increase shell capacity to 7 (18" or longer bbls.), 8 (20" or longer bbls.), or 10 (26" or longer bbls.). Made for Remington 870, 1100; Winchester 1200; and Browning 5-A. Installs easily without alteration. Now used by the FBI, Secret Service, etc. Include make, model and gauge when ordering.

7 OR 8 SHOT MODEL $22.00
10 SHOT MODEL (Not available for Browning 5-A) $36.00
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BRAND NEW ORIGINAL G.I. M-65 FIELD JACKET

Available in Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

#1100 O.D. GREEN $49.95
#1102 CAMOUFLAGE $49.95
#1103 Original G.I. M-65 Cold Weather Liners . . . $16.95
(Add $2.00 per unit for shipping.)

G.I. CAMOUFLAGE GEAR

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#10008 U.S.M.C. Camo Poncho . . . $29.95
#10009 Camo Poncho Liner $29.95
#33261 Camo Wallets . . . . . $ 6.95
#1130 Camo T-Shirt, S, M, L, XL . . $ 5.95
#1106 U.S.M.C. Camouflage Fatigues; Sizes: S, M, L, XL . . . $49.95
#1104 New U.S. Army Woodland Camouflage Fatigues; S, M, L, XL $59.95
(Add $2.00 shipping for the first item, 50¢ for each additional item.)

OTHER G.I. GOODIES

#10160 New G.I. Compass $29.95
#1140 U.S.A.F. MA-1 Flyer's Jacket. Fully reversible, sage green and International Orange. S, M, L, XL $41.95
#10070 New M-17 Gas Mask with filters and bag $49.95
#10052 U.S. Army .45 Auto Belt Holster, black $19.95
#10053 U.S. Army M-7 Shoulder Holster, fits .45 auto, black $19.95
#10084 M-1949 Mountain Sleeping Bag, latest issue, mummy style $49.95
#10082 G.I. Flashlight with extra filters and bulb, O.D. . . . . $ 4.95
#10095 U.S. Army O.D. Plastic Canteen with latest issue canteen cover . . . . $ 6.95
#11207 U.S.A.F. Sunglasses, gold-plated frames, case included $19.95
#80012 MP Peerless Handcuffs . . . $19.95
#10056 G.I. Combat Pack, used . . . $ 5.95
#6145 U.S. Army Machete 18" blade with O.D. Sheath $12.95
#1122 G.I. O.D. T-Shirts, S, M, L, XL . $ 3.50
#1760 U.S. Army Stainless Steel Pocket Knife, 4-blades, 1000 uses $ 7.95
#10302 G.I. Black Leather Combat Boots, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 . . . . $39.95
#10030 G.I. 0-3 Glove Shells, Sizes: S, M, L $11.95
#10882 G.I. Wool Glove Liners, Sizes: S, M, L . . . . . $ 2.95
#10038 G.I. Duffle Bag, latest issue $21.95
#10000 G.I. Ammo Cans . . . . . $ 5.95

USA USN
(Add $2.00 shipping for the first item, 50¢ for each additional item.)

VIETNAM JUNGLE HAT

The soft, collapsible hat made famous in Vietnam. Very comfortable. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

#1150 O.D. GREEN or #1160 CAMOUFLAGE (Specify) . . . . $ 6.95
(Add $1.50 per hat for shipping.)

BRAND NEW FACTORY FRESH COMBAT & TARGET MAGAZINES

#33206 German Luger 9mm $14.95
#33006 AR-15/M-16 30-shot G.I. . . . $ 6.00
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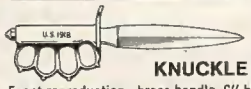
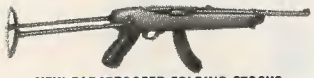
#33009 AR-15/M-16 Army 30-shot plastic . . . . . $ 9.95
#33000 Mini-14* 20-shot . . $ 9.95
#33002 Mini-14* 30-shot . . $12.95
#33003 Mini-14* 40-shot . . $24.95
#33010 Browning Hi-Power 9mm Pistol, 13-shot . . $15.00
#33011 Browning Hi-Power 9mm Pistol, 13-shot Stainless $21.50
#330120 Browning Hi-Power 9mm Pistol, 21-shot Blue $28.50
#330121 Browning Hi-Power 9mm Pistol, 21-shot Stainless $34.50
#33451 Colt .45 Auto, 7-shot . . . . $ 5.00
#34515 Colt .45 Auto, 15-shot $15.00
#33208 S & W Model 39, blued steel $ 7.00
#33210 Walther P-38 9mm, blued . . $12.00
#33204 Ruger 10/22* 25-shot . . . $24.95
(Add $1.00 for first magazine – 50¢ for each additional magazine for shipping.)



W.W. I KNUCKLE KNIFE

Exact reproduction – brass handle, 6" blade. Truly a collector's item. Check local laws before ordering. You must be over 21.

#700918 . . . . . $19.95
(Add $2.00 per knife for shipping.)



NEW PARATROOPER FOLDING STOCKS

Custom-made Schmeisser Fallschirmjager-type folding stocks for the M-1 Carbine and the Ruger 10/22 Carbine. Beautiful quality American walnut stocks with blued ordnance steel. Skeleton stock locks open and closed. Has full pistol grip and is ready to install. Standard length open – 26½" closed. Ideal for compact storage, backpacking, camping or police and combat use.

#31000 for G.I., National Ordnance and Plainfield Carbine $69.95
#31UU0 for Universal Firearms Corporation Carbine $69.95
#31022 for Ruger 10/22 Carbine . . . $69.95
(Add $4.00 for shipping and insurance.)

BRAND NEW M-1 CARBINE ACCESSORIES

#30016 5-shot Magazine . . . . . $ 2.50
#30018 15-shot Magazine . . . . . $ 2.50
#30020 30-shot Magazine . . . . . $ 4.00
#30000 60-rd Jungle Clip – (Clips 2-30 shot clips together) . . . . $ 4.95
#30002 Sling and Diler . . . . . $ 3.95
#10102 15-rd. Magazine Pouch – holds 2-15 shot mags . . . . . $ 1.50
#30024 30-rd. Magazine Pouch – holds 2 or 4-30 shot mags . . . $ 4.95
#30010 Flash Hider $12.95
#30008 Muzzle Brake – Reduces recoil and muzzle jump $12.95
#30006 Piston Nut Wrench . . . . . $ 2.95
#30004 Scope Mount, no drilling or tapping $12.95
#30012 Ventilated Steel Handguard . $ 4.95
#013 Carbines, Cal. 30 Technical Manual . . . . . $ 5.95
#70024 G.I. M-4 Carbine Bayonet W/M8A1 SCABBARD $34.95
(Add $1.50 shipping for first item, 25¢ for each additional item.)

THE LITTLE BLACK BOX

Warning this device is not to be used for surveillance! Automatically starts recorder when telephone is picked up. Records entire conversation, both sides... Then automatically stops recorder when phone is hung up! Can be attached anywhere along the line – plugs into ANY recorder and causes absolutely no interference or noise on the phone. MINIATURE! Only 1" x 2" x 3".

#90002 with alligator clip hook-up . . $29.95
#TR-150 with modular plug-in hook-up $29.95
(Add $2.00 for shipping.)

NEW 8-SHOT TEAR GAS REVOLVER

Fires 8 – .22 cal. tear gas cartridges or blanks in seconds. You must be over 21.

91000 BLUE – Sale Priced at only $ 9.95
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91004 Hip Holster . . . . . $ 2.95
91006 Tear Gas Cartridges (10) . $ 2.00
91008 Extra-Loud Blanks – (100) . $ 3.00
92000 Paralyzer Tear Gas Spray, Pocket Size . . . . . $ 5.95
92004 Paralyzer Tear Gas Spray, Police Size . . . . . $ 8.95

COLT .45 AUTO MAGS & CLIP POUCH SET

Heavy duty G.I. Canvas pouch with 2 brand new G.I. .45 auto magazines. Latest contract magazines.

#452M $11.95
(Add $1.50 for shipping.)

G.I. AR-15/M-16 30 ROUND MAGS & POUCH SET

G.I. Pouch with three (3) new G.I. 30-shot magazines.

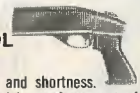
#M16S $24.95
(Add $2.00 for shipping.)

MINI-14 30 ROUND MAGS & POUCH SET

G.I. Pouch with three (3) new 30-shot Mini-14 magazines.

#M14S $39.95
(Add $2.00 for shipping.)

BRAND NEW RIOT GUN PISTOL GRIP KIT



The ultimate in firepower and shortness. Used extensively by Federal law enforcement officers. Easy to install. Take off buttstock and replace with our pistol grip. For Rem. 870, Marlin 120, Win. 1200, Mossberg Pump, High Standard Pump, Win. Mod. 12, and Ithica 37. (Please specify when ordering.)

#RGK $30.00
(Add $2.00 per unit for shipping.)

THE BLACK BOOK OF DIRTY TRICKS

"Improvised Munitions Handbook," is the most sought after, heretofore impossible to obtain Army Manual. Includes revealing chapters on: Improvised Explosives and Propellants; Mines & Grenades; Small Arms Weapons & Ammo; Mortars & Rockets; Incendiary Devices; Fuses; Ignition & Delay Mechanisms. Plus how to manufacture Rocket Launchers, Pistols, Shotguns, and Recoiless Rifles from easy to obtain materials and much, much more! New expanded edition! Limited Number Available! ORDER NOW!

#BB . . . . . $10.00 ppd.

NEW! RARE! QUICK RELEASE VIETNAM ISSUE PISTOL BELT

#10034 . . . . . $ 5.95
(Add $1.50 for shipping.)

MINI-14 ACCESSORIES

SCOPE MOUNT, no drilling or tapping. Insta-Mount.

#IM180 for Series 180 Mini 14 . . . . $21.95
#IM181 for Series 181, 182 Mini-14 . . $21.95
#RM1 Rear Sight Tool, to adjust windage & elevation . . . . . $ 9.95
#RM2 Match Rear Sight, blue . . . . $ 9.95
#RM4 Flash Hider, Blue Steel, Installs in seconds $14.95
#RM5 Stainless Steel Flash Hider . . $19.95
#RM6 Extra Power Recoil Spring – Improves Feeding, reliability. Specify series 180, 181, 182 . . . $ 4.95
#RM7 Ventilated Handguard $13.50
#RM12 Bayonet Lug, installs in seconds. Will hold M7 bayonet $22.00
#LSP-18 Mini 14 Manual . . . . . $ 2.95
(Add $1.50 shipping for first item, 25¢ for each additional item.)

BRITISH COMMANDO BATTLE JACKET LAST CALL!

This attractive jacket is Brand New British government surplus. A lightweight, rugged, all-purpose jacket made of O.D. color, denim. May never be available again. Sizes: S, M, L.

*Please send height, chest and waist measurements for an exact fit.

#BCBJ. Only $14.95
(Add $2.00 for shipping.)

AR-15/M-16 ACCESSORIES

#70027 G.I. M-7 Bayonet & Sheath $29.95
#32026 Ordnance & Armorer's Wrench $12.00
#32012 Flash Hider $16.00
#32000 Scope Mount $19.95
#016 M-16 Manual . . . . . $ 5.95
#061 Ar-15 Full Auto Conversion Manual . . . . . $ 4.95
(Add $1.50 shipping for the first item, 25¢ for each additional item.)

ORDERING INFORMATION! To order by mail, use the coupon below, or separate sheet. Mail with payment. Add shipping or your order will be delayed. BA, MC, COD'S may call 800-323-3233. Minimum phone order $25.00. Illinois, Alaska, Hawaii call 312-598-4466. PARELLEX CORPORATION, CHICAGO RIDGE, IL 60415. For questions or information call – 312-598-4466.

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COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Handgun Finishes & Luminous Sights

by Ken Hackathorn

FOR years I have favored hard industrial chrome as a handgun finish. Plating is normally done by an industrial plater that specializes in hard chrome for tool and machine use. The finish is normally satin, non-reflective and extremely long wearing. I even use it for plating the frame of my combat .45 autos.

Recently I had an opportunity to check out a plating firm that specializes in a variation of industrial hard-chrome plating. Accurate Plating & Weaponry, Inc., Dept. SOF, 1937 Calument St., Clearwater, FL 33515, is now offering a plating service for handguns. Bob Cogan of Accurate Plating has developed a special hard-chrome finish that has the look of a brushed stainless-steel surface. The plate is hardy and attractive. Accurate Plating & Weaponry's work represents the finest examples of custom-gun finishes I've seen.

S&W M-13 with custom-cut hammer spur, tuned and hard-chrome plated: attractive, concealable, nearly invulnerable. Photo: Ken Hackathorn

Since I was interested in the brushed-stainless-look hard chrome I sent Bob Cogan a new tuned Smith & Wesson M-13 .357 magnum revolver for this custom finish. It was returned within three weeks.

Not only is the work completed by Accurate Plating & Weaponry nicely done, but it is guaranteed. Great care is taken in the finish of each handgun plated, and revolvers are accepted and as cheerfully done as the auto pistols. Close tolerances are carefully maintained for both. Both the M-13 S&W that I had done and a friend's Colt Python are so complete that many people handling the weapons assume that they are stainless steel.

The final product is beautiful. Average price for having a revolver plated with this brushed hard-chrome finish is less than $70, and auto pistols are slightly over $75. Complete services for blueing, nickle-plating and parkerizing are also available.

ANYONE who has used a defensive sidearm is aware of the difficulty of sighting in low-light situations and the odds of having to defend yourself are much greater during the hours of darkness.

Continued on page 92

*FOR AR-15 RIFLE ONLY

CUT AND SAVE FOR FUTURE SAVINGS!

BAYONET BONANZA — ALL BRAND NEW!

SI-1
COLT AR-15/M16 Bayonet* & Scabbard
Blade length: 7." Features: Wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle and tie-thongs.

$29.95

SI-2
COLT AR-15/M16 Bayonet* & Scabbard
Blade length: 7." Features: Bottle opener, wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

$32.95

SI-3
COLT AR-15/M16 Bayonet* & Scabbard
Blade length: 10" (Long). Features: Wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

$37.25

SI-4
COMBAT KNIFE with Scabbard
Blade length: 7." Features: Wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie thongs.

$25.95

SI-5
COMBAT KNIFE with Scabbard
Blade length: 10" (Long). Features: Wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

$32.95

SI-6
SWISS SIG Bayonet & Scabbard Model 510-4 7.62 NATO
Blade length 7." Features: Wire cutter, razor back saw blade, belt attachment, sure-grip handle, and tie thongs.

$29.95

SI-8
M4 CARBINE BAYONET with M8A1 Scabbard
U.S. Caliber .30 M1 Carbine. Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

$19.95

SI-9
M5A1 GARAND BAYONET with M8A1 Scabbard
U.S.Caliber .30 M1 Garand Rifle. Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

$20.95

SI-10
COLT AR-15/M16 M-7 BAYONET* with M8A1 Scabbard
Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

$19.95

SI-11
COMBAT KNIFE M3 Bayonet with M8A1 Scabbard
Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment, sure-grip handle,and tie thongs.

$16.95

SI-12
G-3 RIFLE* (HK 91/93) Bayonet & Scabbard
Blade length 6½." Features: Belt attachment and sure-grip handle.
*(NOTE: Bayonet adapter for rifle is separate. See item no. SI-20.)

$26.95

SI-13
G-3 RIFLE* (HK 91/93) Norwegian Model) Bayonet with M8A1 Scabbard
Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment and sure-grip handle.
*(NOTE: Bayonet adapter for rifle is separate. See item no. SI-20).

$26.95

SI-14
G-3 RIFLE* (HK 91/93) Bayonet & Scabbard
Blade length: 10" (Long). Features: Woodgrain scabbard, belt attachment and sure-grip handle.
*(NOTE: Bayonet adapter for rifle is separate. See item no. SI-20).

$32.95

SI-15
SI-16
COMBAT AUSTRIAN ARMY Knife and Scabbard
Blade length: 6½." Features: Bottle opener, belt attachment and sure-grip handle. Colors: SI-15 O.D. Green, SI-16 Black.

$14.95

SI-17
BELGIUM FAL Bayonet & Scabbard
Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment.
(For late model, large flash surpressor rifle)

$36.95

SI-18
GERMAN ARMY MK III Boot Knife & Scabbard
Blade length 5." Features: Quick release safety snap, belt attachment, sure-grip handle, and leather scabbard.

$19.95

SI-21
M-6 BAYONET M14 RIFLE with M8A1 Scabbard
Blade length: 6½." Features: Belt attachment, sure-grip handle and tie-thongs.

$20.95

SI-7
COLLECTORS' PRESENTATION CASE
6 different Bayonets & Scabbards are ready for your display. A must for every collector! Each case contains 1 each of the following:
SI-10 COLT AR-15/M16 — SI-11 COMBAT KNIFE
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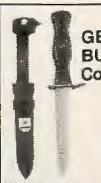
$169.95

SI-1A
COLT AR-15/M16 Bayonet* & Scabbard

$25.95
Blade length: 7"
Features: Razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

SI-22
GERMAN ARMY BUNDESWEHR'S Combat Knife

$29.95
Blade length: 5½"
Features: Sure-grip handle, aluminum Scabbard and belt attachment.


Example of wire cutting capabilities of the world famous Eickhorn bayonet. This feature available with the following models: SI-1, SI-2, SI-3, SI-4, SI-5, SI-6, SI-19.

SI-4A
COMBAT KNIFE with Scabbard

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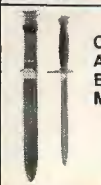
Blade length: 7"
Features: Razor back saw blade, belt attachments, sure-grip handle, and tie-thongs.

SI-10A
COLT AR-15/M16 M7 BAYONET* with M8A1 Scabbard

$29.95
Blade length: 9"
Features: Belt attachment, and sure-grip handle.

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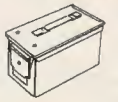
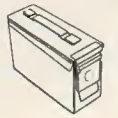

50 Caliber (M2A1) cans **$9.00** ea. Special case offer of 12 cans in original government pack (weight 70 lbs.) **$85.00** per case

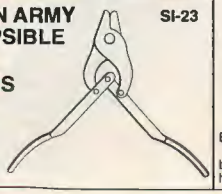

30 Caliber (7.62 NATO) cans **$6.95** ea. Special case offer of 16 cans in original government pack (weight 64 lbs.) **$74.00** per case

Note: Individual cans purchased add $3.00 per unit for shipping and handling. CASE LOTS SHIPPED FREIGHT COLLECT.

(not shown) **SI-19**
New COLT AR-15/M16 Bayonet* with M8A1 Scabbard
Blade length 6½." Features wire cutter, belt attachment, sure-grip handle and tie thongs.
$25.95

SI-20
G-3 Adaptor
G-3 Adapter for SI-12, SI-13 and SI-14 for attachment of bayonet to rifle.

$8.95

SI-23
GERMAN ARMY COLLAPSIBLE WIRE CUTTERS
BRAND NEW $26.95


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4.	Bushing, stock screw	.75
5.	Cap, Mainspring	.75
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11.	Hammer	12.50
12.	Hammer Wide Spur	14.50
13.	Housing, mainspring (arched)	12.00
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15.	Link, Barrel	1.50
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17.	Lock, safety (thumb)	10.00
18.	Magazine, New G.I.	6.00
19.	Mainspring	1.00
20.	Pin, barrel, link	.75
20A.	Pin, retainer lanyard loop	.50
21.	Pin, ejector	.75
22.	Pin, firing	2.25
23.	Pin, hammer	.75
24.	Pin, hammer strut	.75
25.	Pin, mainspring cap	.75
26.	Pin, mainspring housing	.75
27.	Pin, sear	.75
28.	Plug, recoil spring	2.00
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30.	Plunger, slide stop	1.00
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32.	Safety grip (long tang)	10.00
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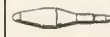

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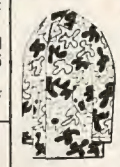

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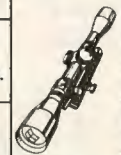

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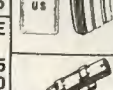

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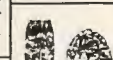

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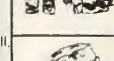

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IN REVIEW

WITH THE OLD BREED AT PELELIU AND OKINAWA. By E.B. Sledge. Presidio Press, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, CA 94947. 1981. 135 pp., photographs and maps. $15.95. Review by Bob Poos.

"I've Eaten Your Bread and Salt
And Drunk Your Water and Wine;
The Deaths Ye Died I have Watched Beside
And the Lives That Ye Led Were Mine."

— Rudyard Kipling

"Rifles were high and holy things to them, and they knew five-inch broadside guns. They talked patronizingly of the war, and were concerned about rations. They were the Leathernecks, the Old Timers .... They were the old breed of American regular, regarding the service as home and war as an occupation; and they transmitted their temper and character and viewpoints to the high-hearted volunteer mass which filled the ranks of the Marine Brigade...."

—John W. Thomason in *Fix Bayonets*

THE United States Marine Corps infantry seems to turn out talented writers: William Manchester (*Goodbye Darkness*), Leon Uris (*Battle Cry*), Robert Leckie (*Helmet for My Pillow, Strong Men Armed*), James Webb (*Fields of Fire*) and John W. Thomason (*Fix Bayonets*) are some who come to mind.

There is no logical explanation for this. I can testify from personal experience that in the Marine infantry, you are not taught how to write — you are taught how to fight, and a good job they do of it, too.

However, now another Marine joins the ranks of those mentioned above: E.B. Sledge. Sledge is now holder of a Ph.D. in ornithology (the study of birds), but in 1944 and 1945 he was a nails-tough mortarman in K Co., Third Battalion, Fifth Marines, First Marine Division.

Sledge has left a searing, unforgettable memoir of those terrible days spent on the tiny island of Peleliu and the huge island of Okinawa, two of the longest, bloodiest WWII campaigns the Marines fought.

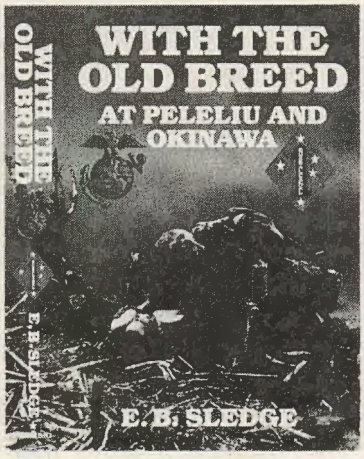
He takes the reader from boot camp at San Diego: "At the time, we didn't realize the fact that the discipline we were learning in responding to orders under stress often would mean the difference later in combat — between success or failure, even living or dying."

Then he ventures on to what was supposed to have been a rest area for the veterans of Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester and training camp for replacements: the island of Pavuvu — "But once ashore; one found the extensive coconut groves choked with rotting coconuts .... Of all the work parties, the one we hated most was collecting rotten coconuts. If we were lucky, the coconut sprout served as a handle. But more often, they fell apart, spilling stinking coconut milk over us....

"The most loathsome vermin on Pavuvu were the land crabs....Before putting on his boondockers each morning, each man in the First Marine Division shook his shoes to roust [them]. Many mornings I had one in each shoe and sometimes two. Periodically we reached the point of rage over these filthy things and chased them out from under boxes, seabags and cots. We killed them with sticks, bayonets and entrenching tools. After the action was over, we had to shovel them up and bury them or a nauseating stench developed rapidly in the hot, humid air."

But bad as Pavuvu was, Sledge (who of course was nicknamed Sledgehammer by his buddies) soon found that, as warned by veterans, there was worse to come: in this case Peleliu.

The following incident sums up the island. It occurred during the Marines' first attack (across an airstrip) on that island's Bloody Nose Ridge:



"Through the haze I saw Marines stumble and pitch forward as they got hit. I then looked neither right nor left but just straight to my front. The farther we went, the worse it got. The noise and concussion pressed in on my ears like a vise. I gritted my teeth and braced myself in anticipation of the shock of being struck down at any moment. It seemed impossible that any of us could make it across. We passed several craters that offered shelter, but I remembered the order to keep moving. Because of the superb discipline and ... spirit of the Marines, it had never occurred to us that the attack might fail...."

Sledge wondered if Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester had been as bad as this. His question was answered when a veteran remarked, "That was rough duty; hate to have to do that every day."

The Marines fought on Peleliu for exactly one month and compressed the Japanese into a small pocket — at a terrible cost: 1,252 killed, 5,274 wounded. When the Marines were relieved by the Army's 81st Division — whom they highly respected — it still took the soldiers another two months to secure the miserable little island, suffering 542 killed and 2,736 wounded.

After Peleliu, it was a return to Pavuvu (which by then had become somewhat more habitable) for further training in preparation for Okinawa. Sledge says: "Peleliu was something special for the ... First Marine Division. It has remained so ... but Okinawa had its own character, more forbidding in many ways than its predecessor. There the First Marine Division fought a different war, of tactics and movement ... previously unknown to the island-fighting Marines."

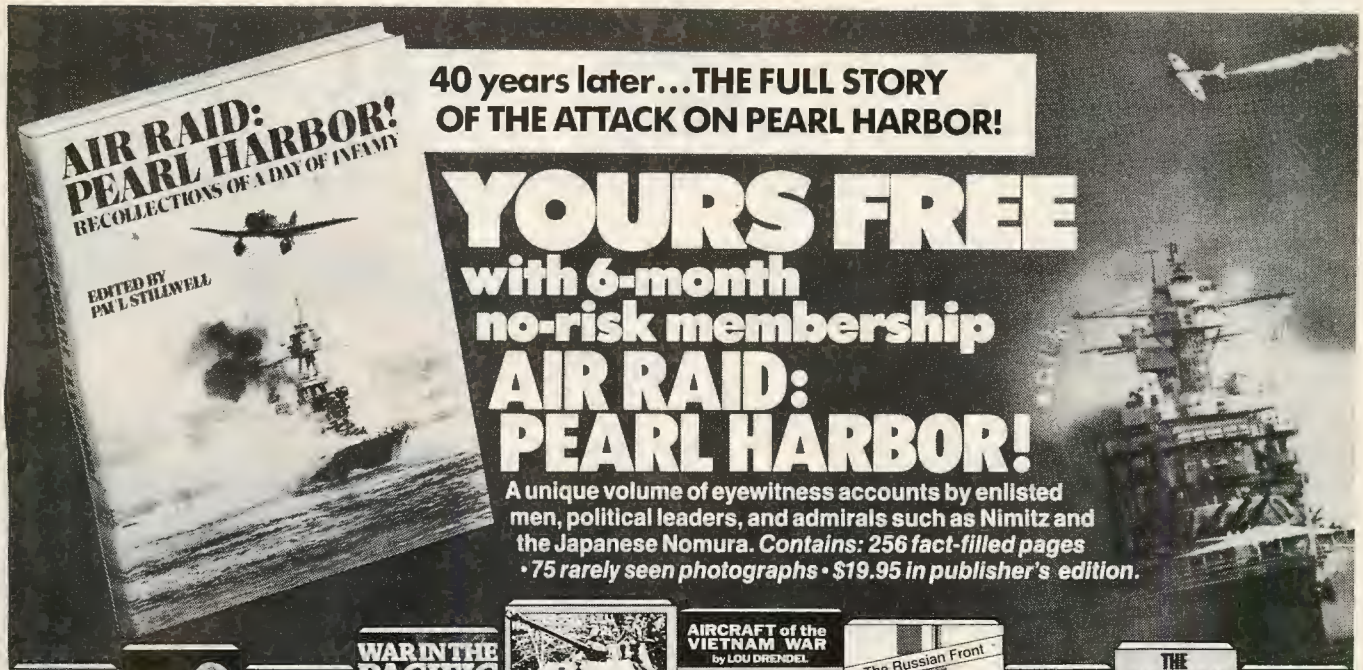
After about a month of fighting, following an unopposed landing, Sledge and his mortar crew set up their gun:

"I had my first opportunity to look around our position. It was the most ghastly corner of hell I had ever witnessed. As far as I could see, an area that had been a low grassy valley with a picturesque stream meandering through it was a muddy, repulsive open sore ... the place was choked with the putrefaction of death, decay and destruction. In a shallow defilade to our right ... lay about 20 dead Marines, each on a stretcher and covered to his ankles by a poncho, a commonplace, albeit tragic, scene to every veteran ... But as I looked about, I saw that other Marine dead couldn't be tended properly. The whole area was pocked with shell craters and churned up by explosions. Every crater was half full of water and many of them held a Marine corpse ... rusting weapons still in hand. Swarms of flies hovered above them."

But despite carnage like this, the Marines, including K/3/5, prevailed and captured Shuri Castle and Kunishi Ridge. "Late in the day of 21 June 1945, we learned that the high command had declared the island secured. We each received two fresh oranges with the compliments of Admiral [Chester] Nimitz. So I ate mine, smoked my pipe and looked out over the beautiful blue sea....After 82 days and nights, I couldn't believe Okinawa had finally ended."

Sledge offers one of the most moving — and accurate — tributes to the U.S. Marines I have ever seen.

"War is brutish, inglorious and a terrible waste. Combat leaves an indelible mark on those who are forced to endure it. The only redeeming factors were my comrades' incredible bravery and their devotion to one another. Marine Corps training taught us to kill efficiently and to try to survive. But it also taught us loyalty to each other — and love. That *esprit de corps* sustained us."



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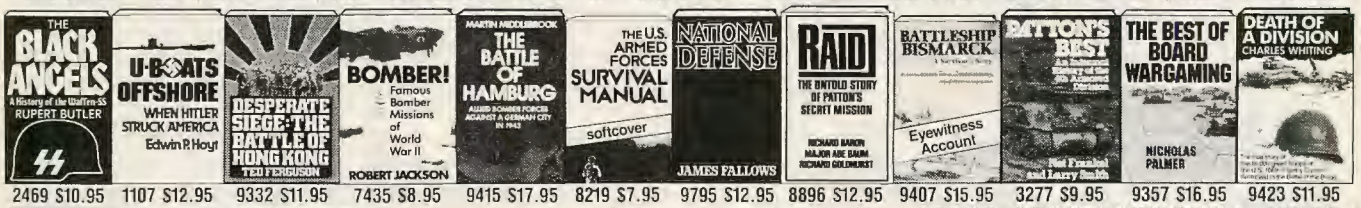

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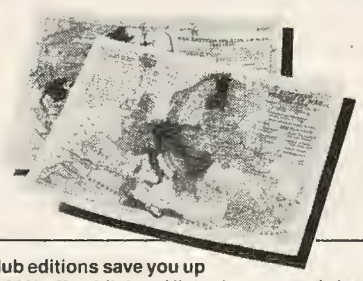

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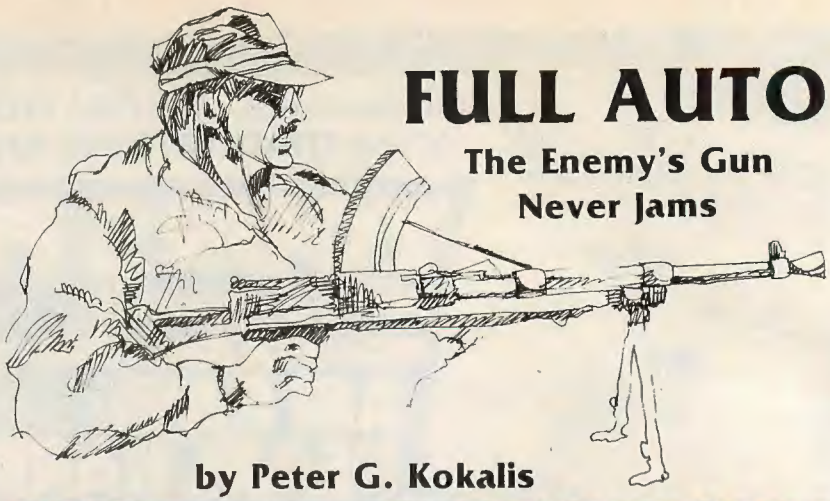

FULL AUTO

The Enemy's Gun Never Jams

by Peter G. Kokalis

THE common soldier's continual — and mostly unjustified — envy of his opponents' and allies' weapons can be traced without interruption back to early man and the atlatl (a throwing stick once used to give a spear greater propulsion, which was eventually superseded by the bow and arrow).

The envy is usually bilateral. In WWII German troops fighting on the *Ostfront* (Eastern Front) coveted the Russian PPSh 41 submachine gun, largely because of its drum capacity of 71 rounds. Meanwhile, Ivan was very much taken with the German MP 40 because of its compactness and excellence of manufacture.

In Vietnam, almost every GI wanted an AK-47, which had a 30-round magazine and, of course, never malfunctioned. Our logistically poverty-stricken enemy would take anything he could get his hands on, but, nevertheless, much favored the "black stick" (M16).

By definition, we are all more familiar with our own weapons systems — both their attributes and faults — than those used by others.

In the frightful reality of infantry combat, each of us wants every real or supposedly decisive edge he can grab.

Since neither the enemy nor our allies are wont to publicize their problems, the average grunt knows very little of another's small-arms deficiencies. Ergo, They must be better than what he has. If only he could get ahold of one — or, better yet, why can't his country come up with something as good as "they" have?

Closeup of FN MAG general-purpose machine-gun receiver. Failure occurred in front four cross bolts as discussed in text. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

Two very recent and, until now, unpublicized examples illustrate the fallacy of assuming that everything that one designs is poor, while everything others do is proper. Both episodes involve our faithful allies, the British.

The first event concerns the current British service rifle, the L1A1 SLR (self-loading rifle). This is a somewhat modified version of the highly vaunted, legendary FN FAL made in England under Fabrique Nationale license.

As the Israelis discovered during the 1967 war, the FAL has never performed well under conditions of sand and dust. By design, an extremely close fit is required between the bolt carrier and the receiver rails. The bolt itself depends upon precise tolerances. The British were already aware of this in 1955. In an attempt to shield the FAL action from debris as much as possible, they shortened the pin on the front of the hold-open catch so that it would not engage the follower of an empty magazine, thus negating the hold-open feature entirely.

Since the bolt carrier no longer slams back and locks up against the lower receiver after the last round is fired, but moves forward again, it was thought that the forces of momentum would be further dissipated and that the lower receiver would be subject to far less stress than had the hold-open feature been retained. It should thus in theory be possible to utilize a milder grade steel in the fabrication of the lower receiver. This was done and now, after little more than 20 years of use, many of the FALs in service with the British army have cracked lower receivers! Ah hah, but nobody ever told you this before, did they?

Let's move to that most successful of all GPMG (general-purpose machine gun) designs, the FN MAG. The MAG takes its locking system and operating method from the BAR and its feed mechanism directly from the German MG 42. The British version (L7A1) weighs in at a fairly heavy 23½ pounds, and this without a Stellite-lined heavy barrel for the sustained-fire role. No Stellite-lined barrel exists for the MAG, as the Belgians and British proved incapable of manufacturing to the very close tolerances essential to produce a good interference fit for the liner.

The side plates of the MAG are attached to the receiver frame by rivets. Recently, while blazing away at a British army range, a friend of mine had the front four cross bolts on the left side of his MAG separate from the side plate. The bolt attempted to depart from this interesting new opening and rather abruptly terminated the firing sequence!

There is no perfect weapon system. There never has been and probably there never will be.

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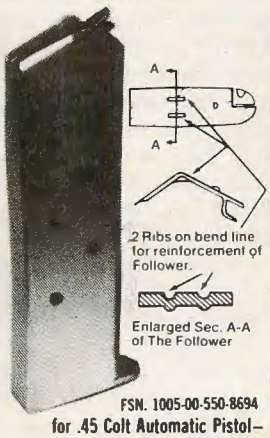

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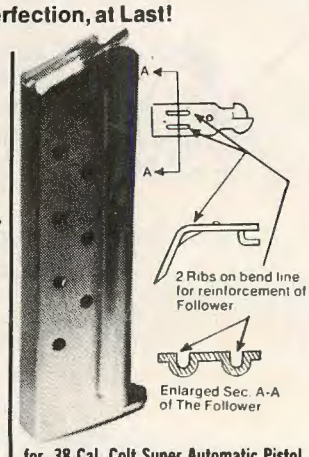

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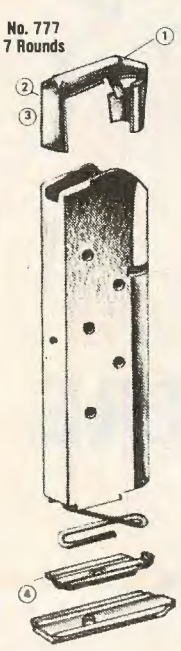

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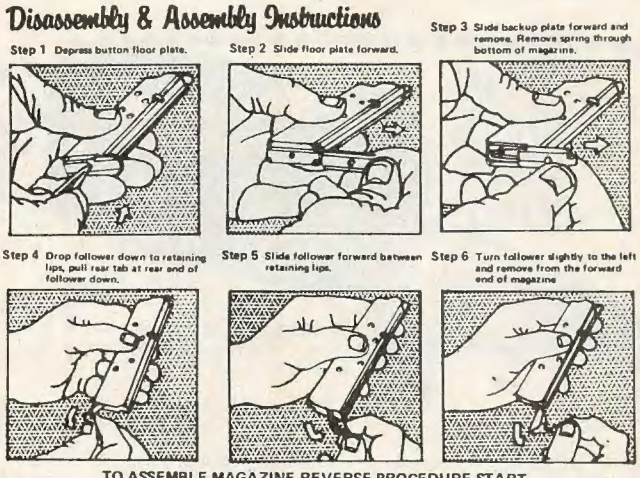

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I WAS THERE

by Bob Poos as told to M.L. Jones

SOF's Executive Editor Bob Poos was recently regaling us with his adventures as an AP correspondent in Vietnam. We've decided to share some of them with you. Here, as he tells it, was his introduction to the Saigon Bureau:

ONE of the most wondrous scenes ever beheld on this earth was the Saigon Associated Press Bureau during the Vietnam War. I shall never forget the first time I set eyes on it that hot, steamy day in July 1965.

The office, formerly the German Embassy during French colonial days, was on the fourth floor of the Eden building (which bore absolutely no resemblance to the garden of the same name) and just across Nguyen Hue (Street of Flowers) from MAC-V (Military Assistance Command — Vietnam), also known as The Pentagon East. Getting to the office was via an ancient self-operated French elevator which usually got stuck between floors. My first trip on it, however, was uneventful and I got from first to fourth floor with no problem.

In keeping with its past as an embassy, the office had a huge pair of solid mahogany doors and mahogany desks and woodwork.

Carrying my B-4 bag, I entered the office and saw this:

There was an aging rattan couch in the reception area, and upon it sprawled a young American woman whose acquaintance with soap and water was obviously limited. Her legs spread wide, literally the first thing that caught my attention was that she wore no panties. It later developed that she was an agent for the Buddhist movement and played an active role as a spy during the 1966 Buddhist uprising. She played around at doing work with orphans and hence we called her "Orphan Annie." When I first saw her, she was out cold from smoking pot.

The next thing I noticed was a young man clad in filthy, blood-stained jungle fatigues, sprawled out on a desk, arms outstretched, surrounded by about a dozen bottles of Ba Me Ba (Beer 33 Export) and with a little puddle of bile at the corner of his mouth, through which he was snoring loudly. No one paid any attention to him.

Peter Arnett, later to win a well-deserved Pulitzer Prize for his war coverage, sat at a desk, talking loudly to himself (a habit he had) and pounding furiously on a typewriter.

As I stood, a little bemused, a handsome young man clad in a Vietnamese marine tiger suit, carrying a .38 revolver and festooned with what seemed to be a dozen cameras, burst out of the photo shop, mumbling something like "Big operation going on in the Boi Loi woods. Gotta get there."

This turned out to be Rick Merron who, before the war got serious, was an English instructor at the University of Tokyo. Merron decided upon his own to become a

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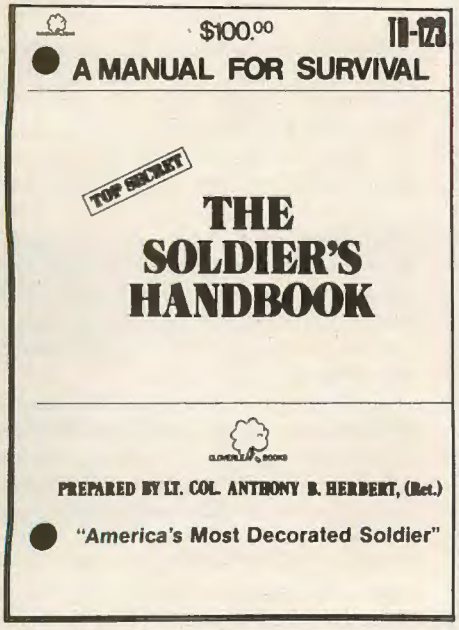

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Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

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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war photographer, so he bought a cheap Pentax camera and in order to get to Saigon shipped out as a deckhand on a Japanese freighter. Never thereafter would he eat either rice or fish. However, he developed into a fine cameraman.

In the photo room itself stood Horst Faas (also to win a Pulitzer), the chief photographer. An unreconstructed German nationalist and former member of the Hitler Youth, he wore a WWII Nazi helmet around the office, just as he did in the field.

Henri Huett, who also won a number of journalistic prizes, was examining 35mm film with a loupe. Huett was to become one of the best friends I have ever had in my life — we got shot at a lot together — and he died in a helicopter crash in Laos.

(Of the 12 Westerners in the bureau when I arrived, 11 of us were to be killed or wounded in the next 18 months. Only Peter Arnett escaped, and that was something of a miracle because he went out to the boondocks as much or more than the rest of us.)

Ed White, the unflappable chief correspondent, sat quietly at his desk. (The only time I ever saw him excited was when he asked me if I had "the envelope." The AP had given me an envelope crammed with several thousands of U.S. dollars ["green"] to finance the Bureau's operation. I jokingly said, "Naw, I lost that envelope in Hong Kong." Seeing his sudden look of distress, I quickly produced it and handed it over.)

There were several other people in the offices, too, mostly troops from Army and Marine units and one guy in a loud, Hawaiian type sportshirt with "Death Before Dishonor" tattoed on one brawny forearm and "82nd Airborne" on the other. I concluded, correctly, that he was working for the CIA.

All inhabitants of the offices seemed to be drinking Ba Me Ba as if the supply would run out at any moment.

As Ed White interviewed me while looking at my AP records, he remarked: "I see you were in the Marine Corps infantry. Do you like that sort of thing?"

I replied: "Well, I don't know if I like it or not, but I'm pretty good at it."

Said White: "Good. That's what you'll be doing. Covering the infantry. We need guys to do that."

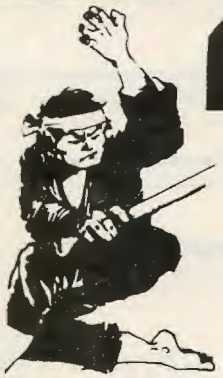
One week later I was stumbling around in the bush of War Zone C with the 173rd Airborne and that became my occupation for the next two years from the Mekong Delta to the DMZ. I was wounded twice in the process.

I soon became absorbed in the Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere of the AP operation in Saigon, becoming just about as much of a character as the rest of them.

However, I never wore a Nazi helmet. Got mine from the First Cav.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD!

NINJA



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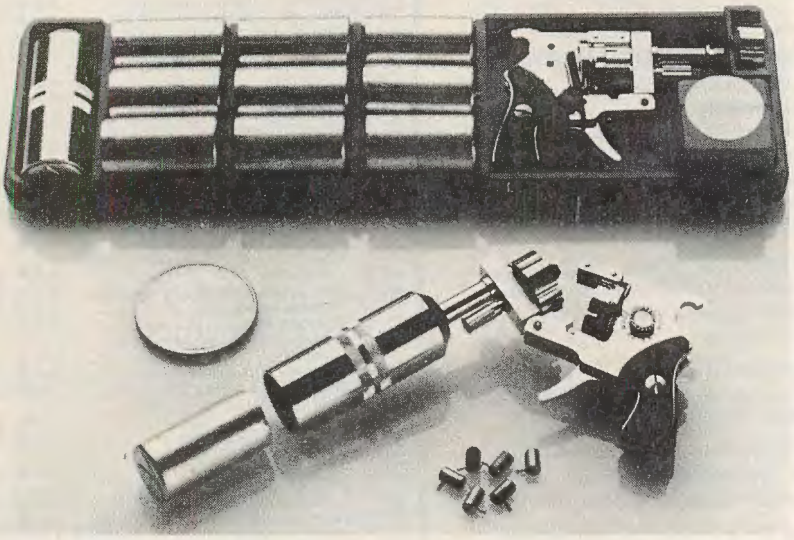
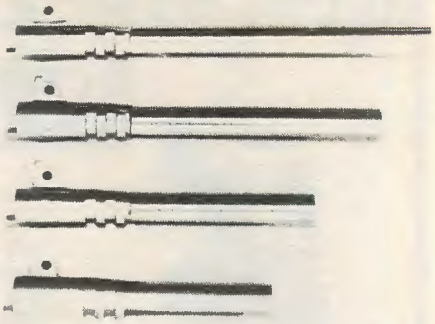
by John Metzger





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This highly effective, lightweight survival device retails for $38. It's a great little gadget to have in your car, pack or girlfriend's purse, and is exempt from U.S. Federal Firearms Regulations. For more information, contact the *T&M Survival Company*, Dept. SOF, 1402 Laurel Ave., Hollywood, CA 90046. Phone: (213) 656-1786.

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These hammer-forged barrels are constructed of blued steel, completely finished and ready for installation. They are available in 4½-inch, 5-inch, 6-inch and 7-inch lengths. For the SOFer who busts a lot of caps, this new product may be a good, long-term investment.

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Auto Ordnance Corp., manufacturer of the venerable Thompson submachine gun, introduces its production of the Government Model 1911A1 .45 ACP automatic pistol. This model is made to the same specifications as the standard military model and all parts are completely interchangeable with all other Government 1911 pistols. The gun is 8½ inches long with a five-inch barrel and a magazine capacity of seven rounds. Constructed of 4140 steel, the weapon weighs 39 ounces. The frame and slide are finished in a deep blue and each radius features a non-glare finish.

We haven't had the chance to test this new pistol, but experienced gunsmiths and weapons experts have. Various test firings have shown that the accuracy of the Auto Ordnance .45 is significantly better than the average M1911 due to excellent fitting between barrel bushing and barrel, and a tighter fit between frame and slide. Other pluses for accuracy come from the manufacture of the frames and slides in sets rather than at random and the use of Numrich barrels.

Retail price in December 1981 was $325, but this figure may vary around the country. For prices in your area, contact your local dealer. For more information on this new .45, contact *Auto Ordnance Corp.*, Dept. SOF, Williams Lane, West Hurley, NY 12491. Phone: (914) 679-7229.

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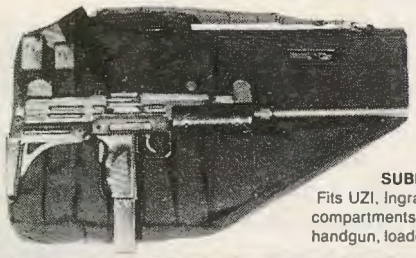

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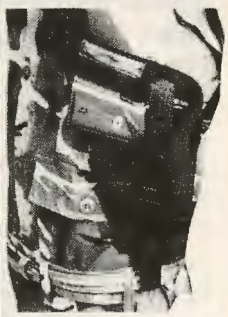

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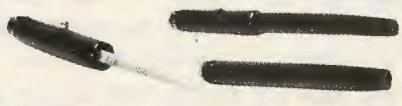

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EDITORIAL:

ALTERNATIVE TO THE DRAFT

by Alexander M.S. McColl

UNDER the present system of all-volunteer enlistments, the armed forces are not attracting sufficient initial enlistments, nor are they retaining enough of their qualified career NCOs, officers and technicians.

To a great many people the only solution to this is to go back to the draft. This conclusion is often supported with the assertion that it is the duty of every young man to serve a tour of duty in the armed forces of his country.

But these are two different things, and generate confusion. A universal-military-service law that took everyone except physical and mental cripples and conscientious objectors would bring in somewhat over two million young men each year. If the term of service were two years, this would allow reasonably efficient use of the draftee after he had been trained, but the total active-duty manpower of the armed forces would be about five million. At this level of manpower you would either have to have a spectacular increase in defense spending, beyond the scope of political and economic realities, or content yourself with a force that was primarily walking infantry, with very limited mechanized, air, naval and strategic nuclear capabilities; this is obviously not the kind of force that is needed to meet strategic commitments around the world. On the other hand, if the term of service were tailored down, say, to 13 months, so that the number of people on hand conforms to the size of force that can be effectively equipped, there are gross inefficiencies: Half the force is a training base (for it still takes about five months to train a recruit), and the other half consists of half-trained units where no one is around long enough to get acquainted. Universal service is not the answer.

Selective service, where only a fraction of the young men each year who come of military age are taken, has the great, bottom-line injustice that the burden falls on some and not on others, however the selection process may function. Have we so soon forgotten all the hassles and hard feelings during the last draft, or the permanently anti-military, anti-patriotic mentality that it created in colleges and universities? For every objector who at least had the moral courage to make a formal issue of the matter by going to Canada or Sweden, how many found a perfectly legal draft shelter in a seminary or a graduate school or the National Guard? The smaller the percentage taken, the worse the injustice. So this is a remedy of last resort, and the Reagan administration is commendably reluctant to apply it.

But what can be done to improve the voluntary recruiting effort?

First, we should make it easier for foreigners to enlist. We are, after all, in the contest not only to protect our own specific national interests, but also as the ultimate defender of the heritage of western civilization. Enlisting foreigners is not the same as hiring mercenaries. This might take several forms: A U.S. copy of the French Foreign Legion, something in the order of a U.S.-unilateral MIKE-Force, or simple enlistment for general service. All three of these solutions can and probably should be pursued simultaneously.

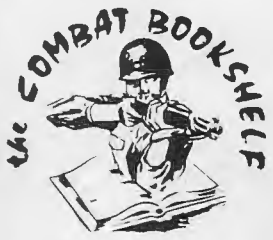
Second, instead of offering young men a scholarship worth several thousand dollars on completion of three years, which constitutes paying them not to re-enlist, as has been proposed, try this: A law to the effect that anyone who satisfactorily completes three years active duty gets a 15 percent credit against his income tax for the rest of his life; for every year of active duty, or every two years of active reserve-component duty thereafter, the credit goes up another 5 percent to a maximum of, say, 80 percent. This would attract the eager young hot-shots who think they're going to be millionaires by the time they're 30 — a class of folk for whom all sorts of useful work can be found in the armed forces.

Third, we hear a lot about the idealism of youth, communications gaps and so on. How long has it been since a President of the United States taped a recruiting pitch? What needs to be said is that the future of this country, and the Free World generally, belongs to the young people, for no more complicated reason than that they will be around when the rest of us are gone and that if that future is going to be worth having, and is not going to resemble what has happened in Poland, it will have to be defended.

Willingness to serve after the country is attacked isn't good enough; it takes a full year to train an infantry division, and by then it may be too late. For very practical reasons, it is therefore simply a duty of each young man to embrace the Great American Adventure and serve an enlistment in the armed forces. The not very great hardships and inconveniences are part of the price of citizenship and of having a future worth looking forward to — to say nothing of individual pride and a clear conscience.

If this line of thinking only got to an additional 10 percent of the 2,000,000 or so young men who come of military age each year — and President Reagan is a very persuasive speaker — our recruiting problems would be solved.

Certainly these ideas are worth a try before we go back to the hassles and hard feelings, unhappy compulsions and basic unjustices of the draft as it existed 10 years ago.



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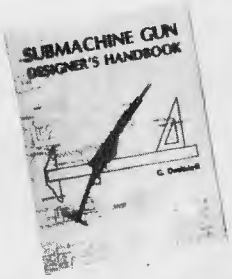

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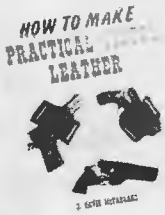

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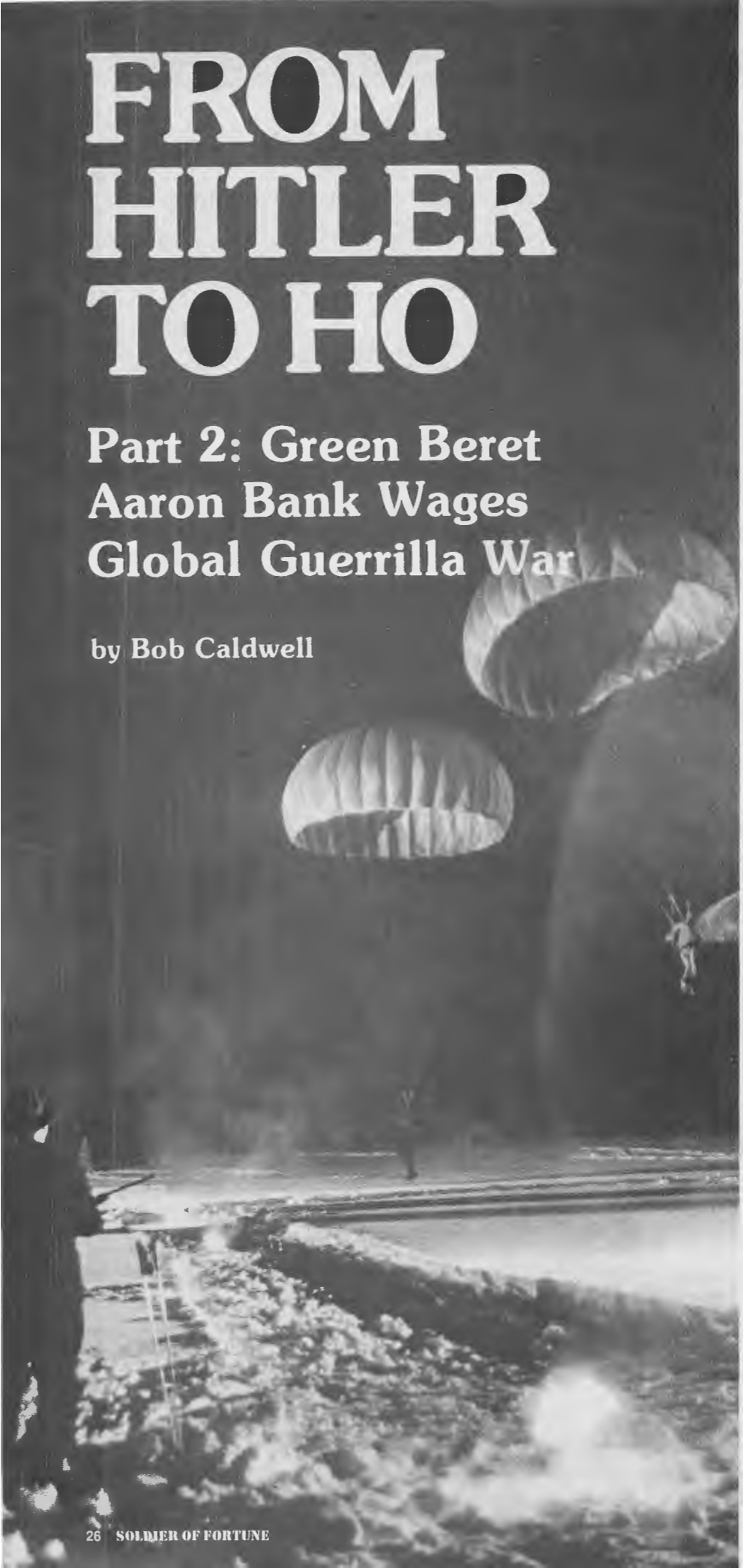
THE COMBAT BOOKSHELF

FROM HITLER TO HO

Part 2: Green Beret Aaron Bank Wages Global Guerrilla War

by Bob Caldwell



***PART 1:** In early 1942, the U.S. War Department accepted Aaron Bank as a recruit for the newly-formed Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Bank was a natural. During the '30s, he had toured Hitler's Germany and reported military and other useful information to Washington. After a year of training in small-unit tactics, sabotage and ambush techniques, Bank was shipped to England for more intensive preparation for actual European operations.*

In the English countryside, Bank

10th SF unit prepares to ambush convoy during winter training near Bad Tolz. Trooper wearing white anorak carries .30 cal. M2 carbine popular in WWII forest battles. LEFT: Aaron Bank's OSS training proved useful when he helped organize Special Forces in 1952. Night exercises in West German countryside prepared 10th SF troopers to parachute behind enemy lines. Photos: Ralph Crane, Life Magazine © 1956 Time Inc.

and his fellow Americans honed their deadly skills at a secret Special Operations Executive (SOE) training site. They had to be the best since their assigned mission, codenamed Operation Jedburg, was to "set France aflame" before the Allied invasion. The plan called for three-man teams to be parachuted into occupied France at prearranged points where they would rendezvous with members of the French resistance. Each team would then attempt to organize hundreds of partisans. If Operation Jedburg succeeded, it would wreak havoc in the German rear areas, disrupting supply, communications and the movement of reinforcements to the Allied invasion front.

In March 1944, some 20 OSS teams, including Bank's, were selected to support the invasion of southern France that was to follow the Normandy landings. The teams were shipped to Algiers for final training before jumping into France. The go signal for Bank's team came during the first week of June, only days before the invasion of Normandy but nearly 10 weeks before the Allied invasion force would land on the French Riviera.

Bank, a French army captain, who would serve as liaison officer, and a French lieutenant-radio officer dropped from the belly of an RAF Liberator shortly after midnight, landing on a rocky plateau, 5,000 feet up in the rugged Massif Central overlooking the Rhone Valley 100 miles north of Marseille. They were met by local partisans and moved by truck to a safe house near the team's first base camp. The three men were

awakened from a restless sleep by a member of the resistance who warned them that the Germans were at the edge of the village. The team escaped out a rear window and raced up a nearby mountain. They learned a valuable lesson: Trust no one and never stay in the same place twice.

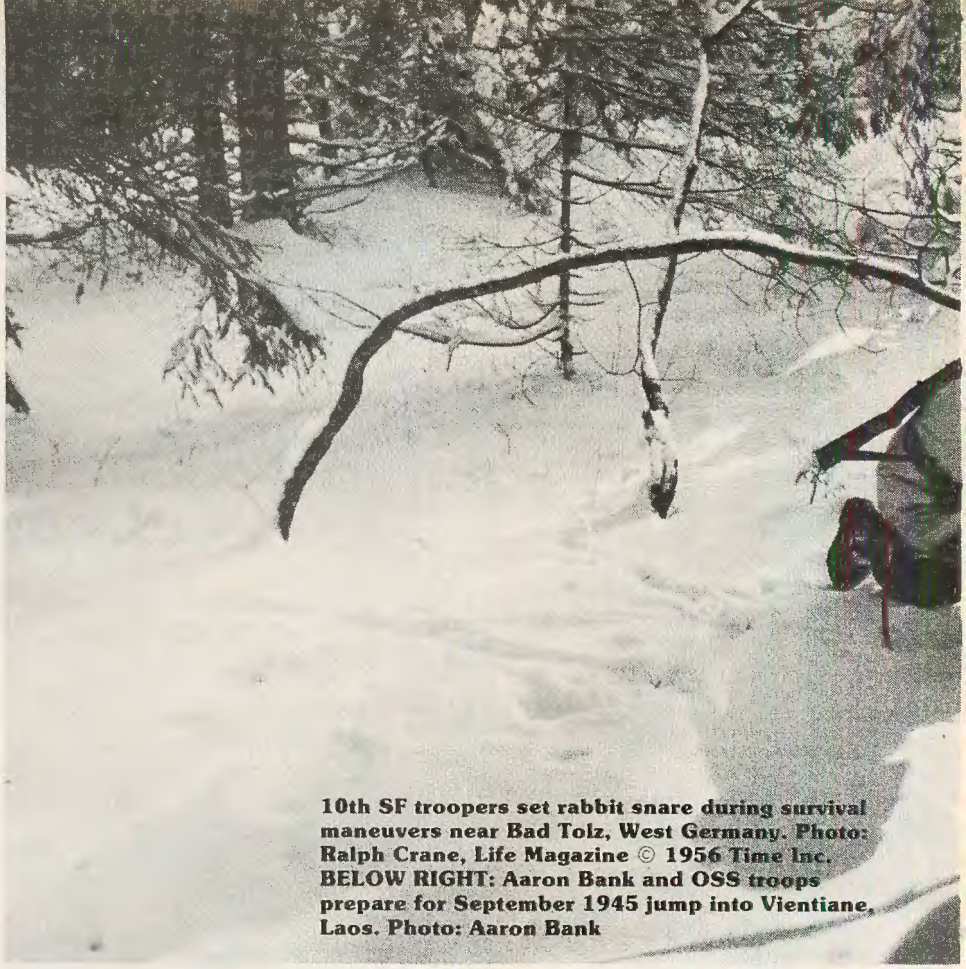
Bank and his two French officers moved from one partisan group to another, conducting training courses and calling in arms drops. The team set up a sabotage net which eventually stretched to Marseille, an intelligence network and an "underground railroad" which passed downed Allied fliers to the Spanish border. By mid-July, they had built the foundations of a formidable guerrilla force. Bank's partisans turned to sabotage, blowing up strategic elements of the electric network, railroad lines, bridges and even some port facilities in Marseille itself. The partisans ambushed German convoys and patrols.

On 15 August, radio code indicated that Operation Anvil, the invasion of southern France, was about to begin. The Jedburg teams received new orders. They and their partisans were to bottle up the retreating Germans along the Rhone in a line that would be vulnerable to steady pounding from the air. The choke point for the Germans was Ales, a small city in the center of a road net that linked the Rhone Valley and the southeastern edge of the Massif Central. Here Bank gathered his resistance fighters, now some 3,000 strong.

For three days Bank's partisans turned individual German units back toward the Rhone in a series of fire fights. By the end of the month, Free French armored units entered Ales and U.S. troops were 75 miles north of Marseille. Aaron Bank's war in southern France was just about over. He was ordered to London and was soon involved in perhaps the most daring plot ever conceived by the OSS: Operation Iron Cross.

Iron Cross called for the recruitment and training of a bogus company of German mountain infantry from anti-Nazi POWs in France. The unit was to be parachuted into Austria's Inn Valley. Here it would maintain its Wehrmacht disguise while conducting sabotage and guerrilla warfare. Bank readily accepted command of the unit.

Within a week 175 Germans were signed up. Specialized training in sabotage, demolitions, ambush and psychological warfare soon began, as well as realistic combat and jump training. By April, Bank's force numbered 100 hardened volunteers.



10th SF troopers set rabbit snare during survival maneuvers near Bad Tolz, West Germany. Photo: Ralph Crane, Life Magazine © 1956 Time Inc. BELOW RIGHT: Aaron Bank and OSS troops prepare for September 1945 jump into Vientiane, Laos. Photo: Aaron Bank

AARON BANK TODAY

If there is such a thing as a model Special Forces retiree, Aaron Bank might be said to have set the mold. At the age of 79, he is still fit, trim and actively promoting the concept of unconventional warfare.

Col. Bank works full-time as chief of security for the Capistrano Bay District, a private beach community not far from his home in San Clemente, south of Los Angeles.

Col. Aaron Bank in 1957. Photo: U.S. Army

He runs for one hour each afternoon over a cross-country course designed to keep him going uphill half the time. Then comes 30 minutes of isometric exercises.

His spare time is occupied with writing and speaking on special warfare topics, and on maintaining an active correspondence with fellow SF and OSS retirees. There are also occasional interviews with authors and journalists collecting information on OSS and Special Forces exploits.

But Aaron Bank's chief professional interest these days is nurturing a greater and wider appreciation of the Green Berets' unique potential.

"Remember," he says, "that the Special Forces were originally organized to conduct guerrilla warfare but have never had a chance to do it. In Vietnam, they were used in a counterinsurgency role and they performed brilliantly, but it wasn't what they were created for.

"Imagine the future that might await Special Forces when that seething volcano behind the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe explodes. That's when the Special Forces are going to show the world . . . they're going to organize guerrillas by the hundreds of thousands."

And why not? As Aaron Bank is fond of noting, the motto of the Green Berets is *De Oppresso Liber* — Free the Oppressed. — B.C.

As Iron Cross' training neared its end, the Allies were driving deeply into Germany. Allied intelligence picked up reports that top Nazi leaders might retreat into the Austrian Alps if Germany were overrun. The Inn Valley was a natural approach route to this region, and OSS Commander Bill Donovan changed the unit's mission: "Tell Bank that when he gets in there to get Hitler."

Bank frantically rewrote the training schedule to include motorcade ambushes and penetration of defended compounds. Finally in late April, he was alerted for immediate departure. Bank and his advance team flew to Dijon to wait for an OSS flight to the drop zone. The rest of the company would follow in C-47s once the advance party landed and secured the DZs. For five days the team was told that bad weather ruled out any flights, and on the sixth the mission was scrubbed. OSS HQ had had second thoughts: Nearly all the German volunteers were dedicated communists and their insertion into the Reich could have embarrassing political consequences. Aaron Bank is still convinced that had Iron Cross gone ahead, Hermann Goering would have been his prisoner.

AFTER the cancellation of Operation Iron Cross, Aaron Bank took two weeks leave in Paris. By the time it was over, so was the war in Europe. Eager for a new challenge, he asked for a transfer to Asia or the Pacific and another chance to use his OSS skills. At that point — May 1945 — the Japanese army was still occupying French Indochina. The OSS headquarters at Kunming in southern China was training Vietnamese for partisan operations against the Japanese in Vietnam. The Kunming headquarters needed a training officer and Bank needed a job.

Southeast Asia And The OSS

He was to train the Vietnamese and then accompany them in a parachute drop into the mountains above the Red River valley in northern Vietnam. Operating from their mountain base, the Vietnamese under Bank's command were to harass Japanese river traffic. Eventually they even raided a Japanese military headquarters northwest of Hanoi.

Drilling the Vietnamese presented some difficulties. Bank spoke no Vietnamese, so every order had to be re-

Continued on page 66

THE GREEN BERET

The distinctive green beret has long since come to symbolize the U.S. Army's elite Special Forces. Ironically, it took a Presidential directive to overcome the Pentagon's traditional hidebound resistance to any "European-style" headgear for the unconventional warfare forces.

In 1953, Col. Bank recommended that a green or red beret be authorized for Special Forces. At the time, the French *Services Specieux* were wearing green berets and the British Special Air Service sported claret-colored berets

The Army's chief of Psychological Warfare approved the request, but it was vetoed by his superiors. Notwithstanding their elite status, the Special Forces were condemned to wear the Army's standard fatigue and service caps. By the late 1950s, some Special Forces troopers in Germany were wearing berets anyway, in violation of regulations.

When President John F. Kennedy visited Special Forces headquarters at Ft. Bragg and toured the unconventional-warfare school there in the early 1960s, he was sufficiently impressed to order creation of additional Special Forces units He also had the sense to recognize that elite units ought to be accorded the privilege of wearing something that would set them apart from regular troops.

Thus, the green beret was officially authorized for Special Forces and today, two decades later, it is synonymous with soldiers who represent a standard of military excellence unsur passed anywhere in the world

B.C.

SPECTRE

Air Force Angel of Death

Three-quarter front view of AC-130A aircraft firing 20mm Gatling gun in flight. Aircraft is assigned to 919th Special Operations Group, Air Force Reserve. Photo: U.S. Air Force

by Fred Reed

MIDNIGHT. Sucking oxygen at a classified altitude over the Nevada desert. Intercom shrieking *whoopwhoopwhoop* for mysterious reasons. Roar of four massive engines. Fourteen men jammed in $25 million of weird airplane — weirdest in the whole Air Force.

We are aboard an AC-130 Spectre gunship, a cargo hauler become a metal vampire with incredible firepower. Soon we will be firing.

I am standing on the fire-control deck with freezing wind whipping down my neck, eyes straining in the eerie light, listening to 30 disembodied voices in the headphones. This crate is like a canful of ghosts. "Garblegarble," the voices whisper, hollow and macabre. Other voices, maybe aboard Spectre and maybe out in the circling F-4s, reply, "Garblegarblegarble."

I am looking over the shoulders of the navigator and fire control officer, both in nylon flight suits and camouflage helmets which make their craniums seem swollen by some hideous disease. They flip switches and adjust knobs, probing the dark, distant ground with delicate electronic beams. It seems a hell of a way to fight a war.

My mind goes back to my days in armor school with the Marines at Camp Pendleton. Compared to this electronic whizz-bang, a tank has the brutal simplicity of a knee in the groin — unpleasant but not complicated. It doesn't require banks of malevolent circuitry and the general atmosphere of a television starship.

And in a tank you don't fall three miles out of the sky in a silly-ass parachute, fluttering from Vegas to East Jesus. If a fighter accidentally rams us, we may do just that.

The target drifts reluctantly into the fire-control officer's screen, moving inch by inch into the gunsights. The deck is cramped and dark except for glowing walls of instruments, a green flicker of screens the Air Force won't talk about, the pale orange glow of classified computer readouts, television screens for the night vision gear. And a fire-control computer that will shoot your fillings out at 10 miles.

There is a flavor of madness to this ship. It looks like the set for a B-production of *Last Days of the Forbidden Planet*.

This isn't war, not the way most GIs fought it on the ground. 'Nam veterans know the proper way to fight a war. You find a lovely green swamp full of lovely green leeches and squat neck-deep in it for three hours, while Luke the Gook dings at you from the tree line.

You amuse yourself by burrowing frantically into mud dikes, experimenting with breathing underwater, anything to keep from getting sniped. There's none of this oxygen and cold wind, *garblegarble* stuff. The swamps are warm and pleasant with friendly bugs and maybe a bamboo viper swishing by. Great duty.

The closest the ground pounders got to Spectre was Puff — Puff the Magic Dragon, also called Spooky, an early gunship made from a C-47. If you were lucky, Puff came droning across the tree line and its quivering red death ray erupted, miniguns at 12,000 rounds per minute. And, as jarheads liked to say, Luke would develop skin trouble: holes in it. Then you spent an hour burning off leeches and putting people in body bags, still not understanding gunships but profoundly grateful anyway.

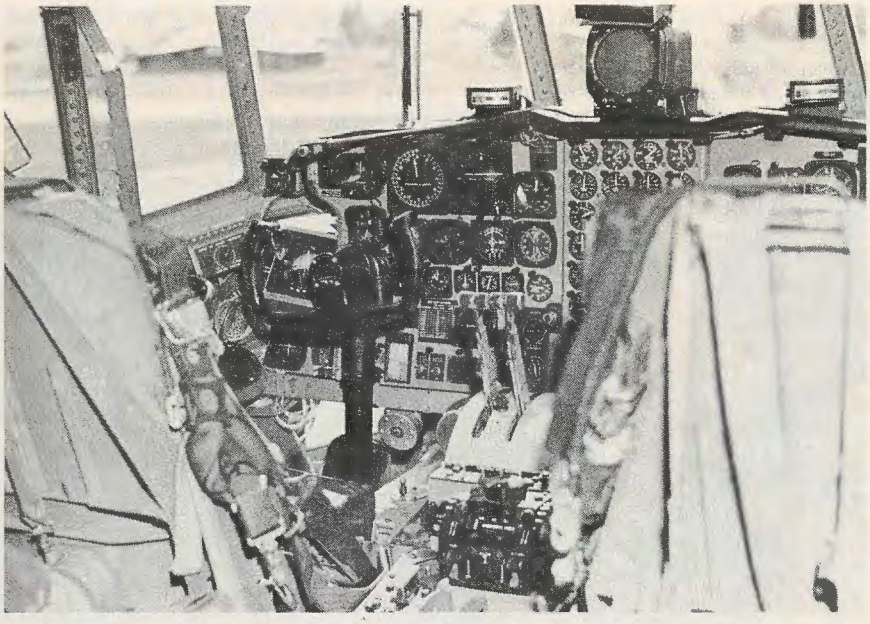
The AC-130 is one of the great untold stories of the war. Spectre is the legendary night-fire gunship of the Air Force, a lumbering cargo plane turned into a dark killer. The military has only recently loosened the security wraps. Gunships were so secret in Vietnam that if one was shot down — only half a dozen were — command sent a fighter to bomb the classified wreckage.

Spectre's mission is simple: to track anything that moves by night, lock it into the night-vision devices, and blow it into twisted metal — trucks, men, tanks, boats, missile sites, air fields. The enemy often doesn't even know that Spectre is drifting overhead until the first round whistles in and the lead truck goes up in greasy smoke. And it's hard to hide from a gunship's night eyes.

To understand Spectre, you've got to be the kind of person who is fascinated by powerful machinery and deadly snakes. Certain machines, and certain people for that matter, grab at the dark corners of the mind just because they are so morbid and violent. It's a gangrenous and frightening fascination.

Maybe you've looked at a Phantom fighter against a glowing bruise of sunset, in some crazy place like Udorn — a nasty hang-nosed fighter that always seems to be sneering, with the strong curve of the cockpit like a muscle.

Or, you've pulled up to a stoplight, maybe in Los Angeles, and found yourself next to a chopped Harley, a mean, sleek bike with a suicide stick, throbbing and pounding because it has an overbore and too much cam, and some greasy human wart on it. And, if you *liked* it, even secretly, then you understand Spec-



Pilot cockpit in U.S. Air Force AC-130 at Ubon Air Force Base, Thailand, 22 May 1971. Photo: U.S. Air Force

tre. A gunship is the ultimate outlaw motorcycle.

But with a trace of snake.

All that firepower is controlled by a silent electronic brain, uninterested in the nightmarish rain of intestines it causes. A brain controlled by barely measurable currents flowing through microscopic circuits. Spectre has the soul of a computer.

Spectre starts as a four-engine C-130 Hercules transport at Robins AFB, Ga. Propeller-driven to give it loitering time over battlefields, Hercules is not a pretty plane, not fast, not maneuverable. It is a weightlifter, not a warplane. A Herc is a squatty box, with cleats on the deck, a dropping tailramp, hydraulic lines and bundled wires and girders everywhere.

For a quiet killer it is incredibly noisy. The inside shakes with a pounding, throbbing roar which careful listening separates into a dozen hisses, rattles, demented hydraulic warblings, chatter of shafts, the heavy drone of the churning engines.

At Warner-Robins, workers install about $20 million of circuitry and guns. Along the left side go the sensors that give the plane its uncanny night sight. An IR detector-head picks up infrared light, invisible to the eye. A low-light TV camera gathers starlight, moonlight, the faint light that exists on the darkest night, and amplifies it.

A laser target-designator goes in. With it, Spectre, which carries no bombs, can mark a target for smart bombs carried by fighters.

A powerful searchlight is added. From 7,500 feet it will light an area the size of two football fields brightly enough so you can read a newspaper. It can operate in the visible band or in the infrared, leaving the enemy unaware that he is being illuminated.

Flare dispensers go beneath the right wing, as do the ECM (electronic countermeasures) pods that scramble anti-aircraft radar. A Plexiglas bubble goes into the bottom of the fuselage for the flak-watcher. He keeps an eye out for Triple-A — anti-aircraft artillery — and yells evasion instructions to the pilot. On the early Spectres he hung half out of the open tail-ramp on a nylon strap, staring thousands of feet down to the Laotian jungle, but now he has a bubble.

Ammo racks go in, many ammo racks. In the right rear, flak curtains — stiff shrapnel-absorbing panels — wall off the sensor booth. The two enlisted sensor operators sit here, as does the electronic-warfare officer. They all stare at banks of screens and switches.

Just behind the cockpit goes the fire-control computer, the chilly brain that calculates altitude, range, wind velocity, air speed, all the variables. The computer gives the plane its deadly accuracy. The fire-control officer sits here and watches a television screen with cross-hairs on it, playing Pong for keeps.

All this ugly plane needs is firepower and she will roll out, still ugly but with cat's eyes and sharp teeth. The guns in these monsters numb the mind. They don't even look like guns, more like machine tools in a foundry, and some of them have no business on an airplane.

For example, a stubby 105 howitzer pokes out from the left fuselage. In case you are not familiar with artillery, that is what a 105 is — artillery, the kind of gun the Army drags behind a truck and uses to bombard cities. It is said to be the biggest gun ever mounted on an aircraft. A round for it weighs 47 pounds. Shrapnel from a 105 is still dangerous 1,000 meters from the point of impact. A 105 can ruin a tank and, should it hit a truck, metal and bone fragments would cover acres.

Further forward is a 40mm, firing 100 rounds per minute, a graceless weapon that looks like part of a steel mill. It also projects from the left side, because Spectre is designed to fly around its prey and fire inward. A 40mm round can make

junk out of the nicest truck, or turn a sitting jet into an all-day barbecue.

Further forward are a pair of 7-barrel 20mm Vulcan Gatling guns firing 2,500 rounds per minute each — fast enough that Spectre carries a coal shovel to toss the casings away. The 20mm is useless against armor but it can do unholy things to vehicles or troops.

Last are the two 7.62mm miniguns, Puff's old weapon. The 7.62 is light machine gun ammo, but it fires at 6,000 rounds per minute per gun. The result is the buzzing red death ray that played for so long in the paddies around Saigon.

A friend of mine tells of watching Puff clear a tree line in the Delta. The day was clear and windless with blue skies and trees reflected in the paddy and snipers everywhere. Puff methodically moved the death ray along the tree line, chewing up the foliage, until one of the VC ran frantically into the paddy. The pilot finished his run and then swerved toward the guy.

The water erupted in a fountain and moved toward him, as if a school of piranha were boiling along in the water. The VC didn't even try to run, just waved his hands in the air and yelled a lot until the fountain hit him. When they found him, he was a mess.

For a reporter, getting aboard Spectre is only slightly more difficult than a Cherokee manhood ritual, and at least as complicated. The gunship command reacted as if I had requested the guidance plans for a Minuteman III. Finally they gave in, specifying no photos, no altitudes, no figures, no this, no that.

Then came high-altitude training at Andrews AFB, Md. It includes a hernia check (cough ... once more) because, when surrounding pressure falls with altitude, the internal organs tend to bulge out. The doctor checks to see that your ears are clear. If they aren't, you will think your brains are being sucked out on ascent.

Next, a physiologist lectures you. If you are taking any kind of medicine, he says, don't fly without telling the flight surgeon. Medicines can have strange effects at high altitude. Maybe your blood will turn to jelly, or dry up.

Then he explains (for about two hours) all the things that can go wrong at altitude: hypoxia, hyperventilation, disorders of the central nervous system, nitrogen narcosis, turning blue, fits of wild and irrational rage. For some reason it reminded me of the list of worms they warned us about at Pendleton as we were staging out for 'Nam: hookworm, roundworm, flatworm, pinworm, brainworm, ringworm.

Next step the altitude chamber. Actually, the next step was a quick trip to the john with a pair of barber's shears because, as a sergeant told me, my beard would spoil the seal of the oxygen mask.

The chamber is a grey metal box the size of a small room with thick windows and pumps to suck out the air, simulating altitude. You sit in phony aircraft seats, wearing a flight helmet and oxygen mask, with the oxygen regulator in front of you. No fewer than three sergeants go through with you. It is like flying a closet with three copilots. The sergeants are there because people sometimes panic.

The chamber teaches you fascinating facts about ascent, such as that it makes you fart like a teapot. This is because the gas in the body expands. The AF calls it passing flatus, because the AF has delicate sensibilities, but the sergeants tell you it means farting, because no one has heard of passing flatus.

"It does seem strange to put four men in a metal box to pass gas," said one of my companions, grasping the situation clearly. "I don't think the service does it very often."

That was good to know.

Next stop: Nellis AFB, near Las Vegas, and a briefing by Capt. Andy Demeyer, navigator of my gunship. Andy is in his mid-30s, heavy but not fat, with an open gaze and dark hair — dark *short* hair. Andy is a great guy, but very military, very patriotic, and not fond of those who are not. He tells me what Spectre can do.

"We can handle night interdiction — in daylight we'd get blown out of the air. And we can fly sustained close ground support, search and rescue, act as forward observer for artillery, mark targets for fast movers, and control toads."

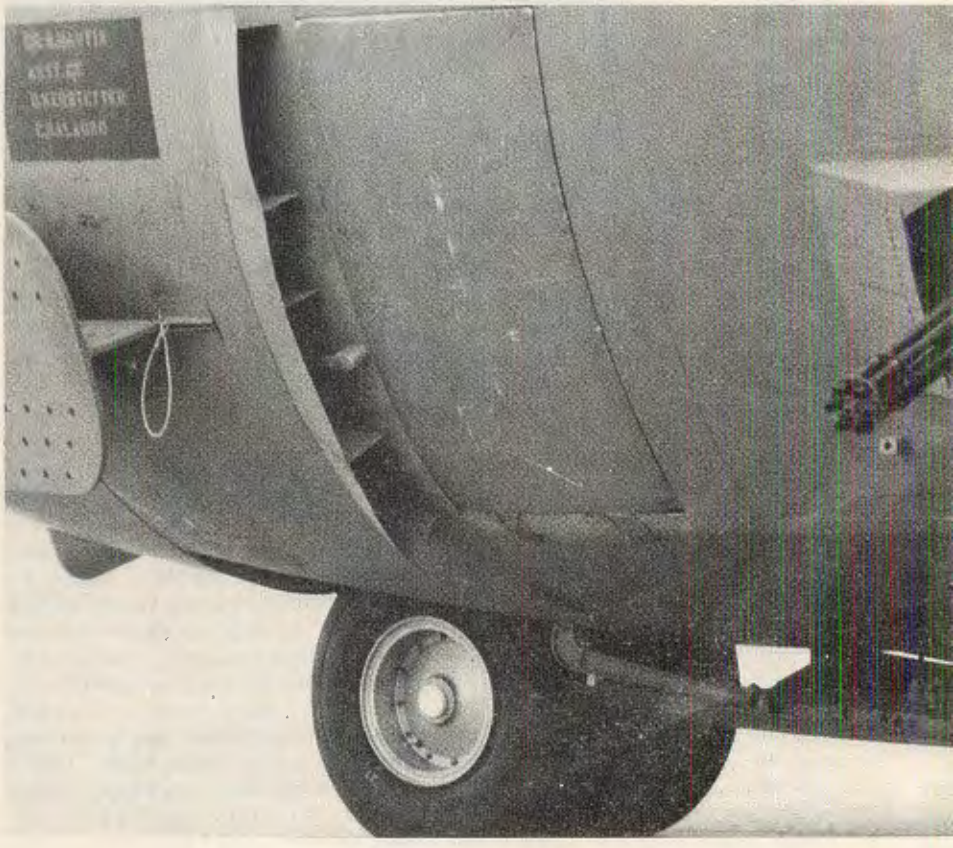
Toads?

"Yeah, dissidents, terrorists. If they take hostages we can spot 'em on rooftops. If a bunch of terrorists holed up somewhere in a building, we could just take off the top of the building."

Spectre: The Eye In The Sky

Gunships have other uses. "One time on a training flight at Eglin AFB, Fla., we spotted a couple of poachers on the range. We called the state cops and followed those poachers home, and vectored the cops after them. Those guys didn't have any idea that we were watching them."

Imagine those yoyos out poaching alligators, or whatever you poach at Eglin — coming out of the swamps at night pulling a dozen alligators on a red wagon, all tied up, and thinking about how many wallets they can make out of them. And a few miles overhead, 14 guys are staring down their collars with TV, radar. Think about it, next time you take your girlfriend to a deserted beach.



Closeup of pair of XM 134 7.62mm miniguns. Their six barrels fire 6,000 rounds per minute, creating "buzzing red death ray."

Andy takes pride in his ship, knows every inch of it the way a watchmaker knows a watch, gets satisfaction from its effectiveness. But Andy is very security conscious and doesn't say much about the planes. I don't think he is entirely happy at having a newsman aboard — not hostile, just cautious.

"Well," I said, "I'd hate to get somebody killed unnecessarily by talking about the wrong things."

He looked at me. "I'd hate to get *me* killed by talking about the wrong thing," he said thoughtfully.

Night was coming. First Lt. Ed Green, the copilot, chats a moment while we are waiting to go to the plane. Ed is one hell of a nice guy, 28, medium height, with brown hair and a trace of his native San Antonio in his speech. We are sitting in the equipment room where several airmen are playing cards or swabbing masks with alcohol.

Something about Ed and Andy and all these guys has been tugging at my mind for hours, but I can't quite put my finger on it. They are an impressive, likeable bunch. Military men as military men should be. But they seem vaguely out of place — not quite cynical enough, maybe, not always wondering what's in it for them. They are a far cry from the political colonels of the Pentagon.

The '50s, I decide. These guys have the curious wholesomeness I associate with Arkansas in 1957. I can imagine Ed and Andy bombing along in a '49 Chevy convertible with chromed tailpipes, a foxtail on the antenna, and girlfriends in short shorts. That's where I've seen Ed's face — lead guitar on an Oldy-but-Goody album.

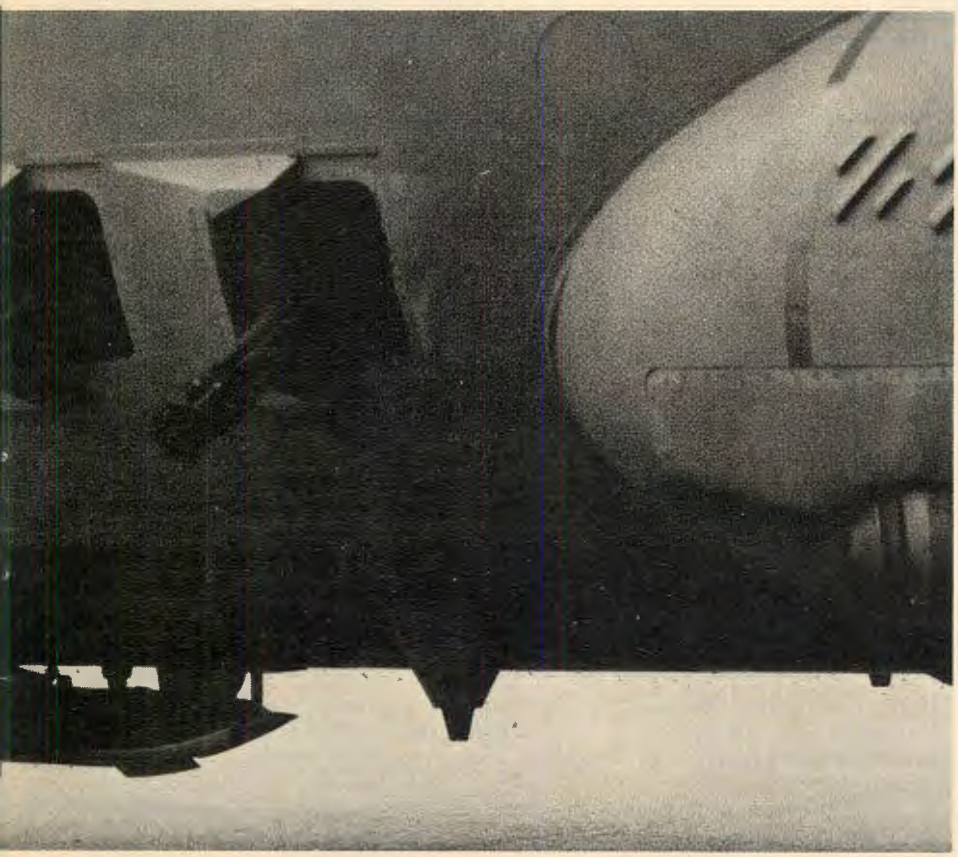
We head down the hall to go to the plane, carrying our helmets in canvas bags. It looks as if we are carrying replacement heads.

Apparently Ed does not realize I was in the service. He keeps talking about the "big gun," by which he means the 105, and about "big bombs" and "bullets." He says things like, "If we can't shoot it with our own bullets, we point the laser at it and another kind of plane drops big bombs on it."

Operation Red Flag: Sophisticated Battlegame

For a moment this puzzles me. In any other branch of the service, a 105 is called a 105, bullets are rounds, and a bomb is a 500-pounder, 1,000-pounder, or whatever. Well, I think, if the AF calls them big bombs and bullets, maybe I better do it too.

I do, and Ed becomes even more sure that I don't know anything about guns. Pretty soon we are saying things almost as silly as, "The big bombs go boom and the target goes bye-bye." When I figure out what is happening, I feel like a blue-ribbon jackass.



The remnants of a violent orange sunset are dying in the west and barren hills are turning from brown to black. The wind picks up and turns chilly, blows across us and out over a million square miles of sand. A desert airfield is a lonely place.

The gunship's auxiliary power plant is roaring, isolating men from men with the sound. The ground crew work around the plane, getting it ready for flight. The tail ramp gapes down like an open jaw and the tube of the 105 droops toward the earth.

Ed Green leads me up the ladders and into the side door. I clatter awkwardly aboard and then into the sensor booth, the only warm place on the aircraft and the only place where smoking is allowed. The long pre-flight procedure begins. We won't take off for 45 minutes.

Tonight's mission is not just gunnery practice for this airborne battleship. We will be one of perhaps 100 planes in Operation Red Flag, an enormously sophisticated battlegame. Red Flag has its roots in the high losses of American fighters over North Vietnam. The AF noticed a pattern: Most of the downed pilots were on their first 10 missions. Men who survived the first 10 missions usually survived their tour.

The reason was that training in air combat was, in the words of a Red Flag pilot, "poor." Pilots were training to fight each other, not the North Vietnamese. They practiced against other American pilots in American planes, using American tactics. Unfortunately the Russians did not train the North Viets to fly American planes with American tactics. The differences were fatal.

Air Force officials do not talk about tactics. If you ask, they gaze into space, scratch, and change the subject. They do give a few examples of what went wrong. Russian planes are smaller than ours. American pilots, accustomed to flying against bigger craft in practice, tended to misjudge speeds and distances. By the time they realized their errors, they were in deep trouble.

Something had to be done. Tactical Air Command consequently formed four squadrons of T-38s, gradually replaced by F-5E Freedom Fighters, supersonic export fighters that look and perform much like the MiG-21. These squadrons, about 20 planes each, were given Warsaw Pact camouflage. The pilots studied Russian tactics.

Two squadrons are stationed in Europe and the Pacific. The other two, the 64th and 65th Fighter Weapons Squadrons, are stationed at Nellis. They spend about a third of their time on the road, giving pilots at other bases experience in flying against Russian tactics. The rest of the time they take part in Red Flag at Nellis.

They are called Aggressors. They wear shoulder patches with a red star, and

have Russian propaganda posters in their briefing rooms. Contrary to press reports, they do not live in mud huts and drink vodka.

On the Nellis range, planes take part in every sort of air combat from dogfighting to strafing. Nevada makes an excellent firing range because there is nothing in it except Las Vegas, which no one would miss anyway. The range covers three million acres and pilots can use the air space over an even larger area, a total air space about the size of the country of Switzerland.

The range is laced with target airfields bulldozed into the desert, different kinds of SAM (surface-to-air) missile sites with their distinctive networks of roads and radars. There are Russian tanks made of plywood or Styrofoam, convoys of junked trucks, missiles made from telephone poles.

Vietnam War: From Space Age Technology To Crossbows

There are also "threats," live radar sites which simulate Russian missile radar. The threats are manned by Americans who lock onto planes and shriek like crazed Indians when they shoot down an unwary pilot. If the Soviets are as bloodthirsty as these guys, we may have problems.

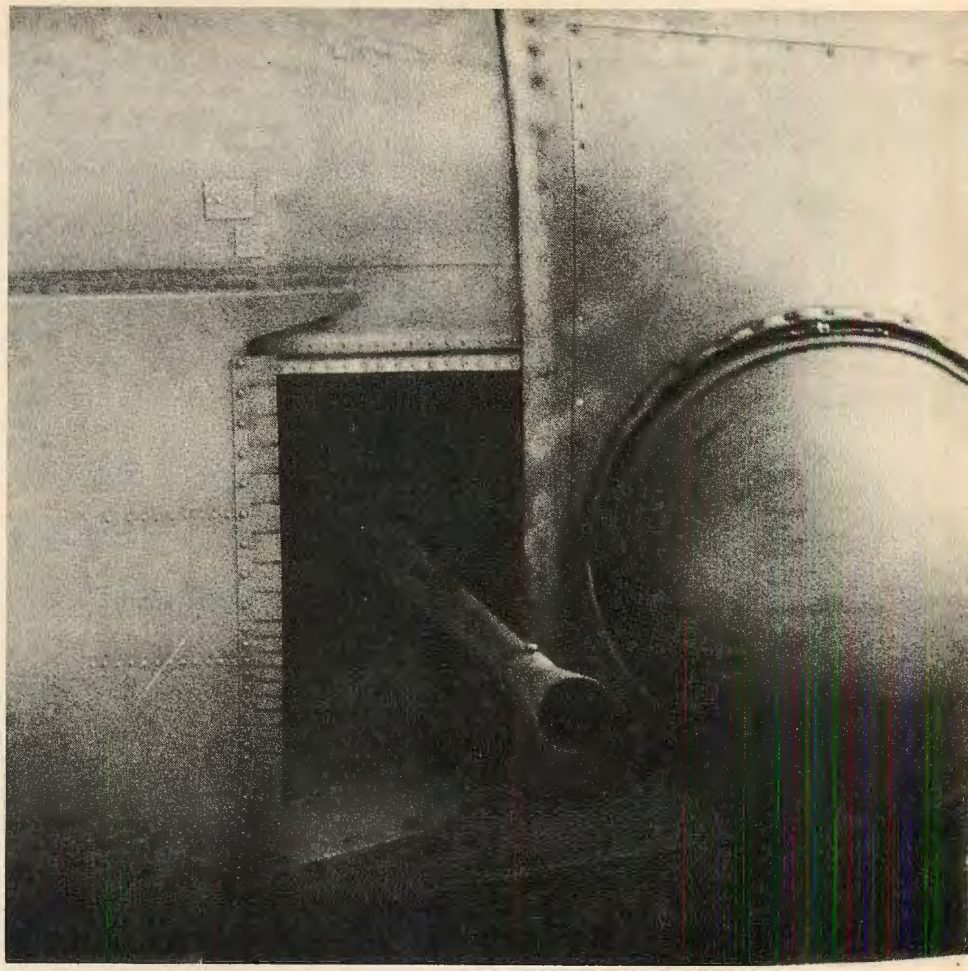
The results are recorded on videotape. Watching the tape can be a real shock for a pilot who thinks he has done everything right. He imagines himself zipping in low over the ground just like Terry and the Pirates — beautiful bombing run, picture-book release. He's thinking, All the girls will love it, *hot dog*, and then he goes evading-off through the cactus like a pro.

Then on the videotape he sees himself locked firmly into the sights of three SAM sites, a flak battery and a couple of duck-hunters who have accidentally wandered onto the range: He's been dead since three seconds into his run.

The Aggressors and gunners point out the pilot's mistakes and suggest ways of eliminating them. During his training with Red Flag he keeps trying. Aggressors say improvement is remarkable.

Red Flag is big business. During the past two years, Red Flag sorties have logged 39,316 flight hours in 24,439 sorties. Red Flag is also dangerous. When large numbers of aircraft are maneuvering in a small area, firing live ordnance, people get hurt. Carelessness is not the cause. Combat flying just isn't safe.

An Aggressor pilot told me, "You have to take the risks. You have to train the way you fight, so you can fight the way you train. If you don't get down there low over the terrain and dodge through the hills, you aren't simulating combat. If you get down there, sooner or later someone will die.



Stubby 105 howitzer pokes from fuselage. Said to be biggest gun ever mounted on an aircraft, one round weighs 47 pounds. Further forward is 40mm which fires 100 rounds per minute. Both are mounted on left side of fuselage so Spectre can fly around its prey and fire inward.

"A man wants to fly the best he can, gets a little excited, takes risks that would make sense in combat, gets caught up in what he's doing, and, well ... he flies into the ground. We figure it's better to take risks here than to lose a lot of men in combat."

Since January 1976 there have been 23 deaths in Red Flag. As I was waiting for my gunship briefing, two men died in an F-15. They flew into the ground.

In the murk by the 40mm, a crew member straps me into a parachute harness. It is surprisingly heavy. He shows me how to attach a chute to it.

"Just grab it with the handle in your right hand," he says, "and snap it on like this." He hits me in the chest with it, nearly crushing my rib cage, and the chute snaps miraculously into place. He seems to think jumping out of airplanes is reasonable.

Lt. Green takes me into the sensor booth where the low-level-light television operator straps me in. By this time wearing more harness than a Sumpter mule. The booth door slams shut and the roar drops to a hissing drone. The TV man plugs me into the intercom.

The lights go down low so they can see the gauges and dials. Airborne, we throb into the night sky, locked in a strange, noisy world, windowless, communications with the dark outside world only through instruments.

"Civilian passenger okay?" comes the pilot's voice.

"JUST FINE!" I bellow into the microphone, instinctively trying to shout over the noise. I decide I probably have blown the pilot's eardrums out. I cut my losses and sink into a doze for the flight to the firing range.

My mind keeps coming back to Hsua's grandfather's crossbow. Hsua is a Montagnard girl from up around Pleiku who ended up in Washington, by way of Iran and some other places, after the evacuation of Saigon. We chat sometimes when she misses the hills.

She was telling me the other day about going out with her grandfather, when she was a thin brown girl, to shoot supper with a crossbow. Sometimes I try to imagine it. Mud everywhere greasy and thick, the world stretching green around them, monsoon banking up thick and grey over the hills, and Hsua trudging the slimy slopes behind a ropy old man with a crossbow.

By then the Marines were at the airfields in Da Nang, Phantoms were crackling along at Mach 2, and satellites were watching from space with glittering quartz eyes. All that precision death in the same country with a crossbow . . . it was a screwy war.

The military keeps slipping into the future faster than the rest of America, and the rest of the world barely moves. In Cambodia, far more primitive than 'Nam, the difference was even sharper. Across that stark countryside with its rivers and ruined temples were barefoot people who had never seen a radio. I'd come stomping into one of their crude little firebases, wearing an Aussie bush hat and a thousand dollars worth of Nikon, trying to look like the world's saltiest war correspondent, and the brown soldiers would stare.

Beside them would be a machine gun made in a factory they couldn't imagine in a world they would never see. And the T-28s would come roaring out of Battambang or Kompong Speu or Kompong Chenang, places with strange musical names and no connection with the real world.

Back at Red Flag's Range Control Center at Nellis, a net of electronic eyes scans the range, feeding their info into the Range Control computer. The computer room is dark. On a huge black screen, seven feet square, the boundaries of the firing range glow in the dim blue-grey of the tube's display.

The room looks like the bridge of the Enterprise in *Star Trek*, and has much the same function. Each plane on the range appears as a red line, showing where it has been in the last 90 seconds. Small green numbers above and below identify it and give its altitude in little IBM script.

White dots mark the SAM radar sites. When they turn their radar on, white letters appear next to them to show what band they are using. A white line sweeps out from the SAM site when it is searching and, when the groping beam finds a target, it locks on like a leash. When it fires a missile at the plane, white arrows pulse down the radar beam. The computer decides whether a real missile would have hit the plane.

White Arrows Pulse Toward Their Targets

Below the screen sit men at radar scopes and computer consoles, monitoring the battle. Some of them are ground controllers for the Aggressors. By pushing buttons, the men can magnify a part of the range on the big screen or have the computer read out different kinds of information.

This is how war goes these days, screens and sweeping lines of radar. There is no room for crossbows or old men trudging mountains.

On Spectre's fire-control deck, I watch flickerings of dials and gauges, a target spinning slowly on the screens. We will say it is a building. (Part of the price for getting aboard this tin vulture is not to talk about its screens.)

We are orbiting. The foam rubber of the headphones drowns the roar of the engines. It is very cold.

Luminous crosshairs float across the desert on the screen. It is a spooky thing to watch. I can almost feel the computer eyeing its target.

Sucking oxygen. Gunships are not pressurized because they fly with the door open for the guns, the sensor heads, the searchlight. The oxygen mask pinches my nose in a soft painful grip, a flabby palm clamped over my face.

I sweat profusely where the rubber touches my face. It is giving me claustrophobia, threatening to smother me — an absurd sensation, considering that only the mask keeps me from passing out. Oxygen hisses through the crimped hose attached to the ceiling. It has a cold dry smell and parches the throat.

"Garble. Garble?" crackles a voice. We are preparing to do our trick. The voice is Andy Demeyer — good old Andy who doesn't like toads — but it doesn't sound like him. Maybe they've removed his voicebox and put in an electronic noisemaker. The swollen craniums begin flipping switches, turning knobs. The target drifts into the crosshairs and stays.

I'm standing there, slowly freezing, with the oxygen *shhhhh* — pause — *ssssss* and the little white eyes of the oxygen-flow indicators blinking with each man's breathing. Hoses dangle from faces like sucking worms.

I'm thinking, *How can I explain this to my editor?* I picture him jumping up and down the way editors always do, and yelling, "People! We gotta have people in this story."

But there aren't any people on a gunship, just creatures with fiberglass heads and disembodied voices.

"F-4 on the perch?" comes the voice of the pilot, sounding as if he is trapped in a sewer pipe. Far above in the night a pilot is circling in a Phantom. He can't see us from his Mach-2 box. We can't see him. Nobody can see the target. Only the machines see in this war.

"Ready in one minute, garble-screech," the F-4 tells us.

"Foco ready?"

"Roger that."

"Arm the gun."

"Gun armed."

"F-4 on the perch."

Continued on page 65

MAKE MINE M14

RDF's Strong Right Arm?

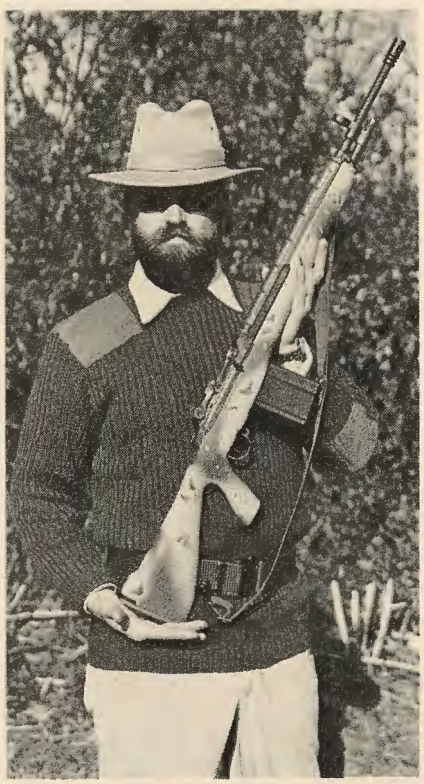
by Ken Hackathorn

I have never felt that the replacement of the 7.62mm NATO general-issue battle rifle was sound, although I like the 5.56mm M16 as a special-purpose tool. It is perfect for many military applications, including airborne-assault teams, commando units, special forces and SAS outfits, troops which had previously relied on submachine guns as their primary weapons. The M16 with its 5.56mm round is far more efficient than the typical SMG and a mated pistol cartridge. I consider the 5.56mm round the finest 75-meter cartridge in the world.

In Vietnam the short-range M16 replaced the M14. Its proponents argued that it was the best general-issue battle rifle, citing the following points: Because 5.56mm ammo is smaller and lighter than that of other full-bore weapons, more ammo can be carried by the individual soldier; the M16 rifle is lighter and therefore easier to carry; training new troops is simpler, because it is easier to teach new soldiers to use a weapon with light recoil, and therefore training time is reduced. The Pentagon whiz kids have long given these reasons for their choice of the M16 as the only battle rifle for the American soldier, and today they add that the female soldier can do well only with this light-recoil weapon.

Now, however, we find our nation faced with an extremely dangerous situation in the Middle East. As a result, the new Rapid Deployment Force has been organized and given this difficult but specialized military mission. Its battle rifle, equipment and training must vary greatly from those inherited from the Southeast Asian conflict.

Our current battle rifle is inadequate for the RDF both in caliber and range. The 5.56mm is not a long-range cartridge. In the Middle East the need for accurate 250- to 300-meter rifle fire is more than casually important. The "Bright Star" field exercises in Egypt proved that U.S. troops using the M16 had no chance of hitting targets at 300 meters — a desert breeze does terrible things to that little .22-caliber bullet. At the 1981 SOF Three-Gun Match, I purposely added a 300-meter stage to the rifle match,

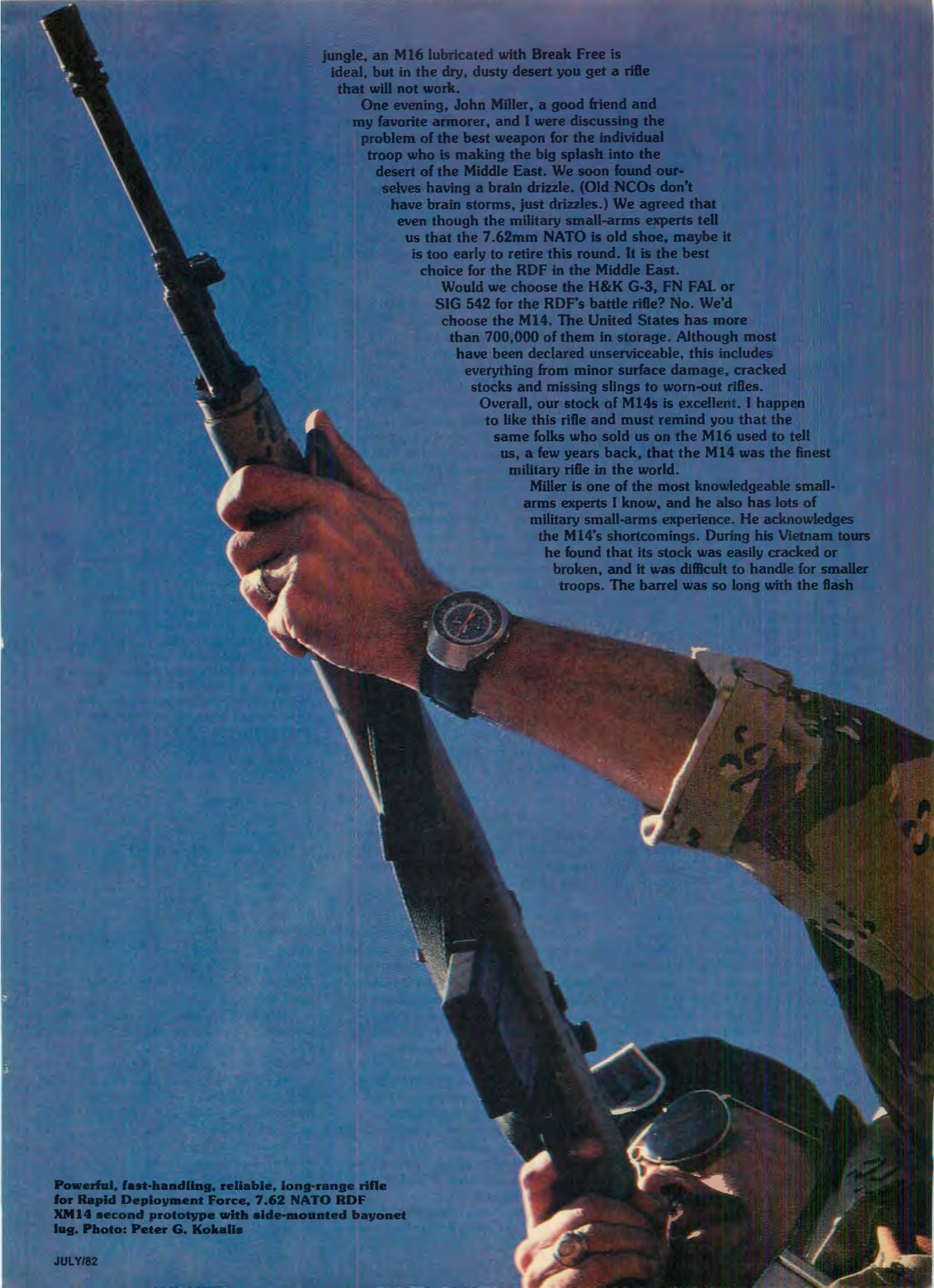


Hackathorn shows off phase-two prototype RDF M14 with longer barrel. Photo: John Miller

and anyone who was at Black Canyon can tell you how grim the long-range stage was for the 5.56mm users. (See "Shootout at Black Canyon," SOF, March '82.)

When the M16 and the 5.56mm cartridge first made their appearance in the mid-1960s, as a young troop I was impressed by the propaganda about the cartridge's deadliness. Remember the stories about its blowing arms off, about the bullet's tumbling as it exited the bore and all the other war stories. I often spent time as a range NCO, and as a weapons man I rather enjoyed the 5.56mm cartridge. But when the M16 replaced the M14 in 7.62mm NATO, I noticed something strange about the smaller round in the hands of the troops — expert riflemen, capable of outstanding marksmanship, simply failed to engage targets beyond 150 meters even when given plenty of time to fire at them. With a 7.62mm NATO M14, they could engage any target out to 400 meters, but with the 5.56mm weapon, they would not even try. I finally realized that the "mouse gun" had caused them to lose confidence in their skill, and I will always be hostile to those folks who passed this weapon off as the American soldier's rifle.

I realize, of course, that the Colt AR-15 does have some good features. Gene Stoner gave the AR-15 design some nice touches. Its controls are designed with user application in mind — but there is no ambidextrous safety or magazine catch for the left-hander, and the ejection pattern puts cartridges right up his nose. After nearly a decade, the military has now adopted an ideal lubricant for the rifle: Break Free CLP (Cleans-Lubricates-Protects) removes carbon fouling in most environments. In the



jungle, an M16 lubricated with Break Free is ideal, but in the dry, dusty desert you get a rifle that will not work.

One evening, John Miller, a good friend and my favorite armorer, and I were discussing the problem of the best weapon for the individual troop who is making the big splash into the desert of the Middle East. We soon found ourselves having a brain drizzle. (Old NCOs don't have brain storms, just drizzles.) We agreed that even though the military small-arms experts tell us that the 7.62mm NATO is old shoe, maybe it is too early to retire this round. It is the best choice for the RDF in the Middle East.

Would we choose the H&K G-3, FN FAL or SIG 542 for the RDF's battle rifle? No. We'd choose the M14. The United States has more than 700,000 of them in storage. Although most have been declared unserviceable, this includes everything from minor surface damage, cracked stocks and missing slings to worn-out rifles.

Overall, our stock of M14s is excellent. I happen to like this rifle and must remind you that the same folks who sold us on the M16 used to tell us, a few years back, that the M14 was the finest military rifle in the world.

Miller is one of the most knowledgeable small-arms experts I know, and he also has lots of military small-arms experience. He acknowledges the M14's shortcomings. During his Vietnam tours he found that its stock was easily cracked or broken, and it was difficult to handle for smaller troops. The barrel was so long with the flash

Powerful, fast-handling, reliable, long-range rifle for Rapid Deployment Force, 7.62 NATO RDF XM14 second prototype with side-mounted bayonet lug. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

hider that it got entangled in underbrush, and the weapon was clumsy for close-quarter use by mechanized infantry. The protruding flash suppressor and front sight were that easily damaged.

We agreed about the M14's strong points. It is extremely reliable, even in dusty environments, easy to clear and provides immediate action and excellent long-range accuracy — 400-meter hits are no problem for a skilled rifleman. Other good features are excellent sights, one of the best triggers available and ideal safety location. In addition, the safety, magazine catch and spent-case ejection pattern make the M14 a left- as well as a right-handed rifle. It is a rugged weapon and, most important of all, the military supply system is still geared to it with spare parts, manuals and ordnance. What if the United States were to take 200,000 M14s and convert them for the RDF battle rifle?

Miller and I decided to design a prototype weapon. He set the parameters for this new RDF version of the M14: The rifle must be shorter and lighter; it must also have a rugged, modern stock design. With these parameters we went to work.

We purchased a Springfield Armory M1A since the issue M14 is now unavailable. Taking a worn, issue-M14 barrel, we set it in the lathe and cut it to 17½ inches. Then we recrowned the muzzle and threaded it to accept an H&K flash hider. The front sight was a problem, until Miller pointed out that the H&K-style front sight would be ideal. He machined out a new gas-cylinder lock for our weapon. When we added a large lobe to the lock's top, we had a new front sight. Then we installed a solid post. The result is a protected, rugged, fast, speed-shooting sight, which is still suited for precision shooting. All the conversion takes, so far, is to cut and recrown the barrel, add the H&K flash hider, and replace the gas-cylinder lock with our new design.

Next we addressed the problem of the stock. The original wooden one was out. We wanted a new stock of plastic or nylon. Although the U.S. Army decided to use a nylon stock for the M14 in the late 1960s, few of them got into service because the M16 had replaced the earlier rifle. Furthermore, these GI nylon stocks had the same configuration as the wooden one, and they also had poor thermal properties, giving inconsistent accuracy.

I believe that the new RDF stock should be made of ABS or an engineering polymer that will provide light weight, excellent strength and good thermal properties. Because many organic solvents will attack plastic and weaken it, I will have to leave the choice of the proper material to the plastics experts.

Miller and I both felt strongly about the RDF's stock design. We believe that all handling characteristics of the weapon must be designed with the user in mind. Because a prototype plastic stock would be prohibitively expensive, we took a used M14 E2 stock and started chopping. This birch stock is heavy, but we decided that it would at least give us something to design from.

The M14 E2 stock has a standard pistol grip, so we tried to modify it as closely to M16 dimensions as possible. The pistol-grip stock is important — and it works. A production XM14 RDF rifle-grip should closely resemble the M16 pistol grip in shape and feel. Length of pull (distance from trigger to butt plate) should be identical to that of the rapid-shouldering M16. Height of the stock comb to the line of sight should also be the same. A rubber butt pad should be standard. (Steel butt plates are ridiculous, and the hard-plastic ones on the current line of *Sturmgewehrs* cause the weapon to slip off the shoulder as well as prevent a solid firing mount.)

Master armorer Miller went to work and soon modified our old E2 stock to a nearly ideal pistol-grip shape. He also added an extra sling swivel at the top of the butt plate and a side swivel at the fore-end to allow the rifleman to sling up in the now-popular patrol position without added trouble. For the production stock, we recommend that the bipod rail be modeled into the fore-end so that the weapon can accept the excellent H&K light bipod. The stock should have a slightly abrasive surface like that on the H&K system. When making this modification, a cammie pattern can also be applied.

Although I was concerned about the function of the action — the shortened barrel causes short recoil — test-firing proved that this was not a problem. The weapon functioned fine with all 7.62mm NATO rounds. The H&K flash hider really did its job. Most observers at our range sessions found our RDF conversion handy and enjoyable to shoot.

After test-firing hundreds of rounds through our M14 in its XM14 RDF dress, we began to show the rifle to interested parties. The Marines looked hard and said: "Beautiful." We expected that — the Corps still prefers real rifles and considers long-range marksmanship a fundamental part of soldiering.

When the Army brass looked the RDF over at Camp Perry, they were totally confused.

ABOVE: Longer barreled prototype in arid-country camouflage matches desert cammies. H&K front sight stands out. UPPER RIGHT: Fading into desert rock, masquerade RDF trooper displays enemy-eye view of second version of RDF rifle. Photos: Peter G. Kokalis RIGHT: Armorer Miller hefts original prototype RDF rifle for quick-point, quick-sight with short-barreled, H&K sighted, modified M1A. Photo: Ken Hackathorn

"Why?" they asked.

We explained.

"But," they said, "the M16 is easy to carry and you can pack more 5.56mm ammo."

We replied, "The same applies to the Daisy air rifle."

They looked distressed, shook their heads and walked away.

One sharp Army officer asked, "Will the RDF M14 conversion be selective-fire?"

"Hell, no!" we said. "The key is semiauto only; *no automatic fire*. The reason the M16 uses so much ammo is because the troops use it on overdrive all the time. They make lots of noise, but only hits count — and hits come from aimed fire. In fact, we believe lock-out plugs should be issued on RDF rifles, and the overdrive switch be under lock and key in the CO's [commanding officer's] possession. Then the troops would have to carry only 200 rounds — and that would be plenty."

I know many esteemed small-arms experts really get twisted on this subject. They say, "Firepower," and their eyes roll back in their heads — and I suspect they experience a twitch in their groins. For those who still believe that garbage about scaring the hell out of the enemy by making him keep his head down, let me point to those rugged Afghan freedom fighters who are giving Ivan fits — with WWII-pattern Enfield .303 rifles. Every time a Russian sticks his head out of an APC, there is a .303 bullet with his name on it. Firepower? No, thanks. The Afghans will be happy with another handful of .303 cartridges so they can go out and kill more Russians.

At Camp Perry the Army brass handed us a new problem. Seems they want bayonets again — the bayonet is a hot subject in some infantry-school concepts. I groaned. (My favorite use for the bayonet is to clean mud off my boots or as an emergency tent peg.) Miller, however, realized that we had to address the problem. His solution: a standard-length barrel. (I winced.)

When we got home, he went to work and a few days later showed me our new phase-two prototype with standard 21-inch barrel and M16 flash hider reamed and threaded to fit the muzzle. The phase-two gas-cylinder lock now has a bayonet lug on its left side. A standard M16 (M7) bayonet can be attached easily; no other change is necessary. With bayonet attached, the blade lies flat, ideal for slipping it between an enemy's ribs.

With our second prototype design, the soldier can now use standard 22mm rifle grenades without carrying an extra launcher: He just turns off the gas and fires. (Although our NATO friends in Europe rely on rifle grenades, we have replaced them with the M79, M203 and M72 LAW,

NEW M16A1

The recent decision by the U.S. military services to adopt a new version of the M16A1 rifle comes as no surprise. In 1980, NATO reluctantly adopted the 5.56mm as its new round. The standard 5.56mm round lacks sufficient range. So a heavy 5.56mm NATO round (XM777 or SS109) will be used. This round will increase bullet weight to nearly 70 grains as well as add a penetrator core, and it will require a faster-twist, 1-in-7-inch barrel. The new rifle will have a heavier barrel to aid control and holding. Therefore, the weapon will weigh an average of 7.5 pounds empty. After the XM or SS round is chosen, existing stocks of M16A1 rifles will have to be rebarreled. Somehow I feel that trying to convert the 5.56mm NATO round and M16 rifle into a long-range weapon is making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. — K.H.

LEFT: Already deadly profile of RDF rifle enhanced by slender, sinister horizontal-mount bayonet. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis UPPER RIGHT: Side by side, Hackathorn/Miller modified M1A with camouflage paint, H&K sight, cut-down stock and grenade with M16A1 and rifle grenade for scale. LOWER RIGHT: Barrel lengthened to meet mission requirements, second prototype RDF rifle bears distinctive side-mounted, horizontal-blade bayonet in perfect position for penetration. Photos: Ken Hackathorn

SOWS' EARS, MOUSE GUNS, WOODCHUCKS, AND DEERSLAYERS: A Defense of the 5.56mm

by Peter G. Kokalis

Enough is enough.

Hackathorn's hallucination on the proposed RDF rifle and Maj. Jack Chase's "Woodchuck" fantasy (see "Woodchuck Wars," SOF, June '82) represent the low ebb of a flood of stagnant thinking about military cartridges. Such repetitive, groundless attacks on the 5.56mm NATO cartridge from popular gun writers deserve a rebuttal since the military experts won't stoop to answer them.

It's fashionable for *gun writers* in the mass-circulation firearms periodicals to jump on board the anti-5.56mm band wagon. It somehow builds credentials to ridicule the efforts of a bunch of "scientific loonies," especially when they don't respond. We never hear from this band of ballisticians, program managers and requirements analysts because few, if any, read let alone write for the mass-circulation gun magazines. The irony then becomes that the small-arms technologists (who are most qualified to speak out on this subject) are not heard by the public while these *gun writers* (whose real qualifications rarely extend beyond the advanced hobbyist's realm of experience or the usual civilian-soldier's tour of duty) rant and rave unceasingly without regard for logic, fact or scientific method.

Let us examine the specious arguments of the species *gun writer* under the harsh, uncompromising light of logic on a rhetorical dissecting table.

Hackathorn in particular has a penchant for turning reality upside down. He glibly asserts that NATO has "reluctantly" adopted the 5.56mm. Acceptance of the 5.56mm has been far from reluctant. In fact, it was the 7.62x51mm cartridge that was shoved down NATO's throat in 1952. The new Belgian SS109 bullet, summarily dismissed by Hackathorn, can defeat the U.S. steel helmet at 1,100 meters — one hell of a "sow's ear," I'd say.

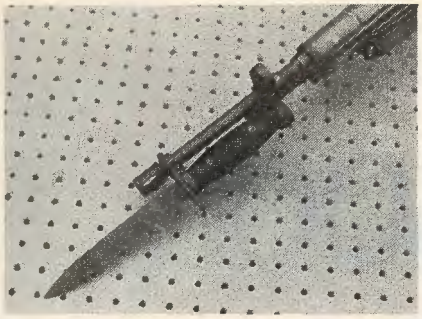
But the power freaks have been with us for a long time. They were around in the 1890s yelling that adoption of the puny caliber .30-40 Krag in place of the man-stopping .45-70 would inadequately arm the American soldier. They shouted loudly several years later when we went from the 220-grain .30-40 service bullet to the pipsqueak 150 and 170-grain caliber .30 projectiles for the Springfield rifle. They are in fact an intrinsic part of an essential American syndrome — the obsession to possess the largest and most powerful whatzit.

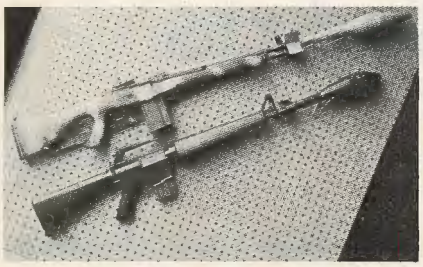
The proposed use of calibers under .30 for military use is not new. In 1894 the Mexican army tested a straight-pull design Mondragon rifle in caliber 5.2x68mm. The U.S. Navy's experiments with caliber .236 ammunition during the same time frame are well-documented. During the quest for our first semiautomatic battle rifle the U.S. Infantry Board, reporting on the test of the .276 Pedersen rifle, stated in 1928: "The casualty effect of the .276 caliber should be accepted as clearly sufficient to meet all requirements." That the .30-06 was eventually retained was almost entirely a consequence of economics, as huge stores of .30-06 ammunition remained from the war in Europe a decade before.

Concepts developed by the Germans in WWII are directly responsible for the subsequent evolution of military small-arms ammunition. By 1942 the Germans had concluded that battlefield targets were rarely engaged at distances beyond 400 meters and that the ability to deliver occasional short bursts of full-automatic fire was a desirable feature. The result was the 7.92mm Kurz cartridge and the world's first true assault rifle, the MP43/44.

Postwar development of intermediate-type cartridges continued, but the only real assault rifle caliber to be adopted was the 7.62x39mm ComBloc, as the United States forced adoption of the 7.62x51mm hybrid on the NATO countries. During the 1950s, extensive ammunition research programs in the United States — in particular Project SALVO — eventually resulted in the 5.56mm round.

The advantages of the 5.56mm are: 1) a lessening of physiological fatigue from recoil and sound; 2) shortening of the training time required to reach proficiency with the weapon; 3) improved accuracy and hit probability due to reduced recoil; 4) shorter and much lighter weapon designs; 5) ability of the





since the M16 is too anemic to launch rifle grenades with much range effect.)

The real secret to Miller's and my M14 RDF rifle conversion is its simplicity of modification and cost-effectiveness: recrown the muzzle and thread it for the H&K flash hider; replace the gas-cylinder lock and modify this lock for the new sight; replace the stock with an M16 pistol-grip design. I would also recommend using a 130-grain, 7.62mm NATO, low-recoil round with a velocity of around 2,450fps. This round would hit hard at 400 meters, penetrate body armor with ease, and give reduced recoil. Yes, I am talking about a Magnum AK round.

The XM14 conversion concept came because two individuals looked at the problem from the user's angle, not that of a design engineer or chairbound weapons expert. Miller and I used a minimum of materials, taking as many as we could get from the existing supply system. We couldn't cover every angle, but we did try to use common sense to find a direct, simple, inexpensive solution to the problem.

After we showed our RDF design to a few really sharp small-arms specialists, they all answered: "It makes good sense. It's practical. It's needed. It's cheap. Therefore, it will *never* go." Unfortunately, I know enough about arms procurement to be afraid their fear may be true. However, if I were in the Rapid Deployment Force headed for the Middle East, I'd choose the RDF M14 over the "mouse gun" any day.

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individual soldier to carry greater quantities of ammunition in the field; and 6) no small amount of savings in material costs.

Now the 5.56mm's detractors insist that this is all to no avail as the cartridge is inaccurate at the required ranges, an ineffective man-stopper and in any event designed in a vacuum without regard for the user's actual requirements.

Hackathorn's statement that the 5.56mm round is the "finest 75-meter cartridge in the world" is sarcastic nonsense. His use of only one uncontrolled example, the 300-meter rifle stage at the 1981 SOF Three-Gun Match, to demonstrate that one has no chance of hitting 300-meter targets with the 5.56mm is more than a little suspect. Extensive, controlled parameter testing over a long period of time has conclusively demonstrated that the M16 is more than adequate out to 300 meters. Beyond that we can employ snipers armed with special-purpose M14s and ART II scopes.

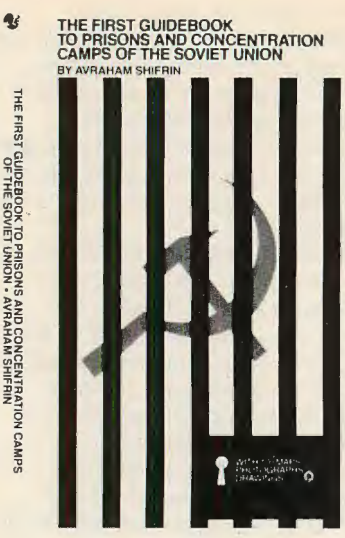
Effective killing power at fighting ranges is a complex topic, often difficult to evaluate. Factors such as the part of the body struck, the proximity of solid objects such as bone and the degree of the projectile's yaw are all important considerations. Test mediums, such as clay or gelatin, are of necessity homogeneous in order to yield comparative results. The human body is a heterogeneous object; nevertheless we have more than ample medical survey evidence from Vietnam to demonstrate that at 300 meters and less the 5.56mm bullet can break up in the target and cause very large wounds.

Its detractors depend largely on undocumented war stories and invalid comparisons to a menagerie of animals ranging from woodchucks to venison. Experiences with animals cannot be correlated with effects on human targets. The combat tales range from "my friend was hit with an M16 ricochet and he failed to notice it" (a spent .458 Magnum projectile might even fail to break the skin), to the more colorful "this VC was coming at me so I emptied the magazine in his chest, but he failed to go down." More often than not these latter stories are an understandable rationalization from a very frightened individual who panicked and scored not one hit. How much more face-saving it is afterwards to blame the weapon.

Do modern military small-arms technologists design weapons systems without regard for the user? Not hardly. The users themselves set the specifications, and the designers devote their careers to meeting these requirements. In the United States, military users formulate what is called a Mission Essential Need Statement, which in turn elicits a response by the developers. The process continues with a series of reviews in which the users cast the deciding vote. Occasionally, the developers do produce a design on their own initiative. However, if user interest is not forthcoming, as has been the case with the excellent Dover Devil .50-caliber machine gun, the proposal simply dies. These lengthy procedures are not required by good old boys like Hackathorn and Miller. They just sit around the cracker barrel and have "drizzles."

No country relies more heavily on direct user feedback than Israel, which has been at war for 40 years in the very desert that Hackathorn maintains will demonstrate the 5.56mm's total inadequacy. The Israeli army uses the Galil rifle in 5.56mm NATO. No less a personage than Israel Galili, his country's leading small-arms designer, has emphatically stated that the Israeli army has no interest whatever in a 7.62mm battle rifle. The South Africans, also engaged in a fierce struggle for survival, have recently switched from the 7.62mm to the R4 (Galil) in 5.56mm.

John Miller is an excellent and highly touted gunsmith, and deservedly so. But his "RDF" rifle is well-executed step backwards. Acknowledging that I am not one of Hackathorn's "really sharp small-arms specialists," since I disagree with his entire thesis, it remains my contention that the 7.62mm NATO caliber will have a continued, healthy existence in roles for which it has always been best suited: as a medium machine gun and long-range sniping cartridge.



GULAG GUIDEBOOK

SOF Tours Workers' Paradise

Bill Guthrie

THE FIRST GUIDEBOOK TO PRISONS AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS OF THE SOVIET UNION. By Avraham Schifrin. New York: Bantam Books. June 1982. 416 pp. 176 maps, photographs and drawings. $6.95. Review by William Guthrie.

THE Soviet Consulate stiffed me. The Soviet Embassy stiffed me.

Two different offices of the Russian news agency, TASS, stiffed me.

The bright, personable, young woman who answered the phone at the State Department's USSR Desk just giggled when I asked her if there would be any representatives of the Soviet government who would answer some non-hostile questions about this book.

Seriously, gentle reader, does this sound like a question you could not reasonably answer without getting yourself in trouble with the KGB:

Schifrin says it is legal to visit certain parts of every labor camp and prison in the Soviet Union; is that true? What trouble could occur if a foreign tourist visited a Soviet penal facility? America incarcerates a disproportionate number of blacks and hispanics; is there any comparable imbalance in the Soviet prison system, say, between Ural-Altaic or Sino-Tibetan-speaking peoples and Russian-speaking westerners?

Those are damned reasonable questions, especially considering that I was dealing with a bunch of godless communists and, working at SOF, I wasn't gaining any points by being nice to the Sovs. About as bad as I got was: According to Schifrin, the late Russian dictator Nikita Khrushchev said he was going to close all labor camps in the '50s. Why didn't that happen? What percentage of the Soviet population is held in penal facilities on any one day? Is it true that a lot of dangerous jobs, like nuclear submarine maintenance, uranium mining and refinement and the industrial production of asbestos, are done at Soviet labor camps?

Why won't the Soviet government even confess that it knows about Schifrin's **First Guidebook to the USSR**? The KGB may be a lot of things, but being ill-informed is not one of them. Wouldn't it seem reasonable that since this book has already been through a Swiss edition and is now being published in America that the Soviet government might at least deny Schifrin's damning charges?

The root of Russian silence about this book and its subject, the torture and enslavement of large part of the population of the USSR, may be the legendary Russian paranoia that every scrap of information may be of vital strategic importance: Did you know that one of the most desired objects a Western tourist can give a Soviet citizen is a map of his own country, because no maps printed in the USSR give true positions or true distances between cities (so enemy bombers can't use road-maps as guides to targets)? Irrational fear may be one cause for avoidance of any official notice of this book, but — having read it — it would be easy to guess that whatever replaces normal human "guilt" in a Soviet bureaucrat might cause him to want to forget he had ever heard of Avraham Schifrin.

This is not a particularly "enjoyable" book, and it is, generally, quite dry. The writings of Anne Frank, Henri Charriere and Alexander Solzhenitsyn evoke a more universal human response than **The First Guidebook** and are all certainly destined to fame beyond the time that the **Guidebook** will be known, but for *this* time Avraham Schifrin's work could be more important.

The original Russian title is *Putevoditel' po Lagyeryam, Tyur'mam i Psykhiatricheskim Tyur'mam v SSSR:* A Tourist Directory Through Camps, Prisons, and Psychiatric Prisons in the USSR. Part of the reason that the book in and of itself is so dry is that it is simply an annotated list of Russian correctional facilities. There are anecdotes of those who have been imprisoned and those who have visited prisons, but not enough to make this book the same kind of newsstand hit as *The Gulag Archipelago*. But it is important for us to understand that **The First Guidebook** is not trying to be anything like Solzhenitsyn's work, and that for many purposes, it is a better book than *Gulag*.

Solzhenitsyn's book is a literary lighthouse: a flashy warning against the hidden evil of totalitarian governments, but **The First Guidebook** is a small sun by which the curious and the dedicated can seek out the truth.

The First Guidebook gives an overwhelming amount of hard information for its size, and most of it is as useful as it is surprising:

"A large monument of Lenin located near the Finland Station and the *Finlyandskii vokzal* metro station marks the spot where the revolutionary leader gave his first speech in Russia following his return from the West in 1917. All tourists who visit Leningrad are therefore taken to observe this historic site. From here, the tour bus usually drives along *Arsenal'naya Quay*, passing a massive stone wall on the right. The guide will announce, 'This is a cardboard factory.' What he will neglect to say, however, is that the workers at the factory are also prisoners of the infamous *Kresty* Prison located behind the same wall. The official name and mailing address of the prison is *Sledstvennyi Izolyator 45/1.*"

Repeatedly Schifrin shows us the other side of what Intourist (the Russian tourist bureau) wants us to see.

We are shown the great public works of Russia, built with the sweat and blood of people enslaved for acts and words that we assume are the basic rights of man: the Baikal-Amur Railway, Krasnoyarsk logging industry, palatial KGB offices in remote Vorkuta, Volga-Don Canal, Intourist Hotel in Bukhara, cute carved bears and painted wooden bowls and spoons some buy so innocently in souvenir shops as "folk art," the Kuibyshev-Moscow pipeline on which the author worked as a prisoner and

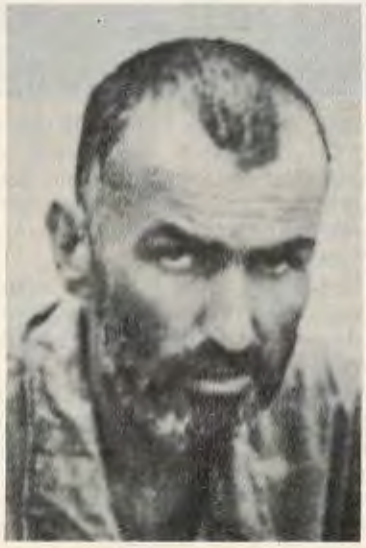
through which passes the oil some of our allies buy so eagerly ... the list is exhaustive. If half of what Schifrin says is true, an enormous part of the Russian gross national product must proceed directly from slave labor.

One of the questions the Russians could have answered if they had talked would have been: With such a large part of the economy dependent on nearly all-profit forced labor, doesn't the "normal" economy suffer from this unfair competition to the point that it can never develop either the labor force or the technical and administrative skills to achieve "business-as-usual" industry and begin the economic recovery of the Soviet Union? It's sort of a hostile question, but it does define the flaw at the heart of this system. The Soviets will never recover economically as long as theirs is a slave industry. The American South showed that well enough. It lost the war with the North because of simple incapacity to compete economically. Schifrin's book is a plea for the Western world to stop giving the external support the Russian forced-labor economy needs for existence.

What lifts this book above the rest of the genre of prison literature is that it is a detailed, forceful invitation for anyone in the world — including the Soviet government — to look for himself. This is not "Dragnet" and the names have not been changed to protect anyone. Mailing addresses are listed, superintendents are named, guards are pictured — and if that were not enough — the whole penal system is plotted on a large map of Russia; detailed maps are given of regions and cities, and for most prisons information is given on how to get there by public transportation.

Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* may be more emotionally engaging and better "literature," but Milton's idea of the greatest rhetoric being "truth unvarnished" may show why Schifrin has written a better book. Solzhenitsyn introduces us privately, through the back door, to a world of suffering and horror that is largely personal and almost entirely unsubstantiated, except by individual testimony of people convicted of crimes in their own land. Schifrin's book gives little to exercise our sentiments, because he wants us and the world to *know*, not feel, the world's biggest human-rights problem. **The First Guidebook to Prisons and Concentration Camps of the Soviet Union** is a much greater book than its sales will probably indicate, but I hope that *Soldier of Fortune* readers will do what they can to support Avraham Schifrin's brave and arduous attempt to expose Soviet tyranny. If you want a good Russian souvenir, buy this book, not a slave-carved toy.

ABOVE: Rebellious Ukrainians — who joined Germans rather than live under communist rule — short on rations but given extra portion of prisons and labor camps, each represented by dot. Courtesy Bantam Books
LEFT: Carter's Olympic embargo may have kept this bear's family home: Desperate for hard currency for foreign trade, Russians sell "folk art" made by prisoners in forced-labor camps. Photo: Bantam Books
BELOW: Avraham Schifrin: author in Russia (left) and Israel (right). Photo: Bantam Books



U.S. Engineer Mercs Make NVA Special Delivery

Text & Photos by John Park

A tank lumbered down the dusty road outside Kontum City on the morning of 2 May 1972. Although the M41 tank had been built in America, its occupants were North Vietnamese (NVA) who had captured it and were using it against U.S. and ARVN units falling back to Kontum.

That morning, Army Warrant Officer Carroll W. Lain "made history," according to the U.S. Army Missile Command (MICOM) at Redstone Arsenal, Ala., when he touched off one of six TOW (tube-launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided) missiles carried by his helicopter. The missile destroyed its target. Later in the morning, missiles reduced three other enemy tanks to rubble.

The Redstone "package" had arrived in Kontum.

MICOM credits Lain with being "the first American soldier to fire an American guided missile in combat." American soldiers had fired some French-developed ENTAC wire-guided missiles early in the war, but the TOW was the first American wire-guided missile to be used. Many other Americans would fire TOWs in the following weeks.

During May and June of 1972, the two TOW-firing helicopters (the only two in existence and still technically prototypes) fired 81 missiles in combat around Kontum, destroying 24 tanks, several armored personnel carriers, trucks, machine-gun positions, artillery pieces, bunkers, a rocket-launching site, an ammunition dump, a wooden bridge and various other point targets, for a total of 47 kills.

One of approximately 17 members of the TOW team (later to be designated the 1st Airborne TOW Team) was an Army civilian engineer, Hugh McInnish, from the TOW project office at Redstone Arsenal. Only 10 days before the tank engagements of 2 May, McInnish had traveled to Tan Son Nhut from Redstone with the two TOW choppers, missiles, men and equipment.

Almost immediately after arriving on 24 April 1972 in C-141s, McInnish and the TOW team began to prepare the helicopters for flight and to install the XM-26 (the airborne TOW) systems.

The TOW-support crew began cram courses to teach Army aviators to use the stabilized missile sight and its controls. The Army aviators learned quickly and, as a graduation exercise, fired two missiles each from the special choppers.

Original plans called for the TOW choppers to fight in the battle in progress at An Loc. These plans were changed on 28 April.

The team was ordered to head north, not south to the Delta. The destination would be Camp Holloway, just outside Pleiku in Vietnam's central highlands. The choppers left, followed by the rest of the crew and equipment in C-130s.

A major attack on Kontum was expected. The day the TOW team reached Vietnam, the NVA had overrun Tan Canh, northwest of Kontum, and heavy fighting was reported at firebases at the northern and western approaches to the provincial capital.

In addition to conventional infantry assaults, the NVA was deploying Soviet armor — T-54 medium tanks and PT-76 amphibious tanks.

The battle saw the first combat firing by the TOW-armed helicopters which were actually prototypes (hence the "X" prefix in XM26) tested at Redstone Arsenal from 1966 to 1968 and later demonstrated for possible sale in Germany.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Park has been a reporter with several newspapers in northern Alabama and a contributor to the Associated Press and other wire services. Park's military service included a tour of duty with the 4th Infantry Division at Camp Enari in Pleiku, RVN. He was also assigned with Redstone Arsenal Munitions Center and School in Huntsville, Ala. Park holds a B.A. degree in English literature and is now trying his hand at freelance writing.

PACKAGE TO KONTUM

Early version of UH-1B helicopter firing TOW missile (extreme left). Note single launch tube. Later models used three-tube launcher on each side.

After the European demonstration, the Hueys had returned to the U.S. where most of the weaponry was removed and stored. Then the choppers began another series of tests at Ft. Lewis, Wash.

TOW was not used in Vietnam then simply because of the absence of North Vietnamese armor. In fact, according to Gen. William C. Westmoreland's book, *A Soldier Reports,* before the 1972 Easter offensive, enemy armor had been reported only on two occasions — at the Lang Vei Special Forces camp in 1968 during the siege of Khe Sanh (see "Armor in the Wire," SOF, November '79) and at Ben Het in Kontum Province the following year.

Another unusual feature of the mission was the speed of deployment. From the moment Hugh McInnish at Redstone was notified on 12 April 1972 that the Department of the Army wanted to "send to another location the same 'package' we sent to Germany last year" to the time the TOW arrived at Ton Son Nhut Airbase, only 10 days passed. McInnish said later that when the recreation of the Germany demonstration was mentioned "at another location," he was offered "a real target."

Yet another unusual feature of the mission was the use of civilian Army employees, like McInnish, in the deployment and as technical advisers in combat. The reason was simple — civilians, having tested the prototype, knew how it worked. No Army personnel had ever fired a TOW from a helicopter.

The TOW team began its mission with the tank kills on 2 May 1972.

McInnish described a mission in which a TOW chopper spotted a sus-

picious tree-covered island that had suddenly appeared overnight in a shallow river near Kontum. A missile launched from the chopper blew away the brush, uncovering a Soviet-made T-54 medium tank. Subsequent missiles destroyed the newly made "island."

The anticipated attack on the provincial capital of Kontum finally occurred on the morning of 26 May. McInnish remembers that word soon spread that the North Vietnamese infantry, supported by numerous tanks, had penetrated the defenses and was moving into the city.

Tactical air strikes pounded the enemy within a radius of a mile outside the city, but closer support was hampered because the U.S. and ARVN defenders, engaging in fierce house-to-house fighting, were too close to the NVA.

At 0640 hours, the two TOW helicopters went into action and, by late morning, had flown three sorties each, launched 21 missiles, and destroyed nine tanks — all the tanks that had been located. The following day a chopper located two T-54s on a road north of Kontum and "terminated" both.

In addition to the XM26 airborne TOW, the newly trained TOW teams on the ground, deployed about the same time as the airborne TOW, combed the area, covering likely points for armor attacks. The ground-based system, firing from a tripod or from mobile launchers in jeeps, killed 12 tanks by the end of June, including nine in a single battle near Fire Base Nancy, northwest of Hue on 25 June. Near the end of the month, tank-helicopter engagements became less frequent. The city of Kontum held.

It was about this time that McInnish first entered Kontum — primarily to view the knocked-out T-54s. In photos made by McInnish the tanks resemble a junk yard.

"The inside of the tank looked like the inside of an incinerator," McInnish said. "There was nothing left but trash and scorched metal." The TOW's shaped-charge warhead had apparently ignited fuel and ammunition. The burned-out tank was not all McInnish saw that day. He saw the rubble that had once been the provincial capital — a sight he swears he'll never forget.

"Shrapnel lay on the ground like acorns. Belts of machine-gun ammo lay everywhere. And there were lots of bones. At one spot, all that remained of what used to be an NVA soldier was a small plastic bag containing a rice ration — the body was gone.

"I don't think there was a square inch in the entire area that wasn't marked by a hit from a bullet, bomb or fragment," McInnish said.

After almost two months of heavy fighting, much of Kontum City was reduced to rubble.

McInnish stands beside "scoreboard" on side of TOW-firing UH-1B "Huey" outside Kontum City in 1972 after weeks of helicopter-tank engagements.

Remarkably, the TOW team suffered no casualties during the heavy helicopter-tank engagements. "We did take quite a bit of sporadic mortar and rocket fire but nothing real close. One night I thought for a moment we'd taken a direct hit. Windows rattled, plaster cracked and the building shook violently, but it turned out to be the result of a sapper who blew an ammo dump. It was five miles away," McInnish said.

A discussion of the use of the TOW by Brigadier Gen. William J. Maddox, director of Army aviation, at the Pentagon on 27 June 1972 included these comments:

"The Army attack

Continued on page 78

TOW EPILOGUE

As an epilogue to the TOW mission to Kontum, Hugh McInnish tells this story:

Circumstances surrounding the use of the TOW missile in the central highlands, for security reasons were kept partially under wraps for about a year, after which time the story of the missile's deployment and use appeared in an Army publication.

Shortly after its publication, McInnish received a letter from a man he'd never met. The letter's author identified himself as an Army major, assigned to the Pleiku-Kontum area in May and June of 1972. The officer briefly described how he had been trapped by fire from three NVA tanks that were rapidly approaching his position, until he finally made radio contact with air support which turned out to be one of the TOW gunships. It destroyed the three attacking tanks.

In the letter, the writer said that he never really knew the circumstances surrounding the air support that he had received until he read the Army publication. He had not known how, or to whom, he could express his personal appreciation.

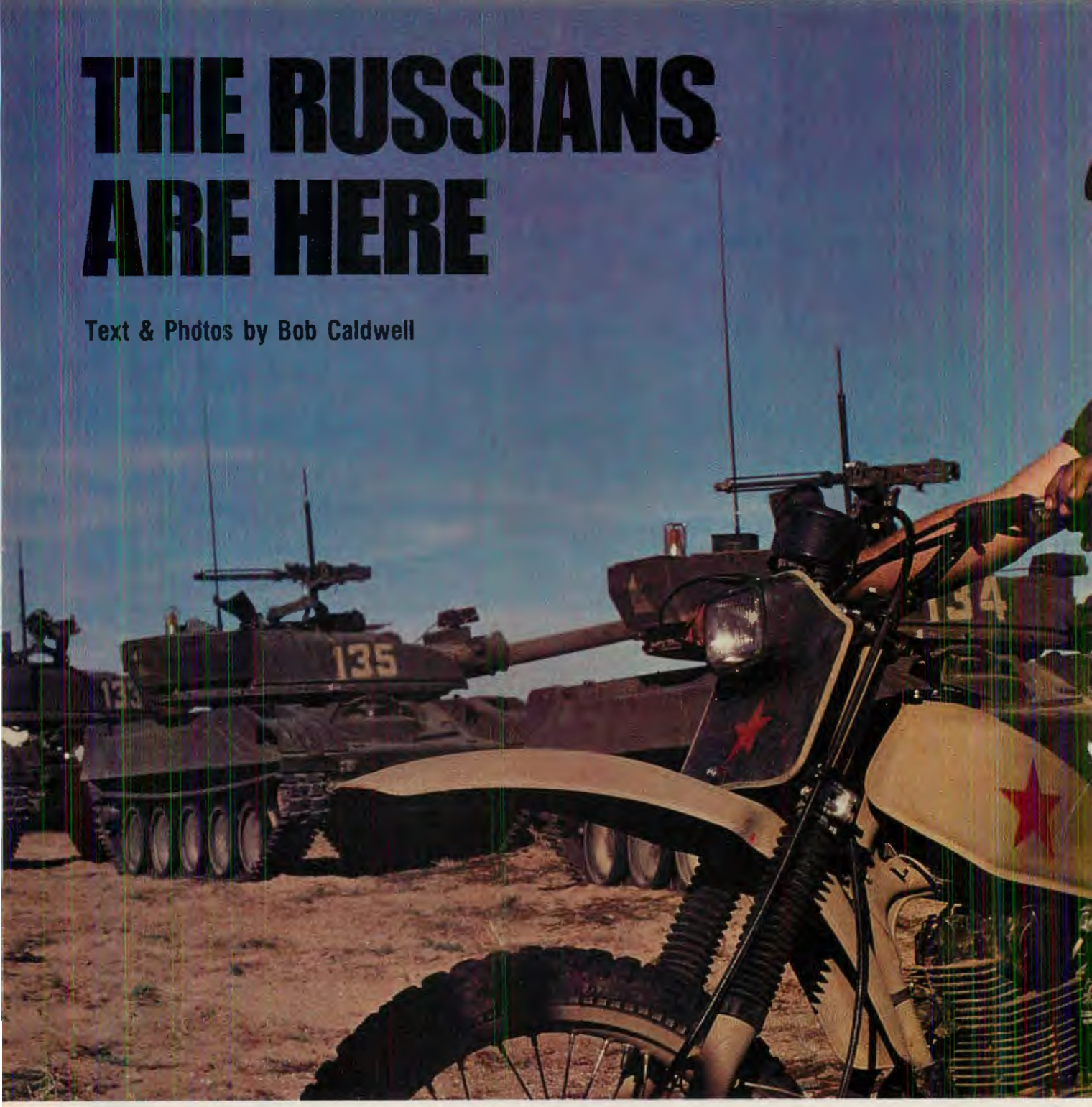
It was a simple letter of thanks.

After McInnish related the incident, he looked at the faded document for a while without speaking.

— J.P.

THE RUSSIANS ARE HERE

Text & Photos by Bob Caldwell



New-Age Electronics War Games Make NATO Nightmare Come True

"KNOW your enemy," has been sound military advice since the dawn of history. Accordingly, the U.S. Army is now pitting its stateside combat units against a "Soviet" motorized rifle regiment that looks, thinks, and fights like the real thing. Better yet, these war-game exercises conducted at the National Training Center in the Mojave Desert at Fort Irwin, Calif., provide what must be the closest simulation of combat short of real bullets and real blood.

The "Russians" in this case are members of a 1,000-man unit equipped with Soviet-style tanks, armored personnel carriers and self-propelled artillery. The "32nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment" was specially trained last year to maneuver and fight in strict accordance with known Soviet doctrine, and in units approximating

ABOVE: Scout/messenger on desert-painted Honda impersonates Soviet battlefield motorcyclist. LEFT: VISMOD Sheridan becomes Soviet BMP APC with Sagger missile launcher and simulated 73mm cannon.

Soviet tables of organization and equipment (TO&Es) for tank, motorized rifle, and artillery battalions.

To enhance realism, the regiment comes complete with several actual Soviet armored vehicles — MT-LB armored personnel carriers. A dozen more Soviet armored fighting vehicles, including a T-62 tank, more MT-LBs, and a GAZ ½-ton field car sit in the regiment's armor park. Maj. Michael Williams, the Ft. Irwin public affairs officer (PAO), won't talk about how or where the Army acquired its Soviet armor, but Israel and Egypt have to be considered obvious sources.

The bulk of 32nd Guards' armor, however, consists of M551 Sheridan cavalry/reconnaissance tanks ingeniously modified to simulate Soviet T-72 tanks, BMP infantry combat vehicles, ZSU-23/4 self-propelled anti-aircraft guns, and 122mm M-1974 self-propelled howitzers. Modified M-880 Dodge pickup trucks double for Soviet BRDM armored reconnaissance/anti-tank vehicles.

The visual effect of these modifications is impressive, especially at a distance. As one 32nd Guards officer put it, "We look pretty good to anybody watching us deploy at 500 meters." That was probably an understatement. Viewed from the front in assault formation, the 32nd Guards regiment looks like a NATO nightmare come true.

The regiment, commonly referred to as OPFOR (for Opposing Forces), was trained by a team from the Red Thrust detachment at Ft. Hood. Red Thrust is the Army's program to familiarize

Current USSR-issue GAZ ½-ton field car in Russian non-camouflage sand-yellow supplies OPFOR mechanized infantry.

ABOVE: Amphibious, wheeled Russian APC designated BTR-60PB brandishes coaxial-mount 7.62mm PKT and heavy 14.5 KPV machine guns. LEFT: Tanker sleeps on Russian T-72, latest Warsaw Pact main battle tank. LOWER LEFT: APC crewman checks and performs light maintenance on M113 after tank "battle." LOWER RIGHT: Between battles "Red" tank crewmen pose next to T-72. Wearing replica Russian tanker berets, crewmen perform routine field maintenance.

combat units with Soviet tactical doctrine and organization, and to assist in establishing realistic OPFORs.

But the Soviet-style motorized rifle regiment is only part of the unique training experience offered in the California desert northeast of Barstow.

The real innovation is something called MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System). Simply put, it eliminates the "bang, bang, you're dead" syndrome of all past war games. Troops and vehicles zapped in Ft. Irwin's war games don't need an umpire to relay the bad news. Just how this feat is accomplished is a marvel of electronic wizardry.

Every soldier and every vehicle fighting it out on the National Training Center's Rhode Island-sized expanse of desert is equipped with laser sensors that register hits and near misses from the laser-equipped weapons carried by both sides.

Weapons modified to date to fire laser beams include the M16A1 rifle, M60 machine gun, Dragon anti-tank missile, LAW anti-tank rocket, M2 machine gun, TOW anti-tank missile, M85 machine gun, 105mm tank cannon, and the 7.62mm coaxial machine gun.

To signal kills, an electronic box the size of a cigarette pack is attached to the back of each soldier's helmet. When any of the button-sized sensors on his helmet and web gear are struck by a laser beam, the electronic box emits a steady buzz or squeal that can only be silenced by removing a key from the laser firing device on his M16.

A Department of the Army circular on MILES

LEFT: Heavy-weapons crew warm with coffee and sun in desert gully. Note red-lensed lights to prevent night detection and simulated-hit/miss sensors on band around helmets. BELOW: Concertina-wired armor park with Soviet T-62, MTLB APC in background. BOTTOM: Ugly as the real thing, VISMOD Sheridan/BMP-1 mechanized infantry combat vehicle threateningly flaunts mock-ups of Sagger anti-tank missile and smooth-bore 73mm gun. Tube bundle behind Sagger is Hoffman simulator.

describes the sequence as follows:

1. Soldier presses trigger, firing blank cartridge.
2. Detector senses kill or near miss.
3. Buzzer gives continuous tone for kill.
4. Weapon key from "killed" M16 transmitter shuts off buzzer and deactivates M16 rifle.
5. Controller (umpire) key reactivates M16 rifle and restores basic ammunition load.

That is the book description. In the field, MILES imposes a measure of the uncertainty, stress and finality of combat. Example: The morning after a spectacular night tank battle, a young trooper of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) was driving your SOF correspondent across a seemingly empty desert to brigade headquarters in a jeep. Suddenly, his helmet box squealed.

"Sniper, I'm dead," he said. It sent a chill through us both.

Tanks and other armored vehicles also carry laser sensors strapped to turrets and vehicle sides. These sensors record only hits from weapons — tank cannon or missiles, for example — capable of knocking out armor. A hit triggers a loud buzzer and activates a strobe light

fixed to the top of the vehicle. At the end of the aforementioned night tank battle, the desert floor was a sea of flashing strobe lights and silenced dark hulks. Future tank battles, like those during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, are going to be very lethal affairs indeed.

Artillery fire in the National Training Center exercises is conducted via radio. Battery commanders simulate fire at targets designated by forward observers. The target grid coordinates or grid squares are then relayed to observer/umpires attached to the unit under fire. The battery commander also indicates the number and type of incoming rounds. The observers toss artillery simulators and consult probability tables to determine casualties. The indicated number of troops and vehicles are then "killed" by the observer umpires who carry laser firing devices set for small arms, tank cannon, or anti-tank guided missiles.

To complicate the exercises and add realism, battles also feature electronic jamming, occasional resorts to simulated chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, plus direct air support missions flown out of Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada.

By the end of 1982, the NTC battlefield will be electronically linked to a computerized command center that will permit the colonels and generals to monitor their units in action and to see clearly how and why things went wrong. Strategically located television monitors and roving camera teams will even permit videotape replays of the action within hours of the end of each engagement.

No other army in the world has anything like the National Training Center simulation and the Pentagon obviously believes it is worth every penny of the $110 million per year being spent on these war games.

By 1984, when the NTC program is scheduled to be operating at full capacity, 42 armored and mechanized infantry battalions plus 21 brigade headquarters and attached support units will cycle through Ft. Irwin each year.

What SOF saw on 20 and 21 February is a sample of what they can expect.

The Ft. Irwin Military Reservation was selected as the NTC site because it is the only military base in the continental United States large enough to permit multi-battalion armor battles *and* live firing of every conventional weapon in the Army inventory in three directions.

Most of the NTC is high desert country broken by arid mountains and lava rock outcroppings. Level, featureless basins and rolling sand hills provide ideal tank ground. Rainfall averages less than two inches per year, and temperatures range from 110 degrees on summer days to sub-freezing winter nights. Depending on the time of year, stiff winds and blowing sand are constant irritants. The reservation's northern boundary is only 10 miles from Death Valley.

Excepting its garrison and visiting troops in training, the NTC is populated exclusively by coyotes, snakes, lizards, ground squirrels and an assortment of crawling and flying bugs only an entomologist could love.

A "brigade slice" of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) had flown into nearby Norton Air Force Base from Ft. Polk, La., on 17 February. Dubbed the Blue Force, the 5th Mech. contingent included the 3rd Bn./11th Inf. (Mech.), the 3rd Bn./70th Armor, 2nd Brigade headquarters, and all brigade support troops including artillery, medical, signals, military intelligence, military police, chemical, combat engineers, and supply.

Bussed to Ft. Irwin, the 5th Mech. picked up its "pre-positioned" tanks, APCs, trucks, and other vehicles and heavy equipment just as it would if flown to Europe to reinforce NATO.

Once in the field, the Blue Force was quickly engaged by the attacking OPFOR, the elite 32nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment. At noon on 20 February, the situation was this:

The two 5th Mech. line battalions were holding a pass known as "the plug" and the adjacent ridgelines on either side. The larger, eastern ridge was commonly known as "the whale" after its humpbacked shape.

An armored assault that morning by the 32nd Guards' two motorized infantry battalions and one tank battalion had been stopped cold. The lead companies of T-72s and BMPs had been shot to pieces. Losses of up to 95 percent — mostly to highly accurate fire from the 5th Mech's M60A1 tanks — had been inflicted on the 32nd Guards' lead assault elements. Staff officers at 32nd Guards headquarters were calling the 5th Mech., "the best we've seen."

Reconnaissance and planning were underway for a new effort by the 32nd Guards (since strengthened by "replacement" of its losses in men and vehicles) to seize the whale and break through the plug. This time, the attack would go in at night.

The first plan called for a surprise strike under cover of darkness by a single motorized rifle battalion advancing along two axes converging on the whale. But the heavy losses of the morning and a fuller appreciation of the strength of the Blue Force's defensive positions dictated a change in strategy.

The revised orders called for an all-out assault by the entire

Awaiting action, Soviet T-72 shows smooth-bore, gas-extracted 125mm gun surmounted by Hoffman simulator capable of laying smoke, imitating cannon fire in exercises.

regiment aimed only at overrunning the whale. A dismounted infantry platoon would be sent forward first to clear and mark lanes through the whale's protective minefield. Meanwhile, a diversionary flanking attack staged by a mixed company of T-72s and BMPs would attempt to draw some defenders off the whale.

The 32nd Guards' main force of three battalions echeloned in successive waves would move off the line of departure at 2400 hours. Massed Soviet artillery would pound the whale, and the regiment's 18 self-propelled 122mm guns would provide direct fire on the objective at 1,000 meters' range as the T-72s and BMPs assaulted: The archetypal Russian steamroller, little changed in concept since the 1944-45 period when it ground the Wehrmacht to bits. The 5th Mech., good as it was, was deemed to have little chance of holding.

As dusk fell on Blue Force headquarters at the 2nd Brigade's tactical operations center (TOC), 5th Mech. staff officers were confident they had done everything possible to prepare for the assault their intelligence had predicted. Long-range recon patrols dug in and well camouflaged on peaks far forward of the whale were sending in a steady stream of reports on the Soviet armor moving below. Screens of tanks and M113 APCs had been thrown out to cushion the Soviet attack, identify its approach axis, and inflict as many casualties as possible.

All defensive artillery fire had been plotted. Extensive minefields covering the whale and the plug had been laid and combat engineers had bulldozed a three-meter-wide anti-tank ditch designed to hold the Soviet attack for up to an hour while defensive fire chopped up the assault force. All roads leading to the TOC and the brigade trains were secured. Should a breakthrough occur, the support units were prepared to move on short notice.

The final good omen for the night was the fact that the usual Soviet electronic jamming was having little success in disrupting the 5th Mech.'s radio communications.

Thanks to Capt. Douglas Sams, the 2nd Brigade's PAO, SOF would have the desert equivalent of a ringside seat for the coming battle. By 2100 hours, our two-jeep, six-member party had arrived at a point about 1,500 meters behind the plug and the whale. We crawled into sleeping bags for a few hours' rest on the desert floor before the action began.

About 2300 hours, flares began lighting up the sky over the whale. Before long, the deep, slow staccato of .50-caliber machine-gun fire could be heard. More flares and more bursts from the .50s. Then, the distant roar of tank engines as the 5th Mech. began what looked like the movement of reserves toward the plug.

As midnight passed, it was apparent that the struggle for the whale had begun in earnest. The flare-illuminated horizon was nearly obscured in dust clouds churned up by the moving armor of both sides. Firing was now almost continuous. And the first strobe lights signalling knocked-out tanks and APCs could be seen through the thickening haze of dust.

For the tankers and APC-mounted infantry, this was armored warfare in the classic style — El Alamein updated, and made far more lethal, by

Four decades of Soviet armor: sand-yellow, boxy T-34/85, European dull-green-finish T-55 and T-62, all in use but in different stages of obsolescence.

decades of technological innovation.

For others, it was a reminder that "those who serve also stand and wait." Dug into the side of a sand hill, a camouflaged M113 mounting the Vulcan anti-aircraft Gatling gun stood silent and useless. MILES hasn't yet been fitted to Vulcans and, in any case, there were no OPFOR aircraft or helicopter gunships to shoot at. The M113 crew stood around, cold and bored.

"Shit, man, we might as well be back at Ft. Bliss," muttered one trooper.

Further to the rear, an M113-mounted weapons platoon equipped with 81mm mortars answered repeated calls for fire support from the hard-pressed Blue Force battalions clinging to the whale.

From this vantage point, the age-old "fog of battle" took on new meaning. The flares, firing and constant roar of tanks moving on the desert floor were providing a spectacular sound and light show. But trying to figure out who was winning entailed mostly guesswork.

Shortly after 0200, the volume of fire diminished sharply. More and more armor began moving across the flat basin that stretched back from the whale. Popping parachute flares revealed M60 tanks and M113 APCs; but was the Blue Force retreating or merely shifting mobile reserves to shore up the threatened whale?

Within minutes, the 5th Mech. armor was caught in a storm of Soviet artillery fire augmented by BMPs firing their 73mm guns from atop the whale. Strobe lights flashed on all across the basin. Soon, only a few vehicles were still moving. Then they too sprouted strobe lights and, suddenly, it was all over.

For perhaps an hour, the 5th Mech.'s surviving armor could be heard withdrawing. By 0330, the desert was once again silent and dark.

After-action reports made clear what had happened. The Soviet diversionary attack had succeeded in drawing significant Blue Forces off the whale, and out of the subsequent main battle. Soviet infantry had cleared lanes through the mine fields and the anti-tank ditch had been breached in something like 10 minutes rather than the hour originally estimated by Blue Force headquarters.

The assault on the whale, massively supported by artillery fire, had carried the objective at 0200. Retreating 5th Mech. armor, caught in the open in the basin behind the whale, was shattered by artillery, T-72 and BMP fire. Whole grid squares were saturated with direct and indirect Soviet fire. The plucky, lucky 5th Mech. had been flattened by the Soviet steamroller. Losses: roughly 20 percent for the 32nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment and 50 percent for the routed 5th Mech.

Reporters aren't permitted to sit in on the formal after-action critiques because the Army wants to encourage no-holds-barred analysis and criticism. Then, too, what colonel who led his unit to disaster wants to read the messy details in a magazine like SOF?

But it's obvious that the units going up against the 32nd Guards are learning some valuable lessons. The three brigades that preceded the 5th Mech. units at NTC were roughly handled by the OPFOR. Soviet assault tactics are effective, and the use of huge artillery concentrations often proves devastating.

Soviet artillery doctrine stresses shock and saturation rather than pinpoint accuracy. When the 32nd Guards calls on its (fictitious) regimental artillery group of up to six tube and rocket battalions, the designated target is frequently an entire grid square of 1,000 meters per side.

Soviet assault doctrine anticipates heavy losses, which is why attacks are typically echeloned in depth. Companies, battalions, regiments and entire divisions are regarded as expendable so long as offensive momentum is maintained. The Soviets also place minimal reliance on radio communications that might be jammed. Tank units, for example, use flag signals until enemy fire forces them to button up. Even then, attacking units usually stay off the air so frequencies are open to receive orders.

The NTC's OPFOR also strives to provide the little touches of realism that enhance training for the Blue Forces during each three-week cycle. From time to time, a 32nd Guards trooper carrying such documents as a Soviet army identity booklet and membership card for the Communist Party's Komsomol youth league is left on the battlefield to be picked up, processed, and interrogated as a prisoner of war.

Some 5th Mech. troopers proved slow to take the hint. Designated POWs had to be sent out on three successive occasions before Ft. Polk's finest stopped shooting their prisoners. Dead men tell no lies, but neither do they reveal their unit's strength, position, equipment, mission or morale.

On balance, however, it must be said that at least some of the despair over the fiber of the volunteer Army is misplaced. Most of the troops that SOF met in the desert would be a credit to any army.

As one young mortarman in B Co., 3/11 Inf., put it, "We're the best." Take that, Ivan!

BUSH MASTER

Sharp Edges from the Veld

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

TED Whitfield makes knives — a dozen custom-made blades each year. They are rare beauties that make use of the lore of Africa's primeval bush in which this ascetic man has lived all his life.

The bush provides the material which he uses to mould his creations: ivory, ebony, tambuti, Rhodesian team, the horn of the Cape buffalo and, occasionally, warthog tusk. The single alien element he uses is steel, and by the time he's finished, his knife projects a basic, almost atavistic usefulness.

Whitfield is a man of the bush who provides an item *for* the bush. His craftsmanship is in such demand that you'll probably have to wait five years for one of his blades. He has recently been discovered by American custom-knife collectors.

Whitfield's knives are not expensive. He makes them for his own pleasure. Money is a secondary consideration. A year ago, his average blade fetched a couple of hundred dollars. Now — because of demand and the time factor — he'll probably charge two to three times that, nowhere near the thousands demanded by Loveless, Lile or Lake for some of their better custom-made productions. It's interesting that, although he prefers the wild and is little influenced by ongoing trends, his quality of execution compares favorably with many of the productions put out by his competition; design, grindwork and finish are world class.

What is surprising is that 46-year-old Ted Whitfield has been producing custom-made hunting knives for less than a decade (he prefers them to fighters because there is more likelihood that they will be *used).* In this time he has devoted only the hours available each evening after his return to camp to work on his blades; despite this limited *time he* has achieved near-perfection.

Ted Whitfield, a full-time senior game warden attached to Sartara Camp, is a lean, sinewy man with the eyes of an African red eagle. Sartara Camp is one of the points in the central region of the Kruger Park known for its lions and huge herds of plains game, including wildebeest, zebra, impala and some of the finest kudu bulls on the continent. His superiors in South Africa's Game Department allow Whitfield to make only a dozen knives each year, and he rarely fills his quota — one of the reasons why a blade from Whitfield rates among the rarest of contemporary custom-made cutlery.

Whitfield, who is dedicated to the bush, admits that the wilds are as much a part of his life as the office or the workbench is to most other people. He candidly declares that even if he were able to go into full-time knife-making production, he wouldn't. In a quiet, soft-spoken voice, he explained to me that it would be foolish to swap the expansive African *veld* for the factory floor. Cash is less important than peace of mind to him.

"I'm just not that sort of person," he said gently.

This Man Of The Bush Makes Knives For The Bush

One must handle a few of Whitfield's blades in order to appreciate the perfection of his workmanship. Since much of his work is done piecemeal (usually in the evening or on Sundays), it is astonishing that he manages such a fine balance between handle and blade. Finishes, I found, were exceptional on some of the larger weapons, especially on the beautiful, upswept lines of the hunter with ivory and buffalo-horn scales.

Originally, Ted Whitfield made all his knives on an emery-wheel powered by a tiny battery-operated electrical motor — there was no other electricity in his corner of the bush. All the blades had to be finished with fine-grit sandpaper. As he explains: "It was a nightmare, and it took days to achieve *any* kind of finish."

Now that he has moved to Sartara Camp, he has electricity "on tap" and has adapted all his equipment to the new voltage. Much of his machinery is improvised; some of it is obviously aging hand-me-down.

His workshop is a tiny tin-roofed shack at the end of his garden; in summer temperature can go up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, making work in the close confines uncomfortable.

In steels, he prefers to use 440 C — particularly on knives and lockblade folders — which he hardens to about 55 Rockwell. Generally, because of its availability in South Africa, he sticks to high carbon 01 and sometimes D2. Since 01 rusts if not properly cared for, he chromes the blade — but as he points out, "The edge is not chromed and that can dull quickly from rust if not treated properly."

This man, who prefers conservation to hunting, carries a folder he made. He told me why:

"I used to carry a Puma. But after years of use it was pretty well worn out. I decided to get another. The way I remember it, that make of factory knife should have cost about $12. When I priced one in town, I found that any kind of replacement would cost me more than $40."

So, he made one instead. By all accounts, it still sees regular service and looks good. He wears it in a pouch on his belt; it has a four-inch blade and a handle decorated with Whitfield's customary ivory inlay. Overall, the knife measures almost eight inches when fully extended.

This knife — like others worn by African game rangers — is used for many purposes, including dispatching an injured buffalo or an old, wounded, dying kudu bull which the ranger has found on his patrol.

For heavier work, such as butchering and skinning parts off an elephant (killed by poachers or dead of natural causes), he prefers one of his big hunters: "You need a certain amount of purchase to get *under* the skin and then lever upwards. Nothing else will do," he explained in characteristically serious tones.

His background is as interesting as his environment, and he has crammed much into a few decades of adulthood. Ted Whitfield has lived all his life in the Eastern Transvaal, not far from the Mozambique border. He shot his first wildebeest when he was 8, but by the time he was 14 he had recovered from what he terms, laconically, as "the shooting itch."

During most of his childhood, Whitfield's father worked in the gold mines at nearby Pilgrim's Rest. In those days, the outdoorsman recalls, the bush he now works in was "fever country"; roads were bad and fences scarce. "But I loved it," he admitted.

ABOVE: One of Whitfield's finest productions — his big fighter, contrasted here with leopard skull. Handle is African ebony. RIGHT: This magnificent hunter has ivory and buffalo-horn scales — a collector-class rarity. Its steel is 440 C stainless. BELOW: Ted Whitfield works in his tiny shop at Sartara. He produces only a dozen knives a year. Demand has created a waiting list already two years' long. His average knife costs only $200.

His mother pushed him through school, though he had other ideas from the start, including one venture in which he was determined to prospect for diamonds with the Williamson group in what was then still known as Tanganyika. But "Ma" prevailed and young Whitfield completed an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic, "because I reckoned if I was going to spend my life in the bush I might as well learn all there was to know about the vehicles in which I would move about."

Although Whitfield has worked in government game parks for most of his life, he did spend six years as a ranger in the Timbavati Game Reserve, whose rare albino lions were in the news a few years ago. During his tenure in Kruger Park, he has been stationed at six outposts; he prefers Sartara. "It's where much of the plains game congregates (high-density area) and is beautiful throughout the year — even in winter when it doesn't rain."

The park supplies much of his decorative material — except ivory, which he obtains privately from a contact near the Angolan border in South West Africa. For handles he prefers natural woods, such as those found in the Eastern Transvaal. His best, he says, are mopani (a warm, red, dark color), black ebony and the deep browns of ***hardekool*** or leadwood. Wild olive, he admits, is popular, but he does not find it suitable for the kind of work in which his blades will be employed. Whitfield also uses buffalo horn and achieves an incredibly beautiful black sheen, particularly on his folders. He tried hippo teeth once or twice which, he says, make a finer ivory than elephant tusk. By and large, he does not consider ivory good handle material. "It's impractical," he said. "It cracks when it gets wet."

It's interesting that, among other duties, Ted Whitfield now handles all reloading for Kruger Park hunters during the culling season. Using standard MR2 powder, he loads 69 grains of powder with a 500-grain bullet for .458 caliber and 79 grains of MR4 with a 300-grain bullet for .375 Magnum. For you Americans, MR2 powder (South African-made) would be equivalent to DuPont's IMR 3031 powder; MR4 would rate with IMR 4350. (Though most hunters prefer to use a larger gun on elephant or buffalo, quite a few hunters in the park opt for .375 Magnum for these beasts.)

Ted Whitfield is an unusual man who makes exceptional knives. I am hoping to receive my ivory and buffalo-horn scaled hunter by 1985. I know it will be worth the wait.

SAILORS OF FORTUNE

Part 1: Merchant Marines Sail Seven Seas of Adventure

by William P. Mote

IN order to tell what the merchant marine is, it is necessary first to say what it isn't: It is neither merchants nor marines, but is the seamen and ships of private and government-owned shipping companies, worldwide, as well as those of the fishing and offshore oil industries. Shipping on inland rivers and lakes is also a part of the merchant marine.

The merchant marine can offer either full-time careers or short-term employment on a variety of types of vessels and voyages under a number of flags. Furthermore, there is no problem of citizenship while working under foreign flags, and Americans are usually welcome.

While the rank structure is quasi-naval, discipline is much more relaxed. Pay is much higher than in the Navy — but when one considers the responsibilities this is understandable. A Navy tanker requires some 250 officers and crew. A civilian tanker runs with a crew of about 30. It takes more men on the bow of a missile cruiser to drop the anchor than there are in the entire deck department of a super-tanker!

One similarity of the merchant marine to the world of the mercenary is the problem of recruitment. I will deal with this in depth next month. Although recruitment itself is a problem, once in, advancement is unlimited and depends only on the ambition of the men and women involved. Probably almost all of today's ship masters were on the wrong end of a chipping hammer at some point in their careers.

Pay is excellent, especially when one considers that room and board are part of the job and free medical attention is guaranteed by the Public Health Service.

I know of no other line of work where a dishwasher can make more than $1,000 a month, plus room and board, plus time ashore in interesting foreign ports. The pay scales go up with rank. Senior officers such as captains or chief engineers can earn more than $50,000 a year. For six-months' work and six-months' leave, pay of that kind is worth working toward. The rates are lower, of course, under foreign flags. The advantage there, however, is that often no tax is withheld nor earnings reported.

There are several sea-going unions in the United States and in most Western nations. It is not common to find unions on so-called "flag of convenience" ships. Union shipping is for the individual who is willing to sacrifice some freedom of choice for stability of employment. Free-lancing, especially on ships of both foreign registry and ownership, is where the real professional adventurer can make his mark.

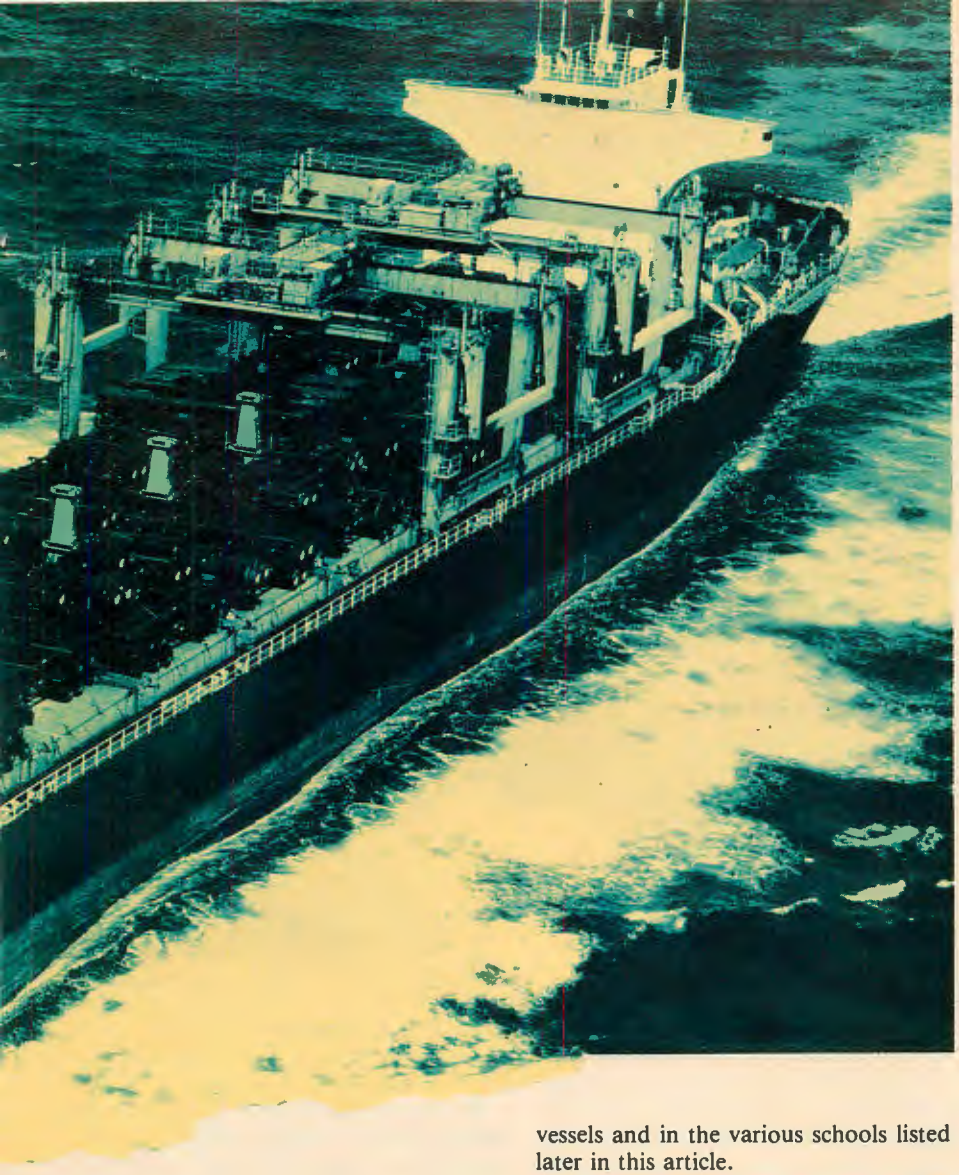
Some merchant seamen are employed by governments. We have the Military Sealift Command and the U.S. Army

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William P. Mote has spent the better part of his life at sea. The U.S. Navy had him do electronic research and cryptography before he took a step (down?) as mate/deckhand/cook of an off-shore tug. He has also rated as third mate and spent 15 years as a radio officer. Taking his own advice on education for up-grading, Mote has just finished another electronics course at the Radio Operators Union Institute of Maritime Electronics.

In spite of this foray as a free-lance writer, Mote intends to continue sailing the lucrative seas as a mercenary of the peace-time merchant marine.

— Bill Guthrie



Saving space by separate shipment, SS *Pittsburgh* carries wheeled chassis for hauling containers by tractor/trailer. Photo: Skyfotos

Corps of Engineers; the British have their Royal Fleet Auxiliary; the Soviet MorFlot is, for all practical purposes, a branch of their military. But in all these cases the crewmen still remain, at least nominally, civilians.

Thus, the merchant marine has adventure, excellent pay, travel, civilian status and good chances for advancement.

The men and women of the merchant marine are civilians. In some cases they may either be civil-service personnel or hold rank in the Navy or Coast Guard Reserve. Although officers are encouraged to hold reserve commissions, this is not a hard and fast requirement. Time spent in the merchant marine does not count toward military retirement. Retirement from the merchant marine yields normal social security and union or company pensions.

To become a seaman, a man must be 16, and most shipping companies do not retain men beyond 70. Exceptions do exist. Under recently passed laws, no discrimination may be applied to women except that the Coast Guard requires separate toilet facilities. Women going to sea in Europe and Russia are common. Today we are beginning to see women at sea under American flag vessels and in the various schools listed later in this article.

The men come from all parts of the country. Many of the career types enter young and stay with one company or union through their shipping years. Many of the older men do not tie themselves down, may belong to several unions or none at all and are more sailor-of-fortune types.

One point to be quickly made: Most are not the class-B movie stereotype — "the pier nine brawler." Today's merchant seaman is generally a well-read person, and the majority are sober, responsible individuals. Due to the small size of the crews, the crewmen themselves, let alone the captain, will not long put up with the oddball or misfit.

The rank structure follows, generally, that of the Navy. The jobs have, over the years, changed and we no longer see "lamp-trimmers," damned few "coal passers" — even the more traditional jobs of yeoman and purser are being phased out. Due to the automation of the newer ships, other jobs once performed by men are now done by keypunch and computers — some computers run entire engine rooms.

Some ratings such as chief mate and first assistant engineer, which traditionally have not stood watch, have become watch-standers. This is due to some of the unions trying to undercut one another and agreeing to man the ships with fewer men, in order to get vessels under their contracts.

Ship structure is first divided into departments. The deck department is responsible for navigation, maintenance of deck gear, and stowing and discharge of cargo. The chief mate has several watch-standing mates who are assisted by steersmen and lookouts who may also, during daylight, chip and paint on deck. The bosun is like a Navy CPO or Army master sergeant. He is, for the low-rated men, *The Boss.* The steersman or helmsman is usually an able seaman. The ordinary seaman is the lookout and represents the entry rating in the deck department.

The engine department is responsible for the propelling of the vessel. It is presided over by the chief engineer, who has assistant engineers under him; they both work and stand watch, and are assisted by the unlicensed personnel of that department: the firemen and oilers. Sometimes these men are called QMEDs (Qualified Member of the Engine Department). The entry rating in the engine room is called "wiper."

The steward's department is responsible for feeding crew and passengers, if any. It is headed by the chief steward, who may help cook himself or have as many as dozens of cooks and bakers under him in a passenger ship. The entry rating here is called food handler — which means dishwasher, hash slinger or potato peeler.

One-man departments, answering directly to the captain, are: the purser, doctor and radio officer (R/O). Pursers usually enter the service as pursers. They handle the ship's paper work, write the letters, pay the bills and advance the crewmen money. If no doctor is carried, they look after the sick or injured.

The doctor at sea is almost extinct, since the medical work is now done by the purser or chief mate. The few remaining passenger ships do carry MDs.

The radio officer handles the ship's communications and repairs the electronics aboard. This gear increases every year. Generally, the R/O enters the service in his specialty.

The ultimate authority on the vessel is the captain: a master mariner, and de facto *God* at sea. The total responsibility for the vessel, her cargo and all who sail in her are his. He is the senior deck officer aboard. He is the most powerful person aboard, period, and could legally overrule the ship's owner, if present, in an emergency.

So, times have changed and the jobs and men have changed with them. The bucko captain and the bully mate,

though still in existence, have mostly been superseded by men who use a good bit of psychology in handling their crews. The crew men, in turn, are a better lot than in the "bad old days."

Today's freighter may be the traditional "break bulk" or package-carrying ship. It may be a bulk carrier with a cargo of grain or ore. It may be a container vessel, which has holds into which trailer boxes are stacked. These 20- or 40-foot-long boxes carry nearly any cargo and unlike palletized or cased cargo, are not usually subject to "stock shrinkage" while in transit. The roll-on/roll-off ship is a variation of the container vessel in which the boxes remain on their wheeled chassis and are towed on and off the ship rather than being handled by a crane.

Giant barge-carrying ships, nearly 1,000 feet long, can visit as many as three or four ports in a day — the old standard freighter might spend a week or more in port as the coolies heavehoed the cargos ashore.

Tankers have changed since WWII. Now exotic chemicals are carried at sea as well as liquid petroleum (LPG) and liquid natural gas (LNG). Special ships require special crews, and the training of these men is a separate subject.

The so-called super-tankers of 20 years ago are just little ones today. Ships of a million tons are common, and larger and larger vessels are joining the world fleets yearly. But as the ships increase in size, the size of their crews gets smaller. And since one super-whopper tanker can replace half a dozen smaller ones, there is a corresponding loss in job prospects. Also, very few passenger ships are under American flag and few freighters still carry the traditional passengers. This has cut the number of jobs available to experienced stewards.

While the "glamor" and "romance of the sea," if one may call it that, is in the big ships, the trend today is toward tug and barge transport, at sea and on the rivers and lakes in the United States and worldwide. The reason is, of course, economy. Tugs operate with crews of from five to 12. Barges, in most cases, carry no crewmen — or two at the most.

The river "tow boat" is really a pusher boat and may surpass the horsepower of a seagoing ship. Their multiple diesel plants can push as many as 40 loaded barges upstream in the Mississippi, albeit slowly. Shore leave is zero while underway, but the contracts here are on a two-week-on/two-week-off or similar system.

Rig-supply vessels are best described as large tugs with a work deck for carrying supplies to oil rigs on the "patch" in the Gulf of Mexico, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea, North Sea — well, just about anywhere. They also have small crews, although many are as large as bigger-crewed coastal freighters.

Fishing boats of all types should also be mentioned. This is a lucrative field when the catch is good and pure hell, financially, when it is not. The owners and crews are a breed apart — for the man with the merc urge who has not been born on a fishing boat, I would not recommend it.

Civil-service-manned ships are of the same basic, large, seagoing types, though the Army Corps of Engineers operates dredges and tugs. The NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) has "research" ships which are also civil-service-manned, and there are private research vessels and those attached to universities. I'd call these types "sea-going bureaucrats" rather than sailors-of-fortune.

Before we look into the mechanics of how to join, let's look closely at jobs the new seaman might be doing.

Ordinary Seaman (OS) is the low man on the totem pole. On large sea-going ships, he will normally work on a four-hour-on and eight-hour-off schedule. Exceptions come when tying up the ship to a pier or during tank cleaning on a tanker. If he has the "12 to 4" watch, it means both during the day and at night. The routine goes something like this: He

Close but comfortable junior officer quarters typical of merchant officer accommodation. Photo: W. P. Mote

Radio officer's closest friend: Sophisticated single-operator ship's radio limits field entrants, guarantees current jobs. Photo: W. P. Mote

eats at 1130 and relieves the other OS at the work in hand at five or 10 minutes to noon — chipping at rust, painting the deck, or maybe helping the bosun splice line and learning necessary skills to pass the AB (able-bodied seaman) test. He works until about 1430 when he makes coffee for the 1500 coffee break, then has coffee and, at 1530, calls the next watch so they can relieve his watch. A few minutes before 1600 he is relieved and off until 2400.

At night the OS normally has the first hour, from midnight until 0100, on "standby" in the mess hall. He then is on lookout from 0100 until 0300. As lookout, he is either on the bow or the wing of the bridge, near the wheel house. At 0300, he makes coffee for the watch coming on at 0400, calls them at about 0320 and, after being relieved at 0400, is off until noon.

This routine varies with ships, unions, companies, seasons of the year and weather — and changes with the ship's schedule of ports and work on hand in ports. On tankers, the OS is expected to help handle hoses, turn valves and muck tanks after the cargo is discharged. It is dirty work but carries good overtime.

It takes approximately three or four years before the OS can take the Coast Guard test to advance to AB.

In the engine department, the wiper is a day worker; he does not stand the four-on eight-off system of watch hours. He is under the direct orders of the First Assistant and, with initiative and the help of a good First, he can make QMED in six months to a year. His duties can range from wiping up oil spills in the bilges to welding. Most of his training is at the whim of the First.

For the mechanically talented, this is

ON CANNONBALL'S CREW

As Bill Mote says, there is a Catch-22 in getting a job as a civilian sailor: You're supposed to have a Z-Card before you can ship out and it is technically impossible to get a Z-Card unless you have experience working on the water.

There are ways around this, of course, or the craft of being a merchant sailor would disappear by attrition through old age.

The way I broke through the employment barrier was by "catching a pierhead jump."

Sometimes the captain of a vessel is desperate for help, usually when one or more members of his crew get drunk or are arrested and don't show up by sailing time.

In such cases, he will take whatever he can find, and he usually solves his problem by calling some place where sailors hang out — mainly cheap hotels or bars.

In my case, it was a Sunday and I was in Johnny Sansone's place on Broadway in North St. Louis. The phone rang and Johnny said to me, a friend of mine called the "Big Dago" and one other person: "Want work? The *Harry Truman* needs two deckhands and a mess boy; the union hall's closed; the captain can't locate the agent at home and he'll take any warm bodies."

Three of us said in chorus, "Yes."

The "Big Dago" was an experienced deckhand; I was not; and the third was a pimply-faced youth who wanted to be the messboy.

We marched out to Broadway, boarded a streetcar and headed for the Foot of Iron Street, where the *Harry Truman* would be putting in to pick up barges.

We jumped aboard just as the vessel was about to pull away, shorthanded, and were greeted by the legendary captain, one "Cannonball Smith," known as one of the toughest — and best — skippers on the Mississippi River.

I didn't know the first thing about "decking" when I got aboard, but I soon learned under First Mate Fred Wade, who had a nasty personality but who had forgotten more about riverboat deck work than most people ever knew.

By the time we had made the round trip from St. Louis to New Orleans to St. Louis, I could hold my own with any deckhand on that boat. The *Truman* had a high turnover of deckhands because work aboard her was harder, for a number of reasons, than on most other riverboats. But the "Big Dago" and I stayed aboard her for several months and when we finally left, Cannonball told us we could ship under him any time.

And Cannonball made good his promise one day.

I had been away from the river a couple of years and one summer was badly in need of a job. Since I had kept my union and Z-cards current, I headed for the St. Louis union hall.

Shipping was tight and I began to worry about the size of my tab at Johnny Sansone's.

Then one day a "vacation-replacement" job was posted. Rivermen don't like to take such jobs, because they know absolutely they will be bumped, later if not sooner. This one was on the SS *Tenaru River* — a certain class of vessel in the Federal Barge Lines fleet bore the name of famous WWII battles.

None of those above me on the shipping list volunteered to take it. I asked the union agent how long the job would last. He didn't know. I thought, "Oh, what the hell, it ought to be good for as far as New Orleans." There, I would have a choice between deep-sea and river jobs and thus a better chance of shipping out permanently. So I bid on it and, of course, got it.

When I boarded the *Tenaru River,* much to my surprise, it was skippered by Cannonball Smith and the First Mate was Fred Wade.

So downriver we went. Since I was junior deckhand aboard, one evening I was carrying coffee up to the captain in the pilot house and while ascending the ladder I was horrified to hear Wade say: "Well, little Woody is coming back at Memphis, so we'll have to put Poos on the bank there."

(A Little Woody and a Big Woody worked for Federal. Otherwise unrelated, their only similarity was the first name of Woodrow.)

Stunned, I paused just outside the pilot-house door, thoughts racing through my mind: I hated Memphis. And everyone knew that although there was a union hiring hall there, it was perhaps the most difficult port to ship from on the entire river

Then I heard Cannonball growl: "I don't care who's gettin' off this boat, Mr. Mateman, but it ain't going to be Bob Poos."

Surprised, Wade groaned: "But what'll I do, Cap'n?"

Smith snapped: "That's your problem, Mr. Mate."

Nobody — and I mean nobody — on the Mississippi River argued with Cannonball "Red" Smith.

Relieved, I kicked open the pilot-house door and announced: "Coffee, Cap'n, just like you like 'er, Cajun coffee, hot and black."

Wade glared at me as he left.

Cannonball said, "Stick around, Bob, and I'll show you how to steer this thing." (We were on a long, straight stretch of river.)

He did let me steer the *Tenaru River* for a while and that remains to this day one of the highlights of my rather adventurous life.

Ultimately, I became a writer and editor; the "Big Dago" is now a successful corporate attorney — and the pimply-faced kid, who didn't want to be a deckhand because he considered it too dangerous — fell overboard one afternoon while emptying a GI can full of garbage and drowned.

— Bob Poos

the way to go. Unfortunately, the union halls seem to be cluttered with 50-year-old professional wipers and this tends to block advancement.

The stewards' department entry rating would be called, officially, utilityman. This boils down to dishwashing, cleaning and making up the bunks in the officers' rooms. Good cooks are jewels who should be protected and cared for as such. They can make or break a ship, and in the merchant service, where contracts are short and can be broken in any American port, the cooks had best do a good job. They are in many ways caught in the middle, especially the chief steward: The company wants the food costs held down; the crew wants gourmet cooking. The unions try to help by making a feeding plan to which both crews and companies agree.

Unlike the deck and engine departments, advancement in the stewards' department is not by a Coast Guard test. Nor is it necessary for a man or woman to sail any set length of time as a third or second cook before becoming a chief cook. Here, skill — and only skill — is the way up.

"How do I join?" Herein lies the problem. Unlike the military services, the merchant marine does not actively seek recruits. Prospective seamen must acquire, at their own expense, a merchant mariner's document. This is the "Z-card" necessary in order to work on any vessel of over 100 gross tons under U.S. flag. This would just about cover anything afloat, including even the smallest tug boat.

The Z-card is issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. It is a wallet-size, plastic-laminated card. The front has the bearer's photo, name, his or her Z or book number (these days the social security number is used), birth date and place, and citizenship as well as the home address at the time of issue and signature of the bearer. The back of the card lists height, weight, complexion, hair and eye color, the social security number again, the left thumb print of the bearer, the place and date of issue by the Coast Guard and the signature and rank of the issuing officer.

Since foreign nationals can hold American seaman's papers, a privilege extended internationally by a number of maritime nations, spaces for alien registration number, date of first papers, naturalization date and number are provided. Aliens may be seamen, but officers must be U.S. citizens.

Listed on the Z-card are all the jobs and ranks the man holds. For example: "See License as Radio Officer, Ordinary Seaman, Wiper, Steward's Dept. (FH)."

The card is also stamped "Validated for Emergency Service." This means that in the event of full-scale war, when the merchant marine comes under Navy control and becomes "The Fifth Arm of Defense," the bearer is subject to military orders.

Now comes the "Catch 22": In order to sail in the merchant marine, it is necessary to have this Z-card. In order to get the card, you must have sailed on a ship or have a letter of commitment.

The easy part first. If the prospective seaman has had sea time in the Navy or Coast Guard, he qualifies. Well and good. However, the person who wishes to go to sea and does not have military seatime has an acute problem.

A letter of commitment is simply a letter stating that the individual will be hired by a company or by a union and employed on a vessel if the Coast Guard will issue the necessary Z-card.

Besides the letter, the applicant must be 18 (16 with parental consent), present proof of citizenship (his birth certificate), have three standard passport photos made and, if an alien, have proof of lawful entry into the United States. Application must be made in person.

It is nearly impossible to get a letter of commitment from a shipping company unless you happen to be related to someone in an oil company which operates non-union crewed ships. Other companies are almost all unionized, and since they get their personnel from a union hiring hall, they cannot issue a letter of commitment, but are committed to the union for their crews.

The obvious answer, then, is to get the necessary letter from a union.

Unions are self-contained entities, virtual fiefdoms, protecting the jobs of their members and only taking in new men as needed. With the job ratios becoming worse in deep-sea shipping, it can be — and is — a problem. There are, however, several union-run training programs and schools. These have another catch attached. Once accepted for the program, the man is usually committed to finish out the program and sail with the union which trained him. The selection process is strict enough to ensure loyalty. No one walks in off the street, signs up, gets his letter of commitment, receives his Z-card and then just says, "Thanks, man. Good-bye!"

If the prospective seaman is willing to attach himself to a union and can satisfy its selection board, he will be trained and offered employment. He must, of course, be otherwise qualified for the Coast Guard papers.

The best of the training schools — in effect a deep-sea boot camp — is that of the Seafarers' International Union (SIU). The Harry Lundeberg School, St. Mary's County, Piney Point, MD 20674, not only prepares the applicant for entry rating but also certifies unlicensed grades. Besides basic seamanship, engine-room work and cooking, more than 30 specialized courses are offered to make the seaman more productive, qualify him for higher Coast Guard certification, and ultimately provide him with more and better employment. Although a high-school diploma is not required for entry, the GED must be obtained before going into any kind of seamanship training.

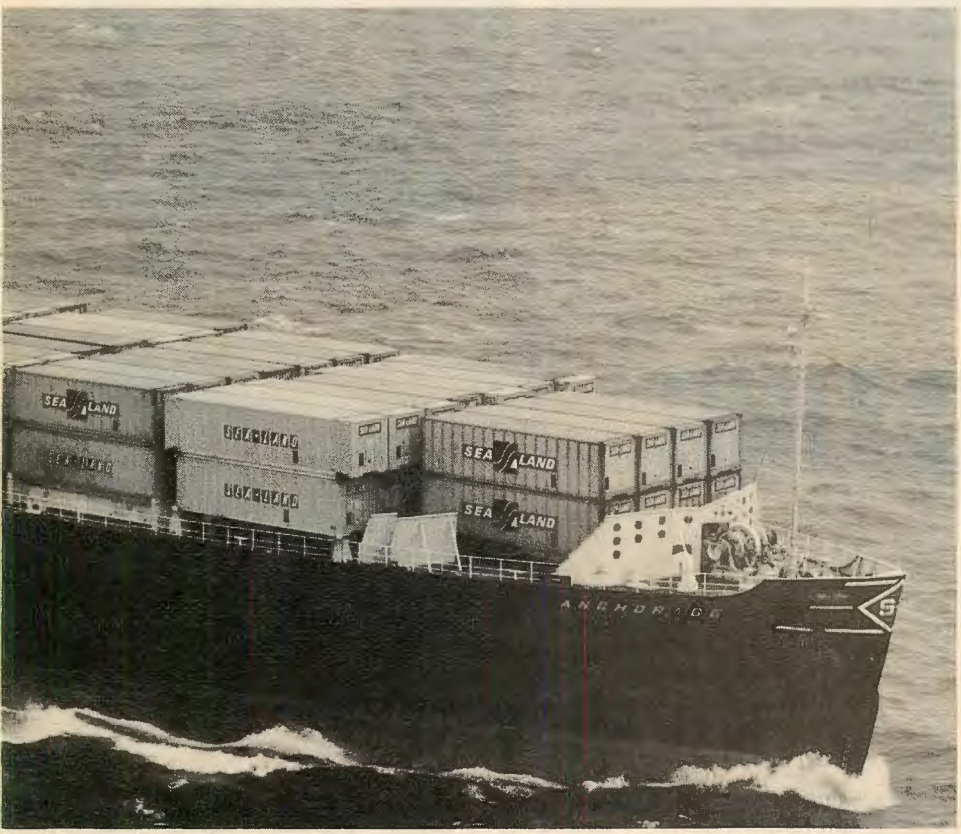
The National Maritime Union (NMU), the other major unlicensed union, has its NMU Upgrading and Re-

SS *Anchorage* ferries containers around Caribbean. Photo: Skyfotos

training School at 346 West 17th Street, New York, NY, 10011. This school is not set up to prepare prospective seamen for entry but should be able to give entry-requirement information for membership in the union.

The bulk of unlicensed American seamen sail through these two national unions, which have hiring halls in many ports around the country. Both provide benefits and encourage members to attend certification classes during leave. There are, of course, entrance fees, dues and assessments. Wages, working conditions, shipping rules, length of vacations and even required recreation equipment are fixed by contract.

The union-trained man will probably stay a member of his union for the length of his sailing career; he is, of course, expected to owe his first loyalty to the union which provides him with his



jobs. Assignments to ships can be in a variety of types, on different runs and for varying lengths of time, since the seaman has a great degree of latitude in the jobs he accepts. Some spend many years on the same vessel, some prefer to sail with only one or two companies.

The Calhoun MEBA Engineering School, 9 Light Street, Baltimore, MD 21202, has a nearly four-year-long program which takes men and women interested in becoming marine engineering officers and trains them from entry-level to licensed-officer status. These people are also committed to sailing with the MEBA after completion of schooling. Their training is broken up into several phases. Part of the training is in Baltimore. A year is spent at sea as an officer cadet, then further training is given on campus at the MEBA school in Easton, Md. This school is located on a 750-acre estate on the famous Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. Besides classrooms and dormitories, there are sports facilities available, including an indoor heated pool, gym and sailing boats.

Other schools train engineers and deck officers. These are only of interest to those willing to invest four years in a degree program. They are run by states or by the federal government, as in the case of Kings Point, the Federal Maritime Academy. These schools do not commit their graduates to any company or union. They usually present a Naval Reserve commission upon graduation. In the case of state universities, the student pays tuition, but both Kings Point and the MEBA schools pay their students a stipend while attending, and instruction and room and board are free. The SIU school at Piney Point also provides spending money for its students.

Direct entry into the radio-officer ranks is difficult. Not only are an FCC license and Z-card required, the person must work six months as a second operator in order to qualify to sail by himself. With the demise of the American passenger ship, multi-operator vessels ceased to exist — another "Catch 22."

As with other employment in all forms of shipping, the R/Os undergo a feast-or-famine cycle. Union books are now closed and the non-union tanker companies do not have a dual operator program to enable new men to get the necessary six-month endorsement.

At various times, the Radio Officers Union (ROU), 8th Floor, 30 Montgomery St., Jersey City, NJ 07302, has had an apprenticeship program whereby new men could get the necessary sea time. This program is not accepting applicants. When it was, the basic requirements were that the applicant be under 25, single, and have completed his or her military service, preferably with a strong electronics background. At one point it was even accepting individuals who did not know Morse code. If they were well-qualified electronic technicians, the union taught them the code.

The ROU maintains a grade-improvement school on the grounds of the MEBA school in Maryland.

The American Radio Association (ARA), the other major American radio union, has its ARA TIME school at 326 West 42nd St., New York, NY 10036, but has no entry program.

The MEBA No. 2 and AMO High Seas School on 627 4th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11232, had, at one time, a training program for radio officers, including arrangements for the acquisition of the six-month internship.

As with the unlicensed unions, when a radio union enables an applicant to obtain the necessary time to be fully qualified to sail by himself, he is expected to continue to sail with that union.

The American oil companies are sailing few of their ships (and as few as possible) under American flag. None would be under U.S. flag if it were not for the Jones Act of 1936, which requires that oil cargos carried between U.S. coastal ports be carried in American flag vessels.

Since WWII, the U.S.-flag tanker fleet has dwindled to a handful of mostly old or rebuilt ships. By contrast, the American-owned foreign-flag tanker fleet has expanded enormously. Few openings for American seamen exist on these vessels, since, for convenience, they are usually crewed overseas.

In order for a person to get a letter of commitment from an oil company, I suspect it would be well if his father were high on the pay roll or held considerable stock in the company. Connections is the name of the game here. But since the majority of these oil companies are non-union or company union, the really serious searcher might contact the Independent Tanker Association, 53 Park Place, New York, NY 10007.

It is extremely doubtful that a letter of commitment could be obtained without connections but, as in all forms of merc work, a stamp is a small price to pay when shotgunning for prospects.

To be continued.

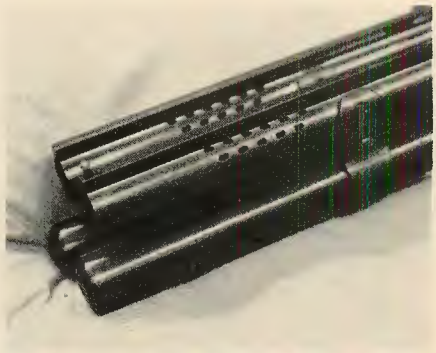
Part 2: American shipping.

Double your pleasure, double your fun — Laughridge's death-dealing double packs 20 buckshot pellets and both barrels fire simultaneously.

Irimu's creator, Bill Laughridge, prepares to demonstrate his death-dealing double.

Irimu : DEATH-DEALING DOUBLE

Text & Photos by Jake Jatras



Irimu's 12-gauge barrels are Mag-Na-Ported to reduce recoil.

THE search for fire power in a weapon capable of launching multiple projectiles at opponents began with the double-barrel 12-gauge shotgun, progressed to pump actions and autos and has led to the various experimental fighting shotguns now being tested by police and military.

Bill Laughridge (Cylinder & Slide, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 937, Fremont, NB 68025) conceived the "Irimu" pictured here. The unique scatter-gun utilized two Remington 1100 12-gauge auto shotguns — one left-hand action and one right-hand. Garth Choate (Choate Machine, Dept. SOF, Box 218, Bald Knob, AR 72010) supplied two 10-shot extension magazines to give the double/auto its teeth and Larry Kelley of Mag-na-Port (Dept. SOF, 30016 South River Road, Mt. Clemens, MI 48045) assisted in reducing recoil by Mag-Na-Porting the two tubes.

Laughridge had a custom fiberglass stock made complete with two pistol grips to hold on to because the loaded weapon weighs in at 22 pounds — an M60 machine gun weighs 23 pounds.

A unique Laughridge-designed cammed trigger enables the shooter to fire both guns simultaneously, creating a true "alley-sweeper." Timing is critical, but if one gun malfunctions, the other will continue to fire.

No doubt the portentous sight of this authoritative creation and unnerve someone backing out of an all-night gas station after successfully applying for an interest-free loan to support his drug rehabilitation program.

A traditional figure in African Zulu and Basuto mythology is the Irimu. The Irimu is a mysterious, fierce ogre who defeats all men and beasts before him — then devours his victims.

A Chaga tale relates how one warrior who broke a tribal taboo became an Irimu. The Irimu grew thick, thorny bushes from his sides until he became literally a walking thicket, immune to attack. Finally a fellow warrior managed to break the spell, but not before the Irimu had devastated the area.

Our contemporary Irimu is not only a slaughterer, but is capable of hurling its lead thorns at antagonists. No shaman conjured a spell to create this Irimu, and only the desperate would undertake to defy its power.

SPECTRE

Continued from page 35

The voices are laconic, unemotional. It is like being in a warship full of telephone operators. I feel like shouting, *Full Phasers! Go to Warp Eight!* — anything to break the monotonous efficiency. Where's John Wayne? I wonder. These guys sound like dental technicians at a convention.

"Go."

Whang! At first I think someone has kicked the bulkhead with a heavy boot. No. The 40mm is spitting rounds. They'll flash when they hit the ground, and the Phantom will bomb the flashes. From the fire-control deck the noise is a grunt, not at all like gunfire. Two more grunts, a fourth. Is this all? Thump? Clonk? Whump?

"Safe the gun."

Long seconds pass while the rounds are in flight. Meanwhile the F-4 pilot noses into a shrieking dive, praying that his altimeter works, and screams toward an invisible target. The earth is a black table below him, night arching above. He is about to bomb sparkles in the blackness, but he doesn't know what they represent — an airfield, somebody's grandmother, or just a family of terrified rabbits.

The more I think about it the crazier it seems. We are fighting an abstract war, untouched by human hands. I wonder whether those metallic voices out there eat hot dogs and go to porn movies.

The Spectre's 40s reach the earth and the target erupts on the screen. There is a loud clank as my jaw hits the deckplates. Holy god, I think, this beast is *accurate*. The Air Force doesn't want accuracy written about very much, but ... well, Spectre can drop a round in your jeans' back pocket.

I struggle to retract my eyeballs into my head while the crew, who are not accustomed to missing, report without interest, "Bull's eye ... bull's eye ... bull's eye."

I wait for the F-4's bomb to spread the target over half of Nevada. By now I am a little excited and ready to cheer. But nothing happens.

"Did anybody see where that F-4's bomb went?"

"Garblegarble."

"The bomb. Anybody see where that thing went?"

"That's a negative."

"Nothing here. It looks like a great big miss."

The pilot apparently has missed Nevada. Well, I think, it's only a medium-sized state. Later the Spectre crew would try to be nice about it and say, well, he probably doesn't do this much, and it was dark, and after all he was only a Reserve pilot.

"F-4 wants another go," says the Spectre pilot.

I would too. Missing Nevada must be very embarrassing.

Again we go through the routine.

"Roger that."

"Go."

Again the F-4 races down, again Spectre is right on target, again we wait for the bomb. Nothing. Maggie's drawers. This guy could miss the continental United States.

And that, really, is all there is to the mission. We mark targets for a couple of hours until we run low on fuel, and then we return to the base. I decide that there is very little danger of being hit by a fighter-bomber, except accidentally. At Nellis, the crew take off their fiberglass craniums and become people again, and I go into Las Vegas, a little dazed.

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AARON BANK

Continued from page 29

layed through the French officers nominally in command of four platoons of partisans. The Vietnamese were wholly unfamiliar with the American weapons they were to use, and they were the worst shots Bank had ever seen.

Eventually, however, the company was whipped into acceptable form and was rated ready for its mission. But once again, political considerations intruded. Intelligence contacts inside Vietnam passed the word that insertion of any French-officered unit, even one headed by an American, would alienate at least some of the Vietnamese guerrillas already fighting the Japanese. The Red River operation was scrubbed and Bank was sidelined again. Adversity seemed to be following him like a dark cloud.

In August, mushroom clouds rose over Japan, convincing the Emperor and his cabinet that further resistance was futile. Japanese occupation forces throughout Indochina retired to their barracks to await surrender arrangements and relocation.

Bank was detailed to a war-crimes investigation unit that was to set up shop in Hanoi. But after a week in the Vietnamese capital, he was recalled to Kunming to prepare for something with a hauntingly modern echo — a parachute drop into Laos to search for prisoner-of-war camps rumored to be hidden in the Laotian jungles.

A nine-man team was assembled and Bank, now a major, assumed command. In late August, the team jumped near Vientiane with considerable quantities of food and medical supplies for the POWs they hoped to find. A truck was requisitioned for the supply bundles and the team then scoured the

PHOENIX

T-SHIRTS! — Buy one for yourself & one for a friend! — T-shirts are of a cotton/poly mix. USMC & SPECS T-shirts are yellow with red or green printing, remainder are white with red or black printing. All are illustrated along with the printing.

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2F Patience My Ass — I'm going out and kill something! — **$7.95**
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2N Death To Tyrants — **$7.95**
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Also avail. in Navy Blue: #2B & #2G

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2X Cammo Jogging Shorts — 100% Cotton. S,M,L,X-L — **$6.50**

2Y Camo Sweatshirt — On those chilly days when all you need is a light jacket, this tightly insulated sweat jacket is ideal. The outer and inner lining are 100% Fortrel® polyester with a thin, insulating layer of 100% polyurethane foam. Features two slash pockets, adjustable drawstring hood, zipper front, rib knit cuffs and bottom. Sizes: S,M,L,X-L. Please specify. SPECIAL SALE — **$21.95**

3A — avail. in white or navy blue — **$7.95**
3B — avail. in white or black — 2-sided printing — **$8.95**
3C — avail. in white — **$7.95**

3B

3C

3A

TEKNA KNIVES — DESIGNED BY A WEAPONS DESIGNER
The Tekna Knife is drawn and shaped from a single piece of nickel/chromium stainless steel. Tpe 431 stainless was chosen for this knife. This knife is at home below the seaweed or above the timberline — and everywhere in between! The five-holed handle permits the knife to be positively locked in its sheath, reduces weight, and allows the knife to be held comfortably. It features twin rows of razor-sharp saw-tooth serrations, and cuts through most things with a single pass.

T-2200 — Features unique, self-guiding ABS sheath with thumb operated latch allowing one-handed removal or replacement in less than half a second. Two self-closure Tekna-Straps permit quick adjustment and include stainless self-tensioning buckles. — **$39.95**

T-2300 — Exactly the same as T-2200, but provides a stainless clip in place of the Tekna-Straps for mounting on belt or inside boot top. — **$34.95**

T-2400 — Low profile black leather sheath with stainless boot clip and positive snap lock is included in this model, replacing the ABS sheath. Sheath is made of genuine top grain cowhide. — **$39.95**

BLACK MATTE TEKNA KNIVES — WON'T GIVE YOU AWAY!!
Exactly the same as the above Tekna Knives, but with a non-reflective black matte finish applied to the entire surface of the knife.

T-2200B — Features same unique ABS sheath as explained on T-2200 — **$44.95**

T-2300B — Features stainless clip on sheath as in above T-2200. — **$39.95**

T-2400B — Features black leather sheath as in above T-2400. — **$44.95**

CAMOUFLAGE DUFFLE BAG — American made. Regulation size 21x36. Sturdy web handle and shoulder strap. Heavy duty steel grommets and hooks for padlocking — **$13.95**

PLASTIC 1 qt. CANTEEN — with aluminum cup and nylon cover — **6.95.**

CAMOUFLAGE COLLECTION — Each item in this series is lightweight, soil-resistant, 100% nylon; double-stitched for exceptional durability. Colors in camouflage pattern are brown, black, & olive green on a light green background. Items are also available in solid black color.

CHECKBOOK COVER — holds all standard size checks. Additional compartment for credit cards, photos, cash, etc. is secured by snap — **$4.95.**

TRIFOLD — Compact wallet folds into thirds. Ample pockets hold photos, credit cards, or cash. Sturdy construction insures the security of your valuables — **$9.95.**

BIFOLD — For the person who carries the normal amount of I.D. cards & cash. The wallet is the same rugged construction as the Tri-fold with velcro fastener, only smaller — **$8.95.**

SECURITY PURSE — A must for the traveler or jogger. The easiest way possible to conceal your valuables. Pocket is sewn onto a 16¼" velcro strip which allows it to be worn on arm, leg, or inside of clothing. Easily holds 7 or 8 credit cards & cash — **$6.95.**

WATCHBAND — Available only in black nylon. Perfect accessory for the active man or adventurer. Black nylon strap with "long-life" velcro safety lock. Band also provides a crystal cover strap for protection or for use in "blackout" conditions — **$5.50.**

"BREAK-FREE CLP" CLEANER, LUBRICANT & PRESERVATIVE — A new Teflonized Cleaner, lubricant, preservative, and water displacer that eliminated solvent cleaning in mechanisms and provides complete "Cleaning, Lubrication and Preservation" all in one product. For use in temperate, arctic and desert climates. For use on cars, trucks, building maintenance, construction equipment, shop equipment, boats, firearms, etc. Following sizes available:

a. 1 fl. oz. (30 ml) liquid — $1.49
b. 4 fl. oz. (120 ml) liquid — **$2.95**
c. 3.17 oz. (90 grams) aerosol — **$2.95**
d. 15.85 oz. (450 grams) aerosol — **$7.95**

RHODESIAN PLAQUES — Authentic military plaques from Rhodesia! Rhodesia's war was divided into various operational areas: Hurricane, Thrasher, Repulse, Grapple, Splinter and Tangent. Each was controlled by its own Join Operations Command; and each JOC adopted its own insignia. **Now you can own this set of unique plaques!** The plaques are made from acid etched Rhodesian copper plate, and are mounted on Zambezi hardwood. Phoenix bought out the manufacturer of these plaques, and are offering these at a special price! Plaques are $11.95 each, or the complete set for the special price of $49.95, plus $1.50 for postage and handling. **Order now — limited number available.**

TEKNA ITEMS!!
THE WORLD'S SIMPLEST 2-CELL FLASHLIGHTS . . . THAT WORK!

T-2000X — This tiny, three ounce Tekna Lite II cell is made of shock resistant plastic in a handsome matte black finish. It is also waterproof and emits a powerful beam. Supplied with two #222 bulbs, it operates on two AA alkaline batteries (not included). Length is 6", diameter is 1.16". Waterproof to 2000 feet. Candlepower is 1400. Switch is activated by ½ turn of lens; light is explosion proof — **$10.95.**

T-2000-0 — The Survival-lite is molded in high visibility international orange & is the ideal life-saving personal light. The Survival-lite features a thermal flasher blub that will operate for 12-16 hours on a single pair of 'AA' alkaline cells. The intermittent pulses of light can be spotted up to two miles away. A #222 bulb is also supplied for regular flashlight use. The convenient nylon neck lanyard keeps the light handy while both hands are free. — **$11.95.**

T-2000-XR — Identical to the T-2000-X but with a red lens. The T-2000-XR is the ideal light source for map, chart or compass reading. Built-tough, like all Tekna lights, the T-2000-XR will survive the harshest environment — **$10.95.**

T-2208 Tekna Strap — Designed for use with any of the Tekna Lite 2 cells, the Tekna-Stap allows the lights to be fastened to the arm or leg, leaving both hands free. In addition, the exclusive self-tensioning stainless steel buckle compensates for muscular expansion and contraction, thus providing a snug fit at all times — **$6.50.**

MINI-STROBE — A FLASH OF BRILLIANCE!
This Tekna T-3000 mini-strobe is the smallest signal strobe in the world. Consisting of a xenon flash tube linked to a fully miniaturized electronic circuit and powered by a mercury battery (sold separately), the mini-strobe will operate continuously for 8-10 hours. Its brilliant omnidirectional flash can be seen over a ten mile radius. This lite is the same size as the T-2000 series, and is waterproof to 1000 feet. Switch is operated the same as the T-2000 series. Available in black or orange color. — **$39.95.**

T-3001 — Mercury battery for mini-strobe lite — **$4.95**

Soldier of Fortune 2nd Annual Convention Patch — commemorating the 2nd Annual SOF Convention — similar to original patch in design with red, white, and black colors — **$1.75**

Soldier of Fortune Decal — 3" vinyl decal with crossed daggers and beret design — red, white and black — **50¢**

Soldier of Fortune Coffee Mug — white porecelain with embossed SOF logo (same as on patch) — **$6.95**

Soldier of Fortune Ashtray — white porcelain with embossed SOF logo — **$4.95**

Zippo Cigarette Lighters — High quality with SOF logo in red, white and black — **$9.95**

Soldier of Fortune Binders — Save your issues of Soldier of Fortune, and keep them in good condition with this 12-issue binder. Black vinyl with white lettering — **$7.95**

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region for any sign of Allied prisoners. They found none. But a visit to the Vientiane hospital turned up a number of French civilians who clearly had not been well cared for by the Japanese and didn't trust the locals to do very much better.

After arranging evacuation of the French patients to Thailand, Bank and his team moved south along the Mekong River and established a headquarters at Thakhek. From there, they searched for Allied POWs as far south as Savannakhet. No prisoners of war were located but the OSS team did assist small groups of French refugees trying to reach Thailand or southern Laos, where a semblance of French control had been re-established.

In the meantime, trouble had developed at Thakhek. Laotian irregulars armed by the defeated Japanese were resisting the efforts of French-led colonial troops to reassert control over the Mekong River city. The French weren't supposed to be operating north of the 16th parallel, an area still under the administrative and military jurisdiction of the Sino-American China Command based in Kunming. Thakhek was 100 miles north of the 16th parallel and thus way out of bounds for any French-flag forces.

As the local representative of the OSS and the China Command, Bank had to do something. But what? He repeatedly radioed Kunming for instruction but the OSS had no advice to offer. The sparring between the Laotians and the French had now taken the form of nightly fire fights on the edge of town. Bank decided on a quick trip to the China Command headquarters back in Hanoi.

He commandeered a staff car and sufficient gasoline from the local Japanese garrison, hired a Lao driver, and set out for Hanoi with Mike Holland, a member of his OSS team. By the time Bank arrived in Hanoi several days later, both OSS and China Command had decided that the administrative division of Laos would have to be enforced pending a decision on the political future of Indochina. Accordingly, Bank was told to kick the French out of central Laos. If he needed help, he was promised Chinese paratroopers.

The grueling drive from Thakhek to Hanoi had left the Japanese staff car in need of major repairs and Bank without transportation for the return trip. Holland, who had operated briefly with Vietnamese guerrillas against the Japanese, had a nodding acquaintance with the new self-proclaimed president of Vietnam. So the two Americans marched over to the former French governor's residence, now occupied by the Vietnamese, and asked to see Ho Chi Minh.

Ho welcomed them in his halting English and then switched to French. He would, he said, be happy to accommodate the OSS. Ho was planning to travel south the next day and offered to take Bank and Holland along. Ho was even willing to turn his car and driver over to the Americans for the trip into Laos, after which the driver could return to pick up his boss.

Early the next morning, Ho, an aide, the chauffeur, Bank, and Holland squeezed into a small, battered, antediluvian French sedan for the day-long drive south.

He liked Americans, Ho told Bank and Holland, because they were not colonialists at heart. Cuba had long since been given its freedom. The Philippines was scheduled for independence in 1946. And Puerto Rico, while not independent, enjoyed home rule and the probable blessings of the Americans if it chose independence in the future. All this, Ho said, proved that the Americans were different from the European colonialists. He confided that he wanted American economic aid, technical assistance and yes, perhaps even military advisers for Vietnam.

His next request was for a copy of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence as possible models for Vietnam's own political charter.

As the aged car rattled south along Vietnam's National Route 1, Ho told his American guests that the French would be welcome to return to Vietnam as merchants. If they returned as soldiers, however, he and his followers would fight for a generation if necessary. Even then his words had the ring of prophecy.

Bank was also impressed at the welcome accorded Ho in each village and town along the road. In northern Vietnam at least, Ho was regarded by many as the liberator he claimed to be.

Arriving back in Thakhek, Bank began helping the Lao irregulars organize a more effective defense against the nightly raids of the French colonial forces. Following a particularly sharp fire fight a few nights later, Bank radioed the French headquarters in southern Laos and asked for a meeting on neutral ground.

The French arrived with an impressive guard of several hundred colonial troops, mostly Lao. Bank turned up with his nine-member team. After some stiff introductions, Bank minced no words in telling the French they would have to withdraw south of the 16th parallel.

The French officers, several of them *Service Speciale* veterans of Operation Jedburg, were infuriated that Bank

a man who had fought beside them in Europe — would now oppose them in Asia. But Bank's threat to call in Chinese paratroops carried the day, and the French agreed, however resentfully, to withdraw.

That accomplished, Bank was recalled to Kunming and subsequently shipped back to the United States. But within a few months, he was back in Europe.

Mustered out of the disbanded OSS, Maj. Aaron Bank finally made it into Germany. Ironically, he found himself in Army counterintelligence assigned the task of catching Soviet-bloc agents — mostly Czechs and East Germans — then infiltrating southern Germany. Bank cultivated a cooperative relationship with his less fastidious French counterparts because strict U.S. Army regulations forbade mistreatment of captured agents who refused to divulge their secrets. When the French returned an agent captured by the Americans, he bore no marks — but his dossier was full of information. The French, Bank would note approvingly, knew how to get things done in what was an inherently dirty business.

The network of counterintelligence agents Bank developed and controlled in Bavaria caught its share of Soviet-bloc spies, and also pursued tips on the whereabouts of Nazi war criminals, including Martin Borman.

In the spring of 1950, Bank was rotated back to the United States for his first stateside assignment in seven years. He was given a battalion in the 11th Airborne Division's 187th Regiment at Fort Campbell, Ky. The monotony of garrison life ended abruptly in June when the 187th was alerted for duty in Korea. In August of that year, the regiment shipped to Japan and then to Korea.

Early the following year, Bank was promoted to full colonel and recalled to the Pentagon. Orders assigning him to the Army's Psychological Warfare branch seemed to spell the end of a career during which Aaron Bank had been on the cutting edge of his country's efforts to practice and perfect doctrines of unconventional warfare. But, in fact, Bank was about to fulfill a dream pursued by a handful of Army visionaries who understood the potential of clandestine war.

Bank had been hand-picked for his new assignment by the Army's chief of psychological warfare, Brig. Gen. Robert A. McClure. The general went straight to the point. He was putting together a staff to draw up all the necessary plans for forming special-forces units to be incorporated into the regular Army. The units were to be prepared to conduct guerrilla operations behind enemy lines.

Bank's OSS experience, and especially his successes during Operation Jedburg in France, would be invaluable in the development of special-forces doctrine, and in training volunteers for the units. He would work with Col. Russell W. Volckmann, an officer who had organized and led thousands of Filipino guerrillas against the occupying Japanese on the island of Luzon during World War II. When Douglas MacArthur had promised the Philippines, "I shall return," then-Capt. Volckmann responded: "We remain."

By the time U.S. forces landed on Luzon nearly three years later, Volckmann had organized the equivalent of a full division of Filipino guerrillas. Who better than these two officers could organize the new special-forces

units, and to sell the idea to the Pentagon brass?

The two colonels went to work writing doctrine, TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment), and training requirements. They even drafted a rough operational plan for guerrilla warfare in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, partly because that was what special-forces troopers would be called upon to do in the event of war, and partly because a plausible plan for tying down large numbers of Soviet troops in the event of war would help sell Gen. McClure's ideas to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Merely convincing Army Chief of Staff Gen. J. Lawton Collins wouldn't be enough. The special forces would need the active cooperation of the Navy and Air Force as well. Air Force planes would be necessary for insertion parachute drops and subsequent resupply missions. And amphibious operations would be impossible without Navy help.

The Central Intelligence Agency, successor to the defunct OSS, would have to approve as well since the agency would undoubtedly play a supporting role in clandestine operations. The "spooks," who felt strongly that they and they alone should be responsible for stirring up trouble in occupied countries, proved the toughest sell of all.

But by the spring of 1952 the service chiefs and the CIA had been persuaded, and only the approval of General of the Army Omar Bradley, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was needed. Col. Volckmann handled most of the briefing and Gen. Bradley gave his consent.

Next, a way had to be found to create room for the proposed 2,500 to 3,000 special-forces personnel without any overall increase in Army strength. Gen. Collins did this by disbanding the Rangers while retaining a Ranger school for selected officers and enlisted men.

Gen. McClure then dispatched Bank to Fort Bragg, N. C., to select an appropriate site for a Special Forces school and to arrange the necessary base facilities for the soon-to-be-activated 10th Special Forces Group.

Bank would command both the school and the 10th Group until a suitable commander for the training center could be appointed.

In June 1952, Col. Aaron Bank was formally designated commander of the 10th Special Forces Group (Abn.). Soon, volunteers from throughout the Army began to arrive at Bragg. All were twice volunteers, having signed up for airborne training and for operations behind enemy lines. Bank himself had written the first recruiting pamphlets circulated within the Army.

Prescreening of volunteers plus the exacting requirements set for Special Forces troops guaranteed that those who made it to Bragg were highly motivated. Most were drawn from the elite airborne units and were dedicated career soldiers.

A particular effort was made to recruit Eastern Europeans — for obvious reasons. The possibility of a Soviet attack upon Western Europe couldn't be discounted. If it happened, Special Forces teams would be parachuted far behind the Red Army to incite revolt among the captive populations of the Soviet satellites. The teams would be doubly effective if each contained one or two members who not only spoke the language like natives but could establish an instant rapport with the local population.

The post-war Lodge Act, which

granted American citizenship to European refugees who served a hitch in the U.S. Army, had already brought thousands of Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and other Eastern Europeans into the ranks. Typically, they hated Russians and many found the Special Forces a challenge they couldn't refuse. Several former OSS officers were recruited as well and the 10th Group was in business.

Bank expanded the Jedburg-team concept to encompass 12-man "A" teams, designed as self-contained units for insertion into hostile territory, and 15-member "B" teams responsible for tactical support.

During that first year of training and organization, the 10th Group ran extended exercises in the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia. Less elaborate affairs were conducted at Camp McCall not far from Bragg.

Under Bank's practiced eye, the maneuvers grew ever more realistic. Civilian clothes were issued to participants. National Guard units and local police forces became the enemy. Whenever possible civilians were recruited by the A teams to join resistance networks. Agents were sent out to gather intelligence. Safe houses were established for hiding downed pilots and escaped or liberated POWs. National Guard and police were constantly harassed with mock sabotage and ambushes.

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Some of the exercises lasted as long as six weeks. There were frequent night parachute drops and every Special Forces team was sent to Little Creek, Va., for Navy amphibious training which featured night landings in rubber rafts from submarines.

The Pentagon had accepted the Special Forces concept largely on the basis of OSS successes during WWII. It took the East Berlin revolt of June 1953 to drive home the potential of Special Forces operations in any East-West war. If young East Germans armed only with rocks and paving stones were willing to stand up to Soviet tanks, it was a fair bet that any Special Forces teams dropped into Eastern Europe would be both welcomed and effective.

So, Bank was ordered to move his 10th Special Forces Group to Bad Tolz, West Germany, in October of 1953. The 10th left behind half its strength to provide the nucleus for the new 77th Special Forces Group to be formed at Bragg.

Those assigned to Germany shipped from Wilmington, Del., in November and debarked in Bremerhaven in time to complete the move to Bad Tolz by early December.

The setting was nearly perfect for a Special Forces unit. Bad Tolz, in the foothills of the Bavarian Alps, was isolated enough to keep the 10th under discreet wraps and rugged enough to provide training.

The base itself was a former Waffen-SS officers' school, built during the 1930s. Its impressive accommodations included a huge gymnasium, comfortable barracks and well-appointed classrooms. Nearby West German border-guard units were a ready source of "aggressors" against which the 10th could train. And, of course, the West German environment was a far more suitable approximation of the likely Special Forces operational areas than rural Georgia or North Carolina. In Bavaria, the locals really were foreigners and none of the road signs were in English.

At Bad Tolz, it became apparent that the Army was taking Special Forces seriously. The Seventh Army, under whose command the 10th fell, assigned Bank a separate staff charged with drawing up a minutely detailed war plan for each of the 10th Group's combined teams.

Detailed maps were obtained for specific operational areas behind the Iron Curtain. All the latest intelligence on each area was carefully catalogued and filed. Team members were sent to the nearby Army language school at Oberammergau. There, they learned the languages and dialects spoken in the countries and regions into which they would be dropped in the event of war. The Oberammergau instructors also conducted classes at Bad Tolz in the history, customs and culture of the targeted countries.

Once the 10th arrived in Germany, more Eastern Europeans were recruited. Virtually every one of the Lodge Act enlistees was approached by Special Forces recruiters. Eventually, every team at Bad Tolz had at least one Eastern European member.

Had Europe exploded during the middle or late 1950s, no unit in the U.S. Army would have been more ready or, man for man, more effective than the 10th Special Forces Group.

The war plan called for each 12-man A team to recruit, train and lead 1,500 guerrillas behind Russian lines. Even assuming that some of the 200 A teams to be dropped over Eastern Europe had been wiped out, a huge phantom army of guerrillas would have disrupted the Soviet rear.

Aaron Bank stayed on as CO of the 10th Group until December 1954, when he was transferred to Seventh Army headquarters.

During Bank's 23-year retirement he has had many reasons to be proud of the special units he helped found, organize and train. The legend of the Green Beret will in some ways always be a monument to Aaron Bank.

KONTUM

Continued from page 47

helicopter has played a key role in the current campaign which began 30 March 1972 [the Easter offensive].

"The Army has fielded, for the first time, a highly effective aerial anti-tank weapon. This is the TOW missile."

Maddox described the operation of the TOW in scoring a direct hit on a tank about 19 May at Kontum.

"It's very simple," the general said. "You turn the helicopter in the general direction of the target, launch, then break away and track the target with the stabilized sight."

The general said that he had personally scored a direct hit on an enemy tank at a range of 2,800 meters. "As far as I could tell, the missile hit right on the turret. The tank caught fire," he said.

The maximum effective range of the original TOW was 3,000 meters.

Maddox summarized the importance of the operation: "A major new dimension has been added by their [the attack helicopters] proven effectiveness using the TOW missile against modern tanks as well as against other important point targets. With so few having proven so effective in Vietnam, it is now possible to visualize more clearly the great anti-tank potential which far larger numbers of modern attack helicopters and TOW missiles would bring to a modern American division."

After late June 1972, the Kontum experience ended for McInnish and others in the TOW project. Their combat record had been remarkable.

The logistic effort in fielding the TOW team was as remarkable. On the morning of 12 April 1972 — the day it all began — several men sat around a table at Redstone Arsenal in the office of Brigadier Gen. Louis Rachmeler, deputy

commanding general of the Army Missile Command. There were McInnish; Col. Robert W. Huntzinger, TOW project manager; Robert Taylor, TOW deputy project manager; and Major Gen. Edwin Donnley, commanding general of Redstone.

The problem was best stated by Col. Huntzinger, project director:

"Normally, the Army fields a weapon by a plan that includes development, production, testing and deployment. It's done on an orderly basis and takes into account when equipment is available, when it can be supported — and when it's needed.

"But the XM26 [airborne TOW] is an experimental subsystem developed by the Army and Hughes [Aircraft] to adapt the UH-1B helicopter for firing TOW missiles. Because the hardware is experimental there are only a limited number of complete subsystems — the missile launchers, stabilized sights and electronics for the fire control systems — in existence." Taken together, these things were called the "package."

Many problems remained before the "package" could be delivered to Vietnam. The TOW equipment was in storage — and not one U.S. Army soldier had ever fired the TOW from a helicopter. The men in Gen. Rachmeler's office believed these problems should be solved immediately — and within two days, the Department of the Army asked to have the airborne TOW sent to Vietnam, to be ready for combat in seven days in the battles of the Easter offensive.

There was no time to train new men. McInnish, a civilian engineer, became leader of the technical-support team going with the team to Vietnam. Traveling with him would be as many as possible of the demonstration team that had been sent to Germany.

The phone calls began. Jim Follett of Bell Aircraft, expert technician on the UH-1B helicopter, came from a Navy project in San Diego.

The TOW's prime contractor, Hughes Aircraft, contributed four men to the team — Tom Zogorski and Dennis Camp, engineers, and technicians James Faulk and Kenneth Blum — all experts on the TOW's airborne guidance system.

Phone calls continued to locate the two gunships, found at Ft. Lewis, Wash. The remaining XM26 hardware was flown to the Culver City, Calif., Hughes Aircraft plant where it was combined with equipment already stored for completed XM26 systems and assembled and checked. At the same time, refurbishment began on the helicopters at Ft. Lewis, and two more men were added to the crew: Lt. Col. Patrick L. Feore, Jr., and Chief Warrant Officer Lester Whitels, the gunships' current pilots.

At Redstone, three C-141 aircraft were designated to handle the choppers, crews, missiles and equipment.

Plans also were made to pick up TOW missiles at the Hughes plant in Tucson. The XM26 was readied in El Segundo, Calif.

Six days after the word to go, McInnish left Huntsville, Ala., by commercial flight to Culver City for the final packaging of the XM26. C-141s were loaded and headed west.

After going through Hawaii, Wake Island and Guam, the group unloaded at Tan Son Nhut on 24 April 1972.

They were on their way to give a "package" to Kontum.

That package, the XM26, now called the M26, is standard on attack helicopters such as the AH1S Cobra. More than 250,000 TOWs have been produced to date, and they have been purchased by 32 countries.

ABOUT THE TOW

TOW is an acronym for Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-command-link guided missile. Though relatively heavy (78 kg. in its infantry version — M151E2) and bulky, compared to its more modern counterparts, it is hard to argue with the field and sales success of this effective weapon.

The M151E2 breaks down into five elements which weight 24 kg. or less, so it is infantry-portable over relatively short distances. It is extremely accurate and has a high probability of hitting and destroying any armor on its sights up to 3,750 meters.

The TOW system fires a two-stage, solid-propellant rocket carrying a high-explosive, shaped-charge warhead at 200 meters per second. The warhead is armed after 65 meters and is held on target by an optical tracker bore-sighted to an infrared source. The weapon reads and follows the reflection from the target. Radiation

from the IR source is modulated to prevent missile-sensor confusion between the sight's IR source and other infrared sources such as jet or vehicle exhausts, or flares.

An extremely flexible anti-armor weapon, the TOW was originally designed for both infantry and vehicle-mount use, but this powerful missile found its greatest effect in deployment from helicopter-gunships. Originally, the helicopter-mounted TOW was equipped with a joy-stick-operated sighting device, and this is what was used in the operation described in "Package to Kontum." That sight — the M26 — has been augmented by the Honeywell helmet sight for Bell Huey Cobra gunships and a new laser-sighting system designated LAAT (Laser Augmented Airborne TOW) developed by Hughes Aircraft that will integrate the previously all-IR TOW sight into the new laser-sighted fire-control system Hughes is developing for the AH-1S Cobra. Up to four two-round TOW pods can be mounted on a Cobra while leaving room on the pylons for two mini-guns such as the XM35 20mm gun.

Lethality, training ease, world-wide distribution and mission flexibility all suggest that the TOW will continue to kill tanks for a long time.

— Bill Guthrie

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos

Continued from page 6

Vietnam is one more example of sensationalism, since the group chose the sponsorship of a pornographic magazine and ignored the many responsible groups already dealing with this issue.

Project Freedom has made a public position statement on the Muller visit. Our society could resolve this terrible tragedy, it stated, without "letting it be sandwiched between pages filled with naked, writhing bodies. No doubt Hanoi will use all this to further torment by sending home more boxes of bones from their warehouses of bodies or some such gruesome act rather than provide an accounting of the hundreds we know about.

"Why is it that when so obvious a peddler of sensationalism is beating the drums, our nation waits breathlessly, while for years responsible voices have cried out to be heard on this issue and were ignored?"

George Books, a member of Project Freedom's national advisory board, adds: "They didn't get anything. We were hoping for prime steak, but this turned out to be bologna."

SOF agrees. See next issue for further comment.

LAO RESISTANCE UPDATE . . . . .

Word received in Bangkok from the interior of Laos reveals the result of a secret meeting between powerful key elements of the anti-communist Laotian resistance opposed to the Vietna-

mese-backed regime of Kaysone Phomviharn. Reports indicate the groups met secretly near the Plain of Jars and agreed to a political and military alliance comprising the H'mong guerrillas, representatives of the former Lao royal family, commanders of the Yao resistance, and delegates from the Tiao Fa-Tiao Chuang group, a Chinese-backed movement inactive for some time, but which could provide the necessary logistical support for large-scale military actions in northwest Laos.

The joint political wing of the newly formed alliance has been named the Lao Nationalist Socialist Party, and the combined military wing the National Liberation Front of Laos. National resistance to the Vietnamese-backed regime in Vientiane has intensified significantly over the last year, and the emergence of this new alliance is seen as the first successful step toward unity among the various resistance groups since the collapse of American support in 1975.

The new alliance agreed to a three-phase strategy for the eventual liberation of Laos: (1) the procurement of weapons and ammunition; (2) stepped-up ambushes of Pathet Lao soldiers and Vietnamese and Russian advisers; (3) full-scale insurgency war.

Siang Pasason (People's Voice), the official newspaper of the Lao government, recently condemned "anti-national elements who had sided with China." *Siang Pasason* also accused China of committing regular troops to assist the resistance in the northwest. The newspaper confirmed reports that China was training and equipping large numbers of anti-Pathet Lao guerrillas in bases located in southern China (see "The War That Never Ended," SOF, January '82). China has contributed substantial military, financial and logistical support to the Lao resistance over the past 18 months.

Given the unstable political and economic situation inside Laos and the wide-spread resistance to the Vietnamese army of occupation, resistance leaders are extremely optimistic that their efforts are beginning to pay off: Object — a free and neutral Laos once again.

REDEYES TO THAILAND . . . . . .

The U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, John Gunther Dean, recently presented the first shipment of 20 Redeye surface-to-air missiles, purchased by the Thai military for a reported 1.1 million dollars, at ceremonies at Don Muang Airport in Bangkok. The Redeye, a light shoulder-launched, heat-seeking, low-level SAM, is designed for use by infantry on the forward

edge of the battle area (FEBA). The Redeye is currently being replaced in the U.S. military inventory by the more advanced Stinger, which, unlike the Redeye, can engage an approaching target. The Redeye is restricted to a "tailpipe" launch, and for that reason has been criticized as a "revenge" weapon. Nevertheless, the addition of man-portable SAMs to the Thai air-defense system on the Thai-Cambodian border should prove an effective deterrent against Vietnamese overflights into Thai airspace such as recently occurred when a Soviet Antonov 26 with 15 Vietnamese troops aboard crashed "off course" 90 kilometers inside Thailand.

CHINESE M16? . . . .

A reliable source in the international arms trade in Hong Kong reports that the People's Republic of China is manufacturing a modified version of the U.S. M16A1 for export. The Chinese M16 (not yet seen in the West) reportedly bears U.S. markings, uses standard 5.56mm NATO ammunition, but employs a slightly heavier barrel. Reliability of the new weapon is described as "extremely good."

China has a history of manufacturing counterfeit weapons beginning in the early 1900s when millions of counterfeit Mauser machine pistols began to appear in Asia. Quality was excellent and many are still in use throughout Asia.

Look for the first photographs of this new weapon in SOF.

TOYS FOR TERRORISTS . . .

A relief group in Pakistan says that small, toy-shaped mines are maiming Afghan children.

International Christian Aid, which operates a child sponsorship program for Afghan children in Pakistan says Russian aircraft are dropping mines

Are there American Prisoners of War still alive and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia?

Accumulating evidence strongly suggests that there *are* American Prisoners of War alive and unaccounted for and who remain in captivity.

There is an urgent need for a full accounting by *all* parties regarding information pertinent to missing and captive American servicemen.

There have been more than 350 "live-sighting reports" of American POWs since the Paris Peace Accords were signed in 1973, but the U.S. government has been unable to substantiate any of them. Previous administrations have been less than candid regarding the possibility that American POWs may still survive in prison.

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

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

There is much to be done.

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shaped like dolls, watches and pens along roads used by refugees.

ICA spokesman Steve Lawson said when children fleeing the fighting between Afghan freedom fighters and Soviet troops pick up the objects, they explode and injure or kill the children.

WHOOPS . . .

"An Aerial Ballet: Marine In-Flight Refueling" (SOF, May '82) gave an accurate picture of the latest in aerial fueling for range extension of tactical aircraft, but the pictures were inaccurately captioned.

We're certainly sorry if we misled anybody, but — as many of our readers have pointed out — we did misidentify the A-4 Skyhawks as F-4 Phantoms on pages 59 and 62. We are proud of our readers' acuity and seriously doubt that anyone would have caught *The New Yorker* if they had made this sort of error.

COFFEE AND THE WAGES OF WAR

by Alexander M.S. McColl

Let me tell you about the origin of coffee drinking in the West and its relationship to military history.

In the summer of 1683 (should we be getting ready to celebrate the tricentennial of the event?) the Turks marched up the Danube, defeated the Austrians and laid siege to the city of Vienna, which is really quite far into Western Europe. The Holy Roman Emperor and the rest of the government got out, leaving Ernst Rudiger von Staremberg in command of the city. And the Turks settled down for a long siege.

In due course, the combined armies of just about all of Western Europe, except France, assembled under the command of King John Sobieski of Poland and Charles, Duke of Lorraine, defeated the Turks, raised the siege and captured the Turkish camp. The loot was fabulous: silks, fine horses, oriental rugs, jewels, what-have-you.

At this point a man named Kolschitsky steps onto the stage of history. He was an Austrian who had lived among the Turks and could pass for Turkish. During the siege he had taken on and successfully acted as courier through the Turkish lines between the city and the relieving army. One of the items taken in the Turkish camp had been their supply of coffee beans. These were awarded to Kolschitsky as his share of the loot, since he was in good odor with Authority, knew what to do with them (no one else had any idea) and had ideas for their use. So he went and opened the Blue Bottle Coffee House, which was the original Viennese coffee house.

This was the origin of serious coffee drinking in the West. This was also a great change in the military fortunes of the Austrians and the rest of the "friendlies." Before this, running on beer and German attempts at red wine, they had had great difficulty defending against the Turks. But from this time forward, reinforced with a good cup of coffee for breakfast, they had no great difficulty in pushing the Turks down the Danube and out into the Balkans.

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My table will contain _____% guns; _____% knives; _____% parts; _____% scopes; _____% survival gear; _____% police equipment; _____% SCUBA gear; _____% parachute equipment; % art (gun or military); % militaria; % military surplus; % other (please describe) _____

I agree to abide by federal and state laws and the rules set by Soldier of Fortune.

I understand that I am responsible for all tables in my name and I do not hold Soldier of Fortune responsible for my property.

Signature _____ Date _____

RESERVATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS COMPLETED AND SIGNED FORM.
PAYMENT MUST BE BY CERTIFIED CHECK, CASHIER'S CHECK OR MONEY ORDER.

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

I authorize the following persons to pick up badges for my tables _____

RESERVATIONS NOT ACCEPTED AFTER 1 OCTOBER 1982

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION

12 - 17 October 1982 *
Charlotte, North Carolina

Dear Fellow Adventurers,

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

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

We are also going to have a special seminar this year entitled "Man Against Tank" taught by one of America's best small-unit tacticians, Capt. Larry Dring. More information on classes and seminars will be forthcoming in our next issue.

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

Due to the tremendous response we received at last year's exhibition, we decided to expand our 1982 exhibition to 400 tables. The 1982 SOF Gun Show and Exhibition will begin Thursday 14 October and run through Sunday 17 October. (See reservation form to left.)

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

All of you who wish to attend must arrange your own accommodations. The HQ-Hotel will be the Holiday Inn — Woodlawn located at I-77 and Woodlawn in Charlotte. Reservations may be made by contacting Pam Stoltenborg at (704) 525-5007. Be sure to identify yourself as an SOF Convention delegate. Room rates are: Single — $45.76 per day and Double — $50.96 per day, taxes included. Rooms are also available at the Howard Johnsons — Woodlawn at $38.48 per day Single and $44.72 per day Double. Contact Linda Geer at (704) 525-6220. Days Inn — Woodlawn also has rooms at $34.20 Single and $39.40 Double — Contact Shirley Brown at (704) 527-1620. Howard Johnsons is located across the street and Days Inn is directly adjacent to the Holiday Inn, so you won't miss a thing.

(ROOM CANCELLATIONS: No refunds will be given without 72 hours notice, prior to date of arrival and by 1800 hrs.)

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

DEATH TO TYRANTS,

Robert K. Brown
Editor/Publisher

*TENTATIVE CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Pre-convention courses (Urban Street Survival; PMRS Disaster First Aid; Combat Pistolcraft; Combat Riflecraft; Combat Shotgun Techniques — these courses will be held only if 20 or more students sign up) — 9-11 October.

Three-Gun Match . . . . 12-15 October
Jump School . . . . . 13-15 October
Main Convention . . . . 14-16 October
Exhibition Hall . . . . . 14-17 October

Look for further convention information in the next issue of SOF.

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*1982 SOF CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION FORM**

Mail To: CONVENTION DIRECTOR — P.O. Box 693 — Boulder, CO 80306

Yes, I'm coming to the 3rd Annual SOF Convention!

— Find my Certified Check, Cashiers Check or Money Order enclosed for $100 . . . . . _____

— 1st Airborne Jump School fee $100 . . . . . _____

*— 1st Airborne Jump Fee (qualified jumpers only)** $50 . . . . . _____*
(All Jumpers must pay $100 convention fee)

— Competitive Shooters write for application.

— Exhibitors see form to left.

— Extra Beer-Bust and Banquet Tickets $25 each . . . . . _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

**Pre-registration ends 15 September; after that the fee is $125.00.*

***A qualified parachutist is defined as any person with a current Jump Log Book showing a jump within the past 90 days. 1st Airborne reserves the right to deny anyone access to their program.*

(See other side to complete form)

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

- ***SOF Salutes Project Freedom — POW/MIA ACTION UPDATE with special report by SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown.***
- ***IPSC-Sanctioned 3-GUN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICAL SHOOTING MATCH to determine the world's best Combat Shooter.***
- ***400 Table Gun Show and Exhibition at CHARLOTTE CIVIC CENTER.***
- ***One of the largest displays of Automatic Weapons in the world.***
- ***1st Airborne Jump School and Tactical WWII-Type Combat Jump!***
- ***SOG (Special Operations Group) 2nd Annual Seminar on cross-border operations in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam 1958-1973.***
- ***Man Against Tank — a SOF Special seminar by Captain Larry Dring on the ways and means to smash Soviet armor.***
- ***David Isby on the Soviet army and the war in Afghanistan.***
- ***James Fender on Mercenaries and the Law.***
- ***Robert Caldwell with a Central America update.***

- ***YELLOW RAIN — a SOF exclusive on the communist use of poisonous gas.***
- ***Beer Bust and Awards Banquet.***

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ ***Zip Code*** _____

Phone Number _____ ***Age*** _____

FLAK

Continued from page 8

ple who are trying to push this garbage off on us.

Tony Gray
Abilene, Texas

...I would prefer to see an M16 with its bayonet in the ground, the way we did it in the battlefield.

Mark M. Reveaux
Stony Creek, Connecticut

...It is apparent that this monument reflects the political convictions of the VVMF jury and is meant to condemn military action rather than honor the men who answered the call to arms....a black marble latrine.

Robert G. Wheaton
San Antonio, Texas

...To us who served in the 'Nam and to those who died there this is just another shot in the back. We, the people who were there, do not want a hole to jump into like when we used to hide from 122mm rockets.

Thomas M. Cooney
Union, New Jersey

...If you have ever been on the road between Taos and Eagle's Nest, N.M., you would have seen a memorial to those who died in Vietnam without making moral or political judgments.

Pat Schmitt
Buena Vista, Colorado

...Maya Ying Lin is right about the memorial acting as a sound barrier: It will serve to silence our memories in darkness.

Larry G. Payne
San Bernardino, California

...The moral difference between the soldier and the civilian lies in the field of civic virtue. A soldier accepts personal responsibility for the safety of the body politic of which he is a member, defending it — if need be — with his life. The civilian does not. But the civilians have had their say, and the architects of defeat have designed a crypt for us to lie in.

John W. Wells III
Newport Beach, California

AFGHAN BENEFICIARIES ...

Sirs:

Having recently gone back into the Navy, I was given a stack of paperwork to complete. The insurance forms baffled me. I'm single, have no children and my parents are well-off, so, I decided what-the-hell.

If I should kick off, you, the NRA-ILA and my cousin split the cash ($35,000). If your Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund should be no more, please put your share to good use.

During my five years of active service with the Navy, I and countless other unknown sailors kept turning down all those countless extra insurance offers on the grounds that we were single. I hope some more single GIs will think of good projects like yours when they fill out insurance forms.

David P. Hood
North Bend, Washington

COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Continued from page 10

Most of us practice in normal daylight but rarely at dusk or dark. Be they police, military, or private citizens, they expend little effort with night shooting.

Because of the difficulty of night-shooting, it would seem that an inventor of a working night sight would be swamped: It has been invented, but no one seems to know it. Julio Santiago of Nite-Site, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box O, Rosemount, MN 55068, has marketed his luminous sights for years. His sales were once limited to police, but Nite-Site, Inc., now sells to the general public, too. Nite-Sites are shockingly clear in low light or darkness. I have tested them on a number of weapons, and guarantee they will improve your shots in the dark. With Nite-Site-equipped weapons, low-light shots that would be luck become dead certain.

Many people have defensive pistols — and expensive ones at that — but few will spend the relative pittance for good night sights. Police officers won't use anything that isn't issued to them or free, so the luminous sights are rarely seen on duty sidearms. And those soldiers who really need the special night sights for their rifles are usually the last to get them. For these people and for the private citizen who wants to assume responsibility for his own protection there is a simple answer.

Nite-Site, Inc. sells replacement beads for shotguns, front sights for AR-15/M16 or Ruger Mini-14 rifles, and inserts that can be installed by your gunsmith. A shop installation service is offered for S&W, Colt, and Ruger duty sidearms. I have used a number of fighting shotguns with the Nite-Site bead, and would not consider my shotgun fully equipped without one.

ANOTHER firm has entered the luminous-sight business. The "T-Sight" marketed by Self-Powered Lighting, Inc., Dept. SOF, 8 Westchester Plaza, Elmsford, NY 10523, are tiny, tritium-filled, phosphor-coated capsules that are installed on your handgun sights. The T-Sight allows positive, fast sight alignment in poor light, or relative darkness. Even in daylight these inserts help the gun sights to stand out for faster pick-up. The T-Sight, like the Nite-Site, requires no bulbs, no batteries, and no wiring of any kind.

Using either of these sight systems in low-level light or darkness increases nighttime accuracy. T-Sight does only custom sight installations and will fit T-Sights to nearly any handgun. Even if you have special sights, skilled plant gunsmiths can machine and precision-fit the T-Sight to your weapon. Ross Seyfried, the current World Champion, uses them on his Pachmayr .45 Combat Special. Luminous sights are not a crutch, but a vital tool in combat pistolcraft.

CLASSIFIED

CURRENT REQUIREMENTS — $1.00 per word per insertion — $20.00 minimum. Personals 50¢ per word — $10.00 minimum. Copy must be accompanied by remittance. Insertion will not be made without payment. Include name and address in counting number of words. FOR EXAMPLE: P.O. Box 693 = 3 words; Boulder, Colorado = 2 words; 80306 = 1 word. Abbreviations such as A.P., 20mm, U.S., etc., count as one word each. Hyphenated words and telephone numbers are counted as two words. Please type or print all ads. We do not furnish proofs. All ads MUST be received by the 15th of the fourth month preceding cover date. We reserve the right to delete or change any copy which we determine to be objectionable. Mail to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Classified, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

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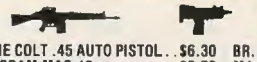

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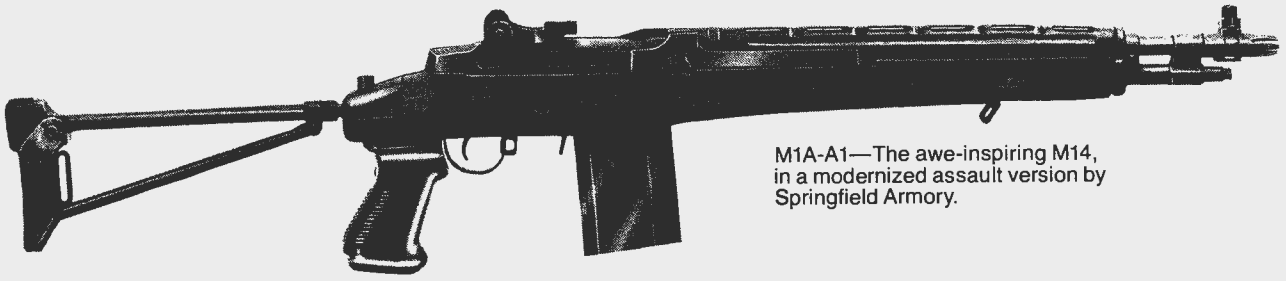

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