

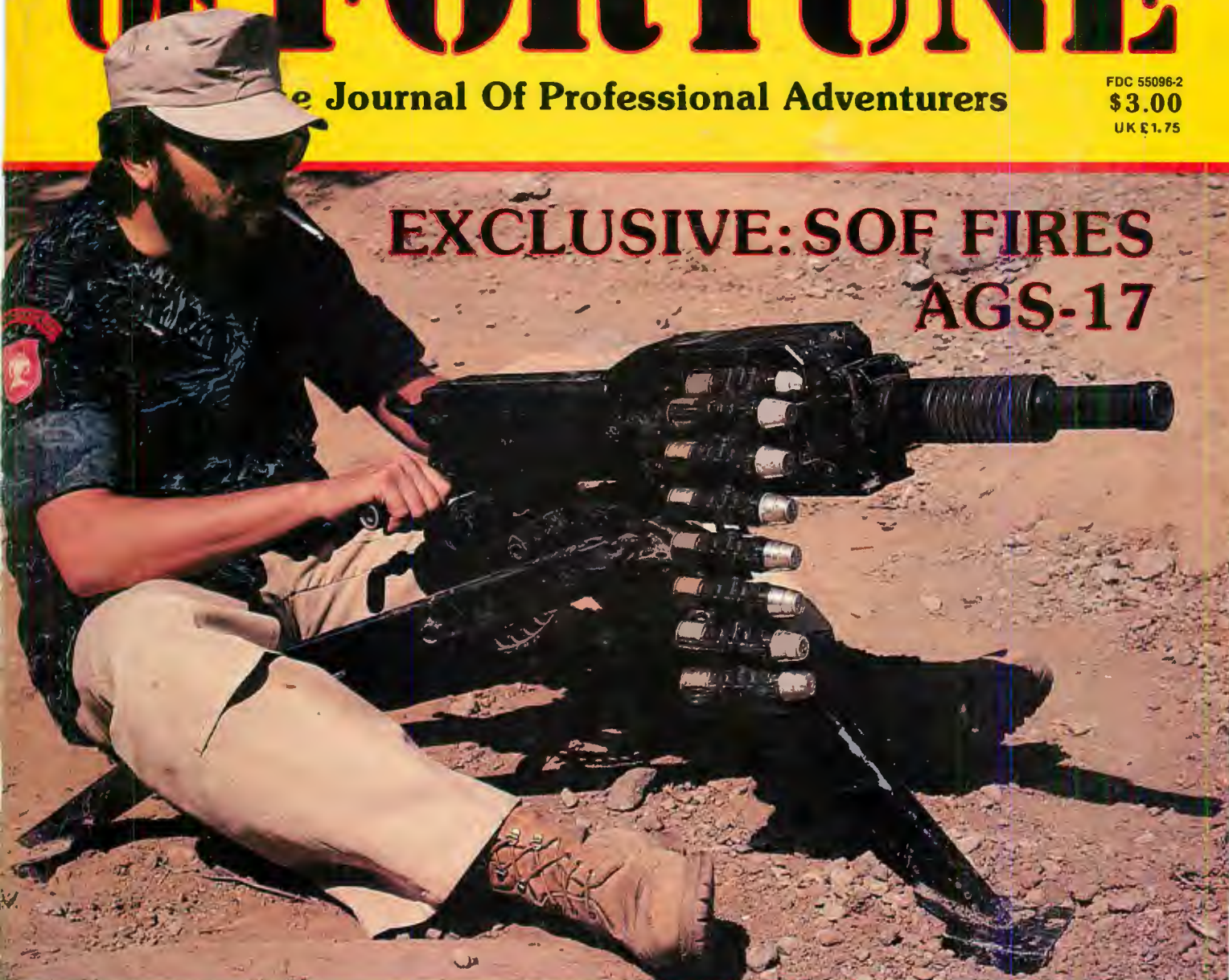


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As Reid Daly describes it in his book:

"The parade ground suddenly opened up in front of them (the Scouts). There were few men in the column who did not gasp in amazement at the sight that greeted them — thousands of terrorists on parade.

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Reid Daley quotes one Scout: "I just hope we don't run out of ammunition!"

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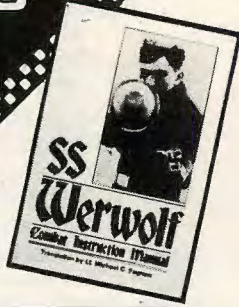
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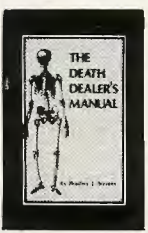
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

## NRA ELECTIONS

**O**BSERVERS from totalitarian states must consider the political contortionism of our democracy wasteful and degenerate. When a Red Chinese citizens' organization voices an opinion, that statement certainly represents the government's ideas, too. On the other hand, when the Second Amendment Foundation and the National Coalition to Ban Handguns blare contradictory ultimata on the relationships among guns, freedom and crime, it is hard to tell who is in charge.

The National Rifle Association has its built-in battles, just like the Republic. The NRA has increased its vulnerability to political infighting over the last years by becoming more and more democratic. Directors and Life Members once elected the Executive Vice-President. Now, holders of life memberships not only vote on by-law changes at the annual meetings, they directly elect that most powerful official in America's best-known gun-lobby.

The Federation For the National Rifle Association (FFNRA) has been the NRA faction most dedicated to giving voting members the power they now have. As a member of the conservative press and supporter of rights to self-determination for all, we probably don't need to say that we applaud the programs of the FFNRA. The only problem with the forthcoming NRA directors' election is that there is a campaign within the older leadership of the NRA against the FFNRA.

This campaign is not a nefarious plot, nor do we seek to characterize it as such. Certainly, Executive Vice-President of the NRA Harlon B. Carter fired Neal Knox as head of the Institute for Legislative Action out of the healthiest kind of democratic and parliamentary conflict. Carter's party would like to soft-pedal the issues so dear to hard-core Second Amendment rights partisans. Perhaps the "Old Guard" believes that such moderation on certain kinds of gun regulation and restriction will make their stands on other gun issues more credible to the general public. Perhaps they believe that compromise will improve their image in the press and leverage in Congress. They would also like to restore election of Executive Vice-President to the Directors.

The FFNRA — and SOF — disagree. We believe that the right to bear arms is inalienable to the American citizen, as it is expressed in the Bill of Rights. Furthermore, we believe that open, public and democratic government of the NRA is more important than the convenience of government by the few. *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine endorses the candidates of the Federation For the National Rifle Association, and the principles of self-determination and unequalled rights to bear arms that these candidates represent. The names listed here are those of the nominees of the FFNRA, including the recently deposed Neal Knox. If you see these names on your NRA directors' ballot, be sure to vote for them:

Sue W. Caplan	W.L. Kempton	Charles Provan
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Robert Corbin	Neal Knox	Richard H. Ray
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Max Crunk	Merwin Lodge	Robert Tullis
John Dingell	Clarence Lovell	Miles Ugarkovich
Robert M. Garrick	David Lyman	Francis Winters
Marion Hammer	Richard Metcalf	Michael D. Yacino
J.D. Jones	Ted Pool	

These nominees represent your best chance to keep your vote in the NRA and *all* your firearms.

— Robert K. Brown

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FEBRUARY 1983

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## POWS WANTED— ALIVE ...

Sirs:

Having recently read Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt's letter to President Reagan, I would like to make the following offer:

I will contribute \$10,000 to a reward fund for any American Prisoner of War now being held in Southeast Asia who is returned to the United States alive. The reward would be paid upon the delivery of the freed prisoner and proper verification by your staff.

Martin M. Foersterling  
Houston, Texas

*SOF can add nothing to the honor this patriotic American has done himself. We add our prayers and our financial support to those of Mr. Foersterling. — The Eds.*

## LEGAL MATTER ...

Sirs:

I am a fairly new secretary to an attorney at law. Since March 1982 he has been bringing your magazine into the office for clients to read, and had not mentioned to me that he was a collector of the magazine nor the value he placed on it. This past week, due to a large accumulation of magazines, I threw out the issues from March up to the September issue. To say the least, he was extremely upset, and because of the high value he places on your magazine I am extremely upset.

Would it be possible to replace the issues which I threw away? He is of the opinion that they cannot be replaced; however, I am of the opinion that if I don't ask, I will never know.

I will pay whatever costs are necessary to replace these magazines.

Thank you in advance for helping me out of what has been a very bad experience on a new job.

Name Withheld  
Gainesville, Florida

*Glad to help. See our back-issue information on pp. 80-81. Your refusal to give up in advance does you credit. — The Eds.*

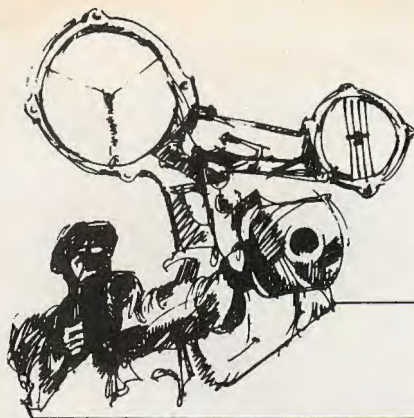
## CIA LISTLESS ...

Sirs:

I am presently a subscriber to your magazine and enjoy receiving it each and every month. I am writing this letter, because I have heard from various sources that if one is a subscriber to *Soldier of Fortune* somehow the CIA is furnished with the subscriber's name.

I would appreciate it very much, if you would write and answer this question for me. If the CIA for some reason has acquired my name because of my subscription, I will double it and be glad to forward my name to them in capital letters.

Once again, keep up the excellent work.



## FLAK



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SQUAW

I look forward to many more issues. Oh, by the way, I spent almost eight years in 'Nam myself, believing in that cause, till I was run out in 1975.

Robert B. Davidson  
Bend, Oregon

*This persistent rumor keeps cropping up. SOF has never given its subscription list to the CIA — and wouldn't if they asked for it. — The Eds.*

## 'NAM DEJA VU ...

Sirs:

In the September '82 issue of SOF there was an article entitled "Amtrak Ambush" that hit really close to home. My brother was stationed at Chu Chi at the time this event took place.

My brother was deeply affected by the war — the same as thousands of other men — but until now, I never knew how much.

After showing him the article, I finally got him to talk about his experiences, and found out that he had been hit twice.

I want to thank the author, William Kestell, and the editors of this excellent magazine for my brother's new openness.

Brent Sealscott  
Rockford, Ohio

## SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS ...

Sirs:

I'm a GI stationed in West Germany. I'm writing to tell you about the poor state of training quality over here. It seems that all our commanders are concerned about is working on M113s, and spit, shine and starch. I personally joined the infantry to learn how to fight for freedom. I quit a \$2,000 per month job in the oilfields for this. At the time, the Iran crisis had just begun and I was ready to put my life on the line for my country. Instead, our leaders cowered and disgraced our nation.

That goes the same for the nation we're stationed in with a bunch of people who don't want us here and an Army that does not want to train us. So we are here, getting shafted from both sides.

I realize the threat facing us and I have seen the enemy. I just wish that our leaders would pull their heads out and see that we want to be trained to fight — not just look pretty and sweep streets. Please publish this so that there's a chance that someone who can make a difference will read it and think for once.

Name withheld

*Continued on page 90*



# THE SOG PAPERS.

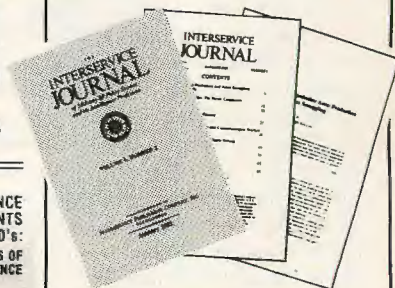
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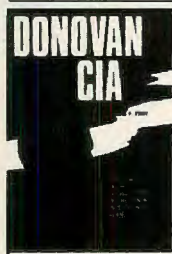
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ASK any "gun expert" about the ideal defensive sidearm: You will hear the merits of .357 Magnum, 9mm Parabellum, and .45 ACP pistols described in detail. Revolvers and autoloading pistols will generate hours of argument along with minutiae of double-action, single-action and large magazine capacity. But most gun owners know little of technique or technology: They want a handgun hidden under a pillow or in a drawer should danger arrive. The most popular solutions to the problem of what's small, light and cheap are either the .25 automatic pistol or .38 Special two-inch-barrel revolver. The first choice is ideal only if your need for a weapon is more imaginary than real. The .25 auto is worthless in a fight.

The other popular choice for self-protection in a handgun is the two-inch-barrel .38 Special revolver. Small, lightweight, easy to carry without discomfort, the .38 "snubby" is America's favorite sidearm. I must be occasionally reminded that most of the readers of SOF could care less about combat pistol competition especially when sidearm costs start at \$400.

The .38 snubby is an inexpensive, but effective compromise. I know scores of competitive shooters who carry a two-inch .38 regularly and only take it off when they don their fancy combat-competition pistols.

Once you decide upon .38 snubbies, pick one that suits your needs. The original snubby is the Colt .38 Detective Special. Currently priced at \$334 retail for a blued-steel model, the Colt Detective Special is the most expensive of the three most popular. Smith & Wesson offers its excellent "J"-frame revolvers, the M-36 Chief Special being the most popular at a suggested retail of \$224 in blued steel. The S&W snubbies all seem to be black-market priced so most Chiefs go for near \$300. Charter Arms markets a .38 two-inch revolver called the Undercover. It is a five-shot .38 Special like the S&W and has proven to be a very fine handgun. One of the most attractive features of the Charter Arms Undercover .38 is the very reasonable retail price of \$190.

Recently Colt Firearms decided to make a snubby .38 revolver that can compete with the Charter Arms weapon. Although Colt dropped its Agent .38 revolver in 1978, it has reintroduced this revolver with minor changes in fit and finish. The Agent is nearly identical to the Detective Special except that the Agent has an alloy frame and smaller stocks and is ideal for use in ankle holster or packing in the pocket. The final product is a rugged little snubby that is perfect for the person wanting a top-notch belly gun at a reasonable cost of \$189.95.

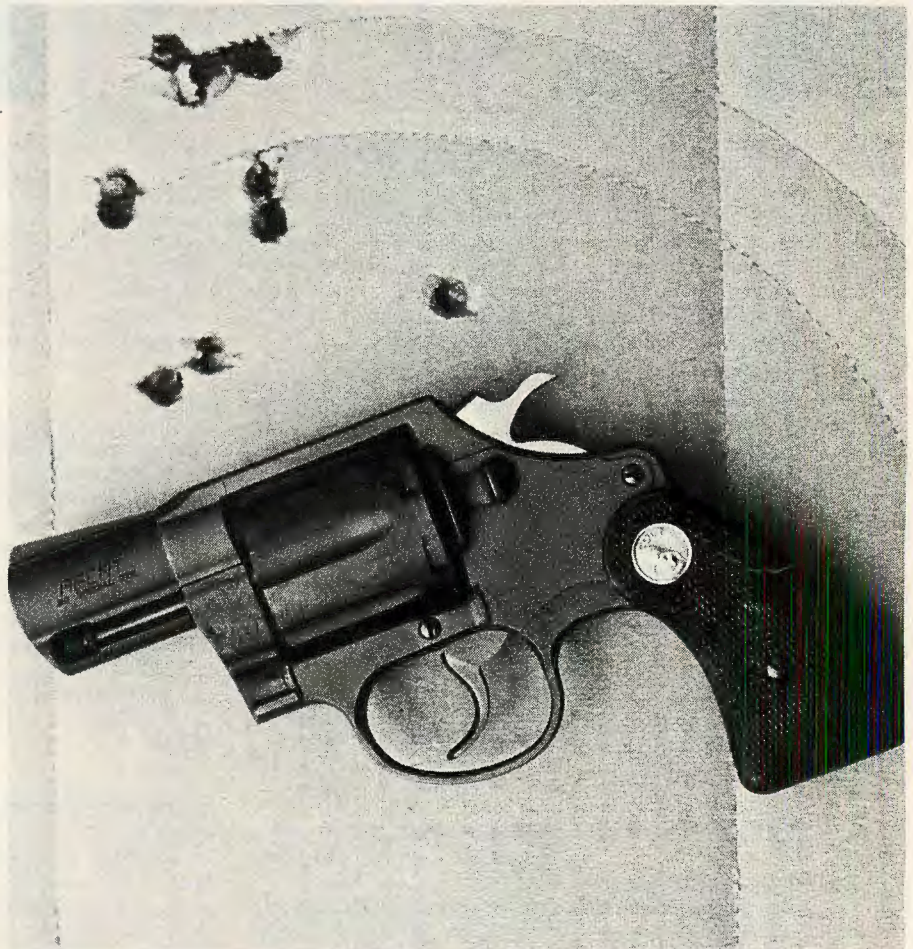
The new Agent is less expensive because Colt has skipped the final exterior fit and finish common to all other Colt revolvers. The new Agent shows tool and casting marks on the outside of the gun. The sideplate fits, but is not smooth. The Agent is given a dull-gray Parkerized finish. Combined with dark-stained walnut stocks, the Agent has a very Spartan appearance.

# COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

## The Agent: Colt Quality at a Bargain Price



by Ken Hackathorn



**Rugged, accurate and cheap, Colt's reintroduced Agent in .38 Special.**  
Photo: Ken Hackathorn

Lighter alloy-frame guns kick much more than steel-frame weapons, but considering the ranges for which these sidearms are intended, that hardly matters. The manufacturers of most alloy-frame revolvers recommend against the use of +P .38 ammo. Stick to regular-velocity .38 Special loads if you want your light-weight to last. Standard mid-range .38 wadcutter ammunition should be used by most owners who are not highly skilled handgun

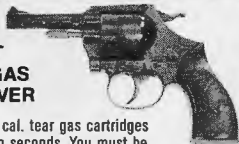
shooters. Shot-to-shot recovery is fast, accuracy is superb, and the properly placed wadcutter will do the job nicely.

My Agent has proven to be every bit as good as all other Colt revolvers. The action is smooth and positive. Accuracy is certainly acceptable. The sights are easy to find. For a "walk-around gun," the Agent is one of the best bargains in the U.S. market. Bargains in guns seem to be very elusive these days — maybe Colt will try the same thing with a less expensive .45 auto or Commander in Spartan dress. After all, those old GI .45 autos weren't so bad, were they? ☒



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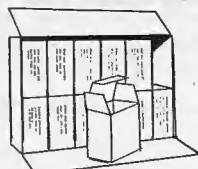
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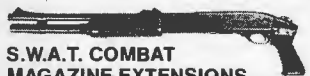
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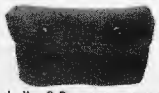
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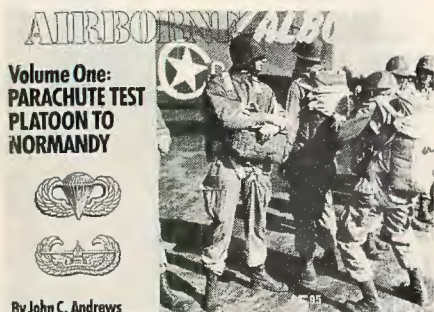
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# IN REVIEW

**AIRBORNE ALBUM. Volume One: Parachute Test Platoon To Normandy.** By John C. Andrews. Phillips Publications, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 168, Williamstown, NJ 08095-0168. 1982. \$5.95. Review by William Brooks.



By John C. Andrews

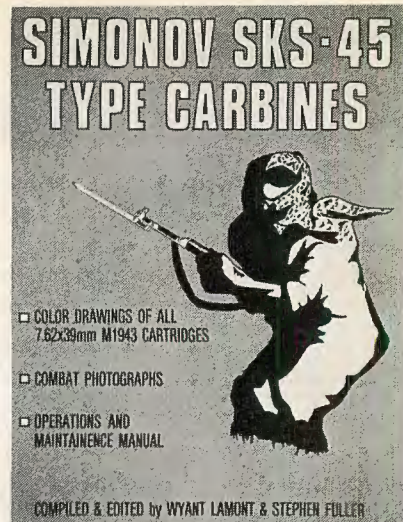
**T**HIS is the first work in a series of pictorial volumes telling the stories of American elite forces. Volume One describes the Parachute Test Platoon, the formation of the 82nd Airborne Division and its deployment to England in 1942 with Operations Torch, Husky and Overlord, and additional training missions in New Guinea and Italy. Also covered are USMC parachute units, OSS (Office of Strategic Services) and 1st Special Service Force airborne beginnings.

Relying much on photos with extended captions, the book covers uniforms, organization, history, weapons and insignia. The author has attempted to use as many unpublished illustrations as possible. Of the 98 black-and-white photos in the book, I had previously seen only six. The insignia and uniform comments are extremely interesting and informative. For WWII buffs or insignia collectors, this book will enhance your reference collection — and at a price you cannot afford to shuffle by.

**SIMONOV SKS-45 TYPE CARBINES.** Compiled and edited by Wyant Lamont and Stephen Fuller. Military Arms Research Service, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 26772, San Jose, CA 95159. 1981. 218 pp. Black-and-white and color-illustrated. \$19.95. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

**A**T least several thousand SKS carbines were brought back as souvenirs from the Vietnam War. Military Arms Research Service (MARS) has published a book which addresses itself exclusively to this weapon. Although authors Lamont and Fuller are eminently qualified to write about military arms, neither makes much effort to weave his respective knowledge into any semblance of original textual material — except in the area of ammunition.

Although not explicitly identified as such, almost half of the book is a well-



□ COLOR DRAWINGS OF ALL 7.62x39mm M1943 CARTRIDGES

□ COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHS

□ OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE MANUAL

COMPILED & EDITED BY WYANT LAMONT & STEPHEN FULLER

done English translation of the Soviet SKS technical manual. The manual, written in the same monotonous, precise, dry manner as U.S. Army TMs, describes in detail the parts and operating mechanisms, the principles of operation, disassembly and assembly, cleaning and lubrication, use, accuracy checks and adjustments, and the packing and storage of ammunition.

A 30-page section of excellent, detailed close-up photos shows some of the salient features which characterize the different SKS variants. However, we have only the

*Continued on page 87*

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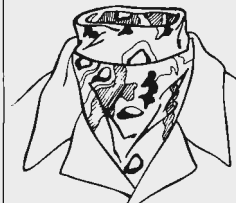
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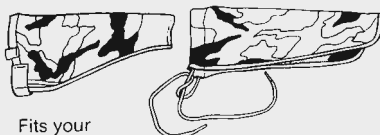


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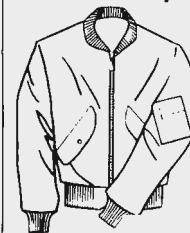
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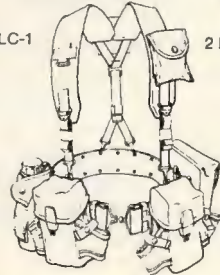


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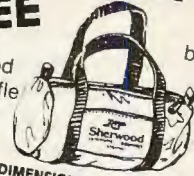
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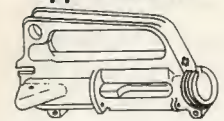
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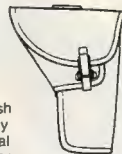
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# I WAS THERE

## The Luck of Lucky Stevens

by Jack Gilligan  
as told to M.L. Jones

*A between-battles refueling operation nearly killed Jack Gilligan when he was serving with the 6th Fleet in 1945. His ship, USS Stevens, DD 479, was a Fletcher-class can of 2,700 tons, and in combat had shot down seven kamikazes, received six purple hearts and engaged the enemy 16 times. As he tells it:*

**T**HEY called her "Lucky Stevens." "A crock," I thought as soon as I boarded: battlescars everywhere — welders working fore, aft and amidships. Probably the funniest problem the beast had was her keel. It curved to starboard into the water at 45 degrees! The old man had chased some Jap PTs across a coral reef in a night action — our "bent-beak" resulted. The Yankee-devils' shallow-draft destroyers streaking at 40 knots across the reefs might have puzzled enemy skippers until they saw us. Then they'd have died laughing.

I often chuckled as I watched the keel snowplowing through the water 30 feet below. Later, I had reason to ponder.

The run to Korea, where we had been assigned to put a prize crew on a captured Japanese destroyer, was beyond our steaming range — especially since we were dragging our ass in the water.

The old man decided to fuel on the run with fuel hoses running from the tanker to our fittings on the boat deck. Matching speeds, both ships ran parallel, fuel hoses waving in the breeze with the tanker on our port side heading north in the South China Sea.

I had been on scullery duty in the chow hall for a week, and I now found we were out of soap. Was the spare soap in the scullery? No way! It was in the forepeak of the Chief Petty Officer quarters (extreme bow at the anchor position).

I patiently plodded half the length of the ship to the CPO quarters and started opening lockers at eye-level. The first locker was empty and dark. Suddenly, I felt a sharp lurch to starboard, and the locker doors flew open. This time, I saw daylight clearly from inside the locker!

With the quick, sure wit of a Stan Laurel or Joe E. Brown, I figured: "This ain't right so let's get the hell out of here!" As I ran toward the ladder to topside, another sailor bolted out of the forward head, pants and shorts dangling around his ankles, and shot up the ladder. As he popped the hatch open, we saw fuel lines lashing wildly across the deck, and the tanker was 50 yards out and moving away. We dashed down the deck to the crew quarters and safety.

Later, I got the shakes when crew members told me what happened. The port steering motor had crapped out suddenly. The quartermaster on the wheel had sprinted the length of the ship to the aft rudder housing where he had hand-wres-

ted that big bastard rudder to starboard — away from the tanker. But not before the bow had knifed into the tanker's side. Our anchor was stripped away and a six-foot gash torn in the bow above the waterline — within 24 inches of my face. Another two feet, and I'd have been jelly spread around the inside of the compartment under thousands of tons of pressure.

Still later, I wondered what bought me the two feet. Of course! That bloody keel! It had slowed the turn from starboard and given recovery time. How 'bout that? I'm alive today because of a reef in the Coral Sea. All stand now for two choruses of the Navy Hymn! ☩

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

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

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## SHAW TOP SHOT IN SOF'S 3-GUN INTERNATIONAL ...

The 1982 SOF Three-Gun International combat match at the Third Annual Convention in Charlotte, N.C., 12 through 14 October 1982, saw 120 top shooters compete for over \$34,000 in prize money, guns and gear.

John Shaw of Memphis, Tenn., was the overall champ, while also taking top honors in both pistol and shotgun competition. Choate Machine and Tool Company sponsored first place, presenting Shaw with \$5,000 in cash, a trophy, the SOF Gold Medal, a Choate-customized Remington 1100 and a stainless-steel Mini-14.

Bill Rogers of Jacksonville, Fla., took second overall, as well as taking top rifle. Rogers was presented \$2,000 in cash from sponsor Heckler & Koch, as well as an H&K 91 with bipod, trophy and SOF's Silver Medal.

SOF-sponsored J. Michael Plaxco of Roland, Ark., took third overall, receiving from Beretta, U.S.A. Corp. \$1,600 cash, trophy, Beretta 92SB 9mm pistol and Bronze Medal.

Fourth place, sponsored by Bianchi Gunleather, was won by last year's Three-Gun International winner Craig Gifford, who was presented \$1,300, a Silver Trophy and a Colt Mark IV Gold Cup .45.

Fifth place honors went to Mark Lonsdale, who won \$1,100 from Bianchi, with Silver Trophy and Gold Cup .45. Lynn Schoening took sixth, receiving an H&K VP70-Z 9mm pistol, and \$1,000 in cash and a Silver Trophy from Heckler & Koch.

Springfield Armory sponsored the rifle match, and presented winner Bill Rogers with \$600 and an M1A1 rifle. Top shotgunner and pistol shot John Shaw received a Mossberg 500 shotgun and \$800 from A.P. Mossberg and Sons, and \$600 and a Colt Mark IV Gold Cup .45 from Roger's Holster Co., for winning the respective matches.

Competition was tight, and shooters had to cope with some wet weather and a tough, practical course designed by match director Jake Jattaras. Look for full match coverage in a future issue.

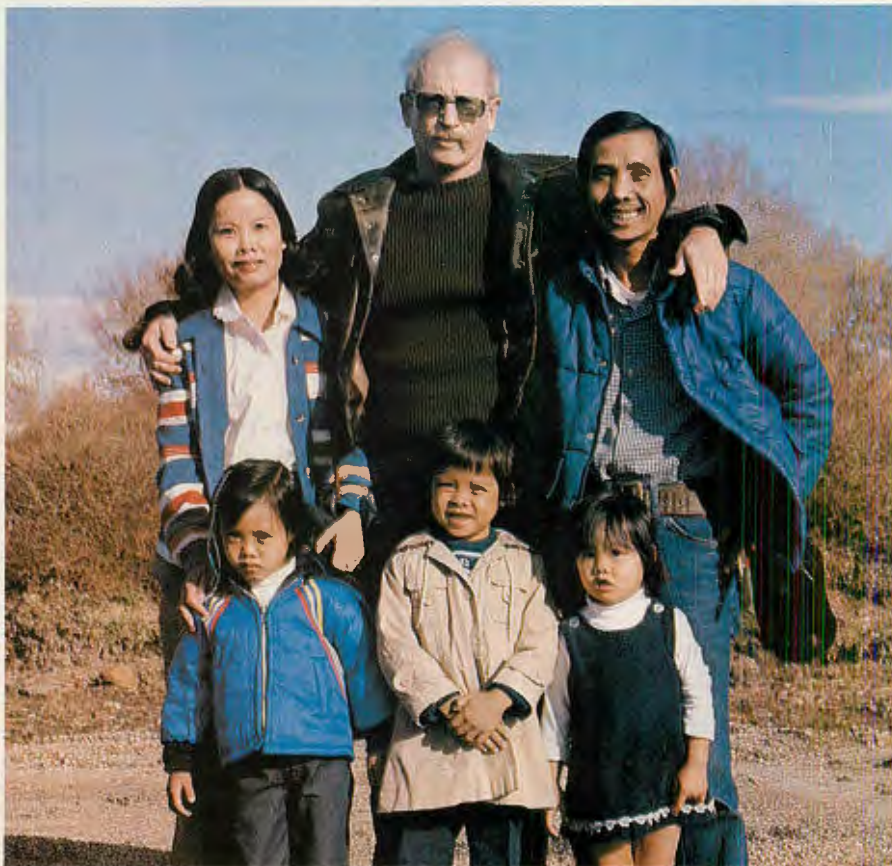
## BOB BROWN SPONSORS VIETNAMESE FAMILY ...

SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown is the sponsor of Giang Bang La; his wife, The; and their children, Hung, Quyen and Vy. Giang was Brown's interpreter during his stint as a Special Forces "A"-Team commander in Vietnam. Giang is employed at SOF as Assistant Mail Room Foreman and, along with his family, lives in Boulder.

During his tour of duty with Brown's team and subsequent service with the 3rd Mike Force, Giang

# BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos and John Metzger



Robert K. Brown with Vietnamese family he brought to United States. Giang Bang La, assistant foreman in the *Soldier of Fortune* mail room, his wife, The, and children Hung, Quyen and Vy stand with Brown outside SOF offices in Boulder.

was wounded three times and otherwise distinguished himself fighting communists. We know that SOFers join us in extending a hearty welcome to these Vietnamese friends and in wishing them a happy resettlement in their new home.

## BOY HERO ...

Heroes come in all sizes and ages, and they don't have to be soldiers to achieve that status. One such is seven-year-old Scott McKenzie of Ferguson, Mo., a St. Louis suburb.

Scott is credited with using himself as a decoy to save the lives of his sister, Carrie, 3, and her little friend,

Kyle Naes, 4, from the attack of a vicious 100-pound wolf-dog. By so doing, he suffered savage bites from the animal, leaving wounds that required more than 1,000 stitches to close.

The animal, half wolf and half Siberian husky, leaped the backyard fence of the McKenzie home in north St. Louis County. As it bore down, Scott shoved the two younger children into the safety of a many-barred jungle gym and then dashed toward his house to lure the dog away and to try and get help from his dad, Charles, a Ferguson policeman.

But Scott never made it. The dog, so big that his jaws could lock around the boy's body, leaped upon him, bore him down and dragged him 70 yards. Then Carrie ran for the house and summoned her father, who shot the dog, which nevertheless escaped and had to be hunted down and killed.

Scott has had 10 operations and faces three to five more years of



therapy, including at least 10 more operations and psychological counseling. His worst wound left a vivid scar that runs from the left corner of his mouth upward past his left cheekbone. The boy also lost parts of his left ear and lips in the attack.

While Scott was recovering, Galveston County, Texas, police detective Lt. Jack Leonard read about the incident and he and other members of the Detective Bureau wrote the boy a letter of commendation and made him an honorary deputy sheriff.

Galveston citizens thought that wasn't enough and invited Scott and his family (mother, Debbie, father, and sisters Carrie and Casey, 9), to the city for a heroes' reception which included a parade and a dance which raised about \$10,000 to help defray the estimated \$50,000 in medical bills already incurred.

## AK-80 AND SOV FLAK-JACKETS ...

Military Small Arms Editor Peter G. Kokalis did the work of several ordinary journalists in his last trip to Pakistan (see "Raiders of the Lost Grenade Launcher," on p. 46) but found enough spare time to investigate rumors of a new Russian rifle: the AK-80. According to Kokalis's Afghan sources, it is a scoped Kalashnikov which fires the new Russian 5.45mm round. It may be a micro-caliber sniping weapon, similar to the Dragunov in appearance.

Kokalis also received information in trade from unnamable Western intelligence sources that his Russian body-armor sample captured in Angola (see "Bad News for Boris," SOF, January '82) is one of five types of current-issue Russian body armor. Two of these are known to be a conventional heavy metallic-plate vest and an unusual "fish-scale" type. The scales are titanium and fixed to a garment made of a fabric similar to Kevlar®.

## COLLECTOR'S SMG IN EL SALVADOR ...

Weapons took up most space not filled by camouflage-clad conventioners at several functions of the now-legendary '82 SOF convention, but probably the most interesting weapon there appeared only as a fuzzy Polaroid photograph.

An El Salvadoran citizen slipped up to SOF Military Small Arms Editor Peter G. Kokalis and offered him a peek at an interesting picture. It gave no information or detail at all, but the *hombre* had copied relevant printed engraving on the gun. The blurred photo depicted a very rare Mauser MP-57 9mm Parabellum SMG. Only 25 were ever made and this piece bore the serial number "021." Some El Sal-

vadoran communist terrorist could have sold this and gone to a healthier clime ... but we're sure the thought will not comfort him now.

The MP-57 was developed in 1955 and 1956 at the Erma factory at Dachau. After development, a limited production contract was turned over to Mauserwerke in Oberndorf. Mauser slightly redesigned the weapon, and made 25 of them in 1957. The blow-back-operated MP-57 fires from an open bolt and is economically made from sheet-metal stampings with a bare minimum of milled parts. An advanced SMG for its time, it was compact because of a telescoping bolt and had a cyclic rate of fire of about 800 rpm. Interestingly enough, it eats from a slightly modified MP-40 stick.

nine of the mobile SS-20 launchers, with each missile carrying three individual warheads individually targeted. The missile's range is in excess of 3,000 nautical miles.

Initially, the Soviets proposed to stop further deployment of the missiles in exchange for a halt by the United States of planned deployment of the ground-launched cruise missile and Pershing 2 ballistic missiles in Europe. The Russians later said they would unilaterally stop SS-20 base construction. But, they didn't.

## MERCES REFUSE TO JOIN SEYCHELLES REBELS ...

Four foreign mercenaries sen-



## POW PSCAM ALERT ...

SOF is conducting an investigation of the various scams relating to American POW/MIA rescue efforts in Southeast Asia. We would like to hear from anyone who has invested money in such a scheme and is dissatisfied with the results. Just write to SOF, c/o Bulletin Board POW/MIA Investigation, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

## I VAN CONTINUES WITH SS-20 ...

The USSR has violated its own ban on continued deployment of the SS-20 nuclear-armed intermediate-range ballistic missile. U.S. officials are using reconnaissance satellite photographs of three new operational SS-20 sites in Europe to convince NATO that the Soviets are indeed breaking their word. Deployment of the missiles at the three new sites brings operational SS-20s in Europe to a total of 324. Each base contains

tenced to die in the Seychelles refused an offer to join an army mutiny last August despite an offer of freedom by rebel troops. The four men, sentenced to hang for their part in last year's foiled coup led by Col. Mike Hoare, told journalists that the rebels came to their cells and offered to free them if they joined in the mutiny.

"We didn't know what the hell was going on," Briton Bernard Carey said. "We didn't know who was fighting whom, so we refused." South African mercenary Jeremiah Puren said he thought their refusal to take part might help their plea for clemency to President Albert Rene. "We proved we were not a danger to the Seychelles government; in fact, we helped them," he said.

The uprising was crushed after 36 hours by troops loyal to Rene. The four condemned mercs were held at the army base outside Victoria, where the mutineers, demanding dismissal of the defense staff for alleged mistreatment, began the uprising.

Continued on page 91



**F**ROM the designer's point of view, the Schwarzlose medium machine gun is one of the most intriguing of all the early automatic weapons. Patented in 1902 by its inventor, Andreas Wilhelm Schwarzlose — but first manufactured by Steyr of Austria in 1905 — it's a marvelous blend of precision and simplicity. Until the advent of the Heckler & Koch series in the late 1950s, the Schwarzlose was the only successful rifle-cartridge auto weapon to employ the retarded-blowback operating principle.

The Schwarzlose succeeds because of the exacting relationship between its barrel length, the proportions of the lever parts in its retarding device and the muzzle velocity of the cartridge it fires.

The retarding mechanism consists of a toggle joint similar to that of the Luger pistol and eventually copied in the .276 Pedersen rifle. This toggle is attached to the bolt on one end and to a fixed axis in the receiver at the other end. The angle between the toggle linkage and its axis of movement is quite small. As the bolt moves rearward, the toggle joint swings through an arc, delaying the opening of the bolt and absorbing the initial shock of recoil. As the toggle swings through its arc, it cocks the firing pin, which has no spring of its own.

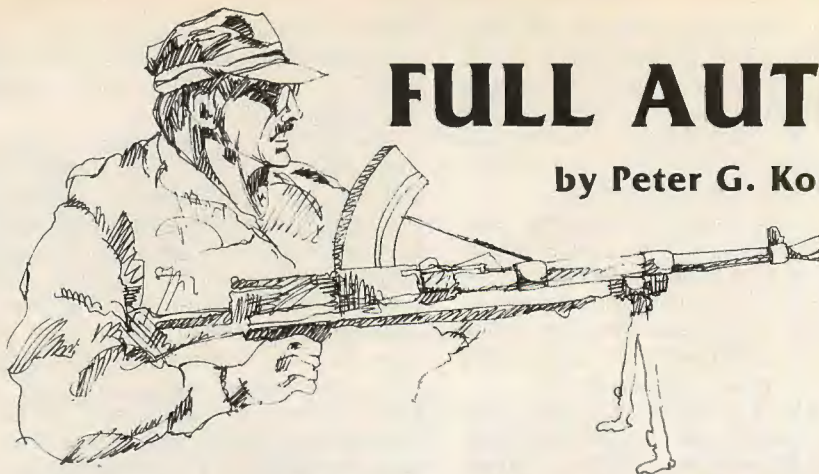
The breech mechanism of the Schwarzlose is never totally locked. The necessary delay in opening is further held in check by the resistance of an exceptionally strong recoil spring. It is the only spring in the system and serves as both buffer and bolt return.

The most critical factor in the design, however, was the barrel length, which had to be carefully calculated for the cartridge being used. The 8x50.5mm Rimmed Austrian Mannlicher cartridge, in which caliber this weapon was first produced, required a barrel length of exactly 20.75 inches. This is the maximum length that can be used to ensure the projectile's clearing the muzzle before recoil of the bolt commences.

As the operating parts have been kept to a minimum, the Schwarzlose can be field-stripped in a few seconds. All of the internal members of the M07/12 I fired and examined (manufactured by Steyr in 1918) had been hand-fitted, polished like the jewels of a Swiss watch, and individually serial-numbered in the Teutonic manner. Unfortunately, such craftsmanship is no longer possible, or required, of the tools of war.

The Schwarzlose has a double trigger which is pressed by the thumbs. Grasping the horizontal wooden grips with the fingers, the left thumb presses down on the automatic safety catch while the right thumb depresses the trigger, releasing the sear (see photo).

As the cartridge is extracted under uncommonly high pressure, it was essential to lubricate the ammunition. A pump was installed to squirt a drop of oil into the chamber itself between each extraction



# FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

## Schwarzlose: Classy Classic



SOF's military small-arms editor, Peter G. Kokalis, fires Schwarzlose Md. 07/12 medium machine gun made by Steyr of Austria in 1918.

and loading. (Assisting extraction by the lubrication of cases was a fairly common practice at one time.)

The Italian Breda Md.37 and a number of the Hotchkiss-type Japanese machine guns required oilers in order to function properly. But, as the Italians learned in Ethiopia, lubricating cases will cause more problems than it solves in dry, dusty environments. Through redesign of the bolt, main spring and toggle link, the oil pump was eliminated on later models of the Schwarzlose.

The Schwarzlose is water-cooled (except for a few unsuccessful air-cooled aircraft and cavalry models) and its stationary barrel allowed use of a simpler water jacket than those of recoil-operated guns like the Vickers, Maxim and Browning, with their reciprocating barrels.

The Schwarzlose's unusual star-wheel feed system contains only two moving parts, a feed roller and detent slide. The cartridges are carried by the roller's sprockets and pulled slowly rearward as the belt moves into the feed block by action of the bolt on the roller. Again, a simple mechanism, yet one that provides smooth and efficient feeding.

The retarded blowback process slows the action of the entire system significantly, resulting in a cyclic rate of only 400 rounds per minute. The lethargic, sputtering cough of the Model 07/12 is easily distinguished from all other automatic small-arms fire.

There are not more than a handful of Schwarzlose machine guns in this country. The 8x50.5mmR Austrian cartridge is no longer available, anywhere, in sufficient quantity for shooting through a Schwarzlose. For those of you fortunate enough to encounter one of these magnificent beasts, cases can be fire-formed from 7.62mm Russian Rimmed brass, trimmed and the necks expanded to accept the required .323-inch bullets. Remember that, by design, this weapon is extremely ammunition sensitive. I suggest a 244-grain bullet and 45 grains of 3031 powder to approximate the military loading.

The Schwarzlose was the standard machine gun of Austria-Hungary in WWI. To a limited extent, it was also used by Italy, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia (in caliber 7.92mm) up to and during WWII. Sweden issued it in 6.5mm; the Dutch adopted it in a rather odd 7.92mm Rimmed. The Israelis were still chugging away with the Model 07/12 in 1948 and more recently it has been seen in small numbers with the Frelimo in their misunderstanding with the Portuguese. ☒



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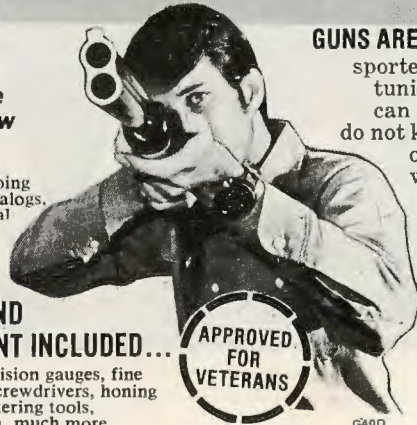
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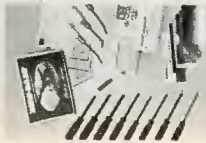
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## VIETNAM KNIVES . . .

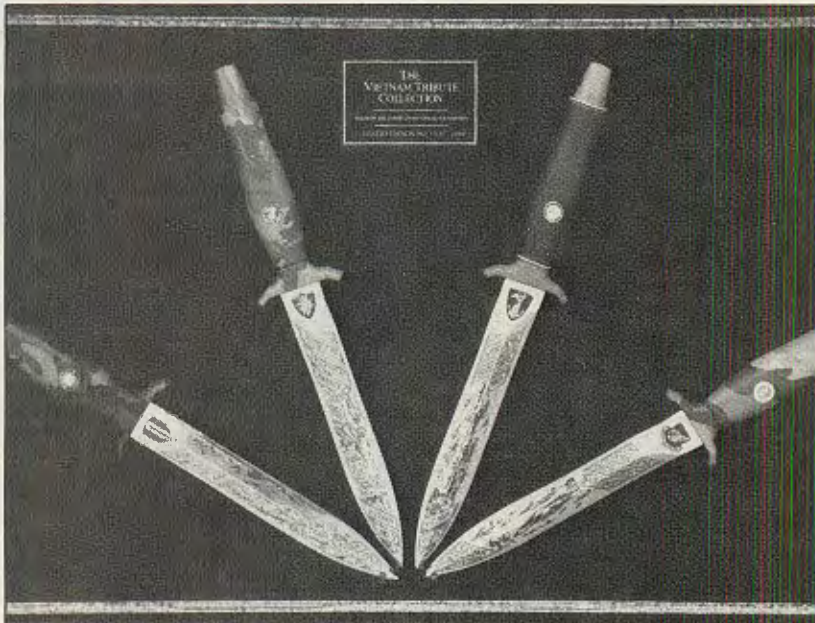
The American Historical Foundation, in collaboration with Gerber Legendary Blades, announces the Vietnam Tribute Collection: four Gerber Mark II Combat knives that pay tribute to each branch of the service which fought in Vietnam.

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These knives are a welcome tribute to the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine personnel who fought in Vietnam and will be a striking addition to any collection. For ordering information, contact *The American Historical Foundation*, Dept. SOF, 1022 West Franklin St., Richmond, VA 23220. Phone 1-800-558-8133.

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by John Metzger



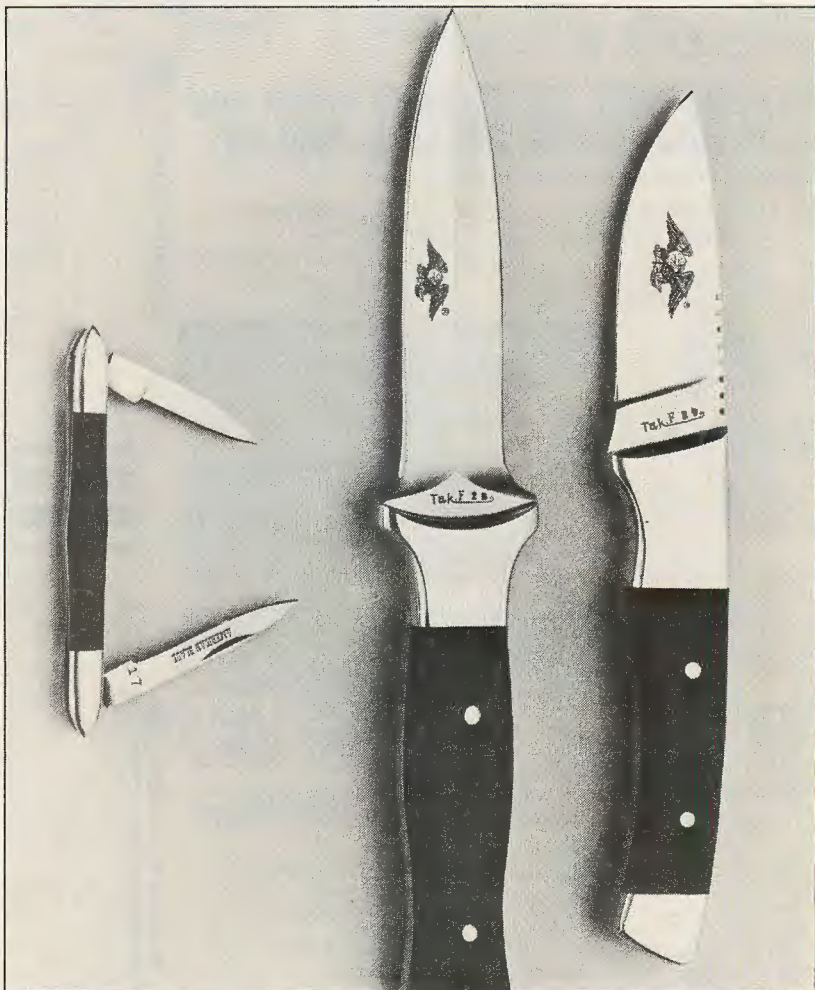
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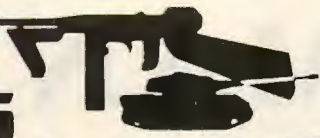
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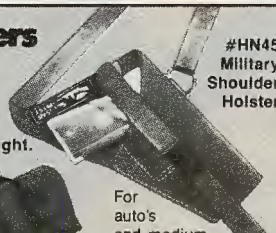
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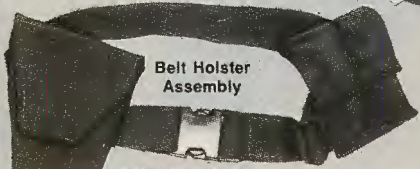
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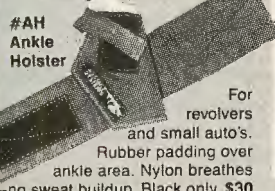
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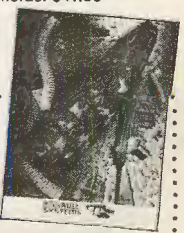


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# GENTLEMAN OF FORTUNE IN SPAIN & CHINA

## Part 2: Hilaire du Berrier

by Jim Graves

Photos Courtesy of Hilaire du Berrier



**PART 1:** Hilaire du Berrier was born Harold Berry in Flasher, N.D., in 1906. After a stormy adolescence, he talked his mother into sending him to art school in Chicago. There he learned to fly and soon became a barnstormer, doing free-fall parachuting and riding a biplane's wing during loops.

In 1931, the young man traveled to Paris — where he changed his name to the more Gallic Hilaire du Berrier — and plunged delightedly into the life of the city. His collection of friends and acquaintances included such royalty-in-exile as Don Jaime de Bourbon, son of Alfonso XIII of Spain, and such women as Marie Barnes (former mistress of the Baron de Mumm), Louise Bryant (John Reed's lover), and Kiki, American author and well-known Parisian character. But it was Charles M. Sweeny and his friends, Granville Pollack, Vincent

Du Berrier at controls of Nieuport-52 with which he shot up Air France passenger plane by mistake on 29 November 1936. In thick morning mist, pilot mistook it for German bomber.

Minor Schmidt and Prince Aage of Denmark, who taught du Berrier the code of ethics for the soldier of fortune.

Having absorbed Sweeny's dicta, du Berrier set out in 1935 for Ethiopia to form a squadron of soldier-of-fortune pilots for Emperor Haile Selassie, but lack of planes and spare parts kept the squadron grounded. When Italy invaded, those foreigners still in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, soon scattered. Hilaire du Berrier stayed. He hoped to become governor of Gojam, a northwestern province of Ethiopia. When questioned about the logic of his plan, he later said, "Crazy? Certainly it

sounds crazy, but at that time and place the line between the possible and the impossible was very thin. Bodoglio (the Italian general) could not get there before September and, by that time, anything might happen.... If worse came to worst, we could retreat through the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan as former rulers of Gojam and leaders of the last armed resistance."

On an early scouting expedition, the would-be governor found an abandoned town — and since it would soon be looted by the Italians, du Berrier helped himself to its scattered treasures, which he shipped to Djibouti. By 5 May 1935 his plans were ready and he set out for Gojam. But he had driven only 55 miles from the capital before being surrounded by Black Shirts. An Italian officer — whose mother, du Berrier learned, was a Schuster of Boston —



took him prisoner. Then the Italian column of 1,200 automobiles drove on to Addis Ababa, where movie crews filmed their triumphant entrance, an event so momentous it had to be reshot several times — and during the confusion du Berrier escaped.

He traveled to Djibouti before taking a German ship to Port Said. On board he met Hungarian Baroness Lydia Maria von Aztell and accompanied her to Greece and Cluj, Romania. While sitting on a hotel terrace in that city with the baroness and the curator of a local museum, du Berrier learned of the revolt in Spain. He turned over his treasures to the curator, packed his bags and left to help his friend, Don Jaime du Bourbon, restore his father to the throne.

**D**U BERRIER'S first stop on his way to Spain was Cannes, France, home of Clifford Harmon, the founder of the International League of Aviators and a friend from the early days in Paris. Du Berrier knew Harmon had close contacts with the Spanish monarchists.

Gen. Jose Saconell Sanjurjo, the monarchist, had been killed in a plane crash while du Berrier raced across Europe toward Cannes by train, but Harmon was able to arrange an introduction to Gen. Orgaz, Franco's chief of staff, who was then residing in Tangier, French Morocco.

Unfortunately for du Berrier and the other soldiers of fortune from Ethiopia, the Italians had entered the Spanish Civil War on Franco's side and Mussolini's army had not forgotten du Berrier *et al.*; they were blacklisted.

Du Berrier tried to find help in Paris, but found himself still barred from joining Franco's air force, so he went to London with Olaf de Wet. In England, the two down-on-their-luck aviators lived on a houseboat on the Lee River (it was off season and cheap), built up flying time at the Herts and Essex Airport and lived off their wits — selling just about anything to a black, would-be prince from Basutoland.

One morning in October 1935, de Wet borrowed 10 shillings from du Berrier and went down to London. He repeated this routine the following day, and on the morning of the third informed du Berrier that since Franco wouldn't have them because of the Italians, he was joining the Republicans, communists or not, just to fight the Italians. Du Berrier, for the same reason — and because he wanted to collect material for articles on the Russian influence in the Spanish Civil War — decided to enlist too.

Although more than 3,000 Americans would serve on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, du Berrier was one of only 24 American pilots to serve. His contract, signed on 5 November 1936 by Subsecretary for Air Antonio Camacho, called for a salary of 150



**Du Berrier stands by his obsolete Nieuport-52 at Alicante, Spain, in November 1936. The 12-year-old plane had neither brakes nor flaps and was armed with two light Vickers MGs. Nieuport-52 missions were suicidal if one encountered a Nationalist Fiat.**

pounds (about \$750) a month. Du Berrier didn't realize it at the time but he should have been paid 200 pounds — his friend de Wet got the other 50 pounds for recruiting him.

The two airmen — both listed as Englishmen since that was where they had been recruited — were sent to Madrid. There they joined American SOF Ben Leiter and two Englishmen, Roger Banister-Pickett and Freddy Lord.

After a brief stay in Madrid's Hotel Florida — Ernest Hemingway's hangout while he covered the war — du Berrier and the other SOFs were rushed out of the city just ahead of Franco's troops.

The Republicans moved the foreign pilots to Albacete, where there were supposed to be planes, but Franco's Nationalists had gotten there first and destroyed them on the ground by bombing. Du Berrier was then moved to Alcazares and finally to the naval air base at nearby San Janvier, where there were planes.

The planes were Nieuport 52s, powered by Hispano-Suiza engines and mounting two light Vickers machine guns. They were in poor condition, obsolete and no match for the German and Italian planes of Franco's air force.

At San Janvier, Vincent Minor Schmidt and Bert Acosta, previously Adm. Richard E. Byrd's pilot, joined the group. Acosta was as notorious as a drunk as he was famous as a pilot. He had once circled a building in New York City because he knew it had a clock on its side and he wanted to check the time.

Du Berrier was saved from the fiery death that awaited most Nieuport pilots in Spain primarily because he could speak so many languages. He was conse-

quently used more as a translator than as a flier. He made only 10 combat patrols and had only one engagement.

On his single contact, he jumped a trimotor plane which he could barely see below him in the early morning clouds. Had it not been for the fact that the sights on his machine gun were broken, he probably would have succeeded in shooting it down — which would have been unfortunate since it turned out to be an Air France passenger liner. Luckily, he only shot some holes in the passenger plane, which was forced to make an emergency landing.

Bannister-Pickett, whose contract was up and who was leaving the country, was blamed for the incident so du Berrier could continue to fly for the Spanish. Vincent Minor Schmidt ran into trouble too. Accused of being a spy, he was hauled before a firing squad but with his back to the wall was able to bluff his way out of execution.

Leiter, one of the few real communists among the American pilots, was not so lucky. When his plane was shot up in a dog fight over the front lines, he was able to parachute out — only to be shot while descending. "Both sides fired on him," said du Berrier. "I guess they just couldn't resist the practice offered."

Du Berrier survived, and when his contract expired in early December, he was sent to Barcelona to meet Alberto Bayo and discuss possible terms of a second contract. Du Berrier did not know that he had been denounced to the local communists by Eddie Semons, another American communist who flew with the group as an observer and gunner. Semons had told the local Soviet that du Berrier had been a member of the French monarchist party.

As du Berrier emerged from a restaurant with a Spaniard named Alberto Plini on 6 December, he was approached by four armed soldiers who ordered Plini to stand back and the American to



get into a waiting car. Du Berrier was taken to a large warehouse and shoved into a room with some other men. Occasionally someone's name would be called from another room. Those who left didn't come back.

When du Berrier's name was called, he was taken to the interrogation room. There three commissars, surrounded by a host of jumping-jack assistants, barked questions. The assistants kept jumping up and scurrying off to the shelves that lined the walls of the room. They would climb up, pull down a box of documents or news clippings and bring the appropriate piece of paper to the commissars.

"I never found out until I got out of there and was later questioned by French intelligence that in Spain the communists had the greatest clipping service in the world," said du Berrier. "Communists all over the world were under orders to clip everything about the Spanish Civil War, anything that anybody said or wrote.

"They were still working on me when Plini suddenly appeared in the doorway at 4:30 in the afternoon waving a paper.

"What Bayo had done — because he was getting support from Eleanor Roosevelt and thus didn't want to have an American shot — was send Plini around to every little group in Barcelona that was carrying out executions, and he had gone to at least half a dozen before he found me."

Bayo put the fortunate American on a train to France the next day. It was 7 December 1936.

Back in Paris, du Berrier was soon heavily involved in cafe-society life but the Spanish Civil War and soldiers of fortune were not through with him yet. One day Schmidt, who had gone back to Spain (to stay in Paris would have been to admit that he was a coward), turned up at du Berrier's door.

"Do you want to go for a plane ride?" Schmitt asked.

When du Berrier asked why, his friend only said, "I saw a nice plane and I thought I'd rent it for you."

The two men agreed to meet for breakfast the next morning, but Schmidt didn't show up. A few weeks later when Schmitt returned to Paris, du Berrier made the connection between his friend's absence and the screaming headlines he'd read that afternoon in the papers.

It seems that the Spanish communists had bought a Marcelle night bomber but the French had grounded the plane because of pressure from the International Nonintervention Committee and were keeping it in a hangar outside of Paris. Schmidt had got back in favor with the Spanish by agreeing to fly the plane to Spain. He calmly told du Berrier, "They'd already shot a Spanish pilot who refused the assignment."

The mechanics at the hangar where the Marcelle was housed were socialists. They had been gradually filling the bomber up, a bit at a time, and on that fateful night they had pushed it clear of an obstructing plane. Outside the strip was lit only by the headlights of parked automobiles. Schmidt had walked into the hangar and flown the plane out — on a cold motor with just a few feet of clearance between the doors and with the wind behind him.

Bayo also turned up in Paris. He had been involved in a deal with Lord and another Englishman to buy three million pesetas worth of arms, which had turned out to be reconditioned and near-worthless junk. Bayo told du Berrier about the deal — but neglected to add that during the three days he was in Paris he had the pesetas, in gold, with him. Due to this omission, the grateful du Berrier, still remembering his rescue from the firing squad, picked up the checks.



**Col. Vincent Minor Schmidt became commander of 14th Volunteer Bombardment Squadron of China which raided Formosa in December 1937. Patch informs Chinese that "Schmitt" is a friend and should be helped if forced down.**

Charles M. Sweeny and du Berrier went into partnership in January 1937 to form a private legion of the air, *L'Escadrille Etrangere*. The pilots were to be drawn from among their friends who had been in Morocco, Ethiopia and Spain, and the planes were Koolhoven 51s. The *Escadrille* would be prepared to fight anywhere in the world.

Sweeny came to du Berrier in March with the news that there was to be a "show" in China: To Sweeny all wars, big or small, were "shows." He suggested that du Berrier go out and get everyone in.

It was a curious coincidence for du Berrier: Two psychics had told him he would go to China. One, Cora Brown Potter, 75 when du Berrier had met her,

had been Lily Langtree's rival for the affections of Edward VII of England. "Cora believed in astrology and she believed in reincarnation. She used to say, 'You should go to China, Hilaire. In your former life you were a mandarin.' I had no faith in reincarnation but China called to me like a drum."

Du Berrier sailed for Asia on 16 April 1937 on board the S.S. *Aramis*. Among the passengers were three Frenchmen, two admirals and a captain, Jean Camille Rougy, en route to Saigon. Du Berrier visited Saigon with Rougy before going on to China.

China was fertile ground for a soldier of fortune in 1937. The main antagonists were the Japanese and Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalists, but there were still a few powerful warlords and the communists were also active as were the intelligence services of most of the nations of the West.

The Sweeny-du Berrier plan to bring their *L'Escadrille Etrangere* to China never got off the ground because of an anti-American Australian named Garnet O'Malley, an adviser to the Nationalist Air Ministry.

The Nationalists did need American help, however, and a group was put together in Nanking. It was called the 14th Volunteer Bombardment Squadron under the command of Gen. (then Col.) Claire Chennault. Schmidt came out to China at du Berrier's urging. He was the flying commander of the 14th when it launched and led an attack against Formosa — the first air raid against Japanese-held territory in World War II — in December 1937.

Du Berrier never flew with the 14th Squadron or the Flying Tigers, which replaced it. His first flying job in China was with the Chinese Nationalists. He and a Chinese pilot flew Douglas Dolphins between Nanking and Hankow on courier runs. But in December 1937 he gave up that job when he met one of the greatest soldiers of fortune of all time, John "One-arm" Sutton, who soon embroiled the younger man in plots far more exciting than flying courier planes.

"Sutton lost his arm in World War I at Gallipoli," said du Berrier. "After the landing, he'd taken cover in a shell hole. A determined Turk kept lobbing grenades at him and Sutton kept tossing them back. Finally, he fumbled one but thought quickly enough to save his life.

"He pushed the grenade into the sticky mud as far as it would go. When it went off, he lost his right arm. The Turk, dissatisfied with the results of the explosion, jumped into the shell hole to finish Sutton off.

"He came at the bleeding Englishman with a knife. Sutton used his left hand to grab the Turk's knife hand and closed in, forcing the knife into his opponent's throat. After the Turk was dead, Sutton choked — and spat out an ear. He





hadn't realized he'd been holding his attacker's head still by holding onto his ear; he'd been too busy with the knife.

"Invalided out as a war hero, Sutton was given a job in the Bureau of Inventions in England. The trench mortar was coming in then and that's where he learned to make those things."

It was knowledge that was to make Sutton a millionaire. Arriving in China in the 1920s, the Englishman became the friend of the famous Chinese warlord, Chang Tso-lin (then in Manchuria) who was struggling with Chiang Kai-Shek for control of all China. It was partially the trench mortars, as well as some other war weapons invented or built by Sutton, that enabled Chang Tso-lin to come over the Great Wall and capture Peking and central China.

Sutton, a general in Chang Tso-lin's army, worked on a fee basis. For every major city his troops captured, Chang Tso-lin paid him \$100,000. He was also allowed to keep part of the profits from captured trains, part for him, part for his troops. Chang Tso-lin also gave Sutton a private railway car, which led to

**SOF Gen. John "One-Arm" Sutton and secretary, Hanna, sail from Hong Kong to Shanghai in spring of 1941. Du Berrier, Sutton and Gen. Linson Dzau hatched several unsuccessful plots in China in 1938 and '39. Japanese interned Sutton in Hong Kong.**

his popular reputation as "Master of Seduction by Railway."

He was also lucky. Chang Tso-lin did nothing without first consulting his fortune teller; Sutton quickly discovered the fortune teller's weakness — canned peaches. For a case of canned peaches the fortune teller made sure Sutton got the assignments he wanted. He also gave Sutton the word one November that the next month would be a good one for him.

"Sutton didn't pay any attention to the prophecy, but in December of that year he paid a fellow in the Peking Club one dollar for a ticket on the Shanghai Sweepstakes," said du Berrier. "He put the ticket in his pocket and forgot it. His mind was occupied with his position in

Chang Tso-lin's army and their southern march.

"They looked all over China for the man who had won the \$500,000 Shanghai Sweepstakes. It wasn't until Chang's campaign was over that Sutton checked his ticket and found he had won.

"Sutton's fortune followed him to Canada for a time. He and Frank Fletcher, a Canadian friend, went to Vancouver where the Englishman bought an amusement park, an apartment building, a bankrupt railroad, an airplane and a bankrupt gold mine. But his financial success didn't last. He ended up losing all his property a bit at a time. Finally, all that was left was a gold brick on Sutton's desk which he used as a paper weight. He and Fletcher were reduced to chipping it down a bit at a time for spending money. They used the last of it for return fare to China."

After leaving the courier job in Nanking, du Berrier went down to Hong Kong and was soon involved with Sutton and Gen. Linson Dzau, a Chinese graduate of West Point (class of 1914), who had dreams of becoming a warlord. The numerous plots cooked up by the three adventurers were all rejected by the Nationalist Chinese.

Du Berrier then got involved with Gen. Yeh Peng, who had accepted a position with the Japanese puppet government with Chiang Kai-Shek's knowledge. Gen. Yeh Peng's real job was to establish a guerrilla army behind Japanese lines. But he also wanted to become a war lord and was establishing a secret army to carve out his own kingdom when the Japanese were run out. Du Berrier, his pilot, was given the rank of lieutenant general.

But du Berrier didn't like the idea of working in the puppet government, even though sanctioned by Chiang Kai-Shek — and he also had a sick myna bird to worry about. Ko-Ko, his myna, came down with a severe cold in December 1938; so du Berrier left for Borneo. He thought the bird would recover in a warmer climate.

Although the bird got better, du Berrier's fortunes didn't improve. He tried gold mining but found no ore and rapidly grew more and more discouraged. A lieutenant general in a nonexistent army who was broke and tired of the life of adventure, du Berrier sat down at the typewriter in his room in Borneo and wrote an article about his career. He posted it off to *The Atlantic Monthly* and set sail the next day for Shanghai.

The reply from *Atlantic Monthly* Associate Editor John Walcott came to du Berrier, care of American Express, Shanghai. It read:

"This is great reading whether you are an honest man or a magnificent liar, but, if I were you, I should head it to a magazine of the type of *Liberty* or even to the pulps."



Back in China, du Berrier — with his American passport, gift for languages and connections with the French — attracted the attention of Gen. Tai Lee, Chiang Kai-Shek's chief of intelligence. Du Berrier was asked to go into Shanghai, which had been declared an open city by the Japanese, and set up a spy ring for \$1,000 a month.

Du Berrier's Shanghai operation was involved in both intelligence collection and direct sabotage. The American's apartment in the French Concession of the International Settlement was off-limits to the Japanese and thus the perfect hiding place for the timers, explosives and radio transmitter. The primary targets for the ring were the Japanese ships taking cotton back to Japan. Time bombs put together by du Berrier in his apartment were smuggled out by the Chinese members of the ring or by Rosa, du Berrier's Eurasian girlfriend, for delivery to Nationalist agents working the docks. The dock workers were responsible for loading them aboard Japanese ships.

While he was working for the Chinese Nationalists, du Berrier was smart enough to realize that would be insufficient protection if the Japanese became suspicious, so he cast around for a Western country to provide back-up assistance. He eliminated the British — "They would have just turned me in to the Japanese and sent their own man to run my ring" — and the Americans — "They didn't have any intelligence service, just some intelligence officers like USMC Capt. Bruno Krulak and they trusted the Russians too much" — so he decided upon the French.

Du Berrier went to Capt. Rougy, with whom he had sailed in 1937, to establish a contact, and Rougy turned him over to Capt. Mingant, who was running a spy ring for the Free French under the control of Gen. Salan, then in Indochina.

It was on behalf of the Free French that du Berrier scored his biggest intelligence coup. To obtain information he had reestablished friendships with the journalists he had known in Ethiopia and Spain, specifically Reynolds Packard and Carl von Wegan of the Associated Press, both of whom had been sent out to China.

In 1941 the most critical question sought by every intelligence operator in the world was to ascertain which direction the Japanese would move: north against the Russians, or south against the Americans, Dutch and British.

When von Wegan arrived in China, du Berrier went to visit and was in the journalist's room when von Wegan received a call from Japan's Minister of Defense, whom the journalist had known when both were students at Washington State. Von Wegan had been trying to get in touch with the minister to set up an interview in Tokyo. The mini-



## CHINESE SPIDERMAN

by Bob Poos

Ever hear the Story of the Spider with the Head of a Man?

Probably not, unless you're in your late 40s or older. And even then you probably remember it only vaguely. But in the 1930s, this story made headlines all over the United States. Headlines out of all proportion to their place in the great scheme of world events.

Hilaire du Berrier remembers it well and also the man who wrote it. Both sound like characters out of fiction. Only one was.

The spider was created by a now (and for that matter, then) legendary news-wire-service correspondent named Reynolds Packard, whose home was the world but mostly China in the late 1930s.

Packard gave the spider life in the form of a "mailer," a dispatch sent by sea mail rather than international cable in order to save money. Important news stories in those days were, of course, cabled: wars, floods, earthquakes, cataclysms of all sorts. Nice little features that required no urgency went leisurely via ocean liner.

These stories were difficult to write because, although they were not a matter of life-and-death urgency, they still had to be interesting enough to attract the eye of a tough newspaper editor who was troubled much more by having too many of them to fill his paper than too few.

During a journey in the wastelands of Manchuria, Packard somehow heard a tale about a strange arachnid which could be found only far out in the then-trackless frozen deserts and then only seldom — it had been seen by only a few living men. And although it had a spider-like body and was about that size, it had the tiny head of a human being.

Some old-time newsmen of the era say that Packard's Manchurian friend actually produced some kind of a fuzzy photo of the creature. Others say Packard, always willing to buy a good story and never mind the facts behind it, simply took the tale at face value, wrote it, mailed it to his editors in New York — and promptly

forgot it in a haze of bad bourbon.

He may have forgotten it, but his colleagues in the news business didn't. They soon began getting "rockets" from their home offices. Rockets were urgent messages saying in effect that the opposition had a great story that was taking space on front pages and would they quickly match or deny it.

Packard's hapless competitors were in no position to do either. They, of course, couldn't confirm it, because they had seen no such thing and for that matter hadn't heard of anything like it. They, knowing Packard, suspected that it did not exist. But they couldn't say that either because, unlikely as it might be, they also well knew that Packard had fooled them before with similar wild tales, which had some sort of foundation in reality — however tenuous. Few thought that Packard, as incredible a character as he was, would create something this fantastic out of whole cloth but, then, on the other hand, knowing Pack...

Packard, himself, stayed out of sight. Finally, the story died down, much to the relief of everyone — most of all Packard himself.

Du Berrier lost track of Packard when WWII broke out in full and Westerners caught in Asia were imprisoned until its end, but saw him when he came back to China after the Allies won.

Encountering one another on a street in Shanghai, Packard rushed up and inquired, "Quick! It's important! Is there a whorehouse in this neighborhood?"

With tacit agreement, neither mentioned the Story of the Spider with the Head of a Man.

(I heard the story when I was in Asia many years after that from veteran AP Correspondent John Roderick — one of those whom it drove nuts when he was among Packard's competitors. Roderick laughed about it then, but he said it was no laughing matter when the news-rockets were coming.)





Airplanes of type to be used by du Berrier's private foreign legion of the air, "L'Escadrille Etrangere." Organized in January 1937, Escadrille soon signed up comrades from Ethiopia and Spain. Col. Charles Sweeney was to be ground commander.

ster had called to tell the journalist that he couldn't see him for some time since he was going to Moscow to make a treaty with the Russians, and then on to Berlin.

"I went straight to Mingant and told him the minister was going to Moscow to make a treaty with the Russians and that meant that the Japanese would move south," said du Berrier.

Nonetheless, when John Chung, one of du Berrier's agents, called him on Monday, 8 December, to tell him the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, du Berrier shrugged it off as another crazy rumor and went back to bed.

"I got up when the noise on the avenue changed," said du Berrier. "I had an apartment in an attic of Number 9 Sun Avenue. I opened up my window, looked out and found the street full of Japanese Naval Infantry.

"Already they were putting up sand bags on the street corners and stringing ropes across the street. If a shot were fired anywhere in the city, the Japanese would pull the ropes up to stop all car traffic until the trouble could be located and dealt with.

"I sat on my bed and said, 'Jesus Christ. Here I am sitting on a 'Chungking Transmitter,' detonators and explosives.'" A quick call to Mingant led the Frenchman to du Berrier's apartment that afternoon. They hastened to carry the incriminating evidence out across the rooftops and down to a Vichy French embassy car.

For the next 11 months, du Berrier became an operative in Mingant's Free

French spy ring, run out of the Vichy embassy. Du Berrier wasn't the only spy living at Number 9 Sun Avenue in 1942. B.J. Yoh, the top agent for the Nationalists in Shanghai, lived directly below him, using the name Wang.

On 5 November 1942, the Japanese decided to round up all Americans stranded in Shanghai and intern them in a prison camp. When they came for du Berrier and led him down the stairs, Yoh opened his apartment door. The startled look on his face attracted the attention of the Japanese officer in charge of the arrest squad.

"Do you know that man?" he asked.

Du Berrier answered haughtily, "I am an American. I do not associate with Orientals."

His response earned him a hit with a rifle butt but luckily the Japanese never brought up the subject of Yoh again.

Du Berrier was held in the general prison population until 6 April 1943 when a White Russian exile, working as an informer, supplied the Kempetai with enough information to cast suspicion on his being in China. Du Berrier was then transferred to an interrogation center and placed in a holding cell with an Englishman, John Cook, and five Chinese, all suspected of being spies.

After Cook's death in mid-April, one of his Chinese agents, who was in the cell with du Berrier, turned to the American for support and consolation.

"He was convinced that he wouldn't make it," said du Berrier. "He would come to me with a questioning look and make a gesture as if he were being hung, or shot or chopped, and I would tell him, 'No, the Japanese won't do that and we'll get out of here alive.'

"For hours I would sit and tell him that when the war ended and we got out of prison, we would get a few rifles, recruit a few men and go out into the interior to take over a village. We would provide the villagers with protection from bandits and, with the rice they paid in return, we would recruit more men to protect more villages. I had him convinced the days of the warlords were coming back and that he and I would be the most famous of them all.

"But one day the Japanese called out his name. We assumed it was for another torture session, but when he turned to pick up his coat the Japanese told him he wouldn't need it. I knew what that meant and the look of despair on his face told me he knew too.

"But he straightened up and walked out calmly. He died like a man should."

Despite the White Russian's story and torture so bad that du Berrier was permanently injured, the Kempetai had no proof that the American was a spy. On 24 April 1943, he was transferred back to the general civilian prison camp in Shanghai. As soon as he returned, du Berrier started planning his escape. He

knew that his only chance was to pass himself off as a Russian, so he started studying that language. He also decided the safest way out of China would be through Turkestan so he also started learning Turkish from a Greek who had been born in Turkey.

But the opportunity to escape never presented itself. Du Berrier settled down to the simple struggle of staying alive in a Japanese prison camp, which is not known for its amenities. He found himself surrounded by a diverse lot: Greek seamen, American and British civilians and a few military men — or at least what the Japanese presumed were military men. There was one Salvation Army major held in the prison under harsh conditions simply because he had been registered as a major in the hotel at which he was arrested. Although there were several powerful, well-educated men in the prison, like Paul Hopkins, the former head of the Shanghai Light & Power Company, and Walker, the Salvation Army man, du Berrier quickly became a favorite of the American sailors whom the Japanese were holding.

"The sailors in the camp were the old type of American sailor who had never finished high school, never read anything and were completely ignorant. They had nothing to do there, and I would spend hours telling them about Napoleon, his battles and his marshals. I remember one old sailor, who had joined the Navy by lying about his age and had never finished the sixth grade. He would ask me when presented with a problem, 'What do you think the Emperor would do in a case like this, Hilaire?'

"That was when I organized the resistance forces of his Majesty Napoleon I. I was the chief and they were my men," said du Berrier. "To them it was a continuing novel. Lights had to go out at 9:00 p.m. and I would sit in the dark, telling them about the lightning march of six columns across Europe, from the English Channel to Vienna, and all the battles fought along the way.

"They were fascinated and by the end of a few weeks every one of them would have voted for Napoleon."

Du Berrier's stories, his resistance force and the little they could do — one prisoner built a radio from scraps in the camp — helped pass the time until 8 July 1945 when the Japanese decided to move the prisoners.

"They marched us to a box car — you can imagine what it was like inside in the sultry heat of China in July — then closed us in with barbed wire," said du Berrier. "At the end of the car the Japanese had men with rifles and if you rose to your feet in order to stretch they would come and club you down. After three days and nights on the train our feet were so swollen we couldn't even get our shoes on."



The Allies were bombing any moving trains in China at that time but somehow the Chinese and Americans knew du Berrier's train carried prisoners and it was not bombed.

The journey ended at Fung Ti, some 19 miles from Peking. There in the railway yard were 27 large go-downs; 26 of them were filled with ammunition. The prisoners were put in the 27th — right in the middle to keep the dump from being bombed.

News of the war's end reached the prisoners on 15 August when a Japanese guard, nicknamed Goofy, who had become a pet (a supplier of contraband to the prisoners), came into the go-down and told his prisoner handler that the war was over. Although excitement stirred some of the prisoners — and the guards were acting strangely — most didn't believe the news until the next day when the Japanese brought Winfield Scott Cunningham, former governor of Wake Island, into the camp.

Cunningham confirmed the news passed by Goofy. He also told the men held in Go-down 27 that he had been held with four airmen (from Billy Mitchell's group) who had crashed in Japanese-held China after the raid on Tokyo. Cunningham said the airmen were being tortured and he presumed that the Japanese would never turn them over, but would execute them.

The threat was very real in the Fung Ti camp as well, since some Allied prisoners were executed by hard-core Japanese troops in China after the emperor of Japan had sent out the surrender message. Some of the hot heads at the camp had collected gasoline to burn the bodies of du Berrier and the other prisoners if the commandant decided to execute them rather than turn them over.

On 18 August, the air-raid siren in the prison went off. The prisoners were locked up, and couldn't see, but they were electrified when they heard the Japanese shouting that the planes were dropping parachutists, not bombs.

That night the Japanese commandant decided not to execute the prisoners in Go-down 27 and in order to prevent the American liberators from seeing the conditions in which they had been held, the prisoners were taken by truck to a hotel in Peking.

The next morning du Berrier wrote down what he knew about the location of Mitchell's airmen and tied the message to a rock. Spotting a priest coming down the street, du Berrier called out from his window, "Father, do you speak French?"

The priest, an Italian named Croche, replied, "Yes." Du Berrier threw the rock to him and requested him to take it to Pierre Beaumont at the French Embassy. Beaumont in turn passed the message to Maj. Gus Krause, the American OSS officer who had parachuted in to

save prisoners. Krause sent a man to collect du Berrier and the adventurer led the Americans to the camp where Mitchell's airmen were hidden.

After his release, du Berrier decided to stay on in China. He had married a Eurasian girl while a prisoner — by proxy and on Napoleon's birthday — and he had come to like China.

"I had been there so long and become so deeply involved in Chinese thinking and politics," said du Berrier, "that I would never have left voluntarily. In sum, I had missed too many boats."

Because of his role in rescuing Mitchell's airmen and because he had run a spy ring in Shanghai, du Berrier was given a job with the Strategic Services Unit (the precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency) as a Far East specialist. For cover he was given the job of stringer with *Newsweek*. But *Newsweek's* Harold Isaacs, head of the Asian desk,

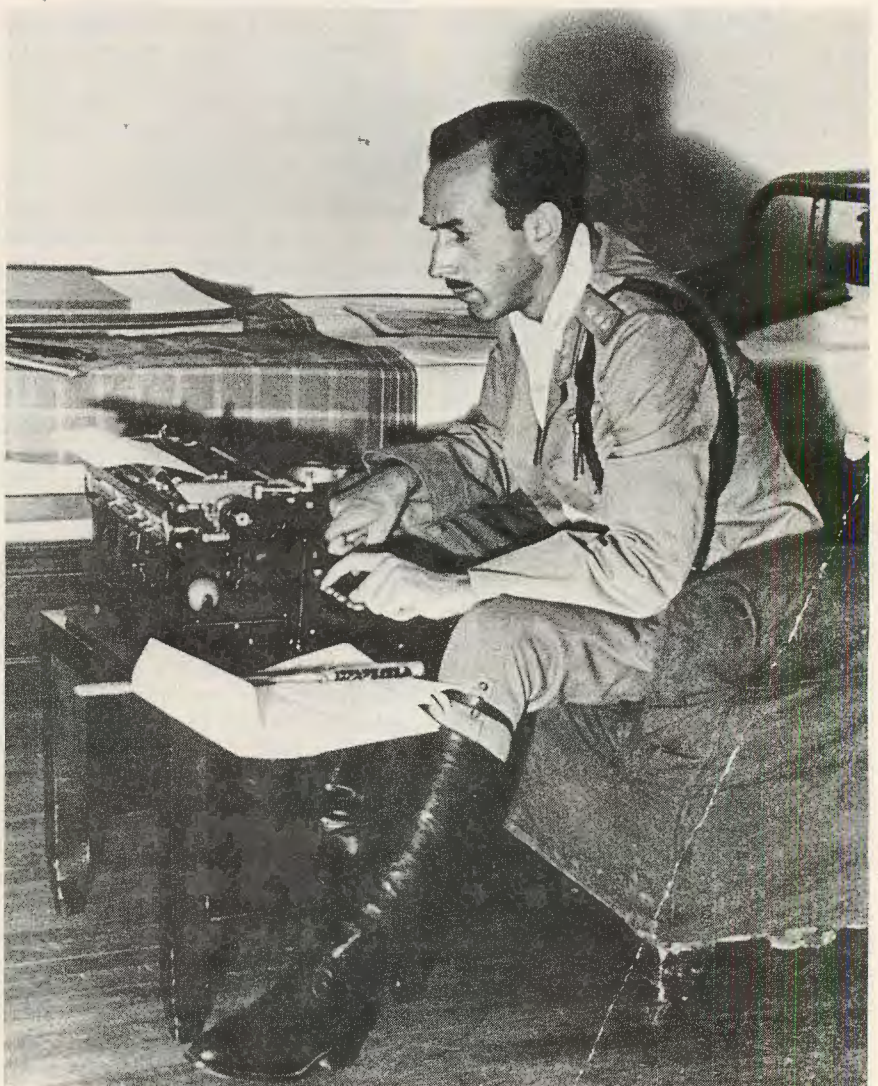
**Du Berrier types, wearing uniform of lieutenant general in secret army formed in China to attack Japanese behind enemy lines. Sarong worn by du Berrier in Borneo covers bed. Chinese sword serves as paperweight.**

didn't care for its new reporter since du Berrier was opposed to any support for Ho Chi Minh. *Newsweek* dropped du Berrier in 1946.

Maj. Robert E. Buckley, du Berrier's chief in the SSU, then approached him with the proposal that would lead to his leaving China. "Buckley told me the day was coming when the U.S. Army would pull out of China, but they intended to leave a Chinese network, headed by an American civilian, behind."

Du Berrier accepted the assignment and after receiving the first batch of customs gold-bond currency notes (his men didn't trust the national currency), sent his first agents into the interior. Then word suddenly came down from Washington: Drop the net and get du Berrier out of China. He left on 12 December 1946 on a Navy transport. Du Berrier didn't know it then but it was his resistance to American support for Ho Chi Minh that led to the break-up of his spy ring.

Du Berrier eventually reached the United States, but for an American with no money and an out-of-favor political ideology — strongly anti-communist — America in the late 1940s was not a good place to be.







And du Berrier could not leave America. Soon after his return to the United States his passport was pulled. When the soldier of fortune had been returned to general prison in Shanghai after 18 days of torture in April 1943, he was so weak the camp doctor had requested the Japanese to provide him with food supplements from the shipments the Red Cross was allowed to bring in. When du Berrier returned to the United States, Louis F. Thompson, division-of-finance chief for the Department of State, requested payment of the \$416.77 the government had given to the Red Cross to pay for du Berrier's food supplement. Partially because he didn't have it and partially because he resented the idea, du Berrier refused to pay. Thompson had his passport pulled.

Du Berrier refused to give in to what he conceived as outright robbery and struggled through by writing articles until 1955 when a friend managed to get his passport returned. Broke, bitter and disappointed with his country, he set sail for France later that year.

Du Berrier's belief that life would be better for him in France turned out to be right. Holder of the *Croix de Resistance*, *Croix du Combattant* and *Medaille de Victoire* for his help to the Free French in WWII, du Berrier lived for a time in

**Hilaire du Berrier with Anamese Emperor Bao Dai at His Majesty's home in Paris on 22 February 1980. Du Berrier has been assisting the emperor in research on communist takeover of Indochina.**

Paris, then moved on to Monte Carlo.

In France, du Berrier's contacts from China — Mingant and Gen. Salan — introduced him to the right people. Within a short time he was making enough money to support himself as an adviser on Southeast Asia. Du Berrier was at one time or another the adviser to Lee Van Vinh, exiled head of the Binh Xyuen faction in South Vietnam, and then to Bao Dai, the exiled emperor of Vietnam. He still works for Bao Dai.

In 1965 du Berrier published a moderately successful book on Vietnam, *America Betrayed*, which led to his appointment as an adviser on Vietnam to George Wallace in the presidential election of 1968. In Monte Carlo he started a newsletter, *H. du B. Reports*, and that, together with his continuing role as an adviser — almost invariably to an exiled

**Du Berrier (left) talks with friend, Gen. Raoul Salan, after Salan's 1968 release from prison. De Gaulle released generals imprisoned for Algerian uprising to secure loyalty of French Army.**



monarch — enables him to maintain himself in a modest apartment in Monte Carlo.

#### EPILOGUE

Soldier of Fortune's search for Hilaire du Berrier began while the staff was preparing an article on Charles M. Sweeny, du Berrier's SOF friend from Paris in the 1930s (see "A Man for All Wars," SOF, May '82).

One paragraph from a letter once written by du Berrier about the men who went down to Ethiopia — Schmidt, de Wet and Weheb Pasha — convinced me that if du Berrier's career could be tracked down he might prove to be a more interesting subject than Sweeny. Months later, it was with some surprise I learned that du Berrier was not only alive but that he was still up to the same business, plotting and scheming from his base in Monte Carlo for the restoration of several former monarchs.

The story of Hilaire du Berrier was prepared from notes obtained in Monte Carlo through a series of interviews and from original papers (flying contracts from Spain, etc.) in du Berrier's collection there. Although Monte Carlo is full of fascinating places and people, I might as well have been in Peoria. A born story-teller, du Berrier ended each interview by introducing a new subject, such as Enver Bey's flight into Bokhara at the end of WWI, which made me wait anxiously until the next session, ignoring Monte Carlo's many attractions.

In du Berrier's small apartment — built, appropriately enough, by the man who first flew across the English Channel — surrounded by the few items he brought from the Far East — including a 17th-century carved wooden door that weighs hundreds of pounds — and from other places in his long journeys to war, it was sometimes difficult to maintain the necessary skepticism of an interviewer. But every question of veracity was documented either through a document written at the time by one of the principals or by a photograph which proved the tale beyond any reasonable doubt.

A master of making the interesting fascinating, du Berrier's finest moment came while he showed me a framed antique seat cushion. It came from Napoleon's coach. "You know, I collect a lot of things from Napoleon's time," he said, "but the item I want most is one of the original Legion of Honor medals he himself issued to his troops.

"You see there is a turtle named Jonathan that lives in a pond behind the house on St. Helena where Napoleon was exiled. Jonathan is a Galapagos turtle and, as you know, they live hundreds of years. Well, Jonathan is the last living being that knew the emperor personally. Napoleon used to sit by the pond and talk with Jonathan during his exile.

Continued on page 88



SOF's interview with Maj. Gen. Alfred M. Gray Jr., director of Marine Corps Development (see "Gearing Up for the Future," SOF, October '81), provided a clear look at USMC doctrines and tactics for the future. Marine readers will be interested to learn that the Corps has been evaluating four Light Armored Vehicles (LAV): the British Alvis Scorpion, the Cadillac Gage V-150, the Cadillac V-300 six-wheeled Commando vehicle and the Swiss MOWAG Piranha since mid-1981.

The winning LAV will be adopted by the Marines in eight versions: 1) infantry squad carrier (designated "light assault"); 2) fire support ("medium assault"); 3) command and control; 4) mortar carrier; 5) antitank; 6) air defense; 7) recovery; and 8) logistics vehicle; 742 of the winning LAV will be procured in late 1983.

The LAV program is a joint Marine Corps and Army effort under a single project manager, but it is apparent the two services differ in their conceptions of what is necessary in an LAV. For example, the Marine Corps will arm its Light Assault Vehicle with a Hughes M242 25mm Chain Gun; the Army intends to arm its LAV with either a Browning Cal. .50 machine gun or a 40mm automatic grenade launcher.

The Marines want firing ports and outward facing seats to provide a mounted fighting capability; Army planners want a "battle taxi" without firing ports — an outdated concept surpassed by Soviet squad carriers since the 1950s.

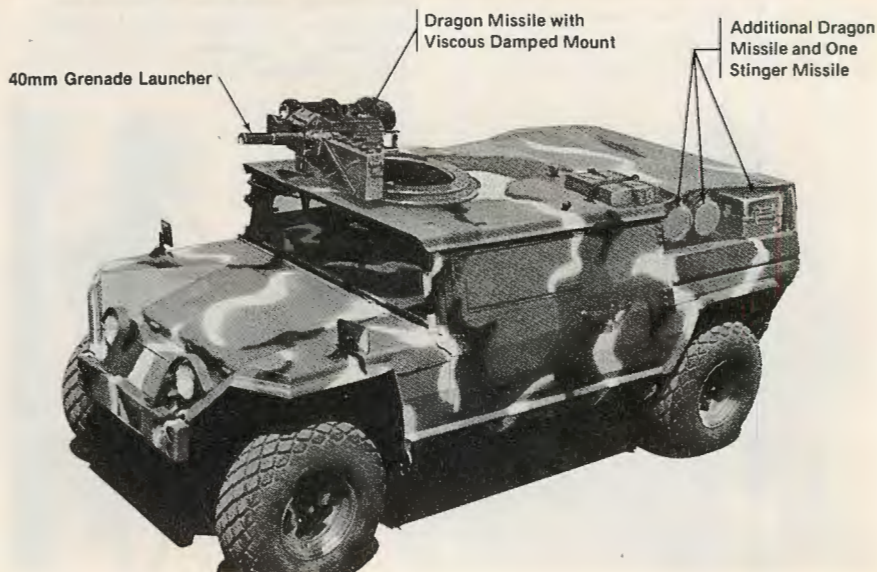
Worst of all is the Army's advocacy of the HMMWV (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle), pronounced "Hum-Vee," designed to replace the quarter-ton jeep and three-quarter-ton truck as an infantry troop carrier, TOW-missile launcher and reconnaissance vehicle. The dune-buggy-like Hum-Vee will provide high cross-country mobility, more load capacity and the ability to add armor, but it has neither the armor-protection level, swimming capability, main armament, load capacity nor growth potential of Soviet armored vehicles. An unarmored vehicle armed with a .50-caliber machine gun and used as a troop carrier would be effective in flat, open areas against light infantry, but its use against Soviet-style armored and mechanized forces would invite disaster.

In SOF's interview, Gen. Gray said, "I wish we could come up with a better term than 'mechanized'."

I propose that the Army, Marine Corps and DoD use a standard terminology (see box on p.31) for U.S. infantry and their new or future squad carriers in order to reduce confusion over roles and functions and, possibly, generate enthusiasm as junior officers and NCOs adjust to mechanization.

Although the Hum-Vee would be suit-

# LAV IT TO THE MARINES





# Army's Battle Taxi Invites Disaster

by Capt. Edwin W. Besch, USMC, Ret.



Swiss MOWAG (Motorwagenfabrik) Piranha 8x8, armed with M242 25mm chain gun, is one of two foreign USMC LAV candidates. Photo: USMC



Cadillac Gage V-150 armed with turret-mounted Belgian Cockerill MK III 90mm gun. In its squad carrier variation, the V-150 is supposed to carry nine men. Photo: Edwin W. Besch



ABOVE: Cadillac Gage V-300 6x6 is one of four Marine Corps light assault (squad carrier) candidates. Vehicle is armed with M242 25mm chain gun. Photo: USMC

LEFT: Teledyne Continental's "Hum-Vee" candidate, may also be armed with 7.62mm machine gun, provides inadequate fire power and protection for infantry. It is now being tested by U.S. Army. Photo: Teledyne Continental Motors



Stormer Scorpion LAV is armed with Bushmaster 25mm chain gun. This is the "stretched" version of the Scorpion APC that is now in British and Belgian service. Photo: Marine Corps Gazette

able for transportation, scouting, raids and reconnaissance by special units, any other infantry equipped with Hum-Vees (each carries half a squad) and expected to fight on a modern battlefield against opponents in armored vehicles should be designated "suicide squads." Hopefully, U.S. Army decision-makers will drop the Hum-Vee for this role and follow the lead of others worldwide — including their comrades in arms, the United States Marine Corps. ☒

## FAVORABLE FLAK

When SOF published "Gearing Up for the Future" in October '81, we received some unexpected flak from Capt. Edwin W. Besch, USMC, Ret. Capt. Besch enclosed this article with his letter, noting that it repeated "some things that I spoke directly to officials of the Army Science Panel and Infantry School in 1980."

Capt. Besch added that his speech "apparently failed to make a large enough dent. I believe SOF is the best forum for me to present these ideas, which are based on seven years' full-time study of foreign light armored vehicles and their use." Capt. Besch has also provided information and advice to more than a dozen U.S. armored vehicle programs.

Besch graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1960. In 1966, he commanded 4th Marines headquarters and rifle companies in Vietnam, where he was wounded. He was consequently retired for disability. He served as a CIA intelligence analyst in Washington and Saigon. Eight years ago he joined the U.S. Army Foreign Science and Technology Center as an armored-vehicle analyst.

In 1981, he transferred to the study of tents and individual equipment used worldwide. We expect that we'll be hearing more from him as he analyzes individual military gear.

—M.L. Jones

## SQUAD CARRIER TERMINOLOGY

Current Designation	Proposed Designation	Squad Carrier
USA Mechanized Infantry	Armored Infantry*	M2 Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle
USMC Infantry	Marine Mech. Infantry	Marine Fighting Vehicle
None	Marine Infantry	LVTP-7A1 amtrac
USA Infantry (Mobile)	Mechanized Infantry	Infantry Fighting Vehicle (LAV)
USA Airborne Infantry	Airborne Infantry (Mech.)	Airborne Fighting Vehicle (Future Armored Vehicle)
None	Airborne Infantry (Light)	None—HMMWV

\*Term used by U.S. Army (during WWII) and appropriate for infantry units of tank-heavy-armored divisions.



# AIRBORNE DOGGIES

## Practical Paratroopers Have Four Legs



**D**OGS have long been used in the military. At Ft. Bragg, N.C., 11 of them are now members of the U.S. Army's only airborne working dogs, part of the 118th Military Police Company (Airborne).

Although the program is currently rather small, if it were expanded it could potentially be quite effective. Dogs have been effective on many different types of military operations. They could be especially valuable when a force finds itself in enemy territory and temporarily surrounded. In such circumstances, an improved capacity for detecting enemy patrols and infiltrators might be critical to the mission's success and the survival of its participants: Trained dogs could perform this function.

Although the Army has numerous devices to detect enemy personnel during times of low visibility, they depend on either sound or visual contact. There is no electronic device which can detect the scent of the enemy. In extremely heavy cover, rough country or built-up areas, odors may be the only way to discern enemy presence. Trained dogs can track by odor as well as by sight and sound, and can sometimes discriminate between friendlies and hostiles as well.

Thanks to their speed, quick reactions and sharp, bone-crushing teeth, trained dogs can also, if need be, become fighting members of a team. They are particularly effective — and frightening — in the dark. They can respond to commands much faster than humans, with-

Airborne dogs must be at least half German Shepherd or have the characteristics of one, as this photo of airborne and nonairborne dogs and handlers shows. Photo: U.S. Army

out argument or confusion. They can be damned near heroic in their attempts to carry out orders despite injuries. Many trained dogs have to be completely paralyzed or killed before they fail to carry out their handlers' orders.

The airborne working-dog program has been in existence for two years. As is the case with other Army canines (or K-9s), the Army recruits dogs which are at least a year old, at least one-half German Shepherd or have the basic characteristics of a German Shepherd, and are not adversely affected by the sound of gunfire. Ideally, a K-9 should react aggressively to gunfire, as he would to any threat to himself or his handler. Han-

### AIRBORNE ALL THE WAY

Bob Harvey is a former paratrooper with a law-enforcement background who has worked with K-9s. After his association with trained dogs, Harvey learned about the K-9 airborne program. "The idea fascinated me," he says, "and I started gathering information." SOF is glad to present the result of his research.

—M.L. Jones

dlers of airborne working dogs are all airborne-qualified military policemen.

As yet, the airborne dogs haven't made any actual parachute jumps, primarily because of possible risk to them, but undoubtedly they could be used in actual airborne operations. Dogs have been parachuted in the past, as in Operation Paradog in 1941 when the Air Force dropped individual dogs into arctic regions to track missing persons. There have also been some unofficial jumps in which paratroopers and pilots took along their mascots.

The current program is slightly different than its predecessors. Its aim is to keep dog and handler reasonably close together. During a jump from a tower — or from an aircraft in the future — the dog is carried in a specially adapted harness which hangs below the handler's reserve parachute like a rucksack. Just before landing, the dog is released from the handler's parachute harness and drops to the end of a lowering line, much as a heavy equipment bag is lowered by a paratrooper before landing. The shock of being dropped doesn't seem to hurt the dog and lowering the dog before landing lessens the chance of a landing injury to either the dog or its handler. These techniques have been tested repeatedly from standard 34-foot training towers without injury to any of the dogs in the program.

The dog touches the ground first and its handler immediately releases his end of the lowering rope to prevent entanglement of himself or the dog during his own landing. After the handler lands, both partners are ready to go to work.

This same procedure would be used during a water landing. The dogs can swim in their harnesses (which is more than a paratrooper can do in his) and on days too hot for routine training, the dogs receive water training. During tree or wire landings, they generally would not be lowered below the handler.

According to Spec. 4 Robert Henderson and the other 10 handlers in the program, the dogs don't seem to mind the training jumps from the 34-foot towers, other than by showing occasional nervousness when a handler stands in the door and the dog realizes how far above the ground it is suspended, but this fear is counteracted by the handler's reassurances, which, thanks to the mutual loyalty, affection and trust between the two partners, is sufficient to calm the dog.

Just as airborne troops perform routine duties when not jumping, the airborne K-9s perform the same duties as their nonairborne counterparts in the 118th MPs when in garrison. They are used for security patrols, building searches, crowd control, tracking suspects and others fleeing from the Military Police, and, of course, protecting their handlers as necessary. In the field, they are used for interior and exterior securi-



## by Robert L. Harvey



Airborne K-9 and handler stand in door of 34-foot tower prior to jumping. Note that dog is carried like equipment bag. Photo: U.S. Army

ty, and in listening and observation posts, where the dogs' alertness, quick reactions and superior senses of hearing, scent and night vision make them an effective supplement and complement to their human counterparts.

By 1985, when the corps of Military Police is due to be phased out and its units changed to infantry-support duties, the dogs will be used for perimeter security, patrolling and scouting, and in some cases special duties such as clearing tunnels and locating mines, tripwires and the like.

The current contingent of airborne dogs, which average 5 years in age, responds to an average of 11 commands. Like other K-9s, they spend most of their time with their handlers. On duty days, they accompany their handlers during their entire shifts. On training days, the dogs make their PT runs with their handlers, then train with them. Training for the K-9 teams includes tracking, scouting, obstacle courses, weapons training, water training, jump training from the towers, attack work and, because they are in the Army, drill and ceremonies. Occasionally, more extensive training occurs, as happened in the spring of 1980 when the dogs participated in an amphibious landing in Virginia, or as may occur when dog teams are sent out to search for and detect aggressor troops which have parachuted into an area.

The airborne dog program is currently quite small. Anyone who has ever worked with K-9s would agree that the program should be expanded in the future so that all airborne units can have K-9 support on their missions. After all, dogs are cheaper to feed and house than soldiers, they don't have to be paid a salary, promoted to keep them happy or offered cash bonuses for re-enlistment, and within their assigned duties dogs can be more effective than humans.

In today's world of terrorism and guerrilla warfare, the employment of K-9s could be especially useful. As a former K-9 handler puts it: "A trained dog is a silently moving, self-propelled, sensitive and discriminating detection unit which also has some offensive and defensive capabilities. It can operate under control or independently. It isn't prone to mechanical breakdown, it needs no batteries and it can get by with the same fuel as its handler — plus a few things the handler wouldn't eat. It can operate in bad weather and in times of limited visibility and instantly responds to commands and unusual situations."

Furthermore, he adds, "You can use it to help you keep warm in cold weather, you can eat it if necessary and, unlike a rifle or tank or electronic detection device, the enemy would have some difficulty in capturing it intact — and even if he did, he'd have a hell of a time using it against you." ☞



# POINT MAN IN HELL

## "Safari" in 'Nam's War Zone D

by Stephen T. Banko III

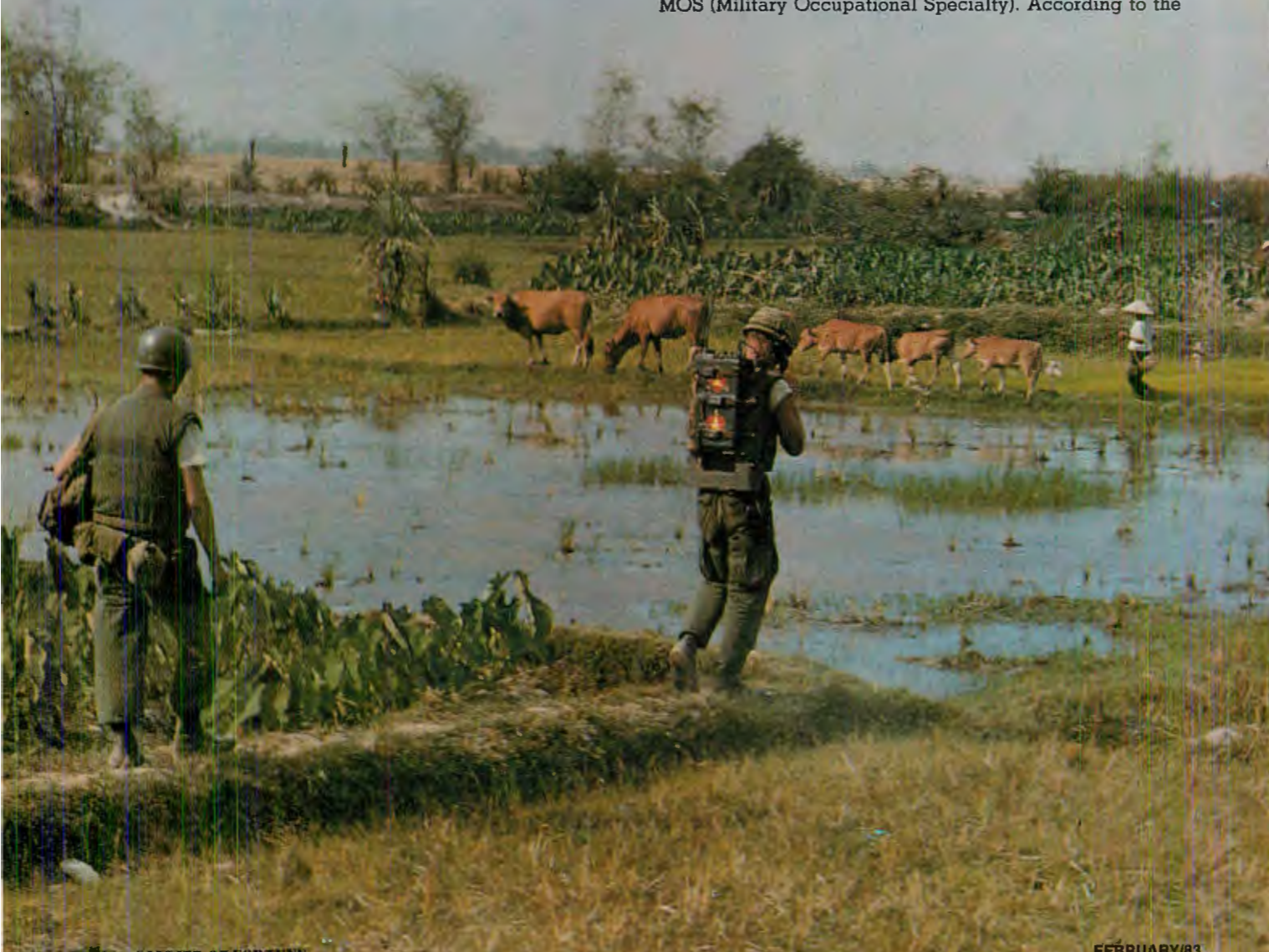
PHU Loi was not exactly the setting and location I would have expected for the few furious minutes of close combat that were to alter my life forever. But then, that was the essence of the paradox we came to know as Vietnam. Things were rarely what they seemed to be.

Named for the tiny ville that lay a few kilometers south of Phu Cuong, the district capital of Binh Duong Province, the base camp at Phu Loi would never bring forth the same dreaded memories of Vietnam as such infamous places as An Loc, Loc Ninh or Song Be — scenes of bloody battles involving the 1st Infantry Division. For the most part, Phu Loi was a support base, housing a number of attack and transport elements of the 11th Aviation Brigade and the headquarters of the Big Red One's artillery component. It was also home for the 409th Maintenance Battalion, the 34th Engineer Brigade and the 29th Supply and Service Battalion.

Phu Loi had no infantry force stationed there but it was the home base of the 1st of the 4th Cavalry attached to the Big Red One (it became better known as the "Quarter Cav" due to its ¼ markings). However, the tanks and tracks of the outfit were usually cracking the thick jungle of the infamous Iron Triangle of War Zone D which spread northward from Phu Loi like a deadly fan.

To fill that void, Phu Loi was also the home of the Combat Reconnaissance Platoon. The platoon was made up of volunteers from the larger units occupying the base and was responsible for daytime perimeter sweeps and nighttime ambush patrols on the periphery of the three major villages lying just outside the Phu Loi wire.

I was one of only two platoon members with an 11-Bravo MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). According to the





manuals, an 11-Bravo MOS was defined as a light-  
weapons infantry specialist. In the vernacular of the  
Vietnam bush, an 11-Bravo meant "grunt." But  
unfortunately it often translated into "bullet stopper."

A number of men in the platoon had received their  
grunt credentials under fire. The crowning achievement of  
the group was their contribution to the savage battle of  
An My during the rush of fighting that ushered in the  
1968 Tet offensive. On a routine sweep less than a klick  
from the Phu Loi wire, the platoon detected a noticeable  
lack of activity in the normally bustling village. While  
approaching for a closer look, the shit hit the fan with  
characteristic suddenness.

A reinforced mainforce company of North Vietnamese  
Army (NVA) regulars pinned the platoon down with heavy  
automatic-weapon and rifle fire. The platoon radioed for  
help: Within minutes the big guns on Phu Loi were raining  
random death on the attackers. As the platoon returned  
small-arms fire, they were reinforced by elements of the  
Big Red One and the battle was joined in earnest.

It took more than an hour to drive the North Vietnamese  
from their positions. When the dust settled and the job of  
counting the enemy dead was over, more than 100 bad  
guys had lost their last battle. A number of the platoon  
members distinguished themselves in the fierce combat —  
and a few became casualties.

Tet '68 also brought a minor skirmish that saw the  
platoon mop up the remains of a crazy company of NVA  
regulars who had spent the night in a rain of shells from  
the Phu Loi 4-deuce mortars. Propaganda documents  
found after the mission indicated that the NVA  
had been led to believe that Tet was a  
glorious victory and the Viet Cong were  
in control of Saigon and other  
major southern cities.

The poor bastards walked all the way down the Ho Chi  
Minh Trail and right up to the wire of one of the biggest  
heliports in Nam. When the green-line bunkers opened up  
on them with machine guns and claymores, they broke  
and ran, probably cursing the VC press secretary who fed  
them the bullshit about the "glorious victory." But they  
couldn't run fast enough to get away from the big mortars.

It was a scene right out of Hollywood. The platoon spent  
most of the night on top of the hootches watching the  
NVA get blown literally to pieces under the eerie light of  
the illumination flares. The mortars and the .50-caliber  
machine guns from the bunker line did a monstrous job.

But after Tet, routine was re-established and the platoon  
had to content itself with wearing blood-stained NVA web  
belts and dented buckles and telling war stories over  
beers at the 409th Maintenance Battalion enlisted men's  
club. During the day, morning patrols checked the wire  
and the deep ravines that zoned the base, and afternoons  
were spent in the baking sun filling sandbags or  
reconstructing bunkers. Night ambush patrols rarely  
turned anything over. On occasion, we would pick up a  
stray VC trying to make it from village to village, but for  
the most part it was tedium.

In fact, it was so boring that I decided to opt out of Phu  
Loi. I had been assigned there by mistake anyway. Having  
been trained as a grunt stateside, I was assigned to the  
29th S&S battalion for reasons known only to some  
personnel clerk with a perverted sense of humor. Needless  
to say, there wasn't a hell of a lot to do in a supply unit so  
I was a natural for the recon platoon. At any rate, I'd had





enough of the sandbags for a while and asked for and got a transfer to a line company in the First Cavalry.

By training and by preference, I gravitated to the pointman's role quickly. We had the terrain around Phu Loi committed to memory and our patrols rarely carried us more than three or four clicks away from the base.

They say familiarity breeds contempt. And maybe it was that contempt for the situation and locale that caused us to be a little careless on that first day of August 1968.

Despite frequent rocket and mortar attacks trying to hit the helicopters, there was no real reason to worry about the villes surrounding Phu Loi. Tan Phu Khanh was distinguished only by being the quietest place in the vicinity. An My had been uninhabited since the battle of Tet. But to the southwest of the base was a wild tangle of thick woods and steep laterite cliffs — which the platoon affectionately called "Lion Country" — where we made contact with the enemy on several occasions. It was a known infiltration route for the NVA and VC and the rough country made it difficult to spot the enemy until you were right on top of them. When word was circulated we had a "lion-country safari" coming up, a lot of stomachs — including my own — tightened.

We were to saddle up and leave at first light, penetrating the woods for some three clicks to the southwest, swing back south and patrol a deep wooded ravine — an autobahn to infiltrators — and sweep back north to the base by nightfall. This was to be a hike: eight clicks through very difficult terrain.

As we made our final stop at the ammo shack in the lingering darkness of early morning, I reached for three extra grenades. I never carried more than three frags and I don't know why I opted for more on this particular day, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. It's funny how hunches can sometimes pay big dividends.

Instead of the brilliant explosion of light that usually heralded the start of another day in hell, this morning kind of sneaked in. It was overcast, but that would burn off by midmorning and the sun would become just another adversary to contend with. I reached absently into the heavy claymore bag that hung from my shoulder and pulled out five red-cased shells. For the dense growth I knew we would encounter, I had chosen a 12-gauge Savage pump shotgun, hoping the wider shot pattern would give me that extra edge that can mean so much in a tight spot. I was already second-guessing myself about the extra frags. Already they were uncomfortable, and I hadn't scaled the first cliff yet. As I slid the shells into the shotgun's chamber, I glanced around to make sure everyone was set. I caught the eye of the MP manning the main gate of the base — a crazy Irish bastard from Boston named Murphy. He gave me the good-luck thumbs-up signal as the lieutenant barked his order to move out.

The terrain fell gently from the road around the perimeter to a series of three small paddies and the dense woods beyond. The first thousand meters would be easy going. As we moved out, I felt reassured by the man walking backup behind me. He was a slightly-built Hawaiian named Neil Okomura, or "Okie" to everyone who knew him. He was a good soldier who wouldn't shrink when the shit hit the fan. With many new guys in the platoon getting their first taste of this shit, I felt better that it was Okie behind me.

I set a pretty brisk pace over the easy ground. I was confident that nothing would happen so close to a big base camp like Phu Loi. Caution was reserved for the tree line ahead and beyond. As I started down for the paddies, the first sign of trouble appeared: A mama-san and a young boy working the fields started hauling ass when they saw us coming. Something was definitely amiss. I signalled the right flank to cover the high ground to the right of the paddies: a steep and heavily-wooded cliff rising sharply to a plateau dominated by a small cemetery. On the left, a stand of trees stood where the two Vietnamese had fled, and it was to this grove I sent the left flank. Okie and I headed straight into the paddies.

My hand tightened on the 12-gauge as I brought it off my shoulder. I was still confident that nothing would happen this close to the main gate but there was no sense in pushing it. Probably a weapons cache or something, I thought.

Sgt. Emil Crone was the lead man on the right flank now walking the ridge above us. I had already reached the end of the first paddy when he called for me to check



out some movement he detected in the thick undergrowth of the cliff. I was still convinced there couldn't be anything this close and was kind of annoyed. I glanced back at Okie. He gave a resigned shrug and started toward the embankment. He never made it.

I had started moving to take a look myself when the VC jumped out of the underbrush. He never even looked at me. He yanked his AK-47 to his shoulder and put three rounds through Okie's body. I'll never forget the revulsion and horror I felt as the green tracers ripped through my friend's body. But the emotion was fleeting. Instinctively, I fired two shots, the first one catching him on the right side and spinning him toward me, the second ripping into him



### FROM LION TO BUFFALO COUNTRY

Today, Stephen T. Banko III is manager of Media Relations for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority in Buffalo, N.Y. He previously served as a speechwriter for the New York State Assembly. During his two tours in Vietnam, PFC Banko was awarded two Silver Stars, the Distinguished Service Cross, four Bronze Stars (two with "V"), Vietnamese Cross with Palm, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and Air Medal. He is currently recognized as New York State's most decorated 'Nam vet, and is active in vets' rights organizations. After his fourth Purple Heart, Banko retired from the bush in November 1969, and finished his tour in January 1970 as a correspondent for the 1st Cavalry.

Banko received one of his Silver Stars for gallantry in the action that took place near Phu Loi Base Camp, RVN, 1 August 1968. During a routine patrol around the base perimeter, Banko ran into trouble — where he least expected it.

—John Metzger

high on the right shoulder close to the neck. A red spray dampened the brush as he went down.

I hit the tepid water of the paddy as bullets kicked around me. I scrambled through the water to the edge of the embankment as more slammed into the bank above my head. I realized that the three-foot wall made me invisible to the VC doing the shooting, but it also meant that I couldn't raise up to return the fire. Without hesitation, I reached for the first grenade and yanked the pin. I gave it a soft toss, hoping that the same bank would protect me from the shrapnel. When it blew, I sent two more up the 10 meters of cliff and heard a scream above the grenades' roar. I leaped up and saw the VC hunched over a low bush. I hit him once with the 12-gauge and moved down the bank to where Okie lay. The medic was also on the move. Two bullets kicked up the muddy water near him. I jumped up again and squeezed off the last round in the shotgun. The third VC went down in a heap.

Reloading the 12-gauge was out of the question now. I grabbed Okie's M16. He wasn't going to be needing it. I jumped into the brush and immediately realized my mistake. By positioning myself near the VC in the cliffside underbrush, I had effectively neutralized the rest of the platoon. No one could fire into the brush without the risk of hitting me. It was too late to get out and I didn't enjoy the thought of trying to make it back to the paddy with my back to the cliff. This was going to have to be a one-man show by necessity, if not by choice.

My buddies couldn't shoot but they could see. Crone shouted a warning and I saw the VC raise up with a pistol. I fired a burst and he went down. Then I heard the unmistakable "whoosh" from an RPG (rocket propelled grenade) and heard the explosion rock the tree line concealing the left flank.

How many of these bastards are in here? I wondered.

To my left, I could see Neil Okomura's life spilling into the paddy. The doc was working furiously but futilely. Even as I heard the medevac chopper come on station, I knew that it was hopeless. Now the air was alive with helicopter gunships buzzing around, waiting for their chance to light the place up. But my presence was denying them their chance.

Another shout from Crone brought me back to the situation at hand. He spotted the VC with the grenade launcher to my front. I clicked on to "rock and roll," pulled a grenade and let it fly. As I heard the blast, I jumped to my feet and emptied the magazine into the brush. Simultaneously, I jumped to get clear of the underbrush and almost knocked myself out when I hit the edge of the dike.

The dustoff bird was coming down and a couple of the guys were there to help put Okie on board. The right flank on the plateau pulled back and the left flank riddled the cliffside with thousands of rounds of covering fire for the chopper. But it was all unnecessary.

We went into the underbrush and found five bodies. One was apparently dead before the first shots were fired. It was determined by the intelligence boys that these guys were the survivors of a Big Red One ambush two nights before and were hiding out to lick their wounds until nightfall when they would move again. Two of the VC had been badly mutilated by my grenades (and I thought they were uncomfortable to carry). The others had been killed by the shotgun or the M16. I had even put a round through the RPG launcher.

The guys were going through the bodies and collecting the weapons. The medevac chopper was long gone but Neil's blood was still shimmering in the putrid water of the rice paddy. I slipped into the water and sat down. I couldn't ever remember being so emotionally or physically drained. I was so empty I couldn't even cry. It was only 0900 but the safari was already over. ☘



**A**FTER spending a year-and-a-half training national servicemen (at age 18, white Rhodesian males had to serve 18 months in one of the country's services — much like our draft system) at Llewellyn Barracks in Bulawayo (then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe), I was nearly climbing the walls in frustration at being unable to participate actively in the bush war going on all around us.

I hadn't traveled half way around the world to sit idly in a training camp, and I spent my time harassing anyone who would listen to me for a transfer to the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) in Salisbury. It finally took a bottle of Ouzo, a stolen regimental sergeant major's (RSM) truck and a near court-martial to convince my boss that I needed a break, and it was with great anticipation that I rode the Bulawayo-Salisbury train toward Cranborne Barracks, home of the RLI.

I arrived during the middle of inter-battalion training competitions, and all the Commandos had been recalled from the bush to participate. My first port of call had been to the RSM's office for a quick orientation on mess procedures, a room assignment and a few brief words of welcome. RSM Harry Springer was the complete professional, not given to idle words or chitchat. I was assigned to 3 Commando for my six-week operational attachment, and would be returning to the bush with them once the competitions had finished.

How I survived the waves of beer and brandy during those few days is still a mystery to me. It wasn't often that the whole of the RLI got together at one time, so there were continual parties in all the Commando bars, officers' and sergeants' messes. It was a bleary-eyed convoy that pulled out of Salisbury a few days later, heading for the Fire Force camp at Mtoko in the northeastern part of the country.

I had been assigned as the 11 troop sergeant by Maj. Strong, 3 Commando OC (officer commanding), who seemed to have a penchant for assigning foreigners to that troop. Aside from three or four Rhodesians, the entire troop was comprised of Brits, Scots and Welshmen, South Africans, Americans, Canadians — and even an Eskimo.

The thermometer climbed upward as we pulled into Mtoko around 1100, and our convoy's dust added to the organized confusion of 2 Commando's preparations departure. Its men had just finished their six-week bushtrip with reasonable success, and were heading back to Salisbury for R&R. Because of the constant threat of callouts, the commando sergeant major (CSM) wasted no time organizing our Commando into two waves of heliborne stop groups and a complement of 16 parachutists to act as the sweep line on the ground. (A stop group is a four-man team or stick, generally commanded by a lance corporal or a

# FIVE AK

## American Survives Rhodesian Ambush



corporal, which is inserted by helicopter on previously determined escape routes. A sweep line is an extended line formation which moves through the contact area, clearing it of terrorists either by shooting them or driving them into the stop groups.)

Having not as yet completed my Rhodesian jump training, I was assigned to Cpl. Percy Hodgson's stop group as the fourth rifleman so I could gain some active bush experience prior to taking my own stick out. Percy had a lot of bush time with 3 Commando, and I was glad to be learning the trade from someone with his experience.

We quickly settled into normal camp routines: muster parades, physical training (PT), test-firing weapons and retraining. I fairly chomped at the bit for a callout. A lot of Selous Scout outposts (OPs) were scattered about the bush, which had frequently called 2 Comman-

do out for successful contacts during their bushtrips.

I didn't have long to wait before the callout siren started blaring daily, prelude to a mad dash to the choppers, quick ground briefing and interminable flights out to areas of terr sightings. We had a tremendous area to cover, and we always responded to sightings made by the bushwise Selous Scouts. Although we didn't spend many nights out in the bush, most of our callouts and contacts became all-day affairs due to the rugged terrain. I learned a lot during the first few weeks and observed at first hand the efficiency of the Fire Force concept.

About midway through the bushtrip, Rod Smith, my troop officer, and Maj. Strong decided that I was ready to take my own stick out on callouts. With six years of infantry background and a year or so of in-country experience, I found it relatively easy to pick up on the Rhode-



# ROUNDS

by John W. Coleman



Coleman moved through the ranks to become junior officer. He notes, "Hair is usual length for officers in RLI."

Coleman moved through the ranks to become junior officer. He notes, "Hair is usual length for officers in RLI."



sian bush war. After all, the basic principles of war do not change, and its techniques are simply modified to meet new circumstances. I found that Fire Force, with its element of surprise and economy of operation, proved this premise many times over.

In early October 1977, we were called out by a Police Reserve pilot who had spotted what looked like a terrorist base camp in the Mudzi Tribal Trust Land. From his small aircraft he had seen numerous trails running through the area of a rocky outcrop and thickly vegetated stream, yet there was no sign of any African *kraals* (stockaded villages) located nearby. Maj. Strong decided to check out the site with the chopper sticks, leaving the second K-Car and Para Dakota standing by at Mtoko for any other callouts. (K-Car was the Alouette command helicopter for Fire Force operations. Armed with either a

20mm cannon or Quad Browning .30-caliber machine gun, it continually orbited the contact area and directed stop-group movement and sweep line against terrorists. It was flown by the most experienced air force pilot and its guns were manned by the best enlisted crew chief. The PARA DAK [Parachutist's Dakota] was the ever versatile DC-3 without which Fire Force simply would not have worked. It performed myriad tasks for the Rhodesian services.)

It was a long, hot flight out; even the open doors of the French-made Alouette helicopters didn't cool us down. With 80 pounds of gear biting into my shoulders and black camouflage cream streaming down my face and hands, I wasn't altogether happy with the report that no terrors had actually been seen by the reserve pilot in the area of the supposed camp. However, as on every callout, you went in with the idea of staying alive, which meant hard, aggressive action once you hit the ground. If it turned out to be a lemon, those were the breaks, and you chalked it up to experience.

After a quick refueling stop en route, the K-Car started flying about a minute in front of the rest of the troopships, so that its pilots could pull up over the target area, see what the action was and deploy the stops according to the situation. Our initial coordinates had been accurate, because Maj. Strong pulled up almost dead center of the camp. This time, however, there were no quick bursts from AK-47s or dust clouds made by igniting RPG-2s or 7s.

The K-Car circled the area a few times, and Maj. Strong decided to set the stops down to have a look. From past experience, this area looked like ideal Indian Country: plenty of water, covered escape routes down a thickly grassed stream and high, rocky ground protected by clumps of trees.

My four-man stick was inserted on a trail leading from the center of the suspected base camp, and we were instructed to sweep along it toward the camp. If nothing developed, we would then rendezvous with the other three stops for a thorough search for weapons, caches, foot spoor (tracks) or other indications of who had been there.

While the October sun fried us in our camouflaged shorts and T-shirts, we searched the bush and found nothing but a few empty cigarette packs and old pop bottles.

The K-Car had been sweeping up and down the stream bed near the camp; it even hovered a few feet off the ground for a better look. After a while, though, the OC decided there was nothing there and started to wrap up the scene. Our troopships were now headed back from refueling and the K-Car was flying back to do the same.

I had joined up with Lance Cpl. Pete Garnett's stick near the stream, and we



set our people out in a loose 360-degree defense under the shade trees. The other two sticks were still about a quarter of a mile upstream, slowly working their way down to join us for the chopper pickup. No one had seen anything worth reporting during the search, and we were all looking forward to the relative comfort of Mtoko's showers and cold beer.

Pete Garnett was a native Rhodesian who had grown up on a farm located north of Salisbury. He was considered one of the better trackers in 3 Commando and often spent a lot of time checking for foot spoor on our numerous callouts. During his original sweep upstream he had spotted something and decided to check it out while we waited for the other sticks to arrive. As was his preference, he took off alone, though as a stick commander he carried the standard backpack radio necessary to the control aspect of Fire Force.

I was sitting propped against a tree, checking out an area map, when a burst of AK fire sent us all diving for cover. I knew immediately that Garnett was involved, and grabbed my handset to find out what was happening.

Before I could hit the transmit button, I heard the words, "This is Garnett. I'm hit." Lt. Smith, who was still upstream, and I repeatedly tried to raise him on the radio, but Garnett did not reply.

In that kind of situation, you have only one option: Get in there and pull out the wounded man.

There was no time to wait for the choppers or other sticks to arrive, nor could we recon by fire to clear the bush, because of the uncertainty of Garnett's position. I radioed Lt. Smith that I was going to form a sweep line with the seven men I had, and try to pull Garnett out before anything else happened. If we got him back to the safety of the high, rocky ground, I planned to fire up that streambed, using every ounce of firepower we had, before going in after the terrors.

We straddled the stream as quickly as we could, and I quietly fanned the sticks out on both sides. The object was to keep the people on your left and right **visible**, but we quickly lost sight of one another in the thick vegetation overgrowing the stream.

We moved slowly and damned cautiously downstream, following the course of the streambed. This kind of situation in Vietnam had taught me to shoot first at anything out of the ordinary, but we all knew Garnett was lying wounded somewhere in front of us.

About 15 meters into the sweep, I stepped into a small clearing bounded by the stream on one side and a dense tangle of bush on the other. As I paused to change my direction of travel closer to the bush cover, I caught movement out the edge of my left eye. My instincts screamed to squeeze the trigger of the heavy-barreled FN rifle I carried — but I

couldn't take the chance; it might be a badly wounded Pete Garnett lying under the bushes. It was the closest thing to a fatal mistake I ever made.

From 10 feet, the impact of five AK-47 rounds fired on automatic lifted my 200-pound frame up like a tree caught in a tornado. I felt as if someone had smashed me in the chest with a 20-pound sledgehammer, knocking me to the ground. I was still conscious and, after a few panicky seconds, realized nothing vital had been hit. Two of the rounds had smashed a bone in my left arm, two had busted up my radio handset and gone on to impact into the right side of my chest, while the fifth had taken a large chunk out of the front of my neck.

I lost a lot of blood lying there, but was still very aware of the terror who had shot me. I was in no shape to use my rifle even if I had known where it was, and my right arm wasn't functioning well enough to undo the holster strap on my Browning 9mm pistol. On top of this, a

chopper had returned to start the pickup and was sweeping the streambed right above me. I was able to feel for my radio handset with my left hand and nearly cried with frustration when all I found were shot-away wires.

By now Lt. Smith had arrived with two sticks and pulled everyone together to form another sweep line in the area where we had started. He was faced with the same problem which had confronted me, but now he had two wounded people in front to worry about.

I could hear the sweep line coming down the stream, and had no intention of becoming the center of a fire fight between them and the terror who had shot me. Praying that the terror wouldn't want to give his position away by shooting me again, I shouted out to Lt. Smith that the enemy was only a few feet from me, and told him to come up using the streambed as cover. During those next few minutes of helpless resignation, I waited for a final AK burst to make me a

## HOW TO FIND AN ARMY

John Coleman joined the Army at age 18 in 1969 and ended up in Vietnam — by way of Germany. From his arrival in 'Nam, Coleman was not one to let grass, rice or anything else grow under his feet.

Coleman served in infantry Recon in Quang Tri and Tuy Hoa, wading paddies and pounding mountains until the end of his tour, attaining the rank of sergeant. Upon his return to The World, the Instructor's Training Course, NCO Academy and Ranger School occupied his time when he wasn't an infantry instructor at Fort Ord. Fort Lewis, Wash., Panama and Germany saw him again as sergeant of a Recon platoon until he tired of war games and decided to find a real war in a real army . . . "I became disenchanted with an army deteriorating into a bunch of officers afraid for rank and NCOs just kicking back and waiting for retirement."

Peacetime armies are hard enough for adrenaline junkies, but the peacetime citizenry is ever worse. Catching a plane for Rhodesia in early 1976, Coleman was grilled by customs and a Special Branch official, before he was finally allowed near a Rhodesian recruiting office.

Coleman may have longed for a little more boredom after joining the Rhodesian Army, and a hard, disciplined, traditional military like Rhodesia's certainly disappointed more than a few Americans who swapped war stories for the benefit of the locals, flashed their medals and went over the hill to find a slightly more relaxed organization. This characterization did not make Yanks a privileged class in Rhodesia.

Not one to be easily daunted, John Coleman finished basic in the top quarter of his class. He transferred to the Rhodesian Light Infantry, completed the company-level tactics course and returned to that same tactical training course as an instructor. Coleman finished first in his Potential Officer course.

Although Coleman has little but praise for the Rhodesian Army ("I found an army that looked like an army, acted like an army, fought like an army and — best of all — had a cause worth fighting for"), he seemed to follow in the footsteps of the Rangers he admired so in Tuy Hoa and stayed in more or less constant trouble with Maj. Armstrong, second-in-command of the RLI. Considering the inevitability of change that would come with the Mugabe government and his continuing trouble with Armstrong, Coleman decided to try his luck in South Africa.

The South African Defense Forces interviewed Coleman, but they made it clear that their operation was every bit as enamored of "Salute It If It Moves" discipline as the Rhodesians, if not more so.

Jan Smuts Airport was the last piece of African real estate to be graced with the presence of John W. Coleman. In 1979 he boarded a South African Airlines jet and reluctantly headed for California where he now lives with his Rhodesian wife. Now he keeps busy writing, studying and working in aviation and the aerospace industry . . . at least until he finds another good army with a war.

— Bill Guthrie



candidate for the RLI Roll of Honor. (This was the one list you didn't want your name on — it was dedicated to RLI members who had been killed in action.)

When a sweaty, black-streaked Lt. Smith finally dove down into the stream next to me, I nearly cried with relief.

I wasn't able to move much, and Rod Smith had just started cutting my radio pack off when the goddamned war busted out all over again. A hot South African machine gunner, Boetie Pen-

neken, thought he had seen something move in the bush and ripped it with his general-purpose machine gun (GPMG). The terr who shot me had been waiting for more targets and was lining up to gun the troop commander when Penneken caught him with two rounds in the chest. No sooner did two troopies start to move forward to check him out, than one of the Alouettes opened up with its Browning .30-caliber machine guns a little way downstream. They had spotted

another terr trying to ease out of the area, but a long burst from the crew chief found its target.

By now, no one was sure just how many terrs were snivelling around under the thick, tangled bush by the stream, and Lt. Smith wanted to put a lot of ordnance on top of the area before going back in. In the meantime, he quickly organized my medevac, and sent out a party to recover the body of Pete Garnett, found about 20 feet from where I had been shot.

Squadron Leader Taylor, OC of 7 Squadron's choppers, had been putting his flying time in on this bush trip, and decided to handle my evacuation himself. It was taking too long to cut a proper pickup zone out of the rugged bush, so using the chopper blades of the Alouette, he cut his own impromptu landing strip and quickly lifted me off toward the field hospital at Mtoko.

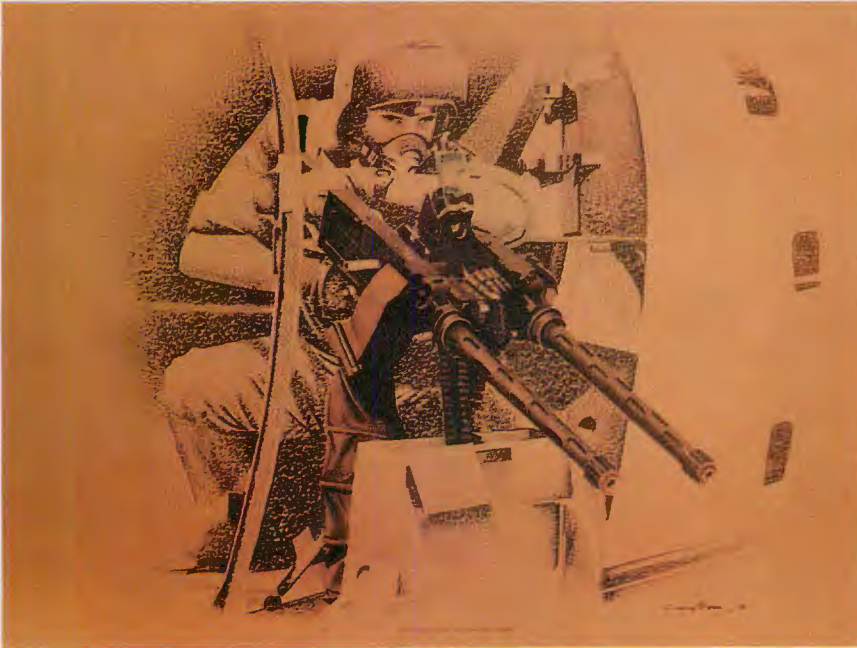
Within 2½ hours' traveling by chopper, Dakota and chopper again, I was rushed into the emergency room at Andrew Fleming Hospital in Salisbury for a series of operations that lasted most of the next week.

During my 3½-week convalescence, I was able to piece together just what had happened out there in the Mudzi. Garnett had stumbled into an advance party of three terrs who had been scouting out the camp for reactivation the next day by another group of 30 or so more out of Mozambique. The three had arrived just minutes before our Fire Force, and had opted to lie low until we pulled out of the area. The third in the party had almost gotten away, but fragments from the K-Car's 20mm cannon exploding-head rounds had turned him into a valuable prisoner.

When 3 Commando returned to Salisbury for R&R, I worried about my future with the RLI. It didn't make a very good impression to get blown away on your first bush trip, and I was afraid that I would be spending the rest of my enlistment instructing national servicemen back at Llewellyn Barracks. However, I wanted to stay with the battalion and felt I had a pretty strong argument for doing so. If I was willing to put my life on the line again after getting out of the hospital with five bullet holes, then the choice should really be mine.

When Maj. Strong came to visit later on, I told him how I felt and asked his help in arranging my permanent transfer to the RLI. A little surprised, he said he would see what he could do.

It was only after I was commissioned a few years later that I hear the end of the story. Maj. Strong had talked to Gen. John Hickman, then army commander, about my request and recommended that I stay. Gen. Hickman replied that I could stay in the RLI as long as I wanted. For two more years I did just that. 突



In Craig Bone's drawing, K-Car chopper crew chief mans twin Brownings. Sight is French-made, and allows for speed and height of aircraft while shooting.

Craig Bone draws tired gunner relaxing behind camouflaged 7.62mm FN MAG. Each stick generally carried 250-300 rounds for gun.







## SOFer Joins Paracaidista Patrol in El Salvador

# GRINGO IN THE BUSH

**W**E lifted off the main runway at Ilopango airfield and soon were where it's high and cold and trousers flutter frantically as your legs hang out the door. I looked at the Salvadoran paratrooper beside me. The wind rippled his cheeks.

When flying over Vietnam, I felt it was the most beautiful place on earth. Now, fifteen years later, I thought the same about El Salvador. Here the fields were smaller, with no rice paddies. There were huge lakes and volcano peaks. Everywhere the land was flat, there were houses: farmhouses, ranch houses, haciendas. But the tropic vegetation and the feel of danger in both countries were the same.

We flew in two Vs and by craning my neck I could look through the windshield over the co-pilot's shoulder and see another Huey rising and falling. It had been a long time since I sat in the open door of a helicopter at 3,000 feet. I gripped the edge of the door and hoped the kid with his knee in my back wouldn't decide to shift his weight. I thought of the chain of events that had brought me here.

Tony, one of the U.S. Army trainers had set me up for a jump with the *Paracaidistas* — the Salvadoran paratroops. The night before the jump he called. "No go," he said. "More than 700 insurgents have been reported near Tenango, about fifty clicks west and a little

north of San Salvador. We got one company that just completed training going in as a blocking force. The jump's off."

"I'd rather go on the operation anyway. Is it possible?" I asked.

"Probably," he said. "I'll pick you up at 0600. We'll go out to the airbase and see."

The next morning Tony entered the coffeeshop in a pair of jeans and a polo shirt, with a Colt .45 tucked into the small of his back. He is a tightly built, good-looking Puerto Rican Special Forces master sergeant, who works in the milgroup headquarters at the American Embassy. Normally airborne training for a battalion-size unit would be a full-time job for a split A detachment.





by Jim Morris

**ABOVE:** Paras break for edge of clearing upon exiting helicopter at beginning of patrol. **RIGHT:** This captain, graduate of U.S. Airborne and Ranger schools, was the hardest-looking dude Morris saw in El Salvador.

But with only 55 trainers in-country these guys are meeting themselves coming and going. With no one else available for the airborne job, Tony had taken it on by himself as an additional duty.

Since trainers are not allowed on combat ops they have no way of evaluating their work. Tony wanted a brief oral after-action report as the price for getting me hooked up with the Paras.



Guard outside embassy quarters carries folding-stock shotgun.

Of course, I was glad to do it. We set out for the airport. On the way he explained their organization.

There are two companies or *escuadrons* of *Paracaidistas*. When the airbase at Ilopango was raided last year and six choppers destroyed, the airborne troops were given responsibility for base security. Two more companies of air force security people were placed under the *Paracaidista* commander. The security troops only pull security; the Paras pull security, and also go on combat ops. Thus, they are army troops assigned to an air force command. For operations they are loaned back to the army by the air force.

When we arrived, Maj. Turcios, the Para's commander, told Tony it was fine with him if I went along, but he would prefer I got out of my civvies and got into a suit of fatigues.

"Good," I said. "How about a weapon?"

"You want to carry a weapon?"

Oh yes indeed I did. Most journalists in El Salvador work in cars clearly marked "TV." They wear T-shirts lettered "JOURNALIST — DON'T SHOOT!" and they still have a frighteningly high casualty rate. By putting on a green suit I was dealing myself into the game. And the game in El Salvador is played under a very rough set of rules. There are virtually no prisoners. The guerrillas have grabbed a few for propaganda purposes, and the government has a number of "returnees" who have turned themselves in weaponless, with a story about having been kidnapped by the guerrillas and made to be cooks — apparently they have several battalions of cooks. But virtually no guerrillas have been captured in battle.

When I first got to El Salvador I asked the American light colonel in charge of the training program about it. "Look," he said, "you don't get it. No Salvador-



an is going to surrender while he has the means to resist. Nobody gets captured because nobody surrenders."

Later, I found out that the custom in El Salvador is to keep the last round to take care of yourself.

They gave me the largest suit of fatigues they could find, a G-3 with four loaded magazines and 300 loose rounds. I could just see myself burrowing into the dirt, trying to reload those mags in a fire fight.

Besides the G-3s, we had a 57mm recoilless rifle and two M60 machine guns.

After having carried an M16 for years, the G-3 seemed heavy as an artillery piece. And this one, although immaculate and well-oiled, was old enough to have had most of the bluing worn off. How accurate would it be? How prone to malfunction?

We flew above the jungle for about fifteen minutes. The doorgunner pulled the pin that held his M60 down and brought it up, ready to fire. We circled and landed without contact.

The Paras deployed around the landing zone, a grassy clearing, to provide security for the next two lifts, but the young soldiers had a tendency to bunch up at the perimeter's edges.

The Salvadoran Army is a young army and it is only since the insurgency that it has tried to develop into a modern force. Until recently, everything technical, complicated or difficult had to be supervised by an officer.

One reporter with a U.S. military background told me he had been astonished to see a 57mm recoilless rifle set up by two grunts, then a lieutenant employed to fire it.

The Paras are far above that level, but they lack the experienced NCOs who compose the backbone of any modern military force.

I melted into the minimal shade on the edge of the LZ. The men were bunched up in clumps, and once satisfied they weren't taking fire, most of them turned inward and lit up. There was a low buzz of Spanish conversation.

The newbies all kept their eyes on the old guys, and there was that big question in their eyes that is in everybody's until they have done it. The old boys moved with ease and familiarity. But they wore edgy grins.

I couldn't see what they were so excited about. They were supposed to be a blocking force for the Third Brigade. I had been on six or seven blocking operations in Vietnam, and never made contact of any sort. I did not know there is almost no such thing as a no-contact patrol in El Salvador.

Capt. Tomas Perdomo, the patrol commander, was on the radio, calling in the next lift. His attitude was both friendly and professional. He would be a good officer in anybody's army.

It was the first week in August at 1230

hours and very close to the equator. My head buzzed from the suffocating heat, just sitting on the LZ. Sundazzle spots drifted before my eyes.

"They put us too far from the objective," Perdomo said. "We must walk five kilometers, not two."

**RIGHT:** Maj. Turcios, commander of *Paracaidistas*, is also responsible for security of Ilopango Air Base. **BELOW:** (left to right) Andy Messing of American Security Council, SEAL adviser who wishes to remain anonymous, Maj. Gen. Singlaub and Rep. Dornan, at Navy base in San Miguel.



## THE TRAINERS

by Jim Morris

Over and over in El Salvador I met U.S. trainers like Tony, voluntarily working nights and weekends to make up for the artificial 55-man limit imposed by Congress.

Nobody pushes them into this; they genuinely like the soldiers they call "the Salvos," and have unanimous admiration for their courage and dedication.

The trainers work in blank green fatigues — no U.S. Army patches, no name tags. Without exception they are Special Forces, most on 90- to 180-day temporary duty (TDY) assignments from the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Panama. Their colonel was a member of the "B" team, credited with "advising" the Bolivian Rangers who caught Che Guevara. Like the rest of them, he did not want to have his name or picture used because of the danger of assassination.

Asked how the 55-man limit affected operations, one officer replied, "We're busy as a one-legged man in an ass-kickin' contest."

I asked him if they lost face with the macho Salvos about not going on patrol with them. He said, "Not unless it is somebody who doesn't like gringos in the first place."

The worst effect of not being able to go out is that the trainers aren't able to observe the results of their work. "The big wheels come down from Washington and ask us how they operate," he said. "We try to tell 'em we don't know. They don't want to hear that."

The spirit of the trainers is best exemplified by the team sergeant of one training team. He was the youngest looking E-8 I've ever seen. When another U.S. officer was sent home for carrying an "offensive" M16, he is reported to have said, "I don't care. I'll work in my underwear if they'll just tell us what the rules are and let us get on with the mission."

I told that story to Congressman Dornan, who asked him if it were true when they were introduced.

"Yes, sir," said the young sergeant. "I'm kind of idealistic about this. All I want to do is help the young soldiers."



I shrugged. Five clicks. How bad could it be? I had run further than that on a Colorado road in the early morning coolness three days ago.

When all the troops had arrived we walked single-file across an open field, entered the tree line and immediately hit the thick jungle, going almost straight down toward a rushing creek.

In the Rockies it would have been a workout, but no challenge; in this steaming heat it was murder, all of it either straight up or straight down. Stretched out, it would have been about twelve clicks. The heat and humidity jammed my camera immediately.

We slid down slick mountain trails and climbed up others. All the wait-a-minute vines that the Salvos slipped through caught me square in the face. We didn't go very fast; the point moved cautiously, and when we stopped, everybody sat quietly. I flopped on my back in the trail and panted like an old dog.

Crawling over a stone fence, I tripped and fell six feet straight down, smashing my jaw on a rock. I didn't even feel it, just dragged myself back to my feet and

lurched ahead to catch up.

Perdomo took a break at the top of the next hill. I sat down and drained my canteen.

He smoked a cigarette and grinned. "Come on," he said. "We are going to the *chingada* [whorehouse]."

I grinned, but it was a bluff. We moved out. I dragged myself across two more hills. At the top of the second, I found Perdomo sitting, totally alert. He wasn't taking any break.

"That's it," he said, pointing to a small stone house with a red tile roof atop the next hill. He scanned it for signs of occupation.

We sat there a long time, as the shadows lengthened and the land cooled. I found my strength returning. When Perdomo was satisfied, we moved out again. This time they were sure there were guerrillas in the area. The stone house had been a way station for them. Perdomo figured they had vacated it when his column appeared, but were keeping it under observation.

We cut down a little draw and up another long steep hill, single file on the

narrow trail. When I reached the top, Perdomo held out something about the size of a tennis ball. "*Bomba contact*," he said. It looked like an overgrown cherry bomb and I didn't take it too seriously.

Perdomo established his command post (CP) up at the house and Elga, his radio-telephone operator (RTO), set the radio on a low stone fence about six feet away. Perdomo got on the radio and gave instructions to his troops. "I am putting ambushes at the four cardinal compass points," he said. One squad moved by us, heading into the bush to the north, carrying an M60. Another moved back down the hill to the west, taking up a position in a smaller house at the base of the hill.

Since we seemed to be settling in for the night, I laid down my G-3 and started to take off my shirt. Around the corner of the house a couple of Perdomo's soldiers started to build a fire.

My sleeve got hung up on my camera wrist-rig, so I stripped it off. Elga eyed the camera with an admiring glint. After Perdomo he spoke the best English in the group. He was a tall, likable, intelligent kid who had been a tour guide before he was drafted. "If you get killed, can I have your camera?" he asked.

I grinned. One of his buddies also lurked about, eyeing me. "You can't both have it," I said.

"He wants your watch."

I laughed out loud. That stuff would never get back with me if I bought it, so these kids might as well have it as anybody. "Sure," I said. I stripped off my shirt. For the first time I noticed that I didn't have a dry thread on me. The shirt was soaked through with sweat: T-shirt, shirt, lapels, epaulets, pockets, everything. Pants were the same way.

A six-round burst from an M16 snapped over my head and I found myself flat on the ground by the stone house.

G-3s returned fire from the north and east, none from the other two directions, as far as I could tell. Everybody in the CP remained cool and collected. Perdomo was on the radio, speaking too fast for me to follow but I heard the word "*putas*" several times. *Putas*, whores, that's what they called the guerrillas. A few rounds still snapped overhead, but they were mostly outgoing.

I slithered over to my weapon beside Perdomo and took up a position facing down the hill to the west. It was the only field of fire available where I wouldn't hit one of his men. "The north ambush killed one insurgent," he said, looking up from his radio.

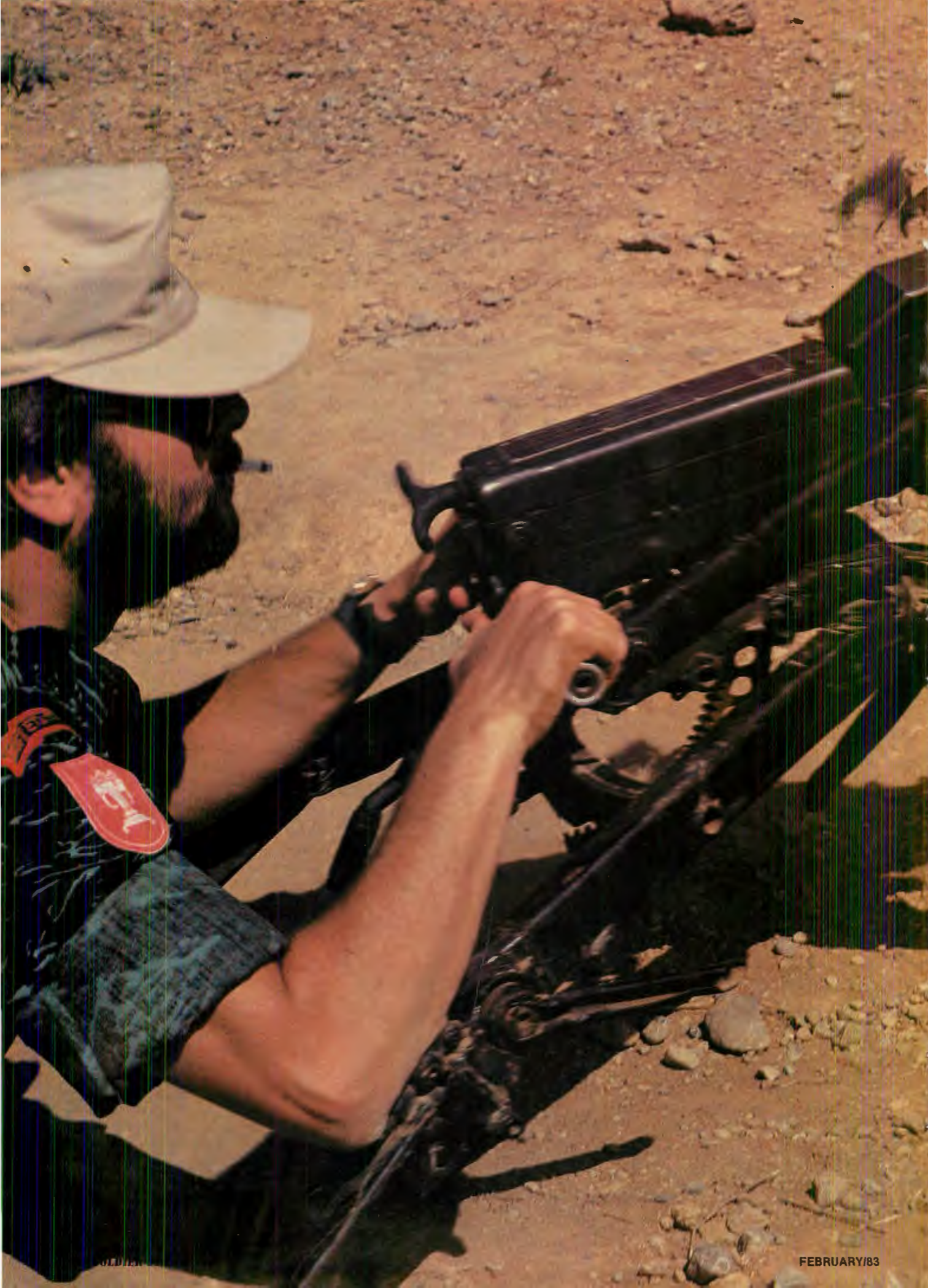
The firing died and there was a cacophony of insults in Spanish. The guerrillas were a little further out and they started it.

Capt. Tomas Perdomo directs deployment of troops, armed with G-3 7.62mm rifles, at LZ on return from patrol.



Continued on page 73









# RAIDERS OF THE LOST GRENADE LAUNCHER

**SOF Exclusive: Staff Tests  
USSR's AGS-17 in Darra**

**Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis**

After reflecting upon the numerous obstacles encountered in tracking down and finally locating a new Soviet weapon being used against Afghanistan freedom fighters, SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, one of the bloodhounds, called in this report on the lengthy search from vacation overseas:

SOF has been tracking down the elusive Russian AGS-17 automatic 30mm grenade launcher for almost 18 months. We had a team in Pakistan in 1980, seeking out the AK-74, additional AK-74 5.45mm ammo and the AGS-17 (see "Assignment Afghanistan," "Jihad in Afghanistan" and "Invisible Enemy," SOF, September, October, November '80). We found the "74" and its ammo, but not the AGS. There were numerous live-sighting reports and promises to show one to us, which gradually started vying for the spot of one of the three greatest lies in the world. As the months and trips to Afghanistan continued, the AGS started to become our own personal Big-Foot or Loch Ness monster. In early 1981 we obtained the first AGS-17 30mm round (see "Exclusive: Another Successful Afghanistan Treasure Hunt," SOF, April '81). In February '82 Jim Coyne got a hurried picture of the weapon in Pakistan (see "Taking Secret Wraps Off USSR's Awesome AGS-17").

We took another giant step when Coyne and I went into Afghani-

stan in late May 1982. En route to our departure point, we stopped for lunch in Darra, the weapons mecca of mid-Asia, in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan. Our host, a wily gun dealer from whom we had obtained the AK-74 for testing and who therefore had some credibility, said, "Yes, I have an AGS-17, but it's in my village a few kilometers from here. Yes, you may photograph and shoot it."

No time. Our presence was required on the border. However, we arranged to contact him on our way out. When we returned, we met and scheduled a short session for the following morning. We were to be transported by our Afghan driver (as Westerners/Journalists were banned from going in the NWFP without a Pakistani official as an escort) but the driver did not show up, or so we thought. We subsequently learned he had been ejected from the hotel lobby and did not call us. By the time we found this out, we were more interested in negotiating for an alleged engine manual from an Mi-24 Russian gunship. We eventually found the manual was a fake — and we were out of time. Still no AGS-17.

We gave it another shot last September. Patience paid. And over to you, Peter . . .



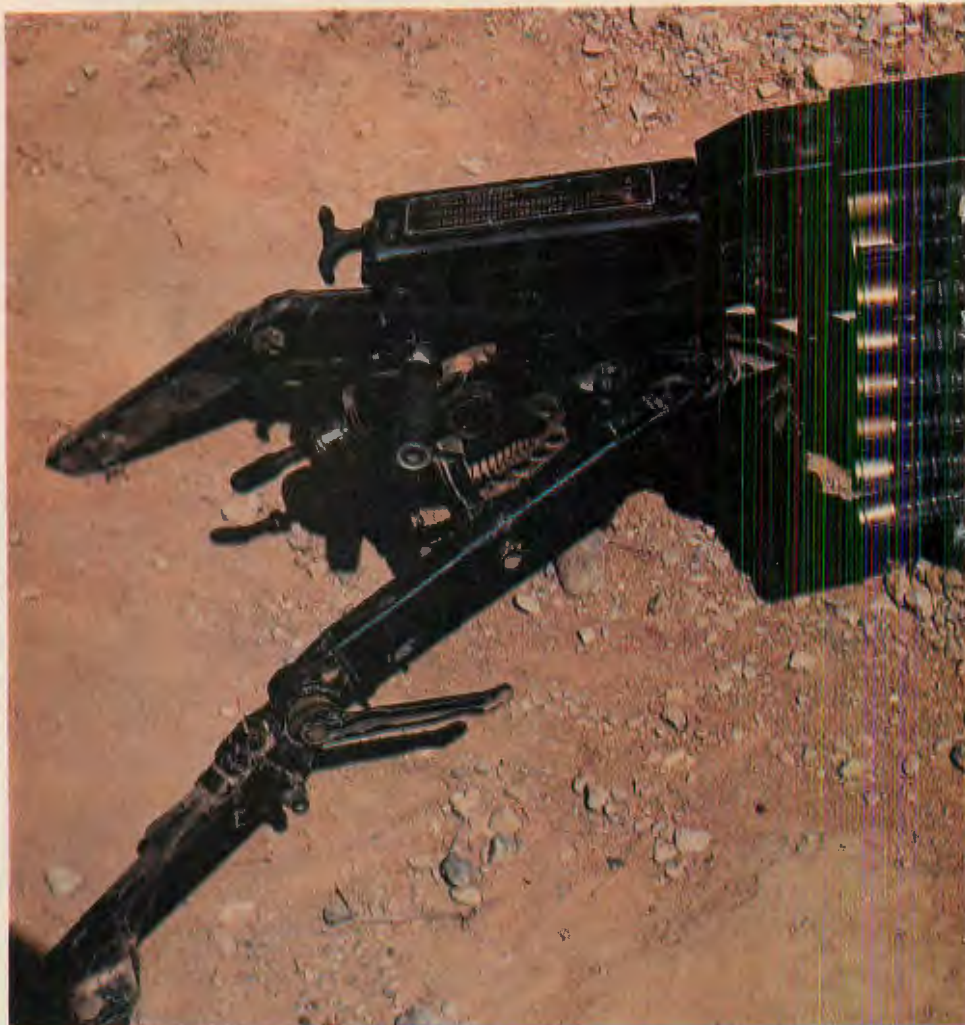
**D**ARRA Adam Khel. Forty clicks from Peshawar and well within the forbidding Tribal Lands on the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In this untamed, violent land, *Pukhtunwali* (tribal law) prevails once you step off the road.

Darra Adam Khel. Closed to foreigners for more than a year now, ever since a large drug bust at the local heroin factory.

Darra Adam Khel. A small, yet overwhelming, village as its narrow, congested main street literally lunges at all the senses. The ear is attacked most brutally of all. Incessant gun fire, as customers step out into the street and test-fire weapons they are interested in, aiming directly into the burning sun above. The constant honking of horns as vehicles of all descriptions swerve in and out on direct collision courses with sheep, people, cattle, vendors' stands and trucks painted in the most garish style imaginable. The sense of taste is overloaded and finally dulled by raw onions, harsh cigarettes, half-ripe tomatoes, Coca-Cola®, heavily spiced lamb kabob and mint tea. The smells promote turbulence in the gut: the odor of human and animal wastes, vegetables, fruits, spices, hashish, sweat, the gasoline engine's poison vapors, the primitive gunsmith's hearth and above all the acrid smell of gun powder. This melange assails the eye as well, reinforcing the frenzied messages being sent without interruption to my brain.

But, I am getting used to it. Twice before SOF's foreign correspondent, Jim Coyne, and I have been wedged into the back of the mujahideen jeep and smuggled past the Pakistan Army checkpoint. The first time a 100-rupee bribe got us across. Subsequently, we sailed past the checkpoint hidden in the rear of the vehicle. On each of our two previous trips we were told the Russian AGS-17 (*Avtomaticeski Granatomojot Stankovi*) grenade machine gun, which I had come 12,000 miles to test, was still not available, that we should return in a few days and *Inshallah* (if God is willing) it would be there. Due to my schedule, this would be the last attempt. If it is not here today, I will never see the AGS-17.

As Coyne and I wait in the jeep parked outside the shop of gun dealer Hakim Gaz, I find myself hot, sweaty, cramped and bummed out, since I now feel there is almost no chance we will ever examine the AGS-17. Hakim Gaz's glassy-eyed vagueness and lack of enthusiasm kindle little expectation that my hands would ever press the trigger on this new Russian weapon, about which there has been so much speculation and so little information.



**LEFT: Bolt face with claws extended exposed by lifted feed cover. Extractor visible at bottom of bolt face, along with open bottom ejection port.**



**BELOW LEFT: Strong, simple feed mechanism on underside of feed cover. Bar curving down from left to right is feed rail, ending in feed pawl. Single feed pawl requires flanking holding pawls, above and below.**

**BELOW: Dealer Gaz's gunsmith fiddles with recalcitrant damaged links while trying to load AGS-17.**







**ABOVE:** Russian AGS-17 complete with tripod mount, loaded and ready to fire. SOF Military Small Arms Editor, Peter G. Kokalis, was first American to test Soviet full-auto grenade launcher.

**RIGHT:** Running straight out the rear of the receiver, cocking handle cable is fixed to back of the block.



**ABOVE:** Closeup of cooling fins.

**BELOW:** Identification stampings on top of feed cover.



The mujahid beckons us and we enter again the candy store of Hakim Gaz. Gaz and Darra's other dealers in guns and intrigue sit amid an exhaustive inventory of military small arms. My pulse quickens each time I step inside his dingy shop. The walls and ceiling are covered with the most amazing assemblage of weaponry one could possibly conjure up into a single 15x40-foot room. Proud of their wares, Gaz and his brother allow me to examine everything.

On the back wall hang the pistols. Browning Hi-Powers, Walther P-38s, old commercial .30-caliber Lugers, Spanish-made Star and Llama .32 ACP pocket pistols, TT-33 Tokarevs, a long-barreled, stocked Mauser broom-handle sporting carbine, a large assortment of flare guns and row after row of Darra-made .38-caliber Webley revolvers. On shelves behind the pistols are boxes of ammo, fountain-pen pistols in .25 ACP, Russian AKM bayonets, Khyber knives, and Kalashnikov and submachine-gun magazines of all types.

From the ceiling hang M1 carbines, Russian PPSH-41 submachine guns and dozens of locally made Mk III and Mk V Sten guns. Suspended along the walls are hundreds of handmade .303 Enfields in every configuration imaginable: P14s, No. 1 Mk.IIIs, No. 4 Mk.1s, and No.5 Mk.1s (the "Jungle Carbine"). Even the British proof marks have been duplicated. In some cases only the recent date of manufacture and the presence of file marks where they should not be betray the rifle's origin. A few puzzle the eye as they combine Mauser 98k muzzles, front sights and barrel bands with Enfield-type actions in 7.92mm caliber. There is even a Mauser-type bolt-action rifle in 7.62x39mm ComBloc using Kalashnikov magazines and fitted with a pistol-grip wooden stock. Several dozens of the Enfields are actually British-made. A steel vault contains the most highly prized items: FN FALs, G-3s, Chinese and Russian AK-47s, Chinese and Egyptian AKMs, and Russian AK-74s and RPK-74s. The floor is littered with cans of .303 ammo in Vickers cloth belts, and 7.62x39mm and 5.45mm ComBloc ammunition is strewn everywhere.

**Right-side view of AGS-17 shows rubber-covered grip, tripod mount with curved rack of rack-and-pinion elevation gear and top of bolt inside opened feed cover.**



Since all of this presumably goes better with a Coke®, we are seated and offered one. A half hour later a man appears, silhouetted in the doorway, struggling to bring the AGS-17 (also known as the Plymya, Russian for "Home") inside. Its presumed part-owner follows and we are immediately told that we cannot fire the weapon until we return with the cash to purchase it — \$45,000. My hopes dim again as we have no intention of buying the AGS-17 and could not in any event produce \$45,000 cash. The corpulent, red-faced, orange-haired individual leaves eventually and Hakim Gaz, who has said nothing during this interval, asks me how many rounds I wish to fire through the AGS-17. I tell him 40, a not inconsiderable number as they are \$20 per round. That settled we pile into the jeep and follow Gaz to a small rural village several miles deeper in the tribal area. It is nestled against low-

not use it during the firing test.

The links are defective and a great deal of time is expended in attempting to load the weapon. Soon the entire male population of the village, about a hundred, has assembled — to watch Jim and me more than the AGS-17.

The AGS-17 feeds from the right side. Two slightly curved, parallel prongs on top of the sheet-metal feed block are inserted between the cartridge and the link, holding the round in alignment for loading. The belt is placed onto these prongs, links up.

The sequence of operation is as follows: With a belt properly positioned, the rubber-covered

recoil spring forces the massive bolt forward. As the bolt approaches the feed block, a semicircular claw rises vertically, grabs a round, pushes it from the link and falls back down in alignment with the bolt face. The bolt continues its forward travel until the cartridge is fully chambered. The AGS-17 fires from the closed-bolt position.

There are no locking lugs and this weapon operates on pure blowback. In contrast, the U.S. Mk. 19 40mm machine gun has a

fixed firing pin and fires with advanced primer ignition. The AGS-17 has a spring-loaded floating firing pin. As the weapon operates on blowback, the bolt is stationary when the chambered round is fired and recoil accelerates the bolt to the rear. This requires an extremely heavy bolt to keep counter recoil velocity within safe limits. In addition, the Soviets have incorporated a hydraulic recoil damper on the left side of the receiver to further reduce counter recoiling energy (the damper was marked "MAKC").

Firing is initiated by first holding the rubber-coated horizontal finger grips at the rear of the receiver and then pressing the thumbs against a

lying hills and steep bedrock escarpments that will prove to be our targets. The AGS-17 is set up — by a gunsmith Gaz has brought with him — facing the sheer cliffs about 400 meters away.

The 30mm rounds are loaded into the non-disintegrating belt. The individual links are held together by cotter pins. A drum-type belt carrier, which will hold 29 rounds, is available, but we did

cocking handle, located at the rear of the receiver, is pulled rearward. It is attached to a steel cable, which in turn is connected to the rear of the bolt. A pull of 16.5 inches is required to bring the bolt back against the end of the receiver and this represents a considerable amount of over-travel. During this movement the trigger mechanism is cocked. After the cable is released smartly, the



sheet-metal, spring-loaded panel in the center, somewhat reminiscent of the Schwarzlose. The AGS-17 will continue to fire as long as the trigger panel is depressed and there is ammo supplied to the system. The cyclic rate is quite low, probably around 800 rpm, and it is easy to fire single rounds.



As the bolt moves rearward, a standard configuration extractor removes the case from the chamber. The empty case (only 1-1/8 inches long) then strikes a nub on the feed block and is ejected downward out the bottom of the open receiver.

The single large feed pawl inside the top cover is positioned over the cartridge's center of gravity. It reciprocates by virtue of an arm which travels in a lateral channel on top of the bolt. Two spring-loaded holding pawls on either side of the feed pawl assure the cartridge's proper retention while the feed pawl is moving over to pick up the next round.

The 16-groove, right-hand twist barrel is 11.5 inches long. A series of 11 large cooling fins toward the rear of the barrel are carry-overs from the Hotchkiss-type machine guns. This feature adds considerably to the cost of fabrication. While of dubious value in small-caliber arms, such as the Thompson submachine gun, it is of demonstrable usefulness in air-cooled heavy machine guns. A version with cooling fins all the way out to the muzzle has been reported. It is most likely the helicopter model, since the higher rate of fire required by an aircraft-borne weapon would require greater cooling capacity. The AGS-17 I fired had been hit several times at the muzzle end of the barrel by mujahideen bullets. The deformation produced caused consternation on my part during the initial firing sequence of the high-explosive rounds.

Overall length of the AGS-17 is about 33 inches. Of all-steel construction, its weight with the tripod and belt carrier with 29 rounds is close to 90 pounds. This is greater than our Mk. 19 40mm machine gun.

The feed cover was marked BA 465, 1974r, obviously indicating the serial number and date of manufacture.

**Dust of impact of 30mm Russian grenade as it must look when AGS-17 is employed against Afghan ambushers.**



The AGS-17 incorporates a telescopic sight mounted on the left side of the receiver. This compact angle-prism device was missing and I was forced to use line of sight over the top of the barrel. The lack of permanently mounted auxiliary iron sights is a serious design defect. Range tables for the telescopic sight are stamped on a plate attached to the top of the receiver. The tables cover direct-fire sight settings from 50 to 1,730 meters (the apparent maximum effective range of this weapon) and settings for indirect-fire from 1,000 to 1,730 meters. The cartridge's maximum-time-of-flight mechanism, in essence a self-destruct device, is used to achieve airbursts with indirect fire.

The tripod itself deserves description. It is finished, as is the gun, with a semi-gloss black enamel. The legs are constructed of rectangular sheet-metal tubing crudely welded together by hand. The elliptical traversing bar is similar to that of the Bren-gun tripod. Elevation is accomplished by operating a folding crank on a simple turn gear which is meshed with a curve-shaped rack-and-pinion gear. The leg adjustments are notched teeth similar in design to those of the M1917A1 Browning and British Vickers tripods. They have large locking levers that are easy to use, but sure to be

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## GET 'EM WHILE THEY LAST

**A videotape of SOF's test-firing of the Soviets' AK-74, RPK SMG and the AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher is available at a cost of \$39.95. Write AGS-17, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.**

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damaged during field use. The tripod's legs have notched paws to better grip the ground surface. However, I found the recoil severe and the tripod should be sandbagged to exploit the AGS-17's inherent accuracy. Unsupported, the AGS-17 climbs excessively in full automatic fire. This would not be the case when it is vehicle- or helicopter-mounted.

The majority of all automatic-weapon malfunctions occur in the vicinity of the barrel's chamber in the form of extraction failures, ejection hangups or stubbing of the incoming round. The stubbing of an impact-detonated high-explosive projectile against the barrel's breech is a serious consideration. Because of this, point-detonating munitions (except incendiary types) almost invariably have bore-safe fuses which spin-arm themselves at least 10 meters from the muzzle. Stubbing of such a round will usually produce only a low-order detonation.

To alleviate this problem completely the designers of the U.S. Mk. 19 made use of the so-called curved stationary rail. The curved stationary rail not only eliminated the extractor and ejector, but made it impossible to stub a round since the cartridge is positioned with the center line of the chamber on the recoil movement of the bolt.

Not so with the AGS-17. The possibility of a stubbed round is very real and my hands sweated every time I fired. The heavy 30mm round is held only at its rim by the semicircular claw. The chamber's small feed ramp fails to diminish this unstable situation. Everytime you press the trigger on the AGS-17, you are literally throwing the dice. Although you will usually survive a low-order detonation, 40 rounds were more than enough for me. The Soviets, with their low regard for the individual soldier, are apparently willing to take the calculated risk. I'm not. Neither are the mujahideen, who scattered behind a six-foot rock berm each time I fired the AGS-17.

We used two different rounds. One was a high-explosive fragmentation type and the other an anti-personnel beehive (darts or shot pellets) cartridge. The fragmentation round is of the wire-wrapped variety, but a few earlier examples contained flat washers. Illumination and smoke rounds may also be available. A new HEAT round is also being issued in limited quantities.

The AGS-17 case is belted, which means there is a pronounced raised rim around the cartridge-case body ahead of the extractor groove. This combines the feeding advantages of a rimless case with the solid support of



**BELOW: Proper AGS-17 loading procedure: curved, parallel prongs on top of sheet-metal feed block are inserted between cartridges and links.**



**BELOW: Proper AGS-17 loading procedure: curved, parallel prongs on top of sheet-metal feed block are inserted between cartridges and links.**







**ABOVE: Large tripod leg-locking lever, convenient but vulnerable, already shows signs of damage. May be required by Soviet stipulations of ease of use in arctic gear.**

**LEFT: Cotter-pinned non-disintegrating link-belt 30mm ammo as it enters receiver in normal operation.**



**ABOVE: Blowback operation, heavy bolt and light tripod gave high recoil and low control, so Coyne impersonates sandbag by sitting on rear tripod legs for firing session. Villagers not visible, since they hid behind rock berm, thinking launcher unreliable.**

**RIGHT: Top of receiver prominently displays range tables for direct and indirect fire.**



rimless case with the solid support of the rimmed case. In addition, the safety factor is increased over the level provided by rimless cases. The belt's forward shoulder abuts against a corresponding shoulder in the chamber.

A copper driving band, to increase the round's rotational thrust, is sweated onto the rear of each projectile. The AGS-17 case mouth is heavily crimped on the projectile. This indicates use of an extremely slow-burning propellant that necessitates a heavy projectile pull. The powder charge is not much more than that found in a 12-gauge shotgun shell. The primer appears to be similar to a conventional shotgun battery cup type.

The Soviet 30mm round offers a much smaller explosive envelope than the powerful 40mm high-velocity M384 grenade fired in the U.S. Mk. 19. The M384 grenade yields limited artillery capabilities, with a maximum effective range of 2,200 meters, and resulted in a ballistic breakthrough that the AGS-17 grenade falls far short of. Still, the Soviet grenade is not to be taken lightly, since the HE round is filled with A-IX-1 explosive. This is an extremely fast explosive, made of 95-percent RDX and six-percent wax.

An automatic, belt-fed, grenade machine gun with feeding, loading, firing, extraction and ejection operated solely by the energy generated by the explosion of the propellant charge, with vehicular and tripod mounting, light weight, and capable of delivering a high rate of suppressive fire at comparatively short ranges is almost a necessity to the modern, highly mobile infantry unit.

Both the Mk. 19 and the AGS-17 meet these criteria. In the areas of design superiority, safety and destructiveness of the explosive package, the Mk. 19 wins hands down. The AGS-17's only edge can be in the realm of economy — a consistent strong point of Soviet small-arms technology.

Firepower of all USMC divisions is to be greatly enhanced by the addition of 180 Mk. 19 40mm machine guns each. We can only hope the U.S. Army follows suit.

Further information concerning the Soviet AGS-17 grenade machine gun can be obtained by traveling 12,000 miles to Peshawar, Pakistan, smuggling yourself into Darra Adam Khel and laying \$45,000 on Hakim Gaz. But, even then, you'd still have to figure some way of getting the damned thing back! ☹



# USSR'S GREAT LEAP BACKWARD

## RPG-18 Copies LAW

by David C. Isby

**"EVERY man a tank killer"** became the slogan of the *Wehrmacht's* infantry through desperate necessity. On the Russian front, Soviet tanks made mass attacks where the *Panzers* and anti-tank weapons were sparse and inadequate. But German infantry relied heavily on improvised weapons until the introduction, in 1943, of the *Panzerfaust*, a single-shot, disposable, man-carried anti-tank weapon. Simple to produce, easy to use, the *Panzerfaust* made the individual German soldier a tank-killer.

The U.S. Army did not follow the German lead until the 1960s, with the introduction of the M72A2 66mm anti-tank rocket-launcher Light Anti-tank Weapon, or LAW. The Soviets took longer to come over to this approach, but a decade later deployed the RPG-18 — basically a copy of the LAW.

A comparison of the specifications of the RPG-18 and the LAW simply underlines what a glance at the Soviet weapon suggests — the Soviets have taken a LAW and copied it. This is standard Soviet practice when they need a weapons system that has been developed abroad and there is no Soviet equivalent. (The most spectacular example of this was in 1945 when the Soviets, lacking their own heavy bomber, produced a direct copy of an American B-29 bomber that had landed at Vladivostok, including, according to legend, the patched bullet holes in the B-29's wings.)

The Soviets were well aware of the limitations of the LAW. In Vietnam, environmental conditions frequently resulted in unreliability, while at battles such as Lang Vei in 1968 and An Loc in 1972, the tank-stopping power of the LAW left something to be desired. The East German military magazine *Militaertechnik* has admitted to its readers (many East German units were, by 1982, supplied with the RPG-18) that although it is not a state-of-the-art weapon, it is inexpensive and easy to produce.

Technically, the RPG-18 follows the LAW in appearance as well as function. One difference is that the rocket is slightly longer and heavier than that of the U.S. weapon, although the bore has been copied. East German sources have claimed a new shaped-charge warhead for the RPG-18. It has greater penetration than would otherwise be expected from a weapon of 63.5mm caliber. The RPG-18 is thus more likely to kill tanks that it hits than the LAW. One unfortunate change in the RPG-18's design is that, unlike the LAW, once the tube has been extended into firing position from its collapsed carrying position, the tube cover folded down and the sights snapped up, it must be fired — it cannot be disarmed.







**ABOVE:** Cyrillic directions in Russian for RPG-18 are supplemented by pictures to facilitate use by often illiterate and non-Russian-speaking Oriental and Turkic Soviet Army conscripts. **LEFT:** Inside and out, virtually a dead ringer for U.S.-issue LAW. RPG-18 differs little except for longer missile, shaped-charge warhead and directions in Russian. **Photos:** Peter G. Kokalis

RPG-18 PERFORMANCE	
Muzzle velocity	114 meters/second
Time to ready-to-fire	8-10 seconds
Maximum sight range	200 meters
Direct fire range	
2m high target	135 meters
Rear backblast area	30 meters

Like the LAW, the RPG-18 is a throwaway weapon, although, in peacetime, the empty tube is retained for recycling. The Soviets have also copied the LAW's subcaliber firing device for training purposes. A large decal in Russian is applied to the outer tube of each RPG-18, which the Soviets believe should give even untrained troops a good idea of how to use the weapon. Because of its compact size and protective plastic covering, the RPG-18 is considered easily carried. Airborne units especially have been said to benefit from the additional anti-tank firepower of the RPG-18.

Tactically, the RPG-18 does not replace any pre-existing Soviet-produced weapons. They are simply issued, in crates of eight rounds, as ammunition. British sources report that Soviet rifle squads carry, on the average, two RPG-18s. Each Soviet rifle squad retains its RPG-7 or RPG-16 anti-tank rocket launcher. Before the introduction of the RPG-18 in the mid-to-late 1970s, the Soviets had rejected the use of such weapons as too much of a burden for the soldier to carry in addition to his other equipment. Furthermore, they believed it might add to training problems by requiring each rifleman to master yet another weapon. The advantages of giving every man a tank-killing weapon, however, eventually overcame these objections.

### THE M72A2 LAW AND THE RPG-18: A COMPARISON

Weapon	M72A2	RPG-18
Launcher construction	fiberglass	fiberglass
Launcher length—closed	654mm (25.75")	700mm (27.56")
Launcher length—extended	892.17mm (35.125")	1046.16mm (41.19")
Rocket diameter	63.5mm	63.5mm
Rocket length—inc. fins	508mm (20")	693.74mm (27.31")
Rocket weight	.997kg (2.2 lb.)	1.44kg (3.18 lb.)
Total weight	2.36kg (5.2 lb.)	2.72kg (6 lb.)
Maximum sight range	350 meters	200 meters
Maximum effective range	160 meters	135 meters

As the Soviets hurried to put an off-the-shelf design (the LAW) into service, they revised their small-unit tactics to allow them to make effective use of the new weapons. The typical Soviet Army method is to teach tactics through combat examples and to allow key messages to be drawn by inference and implication, as was shown in the case of the RPG-18 by magazine articles recounting the effective use of captured *Panzerfausts* during the Second World War.

Soviet small-unit anti-tank tactics are not now limited to the use of large rocket launchers or ineffective shaped-charge hand grenades, nor are they dependent on their supporting armored vehicles. This means that the Soviets can conduct dismounted operations with more confidence. This is why the Soviets have made fairly extensive use of the RPG-18 in Afghanistan. The United States in Vietnam and the British in the Falklands have used the LAW effectively against a non-mechanized enemy, taking out bunkers, houses and fortified positions. An RPG-18 round will surely remove a *sangar* (an Afghan rock breastwork) and whomever is behind it, where a burst of small-arms ammunition would only splatter against the rocks.

To fire an RPG-18, the soldier extends the tube like a telescope. He extends the trigger and safety catch, rear peep sights, folding front sight with range calibrations at 50-meter intervals up to 200 meters range and removes the front and rear tube covers as well. The weapon then must be armed and can be fired prone, kneeling or standing, providing the backblast area is clear. The piezo-electric nose fuse of the rocket is armed at two to 15 meters' range. The rocket also has a base detonator. If the fuse is not activated after four to six seconds flight time, it will self-destruct.

The RPG-18 is probably only an interim measure, in use until the Soviets can field a more advanced design that will be able to deal with tanks such as the M1 Abrams. It also shows that the Soviets are not technologically backward. Even if it means the adoption of foreign designs, they can give their troops weapons as good as those of their opponents — and it appears that the RPG-18 is as good as the LAW, while retaining the traditional Soviet numerical advantage. ☒





Dead Russians are sooo sexy. Photo: Bill Dempsey



Vietnam vet Mel Tatrow won raffle for Karen Liberation Movement flag. Photo: Bill Dempsey



Gen. Westmoreland adds his name to Viet vet's painting, which will be on permanent display at Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. Photo: Bill Dempsey

# CONVENTION COLLAGE

## Charlotte Comes Alive

ON 12 through 17 October 1982, we were at it again — for the third time. SOFers from across the country and around the world came to Charlotte, N.C., to watch, look, listen and take part in the SOF Third Annual Convention and Three-Gun International shootout. Spread out across the North Carolina countryside, conventioneers took in the gun show at the Charlotte Civic Center, the shooting match, factory demonstrations and automatic weapons exhibition at the Charlotte Rifle and Pistol Club Range, airborne operations with the 1st Airborne Division at the Lancaster County Airport Drop Zone, and the various seminars, movies and war-stories-in-the-bar at the Holiday Inn headquarters hotel.

Saturday night's banquet and beer bust at the Civic Center culminated 1982 convention activities, with a Southern-style pig roast followed by words of wisdom and encouragement from guest speakers — including G. Gordon Liddy, Gens. Heine Aderholt, John Singlaub and William C. Westmoreland. To top it all off, the banquet concluded with the marriage of SOF's Demolitions Editor John Donovan to his lovely bride, Pam.

Our readers got together once again, and, as usual, rekindled old friendships, swapped new stories (and some old ones) and had a great time. Look for a full convention report in the next issue of SOF. ☒

by John Metzger



Mr. Modest himself, Bob Brown talks to press. Photo: Bill Dempsey





Springfield Armory's rock'n'roll demo. Photo: Bill Dempsey



Demo jump in front of headquarters hotel. Photo: Jim Coyne



Roma L. Skinner of Lancaster, USA fires Sterling Mk VI SMG. Photo: Bill Dempsey



Sheriff's officer fires H&K MPV SD SMG (suppressed version of MPV). Photo: Bill Dempsey



Lady shooter blasts away on shotgun course. Photo: Bill Dempsey



Buzzards of Indiana can't wait to inhale barbequed pig. Photo: Bill Dempsey



American Ex-Prisoner of War Bob Larson. Photo: Tim Oest



G. Gordon Liddy signs his book, makes new friends at gun show. Photo: Marty Casey



Conventioneers check out gunshow goodies at Charlotte Civic Center. Photo: Marty Casey



# BRITAIN'S GURKHAS

## Mercenaries Extraordinaires

by Maj.

John S. Arvidson

USAR, Ret.

**H**AVILDAR (Sgt.) Gaje Ghale, commanding a platoon of young Gurkha soldiers during WWII, was ordered to take part in an assault on Basha Hill, a key Japanese position in Burma's Chin Hills. The approach was along a knife-edged ridge whose precipitous sides had no cover. While preparing to attack, the platoon came under heavy mortar fire, but Ghale rallied his men and led them forward.

In the ensuing hail of fire, Gaje Ghale was wounded in the arm, chest and leg by grenade fragments, but nonetheless led his men to close with the enemy. Bitter hand-to-hand fighting followed. Covered with blood from his wounds, he led assault after assault, encouraging his men with the Gurkha battle cry, *Ayo Gurkhali!* (The Gurkhas are here!) The platoon, with *kukri* knives drawn, stormed and carried the hill with heavy loss to the Japanese. Ghale continued to command his platoon and refused to have his wounds dressed until ordered to the regimental aid post.

This action by the 2/5th Royal Gurkha Rifles, which blunted a Japanese offensive in the Chin Hills, typifies the legendary Gurkha *elan* and determination. Cheerful, hardy and courageous, these proud and virile men, bound only by a legionary's oath to the service of a foreign nation, represent the quintessence of the Gurkha soldier.

Citizens of the independent Kingdom of Nepal, the Gurkhas began their military role for the British at the close of the Nepal War in 1815, and they have served under special treaties ever since. Before World War II, the Gurkhas were

sometimes called the Foreign Legion of India; the British Indian Army consisted of 10 Gurkha regiments. These small, wiry, broadchested men are racially Mongoloid and loosely adhere to the Hindu religion. Under a tripartite agreement among India, Nepal and the United Kingdom, the Brigade of Gurkhas, consisting of four regiments of two battalions each, became an integral part of the British Army on 1 January 1948.

Since then the British Army has declined drastically in strength; the Brigade of Gurkhas now consists of five battalions plus Gurkha engineer, signal and transport units, for a total of 8,000 Gurkhas. Under the treaty, the British maintain two recruiting depots in Nepal, the main one being at Dharan in eastern Nepal, with a smaller one at Paklihawa in the west. "British Gurkhas Nepal" is the administrative unit which handles recruiting and processing on Nepalese soil. A corps of recruiters, made up of ex-Gurkha mercenaries with unimpeachable records, does the actual recruiting. Based on estimates of the number of Gurkhas expected to leave the army during the coming year, the number of recruits needed is calculated — currently about 300 a year. Since approximately 10,000 Nepalese attempt to enlist annually, the recruiters can be selective. Recruit training takes place in Hong Kong. Since 1978, recruits have been flown from the Katmandu International Airport, Nepal, to the Hong Kong International Airport by the Royal Nepalese Airlines. Enlistments are normally for six years, although the average length of service is 15 years.



Shouting "*Ayo Gurkhali!* (The Gurkhas are here)!" Gurkha troops charge into battle with kukris and SMLs ready. Photo: Imperial War Museum





## TURNER'S TRIBUTE TO THE GURKHAS

Sir Ralph Turner, a scholar who served with the Gurkhas as an officer during WWI, wrote the following tribute in his preface to the *Dictionary of the Nepali Language*:

"As I write these words, my thoughts return to you who were my comrades, the stubborn and indomitable peasants of Nepal. Once more I hear the laughter with which you greeted every hardship. Once more I see you on your bivouacks or about your campfires, on forced march or in the trenches, now shivering with wet and cold, now scorched by the pitiless and burning sun. Uncomplaining, you endure hunger and thirst and wounds; and at the last your unwavering lines disappear into the smoke and wrath of battle. Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had a country more faithful friends than you."



When the new Gurkha recruit reaches Hong Kong via RNAC from Nepal, he is sent to the GFF (Gurkha Field Force) Training Depot (formerly the Recruit Training Center) in the New Territories, where he receives 36 weeks of tough, intensive training. The terrain around the training depot is rough. Rugged hills in the center of the New Territories rise to 3,140 feet, then fall to the north into paddies and farmland. In addition to what corresponds to U.S. basic and advanced individual training, the Gurkha recruit is taught arithmetic and Roman Gurkhali (their own language in the Roman script).

Upon completion of training, approximately 60 Gurkha recruits per year go to each of the Gurkha battalions in Borneo and Britain. The other 180 stay in Hong



Kong with the GFF. Advanced and specialized training for Gurkha mercs takes place in Britain. Gurkhas selected to become officers now attend the two-year course at Sandhurst.

A new generation of weapons is in use by today's Gurkhas. While the *kukri* remains the personal weapon for hand-to-hand combat, the L1A1 SLR rifle (the British version of the Belgian 7.62mm FN FAL assault rifle) has replaced the old .303 SMLE rifle. Before the L1A1 SLR, Gurkhas in Borneo used the Armalite AR-15.

The U.K. 5.56mm Individual Weapon, a bullpup utilizing the new Belgian SS 109 projectile, will replace the 7.62mm L1A1 SLR within the next few years. Originally chambered in 4.85mm, the IW has been re-barreled

## GURKHA VERSUS FALLSCHIRMJAEGER

by Mark Zytner

A legendary battle of giants occurred on Monte Cassino's bloody slopes in February and March 1944, between the world-renowned Gurkha mercenaries and one of the toughest units in military history, the German *Fallschirmjaeger* Regiment No. 3 (3FJR) under Col. Ludwig Heilmann. Here the famed Gurkhas, selected because of their mountain fighting ability, were to pit their fabled courage against MG42 LMGs, FG42 automatic rifles, MP40 SMGs and *stielhandgranates* in the hands of skilled paratroopers battlehardened in Crete, Leningrad and Sicily.

It began for the Gurkhas on the night of 12 February 1944, as part of the 4th Indian Division under Major Gen. F. T. S. Tucker, when they relieved the U.S. 34th Infantry Division which lost more than 2,200 men in heroic but unsuccessful operations to capture Cassino town and Monte Cassino, crowned by the massive Benedictine monastery. Also relieving the 34th Division was the 2nd New Zealand Division.

These two divisions were united on 4 February '44 to form the II New Zealand Corps under Lt. Gen. Sir Bernard Freyberg, VC, who received his initial baptism of fire as a young soldier of fortune in 1913 during the Mexican Revolution. The II New Zealand Corps was soon reinforced with the 78th British Division. These three divisions were to attempt what the U.S. 34th Infantry Division had not been able to do.

With three years of continuous combat behind it, the 4th Indian Division was restored to full strength

before reaching Cassino. The German *Abwehr* (military intelligence) rated the 4th Indian as the best Allied division. It included three infantry brigades of four battalions each. Three of these were Gurkha battalions, the 1/9GR, 1/2GR and the 2/7GR.

Each Gurkha battalion had an authorized strength of 757 officers and men, plus an additional 156 reinforcements held at base to be used as battle replacements. It included a battalion headquarters, an administrative wing, a support company with No. 4 Carrier Platoon (13 Bren carriers), No. 5 Mortar Platoon (six three-inch mortars), No. 6 Anti-Tank Platoon and No. 7 Pioneer Platoon, and four lettered ("A" through "D") rifle companies.

Each Gurkha rifle company included 106 officers and men organized into a company headquarters and three rifle platoons. Each Gurkha rifle platoon consisted of a Gurkha *Jemadar* (lieutenant) and 30 men organized into a command group, a two-inch mortar team, and three rifle sections of eight men each, commanded by a *Naik* (corporal) armed with an SMG. The section included a Bren LMG as its base of fire and six riflemen with SMLE rifles and bayonets. The rifle platoons were numbered eight through 19 in the battalion. The rifle sections were numbered one through nine in the company. Each Gurkha also carried the traditional *kukri* knife as his personal hand-to-hand combat weapon.

Events at Cassino moved swiftly for the Gurkhas, too swiftly for adequate preparations. While II NZ Corps was relieving the U.S. 34th Infantry Division, the German 1st Parachute Division under *Generallieutenant* Richard Heidrich began replacing the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division in the Cassino area. 3/3FJR

held Calvary Hill and the 1st Machine-gun Parachute Battalion, under Lt. Col. Karl-Lothar Schulz, was dug in at Monte Cassino, keeping outside a 400-meter circle from the monastery, when the 4th Indian Division launched its first attack.

Movement in the forward combat zone was impossible at daylight and a nightmare at night. When attack orders reached the 4th Indian Division, its combat elements were far from ready, with a shortage of grenades and mortar shells, among other things. Basically, the 4th Indian was to capture Monte Cassino while the 2nd NZ Division, under Maj. Gen. Howard Kippenger, was to capture Cassino town.

Giving their troops utmost fire support, the British commanders insisted on bombing Monte Cassino Monastery as a military objective. Its sole occupants until after the bombing were 150 Italian civilian refugees and a number of Benedictine monks under 80-year-old Abbot-Bishop Gregorio Diamara. On 15 February 1944, 576 tons of bombs were dropped on or near the monastery by 142 B-17 heavy bombers and 112 B-25 medium bombers. The 2,304 500-pound bombs caused no significant damage to the Monte Cassino defenders, although many civilians were killed and the monastery was severely damaged. The rubble was turned into a mighty fortress and the bomb craters that pitted Monte Cassino's slopes became shelters for the defending *Fallschirmjaeger* and obstacles for attacking Gurkhas.

As a result of Gen. Freyberg's refusal to delay the attack, despite insufficient available ammunition due to a lack of transport mules, Maj. Kratzert's 3/3FJR at Calvary Hill crucified the attacking Royal Sussex Regiment and in two nights of combat wiped it out as an effective





and modified to accept the SS 109 round. It will now be produced by Enfield to become the new standard small arm for the British Army. By the mid-'80s, the Gurkhas are also slated to have their 7.62mm GPMGL7 replaced by the Light Support Weapon, and LMG version of the 5.56mm Individual Weapon.

The three-inch Stokes mortar, which saw use by Gurkha battalions during both world wars and after, has at long last been replaced by the 81mm L1A1 mortar. During WWII, the Gurkha bat-

**Battle-ready Gurkhas climb rugged hillside with kukris and No. 1 Mk III rifles at hand. At Monte Cassino, Gurkha troopers of 4th Indian Division battled German 3FJR paratroopers. Photo: Imperial War Museum**

fighting force. Calvary Hill was a preliminary objective needed for the capture of Monte Cassino.

At 0215 hours, 17 February 1944, the Gurkhas made the main thrust. From the east 1/2GR, 1/9GR, 4/6 Rajputanas, with the Division Machine-gun Battalion (48 .303 Vickers Medium MGs) in close support, launched the 4th Indian Division's attack against Monte Cassino. Other division battalions, including 2/7GR, were used as porters to haul ammunition forward. The 2nd New Zealand Division launched its attack against Cassino town from the south.

The mismanaged attack was a bloody catastrophe. When the Gurkha battalions swept forward, they crossed minefields under a heavy barrage of mortars and Spandau fire. Two-thirds of the 1/2nd Gurkhas were mown down within 10 minutes. The survivors battled on but the attack failed. On the morning of 17 February, Gurkha bodies dotted Monte Cassino's eastern slope. The British lieutenant colonel who commanded 1/2GR, shot through the stomach, was among the numerous stretcher cases hauled back to regimental aid posts. From respect to the Gurkhas, the *Fallschirmjaeger* permitted stretcher parties to operate during daylight hours under the Red Cross flag. Many *kukris* were collected that night as souvenirs by German paratroopers.

While the 1/2GR had pushed on up the slopes, 1/9GR was pinned down by 3FJR fire after suffering 96 casualties in the first few minutes; 4/6 Rajputanas attempted to capture Calvary Hill from the 3/3FJR but was also pinned down after its assault companies lost 196 officers and men to Maj. Kratzert's paratroopers. The Gurkhas found little use for their *kukris* at Monte Cassino. recovered Gurkha dead were buried at battalion

cemeteries near the CP, with a steel helmet at the grave's head and small Gurkha boots at the foot.

By 29 February 1944, the German 1st Parachute Division completed its relief of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division. The 3/3FJR now held most of Cassino town; 2/3FJR held the western area of the town near the railway station where it pushed out remnants of the 2nd New Zealand Division. The 1/3FJR held Monte Cassino and its monastery. Col. Ludwig Heilmann's 3FJR was now holding off an Allied corps and 4/3 *Fallschirmjaeger* Regiment under Maj. Grassmehl held Calvary Hill and Colle Sant 'Angelo to the north, and 1FJR of the 1st Parachute Division held key terrain to the northwest outside the Monte Cassino battle area.

On 15 March 1944, Gen. Freyberg launched the next major attack against Cassino and its monastery. His strategy was simple: 300 B-17s, 200 B-25s and 250 fighter-bombers dropped 1,250 tons of bombs (5,000 500 pounders) on Cassino town in a 3½-hour period, promptly followed with a bombardment of 746 Allied guns firing 200,000 shells at Cassino and Monte Cassino. Freyberg now expected his New Zealand, Indian, British and Gurkha infantry to cross the rubble, accompanied by tanks and walk on up the slopes to take the monastery. His plan nearly worked. The Germans in Cassino were almost wiped out. Against elements of two Allied divisions, the 100 or so *Fallschirmjaeger* survivors managed to hold and defend sections of western Cassino, and 1/3FJR, on Monte Cassino, fought on with routine, ruthless efficiency.

Under Lt. Col. G. S. Nangle, the valiant Gurkhas of 1/9GR progressed further than the other 24 British battalions and finally captured Hangman's Hill, approximately 400 yards

from the monastery, winning imperishable fame in one of the greatest Allied exploits of the war. After storming Hangman's Hill and being cut off by the 2/3FJR and 1/3FJR, the Gurkhas held on under continuous enfilading crossfire for seven days and nights. When the final order to withdraw was carried out at night under protective artillery fire, only 185 out of the 400 holding Hangman's Hill returned.

After the 4th Indian Division lost 3,000 professional soldiers and the New Zealanders another 1,500, the II New Zealand Corps was relieved by Gen. Anders' II Polish Army Corps, which suffered an additional 3,784 casualties at Monte Cassino before Gen. Heidrich withdrew the German 1st Parachute Division on the night of 17-18 May 1944, after repulsing every attack made against it by Americans, British, New Zealanders, Indians, Gurkhas and Poles.

Gurkha revenge against the *Fallschirmjaeger* finally came on 6 August 1944 when a strong force of German paratroopers closed in on the Gurkha garrison at Castello, Italy, which consisted of the 2/3GR headquarters and one Gurkha company. Lieutenant Col. W. Somerville, 2/3GR OC, radioed the situation to the other Gurkha companies operating near Regina. This was the opportunity for which every Gurkha had prayed. Three-hundred Gurkhas with *kukris* drawn caught the German paratroopers in the open and fell on their flank. Blood and severed German heads covered the ground between the beeches and pines that morning. Today a few bones and pieces of equipment still bear witness to the prowess of the small, sturdy men from the hills, who move silently with flashing *kukris* to kill with a stroke and a grunt and then pass on to the next enemy.



talions of the British Brigade of Gurkhas. The old No. 36 grenade (the "Mills Bomb"), a perennial favorite of Gurkha riflemen, has at long last given way to the L1A1 offensive hand grenade as the standard grenade of the British. The Gurkha sniper rifle is the 7.62mm sniper rifle L4A1, which is basically a 10-round bolt-action SMLE rebarreled to fire the standard NATO rifle cartridge. The stock has been cut down; the rifle carries a modified version of the No. 32 telescopic sight. The 7.62mm L1A1 SLR, fitted with a telescopic sight, has also been used as a sniper rifle. Gurkhas take pride in their scouting and sniping.

Gurkhas have fought worldwide: in Asia, Africa, Europe, India, Kandahar, Burma, China and Tibet. During WWI, the British recruited Gurkhas — 20,000 of whom died in the line of duty. An additional regiment, the 11th Gurkha Rifles, was raised for the Great War and disbanded at its completion. In all, 44 battalions of Gurkhas fought for the British Empire in places like Gallipoli, Suez, Mesopotamia, Tigris, Kut-al-Amara, Baghdad, Palestine, Jerusalem and Persia.

Following WWI, Gurkha units fought against Kurdish rebels, then Iraqi rebels in 1920 and Russian communists in the Black Sea area of Armenia. Gurkha units put down Moplah rebels along India's Malabar Coast in 1921, campaigned in Waziristan in 1937 and fought in other parts of India's Northwest Frontier Province in 1937-38. During WWII, Gurkhas again fought around the world, this time reaching North Africa, Singapore and Italy. Nearly 250,000 Nepalese took part in WWII. During the Malayan Emergency from 1948-60, Gurkhas saw continuous service and are credited with killing 2,000 communist terrorists.

With the outbreak of WWII, the standard anti-tank weapon of the Gurkha rifle platoon was the .55 Boys anti-tank rifle, issued one per platoon or three per company. After Rommel's Africa Korps annihilated two Gurkha battalions in North Africa, the Boys AT rifle became a grim joke. In 1943, it was replaced by the PIAT (Projector Infantry Anti-Tank), which fired a HEAT shell. In 1953, the 87mm (3.5-inch) M20 Mark II Rocket Launcher, similar to the American M20A1 3.5-inch "Super Bazooka," replaced the PIAT. In 1964 the Gurkhas began receiving the 84mm Infantry anti-tank gun, better known as the 84mm RCL Carl Gustaf, which replaced the M20 Mark II. It is now the standard platoon anti-tank weapon in the five bat-

talions of the British Brigade of Gurkhas. The old No. 36 grenade (the "Mills Bomb"), a perennial favorite of Gurkha riflemen, has at long last given way to the L1A1 offensive hand grenade as the standard grenade of the British. The Gurkha sniper rifle is the 7.62mm sniper rifle L4A1, which is basically a 10-round bolt-action SMLE rebarreled to fire the standard NATO rifle cartridge. The stock has been cut down; the rifle carries a modified version of the No. 32 telescopic sight. The 7.62mm L1A1 SLR, fitted with a telescopic sight, has also been used as a sniper rifle. Gurkhas take pride in their scouting and sniping.

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Tradition is important in Gurkha life. Numerous sons have joined the regiments of their fathers and grandfathers. Each regiment has its own traditions and distinctive insignia. British officers serving with Gurkha regiments normally become close to their men and maintain a lifelong loyalty. These officers also draw special pay, called "Gurkha Service Pay," which is higher than normal.

The *kukri* knife is important in regimental tradition and in close combat. In each of the 10 Gurkha regiments, the *kukri* appears in the regimental badge worn on the Kashmir "slouch" hat, the beret, and on the small Kilmarnock ("pillbox" cap). The *kukri* knife has been a traditional Gurkha weapon for centuries. It is also useful in civilian life. In addition to the regulation-issue *kukri*, there are larger two-handed *kukris* designed for ceremonial use, such as beheading oxen and goats during Hindu religious ceremonies observed by the Gurkha regiments. The idea is to behead

## OF WARS AND WARRIORS

Since his retirement from the Army, Maj. John S. Arvidson has begun a new career as a free-lance writer, specializing in military history and intelligence. His SOF articles include "French Foreign Legion Update," February '79, "First Yank SOF in Rhodesia," May '79, and "A Man for All Wars," May '82. "Ayo Gurkhali" outlines the contribution of these tough little Nepalese mercenaries to the British Empire.

Its author has been involved in Army intelligence work since the 1940s. During the Korean War he served as commanding officer of the 27th Raiders, U.S. Army, and in the late '50s he worked as a regimental intelligence officer of the 442nd Infantry Regiment. Maj. Arvidson has also been a special correspondent to the *Intelligence Digest*. —M.L. Jones



WWII Field Marshal Montgomery inspects the *kukris* of Gurkha riflemen. Photo: Imperial War Museum

the animal in a single downward slicing stroke. Woe to the Gurkha who fails to decapitate with the first slash. The skilled can do it with one hand.

Against humans, a powerful twisting





Sikhs and Gurkhas of 5th Gurkha Rifles stand guard over Gen. Sir Frederick Roberts at Alikhel during second Afghan war of 1879. Photo: National Army Museum



slash, aimed at the neck to decapitate, is the preferred stroke. In combat this is often difficult, but it has been done on numerous occasions, such as the WWII exploit of Dwansing Basnet, 1/9GR, 4th Indian "Red Eagle" Division. While reconnoitering in front of his platoon at night in Tunisia, he was challenged "in a foreign language."

Basnet then crept up and found him-

self looking into the face of a German. He said, "I recognized him by his helmet. He was fumbling with his weapon, so I cut off his head with my *kukri*. Another appeared from a slit trench, and I cut him down also. I was able to do the same with two others, but one made a great deal of noise, which raised the alarm. I had cut at the fifth, but I am afraid I only wounded him. Yet perhaps the wound was severe, for I struck him between the neck and the shoulders."

Basnet was now struggling with a number of Germans. He said, "After my hands had become cut and slippery with blood, they managed to wrest my *kukri* from me. One German beat me over the head with it, inflicting a number of wounds. He was not very skillful, however, sometimes striking me with the sharp edge but oftener with the blunt.

"They managed to beat me to the ground where I lay pretending to be dead." After the Germans returned to their trenches, Basnet looked up, but could not see anything since his eyes were full of blood. He wiped it away and saw a German machine gun quite near. He tried to think of a plan to capture the gun but by now it was getting light and his platoon was advancing and hurling grenades among the enemy, many of

## TO A GURKHA

When God first chose a Gurkha  
As a vessel of his own,  
He took a chunk of cheerfulness  
and laid on flesh and bone,  
A face, well, some deny it,  
But a soul that no one could,  
For anyone who's seen it  
Wishes his was half as good.

Faith there's little small about him  
Save the question of his size,  
From the mountains which begat  
him  
To the laughter in his eyes.  
His sport, his love, his courage  
Preserve the sterling ring  
Of the simple-minded Hillman  
With the manners of a king.

He has given of his thousands  
And he hasn't finished yet,  
There's never been a murmur  
Of what he himself will get.  
That's not the way he looks at  
things  
But in a simple trend  
He heard the "Sahib-Log" call him  
So he's with us to the end.

I have seen him broken, mangled,  
With his life's tide running low,  
And the tears welled deep within me  
As I watched the last thing go;  
But it triumphed ere it left him  
And stifled every moan,  
T'was the little chunk of  
cheerfulness  
Being gathered to its own.

Dr. William Ross Stewart  
Regimental Medical Officer  
Gallipoli, 1915

which fell nearby. He managed to get to his feet, and ran toward the platoon, some of whom called, "Here comes the enemy. Shoot him."

Basnet shouted out. The men recognized his voice and let him *come in*.

Basnet declared, "My hands being cut about and bloody, and having lost my *kukri*, I had to ask one of my platoon to take my pistol out of my holster and to put it in my hand. I then took command of my platoon again."

The Gurkha's company commander ordered him to the regimental aid post.

Basnet replied, "Sahib, there is fighting to be done, and I know the enemy's dispositions. I must stay and command my platoon." But the officer repeated his order.

Basnet declared, "I had to go. Yet before I went, one of my Bren gunners was hit, and my company commander, although wounded in the neck, took over the Bren gun and continued to fire

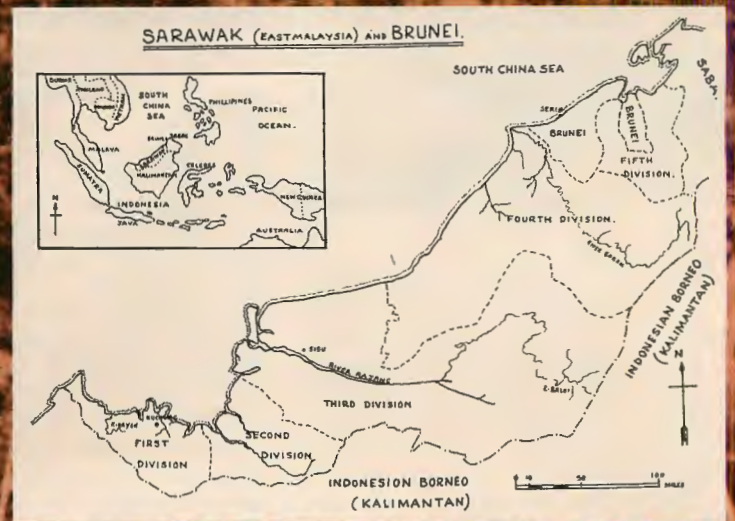
*Continued on page 68*



# BORNEO

## The War That Never Was

by Kifaru





**T**HE world's vociferous left-wingers point to campaigns such as those in Algeria, Vietnam and Rhodesia, and spout the communist-parrot cry, "You cannot go against the tide of history." They conveniently forget other similar campaigns which did not end in a communist victory: those in the Philippines, Greece and Malaya, to name a few — but another little-known campaign in which the forces of the left received a crushing defeat despite all their Marxist tactics was that of Borneo, which took place between 1962 and 1966.

The birth of the new Malaysia in 1962 was a blow to the despotic left-wing dictator of Indonesia, President Sukarno. He had always had plans for a Far Eastern empire ruled by Indonesia.

Once Malaysia began to form from Malaya, Singapore, North Borneo, Brunei and Sarawak, Sukarno began trying to break it up. The Achilles heel was Brunei, because there the sultan had been hesitant about joining the new Malaysia, and the left-wing element in that country had secretly been plotting to seize power.

Suddenly in December 1962, the revolt in Brunei started. The aim of the Sukarno-backed rebels was threefold: a) to capture the sultan; b) to capture all police stations; c) to capture all the oil fields. Though they initially achieved some success, particularly in overrunning a number of police stations, their movement had not come as a complete surprise and the meager local security forces put up a good resistance.

Under a defense agreement with Malaysia, Britain undertook to send troops to assist the Malaysian government: "Plan Ale," a contingency plan for such an emergency, was put into operation. The troops came from 17 Gurkha Divisions in Malaya, and consisted of Gurkhas and British troops.

The situation in Brunei was very shaky by the time the first of the 17 Divi-

## FROM AFRICA TO BORNEO

Kifaru is the Swahili word for rhinoceros as well as the *nom de guerre* of the retired British officer who is the author of "Borneo: The War That Never Was." SOF first heard of him in 1979 when we received permission to reprint two of his articles from *Assegai*, a Rhodesian military publication. (See "Idi Amin," SOF, April '80, and "Beside Bokassa," SOF, May '80.)

When Kifaru sent us this article on the Borneo campaign of the 1960s, he told us he thought our readers would like hearing about "this little-known campaign in which communist tactics failed miserably." We agreed.

—M.L. Jones



Shoulder flash of 99 Gurkha Brigade, Borneo. Art: Kifaru



Badge of R.P.K.A.D. (Parachute Commandos). Elite Indonesian formation. Art: Kifaru

sion troops arrived, the rebels having captured at least one airfield plus a number of police stations, and also having cut off other important areas. But the tide began to turn quickly when the British force arrived. The ruthless little Gurkhas flung themselves upon the rebels with their usual ferocity and soon got the upper hand in their areas. The British troops also soon took the initiative. Men of The Queen's Own Highlanders recaptured an airfield at Seria, when they landed under fire and quickly smashed the opposition in a series of professional little operations. Soon the insurgents were either on the defensive or on the run, and by the end of December 1962 the revolt was virtually at an end, apart from mopping up.

Frustrated by the failure of this enterprise in Brunei, Sukarno unleashed guerrillas, supported by his regular army, against what was now called Eastern Malaysia. The Indonesian plan was based very much on the Viet Minh campaign against the French in Indochina. The area of this undeclared war, which became known as "confrontation," comprised Sarawak (47,000 square miles) and Sabah (29,000 square miles). The land frontier of this part of Borneo with Indonesian Borneo (Kalimantan) is 1,500 miles. This vast terrain contains some of the most rugged country in the world. There are virtually no roads and

no railways, travel being only by river or the few jungle trails. The country is divided on the map into five sectors known as Divisions. The population of the country is mixed, consisting of Malays and numerous tribes collectively known as Dyaks. The largest immigrant population is Chinese.

The guerrillas that had been trained in Indonesia were mostly Chinese from Sarawak. The war in Sarawak started in the early morning of 12 April 1963 when a gang attacked a police station at Tebedu, several miles on the East Malaysian side of the border. They inflicted a number of casualties on the surprised police before they withdrew behind the borders of Indonesia. "Confrontation" had commenced. The operations spread throughout the whole of Sarawak. British Marine Commandos and other troops were rushed there from Singapore. Other troops, including my own battalion, were also sent from the United Kingdom. Australia sent men too. The Borneo campaign, as it became officially called, had several singular aspects which made it different from other similar actions.

*Continued on page 71*

## UP IN THE AIR

by Kifaru

The Dyaks have a peculiar view of the modern world, as this incident shows. At our company bases the company commander always had funds to pay local Dyaks who volunteered to help collect containers after a resupply by airdrop.

At one location where the bush had been partially cleared, the company commander reckoned that a Land Rover and trailer could be used to speed up the long, tiring work of collecting the heavy containers and parachutes. A vehicle and trailer were lowered by helicopter and put to use.

The officer was delighted, as the collection which had previously taken three hours or more now took only one hour. After a couple of *resupply* drops under the new fully motorized system, the company commander, through an interpreter, asked the local Dyak chief: "What do you think of the Land Rover?"

The surprising reply — the chief called the machine "absolutely useless." Amazed, the officer asked the old man his reason for this view.

The reply was shattering. "Well, you see," said the chief, "this machine has been here for nearly two weeks but it has not gone up into the air once." Although the old man recognized jet aircraft, propeller-driven aircraft and helicopters, he never had seen a road and knew nothing about ground-based motor vehicles.



# SILENT SHELLS

## Navy's Innovative Low-Signature 12-gauge

by Bill Guthrie



**F**LASH and blast are part of the fun of shooting guns. Light and noise also give the enemy a good idea of the attacker's location. In the late '60s the U.S. Navy tried to do something about this problem. They thought quiet, flashless firearms might increase both life-span and effectiveness of SEAL and Marine Recon teams.

The 12-gauge shotgun was an obvious choice for Naval Ordnance's requirements of high close-range lethality against poorly defined targets. Unfortunately, the 12-gauge has a well-deserved reputation for making lots of noise and — in the dark with a short-barreled gun — a spectacular, blinding muzzle flash. The quest to tame the legendary riot gun to make a quiet killer on jungle trails led to the Silent Shotgun Shell.

Experimenters had attempted to silence shotguns before the development of the Navy/AAI Silent Shell by means of conventional noise suppressors. Unfortunately, this was not possible, since the large diameter of the muzzle of a 12-bore gun barrel allows the escape of too much gas for normal baffles and similar gas-traps to work. Furthermore, the M162 military shotgun load exceeds the speed of sound at the muzzle.

Silent Shotgun Shell, shown on issue 12-gauge ammo-pouch with normal brass-and-plastic cased No. 4 buck shell. Crack at base of cadmium-plated steel tube indicates over-pressure: may have been early higher-velocity test-round. Photo: W.B. Guthrie

Sound suppressing devices work on supersonic bullets — like 7.62 NATO — but supersonic projectiles leave a characteristic sound signature, even when muzzle-blast is eliminated. Faster-than-sound bullets "crack" as they pass. Depending on atmospheric density and temperature, speed of sound varies between 1,089 fps (at 32 degrees F) and 1,190 fps (at 100 degrees F). This explains why the most commonly silenced rounds are standard .22 Long Rifle and lightly loaded 9mm: The bullets' small cross-section makes the muzzle a smaller gas-escape hole and the rounds are just barely subsonic.

In 1967 Naval Ordnance announced the requirement for a shotgun cartridge that would make very little noise and light and that could be fired from standard military-issue pump-action shotguns without modification of the guns' actions or barrels. Using conventional powders and explosives from conventional cartridge cases, it is nearly impos-

sible to eliminate flash and still have an effective combination of projectile mass and velocity. Somebody was going to have to try something new.

AAI Corp. of Cockeysville, Md., had a leg up on development, since they held the patent for a sealed piece of explosive-powered propelling machinery called the Telecartridge that had been previously designed for the missile industry by I.R. Barr. Robert Schnepfe developed this unusual cartridge from Barr's device.

The Telecartridge — the heart of the Silent Shotgun Shell — was a deep, narrow, folded cup of 1010 steel. When the high-speed explosive under the cup was ignited, combustion gases kicked the folded cup out to its full extension. The payload was pushed forward by the powerful initial impulse, rather than by the steady push of expanding gases produced by burning powder. The Telecartridge cup — when it worked properly — completely contained the gases, the flash and nearly all the noise.

Therein lies the difficulty with the Telecartridge. It is a brilliant and simple conception, but the faster one wants the payload to move, the faster the cup must be made to expand. At higher pressures and higher velocities, the Telecartridge design becomes a delicate balancing act, like inflating a blimp with just-the-right-size satchel charge. At the original velocity — 550 fps or 168 mps — the steel cup often ruptured.

When the cup ruptured, the flash and noise would betray the firer's position. Although light and sound from the shot would be markedly lower than from a

### SILENT SHOTGUN SHELLS

*Soldier of Fortune* Magazine will pursue this interesting topic in future issues. We shall present new information recently released by the Navy, along with firing tests — if we can arrange them.

In order to make firing tests, we need the help of *Soldier of Fortune* readers. Anyone with an unfired 12-gauge Telecartridge round should contact us by telephone or mail. We are interested in purchasing a number of these shells.

Furthermore, anyone who knows anything about the Silent Shotgun Shell should contact us. SOF readers and SOF staff are eager to learn more about this unusual weapon.

Readers interested in photographs of the Silent Shotgun Shell should refer to Thomas F. Swearingen's encyclopedic *The World's Fighting Shotguns*, published by Chesapeake Limited in 1978 and distributed by T.B.N. Enterprises, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 55, Alexandria, VA 22313.



standard 12-gauge shell, the limited-range lethality of the device might turn the quiet cartridge into more of a liability than an advantage. Low velocity and light No. 4 buckshot made such ammunition useless against targets behind light cover or outside the shortest ranges of engagement.

Even worse, the expended Silent Shotgun shell was exactly the length of a normal shotgun round with the crimped case-mouth blown to its full length. Pieces of tough 1010 steel burst and pushed further into the barrel, but still attached to the case, would have made normal extraction from the chamber and ejection from the gun extremely difficult. The Teleartridge's inclination to fail by rupture was entirely cured by reducing the muzzle-velocity requirement to 450 fps (137 mps).

The Silent Shotgun Shell had one of the most complex cases ever built for a 12-gauge weapon. It was made of two machined pieces of steel. The base had the cartridge rim, primer cup (holding a Boxer-type small rifle primer), ignition channel, propellant cavity and a deep milled recess to hold the bottom rim of the Teleartridge cup.

Thick steel for the walls was a requirement for the tube forming the body of the cartridge. Since, unlike a conventional shotgun shell, the propellant gases of the Silent Shotgun Shell were entirely contained by the thin steel cup, the body of the shell had to resist deformation, or

the explosion-swollen case would jam in the chamber. One expended shell I have examined had a well-defined crack in the tube running from the joint with the base toward the mouth of the case for about three-quarters of an inch. That particular case did not drop cleanly into the chamber of a Remington 1100 from its own weight, and it must have resisted extraction after it was fired.

The propellant was a high-speed explosive contained in a sealed aluminum cup fitted into the propellant cup in the base of the shell. The highest pressures of firing were contained by the aluminum cup strengthened by surrounding steel, until explosive pressure burst the cross-cut top of the cup, releasing the developing gases into the Teleartridge, with a corresponding drop in pressure. Explosive gases then began to evert the folded-in section of the thin, resilient steel cup. As the cartridge extended itself the full length of the case, it snapped a stiff plastic plunger forward, which pushed the shot and the sheet-aluminum sealing disk out into the barrel.

Since the shell was intended for issue to Marine Recon and SEAL units, it had to be sealed against any normal earth-surface environment. Shot, Teleartridge, pusher and propellant were entirely covered by the two-piece steel case and aluminum sheet seal at the cartridge mouth. This left two circular joints, at mouth and base, which were filled with an inert viscous sealant.

Both steel parts of the case were plated with corrosion-resistant cadmium. Cadmium is a lustrous silver-white metal with anti-corrosive properties similar to zinc. Most surviving Silent Shotgun Shells are a dull gold color, since cadmium tarnishes when exposed to moist air.

With speed that is not characteristic of arms development, AAI delivered a test lot of 200 Silent Shotgun Shells to the Naval Ordnance Testing Laboratory less than a year after the Navy's publication of requirements. The Navy tested the delivered cartridges, found them to be as advertised, but ordered no more.

Cost certainly had something to do with the cancellation of the Silent Shotgun Shell project. From the description of the cartridge, the quiet 12-gauge must have been very expensive to produce. Not only are most of the manufacturing processes for components complex, the shell demanded precise fitting of its parts. Unlike the common 12-gauge shell, small errors could have disastrous consequences.

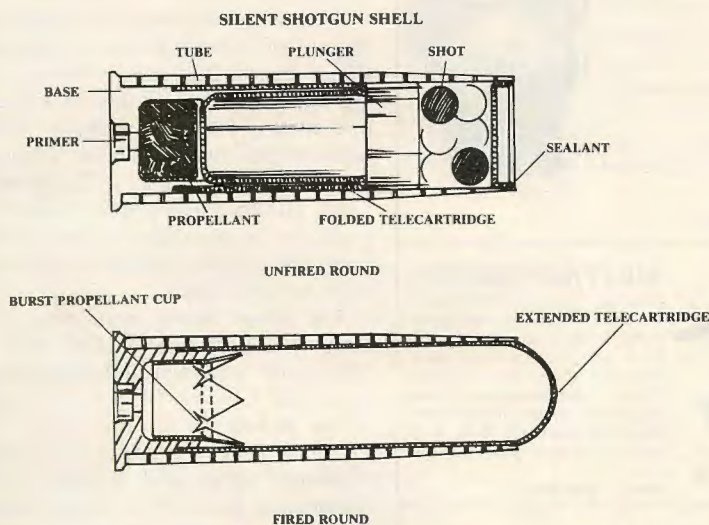
According to Thomas Swearingen in *The World's Fighting Shotguns*, the Silent Shotgun round made less noise than the mechanical sounds of working the slide of a Remington 870 shotgun. Obviously, the special cartridge was a great success.

Since there was little recoil, target reacquisition would have been fast, but recoil-action semiautos — like the Browning — would not have been able to use AAI's brainchild. Similarly, retention of smoke and waste materials would have eliminated smoke that might give away the gunman during daylight operations, but the absence of gases outside of the cartridge case would not allow the use of the Remington 1100 and other gas-operated shotguns.

These are drawbacks for broad issue, but "whipits" and other shot-shooting pistols as well as conventional shotguns with extremely short barrels would gain efficiency from this round. The reduction of barrel friction (since the pellets are not protected by enclosing plastic wadding, friction is an issue) might give the low-noise 12-gauge higher velocities and higher close-range hit-probability than from an ordinary-length barrel.

Obviously, the combination of very short shotgun and Silent Shotgun Shell would make a deadly, concealable weapon for assassination or covert missions.

In spite of the obvious usefulness of this cartridge, the Navy insists that, aside from the cartridges made for research and development and tested by AAI, only 200 test rounds were made and delivered to the U.S. Naval Ordnance Testing Laboratories. This may — or may not — have ended the career of one of the most interesting and novel inventions in the history of firearms. ☒



### COMPARISON TABLE

	Silent Shotgun Shell	Winchester Mark 5 12-gauge Shell
Length:	2.5 inches (64mm)	2.3 inches (59mm)
Case diameter:	.8 inch (20mm)	.8 inch (20mm)
Base diameter:	.9 inch (22mm)	.9 inch (22mm)
No. 4 buck pellets:	12	27
Projectiles' weight:	.5 oz. (14.4 g)	1.13 oz. (32.4 g)
Muzzle-velocity:	550/450 fps (168/137 mps)	1,325 fps (404 mps)
Case:	Milled cadmium-plated steel	Drawn brass sheet and plastic



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# GURKHAS

Continued from page 63

it. Moreover, the doctor-sahib, having bandaged me, refused to allow me to return to my platoon."

What Basnet didn't mention was that he had a dozen wounds on his head alone. For his gallantry in that action, Jemadar Dwansing Basnet was awarded the Indian Order of Merit (IOM), which ranks second to the Victoria Cross.

The British Army's Brigade of Gurkhas is deployed by battalion from Britain to Borneo. The Gurkha battalion in Britain is linked with the 22nd Special Air Service Regiment (22SAS), and together they are under the operational control of NATO's Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force, which maintains headquarters at Seckenheim, Germany. Since 22SAS consists of the most highly trained professionals in the British Army, the Gurkhas have good companions.

On the northwest coast of Borneo is the Sultanate of Brunei, a British protected state which was granted independence in 1981. Here, another Gurkha battalion stands on guard in company-strength posts. Headquarters are at Brunei town, and a Gurkha garrison is posted at the oil town of Seria. Gurkhas have been in Brunei since 1962. (See Kifaru's account of the 1962-66 Indonesian-backed insurrection on the island on p. 64.)

Azahuri rebels operate in Brunei with the aid of Indonesian communist guerrillas from Borneo's interior. The Gurkhas here are skilled in airmobile operations. Platoon strength patrols, helicoptered into the jungle, often stay out for a week or more in COIN operations. Gurkhas also operate with hovercraft in commando-like amphibious operations. Each Gurkha battalion has seen duty in Brunei.

The other three battalions of the Brigade of Gurkhas, 1/2GR, 6GR and 10GR, are stationed at Hong Kong to form the Gurkha Field Force (GFF), which includes a British infantry battalion, a helicopter flight and Gurkha engineer, signal and transport units. Supporting the GFF at Hong Kong is RAF Squadron No. 28, consisting of eight Wessex Mark II helicopters, stationed at Sek Kong field. Also supporting the GFF are vessels of the Royal Navy, consisting of the frigate HMS *Tamar* and five patrol boats (converted minesweepers), in Hong Kong harbor. The major general of the Brigade of Gurkhas serves as GFF commander, with headquarters in Hong Kong.

The GFF's three Gurkha battalions are stationed in the New Territories, bordering on Red China, and on the Kowloon Peninsula. The British battalion of the GFF is stationed on Hong



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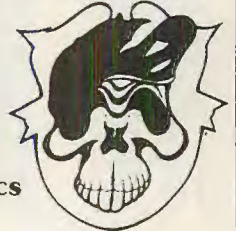
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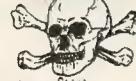
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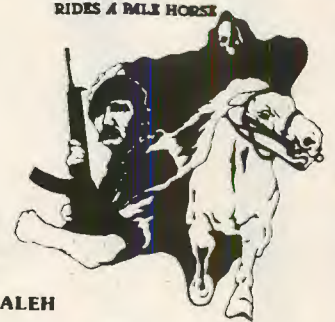


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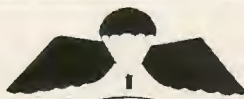
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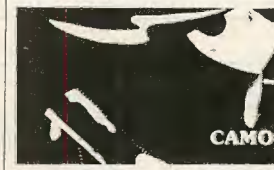
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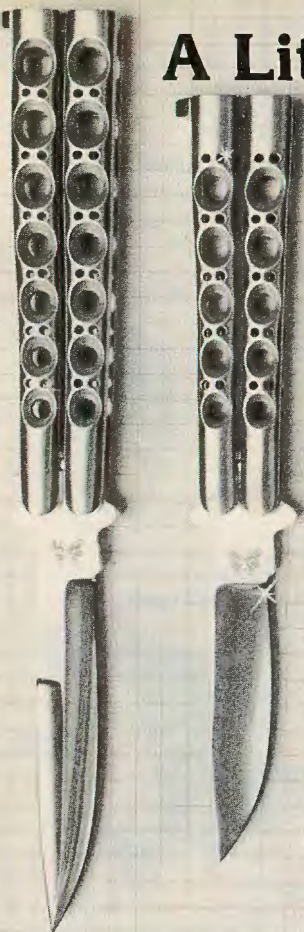
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Kong Island. Working with the GFF is the Royal Hong Kong Police, which numbers approximately 16,000. There are joint HKP/GFF headquarters manned 24 hours daily at Fan Ling in the New Territories (355 square miles) and on Hong Kong Island. The Gurkhas have been the main force of the British military in Hong Kong. They are now scheduled to pull out in March but their stay may be extended for another five years.

Gurkha border patrols operate daily along the Sham Chun River — separating Hong Kong Colony from Red China — where there is a narrow "Frontier Closed Zone" marked by a barbed-wire fence to deter Chinese refugees fleeing the People's Republic. To keep the Chinese communists happy, the British Labour government no longer permits Chinese escapees into Hong Kong. The Gurkhas are forced to turn back anti-communist refugees or turn them over to Red China's Public Security Forces. This is one of the reasons why Hong Kong Police accompany each patrol. The Gurkhas still receive the dirtiest jobs — but that is why they are hired by the English.

Approximately 50,000 Gurkha soldiers now serve in the Indian Army. The British Brigade of Gurkhas has declined from a maximum strength of 15,000 to its present strength of 8,000.

In addition to reductions in strength, in which the Brigade lost the Gurkha Independent Parachute Company as well as other units, another problem may affect the future of the Gurkhas. The Gurkha Liaison Office in London, officially known as AAG Brigade of Gurkhas (Ministry of Defense, Army, Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square), issued a memorandum in December 1978, which warned:

"The standard of the Brigade depends entirely on the contribution which every officer makes to its professionalism and his continuous and selfless dedication to the everyday affairs of his unit and needs of his men. Today a cloud appears on the horizon: the danger that the traditional soldier-like qualities of the Gurkha may be eroded by the closer contact he now has with 'civilization' and Western society and the insidious influence of its more apparent benefits — a right to welfare and to question authority. Thus the prospective young officer in fact is faced with a more difficult task than his predecessors, the challenge of a new situation and the problem of how to combine the best of the new with the best of the old."

Only time will tell whether the British welfare state will corrupt the fighting qualities of its select "Foreign Legion" — the Brigade of Gurkhas. It hasn't been unionized yet. It is doubtful, however, that the Brigade of Gurkhas will ever change its motto: *Kaphar hunnu bhanda marnu ramro* — "It is better to die than be a coward." ☒

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# BORNEO

Continued from page 65

First, the almost complete lack of roads ensured that all major movement was on foot. Helicopters were used to ferry small bodies of troops, but few choppers were available. Supply was normally done by air drop. The fighting men, therefore, had to keep in superb condition, and thanks to excellent leadership at all levels, they normally did so. The British and Commonwealth soldiers soon became lean and hard, used to walking long distances under arduous conditions and to living and staying in the jungle, not on the edges of it.

The next unusual aspect was that, although Indonesia had an air force, and of course the Royal Air Force was constantly overhead, neither side bombed or strafed. We British did not want to cause any casualties among innocent Dyak civilians, an accident that could easily happen in such thick country. I think too that politicians were rather touchy on the subject of aerial bombardment because of the controversy at the time about bombing in Vietnam. As far as the Indonesians were concerned, I think they thought they would probably be overwhelmed by the Royal Air Force if they started anything. So, though our fighter bombers regularly patrolled above us, the strange air truce continued throughout the campaign.

The most important difference was that although the Indonesians based their tactics on Mao Tse Tung's teachings, they did not understand the statement, "The army depends on the people just as a fish depends upon water." The Dyaks are a sturdy, independent people, who don't particularly like the Malays or Chinese and heartily dislike the Indonesians. Fortunately for us, however, owing to the previous benign rule of Roger Brooke, "The White Rajah of Sarawak," in the last century, the Dyaks liked the British. A pleasant change, I must admit, after some other colonial campaigns!

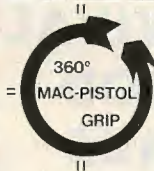
So what Sukarno's soldiers and guerrillas did not realize, but speedily found out, was that it was our army that "swam among the people," and not theirs. As soon as any Indonesians or guerrillas crossed the ill-defined border into our territory, little Dyaks would run, sometimes many miles through the jungle, to inform the nearest military post. Nor could the Indonesians or their minions terrorize these tough Dyak people. If their longhouses were burnt down, the tribesmen just disappeared into the jungle and drifted back later to rebuild them. The Dyaks were traditionally headhunters, and it is said that now several longhouses proudly display the heads of Indonesian soldiers or guerrillas which they somehow acquired during "confrontation."



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But the undeclared war was growing in size and ferocity. The Indonesian regular soldiers were good, especially their RPKAD, an elite paracommando unit. Clashes grew in size, with the game of hide and seek carried out in endless miles of jungle. "Confrontation" continued with the Indonesians and guerrillas steadily losing the initiative.

Eventually we went into a "hot pursuit" policy, and were hammering their bases well inside Indonesia, though this

received no publicity. The commander of our forces in Borneo at that time was Gen. Walter Walker, a tremendous fighting soldier. A few years ago, when the British Labor government shed crocodile tears about attacks by the Rhodesian Security Forces on bases in Mozambique and Zambia, Gen. Walker pointed out the hypocrisy of such claims by politicians, declaring the British during the Borneo campaign had done exactly the same thing.

The war continued and Indonesian enthusiasm faded. Then came October 1965, when a series of crises erupted in Indonesia. Sukarno had been plotting to organize a complete communist takeover of the country, and to rid himself of his anticommunist rivals. However, the plot was discovered, and right-wing forces pre-empted it.

Confusion and some bloody struggles followed. There was a massacre of Moslems by the communists, followed later by an even bigger slaughter of communists. Eventually Gen. Suharto, an anticommunist, seized power.

At this time things were very quiet in the operational area of Borneo. The communist guerrillas and their Indonesian regular friends must have been looking over their shoulders to see which way the cat was going to jump. With Indonesia in such turmoil, Gen. Suharto wanted a rallying point for his people, so he rattled his saber and said that he intended to continue the fighting and "crush Malaysia." This resulted in one last big incursion into the First Division of Borneo in March 1966. We were soon in contact with the enemy, who included a sizable force of paracommandos and guerrillas. They were fierce and determined, and some of them even got to within a few miles of Kuching, the capital of Sarawak. But they never really had a chance. In a big counter-operation called "Mixed Bag," we chopped them down. They fought bravely, but within a few weeks all that remained were a few scattered groups, wounded and starving, trying to return to Indonesia and safety. As far as the campaign was concerned, that virtually signalled the end of the fighting.

Soon Indonesia began to make surprisingly friendly overtures to Malaysia. Eventually, conferences between the leaders of the two countries were arranged, finishing with one at Djakarta, Indonesia, at which a peace agreement was signed on 11 August 1966.

So ended "The War That Never Was." It was not a big war by Korean or Vietnamese standards, but it could easily have become one.

It was, however, a war which proved conclusively that communist tactics can be dealt with and overcome. This is why the world's leftwingers would like the Borneo campaign to be forgotten. ☒

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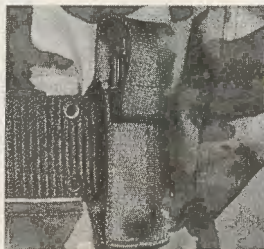
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When that died down, Perdomo said, "I want a cup of coffee. Would you like some coffee?" A few rounds were still being passed back and forth. One ricocheted over our heads.

"Yes," I replied. "That would be nice."

"Eh, Guatemala," he called to one of the dog robbers sprawled under a lean-to at the side of the house. "Cafe."

"Capitan!" Elga said. "Una columna de putas." He pointed across the valley to the west.

Perdomo and I turned to face that direction. The shadows were really lengthening and I couldn't pick out any movement. In rapid-fire Spanish, Elga gave Perdomo directions as to where he had seen the guerrillas and the officer placed six single shots from his G-3 into where he thought they were.

Guatemala brought Perdomo a blackened canteen cup full of coffee. He took a sip and handed it to me. It was hot, sweet and killer-strong. I took a long sip. Perdomo handed me a paper sack and said, "Eat!"

Oatmeal cookies. We sat as the last of the sun went down, drinking coffee and eating oatmeal cookies.

Something flew by. Perdomo snagged it out of the air and popped it into his mouth.

"This captain eats insects," Elga said, choosing his words carefully. No doubt he had picked up insect-eating at the Columbian *Lancero* school, their version of the Ranger school.

"We will get you a nice fat butterfly for breakfast," said Perdomo.

We talked in a desultory fashion for a while and I was asked to explain the word "cocksucker." The young troopers talked and chuckled, talked and chuckled. They were at an age where everything is a joke.

I wanted very badly to wander off in the bushes and urinate, but every time I tried to move my leg cramped. I devoted almost an hour and a half to making the motions necessary to take a piss.

By then it was pitch black. When I got back to my seat on the wet ground, one of the troops asked another, "Who was that?" in Spanish.

"El Gringo," was the response, followed by the sound of panting like an old dog, the sound I had made on the



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trail that day. Fuck you, kid, I thought. If you went to where I live all the clothes you own wouldn't keep you warm.

I had hoped my clothes would dry by the time it got cold, but they didn't. The Salvos hadn't had a spare poncho to issue and I started to shake. It started to rain. Nice fat drops. Perfect, I thought. I wondered if I would die.

"Go in the house," I heard Perdomo say. Even in a semi-sleep, that seemed like a good idea. I staggered in, carrying my rifle and dragging my pack. Inside, I lay with my head on the pack, head cradled on 300 loose 7.62 rounds. I shook for another hour and a half, but finally my clothes dried and I went to sleep.

The next morning, Perdomo hollered down the hill to make sure his outpost in the little house below had pulled in, then threw the contact bomb we had captured down the hill. The throw was about twenty-five meters out and fifty down. It couldn't have dropped into the wet jungle with much of an impact, but it exploded violently and smoke rolled out of the valley for two minutes, finally building to a grey column about thirty-five feet high.

At the bottom of the hill, we connected with a dirt road leading north. Perdomo put a squad out on both flanks and we headed along it. "Easy day," I thought.

But it proved to be much more than that. The road was a virtual museum of the guerrilla life. It was a pleasant tree-shaded lane, lined on either side by stone houses with tile roofs. Behind them lay fields of corn and pasture land. There was plenty of evidence that the houses had been occupied by guerrillas. We found a one-room schoolhouse, set up to teach drill and squad tactics to children, using little eighteen-inch wooden rifles.

The Paras brought anything they found novel or interesting out of the houses. They pushed a wooden-wheeled cart until it fell apart on the rocks in the road. One of them found a nicely framed print of the Virgin Mary, and carried it from then on — probably for his mother.

As we advanced north, I collected

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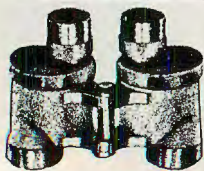


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several samples of propaganda leaflets from both sides. Perdomo handed me a small homemade denim ammo pouch with a half-dozen .223 rounds in it.

For some reason the U.S. press refuses to acknowledge that this stuff is coming in from Vietnam through Cuba and Nicaragua, just as they refused to acknowledge the presence of the NVA in South Vietnam until almost a year after they were there.

But there are only two sources of M16s: the United States and Vietnam. U.S. embassy sources claim that serial numbers on captured weapons correspond with those we left behind in 'Nam.

The troops tried to destroy as much of this enemy stuff as they could, but it was largely a futile effort. Stone and tile don't burn. So they booted a few tiles off roofs and kicked down a few corrugated tin walls.

There was a kind of festive air about it. We moved up the road, eating fruit from the trees, telling jokes and kicking down walls.

A long burst from a G-3 came from about a hundred meters to the left.

Perdomo was immediately on the radio. I unslung my G-3 and dropped off the road into the yard of a house his troops were attempting to kick apart. The firing came from across the fields in back of it. The left-flank security must have made contact. I put my selector on semi-auto and peered around a corner of

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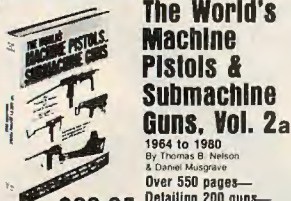


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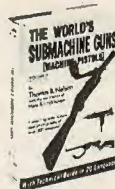
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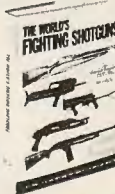
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the house to find where the firing came from.

"They are killing cows," Perdomo called.

"What?"

"They found guerrilla cows. They are killing them."

I put the G-3 on safe, slung it and went back to the road.

Gutierrez, Perdomo's second-in command, screamed into the radio: "*Sus fusils estan para los hombres, no para los animales* [Rifles are for men, not animals]," followed by a long burst I couldn't understand, but it got quiet quickly.

The Paras and the Third Brigade were closing in on each other's positions, and there was sporadic gunfire going off on all sides, but it was too far out to be directed at us.

Finally we came to a large open field. Paras fanned out around it, taking up defensive positions. They didn't bunch up as much as they had. They were taking this more seriously. Perdomo was constantly busy on the radio. Gutierrez tried to be everywhere at once.

Suddenly a Huey appeared over the horizon and circled. Out on the LZ a Salvo popped yellow smoke and eight Paras dragged three bodies, hastily slung from ponchos, across the road. The soldiers held handkerchiefs over their noses, and the corpses were in their underwear, but I could tell from their haircuts they were government troops. One of them wore macho maroon bikini briefs and one black sock. They were limp and bloated in the ponchos. They couldn't have been Paras, because if we had lost anybody it would have been in the last ten minutes, and these bodies had been dead for a while.

I went over to Perdomo and asked him, "Who are those guys?"

"Soldiers of the Third *Brigada*," he said. "They were killed by mortars." No wonder our guys had quit bunching up.

The chopper crew was quick to get handkerchiefs over their noses. The soldiers dumped the bodies in a random pile on the Huey's floor and got out of there as quickly as possible. The rotors whined and the chopper lifted off.

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There was intermittent helicopter activity for the rest of the morning. The next flight brought in rations in huge gunny sacks. I took mine over to the shade by the roadside, and swilled down a small can of pineapple juice at a gulp, before opening a canned tamale, which wasn't as bad as you might think, under the circumstances.

I was almost through eating when an explosion shattered the calm. It came from about seventy meters away in the woodline to the northeast. A half-dozen guys ran toward the sound. I was afraid the Paras had lost their first man of the operation — on the LZ while they were waiting to go home.

A soldier lay in a slight depression in the woods. He looked dead. A cluster of men stood around him. One of them threw a jungle boot, with the canvas top completely ripped down to the leather, into the bush. The wounded man moaned and flopped his arms limply. He wasn't dead after all. They quickly got an IV into him and dragged him across the clearing back into the shade where I had been sitting. One soldier held a plasma bottle as they moved him.

He was conscious now, and moaning louder. The medic drew a clear liquid into a hypodermic and knelt to give him a shot. He became quiet.

They didn't bother to throw smoke this time. The chopper pilot knew where to go. He just came in and landed and

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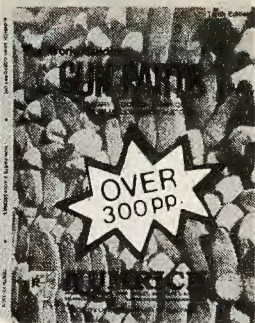
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they ran the wounded man out. I wasn't sure, but I think he was one of the new kids on his first patrol.

"He stepped on a mine?" I asked Perdomo.

He nodded. "Contact bomb, under a rock."

"He'll live, but he'll lose the leg, right?" Perdomo nodded. "He will lose the foot."

We waited around the LZ for another hour. Some troopers led five or six cattle, mooing apprehensively, onto the field. Perdomo had told me earlier they had captured 22 cattle and were taking them back to the mess hall.

They led a fat Guernsey into the center of the field. She and Perdomo circled each other for a few minutes.

The two soldiers holding her rope scurried around to get out of Perdomo's way while he tried to line up a clear shot. The cow kicked and dodged, and Perdomo danced around to stay in front of her. Finally he dropped her with one bullet.

Three choppers came in. Troops loaded onto two of them, and eight or ten guys managed to load the cow onto the deck of the third. Three Paras hopped on with her.

Perdomo turned and yelled to me, "Time to go home."

I grabbed my pack and rifle, jogged to the ship, ducked under the rotor blades and hitched my butt up onto the Huey's floor. The dead cow looked at me with glazed eyes. I leaned back against the warm dead cow and the chopper lifted off. ☒

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by Maj. L.H. "Mike" Williams

At 0530 Jim Morris, red-of-beard, keen-of-eye and swift-of-foot, rose from his hotel-room bed to make ready to leave Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and fly to nearby Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Five hotel rooms down the hall from Morris, another SOF fugitive rose at 0540. Mike Williams, stubbled-of-beard, red-of-eye and

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sore-of-foot and skull, also faced the day. Neither Morris nor I knew of the terrors that lay ahead. It would prove to be a Banana Airlines Day!

After a hurried breakfast, a 12-minute ride to the airport set the wheels in motion.

TACA Airlines (*Tanto Accidentes Como Aviones* — in English, as many accidents as airplanes) was scheduled to depart for Guatemala at 0800 hours. At 0900 hours, Morris, I and the airplane were all still sitting on the ground.

Swarms of people swarmed. Senoritas giggled and jiggled. Children ran around like mad lemmings — leaping, skipping and spitting. Mothers slapped, fathers beamed. We waited.

A Texan — boots, belt buckle and hat his I.D. — sat down, wiped his brow, face and crotch with sweaty hands... "Sheeyit!" he exclaimed. "Yew goin' ta Houston?" I shook my head, not feeling up to small talk.

"Sheeyit! Yew sum kinda white spic 'er sumthin'?"

"No, I am not sum kinda white spic nor anything!"

"Sheeyit! It's damned good ta hear good clean English fer a change!" As a Texan I could understand that kind of talk.

Normally Texans, according to Morris, are capable of saying only three phrases in English: "D'ya wanna fuck?" "Ah'll kill ya, ya son-of-a-bitch!" or "Ah'll giv'ya uh millyun dollars fer that!"

At 1030 the flight was announced. Immediately there was a mad rush for the narrow doorway leading out to the loading area, and as Morris and I were carried along in the mob, I glanced behind us and spotted two Banana Republic Airlines people frenetically clawing, elbowing, shoving and kicking to get to the front of the mass. They both wore white shirts with gold stripes on black epaulettes: the flight crew. Good luck to you both, I thought — wait 'til you try to get to the waiting stairs and up into the cockpit.

Lurching by the girl who was taking tickets, I managed to yell, "Is this really the flight going non-stop to Guatemala?" My head hit the side of the door as I heard her say, "Jess, eet doan' stop ennywher, jus' goes to Guatemala."

Morris was ahead of me because he had bad breath and the door guard obviously thought he was diseased and let him past. As we broke into the sunlight I could see the crew free themselves and sprint for the stairs, run up the steps and into the relative safety of the cockpit, slamming and locking the door behind them.

The seats we grabbed were near the emergency exit on the port side of the aircraft, which I thought was a prudent choice. Buckling up, I asked one of the stewardesses if there might be a change of planes in El Salvador en route to Guatemala.

"Pliss fas'n jour sit bel' an' no eesmokin'an' jess ther' ees no plane change een El Salvador." She beamed, "Do jou wan' some tea?"

Our heads snapped back as the taxiing suddenly became a take-off. I counted 12 seconds or so and the 727 rotated, gear-up, and executed a neat chandelle-like turn as we headed for the nearest mountain. At our climb-out altitude of approximately 400 feet above the goats, chickens, horses, cows, campesinos and an occasional dazed guerrilla, the scenery was breathtaking.

Leveling off at our cruise altitude of 500 feet or so, winding our way between the green mountain tops, the stews started down the

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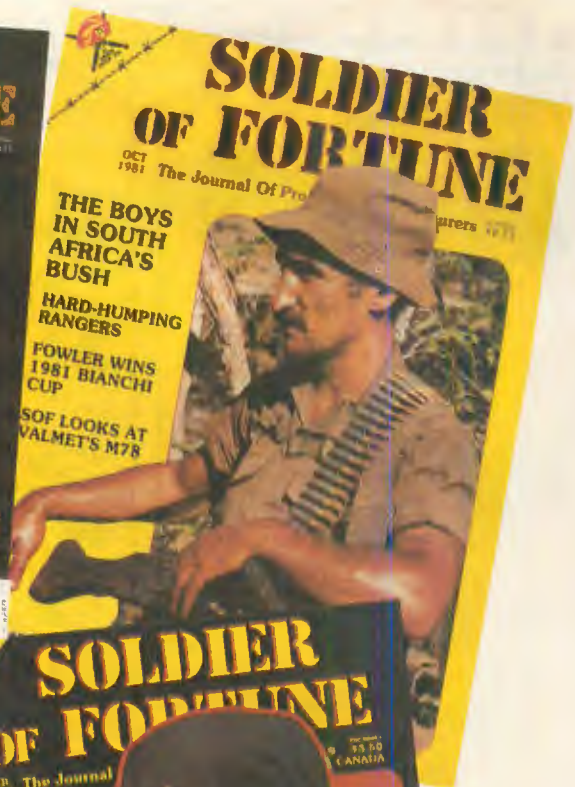
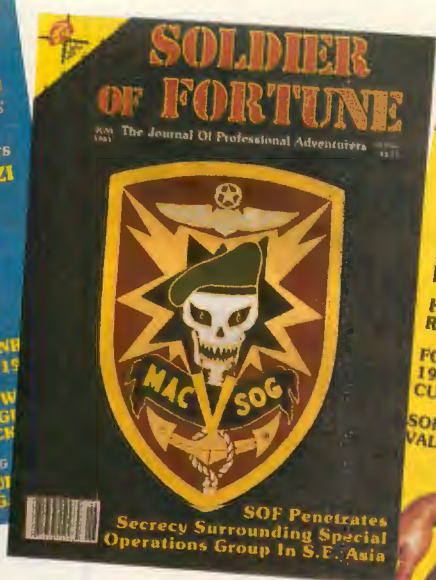
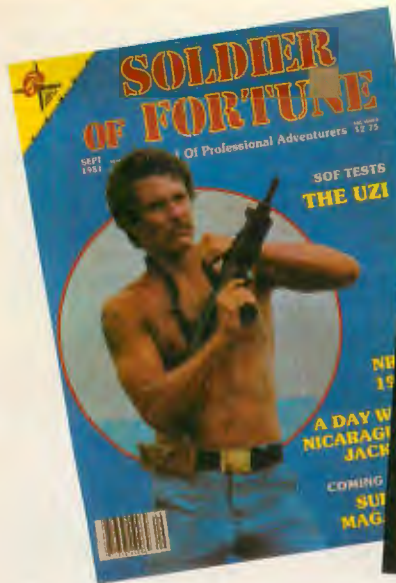
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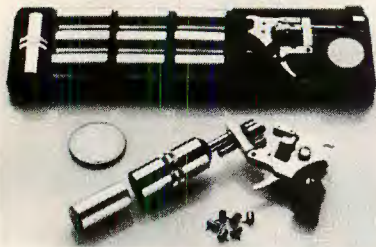
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aisle, flogging their little trays — full of tea, coffee, rum, whiskey and Chiclets.

"Pardon me, senorita," I asked the nearest girl. "Are you sure there is no plane change in El Salvador?"

"Oh, jess, senior, jou mus' change thees plane for Guatemala."

I looked at Morris who smirked and offered, "Why don't you check with the other one?" A typical Okie, smart-ass remark; small wonder we won't let them come down from Indian Territory except once a year for the Texas University game.

"Pardon me, miss...are you sure this plane stops in El Salvador?" She stared at me in wonder.

"Senior, they doan' know wher' thees plane ees goin'...do jou wan' some Chiclets?"

If, I thought, none of the stews was certain of the flight's destination, what then of the crew? Were they poring over route charts? Twisting Nav-Com dials? Trying to raise San Salvador tower? Tegucigalpa? Jimmy Carter? Or simply scratching their balls while perusing the latest copy of SOF? Whatever they were doing, they had evidently found San Salvador, for dead ahead lay El Salvador's capital airport.

"Ladies an' gen'mun! Pliss fas'n jour sit bels an' observe the no esmokin' sign. Thos' passengers goin' to Managua pliss stay on thees plane." MANAGUA? GOOD GOD WE DIDN'T NEED MANAGUA!

I calculated my chances to jerk open the emergency exit window but decided against that option. There was green moss on the handle.

Stumbling off the flight, Morris and I discovered that two connecting flights to Guatemala had left two hours earlier. So much for coordination.

"I say, old chap, do you know how to get to Guatemala?" asked a fellow victim sporting gray beard, baggy pants, thonged sandals and a quizzical expression.

"At this rate, hire a burro!" snapped Morris, somewhat testy, since we had been up since 0530 and had traveled roughly 250 miles in seven hours. Using a tourist guide, we were herded to the desk of TACA Airlines.

"Welcome to El Salvador!" beamed the clerk.

"Fuck that. We want Guatemala," snarled Morris.

"Don' worry, senores, we're goin' to take you to the beach hotel where we're goin' to give you lonch, an' beer an' a room."

"How about our luggage?" I asked.

"Don' worry, we're goin' to take you to the beach hotel where we're —"

"Let's go with the cab driver," I told Morris, who was wiping spittle from his mouth.

"Senores, I'm goin' with jou an' take care of jou!"

Clambering aboard a bus, we were hurtled onto the autopista black-top and San Salvador.

After a short drive, the bus wheeled into a driveway where our "shepherd" hopped off, waving goodbye. The bus roared off again. So much for the beach hotel.

"Where the fuck are we going?" demanded Morris.

"Senores, we're goin' to take jou to the Sheraton. Jou get lonch and I pick jou up at three o'clock."

"What time does our flight to Guatemala leave?" I asked.

"Oh, at leaves at 5:15 exactly."

We had the "lonch" and at 1500 the driver came back to the Sheraton and picked us up.

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Dismounting from the bus at the airport, I saw it was 1530 by my watch. To clear customs, Morris and I had walked past a courtesy bar serving free drinks. We walked slowly back and thanked the bartender for his kindness. We drank. At 1615 we sat down to wait. At 1715 we were waiting. At 1745 we were waiting.

People swarmed. The loudspeaker shouted that flight 303 was boarding immediately. A mad rush for the door, but Morris and I out-sprinted the mob.

Slumping in seats near the exit window, we had just fastened seat belts when . . .

"Atension pliss, thees flight ess goin' only to Guatemala. Ennyone goin' to Managua mus pliss get off now." Mad scramble of bodies down the aisle.

Finally the doors close, engines whine, stewards are thrown against seats, as the iron bird lurches down the taxi-strip.

In front of me, a passenger comments to his seatmate, "I don' theenk thees plane ees goin' to Guatemala."

## DELEGATION TO EL SALVADOR

by Jim Morris

SOF was invited to go to El Salvador as part of a Congressional delegation headed by Rep. Robert Dornan (R-Calif.). Other members included Maj. Gen. Jack Singlaub (USA-Ret.), Andy Messing of the American Security Council, which sponsored the trip, and me.

Dornan and Singlaub are both amazing men. I knew Gen. Singlaub as the former commander of SOG and, of course, for his

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famous flap with the Carter administration about withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea. But I was unaware that he had been a young captain with the OSS in France during World War II.

Dornan, a big, redheaded Irishman, is a former Air Force fighter jock who has flown every aircraft in the U.S. inventory. "The best way in the world to have a good time," he says, "is to go up to 30,000 feet and chase clouds for a couple of hours."

Dornan travels a lot in the course of his duties, but he's not the sort of Congressman who investigates social unrest among inhabitants of the French Riviera. This was his third trip to El Salvador; he had come directly there from Beirut.

Andy Messing is a Vietnam vet from the 1st Cav, and currently a major in the Special Forces reserve. With this background, he contributed more than administration to the delegation.

San Salvador was a tremendous surprise. From old stories in the papers I had expected to stumble over bodies in the street on my morning run. But the capital is much like a small city in the States, except the signs are in Spanish and the streets are cleaner.

The failure of last year's "final offensive," the elections, the new government, all these things have brought a measure of security to the city which hadn't existed for a long time.

For a week we moved among the movers and shakers of El Salvador. We had meetings with the president, the minister of defense, the archbishop, and the president of the constituent assembly, as well as local army commanders and American trainers. In these discussions we tried to pin down major problem areas. We identified four: lack of unity of command, press relations, the land-reform program and infiltration.

Lack of Unity of Command: El Salvador in many ways resembles a feudal country, in that its government consists of a number of little empires. The Army, National Guard, Treasury Police, Customs Police and other agencies all have their tiny fiefdoms, with not much coordination or cooperation among them. They frequently work at cross purposes. Items which appeared in the local paper led me to believe that many of them are deeply infiltrated by the guerrillas.

Press Relations: The Salvadoran government has not enjoyed a very good press in the United States, but a lot of that is its own doing. On the other hand, the guerrillas bend over backwards to get a good press. They reportedly signed a \$1 million-plus contract with a Madison Avenue public relations firm. In contrast, the government of El Salvador has only four people in its Washington embassy, only one of whom — the Ambassador — speaks English.

Here are some examples that show how the two groups handle PR. First, a friend in television told me of a colleague who flew in from New York with instructions to go to the Hotel Camino Real and wait. He checked in one afternoon and the next morning a polite, well-dressed young man who spoke perfect English came and guided him to a guerrilla base camp, where he filmed exactly what they wanted to show him, and was permitted to ask precisely the questions they wanted answered.

The following day he returned to the hotel and left that afternoon for New York, with his film in the can, never having spoken to a Salvadoran official or an ordinary citizen,



but convinced he had done an "objective" account.

In contrast, awhile back, Julian Harrison, a Brit who has served in the U.S. Special Forces at Ft. Bragg, and is now a photographer for UPI-TN, took some footage which made the Salvos look very good. He got the rebels knocking over a bus on the road and killing several passengers. When he got back to town the army confiscated all of his film.

Harrison was still trying to get it back the day I left. He never did though. He got shot in the chest the next day. Something about trying to film an ambush from the middle, the better to show both sides. Only the presence of a very good Salvadoran military surgeon saved his life.

Gen. Singlaub has a friend, a young TV cameraman, who turned in an interview with one of the principal guerrilla leaders, to the network in New York. In it the leader said, "You know you gringos are really stupid. You think we're only after El Salvador, but we want all of Central America." That sounds like a helluva scoop. But the network never ran it.

Land Reform: The United States has hounded El Salvador into a land-reform program. There is little doubt that some sort of social reform is necessary; it was economic and social inequities which provided a breeding ground for the revolt. But many of the former landowners argue convincingly that the land-reform program, as presently constituted, has brought the country to economic ruin, simply because when the campesinos receive their little plots they go into subsistence farming, which produces no surplus; the export revenue from a successful, well-managed plantation is lost to the country.

Billy Sol, a successful San Salvadoran businessman, cites his own former cattle ranch as an example. Before the ranch was confiscated he exported breeding stock to ranches in the United States and Argentina. But the first thing the peasants did when the ranch was split up was eat the breeding stock, since that was the only way it could be divided. Now, when Senor Sol flies over his former holdings all he sees are a few scrub cattle and the grass grown up around concrete breeding pens.

Billy Sol, however, seems to be doing fine. He is an insurance man, lives in a fine old home and still owns his own plane. It is the so-called "beneficiaries" of the land reform program who are starving.

"If Sen. Percy is so keen on land reform," says one former Salvadoran farmer, "why doesn't he try it in Illinois?"

"We lost \$250 million in foreign exchange to get a lousy \$100 million development loan that we have to repay," said a former banker, whose bank had been nationalized.

U.S. agriculture experts are a bit more positive about the program. They point out that world prices for all Salvadoran exports are at an all-time low, which would account for a large portion of the foreign-exchange loss, and that land reform is the only tangible evidence that the lot of the peasants may still be improved.

The most cogent criticism of land reform I heard came from an American journalist who has been covering Latin America for several years. "Those people didn't need land reform," he said. "They don't know what to do with it. What they needed was a two-col-  
one [\$80] a-day wage increase."

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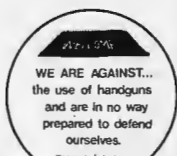
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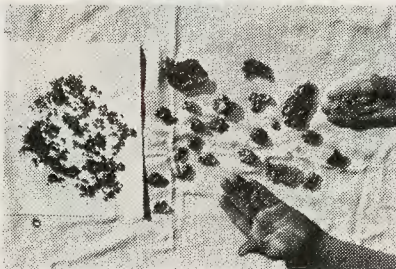
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much of which is still classified, seaborne infiltration from Nicaragua has been significantly reduced. But the difference has been more than made up by airborne infiltration. In Central America, economically dependent on agriculture but lacking a good road network, civil aviation is a big thing. El Salvador is dotted with small dirt strips and Nicaragua has plenty of light aircraft. The Salvadoran government lacks the sophisticated radar necessary to stop this infiltration.

Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt (USAF, Ret.), SOF contributing editor for unconventional warfare, and America's foremost authority on the use of air power in guerrilla warfare, has estimated that one Spectre gunship (see "Spectre: Air Force Angel of Death," SOF, July '82) on station every night could stop the infiltration immediately.

But that would mean the involvement of U.S. forces, which is forbidden by law.

History shows that three things are necessary for success of a guerrilla movement: a) an outside source of arms and ammunition, which the rebels have through Nicaragua; b) secure bases, which they have over the border in the wild mountains of Honduras; and c) support of a significant percentage of the people.



Rep. Robert Dornan (R-Calif.) speaks with Archbishop Arturo Rivera Y Damas in San Salvador about current situation in El Salvador. Dornan, a former Air Force fighter pilot, flew directly to San Salvador from fact-finding trip to Beirut.

I asked Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Dama, El Salvador's senior clergyman, what percentages of the people supported the rebels and the government. His estimate was that roughly 15 to 20 percent favor the guerrillas, 30 to 35 percent the government — and all wish the war was over.

There are factions in the U.S. Congress which support the government of El Salvador, and others which, at least *de facto*, support the rebels. The consequences of this situation are that we are providing El Salvador with just enough support to prolong the agony. It would be kinder to pull the plug altogether, but that is not a viable option.

Loss of Central America would mean loss of control of the Caribbean, which would mean loss of the Panama Canal as a means to ship oil from the Middle East to the United States. It would also mean an insurgency spreading through Mexico and ultimately across the Rio Grande.

If this scenario seems farfetched, remember that while Vietnam is on the opposite side of the world, Houston is closer to San Salvador than it is to Washington, D.C. ☒



# IN REVIEW

Continued from page 10

photo captions to help us distinguish between the various types, since the authors provide no explanatory text whatever. They believed, I suppose, that the photos speak for themselves — but quite often they do not.

The authors never tell us what "SKS" stands for (*Ssamosarjadnyi Karabin Simonov* = Selfloading Carbine Simonov). Nor are we informed that the SKS is virtually nothing more than a scaled-down version of Sergei Simonov's highly successful World War II PTRS 41 semiautomatic anti-tank rifle. Repetition of well-tried principles is a hallmark of Soviet small-arms design.

We are also not told that the SKS bolt more than vaguely resembles that of the world's first true assault rifle — the German StG 44 — a weapon the Russians became all too familiar with on the *Osten* (Eastern) front. The SKS, first rifle to fire the 7.62x39mm ComBloc cartridge, is not personally evaluated by the authors, who never mention its excellent handling characteristics and reliability.

The most useful and original part of the book is the section on ammunition — the informative text is accompanied by 12 pages of full-color plates that illustrate every headstamp and the side view of every loading of all known producers of 7.62x39mm ammunition. The color codes have been enhanced to emphasize particular identification characteristics and the graphic effect is remarkable.

A reprint of a Yugoslavian export catalog is included. However, the illustrations were obviously reproduced from Xerox® copies and their quality borders on the grotesque. The book ends suddenly and without explanation with the U.S. military specification document for 7.62x39mm blank cartridges. Strange!

While hopefully not the final statement on the SKS, this MARS volume is a useful addition to the bookshelves of those who own and enjoy Simonov's carbine. ☒

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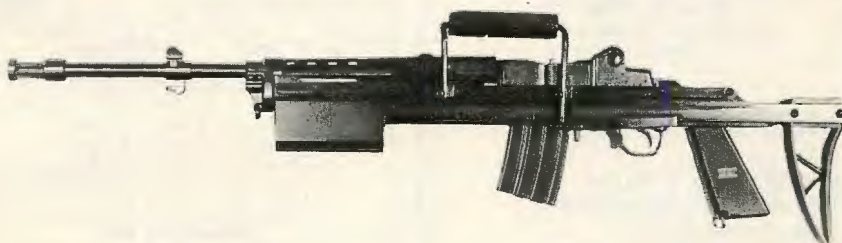


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## DU BERRIER

Continued from page 29

"If I can ever afford to buy one of those medals, I'm going to go down there and award it to Jonathan.

"After all, he deserves it for being the last being loyal to the Emperor."

## THE CAST

by Jim Graves

**Bert Acosta**, American SOF in Spain. Acosta returned to the United States but his drinking problem landed him on skid row. He didn't die there — but did die of alcoholism in a charity hospital in Denver, Colo.

**Alberto Bayo**, Cuban communist who fought in Spain. Bayo, who was born in Cuba, joined the Spanish Foreign Legion prior to the Civil War in Spain. After he left Paris with the three million gold pesetas he had stolen, he went to Mexico City where he bought a farm and a furniture factory. Contacted by the communists soon after settling there, he served as a secret source of funds and assistance to Latin American communists. Fidel Castro's troops were trained, sheltered and financed by Bayo. He died as a Cuban general and head of Castro's military academy. Du Berrier said Bayo was never a hard-core communist, merely a soldier of fortune who started on the communist side and could never break away because he knew he would be killed if he did.

**John Chung**, who worked with du Berrier in the Shanghai spy ring. Chung lives in the free Orient today and is still involved in anti-communist spying.

**Hugh Olaf de Wet**, British SOF from Ethiopia and Spain. De Wet went to Czechoslovakia after leaving Spain and was there when the Nazis arrived. He too was spying for the French (through a contact made from China by du Berrier). Caught by the Germans and sentenced to death, "he bowed and thanked the judge. He was always the gentleman." But de Wet lived; the British threatened to retaliate against a German prisoner in their hands if the Germans executed the well-connected de Wet. He outlived the Gestapo, returning to England after the war — with hands severely broken and maimed by torture: The Germans used his hands as ash trays. Nonetheless de Wet became a famous sculptor, doing busts for poets Dylan Thomas, Robert Graves, Ezra Pound and others. He died in 1975 of natural causes.

**Gen. Linson Dzau**, Chinese nationalist. He died in Macao.

**Paul Hopkins**, American, prisoner



of the Japanese. Returned to the United States and died peacefully in California.

**Ko-Ko**, du Berrier's Myna bird. Died of a broken heart in Hong Kong. When du Berrier took the job as a spy in Shanghai, he had to leave the bird with the second mate of a ship that went back and forth to Borneo. Ko-Ko refused to eat after du Berrier left for Shanghai, sickened and died.

**Tai Lee**, Chiang Kai-Shek's chief of intelligence. A virulent anti-communist, Tai Lee died in an airplane explosion in 1946. Du Berrier presumes the American SSU had something to do with it since the bomb, altitude-controlled, was of the type used by the SSU.

**Freddy Lord**, American SOF in Spain. He was murdered in California in an argument with a gas station attendant.

**Capt. Jean Paul Rougy**, French, head of the Free French spy ring in China. Died peacefully in Nice.

**Gen. Raoul Salan**, French general who became famous for leading the Algerian revolt against Charles De Gaulle. He served his prison sentence and lives quietly in Paris today.

**Vincent Minor Schmidt**, American SOF. Left China in time to join the Finns in their war against the Russians. Joined the American Air Force when America entered the war. At the end of WWII, he was a colonel and wing commander. Schmidt made enough money stealing the plane in Paris for the communists to buy a small apartment in Paris, where he died peacefully in 1962.

"Every year, on November 1, without fail, Schmitt would take a little bouquet of flowers over and put them on a grave in Montparnesse Cemetery in Paris," said du Berrier.

"In 1954, a TWA pilot asked him, 'What do you do that for?' 'That's Pegoud,' Schmitt quietly replied. 'He was the first man to loop the loop.'"

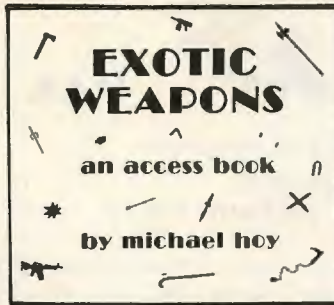
**John "One-Arm" Sutton**, English SOF in China. Imprisoned by the Japanese in 1941, he died of beri-beri and starvation.

**Chang Tso-Lin**, warlord of Manchuria. Killed by a bomb under his rail car in 1931. Chiang Kai-Shek planted the bomb.

**Lee Van Vinh**, known as "the pirate." He once was one, rose to become head of the Binh Xyuen and finally a general in the South Vietnamese Army. Enlisted in a plan to go back to Vietnam to rescue American POWs in the early 1970s, he met with some of Thieu's representatives in a Paris restaurant. He died, presumably of poison, the next day.

**Gen. Yeh Peng**, Chinese warlord and spy for Chiang Kai-Shek. Disappeared after World War II ended. ㄨ

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**FLAK**

Continued from page 6

**PROJECT FREEDOM PARTY ...**

Sirs:

The Support Project Freedom party held on 2 October 1982 at the Windtunnel Lounge in Delta Junction, Alaska, was a great success. More than \$920 were raised from 50 percent of the bar take, the raffle, the sale of T-shirts, donations and membership applications.

Many thanks to SOF for providing information on Project Freedom and for allowing the Delta Paper to reprint the editorial by Brig. Gen. Heine D. Aderholt, USAF, Ret. (SOF, October '82).

Robert A. Kezer  
Delta Junction, Alaska

**AUSSIE RECRUIT ...**

Sirs:

In reference to your editorial ("Alternative to the Draft," SOF, July '82), I couldn't agree with you more about making it easier for foreigners to join the United States Armed Forces. Ever since I was a kid, I've always wanted to be a member of the U.S. Army or Marine Corps. I'm 24 now, and I've lost a lot of my childhood dreams and ideals, but — although it may sound corny and heretical in this age of cynicism and anti-Americanism — I would be the proudest, happiest man ever to walk the face of this earth if I could wear an American uniform.

We still look to America as the Number One defender of liberty and democracy in the face of increasing communist threat. What better way to show support for the United States than to serve in its armed services? I hope somebody in Washington takes up your ideas.

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## BULLETIN BOARD



Continued from page 17

### MIA PAPERBACK AVAILABLE ...

The book, *Operation MIA*, by J. Pollock ("In Review," SOF March '82) is now being published in paperback. It should be available for \$3.50 in local bookstores or may be obtained by writing Dell Publishing Co. Inc., Dept. SOF, Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 245 E. 47th St., New York, NY 10017.

### NEW RIFLE FOR MARINES ...

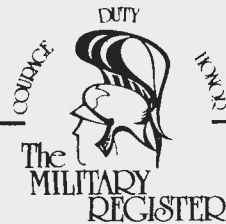
The Commandant of the Marine Corps has signed an acquisition memorandum authorizing purchase of a new service rifle for the Marines.

Actually, the "new" weapon, designated M16A2, features the basic design of the current rifle but incorporates several modifications. These include a heavier "fast-twist" barrel, an improved muzzle-brake compensator, adjustable rear sights, a three-round burst-control device and stronger plastic parts. The modifications, or approximations of them, were incorporated in the M16A1E1 rifles which have been put through an extensive series of joint tests over the past two years. The Army's Armament Materiel Readiness Command at Rock Island, Ill., is handling procurement and will award a contract for the first year's manufacture to Colt Firearms Division in Hartford, Conn.

### MINIMI PROCUREMENT ...

Marine Corps sources report that the Corps has transferred sufficient funds to the Army for procurement of 2,117 squad automatic weapons (SAWs). This is the new light machine gun developed by Fabrique Nationale Herstal S.A. of Belgium which will be known as the M249, or the "Minimi." The Marines have an acquisition objective of 10,264 of the 5.56mm weapons and hope to complete most of the buy by end of fiscal year 1988. The first of them should begin arriving in FMF units in the fall of next year.

Each fire team will get one of the guns for its automatic rifleman, providing that assignment with its first unique weapon since the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). The 15.6-pound weapon can be fed either from a 200-round belt or a 30-round magazine from the M16. For an evaluation of the M249, see "Now See the SAW," SOF, August '82. ☒



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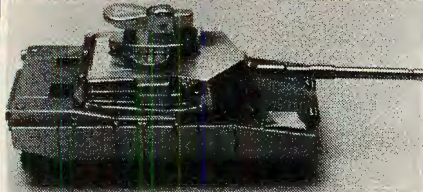
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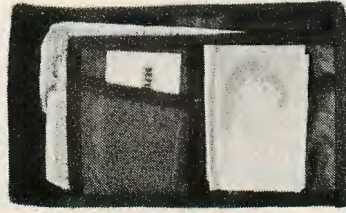
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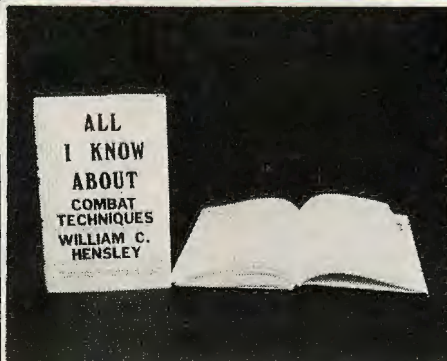
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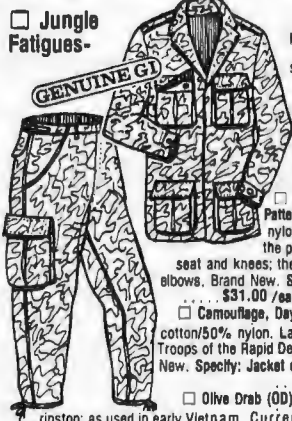
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- Special Forces Crest ..... \$3.00/each
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- Pilot Wing, USAF - nickel plated ..... \$3.50/each
- Full Bird Colonel's Rank - Army - nickel plated ..... \$3.50/pair
- General's Rank-One Star-Army - nickel plated ..... \$3.50/pair
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- For a complete listing of over 1,000 military insignia items send for our Insignia Collection Catalog. Cost \$2.00 plus 88¢ for 1st class postage.



## Jungle Fatigues

Pants feature: 6 pockets (thigh pockets are belted); drawing cuffs; adjustable waist tab. Jackets feature: 4 pockets, belows style. Tell us your chest, height, and waist measurements when ordering. Choose from:

- Camouflage, Woodland Pattern - 50% cotton/50% nylon. Army's latest issue; the pants have a reinforced seat and knees; the jacket has reinforced elbows. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... \$31.00/each; ..... \$59.50/set.
- Camouflage, Day Desert Pattern - 50% cotton/50% nylon. Latest issue to Airborne Troops of the Rapid Deployment Force. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... \$34.00/each; ..... \$65.00/set.
- Olive Drab (OD) Green - 100% cotton, ripstop; as used in early Vietnam. Current GI manufacture. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... \$29.75/each; \$57.00/set.
- Camouflage, Woodland Pattern Commercial Manufacture - we've used the genuine military Woodland Camo cloth and fashioned these like the GI Fatigues. We cut some corners to trim the price, but these American made fatigues look just like the genuine ones. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants ..... \$26.00/each; \$49.00/set.



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2 color silkscreen (never a rubbery iron-on) on finest quality shirts you'll be proud of. Another Kaufman's Exclusive:

- Special Forces-gray shirt, (50% cotton/50% polyester) black and white design.
- Airborne/Ranger-black shirt (100% cotton) red and white design.
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## Ranger Combat Cap-Woodland Camouflage

latest Army issue. This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tucked into the hat when the weather's balmy. Also available in Olive Drab (OD) Green. Sizes: 7, 7 1/4, 7 1/2, 7 3/4 ..... \$9.00/each



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## Angle Head Flashlight

This is the heavy duty olive drab plastic flashlight issued to basic and stealth units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation; operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box ..... \$8.50/each; 2 for \$12.25



## Camouflage Cloth, Woodland Pattern

This genuine military cloth is from a government contract and is the same material currently in use for the camo battle dress fatigues. Twill design of 50% cotton/50% nylon. Price per yard (80" wide) Genuine GI ..... First 3 yards \$7.00/yard Each addtl. yard \$8.00/yard

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## Genuine Leather Chin Strap

Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) ..... \$6.00/each (Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue).

## Watch Cap, 100% Wool

This is the genuine GI, tightly knit, and all-wool watch cap. Used by commandos and troops alike, this tightly knit cap fits snug on any size head for maximum warmth on extended cold weather operations. Sides can roll down to protect ears. Choose between dark blue/black (Navy Seal or Marine Recon teams) or OD (olive drab; army) ..... \$6.25/each

## Camouflage Collection Catalog

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## US Navy Cold Weather Deck Jackets

Type A2 - These jackets feature windproof cuff and hip closures plus a full zipper front with button over-closure. The Olive Drab (OD) green shell is 50% cotton/50% nylon. This blend allows the jacket to be water-repellent (not waterproof) while at the same time it has the softness of the natural fibre. It is lined with double face pile in both the body and sleeves. It sports two hip pockets and a breast pocket with snap closure. The Deck Jacket is cut slightly below the waist so large or tall persons will find it quite comfortable. XS,S,M,L \$47.75/each; XL \$50.75/each; XXL \$55.75/each



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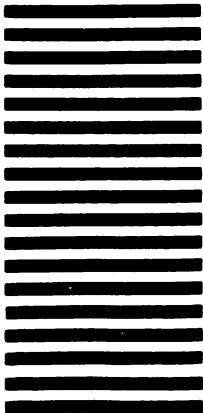
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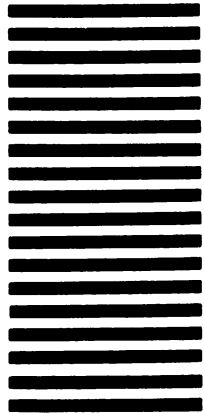
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