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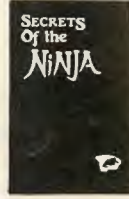
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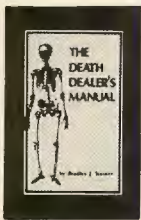
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EDITOR'S NOTE

NRA ANNUAL MEETINGS, 7 MAY 1983

THE National Rifle Association has shut some doors in the last few years, but it has opened some, too. The NRA unplugged its free legislative action line, fumbled the ball on the Volkmer-McClure Bill, gave all the power that was worth having to the Executive Vice-President and fired Neal Knox. But, it also beat California's Proposition 15 (perhaps through no fault of its own), opened voting for Executive Vice-President to Life Members and may have trebled the voting rolls by giving five-year NRA veterans the same voting rights as Life Members.

We are excited about the idea that the private gun-owner who has had five years' continuous membership in the National Rifle Association can have something more to say about the way the NRA is run. We like this extension of the franchise. It makes a lot of sense in principle, and will work for all of us in the NRA.

Making tens of thousands of members eligible to vote will tend to correct the NRA's executive problem of not responding to membership. Myriad new voters who stand outside of the same old NRA gossip, log-rolling and throat-slitting will also make it harder for any small group to seize or hold control of the policy-making bodies.

Let's hope that this new right will not go the way of women's suffrage or the teen vote when these groups turned out in such low numbers that they hardly affected elections. You have to use your vote for it to matter and this doesn't mean the Directors' election alone. If an NRA member of five years' standing can transport himself to Scottsdale, Ariz., on 7 May 1983 he can vote on bylaws just the same as a Benefactor.

This is a lot more important than it seems, since the voting members at the NRA Annual Meetings number in the hundreds. With the new rules on voting members, ordinary Annual Members could impose their popular will on any possible number of Life Members just by mobilizing the NRA membership of the Gila River valley. It is a great opportunity for the man who swings a hammer, pumps gas or drives a truck to make his weight felt in a game that has belonged to those rather better off than most of us.

The only problem with that kind of turnout is that most voters won't know the names or the issues involved in an NRA Annual Meeting, and this is a particularly sensitive year. The head of the Institute for Legislative Action was fired because he was doing his job too well, the NRA leadership is in Washington playing footsie with Bob Dole and Dole with Ted Kennedy, and a few months ago the Executive Vice-President offered to quit if the Federation for the National Rifle Association would help return the election of his office to the Directors.

If you haven't made the NRA a second job this must sound complicated, but there is a way to have it all made simple: Get a copy of the *Gazette* of the Federation for the NRA. It's free, it's short and it's written by the people who brought you the direct election of the NRA's Executive Vice-President. All you have to do is write to: John Bartholemew, 4815 Milam, Houston, TX 77006 or Bill Pace, 10062 Larston, Houston, TX 77055. If you don't get your copy in the mail before 7 May 1983, look for it at the Annual Meeting. The *Gazette* will be there to tell you who the people are, what they are and what the bylaws mean. If you want to make contact with SOF and the FFNRA before the convention, write to me, Bob Brown, Dept. NRA, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

Most important, though, is to get to the meetings and stay there. Most of the members leave each session by the middle of the afternoon, and that is when much of the dirty work is done by the small number of well-organized politicians who help the NRA become something other than what you want. If you read SOF, you probably can vote at the Annual Meetings. See you there.

—Robert K. Brown

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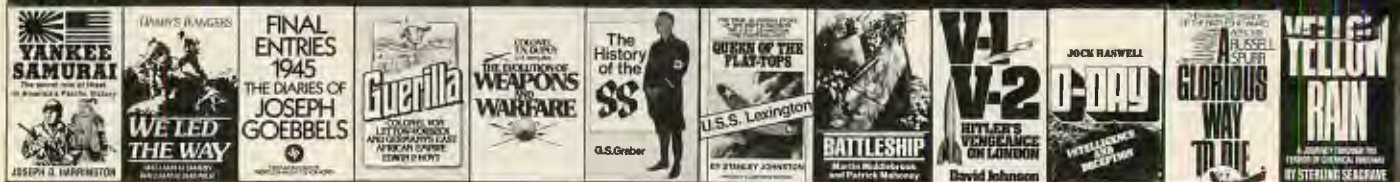
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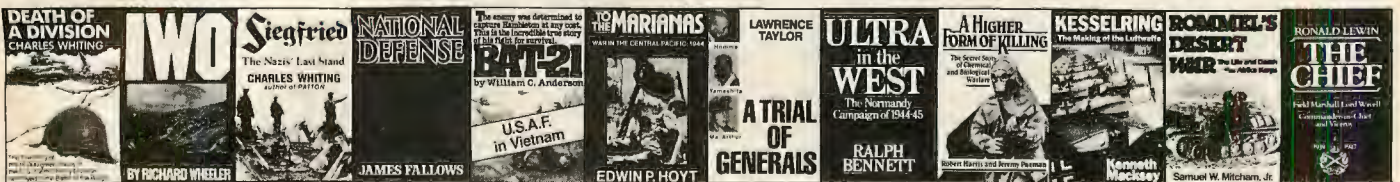
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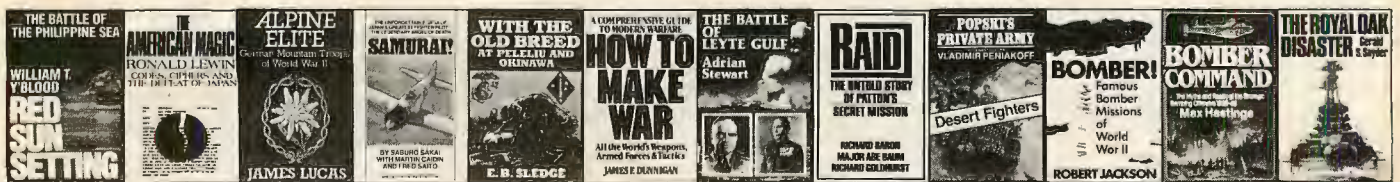
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Sirs:

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I read an old article in SOF (Winter '77). Your article is the only one that comes close to the truth. Your moderately heavy (five-pound) trigger pull is more like 15 pounds. I have broken one selector, one bolt spring guide, one bolt spring, three extractors, one 16-inch barrel and one 9-inch barrel.

Considering that I haven't yet fired 20,000 rounds, I find the weapon unacceptable. Every time I take the weapon out to shoot, something breaks. When the extractor breaks in the middle of a fire fight, this could mean instant death. I have seen plenty of Remingtons explode, throwing the back of the case out and injuring the shooter's leg.

Also the bolt spring guide is designed incorrectly. To make the weapon cheaper, the manufacturers chose to use a spring clip to keep the bolt spring guide from going too far into the rear of the receiver. It should have been machined instead.

I have also found that warranty service is sadly lacking.

I feel that the kind of breakage that I have experienced negates the effectiveness of the 177 rounds. An ill-timed jam is a great way to visit all of your dear departed friends.

Robert Roy
Hartville, Wyoming

Right on. Right on. Right on. The American 180 was one gigantic error from concept to execution. The supposed justification for a submachine gun in caliber .22 LR is a paper fantasy. Poorly fabricated and subject to continual and astounding varieties of malfunctions, the American 180 deserves only a swift, not-so-decent burial among the mountain of other firearms gaffes. It will receive no footnote in the history of small arms. — Peter Kokalis, Military Small Arms Editor

ELEGANT RESPONSE FROM ALASKA ...

Sirs:

Robert Elegant's article was outstanding, intellectually satisfying and long overdue. It is a tribute to Robert K. Brown's shaping and growth of SOF that SOF be the publisher of this, and in turn, it is a sad commentary on the state of the classic or traditional "intellectual" and "ideas" magazines that it not appear there, but rather in SOF.

Elegant has only eloquently and with factual detail stated what I felt throughout the Vietnam War: that print and video media published a limited, altered and editorialized version of the truth. They — the reporters — violated every tenet taught to me by my old high school jour-



FLAK

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS ...

Sirs:

As a former reporter and graduate of the University of North Carolina's School of Journalism, I can only applaud Robert Elegant's articulate indictment of the irresponsible Western press ("Word War," SOF, December '82).

Since the Vietnam-Watergate era, the American press has strayed from its ideals of fairness and objectivity, showing an appalling disregard for facts in major stories and an incredible disinclination to atone for mistakes. However, to admit one's mistakes, especially those grave errors committed by American newsmen in reporting the war, requires an integrity that these men sacrificed long ago.

Today, one sees the same conformist, biased reporting on Nicaragua and El Salvador and a strange disinterest in the brutal subjugation of Afghanistan. It is obvious that the high ethical code the press rigorously applies to America's political leaders does not apply to the press itself. Buffoons like Anthony Lewis still thrive.

Stan K. Ridgley
Clinton, North Carolina

PRISONERS OF PREJUDICE ...

Sirs:

First allow me to say that, even as a female, I enjoy your magazine very much. I am a college freshman and while reading your December 1982 edition, I came across your editorial called "Viet Vets: Prisoners of Prejudice" by Dave McPeak, and it touched me so much that I had to write this letter to you.

The military, and the Vietnamese War veterans especially, are of great interest to me because my father was in the Army. After 23 years in the Army he retired in 1972. I also have three brothers in the Army, and I am a member of Civil Air Patrol. I've written a number of papers on the Vietnamese War for school and have studied it through books such as *Fields of*

Continued on page 89

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In order to allow Ken Hackathorn full range of his experience and knowledge of arms, SOF is introducing a new column, "Combat Weaponcraft."

Under this new rubric, SOF's well-known IPSC competitor, armorer and weapons pundit will continue to instruct readers in fundamental and detailed analyses of the selection and use of combative firearms. — The Eds.



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Bargain Battery On A BB-Gun Budget

by Ken Hackathorn

VIOLENCE is more in the newspapers and more in people's minds in lean times. That makes the subject of guns for the home more relevant at the times when many of us working men either don't have work or aren't getting raises. We may have quad-.50 dreams but a BB-gun budget.

There are inexpensive, practical guns out there; you just need to find them. They should be reasonably priced, reliable and in the most common cartridges. Moreover, one gun will not perform all the tasks the hard-pressed citizen may require. The bargain battery needs at least three firearms: a trainer and working game-getter, a close-quarters combat weapon and a high-velocity rifle.

The working gun for farmers, trappers and outdoorsmen of all types for nearly a hundred years has been the .22 Long Rifle-chambered long gun. Many fine .22 autoloaders are on the market for prices close to those of the various manual weapons. The added speed of fire is worth what little added expense there may be.

For instance, the Ruger 10/22 — my favorite — is \$128.

Like many other .22 semis, the Ruger is accurate, reliable and chambers the world's most numerous, cheapest rifle round. It's good for teaching children about guns, marksmanship training and practice, and small-game hunting. In a pinch the .22 can be used for larger animals. A lot of deer are poached in this country with .22s.

Extended clips and other accessories are available for the Ruger, and many find an inexpensive scope a useful addition. Get a couple of spare 10-round mags, at least,

and if you do want a scope, an inexpensive one-inch-diameter 2.5- or 3-power Weaver or Tasco will do the job, especially since it won't have to resist the shock of a full-house load. Also, you should have at least 1,000 high-velocity .22 Long Rifle cartridges on hand. A thousand rounds, the bare minimum for .22, are cheap, light and compact. At a couple of cents a round, you could have a suitcase full.

Next, comes the gun that could save the lives of you and your family if there's ever a real need to defend yourselves: the shotgun. The obvious chambering is 12-gauge. It is not only capable of producing incapacitating wounds, the ammunition is relatively inexpensive and stocked everywhere. Loads are available to put holes in anything from dove and ducks to lions and trucks, and people fit nicely in the middle of that range. Though the ammo is heavy and bulky, a shotgun comes closer to doing everything than anything else you could possibly own.

Your shotgun should be a pump, since autoloaders — though not what you would call "sensitive" to ammunition variation — will not cycle really light rounds, such as are common in some stocks of reloads, and no autoloader will handle both standard two-and-three-quarter-inch and the more powerful three-inch Magnum.

The Remington 870 with rifle sights and a cylinder-bore, 20-inch barrel is my recommendation. Barrels are easily interchangeable, so you can always modify it later, but with modern plastic-wadded shot loads, patterns are so good there's really no reason for choked barrels for most purposes, anyway. The M-870 goes for \$329 and is probably the best buy for the money.

Double-aught patterns badly out of most barrels, but at really close ranges, who cares? Some shotgun specialists prefer No. 4 buck, and I can't disagree with that, either. Whichever you like better should be represented by at least 100 rounds on hand. An additional 50 slug-loads make me feel more secure. Light game loads should also be stocked, since they are

Continued on page 79

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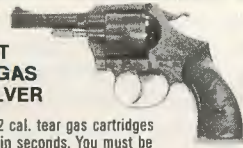
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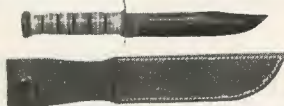
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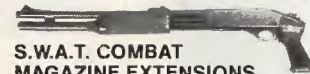
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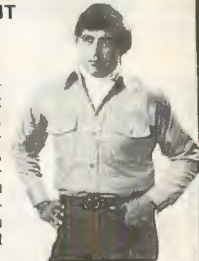
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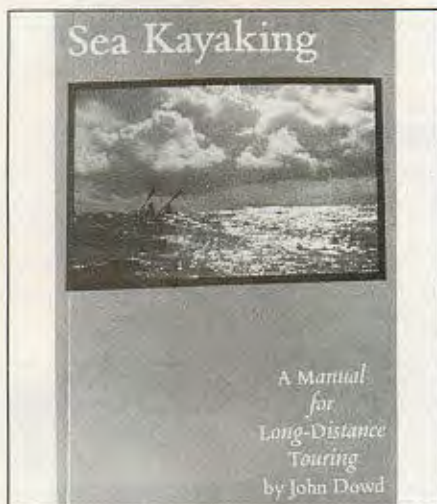
SEA KAYAKING: A Manual for Long-Distance Touring. By John Dowd. University of Washington Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5569, Seattle, WA 98105. 1981. 240 pp. Paperbound with black-and-white photos and line drawings. \$18.95. Review by Bill Guthrie.

SEA KAYAKING is concise, detailed, fluently technical, gently stylish — and perhaps the most frightening book ever written.

Most successful "how-to" books try to ensnare the reader with hyperbole about the difficulty of the undertaking, the beauty of surroundings, and the courage and dignity of the practitioners. John Dowd's work has none of this: *Sea Kayaking* calmly and particularly explains much more than the usual reader would like to know about organization, planning and execution of long journeys across salt water in open, paddle-driven craft, and everything that can go wrong with such a kayak trip.

Anyone with an inclination to hypochondria should avoid this book, since he will find himself exhibiting symptoms of tenosynovitis (inflamed tendons) and kayaker's elbow (like water-on-the-knee, only it's on the elbow). More common diseases — hyper- and hypothermia, fungal infections, boils, carbuncles, blisters and salt rash are each given dispassionate professional treatment. Of this list, the worst is seasickness.

IN REVIEW



"I have several times been badly seasick in a kayak myself, and as anyone who has suffered the problem knows, it is a grim experience. In a kayak there is little you can do except grit your teeth and keep paddling." It is this very coolness that makes Dowd's account of this very dangerous "sport" more real and awful.

Dowd also explains the likelihood, dan-

gers and treatment of hallucinations induced by fatigue, but his greatest *sang froid* is evident in his discussion of losing a boat in cold water.

"If you do find yourself in cold water without the protection of an immersion suit or boat, the outlook is grim. Thrashing about will bring your temperature down fast. Treading water will cool you into unconsciousness twice as fast as holding still. Swimming will only kill you unless the land is very close. Depending on the temperature of the water, you may be able to swim ten yards or you might get half a mile."

Sea Kayaking is sensibly and clearly written, and demonstrates more experience than most could live through. It is not merely a book for long-distance kayak tourists: Anyone who spends time in the outdoors away from likely rescue can benefit from Dowd's sound advice on emergency equipment. Wounds, foraging, water distillation, radios, medicine, aggressive animals and navigation are all explained in clear simple language. *Sea Kayaking* is a systematic, complete, modest and awe-inspiring book better designed to teach survival under the worst possible conditions than the vast majority of survival manuals.

DAMNIT, IKE, I WAS THERE. A play in two acts by Ladislav Farago. Produced by Sol Radam. Directed by Gregg Almqvist. Sets designed by Dan Reeverts. Review by Bob Poos.

WITH absolutely no factual foundation upon which to base it, I strongly suspect that the average SOF reader is no great devotee of legitimate theater. Here is one case where an exception should be made.

This short one-man play starring Biff McGuire is, of course, about Gen. George S. Patton. Patton has just received word that he is to be relieved of command of his beloved Third Army, which under his leadership blazed the way to victory across France and Germany in World War II, and assigned to produce a military history of the European fighting. Thus, he knows he will never again command troops, the role he loved and for which, indeed, he was born. He is an embittered man and while packing to leave his headquarters, he reflects aloud to himself on the conversations, clashes and controversies he had with other senior officers during the war — Eisenhower, Bradley, Montgomery. That's the setting for this remarkable drama written by Ladislav Farago and drawn from two earlier books he authored: *Patton, Ordeal and Triumph* and its sequel, *Ordeal*.

McGuire, who actually served in Patton's Third Army during the war, does a

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Continued on page 88

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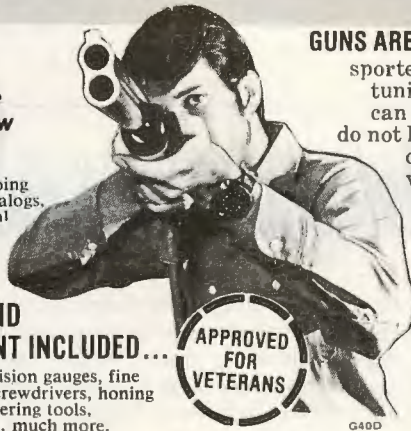
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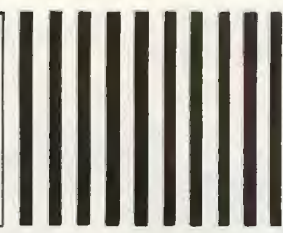
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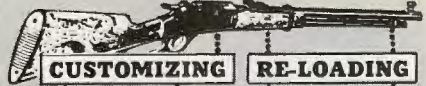
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Stephen A. Latuszek, Jr., refers to the dictionary definition of the bamboo viper to introduce his story: "Venomous, green in color, it feeds on frogs and small birds, sometimes descending from its arboreal perch to hunt along streams." As Latuszek tells it:

IT was another exceptionally bright, hot, sweat-filled day in Vietnam, the kind we had finally learned to accept — although getting to know them had been another experience.

This day had a slightly different twist for me. We of Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Artillery, were on a newly started field mission. Our battery was composed of two eight-inch and two 175mm self-propelled howitzers. We were up from Cu Chi in support of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

Our convoy had stopped near Tay Ninh. We didn't know that what was now a grassy field with bordering jungle and the Black Virgin Mountain on the near horizon would eventually become a base camp. First in position was the mess truck, so it wasn't long before we had a late lunch.

Coming back from eating, I had to walk through ankle-deep water. My feet appreciated my decision to wear the original-issue boots instead of the webbed jungle ones.

I was swinging my mess kit to dry it out, when a movement on the ground not more

IT HAPPENED TO ME

A Snake In the Grass Saved His Ass

by Stephen A. Latuszek, Jr.,
as told to M.L. Jones



than six or eight feet in front of me caught my eye. I looked down and saw a bamboo viper. It stopped me in my tracks. Well alerted, I looked around for more and saw first one, then several, trip wires leading

to a 60mm mortar round, with all but a small part of its tail fins below water. If it hadn't been for the snake, this booby trap would have put an abrupt end to my tour.

I yelled and waved, flagging away anyone else from taking the same route. The Exec was notified. He had the area roped off until it was decided how to dispose of the booby trap. The area was cleared and the mortar detonated by placing a small charge beside it.

Later, I realized how clumsily I had acted in a new area that had not been cleared of any traps. After cursing myself, I thanked Lady Luck for sending a snake to save my life. 突

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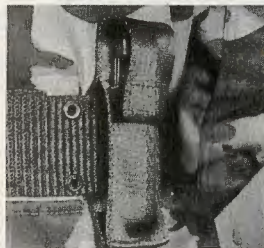
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Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph.

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



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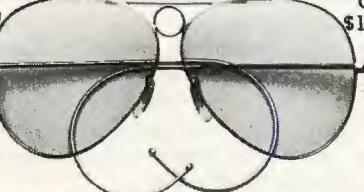
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OVERRATED and overrevered, especially by the Marine Corps, the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) was held in America's small-arms inventory far too long.

Shortly after World War II, *Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre* (FN) of Herstal Iez Liege, Belgium, introduced the Model D BAR. This weapon featured a number of much-needed improvements over the U.S. Model 1918A2 BAR.

Most important, the FN Model D incorporates a quick-change 21½-inch barrel with a series of 30 radial cooling fins at the rear — an expensive, but useful, addition to a large rifle-caliber machine gun used in the sustained-fire squad-support role. The U.S. Model 1922 BAR, produced only in limited numbers for the horse cavalry of the '20s, made use of a short (18-inch), heavy barrel with cooling fins. The FN Model D's barrel is threaded at the muzzle end to accept a muzzle nut, blank-firing device or flash cone (which adds three inches to the barrel length), all of which were issued with the weapon.

To remove the barrel, press in the locking lever on the right side of the receiver, turn the carrying handle upward to the vertical position and push forward. The entire process takes longer to describe than to accomplish.

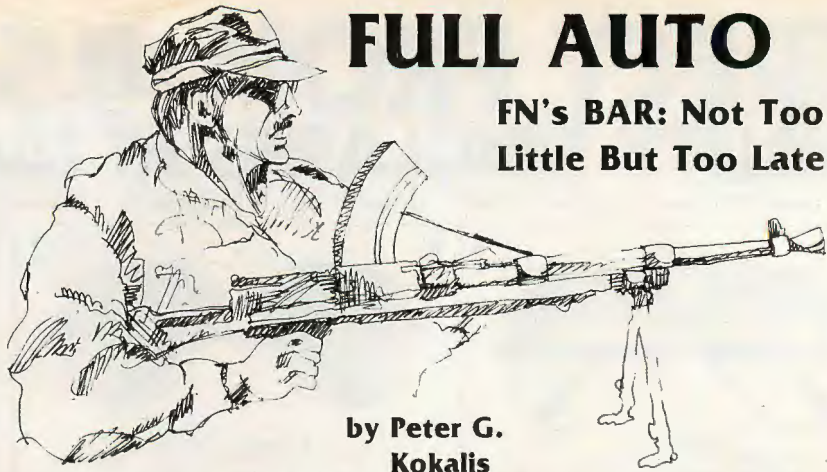
The FN Model D is the only version of the BAR to ever feature a really rapid disassembly. To field-strip the Model D, first place it on the bipod in the firing position with the magazine removed and the bolt forward. Withdraw the trigger-guard retaining pin and trigger assembly. Pull the butt retaining pin out to the right and swing the butt 90 degrees downward until it is resting on the ground. Then, using the recoil spring rod, simply pull the entire operating mechanism (the slide, piston, bolt, bolt lock, link, hammer and return spring rod) out the rear of the receiver. Eat your hearts out, all you former-Marine BAR gunners!

The FN Model D retains the important two-stage extraction system of the original BAR. Primary extraction occurs during the bolt's opening movement as it is started slightly backwards when its cam comes into contact with the rear section of the bolt guides. Complete extraction by direct pull happens only after the chamber pressure has been dissipated and the action is unlocked.

The gas regulator is mounted to the barrel and is of the exhaust type. Screwed in, most of the gases pass into the cylinder, giving maximum thrust. As it is unscrewed, the regulator allows increasing amounts of gas to escape into the atmosphere. Adjustment of the regulator is best accomplished by trial firing, as with the FN FAL rifle.

To avoid attachment to the quick change barrel, the bipod was repositioned rearward to a more sensible location under the gas regulator.

The Model D offers two rates of auto fire rather than a semiauto option. The



by Peter G. Kokalis



FN's Model D BAR, a distinct improvement over U.S. BAR M1918A2. However, it arrived on the scene far too late. (Author's collection.) Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

slow rate ("R" on the selector lever) is about 400 rpm and the fast rate ("M" on the selector lever) is about 700 rpm. The trigger mechanism contains two sears. When the selector lever is placed on the fast, or "M" position, the left sear is cut off and does not interfere with the slide's movement. When the selector lever is placed on the slow, or "R" position, the left sear moves a catch which releases the lever that actuates a rack, pinion and ratchet that slow down the forward travel of the moving parts. Single rounds can be easily ticked off by an experienced operator when this clockwork-type rate reducer is in operation. (The U.S. M1918A2 BAR uses a different system to achieve the same effect.)

The Model D's buffer, housed in the butt stock, consists of a series of split friction rings and cones together with the buffer spring and recoil spring (also mounted in the butt rather than in the piston slide assembly, as it is in the U.S. BAR).

The staggered box-type magazine holds 20 rounds, but it is not interchangeable with U.S. BAR magazines. The rear sights are of the European tangent type, adjustable in elevation from 100 to 1,500 meters, with no adjustment for windage. The trigger assembly has a comfortable pistol grip, but the magazine well is poorly designed and is not flared like that of the U.S. M1918A2 BAR to expedite insertion of magazines.

FULL AUTO

FN's BAR: Not Too Little But Too Late

The weapon is finished with a black, baked enamel, by now almost a trademark of FN small arms. A quick-detachable buttstock monopod with an overly complex vernier scale and worm gear mechanism was also included. In combat, this useless appendage would certainly be thrown into the nearest ditch as soon as it was issued. Because of their battlefield experiences in WWII, the Japanese eventually discarded a similar, but simpler, monopod in later versions of their excellent Type 99 LMG.

The Belgian Army issued the Model D in caliber .30-06 and it was purchased by Egypt in 7.92mm during the reign of King Farouk. Conversion to 7.92mm requires only a barrel and magazine in that caliber. The FN Model D was also adopted by Luxembourg, but by few other countries. Chambered only in WWII calibers, this well-designed but belated improvement over the U.S. BAR arrived far too late.

Trampled by the rush to assault rifles, intermediate cartridges and the so-called General Purpose Machine Guns (GPMG), the FN Model D BAR became only the evolutionary dead end of the Browning Automatic Rifle. An interesting footnote, but only used in battle by the one Belgian volunteer battalion committed to the Korean War.

If you must own a BAR, by all means this is the one to own. It is available in truly excellent, unissued condition from ARMEX International (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 252, Broderick, CA 95605) to qualified Class 3 dealers and law-enforcement agencies. The price of only \$495 includes a spare .30-06 barrel and magazine, bipod, monopod and complete spare parts and cleaning kit. ✕

Here's something you don't usually see in armor ads . . .

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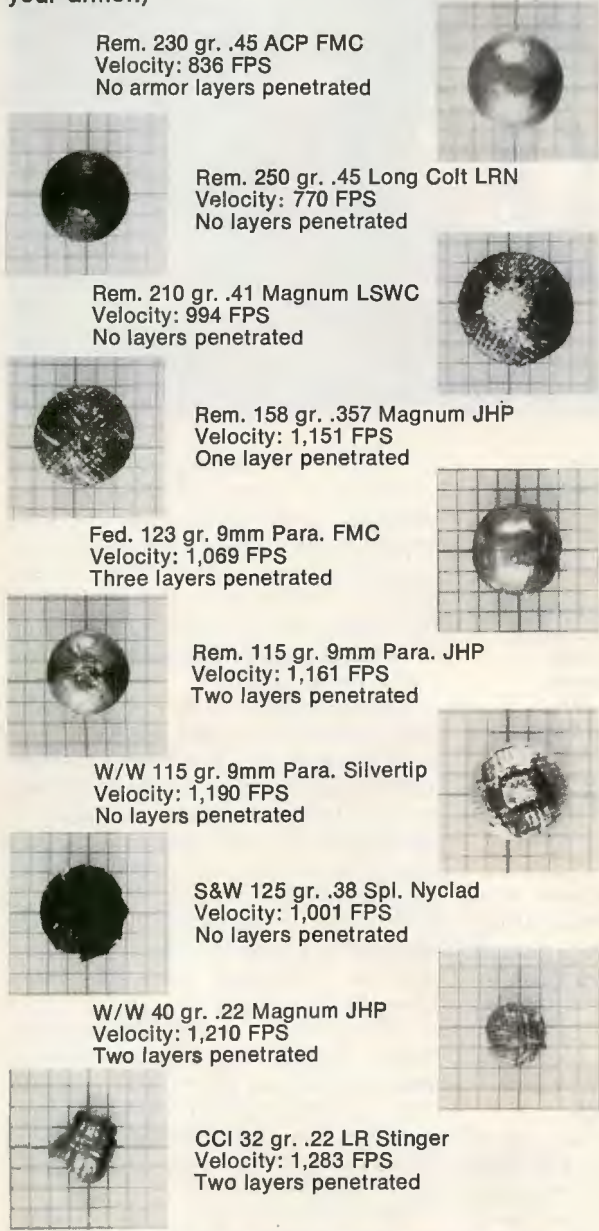
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Velocity: 1,151 FPS
One layer penetrated

Fed. 123 gr. 9mm Para. FMC
Velocity: 1,069 FPS
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Velocity: 1,161 FPS
Two layers penetrated

W/W 115 gr. 9mm Para. Silvertip
Velocity: 1,190 FPS
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S&W 125 gr. .38 Spl. Nyclad
Velocity: 1,001 FPS
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W/W 40 gr. .22 Magnum JHP
Velocity: 1,210 FPS
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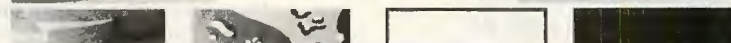
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MERCS FREED IN ANGOLA . . .

Three Americans — two soldiers of fortune and a commercial pilot — were released in November after lengthy imprisonment by the Marxist regime in the African nation of Angola. The two are Gary Acker, 28, and Gustavo Grillo, 33, captured in Angola in 1976 while serving in the forces of anti-Marxist leader Holden Roberto of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA). The other American was 32-year-old Geoffrey Taylor, taken by the Angolans in 1979 when a private plane he was ferrying to Cape Town, South Africa, made an emergency landing.

The Americans were released in exchange for two Soviet airmen, captured by Jonas Savimbi's UNITA (National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola) forces in southern Angola. The South Africans freed a Russian sergeant major and 94 Angolan fighters. (See "To Russia with Love," SOF, January '82, and "The War the World Forgot," SOF, July, August '81.)

Also included in the exchange, which was arranged by American and Soviet diplomats and supervised by the International Red Cross, were the bodies of seven men killed in fighting over the past six years. The coffins contained the remains of four Russians, two South Africans and one Cuban. The bodies were switched between aircraft bearing Red Cross markings amid tight military security at Lusaka Airport.

For more information on the circumstances in which Acker and Grillo were captured see Bulletin Board, SOF, Fall '76, and "Murder in Luanda," SOF, Winter '77.

WALTERS WRONG CHOICE FOR VA . . .

The Reagan Administration maintained its tradition of nominating substandard candidates to head the Veterans Administration with its new VA chief.

He is Harry N. Walters, whose main claim to military fame is that he was a football star at West Point. Walters resigned his commission the day his obligatory four years' service was up to become president of a paper company in Potsdam, N.Y. He formerly was assistant secretary of the Army for manpower and reserve affairs, a political appointment.

Walters became the first VA chief who never served in combat, a bone of contention to veterans' organizations which specifically asked Reagan to appoint a combat veteran to the post, one who might be more sympathetic to veterans' — particularly Vietnam veterans — problems.

Confirmed by the Senate, Walters succeeded Robert Nimmo, a wealthy

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos & John Metzger



SOF Foreign Correspondent Jim Coyne, in Central American bush last November with anti-communist guerrillas, stands with Commandante "Vikingo" and anti-Sandinista guerrillas of FARN Union Democratica Nicaraguense at base/training camp on Nicaraguan border. Under direction of "El Negro" Chammoro, this group prepares for offensive deep inside Nicaragua, part of escalating anti-communist guerrilla campaign being waged for that strategic Central American country. Look for Coyne's report in a future issue of SOF. Photo: Jay Mallin

California Korean War veteran who spent most of his 17 months in office under fire from veterans' groups which accused him of being more interested in cutting the VA's budget than veterans' problems.

CBS STIRS CONTROVERSY WITH FILMS AND FIBS . . .

A Vietnamese resistance group that is starting to work its way into operations against the communists has run into problems with the news department at CBS, according to Alan Dawson of the *Bangkok Post*. The group has charged that CBS altered

the facts on their anti-communist movement and now refuses to correct the error. CBS reported the group is active in Vietnam, while in fact — according to resistance leaders — the guerrillas are only in the process of formation and are thus far restricted to a base area in Laos, far from the Vietnamese border.

This all began early in 1982 when the rightist resistance led by former Adm. Hoang Co Minh invited New York-based cameraman Nguyen Dinh An to attend an official ceremony in the jungle to inaugurate the group. The location was supposed to be a secret, and for the public the group said it was "in Indochina." They have revealed the meeting was in a section of a Lao resistance camp four miles from the Thai border.

But when An's film, narrated by former Vietnam reporter and *60 Minutes* star Morley Safer, was aired on CBS (and rebroadcast on the *Voice of America* around the world), the location was reported to be "on the Vietnam-Cambodia border."

The resistance asked for a correction from CBS, on the grounds that the communists were going to eventually find out where the ceremony

had been held — far from Vietnam — and would ridicule the group's claims made by CBS that it was in Vietnamese territory. CBS didn't reply to several letters from the group. No correction was made, although sources say the network finally asked its Indochina-watching bureau in Bangkok for an evaluation of the protest. The bureau's investigation told CBS in New York that it thought the Safer-An report was probably false. CBS has not yet corrected the report, nor addressed the issue, despite queries by other media representatives.

Thus far, Hanoi has made no mention of the resistance group. Presumably, at least for now, it feels that it poses no threat to Vietnam, and is not worth public attention.

CFA IN CHARLOTTE . . .

This note appeared in the *Free Afghanistan Report*, printed by the Committee for a Free Afghanistan, in November 1982:

"Thousands of people attended the convention hosted by *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine in Charlotte, N.C. The Committee for a Free Afghanistan was there, represented by Executive Director Karen McKay and Counsel David Isby. All expenses and the cost of the display were covered by *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine itself as a contribution to the Committee. At the convention, combat footage from Afghanistan was shown and briefings on the situation in Afghanistan were given. *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine has become one of the last refuges of real-life reporting of the world's trouble spots, so their support is especially gratifying."

We thank the Committee for the compliment, and commend its members for the work they are doing for the Afghan Freedom Fighters. The mujahideen still need your help. Please send what you can to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. For further information on the Committee for a Free Afghanistan, write them at: 1237 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Washington, DC 20003.

A MERASIAN CHILDREN AID . . .

Readers who wish to obtain information concerning wives and children still in Vietnam, or want to help those who were left behind, may contact Sister Mary Nelle Gage, Lutheran Social Services of Colorado, 2695 Alcott, Suite 133 S, Denver, CO 80211. Phone: (303) 433-3301.

CASH REWARD OFFERED . . .

On Saturday, 16 October 1982, someone removed from the seminar

room, Holiday Inn Woodlawn, visual props, i.e. charts, photos and maps belonging to Capt. Larry Dring, M/Sgt. Ernie Husted and Lt. Col. Mark Berent.

SOF will pay \$200 cash for the return or information leading to the return of these items. All correspondence will be confidential. Call Convention Director at (303) 449-3750 or mail the items directly to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

BRITISH HONOR FALKLAND FIGHTERS . . .

Americans don't hold parades to honor their military heroes anymore but the British still do it — and in style. British servicemen who won the Falkland Islands War paraded through the heart of London in a celebration of victory and national pride which drew thunderous ovations and cries of "Well done, boys."

The "Salute to the Task Force" was designed as a tribute from the City of London, the original square-mile section of Roman London which now composes the British business center. But London Lord Mayor Sir Christopher Leaver said it should "be seen as the entire nation's thank you." He and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stood on the reviewing stand and the Lord Mayor doffed his ostrich-plumed tricorn hat as each unit of the 1,200-man task force passed by.

Royal Marines, soldiers and the British Navy swiftly recaptured the island group after its seizure on 2 April 1982 by Argentine invaders, who then suffered one of the most humiliating defeats in modern military history.

JAPAN'S MOVE TOWARD SELF DEFENSE . . .

Japan will attempt to beef up its defense capabilities in 1983. The Japanese Defense Agency is asking the government and parliament for \$10.86 billion — a 7.3-percent increase — to augment all branches of service. Percentage increases are 11 percent for the Air Force, 9.4 percent for the Navy and 4.8 percent for the Army. In addition, the Defense Agency's Technical Research and Development Institute is requesting \$150 million, an increase of 10.2 percent.

New Air Force procurements would include 82 aircraft, 81 short-range air defense missiles and 48 sets of General Dynamic's "Stinger" portable missiles. The Navy wants a number of ships ranging from destroyers to high-speed missile boats. Ground forces want to buy 16 sets of Kawasaki Type 79 antitank missiles, eight sets of Type 81 air defense missiles, 44 sets of "Stingers" and 74 main battle tanks along with an unspecified quantity of armored personnel carriers, howitzers and mortars.

The United States has had its military stretched thin in recent years, and a Japanese defense build-up will permit more Japanese self-reliance, and less reliance on U.S. protection. SOF supports this trend, which has been advocated by responsible American conservatives and military leaders for years.

SPECIAL OPS COMMAND GETS ROLLING . . .

The Army has formed a new special operations command to speed U.S. responses to leftist insurgencies in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The action is the first significant result of instructions in Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's five-year Defense Guidance Plan. Weinberger said in announcing the document: "We must revitalize and enhance special operations forces capable of projecting U.S. power where the use of conventional forces would be premature, inappropriate or infeasible."

The new Special Operations Command, located at Ft. Bragg, N.C., is headed by Brig. Gen. Joseph C. Lutz. It includes existing Special Forces units at Ft. Bragg, Ft. Devens, Mass., Panama and West Germany and the Army's two Ranger battalions. Gen. Lutz said Special Forces would gradually be expanded by 30 percent to flesh out the new command.

VIETNAM'S UNKNOWN SOLDIER . . .

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger has assured Washington veterans' group leaders that a soldier killed in Vietnam will soon be buried at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. Because of advanced medical procedures used during the war, the problem of unidentified corpses was virtually eliminated, but the Pentagon has now accumulated four sets of remains that will be almost impossible to identify. One of them *will be given* a ceremonial burial at Arlington perhaps as early as May 1983.

TURKS GET TOUGH ON SOVIET BORDER . . .

Turkish troops who patrol the 380-mile border between Turkey and Russia have been ordered to shoot on sight any Soviet soldiers who enter Turkish territory.

The order is a direct response to the August 1982 deaths of two Turkish troops who were shot after inadvertently crossing the border. According to Turkish military officials, Soviets who crossed the border in the past were simply warned off. ☒

NEW 94 ...

SOF was fortunate in receiving some of the first photographs released of Heckler & Koch's new 94 series semi-automatic carbine.

We haven't seen the gun yet, but here is some general information:

The weapon will be offered in two models: The HK 94 A-2, with fixed, high-impact plastic stock, and the HK 94 A-3, with sliding metal stock. Both weapons are identical except for the stocks, and are semiautomatic carbine versions of the full-auto HK MP 5 SMG.

The 94 will be produced in 9mm Parabellum with a 15-round magazine. Barrel length is 16.1 inches. Approximate weight is 5.8 pounds (the MP 5 SMG weighs 5.4 pounds as a result of the shorter barrel). A 30-round magazine, sling, magazine loader and unloader will be sold as accessories. The 94 should be on the U.S. market by the time this sees print (April or May 1983). The A-2 will retail for \$650 and the A-3 for \$720.

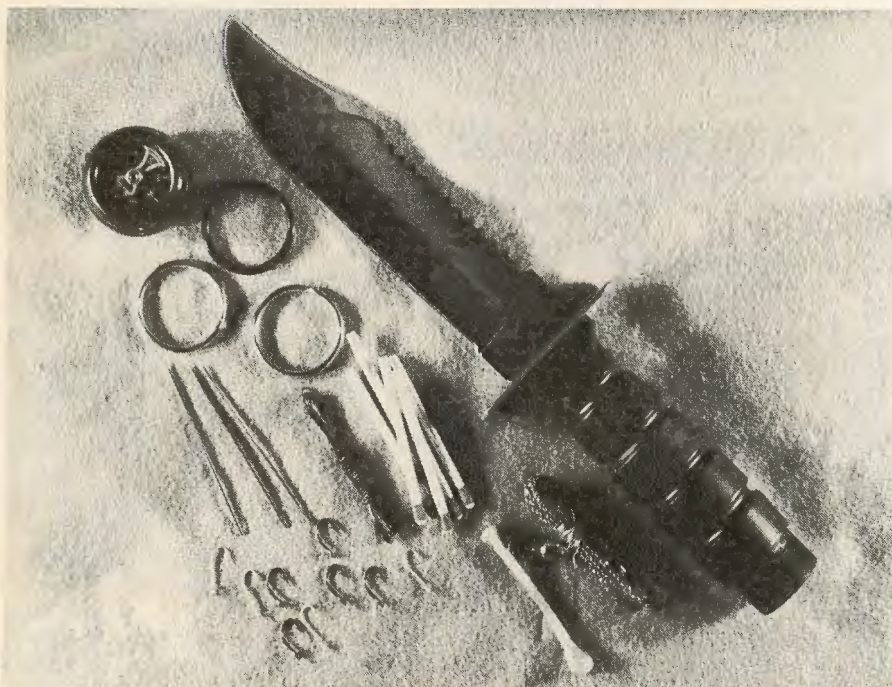
ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by John Metzger



SOF looks forward to a chance to fire this new carbine and report our appraisal to our readers. For more information, contact Heckler & Koch, Inc.,

Dept. SOF, 933 North Kenmore St., Suite 218, Arlington, VA 22201. Phone: (703) 243-3700.



BLADE TO LIVE BY ...

Lifeknife makes a survival knife to help keep you alive in tough places. Included in the hollow handle are wire saw (for emergency use only), seven fish hooks, 20 feet of 10-pound test line, three heavy-duty sewing needles with six feet of utility wire and three to four "British life-boat matches," which can be lit, immersed in water, and stay on fire. The knife's most unique feature is the compass fitted into the handle butt — an extremely luminous, oil-filled, jeweled diver's compass, waterproof to 100 meters.

Overall length is 10½ inches, with full weight of 9½ ounces. The blade is a six-inch modified Bowie with sharpened

false edge and serrated saw on top. The 420C stainless steel blade is extremely corrosion resistant. A leather sheath, sewn with nylon thread and brass riveted, is standard. The handle is aluminum alloy, with baked-on semi-gloss enamel finish.

I personally shy away from hollow-handled knives because of balance compromises and lack of a full tang, but the *Lifeknife* offers enough trade-offs to make it a worthwhile purchase — especially at its reasonable price of \$39.95. It will make an excellent addition to survival kits in the home, car, boat, pack, etc. For more information, contact *Lifeknife*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 771, Santa Monica, CA 90406.



GRAB A GRIPPER ...

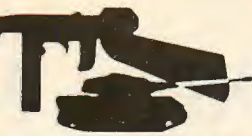
Pachmayr, Inc., famous for its rubber hand-gun grips, has further improved its line with the introduction of the "Gripper." This one-piece combat-style grip for double-action revolvers incorporates all the standard features of the well-known *Pachmayr* revolver grip, plus the addition of finger grooves and wrap-around that cushions the back-strap.

The finger-groove design positions the hand correctly, allowing for quick and positive target acquisition from a fast draw. The padded back-strap fills the web of the hand and absorbs recoil better than ever — even for heavy service loads. The one-piece Gripper really "molds" the shooter to the revolver, resulting in improved accuracy during rapid-fire double-action shooting.

Pachmayr's Gripper is available for \$16.25 from dealers, or directly from the company for \$16.25 plus \$2 shipping. For further information, contact *Pachmayr Gun Works, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, 1220 South Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90015. Phone: (213) 748-7271. ☞

ASSAULT SYSTEMS

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Strong 11 oz. Cordura nylon, super K-Kote waterproofed, 1" foam padding protects weapon, nylon thread—double stitched at seams, military spec. welded black D rings and hardware, nylon YKK lockable zipper, 2" nylon web carrying handle and detachable adjustable padded shoulder strap, hook and loop compartment closures. Unconditionally guaranteed. Specify Black or Vietnam Leaf Camouflage... and weapon.

#ARC Assault Rifle Case. Customized for all Assault Rifles including collapsible stock models. 5 Outside Mag pouches plus compartment for handgun, scope, bipod, etc. \$65



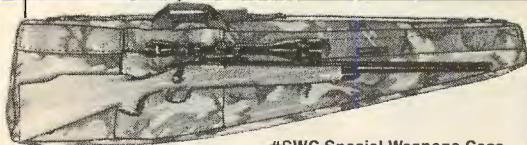
Pistol Cases

3/4" Foam padded, full opening, lockable, waterproofed nylon handles. #P10 10" \$11.50; #P12 12" \$13; #P14 14" \$14.50; #P20 20" \$16.



#SMGC Submachine Gun Case.

For UZI, Ingram Mac 10 & 11. 6 Outside Mag pouches plus handgun and accessories compartment. \$60



#SWC Special Weapons Case.

33", 40" and 48" length models to fit all riot shotguns, scoped rifles, other weapons. Outside compartments for handgun, ammo, knives and accessories \$65

Ballistic Nylon Holsters

Stronger than leather, but allows gun to breathe. Lightweight and flexible for super comfort. Hook and loop closures secure weapon. Washable—no mildew! Black only. Specify weapon and left or right.



#HN45 Military Shoulder Holster

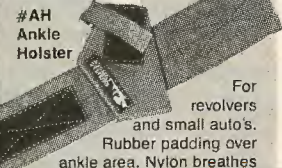
For auto's and medium frame revolvers. Can be worn concealed or military style. Conforms to body shape—\$35. For 6" BBL—\$40.



Belt Holster Assembly

2" Nylon web belt with Fastek quick-release buckle holds ballistic nylon holster for all .45 and 9mm auto's, and flapped double mag. pouch. #BH Holster \$35* #WB Belt \$16.75. #MP Mag. Pouch \$10. #BHA Complete Assembly \$60. *For 6" BBL—add \$5.

#SHC Concealable Shoulder Holster Fits any gun. Elastic back strap allows free arm movement. \$40

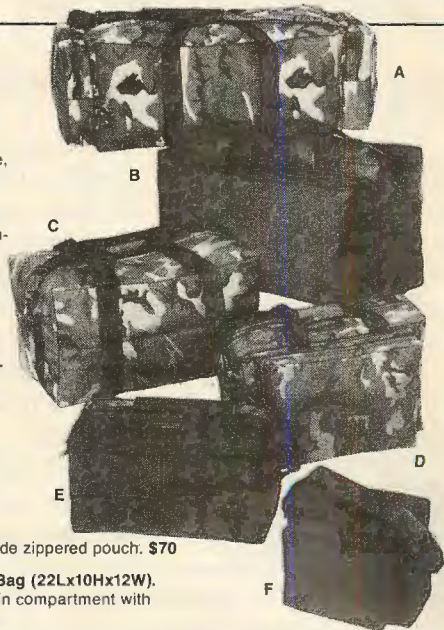


#AH Ankle Holster

For revolvers and small auto's. Rubber padding over ankle area. Nylon breathes—no sweat buildup. Black only \$30

Gear Bags

Strong 11 oz. Cordura nylon, super K-Kote waterproofed, military spec. black D rings and hardware, nylon YKK lockable zipper, 2" nylon web carrying handle (except Escort and Diplomat Bags) and detachable/adjustable padded shoulder strap. Folds flat for storage. Specify Black or Camouflage.



A) #IB30 International Gear Bag (30Lx12Hx13W). Top of the line and loaded with features! Dual inside zipper pockets and divider flap, 4 exterior zippered pockets. \$129.95

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C) #MB22 Medium Gear Bag (22Lx10Hx12W). Perfect utility bag. One main compartment with inside zippered pouch. \$45

D) #FB14 Flight Bag (14Lx11Hx9W). Our best gear bag. Ideal airline carry-on size. One main compartment plus an outside zippered pouch. \$45

E) #DCB Diplomat Bag (17Lx10Hx9W). Big capacity many features. Padded bottom and walls, dual outside flap compartments on one side, envelope compartment on other. \$71.50

F) #ECB Escort Bag (11Lx9Hx6W). Small shoulder bag with padded bottom and walls. One main compartment plus an outside zippered pocket. Ideal for cameras. \$45.00

Also available: Black nylon baseball hat with A/S Logo. \$6.95 • Nylon Tri-fold Wallet with A/S Logo, black or camouflage. \$7.95 • Garment Bag (matches other A/S Gear Bags) 3-suit size, black or camouflage. \$66.75 • Security Pouch, similar to our Ankle Holster shown above, but carries money, credit cards or valuables, black only. \$24.50. • Send \$2.00 for complete Assault Systems catalog—free with order.

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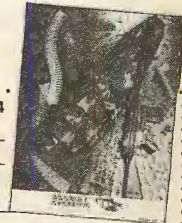
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EDITORIAL

THE UNITED NATIONS — AMERICA'S SELF-INFLICTED WOUND

by Ross Mackenzie



“You will lose control of the United Nations to the developing countries and city-states, who will inevitably be easily manipulated by the Soviet Union.”

Charles de Gaulle



HAS the UN, in terms of America's interests, outlived its usefulness?

Soon after its birth 37 years ago, the UN prematurely entered doddering senility. It began babbling and making no sense at all. Some samaritan took it to the intensive-care unit, where it was hooked up to American-provided respirators that have kept its heart and lungs pumping for the many years since detectable brain function ceased. Perhaps, in the name of compassion, the time has come to pull the plug; perhaps the time has come to allow the UN to drift away into a dignified death.

The UN's intended function was to serve as a town meeting of the world. It was based on the premise that nations would not start shooting at one another as long as they continued to talk to one another — usually about peace. Never mind that its precursor, the League of Nations, didn't have that effect: The Japanese were talking about peace in the league when they stole Manchuria; Mussolini was uttering paeans to peace in the league when his troops invaded Ethiopia; Stalin was singing hosannas to peace when he attacked Finland, for which his government was thrown out of the league.

The UN was to be somehow different, but it hasn't been. And it hasn't been different because of the communist bloc, which has refused to cooperate in peace. Indeed, the communist bloc uses the UN as a weapon of war. Lenin and Stalin, and their contemporary Kremlin disciples, postulated

the inevitability of war for the final overthrow of capitalism. But they postulated as well the weakening of the capitalist world through the medium of negotiation and talk. As Stalin said in 1927, citing Lenin: “The maintenance of peaceful relations with capitalist countries is an obligatory task for us. The basis of relations with capitalist countries consists in admitting the co-existence of two opposed systems.”

Long ago the UN ceased to be a world forum for the airing of views, and became instead a pit for the baiting and bearding of Uncle Sam and his allies.

Back in the '50s, Charles de Gaulle saw clearly. He told President Eisenhower: “You will lose control of the United Nations to the developing countries and the city-states, who will inevitably be easily manipulated by the Soviet Union.” We have learned how right he was.

Let the Reagan administration, then, declare that henceforth the United States shall continue to participate in UN deliberations, but that it no longer will vote — on anything. Thereby the United States would deny meaning to every UN vote. And if the panjandrums and the commissars fail to get the message — the message that we are done with being rhetorically roasted largely at our own expense — then, surely, we ought to pull the plug. Maybe, even now, the moment for pulling it has arrived. ☒

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It's like having X-ray ears...

Tiny, powerful electronic "ears" let you hear whispers through walls, conversations 2 miles away.

The Dyna-Mike Transmitter

It's smaller than a quarter. But DYNA-MIKE will transmit every sound in a room to an FM radio tuned to the proper unused frequency, from 1/2 mile to 2 miles away.

If you're at a neighbor's home a block from your own, you can hear your baby's cry, or you can tell the instant your spouse comes home. If two of you are driving tandem in two cars, one or both of you can communicate with the other even if other cars drive between you.

DYNA-MIKE has as many uses as your imagination can think of. For a business conference, let the tiny microphone sit unobtrusively on the table or concealed on a shelf, and you'll be able to record every word. For businesses, you can put an FM receiver in a warehouse or remote office and "broadcast" instructions or orders to be filled.

Public speakers never had a better friend than the DYNA-MIKE. No wires or setup — just turn on one or more radios and your speech will come through with perfect fidelity. Put one on the front porch. If you hear a suspicious sound, turn on the radio and you'll hear the doorbell or the ring of the telephone.

Choose Your Model

New Horizons is introducing three models of the DYNA-MIKE supersensitive broadcast microphone. Model IC-18 is the world's smallest microphone — it's a miracle of electronic miniature power, with a high-fidelity range of 1800 feet. Introductory price is \$129.95 (two for only \$119.95 each).

Model X-18 is the longest-range microphone, with an unbelievable two-mile range. Introductory price is \$149.95 (two for only \$139.95 each).

Model X-3 is the most sensitive microphone. It broadcasts perfect-quality sound even from low-levels or whispers, up to 1,500 feet. Introductory price is \$99.95 (two for only \$89.95 each).

Each microphone is fully wired, complete with standard HC-1.35v. battery, good for 100 hours of continuous use and easily and inexpensively replaceable.

Of course you're protected by the New Horizon guarantee: use any DYNA-MIKE transmitter microphone for 30 days, with the right to return it for a full refund if you're not delighted.

PHONE OR USE THIS COUPON

The Super-Ear

You'll hear it all.

Effortlessly, you can hear not just a baby's cries, but quiet breathing, through a concrete wall a foot thick. Put the SUPER-EAR earphone in your ear and place the speaker on the wall. That's all there is to it.

SUPER-EAR hears everything, and even more astounding, hears it clearly. It's as though the wall weren't there. If you're coming home late at night and think intruders are in your residence, let SUPER-EAR find out for you. Want to know if the meeting is over in the room with the closed door? SUPER-EAR will tell you in a second.

SUPER-EAR is undetectable from the other side of the wall. The quality of sound has amazing fidelity—good enough to record, and SUPER-EAR has its own built-in recorder jack.

Because SUPER-EAR is the ultimate listening device, you can use it to pinpoint hidden squeaks in your car or the source of mysterious engine noises.

Construction experts use it to check for flaws or cracks in buildings.

It Works Anywhere!

Ever put your ear to a railroad track to try to hear the train? Try it with SUPER-EAR. You'll hear that train many miles away. Use it as a powerful stethoscope on yourself, a friend, or a pet. You can even hear a bird's breathing.

The only source for SUPER-EAR is New Horizons. Choose from two models — Model SB-5, with ultrasensitive microphone, \$139.95 (two for only \$129.95 each); or Model SB-1, with suction-type microphone, \$99.95 (two for only \$89.95 each).

Use your SUPER-EAR for 30 days. If for any reason you're not delighted, the absolute New Horizons guarantee means you can return it for a prompt refund.



The Phone Answerer Recorder

The PHONE ANSWERER/RECORDER connects in seconds between any tape recorder and your telephone. When you're away it automatically delivers a message up to 20 seconds to anyone who calls: when you'll return, when to call back, where you are.

When you're there, the ANSWERER/RECORDER starts any cassette recorder automatically when you pick up the phone and shuts off when you hang up.



It records both sides of the conversation with astonishing clarity, giving you a permanent record of every call, preventing unauthorized use of your phone, and eliminating misunderstandings over what was said. It's specially wired to extend recording time on your tape recorder. Needs no batteries - it's always "alive".

The PHONE ANSWERER/RECORDER is a masterpiece of miniaturization. It's yours for \$49.95 (two for only \$44.95 each). PHONE RECORDER unit alone, records but doesn't answer, \$29.95 (two for \$24.95 each). Every instrument has the unbeatable New Horizons guarantee.

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- 2 for \$139.95 each
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Please add \$1.75 per total order for shipping.

TENS of thousands of Chinese lined the avenue of sorrow as the cortege passed on a spring day in 1932. Four thousand more appeared at Hungjao Airdrome to offer tribute at graveside.

The cortege, which had rolled slowly from Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai, was composed of the hearse, 45 flower-laden cars and 300 more vehicles carrying the leaders of China. Included was T.V. Soong, Prime Minister. The state funeral honored a national hero of China. But the man was not Chinese.

He was Robert McCawley Short, American. More exactly, Col. Robert Short, American pilot who had died in an air battle while defending China against Japan.

Robert McCawley Short was given a state funeral, made a national hero and posthumously awarded a colonel's commission because of his deep idealism. His death on that fateful day of 22 February was a gallant climax to a lifetime urge to fight — and die if necessary — for the underdog.

Robert Short during his brief life was the idealistic All-American Boy. He grew up in Tacoma, Wash., in an era when lifestyle dictated clean living, hard playing, championing the underdog and most important — succeeding in life. It was a national syndrome shaped by home, church and school. Heroes, in story books, triumphed because they lived by the rules. Robert Short's whole life was an emulation of his boyhood heroes. In turn, he became one in his own right.

Short was an early breadwinner. In the strive-and-succeed manner of the Horatio Alger boy-hero, he helped support his widowed mother and younger brother by working as a messenger in a Tacoma shipyard.

In school he was not a model student. But one school principal remembers: "He would fight for his friends or for anyone he thought was imposed upon. He had courage."

After high school, Short worked with a survey crew on the Cushman Dam, then under construction. With the approach of fall he was faced with a decision. Should he continue working and ease the financial burden at home? Or should he try making his way through college? College had a strong pull, but the thought of his family's welfare decided the issue.

With college at least temporarily out of reach, he sought self-improvement in correspondence courses. A year or so later, a friend suggested he try for the Army Air Corps Flying Cadet program. Short investigated the possibilities. What he found out was that candidates for appointment must be unmarried, between 20 and 26 years of age, have satisfactorily completed at least two years of standard college work — or pass a writ-

CHINA'S AMERICAN HERO



Robert Short's brief notation on the back of this photo: "1st Solo." Plane is Consolidated PT-1 Trainer. Photo: Ed Short

ten education examination — and pass a physical examination whose standards were high.

All qualified candidates would be assigned to the Primary Flying School, March Field, Riverside, Calif. After completion of a six-month course, they would spend another six months in advanced training at Kelly Field, San Antonio, Texas. Flying cadets would receive \$75 per month, plus a ration allowance of \$1 a day. They would wear a distinctive uniform.

In addition to flying time, cadets would receive instruction in theory of flight, airplane engines, aircraft rigging, machine guns, map-making, military law, meteorology, navigation, radio

code — in all, 28 subjects necessary for the trained military pilot. Upon successful completion of the course, the flying cadet would be commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Corps Reserve.

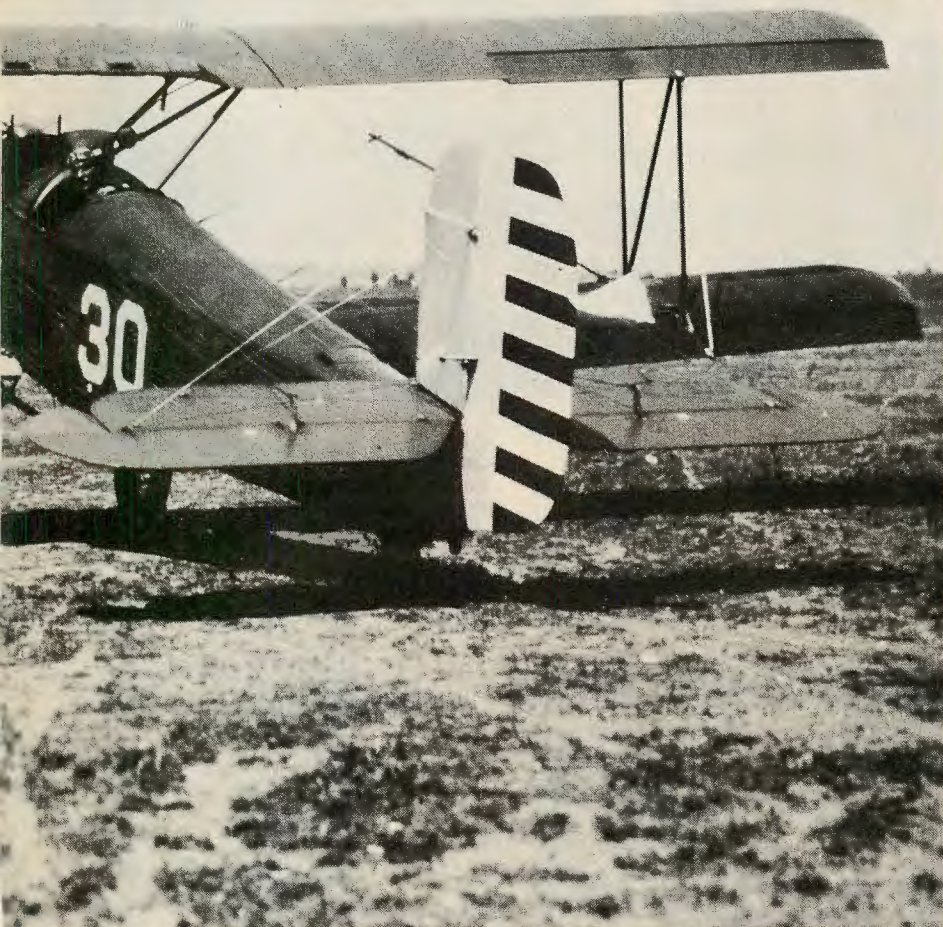
For Short, the suggestion he try the Air Corps program came at a most propitious time. At the moment, he was caught up by the Lindbergh phenomenon then sweeping the country. Lindbergh's New York-to-Paris flight and subsequent grand tour of the United States in the *Spirit of St. Louis* had much to do with Short's decision.

Along with 28 other candidates, he took the written and physical examinations at Vancouver Barracks. The hours of self-improvement paid off. He was one of three selected. At March Field, Short was sworn in with the class that entered training on 1 March 1928.

The cadets, a carefree lot, anticipated a wonderful year of flying. But their ar-

SOFer Robert Short: First American In Air War Against Japan

by Martin Cole



Robert McCawley Short: American and Chinese Nationalist hero. Photo: Courtesy of Ed Short

dor was soon shaken. From enlisted men who served them, they began hearing distressing facts of attrition. Examining boards, called "Benzine Boards," convened frequently, and would account for two-thirds of the class being "washed out" in the primary stage. Of those who were fortunate enough to get to Kelly, the chances were that about one out of 10 would be on hand to receive his wings.

"We live in suspense," Short wrote in his first letter home.

In the days ahead, he received instruction in the Consolidated PT-1 trainer. Sometime during the third week, he received his first words of assurance. An instructor making a check flight told him, "Short, you seem to grasp what it's all about."

Fear of the Benzine Board increased with the tempo of training. One by one, cadets with long faces turned in their gear and said goodbye. By nightfall their cots had gone to storage. On 27 March, Robert wrote his mother that as yet he had not been called before the board, so for the time being he presumed everything was all right. Mingled with this concern was a deep-seated feeling of responsibility. "I will be *paid Saturday*," he wrote, "and I will send you a check."

A month later, he had acquired nearly 20 hours of solo and dual time. Besides landings and takeoffs, he was practicing 80-degree banks, right and left spins, wingovers and chandelles. Statistically, the odds of lasting the course were against him, yet the tone of his letters was, "I am resolved to finish." He studied hard, including free weekends.

By June, the pace had increased with the summer temperature. The dreaded board was taking its toll. More than half the class had been sent home. There was no disgrace in the flying cadet being washed out. On the other hand, there was undeniable honor in lasting out the

Pilot Robert Short pictured when he was flight instructor in Los Angeles area. Photo: Ed Short

course. Those who had survived thus far felt like veterans, although by no means secure.

With the approach of graduation, Short found himself faced with a tough decision. There had developed in recent months a desperate need to lift the financial burden at home. Now that he was in the top five of the class, Short believed he would be assured a flying job. So his agonizing decision was whether to continue at Kelly Field or ask for a discharge. After much soul-searching, he sacrificed his Army career.

Short's flying ability and likable personality opened doors of opportunity. For several years he was a familiar figure at southern California airports. He did private flying for the wealthy and a stint of test-piloting for Lockheed. Eventually, in answer to previous correspondence, he received a telegram offering him an airmail run in China between Shanghai and Hangchow. The pay was attractive and Short accepted.

In Shanghai, Short met sickening disappointment. The Loening amphibians he was to fly were nothing more than fugitives from the junk pile. He refused to fly them. Fortunately, other temporary flying jobs came his way until he was hired by the L.E. Gale Company, a firm marketing American planes in the Orient.

As a field representative, his work took him to every province of China as well as to Japan and the Philippines. He became a close friend to T.V. Soong, who appointed him an adviser to the Chinese Air Force.

In the following year, his letters home revealed more and more a nature that was not to be deterred. The empathy for his fellow men and the code of fair dealing that had characterized him since boyhood now played a significant role. Only one in 50 Americans, he wrote, cared to understand the Chinese. The *American advisers* preceding him had lied shamefully and misinformed the Chinese to their own advantage.

Short also felt a deep sense of injustice over the Mukden incident in Manchuria, a small-scale Pearl Harbor attack in reverse. The Japanese Army leaders stationed at Kwantung belonged to a federation of officers that secretly plotted for an extension of Japanese power. Japanese merchants over the years had invested in the development of Manchuria. Their army clique, eyeing the rich agriculture, timber and mineral resources of the area, concluded Japanese expansion should not only begin there, but begin immediately.

They staged a fake Chinese bombing raid that knocked out railroad bridges near Mukden. The railroad was a Japanese investment. After vehemently denouncing innocent China to the world, they used the incident as a pretext to take over Manchuria.



With prophetic insight, Short wrote home: "Mother, you cannot realize the brutality and the uselessness of it all and what the United States will have to contend with sometime in the years to come. Japan has no bases of supplies and if the world powers allow her to keep Manchuria it won't take 10 years to prepare

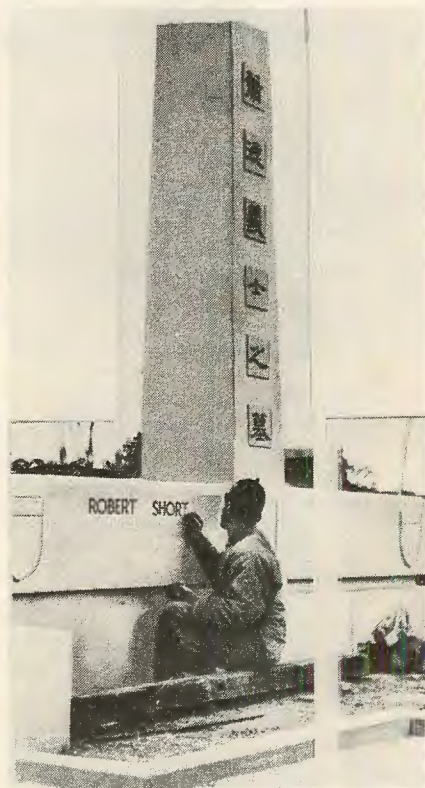
Distinction of shooting down Japan's first American adversary in aerial combat is credited to Lt. Nojitugu Ikuta, pictured on left. Nakajima 3-type fighter in background. Photo: Goro Suzuki

AMERICAN HISTORIAN

Martin Cole is a retired historian/curator for the state of California. His SOF article on the life of Robert McCawley Short is adapted from a longer version which appeared in his book, *Their Eyes On The Skies*, published by Aviation Book Company, Glendale, Calif.

Cole declares, "My story is largely based on an unpublished manuscript written by the mother of Robert Short. The battle scene comes from eyewitness accounts told to Short's brother when he visited China, contemporary newspaper accounts and from the Japanese version, which was related to me by editor and author Goro Suzuki of Tokyo, Japan, and which can be found in his book, *New Frontiers In A Bold Sky* (the literal translation of the Japanese title)."

Cole is presently at work on his sixth book. He has had some 50 articles published in national magazines. After his retirement, he spent four years as associate editor and three years as editor of the *Journal*, published by the American Aviation Historical Society. He lives in Whittier, Calif.



With the inscription: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," memorial to Robert Short at Hungjao Airport, Shanghai, China, as it appeared in 1932. Today, American visitors, who ask to see it, are unable to learn whether either grave or monument still exists. Photo: Ed Short



Grief-stricken Mrs. Elizabeth Short and Edmond commit son and brother to immortality, Shanghai, China, 1932. Photo: Ed Short

for a world conquest with the United States as the prize.”

As the shooting war heated up and the Japanese Army made substantial gains in Manchuria, the Japanese Imperial Navy, jealous of the Army's success, attacked Shanghai. When the war closed in around the international settlement, fear mounted that trigger-happy Japanese might overrun the area.

“Just now it is nine p.m.,” Short wrote in a letter home, “and the big Hong Kong Bank building clock is striking, and sitting in my office, I can hear the bup-bup-bup of machine-gun fire. It isn't steady. Just occasional.”

From his vantage point, Short saw the indiscriminate bombing of Shanghai, and he saw women and children killed. He felt utter helplessness at his inability to do anything. These awful sights and his frustration contributed to a fast-approaching climax.

The triggering event was the arrival of a Boeing fighter. Through Short's sales work, he had succeeded in selling an experimental fighter plane to the Chinese government. At the Boeing plant back in Seattle, this particular plane had outlived its usefulness, but X-66W, c/n 1260, was the proven prototype for the

U.S. Army P-12E and Navy F4B-3 series. In appearance it was a single-seat biplane with metal monocoque fuselage, powered with a 450-hp Pratt & Whitney engine. Its top speed was around 200 miles per hour. The outstanding P-12s developed from this particular test plane marked an era in pursuit development.

In contrast to such a superior fighter, the Air Force of the Chinese Central Government was a conglomeration of obsolete American and European planes. Russian advisers had organized the Air Force in 1927; thus the mainstay of its planes were the Soviet-built De Havilland 9As of 1918 design. By American standards, not only were the Chinese planes inferior, but its pilots were totally lacking in flying proficiency. Probably the only Chinese pilot capable of flying the Boeing was Col. T.S. Shen, who had trained at Kelly.

At the badly bombed Hungjao Air-drome outside Shanghai, the P-12 was uncrated and assembled. At dawn one morning, Short made a test flight. After taxiing to the runway, he checked the instruments and controls. When satisfied, he advanced the throttle. Almost as soon as the fighter got rolling, it came off the ground in a jackrabbit hop. The P-12, he discovered, was a “hot” airplane.

After Short's test flight, the Chinese insignia of a 12-point white star on a light blue circle was painted on the olive-drab fuselage. The Boeing now had to be

delivered to the Chinese Air Force, believed to be at Nanking. Because a three-hour flight there could be interrupted by roving Japanese patrols, machine-gun belts were threaded into the twin Browning .30-calibers.

When all was ready, Short took off.

The date was 19 February 1932. He had 36 hours to live.

The route to Nanking took him over villages Japanese Navy bombers had pounded ruthlessly. Somewhere along the route — possibly shortly after leaving Shanghai, he was spotted by Japanese Lt. Tokoro, leader of a reconnaissance flight. The three planes in Tokoro's command were Mitsubishi, BIM, type 13, two-place, single-engine biplane bombers. Besides the pilot, each machine carried a rear gunner. The BIMs were attached to the carrier *Kaga*, as were all Japanese Navy planes operating in that area.

Tokoro was flying at about 10,000 feet when he saw and recognized a P-12 flying in a westerly direction. The P-12 was flying at the same altitude, and on a course that would bring it within shooting distance of the Japanese. The P-12 was known to Navy Intelligence through the Japanese spy system. What was not known was the plane's performance. At the moment Tokoro assumed the American fighter was being flown by a Chinese. Japanese contempt for Chinese pilot skills, and the fact they were three against one, offered an excellent combat opportunity. Accordingly, they closed in for the kill.

Short met the challenge by pushing the throttle forward, easing back on the stick and standing the P-12 on its tail. Over his shoulder he saw the Japanese feebly trying to climb to meet him. After gaining 1,500 more feet of altitude, he executed a fast wingover and came diving down on his adversaries.

Now it must be recognized Short had had no combat training. Had he gone to Kelly Field, he would have fired machine guns at moving targets, and participated in simulated air battles. As he came diving out of the sky, lining his sights on a forward adversary, he would become his own instructor.

The P-12's excessive speed carried Short past the lead bomber, and he did not know whether his short burst found its target. He pulled up and away from the Japanese, who were turning to meet him. In the next few minutes, as Short's combat maneuvers and shooting improved, Tokoro realized that the enemy was fast gaining the upper hand and shortly he and his men were going to be shot down, one by one — unless Tokoro resorted to the old WWI trick of having each plane fasten itself on the tail of another, making what is called the Lufbery circle. With the rear gunners

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Miami Narc Drops The "Man"

THE DAY I SHOULD HAVE DIED



by David Kowalski

In the summer of 1973, David Kowalski was trying to figure out how to support a family of five while working his way through college. He was also "re-adjusting" from wearing Uncle Sam's green uniform — and expense-paid vacations to such exotic places as Pleiku, Vietnam, where he had been with Company B, 5th Special Forces Group. Kowalski has had police experience as patrolman, narcotics officer, detective and chief of police, and is currently serving as a captain in the Air Force Reserve. Back in '73 on an August evening, Kowalski had a rather terrifying experience — one that he would never forget:

NINE August 1973 was just like any other day, or so I thought. My usual routine was to get out of bed, go to work for eight or ten hours, and then go to school for another four or six hours. On the 9th, however, I wasn't going to school — but I did have a special job planned to make the day worthwhile.

I was a cop assigned to the narcotics division of the Hialeah, Fla., Police Department, and I had a pretty decent-sized "buy" planned for that night. Because of my six years in military intelligence, and my year with Special Forces, I tended to be detailed and thorough with my operations. I relegated everything to a written operations plan and had always tried to recon the terrain thoroughly just before each "buy." Nevertheless, twice in the previous three months I had been involved in cases that hadn't gone exactly as planned, and damned near had my head blown off by a well-meaning deputy sheriff.

Anyway, I got to the office, retrieved my operations plan from the desk drawer, pried my partner away from the coffee pot, selected a nondescript Chevrolet Impala from the motor pool, and headed out to North Miami Beach where I was to meet a major supplier of cocaine and quaaludes that evening.

We cruised up and down sunny south

Florida streets, peered down a hundred alleys, drank coffee in three different diners, and grabbed a meal at the McDonald's on Northeast 179th Street. All this time, my partner Dave was admiring my new Cuban-style, tropical shirt-jacket. He jokingly told me that if I got shot that night, he wanted me to will him my shirt. We laughed and I promised him that if I were shot, he could have it.

By 1400 hours, we had reconned the area to our satisfaction, and returned to headquarters to make final preparations for the night's operation. Dave was going to "listen" to me from the electronic surveillance van, two other narcotics officers would tail me in one car — and two detectives borrowed from Robbery Division would monitor my activities from a second sedan. We had drawn maps and charts of the area, and were familiar with all the one-ways, dead-ends and "good-access" alleys in the neighborhood.

At 2000, we left headquarters, played



a little cat and mouse through Liberty City to practice our surveillance techniques and test the body transmitter, then headed toward North Miami Beach. I was driving a new blue and white Trans Am, packing two snub-nosed S&W Model 19s under my shirt, a small stainless Bauer .25 in an ankle holster and three thousand bucks worth of fancy electronic transmitter taped to my arm pit. I had a grocery bag full of cash, and I was on my way to make a score that I was sure even Serpico would have been proud of.

I arrived at my "snitch's" apartment at 2055 and told her I was ready to make the "score." I had only met Sheila a week before. I arrested her after she sold me five pounds of weed behind a local department store. I lectured her on the evils of selling dope, and told her that the judge could probably be persuaded to make life a little easier for her if she "cooperated" and helped me bust a bigger dealer. She agreed to arrange this

contact with one of Miami's supposedly big-time dope dealers, who, she said, supplied half the high-school market in Miami. I could hardly wait to get my teeth into this scum — and that very anxiety almost cost me my life.

I stepped inside Sheila's apartment — and she told me that plans had changed. Delivery would not be at the apartment; the "man" would meet me at a nearby motel. The first rule of undercover work is that you never, *never*, change plans in midstream — but I was so anxious to bust this defiler of innocent children that I agreed to go to the motel. Hell, what could go wrong? I had half the police force following me, I was wearing enough electronic equipment to shame an AWAC E-3 A, and I was armed to the teeth.

She said the "man" would meet me at *exactly* 2130. Not one minute earlier, and not one minute later. We walked to the parking lot, climbed into the Trans Am, and nosed out onto 184th Street.

We stopped at a 7-11 so she could call the "man" and tell him we were on our way. While she was on the phone I used my body mike to transmit a hurried list of changes and amendments to my following protectors.

Sheila came out of the 7-11 and we pulled out of the parking lot toward 179th Street. Little did I know that pulling out of the parking lot was the last thing my surveillance team saw me do, and the last clear transmission they heard over the body mike was back in the apartment when I first said hello to Sheila. They never heard the details of the change, nor did they know I was driving all over North Miami Beach with the informant in my car.

When I turned east on 179th, they thought they saw me turn west, so they all went that way. When they couldn't find me, they frantically started a criss-cross grid search, but, of course, the longer they searched the further apart we got, and all my cues — "Gee, I didn't know there was a Dodge dealer over here," "Well, I'll be damned, there's the Greyhound station," "Wow, those railroad tracks are rough on my new car" — were wasted; nobody outside my car was hearing them.

At 2125 we arrived at the appointed motel. Sheila told me to wait in the car. She would go in to see if the "man" was ready. The instant she was out of earshot I started babbling instructions to my surveillance team — instructions heard only by me. I had no idea that they were almost five miles away, looking frantically for a blue and white Trans Am, hearing nothing.

At precisely 2130 Sheila leaned out of the door and motioned for me to come in. As I approached, she told me she would wait in the car. I was to go to room 10 and go in without knocking; the "man" was expecting me.

Boy, was he ever!

Upon entering the room, I saw a man standing to my left and slightly to my rear. A second man, standing *in the center* of the room, excused himself and entered the bathroom located to my left front. The door was dragging on the carpet and I was having trouble closing it. I turned my back to the room and forced the door closed. As I turned back, a third man, wearing a woman's stocking over his head as a mask, jumped from behind an open closet door, assumed a crouched shooting position, pointed a shiny steel revolver at me and said: "This is it, motherfucker."

Just at that instant, from the corner of my eye, I saw the man to my left-rear coming down with something in his hand to hit me on the back of the head. I cringed. The blow was very hard and I felt warm all over, seeing everything as though it were in a red light. As I fell, I

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SOF Exclusive Report

AFGHAN TUNNEL INFERNO

SOF recently received this letter, air-mailed from Europe. We reprint it and the information it enclosed as a service to our readers. — The Eds.

SIRS,

As a former Afghan officer now living in Paris until my health enables me to return to Afghanistan to fight against Soviet barbarianism, I must thank you for your interesting news, pictures and support for my people. Afghanistan is not much in the headlines these days but scores still die daily as a direct or indirect result of the communist invasion of my country.

You must have heard of the so-called "accident" in the Salang Tunnel in north-central Afghanistan. This was no accident. I have personal knowledge from the leader of the Afghan resistance of Kohistan, Khwaja Nuruddin, that the lead vehicle in the Soviet convoy was rammed by an Afghan, dressed in Soviet uniform, driving a gasoline truck. On impact the driver died and an impact fuse planted on the tanker went up, sending burning gas down the length of the convoy.

This convoy was carrying supplies of poison gas (and, what is worse, nerve gas) for the Soviet garrison in Kabul. As the tanks of the Soviet vehicles exploded so did the gas cylinders and within 20 minutes over 1,000 Soviet and pro-Soviet soldiers died.

The media have claimed another 300 Afghan civilians died, but this is not true. The Soviets have not allowed any details of this operation to be published.

The serious problem at the moment is food and water. The Soviets have poisoned many *karez* systems (underground water channels connecting wells), burnt crops and forests and killed animals. Now that the snow is falling, it is forcing the Soviets back into their strongpoints and daily their grasp on the country weakens. Low clouds and snowstorms limit their air power and it is further menaced by the ground-to-air missiles that we are finally obtaining.

We feel that both Iran and Pakistan could do more to help. We do not ignore Pakistan's hospitality towards our refu-

ges but we feel that they could allow transport of great quantities of munitions, which are piling up in Karachi, destined for the resistance movement. Also, Iran could let more food and weapons across the border in the region of Herat and Maimanah.

I have been a professional soldier for 30 years and I feel bad being out of the war zone. Here in France, under the hand of an extreme left-wing government, it is not easy to make propaganda for a free Afghanistan although there are very many groups which support us. There are French doctors and nurses working with the mujahideen, although their hospitals are prime targets for napalm and fragmentation bombs.

I am enclosing some photos of Soviet gas kits. These were taken by a French photographer on the spot in Pul a Khumri. (It may be noted that the *first* convoy of Soviet armor that came into Afghanistan included at least 30 Type TMS 65 vehicles which are specifically for gas decontamination.) Much information has been obtained by the resistance about Soviet tactics and arms and we would be happy to share these with anti-communist forces in the U.S.A. and elsewhere.

Thank you to your editors, reporters and readers for the support you are giving the Afghans, We will not forget!

Sincerely,

Paghmani

formerly Royal Afghan Army,
now the Afghan Resistance
Movement

RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE

Paghmani's letter included two photographs and translation of the Russian instructions on the photos as well as the text of a Russian gas manual. Readers interested in obtaining copies of this material may send 50 cents and a business-size self-addressed stamped envelope to SOF, Dept. SChem, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

TUNNEL THEORIES by Bill Guthrie

Government news control and the competitive Afghan resistance rumor-mills nearly ensure that there will be no clear and certain solution to the puzzle of what happened to the military convoy in the Salang Tunnel.

All reports agree that the disaster was triggered by an explosion in the tunnel. That explosion has been attributed to accidental ignition of fuel vapor, a fuel tanker inadvertently colliding with another convoy vehicle, a photoelectrically detonated bomb planted in the tunnel — and Paghmani's mujahid dressed in communist clothing.

Every source concurs that the Russians blocked off the ends of the tunnel, in case there might be a mujahideen ambush. Most reports also agree that everyone or nearly everyone in the tunnel died. Again, however, the cause of death is not certain. Paghmani supports the account that poison gas was the culprit.

Others blame carbon monoxide from idling truck engines, or asphyxiation from burning gasoline or the explosion removing oxygen from the air. Still others affirm that the Russian and Afghan Army troops began fighting as they tried to escape, and they killed each other.

Each version has its strong and weak points. Enough people are claiming to have blown the tunnel that it is unlikely that the truth will ever be known, so the exact means of detonation remains uncertain. However, since all agree there was an explosion — even the Russians and the Afghan government — it is only reasonable to assume there was one.

The sealing of the tunnel is agreed upon, but not certain. Although necessary to any asphyxiation or carbon-monoxide poisoning explanation of a high-percentage kill of the tunnel's occupants, it is likely that the tunnel could not have been closed up at its ends. As of two years ago the

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MERCEDES-BENZES jostled with taxis and army trucks on streets whose open sewers carried effluvia from wealthy suburbs, and cigarette vendors hawked their wares outside banks and carpet stores. The crowds on the street included women in veils and women with Paris fashions slit up to here, men in Pierre Cardin suits and men in rags. Soldiers with machine guns stood guard around monuments and city squares.

A hot afternoon breeze stirred the American flag hanging limply over the walled U.S. embassy. Inside the chancellery, a crew-cut man in a business suit sat in an office beneath a picture of the Marine Corps memorial.

"Sgt. Wright," he said to a uniformed Marine unloading a shotgun, "I need a flag detail out at the American school July third. They called the ambassador to ask for Marines for something they're having out there, and he said okay since it's an American function and the embassy isn't having an official function that day."

"The afternoon of the third?" asked Wright as he put away the shotgun.

"Yeah, about 1400."

Wright looked at a schedule. "Well, five of us are off. Since it'll take at least four people, we'll all go so we won't have any trouble deciding who'll stay. You want me to check the place out?"

"It should be okay," said the crew-cut man. "They said they'd fix everything for us."

The school driveway was filled with police and soldiers to protect it from a recurrence of recent anti-government riots when the Marines arrived for the ceremony. The school itself stood in the middle of a dusty valley overlooked by unfinished high-rises. Hundreds of Americans, Coke® in one hand and a hot dog in the other, milled around, sweating under the desert sun. Five Marines, carrying dress blues, joined them.

"Where are we headed?" Anderson asked the others.

"To the grandstands," replied Wright. "The flags are waiting for us in the locker rooms. We'll change clothes there and do it. We'll wait until the music starts, then march out, go downfield and run 'em up. When you're done, step back and wait for both flags to be up before saluting." He pointed to Moten and Norton. "You guys will have the American flag, which means you'll be on my left. Any questions?"

There weren't.

There were two flags lying folded on a bench in the locker room which smelled of old gym socks. Anderson picked up the American flag and said, "Hey, this thing doesn't have any eyelets . . . but it does have 48 stars."

"What?" said Wright. "Let me see that."

"The other one's the same way," said Anderson. "What are we going to do?"

FLAG FLAP

Sign of the Future

by Joseph R. Svinth

"Well," mused Wright, "I guess we'll have to tie them up with shoelaces through these holes" — he pointed to holes in the flags along the seams — "and hope they stay up long enough for us to get out of here."

He started untying his tennis shoes. "This is the last time I take anybody's word that everything's okay without checking it out myself."

The flags were readied with the shoelaces and the Marines changed into their uniforms, standing on the benches to get into their trousers so as not to spoil the creases. Even inside, the brass shone.

"Are we ready?" asked Wright. Four Marines nodded or muttered assent. "Then let's do it."

They took the flags and waited in the cool shadows cast by the grandstand until the first anthem started. "Forward, march!" said Wright.

The Marines stepped out across the cinder track onto the parched grass of the football field. "Column right, march!" came the command, and they strode the 50 yards to the flagpoles.

Coke®-drinking, camera-clicking Americans clustered around the small hill on which the flagpoles stood. "Squad, halt!" said Wright, and five sets of shiny heels crashed together.

The two pairs of Marines with flags stepped forward to tie the shoelaces to the halyards. Anderson and another corporal ran up their flag, but it jammed halfway and they had to bring it back down; Norton and Moten raised the American flag and stepped back.

The pair on the right struggled with their Gordian knots. A man stepped from the crowd with a pocketknife in his outstretched hand. "You guys want a knife?" he asked.

"Ignore him," muttered Anderson, his lip movements hidden by his chin-strap. Ignored, the man shrugged and stepped back. "The Star-Spangled Banner" finished playing.

The knots came undone and the flag was retied to the other side of the halyard. This time it went up and the pair stepped back.

"Present, ARMS!" snapped Wright, and five hands touched hat frames.

"Order, ARMS!" Five hands dropped to the red stripes along trouser seams, and the crowd applauded. "About, FACE!" The Marines wheeled. "Forward, MARCH!" The crowd still roared.

Wright wondered if the knots had held or if they had slipped to make the flags bunch up on the halyards. He turned around when he reached the embassy van in the parking lot. A gust of wind took the Iranian flag and pulled it free.

"Let's get the fuck out of here," said Wright as the Shah's flag floated away.

The American flag was still flying as they left. ☒

EMBASSY MARINE

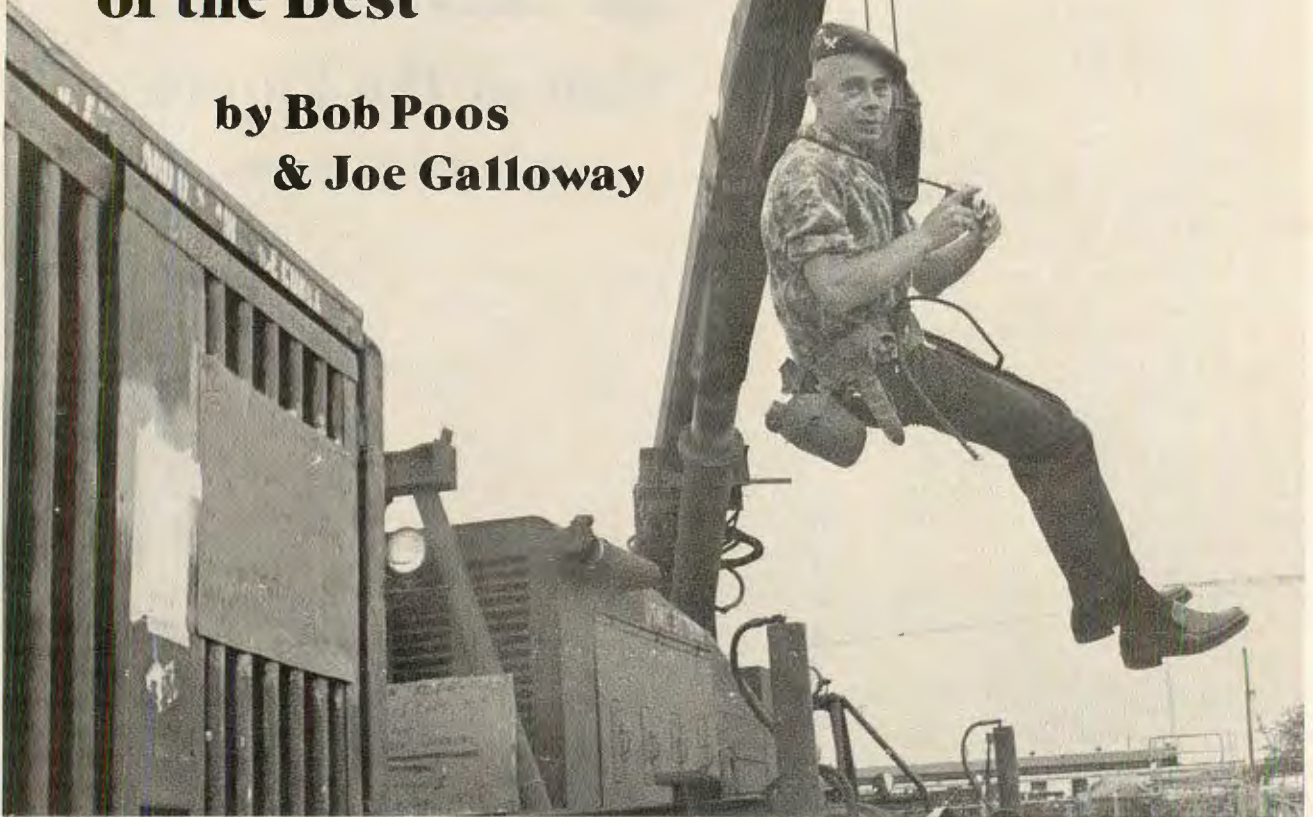
Joseph R. Svinth was a Marine from August 1975 until January 1980. He served 364 days in Tehran, leaving in October 1978, only months before the American Embassy was captured by Iranian "students." At that time the country was already under martial law and Svinth says, "I cried crocodile tears all the way to the airport."

Svinth says of his days as a Marine, "The only medal I ever got was the one for three years of undetected crime and the only time I ever took my piece from its holster except to put it away was the night I read *The Shining* on the midwatch, and I had the shotgun out, too, for that one." Svinth is now studying African history and writing about his experiences in Iran and South Africa. And, in case you hadn't guessed, he was the unnamed corporal in charge of raising the Shah's flag.

CHARLIE BLACK

War Correspondents Remember One of the Best

by Bob Poos
& Joe Galloway



Charlie Black, a reporter for a small Georgia newspaper who became one of the really colorful, perhaps legendary, characters in the Vietnam War, died recently. The following are some recollections by two men who knew him well up where the war was in Vietnam: Bob Poos of SOF, former Associated Press combat correspondent in Vietnam, and Joe Galloway, longtime war and foreign correspondent for UPI (United Press International).

by Bob Poos

CHARLEY Black's luck ran out on 18 October 1982 and not from bullets or some other outside violence as those who knew him expected, but from violence within his own body — a massive heart attack.

And thus the First Cavalry Division, or, rather, the First Air Cav as we knew it in Vietnam, lost the best friend it ever had. For, although Charlie was not himself an Air Cavalryman, he probably spent more time in combat with that unit than anyone else ever associated with it.

Charlie was a war correspondent for

Charlie Black employs small Army crane as photo vantage point while covering the war in Vietnam. Photo courtesy Columbus, Ga., Ledger-Enquirer

the Columbus, Ga., *Ledger-Enquirer*, hometown paper of the Air Cav, which was based at nearby Ft. Benning, Ga., before it left as a unit for Vietnam in 1965. Charlie had covered the Cav back when it had been the old 11th Air Assault Division (Experimental).

Nobody ever knew quite how he did it, but he convinced the publisher of his paper that he was the only person qualified to cover the Cav and that he *must* accompany it to 'Nam. He accomplished this partly by declaring that it would cost the paper almost nothing, since (he projected) he would spend most of his time in the field, and the Army would feed, clothe and otherwise care for him.

It worked out just that way. Charlie's initiative was apparent from the first. He even stowed away on the airplane carrying part of the Cav's advance party.

Charlie sometimes (read frequently) irritated or outraged ranking officers of

the division by his antics, but they couldn't help being fond of him because of his innocent (feigned) audacity (unfeigned). And because he rapidly became not only the Cav's Boswell but its foremost publicist.

Nobody in the old Cav, from Commanding Gen. Harry W.O. Kinnard to Third Brigade Commander Lt. Col. (later Col.) Hal Moore to Spec. 4 Tommy Cole, ever did anything wrong as far as Charlie was concerned.

The strange thing about this is that Charlie was a most unlikely candidate to be an enthusiastic biographer of an Army unit in combat. Unlikely for two reasons: 1) He was too old, 40-something when he got there. 2) He was a former Marine, a Marine's Marine at that, a Raider who made several WWII combat operations, who cheerfully — hell, eagerly — went to Korea when the Marines mobilized their inactive reserves.

Age. Charlie let neither that, nor gargantuan samplings of Ba Mui Ba beer nor a couple of decades of relatively soft living deter him from striding up and
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THE pallid wire-service reporter next to me at the bar of the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand, in Bangkok, whispered through the foam of his Amari beer, "The KGB's here." He rolled his eyes toward the crowded FCC bar behind him.

"You mean TASS?" I named the Soviet "news" agency synonymous with spying. "No," he repeated, "the KGB." His eyes darted around as he spoke. "Him. The big smiling guy with the beer."

The "big smiling guy with the beer" noticed my curiosity immediately. What the hell, I thought; I raised my glass as a toast. "Wise men learn much from their enemies," Aristophanes said, and "Stubbsy," my old high-school football coach, once said, "Don't tie your shoelaces during the kickoff." Both statements seemed oddly appropriate now.

The burly man, in his late 30s or early 40s, genially returned my gesture, but his eyebrows arched with consternation as he sipped and studied the situation. It was unique, even for Bangkok.

Robert K. Brown, editor and publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, sat at a dais with two other panelists in a room crowded with journalists. The panel was going to discuss the issue of "cheque-book journalism."

Brown was all for it. What he didn't like was hypocrisy and incompetence. There's nothing wrong with paying for information, he reasoned, but one need not go about it like a drunken sailor. American television networks and others with megabuck budgets to spend have muddied the water with checkbook journalism on a number of sensitive and important stories: the "money talks, bullshit walks" school of journalism. The consequences are dangerously unpredictable to serious investigations regarding the continued existence of American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia, and the use of chemical and biological weapons by Vietnam or the Soviet Union. Brown was mad.

I assumed that was why the big guy with the beer was present. Word of this Wednesday-night fight had been on the street for weeks.

"SOF is going to be here," I heard an Irish journalist near me say.

I looked over my shoulder as the big guy drained his beer. I told the bartender to buy him another one. Why not, I thought.

The panel discussion flared up. Brown and Alan Dawson, another panel participant and author of the book *55 Days: The Fall of Vietnam*, verbally eliminated some wimp panelist billed as "a former State Department spokesman." No contest. Bored, I looked around the room for some action.

The big guy was buying me a beer.

"Anatoly Korolev, Soviet Embassy," he said, and offered his hand. His grip

SAY GOODBYE, COMRADE JAWS SOF Breaks Bread With The KGB

by Jim Coyne

Originally, I thought of this as an interesting barroom anecdote, rather than an article. But SOF's Managing Editor Jim Graves said, "Write it," so here it is. When I told some of my friends in Bangkok of our meeting with the KGB, and that I was writing it up for the magazine, they thought that was even funnier. I asked a well-known, well-respected journalist friend of mine if he had ever heard of the Soviet "diplomat" I was about to identify in print as a KGB

agent. "You mean 'Jaws,'" he answered. "Sure, everyone knows what he's up to, but nobody's said so in print. He's very good at what he does, you know; that's why we call him Jaws."

I asked my friend what would happen once the article appeared in print. He said, "Two things. One, Jaws will probably be reassigned; the KGB is humorless, you know. And, two, what happens to you will be another story."

was firm and friendly. "Jim Coyne," I said, "*Soldier of Fortune* Magazine; no doubt you've heard of us."

He laughed. "Of course. I've read your magazine, but it's very difficult to get." We both laughed.

"What brings you to Bangkok?" he asked me.

"Chemical and biological warfare violations by Vietnam and the Soviet Union," I replied with a smile.

"Oh, that," he said, and shrugged. "We're not doing any of that stuff."

His voice contained no trace of an accent. He spoke and understood English perfectly, even the idioms.

"I wouldn't expect you to confide in me if you were," I said.

The panel discussion degenerated into a joint attack by both the panel and the audience on the "former State Department spokesman," who was reduced to incoherence.

Anatoly said, "We should have lunch sometime," then wrote his name, telephone number and address on a cocktail napkin. I hesitated, but gave him my telephone number in return. I noticed his address was only four blocks from SOF's apartment.

"I don't often have the opportunity to meet Russians socially," I said.

"You should," he answered. "It's im-

portant to understand both sides of the issue. Perhaps next week?"

My mind went into neutral.

Brown and I were scheduled to leave for Pakistan, possibly even Afghanistan, the next day. We had told no one. "We're going to Aranyaprathet," I said, quickly naming the Thai-Kampuchean border town 200 kilometers east of Bangkok. "I'll call when I get back."

"Fine," he said, preparing to leave.

"What exactly do you do at the Soviet Embassy, Anatoly?" I asked. I expected some sort of "cultural attache" smoke-screen. "I'm chief of the Political Section," he answered and smiled. He offered his hand again. "Until then."

Chief of the Political Section? I thought, as we shook hands. That makes him at least a colonel. Why did I give this guy my phone number? He wasn't worried about blowing his cover, that was certain.

Bob Brown was happy. The panel discussion was over, and it had been, in his own words, "Another small, humble victory over the forces of darkness and tyranny."

"Who was that?" Brown asked, as Anatoly excused himself and walked away.

"Chief of the Political Section at the Soviet Embassy," I said, dryly.

"No shit? KGB!" Brown beamed. "What did he want?"

"He wants to have lunch next week." I said. Brown looked at me as if I were Kim Philby, the British intelligence agent who defected to the Soviet Union in the '60s.

"Fuck a bunch of Russians." Brown replied, and walked off to the bar.

I thought that was the last of it.

Brown and I boarded a JAL flight from Bangkok to Pakistan the next morning, and were in Karachi by noon. Crows circled like predatory hawks above the port of Pakistan's southernmost city, wheeling and cawing endlessly above the noise and dust. In one week we would be far north, in action inside Afghanistan. The memory of Anatoly in Bangkok faded, replaced by clearer, more immediate dangers (see "SOF Inside Afghanistan," SOF, Nov. '82).

Weeks later, exhausted after two sharp skirmishes inside Afghanistan, and days in the sun along Pakistan's rugged Northwest Frontier Province, Brown and I returned to Bangkok.

We headed straight for the Grand Prix, a favorite watering hole in Bangkok's notorious Patpong District. Any number of itinerant journalists may be found there on a given night hard at work on perverse, often strange subjects. The Grand Prix serves the purpose of a foreign correspondents club in Bangkok far better than the official one. "If they're not in here," one old timer told me, mesmerized by the music and the dancers, "they're dead."

"Don't come here," a dancer flirted, "unless you want to have fun."

Rick Menard, the American owner of the Grand Prix for more than 16 years, said to me, "Anatoly's been asking about you." I choked on my drink.

I had not been in-country 48 hours.

"He comes in here?" I asked, surprised. "What did he want?"

"I don't know," said Menard. "What have you been up to?"

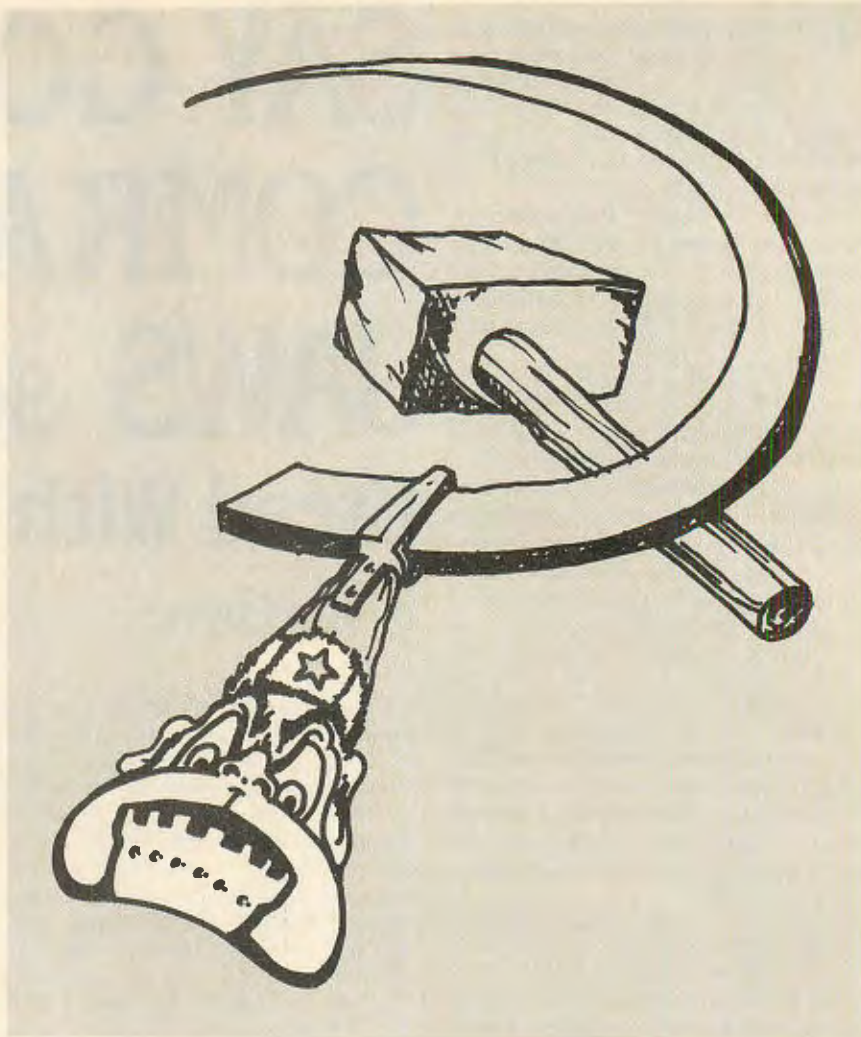
"Same old thing," I said, and drained my beer. "Been in Afghanistan, saw some Russians."

"Oh," he said, and changed channels on the television set. "Benny Hill" flickered on.

"Bob," I said, "the KGB guy's been asking for me."

Brown spat Skoal into a bar glass. "Fuck 'im. Tell 'im that we were in Afghanistan."

Robert Moberg seemed to stoop low as he ambled through the door into the crowded bar. "Mo" flew anything the U.S. government would give him for more than nine years, based out of the American Embassy in Bangkok. Before that he flew for the U.S. Army for many years in Vietnam. He wore a U.S. Special Forces Decade lapel pin on his western-cut jacket. He sort of looked like "McCloud," only nastier. He spoke



with the low whisky draw known only to southerners and army aviators. "I am," he often said humbly, "a legend among my peers."

Moberg commanded the 281st Aviation Company (AML/AHC) in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967. Twenty-five helicopters known only to me as radio call signs: "Intruders" for the slicks, and "Wolf-pack" for the gunship platoon. They were always in the shit. I hadn't even known that there was a name for Delta Project then.

I first heard of Moberg in 1966, when the gunship I was gunner on was dispatched south along with one other ship to assist the 5th Special Forces in Nha Trang. Two "Shark" gunships from the 174th Aviation Company (AML/AHC). Temporary duty (TDY) in Nha Trang: Nothing could be finer.

We flew some of the hairiest missions of the war during the day, and were often parked in Nha Trang by nightfall. Nha Trang was most beautiful from the air at dawn, when it sparkled in the rising sun, a jewel set in the crescent bay of the blue South China Sea.

"Jackie," a local lady with whom I was deeply, and profoundly in lust, was also the most beautiful girl in Nha Trang, maybe even Vietnam. *Playboy* eventually photographed her for one of

their "Girls of Vietnam" stories.

One night Jackie told me she was "dating the commanding general of the airbase." I couldn't believe it. Jackie was the best looking tail in the entire country. I never had it so good — and I was only a Sp/4.

I never had the chance to find out more; I TDYed to "Gang Bang Fuk" somewhere in the central highlands with the 174th. The war got worse; Jackie and I lost touch. I left for good in December 1967.

Fifteen years later, Moberg and I shared a beer while he waited for a flight to Bangkok. I told him Jackie's story and mentioned her real Vietnamese name as we sat in the quiet air terminal at Chiang Mai. "You son of a bitch," he said. "It was you! I told her I was a goddamn general!"

"Mo" works for United Oilfield Rentals/United Oil and Gas Services in Singapore now. Thousands of drilling platforms dot the surface of the Gulf of Siam. Times are good for the off-shore oil business.

He knew the players as well as anyone in Southeast Asia, I reasoned.

"Mo," I said now, over the bar noise at the Grand Prix, "the KGB wants to see me."

"Fuck the KGB," he said. He raised

his glass. "Here's to Jackie."

We closed the bar. Outside the evening dissolved into the silver-misted dawn of Bangkok.

The telephone rang and I blinked awake in the bright morning light. "Hello?" I said groggily.

"Jim, this is Anatoly, remember? I've been trying to reach you. Where have you been?"

I was wide awake with a jagged pain between my temples. "Oh, well, actually, Anatoly, I've been in Afghanistan."

There was a brief pause on the other end of the phone.

"I thought you said you were going to Aranyaprathet?"

"Something came up," I said. "Apparently the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan a few years ago. Maybe you remember reading something about it in the papers?"

I could hear him laugh on the other end of the phone.

"How about lunch at one o'clock, the Narai Coffeeshop, Sukhumvit Road, Soi 56?"

"Sure," I said, as I massaged my eyes. "Why not?"

"Good," he said. "One o'clock." He hung up.

"Browngetup!" I yelled. "The KGB wants to meet us!" I heard fumbling movement in the other room.

"The KGB's awake!" I yelled. "We're burning daylight!"

Brown's door opened a crack. "What are you talking about?" he growled. "It's not even eight o'clock!"

"Anatoly just called," I said. "Guess who's coming to lunch?"

"Who's Anatoly?" Brown asked.

"The KGB guy," I replied.

"Fuck 'em, I'm not talking to any Russians." He slammed the door.

"I'm not going alone," I said. "It's just not done. Besides, I told him we were in Afghanistan." Brown's door swung open. "Let's go meet him and get it over with, or he'll just keep calling. Let's see what he's up to," I reasoned.

"O.K." Brown asserted, "but I'm not shaking his hand."

After breakfast, we discussed our strategy. "I don't want to go," Brown stated. "Why don't you go alone?"

"I want a witness," I said.

"Even if you told him everything, he'd never believe you," Brown joked. We decided to walk to the Narai Coffeeshop, a decaying tourist-rate hotel and guesthouse nearby.

At lunch hour the place was deserted. Inside, it was as cold and quiet as a morgue, chilled by some mammoth, hidden air-conditioner. None of the waitresses spoke English.

Brown sat down next to me in a rear booth. "I'm not sitting next to him," he said. We sat together in the rear booth, facing the door. I wasn't sure I could remember what Anatoly looked like. I

ordered two Bloody Marys.

At precisely 1330, Anatoly walked through the door alone. He hesitated while his eyes adjusted to the dark interior of the coffeeshop. In a few moments he spotted me and walked toward our booth; Brown and I stood. Anatoly and I shook hands wordlessly; there was a measure of uncertainty in his manner. I believe he thought I would be alone.

"This is Robert Brown, editor and publisher of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*," I said. "Bob, this is Anatoly Korolev from the Soviet Embassy." Anatoly extended his hand, and after a moment's hesitation Brown shook it. A minor reduction in tension followed. We all sat down.

We settled in for our tete-a-tete. The game was about to become interesting.

The awkward pause was interrupted by the arrival of our drinks.

"So," Anatoly began, "I understand you've been in Afghanistan?"

"Yeah," I said. "We just got back."

"Well," he laughed, "where were you? What did you see?"

"We were in the countryside with the guerrillas," I replied. "We watched a T-62 get hit. A couple of mortar attacks. A couple of doomed outposts of the Kremlin."

He shrugged. "What could we do? We were invited there to help the government put down an insurrection."

We all laughed; it was too absurd. I imitated a pistol with my thumb and index finger, "I can 'invite' anyone this way," I said.

"Afghanistan is not my area of specialty," he said, and frowned.

"How long have you been in Bangkok, Anatoly?" Brown asked in an attempt at civility.

"Oh, for a few years now," he said. "Before that in other areas of Asia." He smiled.

"It must be difficult to go back to Moscow after Bangkok," I said, unable to imagine the contrasts.

"Not at all," he laughed. "I just get on an airplane. You should come to the Soviet Union," he joked, "see for yourself."

"I don't think I would be welcome there," I said. "I doubt if I would be free to wander around."

"Well," he answered, "every country has its restrictions."

I let it drop. That's not what we were

there to discuss. I was not planning a tour of the Soviet Union.

"Why did you want to meet with us, Anatoly?" Brown cut straight to the heart of the matter.

"Well, I was . . . curious. I wanted to see what *Soldier of Fortune* was really like — I'm here for the same reasons you're here," he said. "You know."

He relaxed and leaned back confidently into the booth and ordered a beer. I noticed a small, wiry Thai man with sunglasses sit down in the booth behind Anatoly, facing us.

It was Anatoly's treat: We ordered lunch on the Soviet Union. Brown ordered white wine on ice, and the most expensive seafood entry. I did the same. We settled in for our tete-a-tete with the KGB. The game was about to become interesting.

"What are you going to do when someone, somewhere, holds up one of your chemical and biological rockets, and says, 'Here it is?'" I asked. "What about the flagrant CBW attacks by the Vietnamese in Laos and Kampuchea, assisted by the Soviet Union?"

He didn't even register a hit. I could see he was used to fielding the CBW issue. "Oh, Jim, really," he said. "We could *never* do anything like that. The consequences would be too, how shall I put it, *expensive* for us. We stand to lose too much. This material you have mentioned, it is extremely dangerous. We can not allow it to be given to *anyone*; especially not the Vietnamese. Why should we? No one will produce such a rocket, or evidence, because there is none." His assertion was cordial.

He was good. He spoke with warmth and conviction. His manner was charming and informal, and he lied through his teeth. No *aparatchik* here. This guy could be a cubmaster in the Bronx.

"Well, Anatoly," I said. "It's only a matter of time."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Communism is dead," I said. "Finished."

I went to the core of the matter, where I hoped he was vulnerable. "Marxism is a joke, Anatoly." I said. "Russia itself is a contradiction of the 'workers' paradise.' If Marxism were paradise, workers wouldn't be in the streets of Warsaw. If it were paradise why would anyone want to leave?"

I warmed up, prepared for a time-on-target multi-battery barrage. "Your 'client states,' such as Poland, Cuba, Angola, Nicaragua, Laos and Vietnam, are literally on the edge of bankruptcy. The false economic and ideological principles upon which your nation is based might best serve as models of mismanagement." Anatoly lit a cigarette.

"Furthermore," I continued, "the anachronisms of Marx no longer appeal

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PHOTO INTELLIGENCE

Thai Guerrilla Provides Smoking Camera

by Alexander Bowie

WE got back to base camp at early evening. As the landing lights flashed on, the pilot banked the Huey gunship tight and let her down fast with her nose pointing high in the air — dropping the last few feet too fast and landing hard.

The pilot turned, grinned and shouted through the rotor noise, "Sorry about that. I'm a little rusty these days. Gotta put in some more hours." I grinned back and gestured toward the chopper's actual pilot, a young captain. Our John Wayne landing had been made by an army staff major just down from Bangkok for a few days front-line recon and by his expression he was having a lot of fun.

Two hours previously, guided in by a smoke grenade, we had dropped hard and fast into a rough jungle LZ (landing zone). A wounded trooper hit during a contact with communist guerrillas was quickly thrown through the starboard door. Almost immediately the chopper powered into the sky. A burst of machine-gun fire hit us as we passed close to a limestone ridge. The door gunners opened up with M60s, blasting the communist positions with accurate .30-cal. machine-gun fire.

The wounded trooper, a private of 2nd Battalion, 15th Regiment, 4th Division, Royal Thai Army, lay in shock on the steel floor of the chopper, a field dressing bandaged to his face. He had taken an AK-47 round through it. A 40-minute flight got us back to the military hospital at 4th Army HQ at Nhakon Sro Thammarat where he was rushed off to surgery.

As I clambered out of the chopper, the pilot rushed round, grabbed my arm and pointed through his door and

FAR RIGHT: Self-styled National Liberation Army of Thailand fords shallow jungle river, moving to attack Ban Koksai near Patthalung in peninsular Thailand. Guerrillas carry AKs, M16s and Chinese Type 56 carbines. **RIGHT:** H&K G-3 at the ready, civvy-clad CPT runs through village as hut-burning begins.

AROUND THE WORLD

Alex Bowie, a 32-year-old photo-journalist, was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The son of a British Army signals officer (now retired), Bowie was formerly employed in retail marketing with a large oil company. However, he got bored sitting at a desk. He applied for and won a university scholarship in visual communications.

During his first year, the building in which he studied was blown up by a 200-pound bomb left by an IRA terrorist unit, which had chickened out before reaching their intended target. Sandy Row, a working-class Protestant enclave in west Belfast.

After completing an honors degree in England — again not wishing to sit behind a desk (this time an art director's) — the author began to travel the world, looking for action.

Now a regular contributor to *Time Magazine*, Bowie has covered armed conflict in his native Northern Ireland, the Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Cyprus), the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia), Central and Latin America (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Bolivia) and more recently in Southeast Asia, where he is presently based.





FAR LEFT: Communists know learning is enemy of fear; Royal Thai flag flies over torched schoolhouse in Ban Koksai raid. **LEFT:** Threatening and taunting, revolver-brandishing guerrilla leader tries ineffectually to scare gut-shot farmer into paying communist "taxes."



up to the Huey's roof. There, a little to the right of his seat, was a grouping of three bullet holes, exiting out and up through the forward stabilizing fin.

"That's very good," he shouted excitedly. "That's 10 *baht* [50 cents] a hole, extra combat pay." And he laughed. I was about to ask him if he really meant it, when Maj. Banchron pulled up in his Japanese pickup truck.

After shouting through the noise, he pulled me away from the chopper and suggested we have a quiet drink (tea or Coke®) in his office.

His large office was empty of people at this time of evening, but full of desks, typewriters and in-out trays. Huge campaign maps lined the walls, full of comments in Thai and colored pins marking contacts with communist insurgents and probable communist camps.

We sat down and chatted about my day's trip to the Thai Army's front-line zone of operations against communists in Krabi and Surat Thani Provinces. As a matter of course I asked the major if he had any intelligence photos taken during an actual raid on a communist base. He excused himself for a few minutes before reappearing with a photo album. Its shots showed soldiers of the combined police-military-civilian command force based out of 4th Army headquarters at Nakhon Sri Thammarat. They were fairly pedestrian photos.

I asked, "Haven't you anything more dramatic?"

The major got up again, crossed the room to another desk, took out a key, fitted it into a lock and opened a drawer. He reached inside and removed a brown envelope. "Have a look at these," he said. "Perhaps this is what you call more interesting."

The small color prints were certainly that: They showed communist guerrillas moving through dense jungle, infiltrating a village, shooting a farmer in the stomach, firing the village and fleeing in panic as government forces converged on the area.

As the major told it, the communists

RIGHT: Guerrilla prepares to fire U.S. M79 grenade launcher as communists flee village. FAR RIGHT: Leaders of raid run from Ban Koksai as government forces converge.



were an operational unit of the Communist Party of Thailand (known by the military as the CPTs), which called themselves the National Liberation Army of Thailand. They were holed up in a series of limestone crags which run the length of southern Thailand like a giant spinal column. Every so often the communists would decamp and move through the jungle until they came to a *ban* (village). They would then change into civilian clothes and slowly infiltrate the village.

In the December '81 attack shown in the photos, the communists, armed with an assortment of weapons — M16s, M1s, G-3s, M79s and the Chinese-made AK-47 — approached the village of Ban Koksai in Pattalung Province during the weekly Sunday market. The villagers and local farmers were peacefully trading their produce with their more affluent neighbors from a nearby town.

The communists paraded along the dusty main road of the village, openly displaying their weapons. One produced a bullhorn and called on the villagers to stop trading. The insurgents then gave a political lecture on the corruption of local government, the ultimate fall of the Bangkok regime and their own inevitable rise to power in a new state of equality for all. After a while the villagers got bored and went back to trading. The communists then demanded that they pay them a tax.

"A tax?" asked one farmer incredulously.

"What for?" asked another.

The communist guerrillas replied, "For protection from local bandits. Without us," they said, "your village would be *overrun* by bandits, your crops stolen and your women raped."

The villagers refused to pay. The guerrilla leader then demanded food for his men, and the people refused once more.

To set an example, the communist leader ordered his men to fire the village. One farmer was singled out, and when he refused to give food to the insurgents or pay the protection tax, he was shot in the stomach. The guerrilla

leader then had the wound loosely bandaged with a white handkerchief, a communist red star emblazoned on one corner. He raised his pistol and threatened to come back and kill all members of the man's family, should he be foolish enough to report the shooting to the local police or army unit.

Meanwhile, according to the major — an intelligence specialist charged with civilian-military liaison for the region — one villager slipped away undetected and alerted a unit of 8th Zone Border Patrol Police. The BPP, together with a combined police-military unit from 42nd Command, quickly converged on the scene.

Somehow the communists learned of their approach (perhaps from a sympathizer in the village), and fled after commandeering pickup trucks owned by visiting town traders. Some hours later the government troops engaged the communists.

The major told me that three guerrillas were killed in the fire fight. Trails of blood leading away from the scene indicated that two or more guerrillas sustained serious wounds. Two communists surrendered to the Border Patrol Police. One of them had a camera in his satchel. The unit turned this and the two prisoners over to

"From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs": failing at extortion, communists succeed at theft of farmers' trucks.



military intelligence at 4th Army HQ. Officers processed the film and found these images, a definitive record of the attack at Ban Koksai.

Former 4th Army commander, Lt. Gen. Juan Wannarat (a veteran of Pork Chop Hill in Korea and of Vietnam), started a re-education scheme which is teaching the surviving guerrillas the error of their ways and showing them how to take up honest professions to enhance Thai society. The military command believes this will encourage desertion from the communist ranks.

Asked why he had taken the photos, the former insurgent, a student, answered that he had wanted to surrender to government forces and decided to bring something with him to demonstrate his sincere desire to leave his communist comrades.

He told the officers, "Life in the jungle was too rough and no fun."

Military intelligence at 4th Army HQ allowed me to make copies of the color prints, showing the attack, which they described as a fairly normal type of communist action in the area against an undefended Thai village. ☒

Raiders fearfully scan road behind for signs of government pursuit as they hightail it in "liberated" trucks.



THAILAND'S 20th CENTURY DRAGOONS

Dirt Bikes Speed Up Commando Ops

by Jim Coyne

BELOW: Two members of Thailand's Harn Suk Motorcycle Team, armed with M16A1s, patrol road near Chong Charn mountains. Rider carries RPG-2. Photo: Jim Coyne



**“Fortis cadere,
cedere non potest”**
(a brave man may fall
but he cannot yield).

RIGHT: Beret flash worn by motorcycle units shows colors of Thai flag. Inscription reads “Eliminate the Cause of War.” Photo: Jim Coyne



MAJ. Vinai was tired. I could hear the weariness in his voice as we sat inside the log-and-sandbag bunker serving as his battalion-sized command post (CP). The remorseless summer heat and humidity of southern Thailand seeped through the doorway, then spilled down to the damp and darkened room.

Maj. Vinai had participated in six consecutive combat operations during the previous three months (February-April '82). He had earned the *Ramathepbodi* (the King's "Coin of Courage," equivalent to the U.S. Medal of Honor), by rallying his exhausted volunteer ranger unit for a successful assault on Camp 508, the Communist Party of Thailand's (CPT) strategic toehold in the southern panhandle of the country. He had every right to be tired. He had led his units without losing a man, inflicted great loss on the communist terrorists (CTs) and, in the last phase of the most recent operation, spurred the attack — unarmed.

I had to ask: "Why unarmed?"

He replied softly, shifting his weight in the dim light: "My men were tired and discouraged. We had fought hard uphill for weeks. That particular day we were pinned down, unable to move. The units behind us, on our flanks, were taking heavy casualties. It was raining. Night was coming. We could hear CTs moving ahead of us. We were all scared. I wanted to show my men we must not be afraid. We had to move *up*, not back. So I laid down my rifle, stood and told them to follow me to the top — they did. We won." He said it so simply that it sounded like the rational thing to do: "*Fortis cadere, cedere non potest*" (a brave man may fall but he cannot yield).

As the major's voice trailed off I heard his men kick-starting the 10 175cc Suzuki dirt bikes used as road patrol, escort and quick reaction force. These men and their motorcycles played a decisive role in the battles for control of the Chong Charn Mountains and the capture of Camp 508, CPT HQ. In gratitude, Lt. Gen. Harn, the steel-willed commander of the Fourth

Army Region, named them the Harn Suk Motorcycle Team — Harn's Volunteers.

I hadn't known any of this before coming to Surat Thani and the headquarters of CPM 42 (Civilian, Police, Military). I knew only that the CPT had again been dealt a heavy blow by the Royal Thai Army (RTA). I figured, correctly, that the motorcycles used by the RTA would be in the thick of it.

Jim Morris and I were the first foreign correspondents to visit the recently captured CPT stronghold at Camp 508. The large-scale operations map on the wall of the bunker indicated — in red areas — where remnants of the displaced CTs from Camps 508, 511 and 514 were fleeing north. The "you are here" mark on the map was right in the center. This is SOF's report.

RIGHT: Harn Suk team saddles up for road patrol from base camp in Surat Thani Province. BELOW: Dismounted rider wears captured web gear at former CPT Base Camp 508. He carries U.S. M79 40mm grenade launcher. Photos: Jim Coyne





CENTER LEFT: Maj. Vinai briefs team leader before patrol. LEFT: Rain doesn't stop Thai motorcycle patrol in mountains near captured CPT Camp 508. Photos: Jim Coyne



RIGHT: Harn Suk Motorcycle Team bikes keep CPT on run in southern Thailand. FAR RIGHT: Datsun pickup with mounted Soviet 7.62mm X 54R SGM forms nucleus of auxiliary support for Harn Suk team. Photos: Tom Reisinger



The 10 bright yellow Suzukis sitting in the summer sun outside seemed incongruous with 20 black-fatigued, heavily armed riders. Each bike mounted two men. The driver carried an assault rifle, usually an M16 with more than basic load of ammunition; the rider also carried an assault rifle, but his primary weapon was an RPG-2 with one-in-the-tube and three spare rounds in a special bracket welded to the side of the frame. The team leader's bike was equipped with a rear-mount PRC-25 radio. Ten teams to a company.

Using a lightweight dirt bike as an integral part of a modern army's strategy and tactics is an intuitive, cost-efficient way of solving the prob-

LEFT: Motorcycle team riders carry RPG-2s and M16s. Note scarves for camouflage and dust protection. Photo: Jim Coyne. BELOW: SOF's Tom Reisinger holds RPG-2 as team prepares to move out. Bikes carry spare rockets mounted in special brackets at left-rear. Photo: Kraiput Phanvut



He smiled: "No, we can muffle them if we have to, but when the CTs hear the bikes they tend to panic and make mistakes adjusting." He laughed. "What really makes them nervous is when the engines stop!"

lems of mobility and firepower. In the United States with our "if we can afford it, why not?" attitude, we are all too accustomed to helicopters, armored personnel carriers, tanks and trucks in those roles. In many areas of the world, however, armies have long had to make do without expensive equipment, often with startling success.

For instance, in 1941, the British, trapped in Singapore at the beginning of World War II, were stunned by the ferocious rapidity of the Japanese advance through Malaysia. Demoralized and unprepared, 90,000 British troops soon surrendered to a Japanese force they outnumbered three to one. Gen. Yamashita, the "Tiger of Malaya," used his unorthodox "secret weapon" to full advantage on the twisting trails and winding footpaths of the Malay Peninsula: the bicycle.

The facts of Thailand's motorcycle commandos are: 10 bikes equal 20 men and 20 assault rifles with approximately 500 rounds of ammunition (a total of 10,000 rounds), 10 RPGs with four rounds each (40 rounds); one radio plus the odd M79 or M60. A company, or 100 motorcycles, equals 200 men with assault rifles and 100,000 rounds of ammunition; 100 RPGs with 400 rounds of ammunition; 10 radios, et cetera.

I continued to count the applications for such a unit as Morris and I climbed into a small pickup truck with the major. The bikes roared off in trail formation in front of us. Still looking for flaws, I asked Maj. Vinai if the noise were ever a problem.

He smiled: "No, we can muffle them if we have to, but when the CTs hear the bikes they tend to panic and make mistakes adjusting." He laughed. "What really makes them nervous is when the engines stop!"

"My god," I thought, "that's right! They *dismount!* These are 20th century dragoons: bikeborne infantry!"

I watched the escorts in front and behind. The drivers were alert, scanning each side of the paved road; the riders staggered the firing direction of their RPGs like tank barrels — first one

to the right, second to the left, etc. We streaked along in the middle of the formation as it expanded or contracted according to visibility, twists in the trail and terrain, never more than 100 meters apart.

"Ambush?" I thought, "no way." Maj. Vinai read my mind and beamed.

Clouds reflected in the water lying in the fertile rice fields on either side of the asphalt highway. We flashed through the countryside. It *looked* peaceful. People passed our convoy, going in the other direction, without concern. We sped by motorcycles and cars as we wove briskly through the light rural traffic.

Maj. Vinai's eyes left the road only briefly as he spoke. "Our first task, with this unit, is to patrol the highways and roads. That's why we kept the original yellow paint on the motorcycles; I wanted them to look as normal as possible. Bandits used to ambush busses all along here," he said, waving his arm casually toward the tree lines.

"Our second responsibility is to remain in reserve as a ready reaction force. Tactically, these motorcycles are sometimes better than helicopters. We can even deploy the unit from helicopters if necessary, motorcycles and all. We can adapt a motorcycle for use as a medical-evacuation vehicle by attaching a wheeled litter as a sidecar. The same bike can bring supplies when it returns."

We turned suddenly from the main road onto a steep, bulldozed track climbing upward into the hills.

Maj. Vinai could tell I liked bikes. I was taking notes as fast as I could while bouncing inside the cab of our small pick-up.

"We can *also* be used in an anti-tank capacity; we've found it very effective for border patrol use as well," he said. He turned on the windshield wipers as a light rain began to fall.

The steep grade slashed into the trees. The motorcycles in front had difficulty in the slippery clay. Some slid backwards; brakes locked and mud clung to the spokes. We stopped as the

riders dismounted and walked.

"Some things never change," I said, smiling at the major.

The drivers scrambled their bikes to the top of the road, the rest tried to walk. Two steps up, one step back, all the way to the crest.

On the ridge line the road simply stopped. Underneath the trees a little farther up the hill, troops were dug in a tight perimeter, without wire. As we approached I could see that they were *very* dug in.

"This used to be one of the CPT's forward bases. From here they would launch attacks on the highway down there." Maj. Vinai turned the collar of his black fatigues against the rain and chill wind.

Continued on page 74

Harn Suk cycles patrol Isthmus of Kra, Thailand, keeping communists on the run. After capture of CPT Camp 508, Thai CPM 42 bulldozed road through it. Photo: Kraiput Phanvut





BUGLE CALLS by Bob Poos

During the fight at Ia Drang, B Co. troopers captured an NVA command bugle and turned it into a weapon against its former owners.

Some soldier in the outfit knew the basics of sounding a bugle and had picked up by ear the approximate notes of "advance," "fall back," etc., which he used to confuse the communists — and sometimes he just blasted out old cavalry calls in sheer defiance.

A few months later, A and B Cos. were once again outnumbered, cut

off and surrounded during the battle of An Thi. This time they had no helicopter resupply or medevac because of a driving 48-hour rain.

When night approached at the first day's end, most of the men did not believe they would see another dusk. I can testify to that because I was among them.

Morning came, a sullen dawn, the sun barely discernible through rain and fog. A storm of firing broke out as cavalry troopers greeted the day with their traditional "Mad Minute." But then silence fell. The dead, of course, were the quietest of all, but the wounded, even the dying, did not

groan or make a sound. The few unwounded stared stoically over the lip of a trench that had been taken in a bayonet charge.

All was silent for a few moments...until the ragged, but loud and clear, notes of a bugle rang out throughout the entire area. A cavalryman lying next to me rolled over on one side, grinned and said, "Hey. That's them crazy bastards in Bravo Co. We're going to be OK." In view of the situation, an objective, uninvolved observer might have called it an absurd statement.

But I felt absolutely sure that he was right. ☒

WINNING ONE FOR GARY OWEN

Bloody Ia Drang, Part 2

by Robert T. Oles

PART 1: In late 1965 U.S. forces encountered regular North Vietnamese Army troops for the first time — and the hit-and-run counterinsurgency operation of the early '60s changed dramatically. The Ia Drang Valley, in the western section of Pleiku Province along the Cambodian border, was the site of some of the bloodiest fighting of the Vietnam War. Part I of "Bloody Ia Drang" found the 7th Cavalry at Landing Zone X-ray, surrounded by an aggressive, well-trained and well-armed enemy — and it looked as if the 1st Bn., 7th Cav at Ia Drang might suffer the same fate as its regimental predecessor at the Little Big Horn, some 90 years earlier when it was commanded by George Armstrong Custer.

Photo: U.S. Army

CO. A and B's first attempt to rescue the cut-off 2nd Plt. had been stopped cold by approximately 300 NVA. Tactically, the link-up was unimportant but — as so often happens in battle — the fate of the platoon had become symbolic: The Americans were determined to rescue their comrades and the North Vietnamese to annihilate the sky soldiers at all costs.

American casualties continued to mount, especially among officers, NCOs and radiomen. This first major contact with North Vietnamese regulars had shown the cavalymen that the NVA trooper was a well-trained, aggressive soldier and an excellent shot, particularly with the rugged, efficient AK-47. Most 7th Cavalrymen who were killed or wounded that day had been shot either in the head or the upper torso. The PAVN (People's Army of North Vietnam) definitely aimed for unit leaders first — identified by their shouting and pointing, or carrying or talking on radios. The PAVN also concentrated fire on men wearing insignia of rank, particularly noncommissioned officers who wore stripes on their arms. (Shortly thereafter, Gen. Kinnard issued an order to dye all T-shirts. Gold and silver insignia, badges and stripes were replaced by muted or black-cloth insignia and rank designations.)

At approximately 1600 hours, Col. Moore ordered Cos. A and B to evacuate their casualties. They withdrew under covering fire from close contact with the enemy and prepared for a second coordinated attack, supported by heavy preparatory fire, to recover the beleaguered 2d Plt. Meanwhile, Co. C continued to hold off mass frontal assaults, supported by deadly, accurate artillery and close air support. The battalion S2, Capt. Metsker, was killed during this attack.

Meanwhile, the isolated platoon's situation steadily worsened. Lt. Herrick and his men desperately needed Moore's reinforcements. The North Vietnamese continued to lace the perimeter with low grazing fire, making it difficult for Herrick's men to dig for cover. However, they returned fire, inflicting a heavy toll on the enemy; Sgt. Savage personally knocked off 12 of the enemy during this bloody afternoon.

Lt. Herrick was mortally wounded by automatic-weapon fire. Although dying, the young lieutenant continued to command the bending perimeter. In his last agonizing moments, he turned over command to S/Sgt. Carl L. Palmer, telling Palmer to redistribute ammunition, call in support fire and, if possible, break for it. It seemed impossible they could survive until a rescue unit reached them. Palmer, already wounded, took over, but was killed within minutes.

Immediately, the second squad leader took charge. As he began to move about



Skytrooper moves warily through underbrush as his platoon clears area beyond battalion perimeter at LZ X-Ray on second day of bloody fighting at foot of Chu Pong Mountain near Cambodian border. Photo: H.W.O. Kinnard

HIGH TIME TROOPER by Bob Poos

When the First Battalion, 7th Cavalry, prepared to move out to Camp Holloway after the battle ended, one trooper displayed a certain amount of quiet initiative.

The soldiers mingled with war correspondents who were also seeking to leave the scene in order to file their stories from Pleiku and send their film back to Saigon.

One trooper inquired of Sgt. Maj. Plumlee: "Who are those guys? They're wearin' uniforms but they ain't got no insignia." Plumlee told him who they were and moved out to do other things.

The soldier stood awhile, then laid down his M16, dropped his pack, unhitched his cartridge belt, peeled the Cav's horse blanket patch off his sleeve and stood almost unnoticed among the correspondents.

He managed to get to Qui Nhon where he had a high old time among the bars and B girls until what little money he had ran out. Then he simply turned himself in and was sent back to An Khe.

One of the correspondents, who had noticed what he was doing, later asked what became of him. A source said, "Nothin'. They sent him back to duty and out on the next operation. What the hell. He did his thing in the fight and he was only gone a few days. Besides, what the hell were they going to do to punish him? Send him to Vietnam?"

the men, the perimeter took a devastating crossfire which killed both him and the forward observer for the 81mm mortar. The artillery reconnaissance sergeant was shot in the neck at the same moment.

Sgt. Savage, the third squad leader, now took command. He grabbed the wounded artilleryman's PRC25 radio and began calling in and correcting 105mm howitzer fire from Landing Zone (LZ) Falcon. Within minutes, the perimeter was ringed by white-phosphorous artillery shells, some falling as close as 20 meters. The shells killed many of the enemy who were taking up close-in firing positions, and temporarily delayed an imminent rush at the perimeter. The men of 2d Plt. already knew that Charlie did not quit but just kept coming, and that they were in deep trouble: Of its 27 troopers, eight had been killed and 12 wounded. ("Charlie," short for Victor-Charlie — VC or Viet Cong — was applied by American troops to all communist forces whether they were North Vietnamese [NVA] or Viet Cong [NLF-National Liberation Front] guerrillas. The word for communist in Vietnamese is *Cong-san*.)

After the first unsuccessful rescue attempt, Co. B's two remaining platoons returned to the creek bed where they met Capt. Herren, the company commander. He briefed the two platoon leaders, Lts. Deveny and Deal, explaining that an artillery barrage would precede the second attempt, which was to be an assault by two companies which would then advance from the creek bed.

Capt. Nadal's A Co. would also use

the creek bed as a line of departure. The men removed their packs, which seemed to be getting heavier and heavier as the day wore on. More ammunition came in for the attack.

As he was not sure of the trapped unit's precise location, Nadal decided to guide on Co. B. If he met no heavy resistance, he would switch his company to a wedge formation. Just before jump-off, Nadal explained the 2d Plt.'s situation to his men, who all seemed eager to give the rescue a try.

Heavy artillery and aerial rocket fire preceded the advance. At 1620 hours, Cos. A and B moved out. Almost immediately they ran into trouble. Unknown to them, between the first and second attacks, the enemy, well-camouflaged and making good use of cover and concealment, had moved in closer. Many had dug into spider holes, others into the tops and sides of anthills, giving them elevated fields of fire.

Capt. Nadal was the first man out of the creek bed with the first and second platoons. All immediately came under intense AK-47 fire.

Lt. Marm, however, kept his 2d Plt. moving quickly until enemy machine-gun fire forced it to take cover. Trying to pinpoint the gun's exact location, Marm deliberately exposed himself to draw enemy fire, firing an M72 antitank round at an anthill about 30 meters in front of him. Enemy firing continued. Marm then sprinted across the open ground and hurled fragmentation grenades into the enemy position, killing some of the NVA soldiers and finishing off the rest with a blast from his M16, before being shot in the face. He was evacuated by helicopter.

Marm's bravery earned him the Medal of Honor. He was the first member of the 1st Air Cavalry Division to receive this award in the Vietnam War; 24 more would follow, 16 awarded posthumously. No other division could match the 1st Cav's heroism in Vietnam.

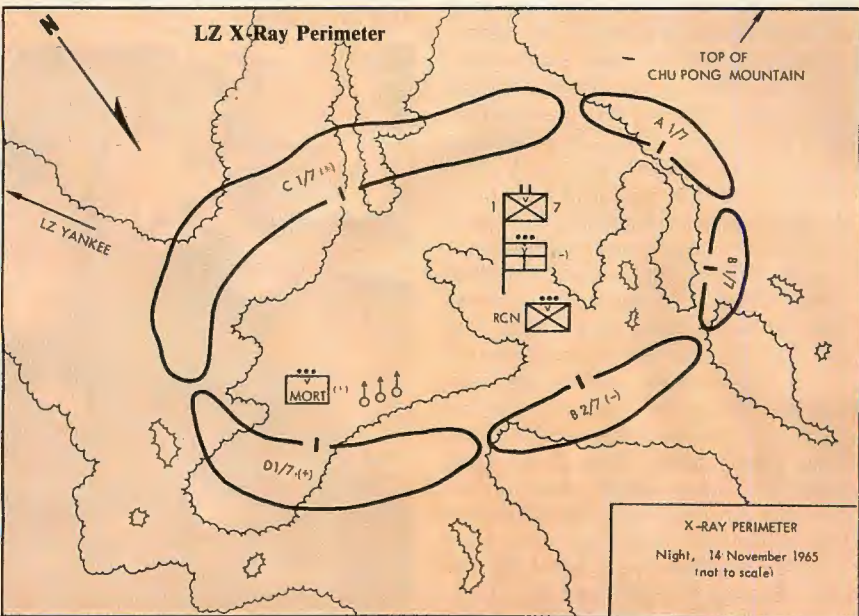
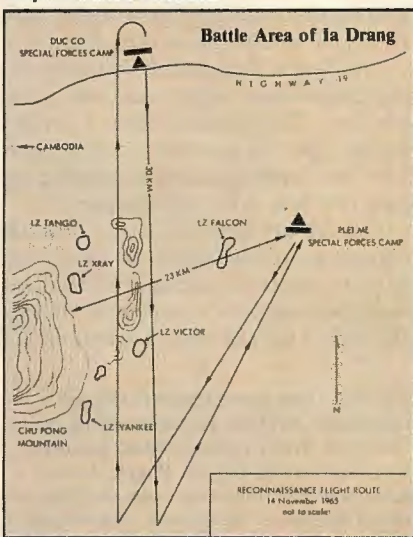
Casualties mounted rapidly. Capt. Nadal's company barely held its own. All the platoon leaders were dead or wounded and the forward artillery observer and Nadal's communications sergeant lay mortally wounded. It was now 1700 hours, with fading light. The platoons had only inched forward 150 meters. Realizing the attack had lost its impetus, Col. Moore decided at 1740 hours to pull back Cos. A and B to the fringe of the LZ and set up a tight defensive perimeter for the night.

The battalion was now engaged in three separate fire fights: one company defended LZ X-Ray, two were attacking and one platoon was surrounded; all were under constant fire and taking many casualties. If the battle continued this way, the battalion was headed for defeat — particularly if the NVA realized how badly it was hurt. Battalion



Largest division patch in U.S. Army was designed by Col. Ben H. Dorcy, commanding officer of 7th Cavalry Regiment, and his wife. Photo: Author's collection

Maps: Author's collection



consolidation and the security of X-Ray concerned Moore most, especially since NVA prisoners had confirmed that three enemy battalions were perched on Chu Pong Mountain. The morning would show him whether to attack or order the isolated platoon to infiltrate back to friendly lines.

The NVA commander counted on the fact that an American commander would not allow one of his units to be wiped out while he had the resources to effect a rescue: Charlie wanted to turn the situation into a meat grinder.

Once again, using white phosphorous artillery and covering smoke, both A and B Cos. managed to break contact with the enemy. The second attempt to reach the isolated 2d Plt. cost almost 50 casualties in little more than an hour.

By 1705 hours, the 2d Plt. and command group of Co. B, 2d Bn., 7th Cavalry began landing on X-Ray. As men on the ground cheered, Capt. Myron Diduryk jumped from the lead helicopter, ran up to Col. Moore and saluted: "Gary Owen, Sir!" — traditional greeting of the men of the 7th Cavalry Regiment. Moore briefed Diduryk quickly, assigned him the leadership of the battalion reserve and told him to prepare to attack in either Co. A, B or C's sector.

Diduryk's 120 air cavalymen came to battle well prepared. Each rifleman had 15 to 20 magazines of M16 ammunition, and every M60 machine-gun crew carried at least four boxes of ball ammunition. The 40mm grenadiers had 30 to 40 rounds for their M79 grenade launchers, and every man in the company carried at least one fragmentation grenade. Diduryk had two 60mm mortars and 48 high-explosive rounds as well.

In the perimeter lineup for the night, 2d Plt., Co. B, was attached to Co. C. Capt. Edwards placed it on the right flank of his perimeter. Co. A took advantage of the dry creek bed. Co. B for-

went the creek-bed's cover; Capt. Herren placed his two depleted platoons just forward of his command post (CP) in the creek bed, along 150 meters of good, defensive ground. He immediately began to register his artillery fire as closely as possible to his defensive line and ordered his men to dig in "deep." Co. D occupied the same sector.

By 1800 hours, all of Co. B, 2d Bn., 7th Cavalry, had arrived at X-Ray. Capt. Diduryk placed his two 81mm mortars with the 1st Bn., freeing the mortars to help man the perimeter.

By 1900 hours, Col. Moore had totally organized his battalion perimeter. The fighting died down considerably, except for sporadic sniper fire, which kept everybody on his toes. As nightfall closed in, the last of the wounded and recoverable dead were airlifted out to LZ Falcon and a resupply of much-needed ammunition, water, medical supplies and rations was flown in. The surgeon and medics were low on dexadrine, morphine and bandages. Water remained a problem in the 100-degree heat and some troopers began to eat C-ration jam for its moisture.

During the evening, Col. Moore visited men along the perimeter, talking to them, making sure all the companies were prepared for the night. Although his troops were fighting for their lives against a tough, determined foe, morale was high; they still believed in the tall, fighting Kentuckian, who had been everywhere during the day, and in their battalion, the best in the regiment. If anyone could lead them out of this cauldron, they knew Moore would.

The cut-off platoon of B Co. was still in radio contact with Moore's CP and anxious about a relief force, but the men understood the battalion's critical situation and they were determined to hang on until help broke through.

That night, the commander of the 66th NVA Regiment moved his 8th Battalion southward from a position north of the Ia Drang and gave it the mission of applying pressure against the eastern sector of X-Ray. Field Front headquarters arranged for the movement of the H-15 Main Force Viet Cong Battalion from an assembly area well south of the Ia Drang. The 32d Regiment had not yet left its assembly area some 12 kilometers away, and the heavy mortar and anti-aircraft units were still en route to X-Ray.

After dark, the enemy made several light probes forward of A and B Cos. and of C Co. near where it tied in with A Co., but American artillery harassing and interdiction fires blunted enemy aggression. The two howitzer batteries from Falcon had a long, busy night. They fired almost 4,000 rounds around the battalion perimeter, the isolated 2d Plt. perimeter and the fingers and draws of Chu Pong Mountain where lights had been seen by Col. Moore's S-3, Capt.

Dillon, who circled X-Ray in the command helicopter.

Three times during the night, Charlie attacked Sgt. Savage's solitary band but was turned back by concentrated M16 fire. Even the wounded fought to maintain the perimeter, and Spec. 5 Charles H. Lose, B Co.'s senior aid man, continually ministered to the wounded and dying, Charlie taking potshots at him all the while. His skill and ingenuity saved many lives that night. When he ran out of bandages, he used the toilet-tissue packets, carried by most of the men, to stanch the bleeding. Lose's calm professionalism comforted the wounded and gave them hope.

The blare of bugles announced the next attack on the surrounded platoon at 0400 hours. (The North Vietnamese seemed to have no radios, their leaders relying on hand signals, shouting and, of course, the bugle. On the mountain, they used signal lights.) After the first bugle blast, Sgt. Savage called down an artillery barrage, followed by a tactical air strike. The Air Force used flares to illuminate the target — a mistake — it also exposed the 2d Plt.'s position; luckily, there were no more casualties.

The North Vietnamese would try one more attack that night; it too was unsuccessful. Throughout those horrible hours, Sgt. Savage and his men could hear and sometimes see the enemy dragging off their dead and wounded.

Col. Moore reported later: "The enemy appeared fanatical in his extreme efforts to recover bodies of his dead and wounded and their equipment. He used the night, the high grass, the anthills and

RIGHT: Gary Owen troopers inspect communist weapons captured during the fierce LZ X-Ray fighting. Most captured weapons were destroyed. **Photo:** Author's collection **BELOW:** Two exhausted troopers of 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, one slightly wounded, move toward waiting helicopters for evacuation to Brigade HQ. **Photo:** H.W.O. Kinnard



TELLING THEIR STORY

With a master's degree in history from Columbia University, Robert T. Oles has been involved in the publishing business since the early '60s. Since 1979, he has worked at the Regimental Press in New York as writer, editor and photo researcher, and recently came up with the idea of producing a series of books covering the complete histories of various military divisions and units.

As Oles worked as editor and researcher on the project, the author assigned to write the history of the 1st Cavalry Division pulled out at the last minute. Oles, who served with the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Cavalry Military Police Detachment, DMZ Po-



other concealment to maximum advantage. We found many of his dead with ropes tied around their ankles.

"I saw two of my dead with similar ropes around theirs." The North Vietnamese habitually stripped American bodies of everything, including dog tags and other ID, making it difficult for graves-registration details to identify American dead.

At brigade headquarters, Col. Brown, following the struggle of the 1st Bn., 7th Cavalry, was pleased at its standing against heavy odds, while taking moderate casualties. Convinced that more troops would be needed in the X-Ray area, he radioed Gen. Kinnard for another battalion. Kinnard told him that the 1st Bn., 5th Cavalry, would be ferried to brigade headquarters the following morning.

Since his troops were somewhat refreshed from the nighttime lull in the fighting, Col. Moore intended to try to reach the isolated platoon a third time. He was positive the enemy would continue the obsessive drive to eliminate the platoon. This time, Moore would throw three rifle companies against the enemy instead of two. Capt. Herren's force, Cos. A and C, would follow, protecting the right and left flanks against Charlie's favorite tactic of encirclement; they would also assist in the field push by B Co., if needed. S-3 Capt. Dillon would remain in command of the rest of the

battalion at the perimeter.

Just after daybreak, Moore ordered all company commanders to send out patrols to the front and rear of their perimeters, looking for snipers that might have infiltrated during the night. As soon as they moved out, enemy fire erupted, shattering the morning quiet. Two recon squads from Capt. Edwards' Co. C took the brunt of the fire. Quickly answering with M16 fire and grenades, the sky soldiers began to pull back to their defensive positions.

Once again Charlie had made good use of the dark, infiltrating closer to the battalion's defensive perimeter and then burrowing, camouflaging and patiently waiting for daylight to hit the Americans with close-in fire. Within minutes, the recon parties took several casualties and some fatalities. Men from other platoons were cut down as they tried to move up to give aid.

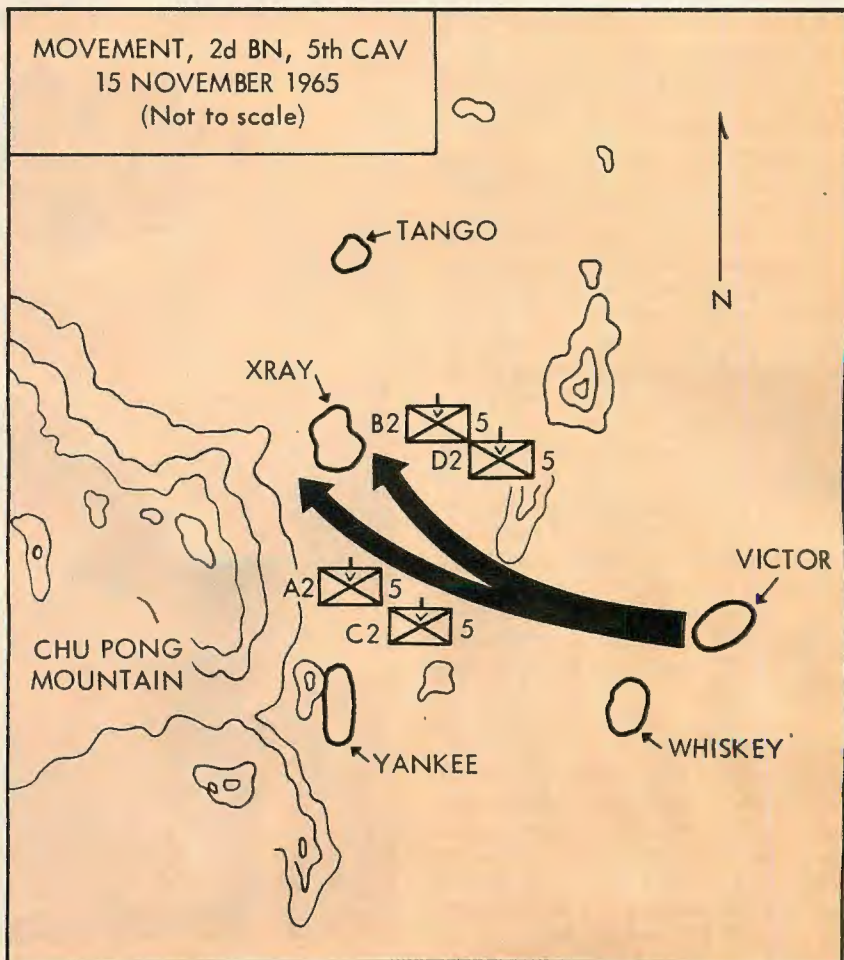
When Capt. Edwards heard the initial firing, he tried to raise the engaged platoons for a situation report. Finally making contact, he learned that most of his 3d Plt. and an attached platoon from Co. B, 2d Bn., had made it back to the perimeter unscathed. But Charlie had achieved the initiative once again.

From his command post, Edwards could see a large group of NVA soldiers about 200 meters to his front, moving straight at him. He immediately called Col. Moore, requesting artillery fire.

lice, and had done extensive research on the division, accepted the task of writing the history himself. The story of the 1st Cav in the Ia Drang Valley will be a chapter in the book, which should be published this fall.

Oles is also in the process of preparing an outline for a military history of the Middle East from 1800 to 1920.

The division history series will include books on the 101st Airborne Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, the 1st Marine Division and others. The series has not yet been released, but our readers who are interested should contact Regimental Press, Dept. SOF, 555 Main St., New York, NY 10044. — John Metzger



Then he and the four others in the group began pumping M16 fire into the enemy. When Charlie kept advancing, a somewhat-shaken Edwards requested support from the battalion reserve. Moore refused; he and Capt. Dillon were convinced that the isolated platoon was the enemy's main objective and they wanted to be prepared for the main push.

In spite of supporting fire by artillery and Air Force fighter bombers, Co. C's situation worsened. Disregarding heavy losses, the enemy infantry reached the foxhole line and hand-to-hand fighting seemed imminent. Enemy fire intensified, making it difficult for the beleaguered Co. C to return it.

As two North Vietnamese soldiers popped up 30 meters in front of the CP, Edwards stood up. He lobbed a grenade at them and fell with a bullet in his back. At 0715, seriously wounded and losing blood, Edwards regained consciousness and again called for reinforcements.

Moore sent a platoon from Co. A to Edwards's aid. An NVA machine gun operating behind an anthill just in front of the foxhole line zeroed in on the CP and began working it over.

Second Lt. John W. Arrington had been sent by battalion to help the wounded Edwards. As he lay prone, receiving Edward's instructions, he was shot in the chest. Second Lt. William W. Franklin, 3d Plt. commander, saw what had happened. He left his position and crawled toward Edwards's group, but was seriously wounded by sniper fire, lying in the open.

About the same time that Edwards's message had reached the battalion CP, the NVA attacked the Co. D sector in force near the mortar emplacements. The battalion was now under heavy attack from two different directions.

The vicious fire fight continued. At approximately 0800 hours, enemy grazing fire crisscrossed X-Ray and rocket and mortar fire exploded in the LZ. One trooper was killed near the anthill and several were wounded. Anyone who tried to reach the Co. C sector immediately drew enemy fire.

Col. Moore alerted the recon platoon being held in reserve. He also radioed Col. Brown at brigade headquarters, described his situation and requested another company. Brown immediately alerted A Co., 2d Bn., to prepare to move out as soon as fire abated at the landing zone. It looked as if the entire Gary Owen Brigade was going to get a shot at Charlie.

The smoke and dust were once more a problem for the 1st Bn. At 0755 hours, Moore ordered all platoons to throw colored smoke grenades to outline the perimeter's periphery for ground artillery, aerial rocket artillery and tactical air support. Extremely high fire support had to be brought in — 50 to 100 meters — due to NVA closing tactics. Several





ABOVE: Troopers of B Co. pepper tree line with M16s during first real confrontation between a major American unit and NVA regulars. Photo: H.W.O. Kinnard. LEFT: Artist's depiction of 11th Air Assault Division during tests at Ft. Benning, Ga. Author's collection

artillery rounds landed within the perimeter and an Air Force F-105 jet splashed a couple of tanks of napalm in the anthill area, burning several men and exploding stockpiled M16 ammunition.

While Sgt. Maj. Plumlee and cavalrymen from the battalion CP struggled to put out the fires, Capt. Dillon sprinted to the LZ's center. Under enemy fire, he laid out a cerise panel to enable strike aircraft to identify the CP.

In spite of the close fire support, the intrepid NVA gunners continued to lash the LZ with everything they had. Their infantry mingled with the American defenders in order to neutralize friendly fire support. The CP continued to take small-arms fire. A medic was killed as he worked on the men during the napalm strike. A radio operator took an AK-47 round in the head. Although his helmet saved his life, he lay unconscious for almost an hour.

By 0800, Charlie jabbed at Co. A's left flank but was sent reeling with heavy losses. Co. D's sector was severely threatened. Col. Moore later declared: "Mortar crewmen fired rifles and fed rounds into their tubes. Suddenly a fusillade destroyed one of the mortars."

The battalion was now under attack from three sides. Moore immediately committed his reserve, the Recon Plt., which moved into the left of the C Co. sector, headed toward D Co. and cleaned out the area. They then joined up with the rest of D Co. Throughout the rest of the attack, that portion of the perimeter remained under control.

Tears filled the weary eyes of these desperately tired men, who greeted their rescuers with hugs and quiet thanks "for not forgetting us."

By 0900 hours, American support fire had inflicted a heavy toll on the North Vietnamese, whose fire slackened considerably. Ten minutes later, Col.

Moore ordered elements of A Co., 2d Bn., 7th Cavalry, commanded by Capt. Joel E. Sugdinis, to occupy Capt. Diduryk's original sector of the perimeter.

By 1000 hours, the enemy's desperate attempt to overwhelm the perimeter had failed and the attacks ceased. The light sniper fire which continued was a piece of cake for the men of the 7th Cavalry, who had taken everything that three of the NVA's best units had to dish out, returning it twice in kind.

Meanwhile, less than three kilometers southeast, additional reinforcements from Col. Tully's 2d Bn., 5th Cavalry, had left LZ Victor that morning and were trudging toward the sound of the guns at X-Ray. The 5th Cavalry marched with a lot of tradition at its back: Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg and Shenandoah in the Civil War; New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, Leyte and Luzon in WWII; and three years in a hell called Korea. This new generation of cavalry — the air cavalry — was ready to help its comrades in the 7th Cavalry and perhaps show Charlie something extra. The battalion would soon have its trial by fire.

The task force moved out at 0800, Cos. A and B abreast, left and right, with Co. C trailing Co. A. Col. Tully loaded his formation on the left because of the threat of the enemy on Chu Pong Mountain. He believed that if the NVA attacked, it would be from that direction. His only orders when he reached X-Ray were to aid and assist Moore. Everything else would be played by ear.

As the two lead platoons of Co. A, 2d Bn., 5th Cavalry, approached X-Ray from the east, they were immediately pinned down by enemy automatic-weapons fire approximately 800 meters from the LZ. The well-concealed North Vietnamese, as was their practice, sheltered in trees and behind anthills. Company Commander Capt. Larry T. Bennett's quick reaction in redeploying his units allowed the Americans to bring overbearing fire on the enemy, and quickly break through the trap, capturing two NVA soldiers armed with AK-47 rifles.

The lead elements reached X-Ray at midday. Cols. Moore and Tully conferred: The two fresh companies, A and C of the 2d Bn., 5th Cavalry, would help relieve the cut-off platoon. Co. B, 1st Bn., 7th Cavalry, would take the lead since Capt. Herren knew the terrain between X-Ray and the isolated platoon. A renewed vigor filled Herren's men; they knew this last push would be successful. Moore would receive Co. B, 2d Bn., 5th Cavalry, into the perimeter defense as well as the incoming battalion's mortar sections, which would support the drive from X-Ray. Col. Tully would accompany the attack force.

At 1315 hours, preceded by artillery and aerial rocket strikes, the rescue force started out for the fourth time, Herren's

company on the right, Co. A, 2d Bn., 5th Cavalry, on the left.

Some 15 minutes later, Col. Moore directed all units to police the battlefield to a depth of 300 meters. "Enemy bodies littered the area," wrote Moore, "some stacked behind anthills; body fragments, weapons, and equipment were scattered about the edge of the perimeter; trails littered with bloodied bandages told of many bodies dragged away."

The cost was also heavy for the 1st Bn., 7th Cavalry: 48 men, the equivalent of an American rifle platoon, were dead. For many, it had been their first battle. The bodies of these brave men lay among the enemy dead, attesting to the furious fighting. One rifleman of C Co. lay, his hands clenched around the throat of a dead NVA soldier. Co. C's 1st Plt. leader lay dead in a foxhole surrounded by five enemy bodies.

The relief column advanced slowly but steadily, harassed by light sniper fire. As it neared Sgt. Savage's platoon, lead troops of Capt. Herren's company found the captured M60 machine gun, smashed by artillery fire. Around it lay the mutilated bodies of its American crew and those of a succession of NVA crews. They also found the body of the American grenadier, his hand still gripping his .45-caliber pistol.

Minutes later, the first men of the relief force reached the isolated platoon. Tears filled the weary eyes of these desperately tired men, who greeted their rescuers with hugs and quiet thanks "for not forgetting us."

Fifth Cavalry medics quickly rushed to the wounded, cleaning and redressing the wounds that Spec. Lose had so expertly attended. Capt. Herren provided details to bring the wounded back to the battalion perimeter. The dead were tenderly lifted onto make-shift litters made from their own ponchos for their last trip with their buddies.

To all who survived, the 2d Plt. swore to a man that they wouldn't have made it without Spec. Lose's first-aid, individual acts of bravery and Sgt. Savage's leadership, determination and uncanny use of artillery fire. After Savage took command the afternoon before, the platoon had no more casualties.

After ringing the 2d Plt. with his three companies, Col. Tully did not believe he had time to reconnoiter the area. The column returned to X-Ray with only one casualty: Capt. Bennett received a severe chest wound from a sniper bullet.

Col. Moore now redeployed his troops. With Col. Tully's consent, he assumed operational control of all troops within the perimeter. Moore now had two battalions under his command. The wounded and dead were medevacuated, and everyone dug in for a hopefully quiet night.

That evening, Col. Brown at Brigade advised Moore that Gen. Kinnard had ordered the 1st Bn., 7th Cav, to be with-





Photo: U.S. Army

drawn on the 16th and sent to Camp Holloway just outside Pleiku for two days of R&R. There was joy at X-Ray that night — at least for a while.

Although NVA units had suffered heavy casualties both from their encounter with the 1st Bn., 7th Cavalry, and from a massive B-52 strike on Chu Pong itself, their commanders had not left the field to the Americans yet. Intermittent sniper fire continued all along the perimeter during the early night hours. A full moon in an unusually cloudless sky lit up X-Ray as the 105mm batteries of the 21st Artillery on Falcon continued their protective shelling around the perimeter and up on Chu Pong.

At approximately 0400 hours, trip flares went off about 300 meters in front of the Co. B, 2d Bn., 7th Cavalry sector. By 0430, the enemy had launched a major assault in company strength. Capt. Diduryk's riflemen met the attack with well-aimed fire from individual weapons, the firepower of four artillery batteries and all available mortar fire. M79 grenadiers and M60 machine-gunners firing tracers chipped in. The noise was incredible: weapons firing, men yelling, bugles blaring. Air Force flares lit the eerie scene as highly disciplined NVA infantry kept coming, inching forward during the darkness between flares. Some got within five meters of the fox-hole line, but were driven back by well-thrown hand grenades.

At 0530, the determined enemy tried again, shifting the attack to the southwest, hitting the 3d Plt. and some left-flank positions of the 2nd Plt. This effort and another attack against the 1st Plt.'s right flank were stopped cold.

Sky-soldier ammo expenditure was incredible. Relays were set up between the ammo storage area at the anthill and heavily engaged units. Periodically during the fire fight, radio operators and troops from the recon platoon of the 1st Bn., 7th Cav, ran under heavy fire to the anthill for supplies of M60 machine-gun ammo, grenades and M16 bullets. When his thump gunners ran critically low of M79 ammo, Diduryk ordered them to restrict their fire to visible targets, especially enemy crew-served weapons — machine guns, recoilless rifles and mortars — and troop concentrations.

Dawn of the 16th showed that the NVA attack had run out of gas. Amazingly, Diduryk's company had only six men slightly wounded; piles of enemy dead in front of the positions reminded some old timers in the battalion of human-wave tactics used by the Chinese in Korea: Pitted against sufficient firepower and good discipline, such tactics always fail, a lesson filed away in the memory banks of the high command of the People's Army of North Vietnam. In the future, mass frontal assaults by the NVA, against the sky soldiers' good defensive positions, would seldom be repeated in the 1st Cavalry's area. The

NVA had learned that the name of the 1st Air Cav's game was mobility and firepower, and although Charlie was as good an infantryman as any in the world, his limited support did not allow him to match up.

Still apprehensive about the enemy mounting another full-scale attack and well aware of Co. C's trouble on the previous morning's sweep, Col. Moore directed all companies to spray the trees, anthills and bushes in front of their positions with concentrated fire to kill any snipers or infiltrators — a practice that the men called "Mad Minute." It had to be unnerving for Charlie to have almost a thousand men stand up, weapons blazing. Seconds after the firing began, an NVA platoon appeared 150 meters in front of Co. A, 2d Bn., 7th Cav, and opened fire on the perimeter. It made an ideal artillery target and was beaten off in 20 minutes. During the "Mad Minute" an NVA soldier dropped from a tree before Capt. Herren's command post; he was dead before he hit the ground. The riddled body of another fell in front of Diduryk's leftmost platoon. It hung upside down, swinging from the branch it was tied to.

Unaccountably, Moore waited almost an hour before having the American units push out from within the perimeter on a coordinated search and sweep out to 500 meters. The lapse between the "Mad Minute" and the sweep allowed the relentless enemy to return to favorable firing positions. After moving about 65 meters, Co. B, 2d Bn., 7th Cav, was hit by a heavy volume of fire. Enemy wounded, still lying unattended in the area, took the NVA firing as a signal and hurled grenades at the oncoming Americans. Capt. Diduryk quickly lost his weapons squad, its leader killed, and nine other men wounded, including the 2d Plt. leader and platoon sergeant. He withdrew his force, under artillery-fire cover, back to the relative safety of the battalion perimeter where he was joined by Col. Moore and Lt. Hastings, the Forward Air Controller.

Within minutes, U.S. Air Force fighter bombers came back, using a deadly mixture of rockets, cannon fire, napalm, cluster-bomb units, white phosphorous and high explosives. The strike ended with a bang: A 500-pound bomb landed only 25 meters from the 1st Plt. positions.

Co. B, 2d Bn., 7th Cav., began another sweep, now using fire and maneuver methods behind a wall of 105mm howitzer fire. It crushed the remaining NVA resistance. Rows of corpses lay in front of the American positions, small, shattered bodies with young, empty faces, looking like those of Saigon cab drivers or peasants in the rice field. The sweep uncovered three missing cavalrymen, all dead. The area was littered with



Prisoner who fought with 304th NVA Regiment at LZ X-Ray squats on ground near 1st Battalion, 7th Cav HQ during battlefield interrogation.
Photo: H.W.O. Kinnard

enemy weapons.

At 0930, the rest of the 2d Bn., 7th Cav., reached X-Ray and an hour later Col. Moore was ordered to move his exhausted men to Camp Holloway. The 2d Bn., 7th Cav., and 2d Bn., 5th Cav. would stay to secure the perimeter.

The defeat was now complete. The North Vietnamese commander, Gen. Man, ordered the remnants of his three regiments to retreat into their old sanctuary, Cambodia. Initial estimates of NVA casualties were light: 600 dead at first count; later intelligence formulas came up with much higher figures which were reported by Joseph Alsop of the *Washington Post*: "Concerning the results of the bloody battle of the Ia Drang Valley... the body count of enemy dead left on the battlefield reached 1,285. Initially, the figure was discounted since the count obviously included a good many laborers as well as enemy soldiers. Subsequently, an NVA general using the pseudonym Bai Quan, in an interview with a Cambodian newspaper, admitted that the Ia Drang fighting had cost 3,000 casualties. Bai Quan's admitted loss figure was almost surely an understatement. It is reliably calculated that the enemy's real loss in the Ia Drang fighting was close to 5,000 men, either killed or wounded." (Despite Alsop's sources, the truth is probably somewhere between 2,500 and 3,000 casualties.)

North Vietnamese losses of materiel and weapons were enormous. Col. Moore arranged with the commanding officer of 2d Bn., 7th Cavalry, to

destroy equipment left behind at X-Ray. It included almost 100 crew-served weapons, 400 grenades and 7,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition. American casualties of the 1st Cavalry Division and attached units were 79 killed, 121 wounded, none missing.

On 16 November, while fighting still raged around X-Ray, Gens. Westmoreland and Vin Loc, ARVN II Corps commander, agreed to commit two or more ARVN airborne battalions to the Pleiku campaign, airlifting them to Duc Co, then moving them south to block the area along the Cambodian border north of Ia Drang to the northwest corner of the Chu Pong massif.

The 52nd Aviation Bn. would provide helicopter support and the 1st Cavalry Division artillery. An ARVN Marine Brigade was to keep the road open from An Khe to Pleiku.

As the weary troopers of the 1st Bn., 7th Cavalry, climbed aboard choppers for Camp Holloway, they left the acrid smoke and stench of LZ X-Ray behind. They realized there would be many hard fights ahead. Charlie was tough, real tough. One hard-bitten NCO remarked, "He never quit, he just kept coming until you blew him away."

Although the Pleiku campaign would continue for another 10 days, there was already celebration at Gen. Westmoreland's HQ. The general's staff was ecstatic. Some people say that it was Westmoreland's finest hour. His brilliant management of the campaign would earn him *Time Magazine's* "Man of the Year" award.

Maj. Gen. Harry W.O. Kinnard's long years of devotion to the airmobile concept were now justified. He and his dedicated men proved that airmobility was the weapon of the future. Upon his return to the United States, the soft-spoken Kinnard would say, "In my opinion, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was by all odds the finest division which we or any other army in the world ever put together for counter-insurgency operations."

The 1st Cavalry would go on to become perhaps the most effective fighting unit in the Vietnam War. Wherever trouble erupted, the division was ready to saddle up within hours, often mounting two or three operations at the same time, hundreds of miles apart — like a fire brigade rushing to put out separate blazes.

After returning to Brigade HQ, Lt. Col. Moore (who would soon be promoted to command of the 7th Cavalry) was questioned by reporters about key factors in the Ia Drang victory. He answered, "It would be difficult to say because we operate as such a tight, disciplined team. But I guess if you had to pick out two things that were instrumental at X-Ray, I would say guts and the M16 won it for us." ☒

BEDTIME FOR BORIS

SOF Reprints Afghan War Episode As Soviets See It

by Red Army Sr. Lt. M. Syrtlanov

This typical example of Russian propaganda was translated by one of our readers. He requested that we give his author payment to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund. We are reprinting this article, which was titled "With Our Friends On the Border," without the permission of Soviet Warrior — so sue us, Ivan. It is interesting to see the junk that the folks back home in Moscow are fed about the reasons the Russians are in Afghanistan fighting the "bandits" known to the rest of the world as the mujahideen or Afghan Freedom Fighters.

Our resident linguist explains that the word Dushmanen is Afghan for enemies. We can't help wondering if the Russian people are really naive enough to believe this Soviet fairy tale supposedly learned "during a friendly meeting with Afghan warriors." — The Eds.

IT'S not easy for them, the defenders of the People's Rule in Afghanistan. Their first fighting experience is born in battle, locked in mortal combat with counter-revolutionaries who are directed from abroad.

At an outpost on the border with Pakistan, Lt. Valayat Khan's company gets up. For days the soldiers of the Afghan People's Army have lived in a small oasis around a spring with drinkable water. Here their combat lesson begins. Surrounded by bare wilderness and a deceptive silence. A mountain range shows blue on the horizon.

The enemies of the revolution, called *Dushmanen* here, have decided not to

attack openly, but to act basely and insidiously. At night the *Dushmanen* poisoned the spring. Only the vigilance of the commander prevented the death of the company. When Valayat Khan formed up the fighting men and told them of the poisoning of the spring, some understood for the first time what kind of heavy burden was laid on his shoulders along with his shoulder boards — the responsibility for the defense of his people from the perfidious enemy.

That day the unit occupied itself with the organization of public services and amenities of a cantonment. They made the tents habitable for the winter, equipped the auxiliary locations, built new ones. And there, from out behind the sand-hills, to the backs of the warriors, came the biting hammer of automatic weapons.

Not for nothing had Lt. Valayat Khan firmly taught military matters to yesterday's workers and peasants — today's defenders of the revolution. Their reaction was lightning-fast. While his command could still be heard, they had already occupied their positions and joined in return fire. Despite the suddenness of the attack and the heavy fire, the company organized a defense.

The battle went on for two hours, but an end still wasn't in sight. The commander understood: To wait longer would be useless; it was necessary to go on the offensive immediately — this is the best way to attain victory.

Having regrouped his forces, Valayat Khan prepared to attack. He assigned a significant role to the only tank he had at his disposal that day. It was commanded by Abdul Samat, who was to take advantage of the terrain, get to the bandits' flank with cannon and machine

gun and hold them with fire for some time until his comrades' attack.

A red flare — the signal to attack — went hissing through the dark blue unfathomable sky. The warriors got up simultaneously and threw themselves forward. But the *Dushmanen* hadn't been poorly trained by their foreign instructors. They intensified aimed fire which threw out the attackers one after another. The soldiers dropped flat.

"Where on earth is Abdul Samat," thought the commander while reloading his weapon.

And as if in answer to his thought, a shot and another resonantly jerked over the desert, overlapping the automatic bursts, as the heavy machine gun struck from the tank. The comrade's support heartened the warriors. Not thinking of the withering fire, the company rushed to attack, crushed the *Dushmanen* and scattered them over the steppe.

For a long time shots popped off in the distant mountain ridges. But the victory was for Valayat Khan's company. It was ascertained later that the band had crossed over from Pakistani territory. The *Dushmanen* came to poison wells, rob the populace, destroy devoted People's Democratic Party activists and the People's revolution. Fearing a strike from the rear, the *Dushmanen* decided to take care of the *outpost* beforehand.

But nothing came of it. Too great was the hatred of the warriors of the DRA (Democratic Revolutionary Army) for the enemies of the April revolution. Their hatred was born of love for their country, their people and of a dream of a bright future for their motherland. It means that they're invincible.

I found this out during a friendly meeting with Afghan warriors. ☒





SHAW SHOOTS UP CHARLOTTE

by Jake Jatras

Photo: Bill Dempsey

RAIN splattered Ivan's face as he lay sprawled — his useless, mangled AK-47 still clutched in his lifeless hand. The shooter holstered his empty .45 auto and bending over the Russian withdrew the man's Tokarev pistol from his flap holster. Taking cover behind a wall, he chambered a round, then aimed the weapon through a window and squeezed off a shot. The six-inch steel plate toppled as the impacting bullet stopped an electronic timer, ending another run on one of the most demanding assault pistol matches ever designed.

The 1982 *Soldier Of Fortune* Three-Gun International Combat Shooting Match offered 120 selected competitors not only a combat pistol match with a creative twist, but new and challenging rifle and shotgun courses as well. Unlike some forms of shooting contests, the SOF Match is changed every year and conducted as a "surprise," the participants learning the course of fire only 24 hours prior to its start.

The Charlotte Rifle and Pistol Club, Charlotte, N.C., hosted this year's all-around combat test, and two-time United States IPSC pistol champ, John Shaw of Memphis, Tenn., scrambled to the top after three days of grueling shooting.

Philosophically, the SOF contest recognizes the rifle as the primary arm of the ground combat troop, but also tests skills in the use of secondary weapons. The rifle match is by itself worth 50 percent of the total score, the shotgun 25 percent and the pistol 25 percent.

Rifle shooting this year began at 300 yards. Bipods and slings were allowed, but each competitor had to begin each string with the bipod folded, or stored in a secure manner, and slings had to be free. The targets were IPSC "Milpark" buff silhouettes and were scored 10-9-8 for major caliber weapons (.308, .30-06, etc.) and 10-8-7 for minor calibers (.223, 7.62x39mm, etc.). The buff humanoid opponents proved a bit elusive against the similar-colored North Carolina berm, and after the 12 timed rounds shooters were grateful to move up to Stage Two at 200 yards.

Stage Two began with participants engaging a bank of three "Milparks" with two rounds each, free-style in 25 seconds. The next string was the same, except the shooter could use any position but prone.

Charlotte Rifle and Pistol Club's range has a series of short rock-filled wood-walls. These baffles prevent rounds from ricocheting off the ground and over the 40-foot-high berm; Stage Three took advantage of

KEEPING IT PRACTICAL by Ken Hackathorn

Practical shooting occasionally is criticized for not using "street" or "issue" type weapons. The game has, after all, spawned a school of expensive competition pistols designed solely to win matches. IPSC course designers are aware of these problems and have attempted to get practical guns back into the race by means of realistic course design.

Any professional knows that in the real world he rarely has a custom "gat" available. The gun is either handed to him, or issued — a stock weapon with no frills or gadgets. When SOF Small Arms Editor Jake Jatras and I sat down to design the 1982 SOF Three-Gun International Match, the complaint that shooters were using \$1,000-plus guns to defeat challengers with stock weapons was taken into consideration. The solution was to design a pistol match that would test the best shooter, not the fanciest gun.

The result was a short tactical assault course that allowed the contestant to have only 20 rounds of ammo in his possession: a reasonable sum considering the spirit of the contest. Unfortunately, to get through the course one needed at least 21 rounds. No panic: At the last barricade lay a mannequin dressed as a Russian soldier, sprawled with his useless AK-47 at his side and wearing an issue TT-33 Tokarev pistol complete with 7.62x25mm Type P ammo — in a genuine Soviet-issue flap holster.

The Tokarev magazine was loaded with eight rounds, chamber empty. All one had to do was draw the pistol, chamber a round and take out a six-inch-square steel stop plate to end the run. Why a Tokarev? The TT-33 Tokarev pistol is one of the best-designed service pistols ever manufactured. While it is no longer standard issue with Soviet forces, the Tokarev is common worldwide wherever communist agents are (or have been) at work. The odds of running across a TT-33 are quite high in every corner of the globe.

The SOF match weapons were a pair of well-used TT-33s (both over 30 years old). The first was a 1941 Tula Arsenal Russian-made pistol and the second a rough Chinese model with a lot of miles on it. Both were checked for reli-



Photo: Jake Jatras

ability and accuracy, and would shoot point of aim at 10 meters.

Ammunition was a slight problem as some 7.63mm Mauser rounds loaded by Midway Arms had chambering problems. I then checked each round for chamber fit, and used only the good ones. We also acquired some 1949 Russian-made ammo and the venerable "Toks" were off and running. And run they certainly did, digesting over 1,200 rounds with only a few ammo-related glitches.

The use of the Tokarevs proved popular, even among the few who complained early on of having to shoot with a strange gun. To those who voiced their concerns, I replied, "Unfair... you bet, baby, but that's the way it is in the real world." Better learn to use what you can get if you want to survive.

I took great pleasure in watching some of the top guns blast divots in the North Carolina turf. While the stop plate was only six meters away, the long five-to six-pound trigger pull had some of the guys terrorized. Once accustomed to the crisp three-pound pull of their pet 1911 Colts, some shooters attempted to help the bullet get out of the barrel.

The simple trick was to watch the front sight and control the trigger, and those who did that usually hit the stop plate on the first shot. The discipline to operate under stress was the key to winning. The same rules apply in life.

The illusion that it takes an expensive gun just to be competitive was dispelled, and whether the shooter was using a custom piece, or a stock Mk. IV .45, the test was of the best man. That is what we have been looking for from the beginning. ✕

these permanent barricades.

Shooters placed their rifles, empty, magazine removed, bolt closed and hammer down, against the wall, and one magazine 12 inches from the weapon. Then each man took the ready position five yards from the gun, now in the "stored" position. On the start signal one had to advance to the rifle, load and engage each target with two rounds, time limit 18 seconds.

The "El Presidente" exercise is well known to IPSC combat pistol shooters and was modified for rifle for Stage Four. From 75 yards aspirants began at port arms. On the horn sound from the electronic timer, one had 18 seconds to shoot two rounds at each silhouette, reload (mandatory) and re-engage the targets.

Taping two magazines together was allowed, and seemed to aid some contestants in making the speed reload, although others had no difficulty in withdrawing spare magazines from standard carriers. Seating the fresh mag created problems for some, particularly those with M1As, and more than one rifleman learned the hard way that a live match was not the time to see if a magazine worked. (SOF Armorer John Miller of Marietta, Ohio, had a full schedule of checking magazines after D-minus-one.)

Firing at a target that is 36 inches high and 18 inches wide with a 10-inch "A" zone center from 35 yards doesn't seem too tough for a championship event, but doing so from "Satterwhite Ready" in two seconds perked up the action. ("Satterwhite Ready" position is when the gun is loaded, safety on, finger out of trigger guard, butt touching the belt and the barrel facing downrange.)

After the snap-shooting Stage Five at 35 yards, competitors could advance to within three yards of the targets to begin searching for holes. Lynn Schoening proved a .223 could be competitive and in fact led the field for a day and a half with a score of 406. However, Schoening's score began to slip as the heavy guns began to turn in their scores.

Bill Rogers, from Jacksonville, Fla., turned in an impressive 458 out of a possible 480 to take the important rifle match, followed by eventual winner John Shaw with 445 and 1982 IPSC U.S. Champ J. Michael Plaxco at 412. SOF defending titleholder Craig Gifford had some gun woes, but still managed a 397.

Although the Rifle Match counted for 50 percent of each contestant's overall performance, one still had to do well on the shotgun and pistol stages to stay in the money. Shotgunners are capable of using many



LEFT: Time Marches On, SOF Match Competitor, reloading on the run, sprints from drivers seat towards next shooting station. Photo: Bill Dempsey.
BELOW RIGHT: Third place winner J. Michael Plaxco receives trophy from sponsor Beretta U.S.A. Corp. Photo: Tim Oest

PRIZE DONORS

Shooters went home with lots of goodies, and we'd like to thank our prize donors. Without them, the match would not have been possible. SOF is proud to be a part of American firearms competition, and proud to be associated with the contributors and sponsors listed below.

1. Soldier of Fortune Magazine	\$13,800
2. Garth Choate, Choate Machine & Tool	3,200
3. Bianchi Gun Leather ...	2,400
4. Heckler & Koch	2,000
5. Springfield Armory	1,500
6. Beretta U.S.A.	1,500
7. O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.	1,200
8. Rogers Holster Co.	1,000
9. Leatherwood Enterprises	800
10. Eagle Enterprises	800
11. Second Chance Body Armor, Inc.	750
12. Star-Lite Training Center	600
13. Detonics .45 Associates	500
14. Ruger	500
15. Al Mar Knives	450
16. Wells Creek Knife & Gun	350
17. Chapman Academy	300
18. IPSC (Athens, Ga.)	200
19. Viet American	200
20. Charter Arms	200
21. Brigade Quartermaster	200
22. Aimpoint	200
23. Quartermaster Sales	175
24. Defense Technology Assoc.	175
25. Gemini Industries	170
26. Bar-Sto Precision	150
27. American Historical Foundation	150
28. Gerber	135
29. Sergeant Violin	100
30. Atlantic Research & Marketing	100
31. Lansky Sharpeners	86
32. Collectors Armory	80
33. U.S. Cavalry Store	70
34. PMC	50
35. Carolina House Pub.	50
36. Wichita Arms	50
37. TBP Enterprises	40
38. Spyderco, Inc.	35
39. Buck Knives	30
40. Long Survival Co.	30
41. Stackpole Books	19
42. Society of Special Elite Forces	15
43. Janus Press	12
TOTAL:	\$34,372



ABOVE: Rifle match sponsor Dave Reese (right) of Springfield Armory presents rifle match winner Bill Rogers with M1A1. Photo: Bill Dempsey



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Top prize donor Garth Choate of Choate Machine & Tool Co. (left) presents overall winner John Shaw with \$5,000 cash and Choate-customized Remington 1100 and Ruger Mini 14. Photo: Bill Dempsey. Heckler & Koch's John Bressem (left) presents second-place overall winner Bill Rogers with silver trophy. SOF Convention Director Bill Brooks (left) presents fourth place winner Craig Gifford with trophy provided by sponsor Bianchi Gunleather. Bill Rogers (left) of Rogers Holster Co. presents pistol-match winner John Shaw with trophy. Photos: Tim Oest



types of projectiles, from cannon slug to dove-downing fine shot, but this year shooters were limited to 12 gauge (any action type) and buckshot only. The targets were full-size steel silhouettes set on stands, that would go down only with solid hits. The course was an "assault" and time only was score.

Each shotgunner began crouched behind a sandbag semicircle, only five rounds in the gun, butt touching the belt and facing four of the ferrous belligerents. On the start whistle from Chief Range Officer Bill Steigerwaldt, shooters quickly dislodged the targets from their perches and proceeded to a wall barricade, complete with a window and barbed wire.

SOF THREE-GUN INTERNATIONAL COMBAT MATCH

The Third Annual Convention saw 120 top shooters from the United States and foreign countries compete for over \$34,000 in prizes 12 through 14 October 1982 at the Charlotte Rifle and Pistol Club Range. Listed here are the top three in each competition — rifle, pistol and shotgun — as well as the top 50 overall shooters.

RIFLE

1st Place: Bill Rogers
2nd Place: John Shaw
3rd Place: Mike Plaxco

PISTOL

1st Place: John Shaw
2nd Place: Mark Lonsdale
3rd Place: Mike Plaxco

SHOTGUN

1st Place: John Shaw
2nd Place: Bill Rogers
3rd Place: Craig Gifford

TOP 50 OVERALL SHOOTERS

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. J. Shaw | 26. E. Self |
| 2. B. Rogers | 27. T. Morgan |
| 3. M. Plaxco | 28. L. Fortune |
| 4. C. Gifford | 29. T. Yost |
| 5. M. Lonsdale | 30. D. Arnold |
| 6. L. Schoening | 31. J. Jacobson |
| 7. P. Miller | 32. B. Dohrman |
| 8. B. Reed | 33. R. Nelson |
| 9. D. Marx | 34. R. Van Sickle |
| 10. D. Watson | 35. D. Crossman |
| 11. R. McGee | 36. R. Morey |
| 12. R. Beckett | 37. L. Hastings |
| 13. M. Todd | 38. C. Rosel |
| 14. S. McCreary | 39. J. Pepper |
| 15. D. Ingmire | 40. D. Robinson |
| 16. J. Clark | 41. J. Narus |
| 17. J. Cirillo | 42. G. Whipple |
| 18. C. Christian | 43. L. Gosnell |
| 19. H. Claflin | 44. D. Churilla |
| 20. P. Walker | 45. B. Wuytack |
| 21. R. Eglolf | 46. M. Jones |
| 22. C. Gennett | 47. R. Burgess |
| 23. T. Zufle | 48. C. Bacon |
| 24. L. Koch | 49. D. Gentry |
| 25. D. Rosen | 50. R. Bowman |



LEFT: Lou Gosnell picks up Russian Tokarev pistol from "Ivan." Most shooters were unfamiliar with the TT-33, but this stage of pistol course added a touch of reality to practical match. Photo: Bill Dempsey. BELOW: Shooting match prize medals were contributed by Don Wortman of Eagle Enterprises, shown here at SOF gun show. Photo: Marty Casey





Shooting through the window, one had to take out three more targets, then advance to a shot-up vehicle and, using it as cover, take out three more steel silhouettes hiding behind a pickup truck at 30 yards. When the last target fell the time stopped. The exercise was repeated. John Satterwhite, world-class champion shotgunner, called the match more of a reloading contest than a shooting match, and maybe it was. The ability to recharge one's weapon on the run for cover is valuable, and when it comes to aggressive run-and-gun, John Shaw is the best. His time for two runs was 39.35 seconds.

Bill Rogers was right behind at 42.24 seconds and Californian Craig Gifford turned in 47.61 seconds. The top six finished under 51 seconds.

More than one competitor was grateful that one could have a drink at the shooters' meeting, and groans were audible when Ken Hackathorn took the podium to explain the 1982 SOF Pistol Match.

"When will I have the opportunity to familiarize myself with a Russian Tokarev pistol?" a seasoned pistol shooter asked co-match designer Hackathorn.

"If you're real fast, maybe 60 seconds after you start the course!" Hackathorn replied. And so it was for many of the shooters accustomed to doing their blasting with finely tuned .45 autos. (See "Keeping It Practical," p. 56.)

Problem: Run a 21-round pistol assault course, while limited to just 20 rounds. Solution: Take the TT-33 from the dummy.

Shooting an unfamiliar weapon in a match as important as the annual SOF International is tough enough, but making one use a *real* Russian pistol is a touch that had a lot of guys shaking their heads.

Shooters in this year's pistol competition began in a vehicle, and had to first engage a couple of bad guys from the truck before heading for the "Cooper Tunnel." The tunnel had knock-off bars, and dislodging one added 10 seconds to one's time. (The match was scored Comstock: point score divided by time.) From the tunnel shooters had to shoot through a culvert at two more cardboard targets, then run to a shooting box and knock off three 10-inch steel plates, then another sprint to a set of three silhouettes and finally to a wall barricade with a window.

If the shooter was doing well to this point, his handgun had one round left to take out another steel plate, before being holstered. He then had to take the Tok from the

Continued on page 82

ABOVE: Chief Range Officer Bill Steigerwaldt officiates during shotgun match as third place overall winner J. Michael Plaxco heads out on course. **BELOW:** Lou Gosnell drops into mud on pistol course. Photos: Bill Dempsey





ABOVE: SOF's Peter Kokalis unloads 30-round magazine from M16A1 utilizing Arm-Tec's Fire Control Gun Stock. Hinged butt-stock design exhibits noticeable lack of muzzle climb as Kokalis fires in full-auto mode. Photo: John Kimball.



RIGHT: M16A1 battle rifle fitted with Arm-Tec's Fire Control Gun Stock. Hinged projections provide positive platform for shooter's cheek, stabilizing sight picture. **CENTER AND BELOW:** Arm-Tec's Fire Control Gun Stock with special adaptor for installation on Heckler & Koch 91.



TOP: John Kimball's invention: Fire Control Gun Stock showing split and hinge, with V-shaped gap in lower portion. Stock is made of magnesium die cast under high pressure, and is actually lighter than Colt stock. **ABOVE:** Fire Control Gun Stock employs rubber sleeve for additional cushioning and to keep out debris. Sleeve shown here is turned inside out showing built-in lug.

RIFLE RECOIL CONTROL

Stock Answer To An Old Problem

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

JOHN Kimball's new fire-control device could turn every infantry soldier into a deadly machine-gunner. Although most recent attempts to control recoil and barrel rise have involved ported muzzle devices in one configuration or another, Kimball, apparently regarding these efforts as a bad case of putting the caisson before the horse, started a company called Arm-Tec and, in 1965, began development of a recoil control system located at the rifle's butt stock. Working first with the M14 rifle in caliber 7.62mm NATO, Kimball shifted emphasis to the M16 after it superseded the M14 rifle.

Kimball calls the device the Fire Control Gun Stock, and refers to it as "power-steering" on an assault rifle. His system contains only seven functioning parts and replaces the issue M16/AR15 butt stock. It is held in place by only one allen screw, so field conversion can be done in a matter of seconds. The entire Fire Control Gun Stock weighs only 9½ ounces, actually one ounce less than the Colt stock. Kimball's butt stock is made of magnesium, die-cast under high pressure.

The Fire Control Gun Stock is split and hinged, with a V-shaped gap in

the lower portion. A strong spring lies between the stock's two segments. The gap is covered by a rubber sleeve with a built-in lug that is positioned within the V-gap itself to provide a second cushioning effect and to prevent debris from entering the mechanism.

Upon firing, the weapon's recoil forces the stock to compress this V-gap. The muzzle then drops one degree (1-1/8 inches), while the butt drops another one degree. The rifle is then returned to the point of aim by pushing outward against the pistol grip. While the results are far more dramatic with caliber 7.62mm NATO battle rifles, the Fire Control Gun Stock permits double the number of aimed shots, in a given time frame, with the semiautomatic Colt AR15.

The Fire Control Gun Stock has been demonstrated to the U.S. Army at Ft. Benning and Ft. Bragg and to the Marine Corps at Quantico. It is presently undergoing field trials in NATO countries such as Great Britain and West Germany. When fired on full-auto, the M16A1, modified with this unit, has achieved a zone of fire approximately two by three feet at 500 yards using the standing offhand position. This is quite extraordinary. During a recent U.S. Air Force demonstration, an M16A1 fitted with the Fire Control Gun Stock and fired offhand dumped an entire 20-round

magazine in one burst into a six-inch circle, 50 yards away!

The Arm-Tec unit has also been installed on the FN MAG GPMG by the British with equally dramatic results. Under normal operating conditions, the FN MAG's bipod will shift to the left during the sustained-fire role. The Fire Control Gun Stock puts downward pressure on the MAG's bipod, locking the weapon to the ground. Lateral dispersion is significantly reduced.

Heckler & Koch has expressed interest in the device and the Swiss have mounted it on their new series of assault rifles made by the Federal Arms Factory in Berne and by SIG. In the Swiss Army trials all shots went into or below the point of impact of the first round during the full-auto sequences. The Swiss are more than interested.

Success with the Fire Control Gun Stock is entirely dependent upon the shooter's employment of the proper technique. The unit must not be precompressed by pulling the rifle into the shoulder in the usual manner. In fact, the weapon must be relieved from the shoulder in anticipation of the next impact. This is accomplished by pushing away on the pistol grip with about 15 to 20 pounds of pressure in full-auto sequences. I

discovered immediately after the first magazine that you do not fight the mechanism if you want it to work properly. It must be allowed to "breathe," so to speak. I fired only several hundred rounds with the Fire Control Gun Stock, yet found that from a standing position, unsupported, I could consistently fire an entire 30-round magazine in one burst and have all shots impact within a three-foot square at a range of 200 yards.

The position of the unit's hinged projections on each side of the stock are a consequence of the M16's charging handle which clears the device by a mere 1/16 of an inch. The projections, covered in use by the rubber sleeve, actually aid in stabilizing the sight picture. Right- or left-handed shooters can rest their cheek against this platform and prevent a changing sight picture.

The Fire Control Gun Stock is priced at \$97.50. An adaptor for the H&K 91/93 series of rifles will be available for about \$25. Further information can be obtained from Arm-Tec, Dept. SOF, 23485 Industrial Park Dr., Farmington, MI 48024. ☒

GUATEMALA

One We Can Win

Text & Photos by Robert J. Caldwell



Guatemalan Army NCO instructs members of Nebaj's civil guard before patrol outside city. Civil guards, despite limited training, assist regular troops through knowledge of local areas and population.



Members of civil guard in Nebaj. Town's para-military company is one of many being formed throughout Guatemala's highlands to provide local security against guerrillas.

THE continuing war in Guatemala remains the most under-reported struggle in Central America. Given the fact that Guatemala is closer to Los Angeles than Los Angeles is to Washington, this lapse by most of the news media is something of a mystery.

SOF readers at least have a right to expect better. (See also "Guatemala's Unfinished War" and "Welcome to Guatemala," SOF, March '83.)

The strategic stakes in Guatemala are considerable. This nation of 7.2 million is the largest in Central America. Its economy was the region's richest even before substantial oil deposits were discovered along Guatemala's border with Mexico. And that proximity to Mexico lends a special urgency to Guatemala's guerrilla war, a Marxist-led insurgency that has flared up intermittently since the 1960s.

If the Cubans and their Soviet patrons have a geo-political blueprint for subverting the Americans (and who can doubt that they do?), they must envision a Marxist tide rolling north from Nicaragua through El Salvador and Honduras to Guatemala, the unquestioned key to southern Mexico.

And Mexico, of course, is the ultimate prize in that strategic triangle encompassing everything between the U.S. border, the Panama Canal and Cuba. Consider the significance of a Castroite regime commanding vast oil reserves and a population of 70 million perched right on the Rio Grande. Whether this nightmare for the United States ever materializes will depend in no small part on what happens in Guatemala. The domino theory was never more valid than it is today in Central America.

Fortunately, Guatemala is proving a tough nut to crack. The Guatemalans are holding their own and more despite a U.S. arms embargo imposed by Congress and the Carter administration during the late 1970s. The overthrow, by military coup, of the heavyhanded Lucas Garcia regime in March of last year prompted the Reagan administration to propose limited military aid for Guatemala. But, as of early January, Congress had not yet agreed and nothing significant was in the pipeline for the Guatemalan armed forces.

The fighting in Guatemala pits an estimated 3,000 armed, full-time guerrillas against government forces totaling about 20,000 regular troops. Last summer, the reformist government of President Jose Efraim Rios Montt began arming civilians and forming them into civil guard detachments to supplement the army in the conflict areas, primarily in the western highlands of El Quiche and Huehuetenango Departments.

Some 40,000 civilians had been enlisted in civil guard units by year's end and about half that number had received arms, including M1 rifles and shotguns. But training for these units is haphazard

and some civil guards carry nothing more lethal than night sticks and wooden rifles.

The Guatemalan Army is generally regarded as the toughest in Central America. The troops are disciplined and reasonably well-equipped. Leadership is usually good, especially at the small-unit level, which is where the war is now being fought.

The army's major maneuver units include 15 infantry battalions, a light armored battalion, one parachute/special forces battalion, an engineer battalion, and 12 batteries of light and medium artillery. A Presidential Guard Brigade provides security in Guatemala City.

The air force has 16 combat aircraft organized as a counterinsurgency squadron of 10 A-37Bs and six PC-7 Turbo-Trainees. The transport squadron includes 10 aging C-47s and nine Israeli-made Aravas. The latter, which can carry 18 fully equipped paratroopers or infantrymen, are particularly well suited for operations from the unimproved airstrips commonly found in rural Guatemala.

The Guatemalan Army — Probably The Toughest In Central America

The most serious equipment deficiency for Guatemala's armed forces is in helicopters and the spare parts needed to keep those in the inventory operational. The air force inventory lists four UH-1H Hueys, three Bell 212s, six Bell 412s, eight 206Bs, six 206L-1s, three Lamas and four French-built Alouette IIIs.

It doesn't take a tactical genius to recognize that the mobility made possible by helicopters is vital for a 20,000-man army attempting to defeat an insurgency in a country that encompasses 42,000 square miles, much of it remote jungles or rugged mountains with little or no access by road.

The guerrillas, members of four decidedly Marxist groups, generally operate in small units and rarely mass in more than company strength. Their weaponry includes an assortment of modern assault rifles, machine guns, an occasional mortar, hand grenades and a few RPGs. The insurgents also manufacture their own mines, including many crude but effective claymores. Booby traps featuring dung-smearing punji sticks are routine hazards for government troops operating in guerrilla areas.

There is outside support for the insurgency. Some guerrilla weapons — RPG-7s and M16s captured by the North Vietnamese in 1975 — obviously come from the Soviet bloc. FALs and

G-3s are readily available on the international black market. The working assumption in Guatemala is that many if not most guerrilla arms are paid for by Cuba and smuggled into the country via Mexico and Belize. Guatemalan security forces believe they have stopped most of the direct arms flow from Nicaragua through Honduras and El Salvador.

Cuba and Nicaragua also provide training and political indoctrination for selected guerrillas and their *commandantes*. Guatemalan officers also believe that both Cuba and Nicaragua are providing advisers and even some small-unit leaders for the guerrillas, although proof is hard to find. POWs are not a staple of this war.

The Guatemalan Army's strategy emphasizes aggressive small-unit operations and, starting a year ago, an extensive rural pacification program. The government calls it "bullets and beans." (See my interview with Guatemala's president on p. 84, SOF, March '83.) The pacification program amounts to providing protection and assistance to the *campesinos* (peasants) and then mobilizing them against the guerrillas. By last summer, the new approach was paying off in the form of vastly reduced guerrilla activity and an impressive expansion of government control in the countryside.

Army casualties during 1982 were less than half those of 1981, the worst year of the war for the government. The number of KIAs and WIAs during 1981 totaled more than 600. During 1982, the figure dropped to fewer than 250.

Significantly, the Guatemalan Army avoids the set-piece search-and-destroy operations employed by U.S. forces in Vietnam and copied by government troops in El Salvador. Instead, the Guatemalans favor long-range patrols combined with small-unit hunter tactics based on careful intelligence. But the basic strategy is still to deny the guerrillas a base among the rural population.

The success of these efforts is measured in the declining numbers of government casualties and an increasing guerrilla reliance on the use of terror against the civilian population. The guerrillas are not defeated yet, but all of the standard indicators suggest strongly that Guatemala is winning its war. ☒

At press time, the U.S. State Department announced the approval of a \$6 million sale of spare military parts to Guatemala, ending a five-year embargo.

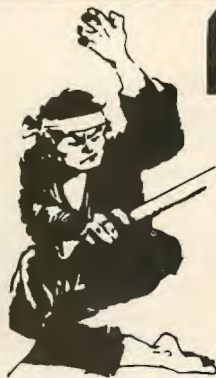
In its announcement, State Department spokesman John Hughes noted that Guatemala had taken significant steps toward improving its human-rights record under President Rios Montt, with decreased violence in cities and countryside.

Most of the parts were for Guatemala's fleet of UH-1H helicopters, regarded as vital to the government's anti-guerrilla campaign. Also included were A-37 aircraft parts, radios, batteries and battery chargers.

—The Eds.

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firing as Short dived on them, they were reasonably protected. For five minutes the air battle continued with neither side gaining an advantage despite the amount of ammunition spent. After making a last futile dart, Short broke off the engagement, and set his course for Nanking.

When he arrived only one bullet hole was found in the plane. He discovered his trip to Nanking had been unnecessary. The squadrons stationed at Nanking had moved to Soochow, where the planes could operate within 50 miles of Shanghai against the Japanese land forces overrunning the countryside. However, because they were hopelessly outclassed by the Japanese Air Force, the Chinese pilots avoided battle.

Either that day or the next, Short backtracked to Soochow. There, at the Hangam Airdrome, he found antiquated planes carefully concealed under camouflage nettings. Quickly the Boeing was wheeled out of sight.

Soochow was a paralyzed city. The Japanese spy system, with swift efficiency, reported train movements and river shipping. Japanese carrier planes operating off a land airstrip took only a few minutes to fly the short distance.

For several days the train to Shanghai had been delayed. It was not a military train but full of civilians trying to escape the coming of Japanese forces. With each day's delay, more civilians arrived, carrying their scanty possessions. Against their better judgment, the train officials decided to make a run for it.

The date of departure was 22 February. In America the holiday spirit of George Washington's birthday prevailed. But in faraway China people at Soochow wondered if the bombers would come.

Japanese spies were indifferent to the fact that the train was overflowing with noncombatants or that its bombing would create a ruthless slaughter. Fifteen minutes after the train's departure, at precisely 1600 hours, three Japanese bombers appeared on the horizon. They were flying at 2,700 feet, slightly above a scattering of cloud covering.

Survivors' details are somewhat confused, but one can picture the scene at Hangam. The results of the probable bombing raid preyed upon Short's conscience. His life of impetuous action for noble causes triggered his decision. He ordered the Boeing out of its hiding.

"*Quai-ti! Quai-ti!* (Faster! Faster!)" he urged the mechanics.

He was in the cockpit, donning helmet

and goggles, when the crank was inserted in the inertial starter. Over his shoulder he could see the bombers closing in.

"Contact!"

He released the starter. The propeller revolved, hesitated — then caught. Without waiting for a warmup, Short released the brake. After a brief run at full power the Boeing lifted off the grassy field. A climbing turn brought Short in line with the bombers.

Not until Short had gained nearly 1,000 feet of altitude was his plane spotted by the Japanese. A Lt. Sakinaga, leading the trio, immediately began swinging in a curve to the left. The change in direction permitted three Japanese fighter planes, following some distance in the rear at an altitude of 4,500 feet, to close the gap between them. The fighter planes were Japan's finest. The Sunshiki Nigo Kansai was copied from the British Gloster Gambit. It was a single-seat biplane with a top speed of 144 miles per hour. The armament was two 7.7mm machine guns. The planes were also attached to the airplane carrier *Kaga*.

Everything that followed points to the fact that Short was totally unaware of the Japanese fighter planes. He ignored the fighters. Furthermore, he entered the battle handicapped by the lack of a protective wingman. All the while he was climbing, the bombers were swinging inward toward the fighter planes.

As Short reached shooting distance, he locked his sights on one adversary. He pressed the electric button on the stick. The two fixed, synchronized .30-caliber Brownings erupted a torrent of steel-jacketed bullets. Bullets pierced the left leg of Lt. Hajime Sasaki, who did double duty as radio operator and rear gunner. The momentum of the full-bore climb carried the P-12 through the flight and on above.

With the advantage of height, Short peeled off in a diving turn. Down he came, sweeping across the line of flight of a bomber flown by Lt. Sakinaga. His bullets raked the machine, killing rear gunner Lt. Sosumu Kotani, the first Japanese to die in aerial combat.

Unknown to Short, the fighter planes had closed the gap and were diving on him. Leading the flight was 27-year-old Nokiji Ikuta, who began firing at 150 meters. The first shots hit the P-12's tail assembly. Parts of it flew back into the slipstream. Ikuta moved the stick slightly and the stream of bullets began stitching the Boeing's length.

Ikuta was still closing, and only fifty meters away when he saw the enemy pilot throw up his hands — a pilot Ikuta believed to be Chinese. He saw two white smoke trails from the stricken plane as it began to fall off. The smoke erupted into red fire as the machine began revolving to the left. Ikuta follow-

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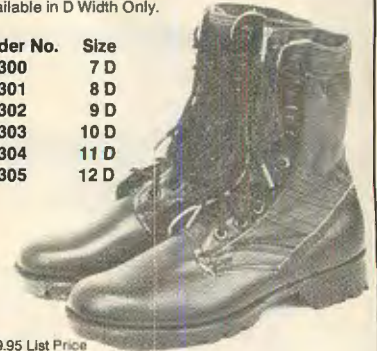


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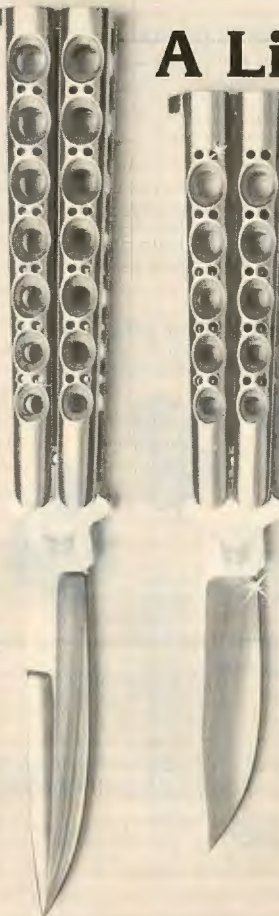
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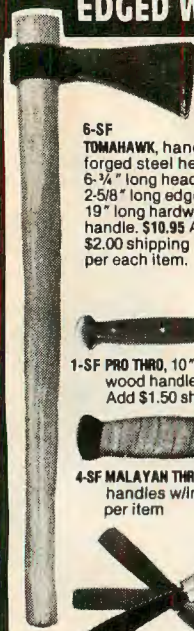
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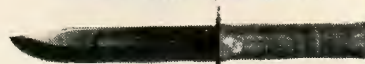
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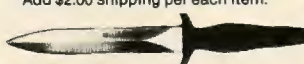
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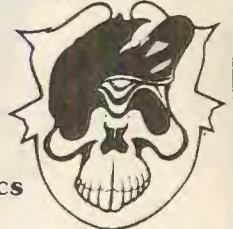
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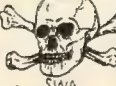
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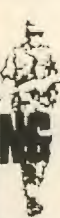
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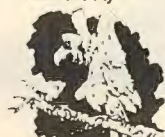
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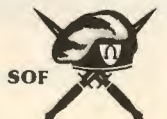
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DAY I SHOULD'VE DIED

Continued from page 27

knew they would kill me when they found out I was a police officer — if they didn't already know.

I decided that it would be stupid to just lie there and get killed without even defending myself, so I reached under my shirt and drew one of my revolvers from my right side. I was looking at the revolver in the man's hand; I could see his finger squeezing the trigger and the cylinder beginning to rotate. I fired two quick shots at him just as my knees hit the floor, and then I fell forward.

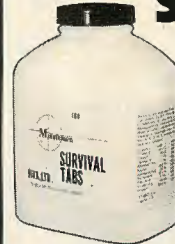
I rolled to my right and saw that the man who had hit me was straddling me, about to come down with another blow with what I later learned was a 12-gauge shotgun barrel. As I lay on my back, I shot him four times at point-blank range. He started to fall on top of me, but I could see that he was still going to hit me with the gun barrel. I don't know how or when it got there but my other revolver was in my left hand. I fired the next two shots with the second gun. I knew that this man wasn't going to hurt me any more because I saw the last shot hit him just below the left eye.

I tried to get to my feet but he had fallen on top of me and I was very dizzy

and weak. I remember thinking: "Oh God, I'm going to die on a dirty linoleum floor in a cheap motel."

I managed to get out from beneath him, and as I turned, I could see the masked man picking his revolver up from the floor. I hollered, "Drop it!" He started to point it at me. I fired once more and hit him right in the center of the chest. He dropped his gun and fell to his knees.

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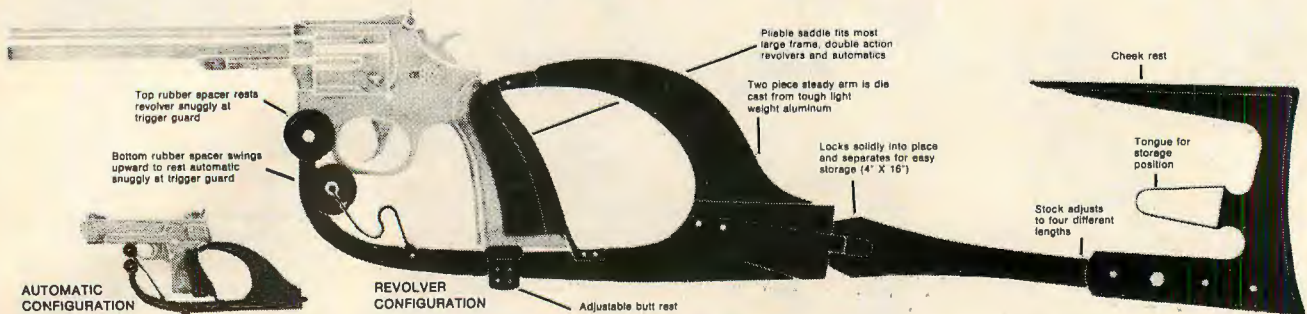
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I made him lie on one of the beds with his hands hanging over the edge so I could see them. I got the third guy out of the bathroom and handcuffed him to the other bed. I guess I was in a state of shock because I then tried to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to the man who had hit me.

I sat on the floor, exhausted; the next thing I remember was a fireman trying to get me on a stretcher. It's strange, but as soon as the life-and-death struggle ended, I stopped recording details.

The next thing I knew, I was on a table in the hospital emergency room, my lieutenant leaning over me, showing me a bottle of scotch hidden under his coat, and telling me I had earned anything I wanted. I was still disoriented, but I remember that he took his gold detective badge out of his wallet and pinned it on my shirt. Just that day I had been kidding him that I had carried a silver patrolman badge long enough; I was going to earn my detective badge soon.

Later, as he helped me out to his car, I saw all of the other officers who had been on the case with me waiting in the parking lot. Dave ran up and asked me how I was. I started to laugh and showed him my shirt, which looked as if it had been submerged in a bucket of blood. I told him it was a good thing I hadn't been killed because the shirt I had willed him was no good anymore. I expected him to laugh too, but he had a strange look on his face, and I'm sure I saw tears in his eyes. He told me he would never make a stupid joke like that again and asked me not to mention the promised shirt again.

I took a row of stitches across the back of the head and lost a pint of blood. My first shot had hit the side plate of the gunman's S&W Model 66 and had wedged the hammer to a stop on its downward fall. The slug continued up the man's arm and took his elbow off. The guy who hit me on the back of the head took six shots beginning at the groin and working a straight line up his torso until the last one hit him in the head. My second shot, the one fired right at the beginning, had apparently missed, but my last shot collapsed the second gunman's left lung, taking him out of action.

When I returned to duty I was promoted to detective and assigned to Robbery/Homicide Division. After my year of work in Narcotics Division, I was now considered the most highly decorated officer in the history of Dade County law enforcement. I received a new car, savings bonds, plaques, medals and all kinds of certificates. I've got most of the awards hanging on the wall in my home, but my most cherished is the badge the lieutenant pinned on my shirt. I have relived those few minutes in that motel room a thousand times, and I'll always remember 9 August 1973 as the day I should have died. ☒

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COMRADE JAWS

Continued from page 33

to the unaligned peoples of the Third World. They are now well aware of the internal and external conditions imposed by the acceptance of the 'Gospel According to Moscow.' They need only take a look at the condition of your 'clients.' The ideal of 'sovietism' is a fraud. It's all over," I concluded. "I hope Brezhnev has a sense of humor."

I was certain that I had scored some hits, but Anatoly registered no surface damage.

The Thai man behind Anatoly laughed to himself and played with his ice-cream sundae: We'd crossed into weird territory again.

"Jim, you needn't take this all so personally," Anatoly said, and lightly tapped my knee. "I wouldn't want to have you arrested for anti-soviet acts." His humor was forced.

"We're in Thailand, Anatoly, remember? Not Kabul, or Moscow," I replied.

"We've just come from Afghanistan, Anatoly," Brown said, and spat Skoal into an ashtray. "You're in deep shit. Excuse me." He wandered off in search of the men's room.

"Changing tapes?" Anatoly laughed, as Brown disappeared.

"What?" I asked.

"We joke, 'he's changing tapes'," he repeated, pointing to the men's room.

"Oh," I said.

I sort of liked Anatoly, but I waited for the feeling to pass. This was not softball. As Brown returned, I sensed the meeting was over.

"Well," Brown said, standing over the table, "thanks for the lunch. I have an appointment in one hour."

Anatoly and I abruptly rose.

"Anatoly," I said, and shook his hand, "don't let them send you to Afghanistan."

"Never," he laughed, "unless you print this story."

We stepped from the cold, quiet darkness of the coffeeshop into the hot, bright afternoon of Bangkok's busiest, noisiest street. Brown and I flagged down a taxi, then crammed inside. I told the driver to make a U-turn and lao-lao out of there. He cornered the cab on two wheels. We careened through traffic back the way we had come.

"Did I ever tell you about the time I 'helped' some Bulgarian diplomat 'defect' from his consulate in Chicago?" Brown asked. He smiled out the window, braced in the back seat of the cab. Faces flashed by on a motorcycle.

"No," I said.

Brown laughed. "Some bozo under-secretary of the Bulgarian consulate in Chicago writes me a letter, on their sta-

tionery, requesting all these technical weapons manuals, right? Well, I wrote back and thanked him for his letter, 'but,' I said, 'I cannot assist you in the ways you've mentioned. If you are serious about defecting to the United States, however, I suggest you contact so-and-so at the State Department for further information, etc., etc.' He's probably picking potatoes in a windy field in Poland somewhere."

The taxi banged over the curb in front of our apartment building.

"I'm going to the American Embassy," Brown said. "You want to come along?"

"No, thanks," I answered, and got out of the cab. "See you by the pool when you get back. I've had enough spooks for one day."

The cab lurched away into the traffic, toward the American Embassy. On the same tree-lined boulevard as the U.S. Compound, the red and gold Vietnamese flag hung limply above the silent, shuttered Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, submerged in the shade of the tall, white Imperial Hotel.

"Communists," someone once told me, "are people who have nothing, and are eager to share it with you."

As I floated on my back in the cool water of the pool, I heard a faint yell. I looked up. Brown loomed above me, silhouetted by blue sky and white clouds. He looked agitated.

"What?" I said, pulling my head

above water.

"Listen to this!" Brown bellowed. He was getting ready for his daily afternoon run through the alleys of suburban Bangkok. "I was at the Embassy, right? Somebody made a crack about Anatoly Korolev, as an aside. I said, 'Who's this Anatoly Korolev?' They didn't want to tell me. Finally, one guy warned me never to go near him. He wouldn't tell me who Korolev was, only that he was 'brilliant. The Kiss of Death. Maybe one of the few men authorized to use the big sleep as a bargaining chip.'" Brown laughed. "He told me I was probably already being watched, only I'd never know it. It was perfect." He laughed again, then jogged off into the streets of Bangkok, a happy man. ☘

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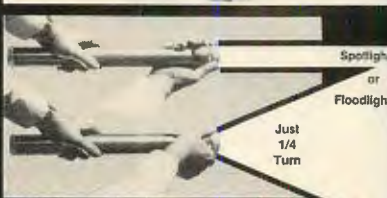
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Continued from page 41

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"I want to check in here, and see if the road to 508 is clear," he said.

I watched the men of the motorcycle unit fan out near their bikes to seek shelter from the storm. In the afternoon twilight I saw mute evidence of the fierce fighting which had recently swept over these hills: jagged tree stumps, ripped as if by hand, and tossed aside; pockmarked boulders near cave entrances which led to the three-storied bunker complex beneath our feet.

"It's safe," he said, after talking briefly into the handset of a field radio. "No contact in 24 hours; let's go."

Morris was visibly depressed. He wanted to get into a fire fight just once before leaving Thailand. I just wanted the rain to stop.

We clambered back into the pick-up for the four-kilometer trip to Camp 508. The bikes opted to use a wheels-locked controlled skid for the slide down the clay road. Again, the riders walked alongside until they could ride tandem in safety.

Morris took photographs of me taking photographs. We were, undoubtedly, the circus come to town. I remem-

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bered having watched reporters with much the same amusement in another place, another time.

The first thing we noticed after arrival at Camp 508 was that we could not see it. From a distance of 50 feet the camp was unrecognizably concealed beneath brush and trees. We stopped in the middle of it after walking uphill from where the bikes were parked below.

"We must be very careful where we walk," Maj. Vinai said. "The CTs have put booby traps all over the place. Only the trails have been cleared."

Back at the headquarters of CPM 42, Col. Tanapol, deputy chief of staff for operations, intelligence and planning, had shown me coil after coil of one-quarter-inch wire used for making mines and booby traps — enough for hundreds of thousands of them.

Below us, under the earth, there once had been a multi-leveled hospital and barracks. The entrance slanted steeply into the darkness. We were asked if we would like to go down. We politely deferred.

The men of the motorcycle team gathered around the bulletin board of the infantry company garrisoned around the former CPT HQ. Tacked to the board were photographs of themselves taken only a few weeks previously, while on the attack. They laughed and hammed it up, posing as they had appeared in the photographs.

As we walked around the remains of the CPT camp, inspecting bunkers, Maj. Vinai explained the difficulties of the assault. "We had great difficulty keeping in contact with our people, because the forest is so thick here. I could hear, but I could not see."

Everywhere there were holes and tunnels, as well as concealed trenches and pathways.

"What's this?" Morris asked, as he picked up a small muddy bra. Everyone laughed. "They had women up here too," Maj. Vinai said. "Political cadre, we think."

The storm opened up above us; sheets of rain pelted the treetops. We sat in the comfort of a small thatch lean-to, still miraculously intact. I could hear other Thai troopers talking nearby, but I could not see them. As I smoked a soggy cigarette, Maj. Vinai took off his black beret. I asked him about its distinctive emblem and flash, which looked a little like a Special Forces patch.

"It means *Kham Jat Nguyen Kai Song Kram*," he said. After some quick talk in Thai to Lt. Kittie, our guide and interpreter from CPM 42 HQ, Maj. Vinai translated the motto: "Eliminate the cause of war."

"I'm an RTA officer," he said, putting the beret back on, "but my men are all volunteers trained by the RTA. They are a little bit army, and a little bit

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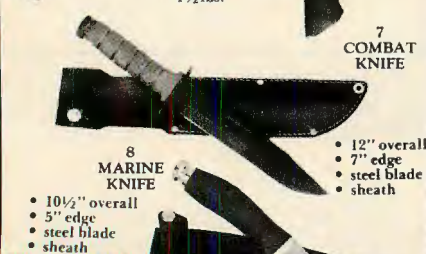


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police. It's a volunteer unit drawn from this region. We are all volunteers. If we are to 'eliminate the cause of war,' we must fight a 'people's war' also. There must be justice."

Maj. Vinai had been in the States once, a long time ago; I saw him make a mental effort to summon the correct words. He wanted me to understand why he, and his men, volunteered to be here. "The origins of war will be eliminated four ways: There must be political justice; there must be economic justice; there must be justice inside the military, and there must be social justice outside the military. Once this is done, communism will dry up like rice without water. They will lose."

He said it very well. I understood him perfectly.

As we walked through the drizzle toward the motorcycles he motioned for his men to saddle up.

"Do you want to ride back on a motorcycle?" he asked me.

"For sure," I said. "I'd love to."

He smiled, then gestured toward a waiting bike. The driver made some minor adjustments, then together we took off after the rest of the team.

Below, men and motorcycles waited in trail formation for us to join up. A biker's dream come true, we formed for the run home.

Startled faces flashed by me as we streaked back past small villages and farms. "If the CPT still wants to fight," I thought, "Thailand's ready." ☒

THAILAND: SITUATION REPORT

The situation facing the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) is grim. Thwarted in its attempts to control the northern central highlands (see "Thailand's Battle Road," SOF, February '82), the decimated CPT leadership and cadres eventually moved south to regroup and lick their wounds. They chose Camp 508 in the jagged Chong Charn Mountains as their headquarters. From there, on the strategic heights dominating large areas of Surat Thani Province, a little more than midway down the Isthmus of Kra on the narrow panhandle of southern Thailand, they assembled and began to map their strategy to renew their struggle.

A Party Congress was called to evaluate their crushing defeat at Khao Khor in the north; an agenda was prepared to evaluate the hard realities now facing them every day — mass defections, key cadre defections, lack of popular support, materiel losses, battle damage and casualties, and the quicksilver changes of the political landscape of Southeast Asia.

Thai military intelligence was aware of the CPT's plans from their incep-

tion; page after page of detailed reports were culled from informants and defectors. The Royal Thai Army (RTA) was aware of the imminent Party Congress before the formal declaration was circulated clandestinely among the CPT cadres. The CPT never had a chance.

Although forewarned is forearmed, the RTA faced a formidable task. While the military objectives and order of battle were similar to the successful counter-insurgency campaign waged in the north, the political terrain in the south was vastly different. The problems encountered were elusive and more complex; convoluted solutions were implemented to deal with the region's internecine politics.

Private land, national land reserves, forest industries, rubber plantations, minerals and tin mines, capitalists, middlemen, communists, Moslem "separationists" and bandits all contributed to the complications. Private armies, gangsters, gangs, guns and grenades equaled chaos. "The whole nine yards," someone told me, "was like the Wild West."

We're talking cash here.

The Thai central government was to some extent responsible for the deterioration of its own power and influence. Large amounts of money were changing hands. With money comes greed, with greed, corruption. Corrupt government officials cooperated with the CPT, or anyone else for that matter, for years without opposition. Unable to rely on the government for protection, mining companies, plantations, trucking firms and construction companies paid off the CPT indirectly via a flourishing business of middlemen. The profits swelled CPT war chests and allowed purchase of better arms and munitions than their counterparts had in the north.

In February 1982, an all-out assault was launched on the covert CPT headquarters camps: 508, 511 and 514. After months of fighting, the CPT capitulated and fled. By March 1982, the RTA was squarely in control. Lt. Gen. Harn's strategy of "Na Tay, Kong Tup, Hang Chat" (Duty, Force, Nation) triumphed.

Col. Suphon, S-5 (Civic Action) for the recently formed Thai task force known as CPM 42 (Civilian, Police, Military 42) is dedicated to setting the record straight. With surprising candor he admits, "The CPT was, in a way, keeping the peace, and therefore helping the people. The people could only see corruption in government ripping them off. The CPT was doing good; the government was wrong. We know that now."

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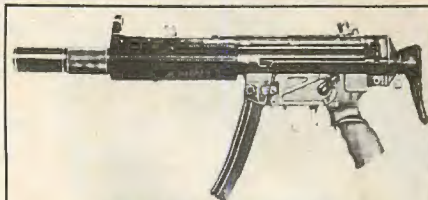
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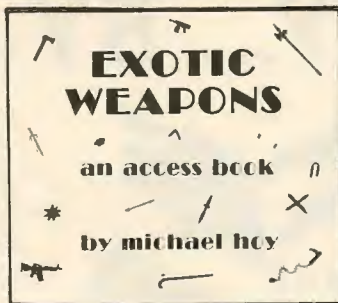
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Lt. Gen. Harn, commander of the Fourth Army Region and CPM 42, announced an aggressive reform program known locally as *Thai Lom Yen* (literally South Keep Calm) in February 1982. It is a program to meet force with force, but in keeping with the overall peaceful strategic redevelopment plan, it encourages cooperation with the government. Lt. Gen. Harn is a no-nonsense, impeccably honest officer eminently capable of wielding both the carrot and the stick.

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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT



Continued from page 8

perfectly effective against larger targets out to 10 yards, and cheaper and more useful against small game than buckshot.

All good and bad arguments on the subject of rifle calibers aside, it makes no sense to stock the third element of your arsenal — the high-velocity rifle — in a cartridge you may not be able to get. In your opinion, .45-70 or 7mm Mag or .30-'06 may be the only real rifle cartridge, but considering that the military has greater stocks of 5.56mm than anything else, you are making a bad choice if your survival rifle is in any other caliber.

Although the Ruger Mini-14 is cheaper, I believe the AR-15 is more rugged and more reliable, and therefore a better buy. Also, its appearance is more threatening than the Mini-14's, and emotional impact is often as important as foot-pounds in preventing a fight. For those concerned with much-publicized M16 fouling problems, the semiauto-only civilian AR-15 would fire so few rounds in any confrontation that fouling wouldn't be a problem.

A big-bore rifle for sniping or game or a pistol is entirely optional. Pistols are relatively expensive, and good ones are more so. A pistol is a back-up weapon for the well-armed survivalist. If you can afford it, get it. The same applies to the big-bore rifle, since, though useful, ammo may be scarce, and it's one more thing to carry.

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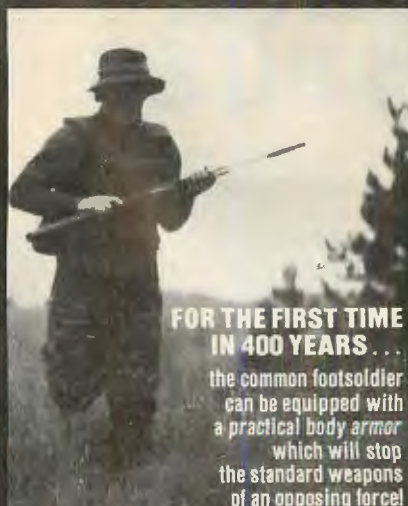
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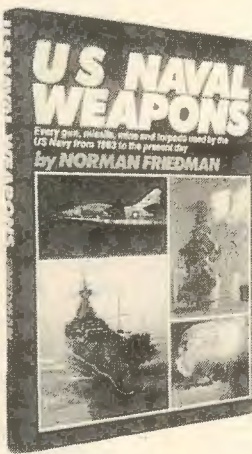
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SHAW SHOOTS

Continued from page 59

"dead Russian" to shoot the stop plate (six-inch metal square five yards away).

Bill Brooks, SOF Convention Director, spared no expense to make the pistol match a unique event. Working with Eric Johnson of Collias-Lawing's gun store in Charlotte, Brooks obtained authentic Russian-

issue hat, belt, holster, ammo pouch and a pair of jack boots of East German issue. (The AK-47 was a fake used in the John Wayne movie, *The Green Berets*.)

John Shaw did it again, running the course in 44.24 seconds and scoring 90 points for a Comstock of 2.03 to take the tough match. New Zealander Mark Lonsdale scored 98 points, but had a time of 49.80 seconds for a C-Score of 1.96 to take second and Mike Plaxco recorded 1.87 for third.

Shaw's consistent shooting put him on top, followed by Bill Rogers, Mike Plaxco and defending SOF Champ Craig Gifford. Mark Lonsdale was fifth and Lynn Schoening sixth.

Payday for this year's competitors was one for the record books. Shaw received \$5,000 cash from First Place Sponsor Garth Choate of Choate Machine and Tool and SOF, plus two presentation weapons, a trophy and a magnificent gold medal. Rogers took home \$2,000 cash from sponsor Heckler & Koch, a new H&K-91, trophy and a silver medal. Plaxco received \$1,600 cash from sponsor Beretta, a Beretta 92SB pistol, trophy and bronze medal. All medals were donated by Don Wortman of Eagle Enterprises, Dayton, Ohio.

Fourth place Gifford received \$1,300 cash from sponsor Bianchi Gunleather, a Colt Mark IV Gold Cup, and a medal. Fifth-place Lonsdale received \$1,100 plus a silver trophy and Gold Cup .45 from Bianchi, and sixth-place Schoening received \$1,000, an H&K VP70-Z and a plaque from Heckler & Koch.

Individual match winners also received awards of cash and merchandise: Pistol-winner Shaw received \$600 from Rogers Holsters, a Colt Mark IV Gold Cup and trophy. Shaw, also the shotgun winner, received \$800 cash from Mossberg, a shotgun and a trophy. Rifle winner Rogers received \$600 cash from Springfield Armory, M1A1 rifle and trophy.

Congratulations to the winners and to the sponsors who make the annual contest the only major Three-gun International contest in the world. The site for the 1983 *Soldier Of Fortune* Match has not been selected, but you can count on another challenging, pace-setting contest. For information and an application, see the June '83 issue of SOF. ☒

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CHARLIE BLACK

Continued from page 30

down slopes of the Annamite Corderilla (including Chu Pong Mountain, a most unpleasant place) and hiking the full length of the An Lao Valley, where it could also get interesting. The only difference evident at day's end when the rest of us, kid troopers, older sergeants and Charlie's press-corps colleagues, slumped down, groaning and easing off equipment, was that Charlie's stubby beard was salt and pepper rather than black or blond or red.

Because he was with the Army, Charlie didn't talk much about his time as a Marine Raider but he certainly never forgot it. If, by his disdain for danger under fire, Charlie didn't inspire soldiers to achieve accomplishments beyond themselves, I will kiss your toes in front of the courthouse on Sunday and give you an hour to draw a crowd. Not that the Cav needed much inspiring, ever, but I never met one of them who didn't admire and respect Charlie Black.

Charlie had his limitations as a war correspondent. A writer from *Newsweek* once did a story about this unknown from a small regional newspaper who rapidly became one of the more colorful characters in a war full of them. As background for the story, this correspondent interviewed some other newsmen who knew and often worked with Charlie: Peter Arnett and John Wheeler of AP, Joe Galloway and Leon Daniel of UPI, and myself among them. All of us cautioned the writer that all Charlie knew of Vietnam was what the First Cav had done, was doing and probably would do there.

He remained blissfully unaware of high strategy, political reality and even other units: Charlie had only the foggiest idea that the Seventh Fleet was in the area and all he knew about the Air Force was that it occasionally dropped bombs in front of the infantry.

But if someone wanted to know something about the First Cav or the Central Highlands, he needn't bother to take the trouble of getting an interview with Harry the Warrant Officer (a nickname for Kinnard) or PIOs Chuck Sailor or J.D. Coleman; all he had to do was buy Charlie a beer.

One example of Black's *savoir faire* and indifference to hazardous circumstance occurred when both of us got into some particularly stupid situation where we needn't and probably shouldn't have been. When the noise abated, the dust settled and people began raising their heads to look about, a Chieu Hoi Kit Carson Scout lying flat on the ground next to me pointed with his chin at Charlie leaning against a palm tree and

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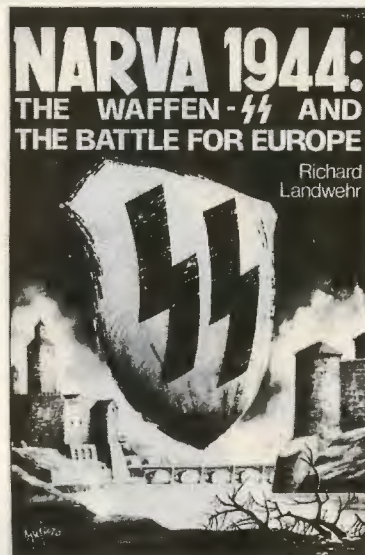
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chewing a toothpick. Black didn't look scared. He didn't even look interested.

The Kit Carson — and they tended to be connoisseurs of courage — said: "Is Dinky Dau." There was a certain amount of truth to that.

But now Charlie Black is dead at the age of 59. That is too young for Charlie to have died. He had too many more beers to drink and too many more stories to tell, most of which would have caused a pained look upon the visage of the Patron Saint of Truth and Purity.

But the wonder of it all is that Charlie Black lived long enough to die peacefully in bed attended by friends and relatives and a doctor rather than a company medic. How strange that his bones weren't left to whiten amid the coral of some Pacific island or on the downslope of a cold, barren Korean hill or upon a field of fire and futility in Vietnam. That, I think, is what Black would really have preferred, perhaps what he sought.

"Wiry. Tough. About As Tender as Woodpecker Lips"

by Joe Galloway

THEY ought to be raising their glasses in a lot of NCO and EM clubs around the world this week, saying a fond farewell to one of their own — Charlie Black.

Wiry. Tough. About as tender as woodpecker lips. A voice scoured and rasped by long acquaintance with young whisky and old editors.

I first met Charlie when An Khe was a red mudhole. We bunked together in a tent that passed as the PIO shop for the 1st Cav advance element.

It was the summer of 1965 and weird things were going on. Band concerts and the nightly showing of segments of "Combat" interrupted by the duty snipers on the next-door mountain.

My first look at Charlie was when he came in off a patrol, packing his M16 and wearing a growth of whiskers that, like Yasser Arafat, he was miraculously able to maintain at the four-day level. His old-fashioned spotted camouflage fatigues contained more holes than spots, held together by dried mud.

We drank some mash and talked some trash while Charlie cleaned up after his own fashion. I was 23 years old that summer and I thought Charlie was four years older than God. But it was a meeting of Georgia and Texas and an instant friendship.

For the rest of my life I will be able to hear, in that inner ear that plays back significant dialogue, Charlie's voice saying, "Galloway, things are getting dull around here. Let's go find John B. Stockton and get in some trouble." Or Hal Moore. Or some other expert at finding, fixing and finishing an enemy others found happily elusive.

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Who could forget old Charlie, rolling around in the dirt laughing so hard he choked while he tried to recount an episode involving one of our British colleagues who had worn a Browning 9mm for months — and how in the cleanup of the Ia Drang thing, he came eyeball to eyeball with a wounded NVA officer holding a grenade. The Brit unsnapped his holster and tried in vain to pull his piece. Moss, mold and mud had welded the neglected pistol to the leather and he couldn't get it out. A Cav trooper came along and dispatched the NVA. Charlie trying to mimic the Brit's accent as he hollered, "Somebody kill this chap for me. Hurry, old man."

Or Charlie proudly recounting his presence with a 20-man platoon of Lt. Col. Stockton's 1/9 recon battalion when it sprang a night ambush on an NVA regiment. Speaking with open admiration of how the platoon scooted back to the Landing Zone (LZ) and joined up with the company just as a highly pissed-off NVA unit roared in behind them. And how Stockton fed the rest of his battalion into the growing fight — inserting Hueys into a hot, dark LZ — and then reached out and began stealing sizable pieces of another commander's battalion and feeding them in too.

Until the general woke up and found that a platoon-sized routine night ambush had grown like Topsy and one half of his entire brigade was in combat without an operational plan to show it had all been done by the book in case Gen. Westmoreland inquired what the hell was going on up there.

Charlie wrote for the Columbus *Enquirer*, the paper read by the wives and kids of the men from Ft. Benning he marched with and wrote about. Unlike some who scooted in and scooted out and wrote bullshit by the ream, Charlie had a permanent constituency he cared about. He wrote it responsible, honest and truthful. And he was loved by the grunts whose story he told in his letters to the homefolk.

I hope God has room for a reporter who can shoot in his recon platoon. ☒

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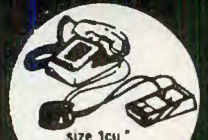


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AFGHAN TUNNEL

Continued from page 28

Salang Tunnel was a long, wide, roughly-concrete-faced hole blown and drilled through the Hindu Kush, north of Kabul between Do Shakh and Qowl-e-Baghi. Our sources agree that it is probably unventilated, but there are no doors inside or at the ends of the tunnel. Since it was built in the recent past, it is probably slightly inclined throughout its length in order to facilitate drainage and convective ventilation. This means that gas and fighting are more likely explanations than they might seem at first glance.

SOF Soviet Analyst David Isby tends to discount the gas story, since the Russians regard chemicals as special weapons demanding special care and specially trained troops, much like tactical nuclear weapons. Isby says the Soviet Army manuals for the handling of chemicals require separate transport by specialist chemical troops. On the other hand, security demands of Afghan military transport may impose certain conditions of size and armament on a column that could not be conveniently satisfied by a chemical unit alone.

There are enough reports of firing from inside the tunnel that it is reasonable to assume that fighting broke out between the Afghan Army and Soviet troops as they tried to escape from whatever was killing them in the tunnel. Trying to shoot one's way out would seem a good idea in case of general panic.

The scenario that begins to develop is this: Intentionally or fortuitously a fuel tanker exploded in the Salang Tunnel when a military supply column composed of Russian and Afghan troops was inside. Security troops must be numerous in the Salang Tunnel area, since the tunnel is vital to transport and communication and a major power station is very close to it.

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The tunnel's portals must have been blocked when the tanker went up, but it is important to note that this would have meant that troops and, perhaps, a tank might have moved to contain the disturbance in the tunnel. Men must have begun dying immediately, as burning fuel ran down the tunnel, igniting other vehicles and burning up available oxygen. If there were chemical weapons in the train, troops inside the tunnel must have begun thinking about their own welfare at this point. It seems, from the mortality rate, that something was killing soldiers in large numbers.

As men began to fall, their comrades must have attempted to escape, finding troops — probably KGB security forces — between them and safety. There are reports of tension between the Afghan Army and Soviet troops. Additionally, government convoys move through Afghanistan on continuous alert, and many in the tunnel must have been certain the explosion meant an ambush. Fear of chemicals, friction between Soviets and Afghans and ambush regimens all must have combined to start most of the troops firing immediately.

As all this was going on inside the Salang Tunnel, the security forces blocking the openings would have been derelict had they allowed anyone out of the tunnel while firing was heard. Their job was to contain the fighting until the problem was identified and stabilized.

Communication and control must have been difficult to establish in the crowded and, probably, darkened tunnel. Even with a small amount of chemical munitions in the convoy, had those containers been damaged in the explosion or consequent fires or collisions, it is easy to imagine nearly everyone in the tunnel would have died from either small-arms fire or chemicals before the tunnel could have been reopened. ☒



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IN REVIEW

Continued from page 10

magnificent job in portraying this controversial general who was either loved or detested by those who served under or with him. The play is given further authenticity by the fact that the U.S. Army has on loan to the troupe Patton's old uniforms and other mementos.

The actor said in an interview, "A former agent of mine [producer Radam] found out about the role and brought me the play. But before taking it on, I did some long soul-searching. I wondered how audiences these days might react to a character like Patton. But I needn't have worried. Audiences seem to find it refreshing to listen to a man who wouldn't duck the truth, who would tell everything straight from the shoulder as he saw it."

Patton anecdotes range from the flip-pant to recollections of the furious fights he had with Ike and Montgomery over conduct of the war — but not with Chief of Staff George C. Marshall: "He was a soldier. He knew what it was all about. Marshall never held me back."

The company will begin an extended U.S. tour this spring. Viewers of this play will feel like they are reliving a moment in history shared with one of the foremost military heroes this country has ever known. It is an experience that SOF readers should not deny themselves. ☒

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FLAK

Continued from page 6

Fire, The Short Timers, They Wouldn't Let Us Die and Soldier of Fortune.

But what this letter is really trying to tell you is that I agree with Mr. McPeak one million percent. It pains my heart to hear of the dishonors and ridicule suffered by the Vietnam vets. But please do not think that I feel pity for the Vietnam vet. I have the utmost respect for him.

I'm not really sure why I wrote this letter; I guess I just wanted to let Mr. McPeak and all of the other Vietnam vets know that there are people out here who care, and that we, if not empathize, then sympathize with you, your missing and killed in action, and your families.

Sincerely,
Priscilla K. Singleton
Lebanon Valley College
Annville, Pennsylvania

SETTING THE LABEL STRAIGHT ...

Sirs:

In SOF, August '82, there is an article entitled "Lebanon on \$3.17 a Day." In this article I wish to point out an incorrect fact. Dave McGrady states that because all the labels on the Israeli Army rations were in Hebrew he could not know the contents and further stated that it would not pass for dog food. McGrady is a liar.

Israeli Army ration cans are wrapped with a covering with a distinct picture as well as the name (in Hebrew) of the contents. Maybe he eats good at home, but the meat is goulash or spam and is *not* inferior quality. So I don't know what he was eating when he was spitting out bone-chips and hair, but it *was not* IDF rations.

What really made me and the other officers in the unit laugh is McGrady's "professionalism." In the picture of him atop a Sherman on page 39 he is wearing a tank helmet...the wrong way round.

Since this is a good magazine I shall subscribe.

Capt. Leen Idan
(handwriting unclear), IDF
Yahad, Israel

Through McGrady's ignorance of Hebrew, he may have been mistaken about the precise origin of his rations, but we are certain he wasn't lying. Thank you for the correction.

McGrady's professionalism, though, speaks from his record. To translate for our foreign audience: Americans consider hats worn backwards to be amusing and an indicator of the levity of a situation.

—The Eds.

MUSSOLINI MASCULINITY ...

Hey, guys, I thought that when you published an article you attempted to separate the truth from rumor!

I specifically refer to "The Life and Times of Hilaire du Berrier" by Jim Graves (SOF, January '83) which repeats one of the older and less possible chestnuts about Benito Mussolini. Specifically on p. 31, Graves states that one of the reasons for Benny's invasion of Ethiopia was the fact that his father was castrated (!) by the Ethiopians when poor Benny was a little boy.

NOT SO. Alessandro Mussolini was an itinerant blacksmith without formal education, and never served in the Italian Army, let alone in the colonial forces. There were two possible occasions (other than minor border skirmishes) where this could have occurred — during John IV of Ethiopia's campaign around Saati-Dogali in early 1887, or during Menelik II's reign and the Battle of Adawa early in 1896. In both cases, contemporary records indicate that the Mussolinis were living in Italy, and that Alessandro was working as a blacksmith or busy writing socialist articles and tracts for the local papers.

Mussolini himself never mentioned the castration in any of his writings (see *La mia vita, Facismo e civiltà*, and *Mio fratello Benito*) by way of confirmation, and certainly such a traumatic event in his (and his father's) life would not have gone unmentioned.

Keep up the good work.

Robert C. Smith
Merchantville, New Jersey

Please excuse our carelessness in not identifying that passage as a reflection of du Berrier's impression of contemporary folklore during the war. At the time, the Alessandro Mussolini castration myth was widely believed in Europe. — The Eds.

CREDIT DUE ...

Sirs:

I read the story about Gentleman of Fortune H. du Berrier (SOF, January and February '83) and it was interesting.

He was lucky to get a Nieuport 52. Me and my buddy got Nieuport 28s made in 1918 and already dry-rotted. Then we got a Berget (*sic*) that looked like a bathtub with a two-by-four sticking out....

Unsigned
No address

Albuquerque, New Mexico

P.S. Interesting about Bert Acosta: He still owes me \$100 plus about \$100,000 in interest.

BACH TO BUCK ...

Sirs:

I am fascinated by your du Berrier profile ("Gentleman of Fortune," SOF, Jan-

uary '83). You mention the late "Jimmy Bach" in same, with the epilogue notation: "Returned to America, fate unknown."

In 1940, when France fell and Paris was occupied, Jimmy Bach (or "Buck") came here to Salt Lake with his French wife, Adrienne. Fortunately the Bachs (Bucks) had had capital outside France.

Jimmy chose Salt Lake for the reason that he had lived and worked here, for a short time, as a young man before 1914. Also, his old "pal" Col. Sweeny ("A Man for All Wars," SOF, May '82) was here.

Among the first people to know J. and A. in Salt Lake were my late parents (my father was a veteran of WWI, in France, and my mother a French woman who could talk with and interpret for Madame B., who in time learned English *beautifully*).

In the WWII years, both J. and A. joined the faculty of the University of Utah. When I went there in the late '40s, they were quite probably the best-loved people on its teaching staff. Arch Whitehouse in *Legion of the Lafayette* tells J.'s fate:

"In February 1959 a man by the name of J. James Buck died in the Latter-day Saints Hospital in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was 74 years of age. Mr. Buck had been teaching French at the University of Utah for more than 15 years. In his obituary it was disclosed that Mr. Buck had used the name of Bach during World War I when he had been a pilot in the French Air Service. He was of Danish descent and had changed his name to the less Germanic Buck at the outset of World War II. The French Government had awarded him the Legion of Honor, the *Medaille Militaire* and the *Croix de Guerre*."

About A., who survived him and then moved away (some locals say to Montreal), no one I know seems to know. Congratulations on du B.

Peter B. Walsh
Salt Lake City, Utah

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SOF has also learned that Hubert Fauntleroy Julian, "The Black Eagle of Harlem," listed as fate unknown in our January issue, died in New York City in 1976. — The Eds.

MEA CULPA

The problem of squeezing out a long, complex article in the short amount of time available just before and after the SOF Convention is my only explanation for the creeping erroritis that led to:

1. My statement that Hilaire du Berrier was partially responsible for the rescue of four of Billy Mitchell's flyers. Du Berrier had said Jimmy Doolittle's flyers and William Craig who wrote about du Berrier's role in his book, *Fall Of Japan*, got it right too. Even though my copy of Carroll V. Gline's Doolittle's Tokyo Raiders

is only 12 inches in front of my typewriter I got it wrong.

2. Wehib Pasha being in Mecca during World War I. He held Medina, as any good T.E. Lawrence fan knows — and I am one. The Arabs captured Mecca early in the Arab revolt but, for a number of reasons, never pressed a serious attack against Medina.

3. And by far the most serious error, as du Berrier pointed out in December when I stopped off in Monaco after a foray to Israel, Lebanon and Egypt was the liberty I took with his name.

Du Berrier was always Berrier, never Berry. Du Berrier did use Hal as his first name, rather than Harold, his given name, and added the "du," — which merely means from — which had been dropped by his father. When he went to France he convinced the French that Hal was a diminutive for Hilaire, because he hated Harold. The Hilaire also helped because he was trying to convince a French official that his father had been born in France, which would have given du Berrier the right to join the French Air Force. He never got in as the official went to some trouble researching the American's background and discovered it was his grandfather who had emigrated from France to America.

Du Berrier was aghast when he saw himself surnamed Berry: "My enemies will seize on that and I'll never live it down. The only thing you could have done that would have been worse was to

make me a Bulgarian."

The wrong name crept in because of a poorly written note about du Berrier's ancestors and their reason for leaving the province of Berry in France.

In the 16th and 17th centuries French Protestants, called Huguenots, battled with the majority Catholics all over France but particularly in the Loire Valley area, which the province of Berry (the Catholic version) or Berri (the Huguenot version) is near. When the French Catholic kings started executing the Huguenots in lots, du Berrier's ancestor, a Huguenot, elected to move.

For that error I extend my most sincere apology to Hilaire du Berrier, a gentleman of fortune. — Jim Graves

MARINE DH 4s ...

Sirs:

Your December '82 issue as usual is great, but your expert on the Sandino story, John Hoyt Williams, sure doesn't know anything about Marine Corps aircraft used in that campaign. The photo on p. 37 captioned Jenny Biplane shows that. These aircraft are DeHavilland DH 4s, the USMC's powerhouse recon-bomber of that period, not Curtis JN4 (Jennys).

This is maybe no big thing but it does make one wonder if the rest of the story is badly researched.

The plane in the early model had the petrol tank between the pilot and observer (gunner). This plane was also used in the First World War by both the British and American squadrons.

Frank F. Conley
Carmel Valley, California

The DH 4s were misidentified as a cut-line mix-up; Williams does know the difference, but we are grateful for the correction. — The Eds.

LEGACY FOR PROJECT FREEDOM ...

Sirs:

My wife, Denise, and I intend to contribute as much as possible to the worthwhile organizations featured in your fine magazine. We have contributed previously to PMRS. We are now pleased to enclose our company check in the amount of \$100 payable to Project Freedom — Special Fund. You have our heartfelt thanks for the work you are doing regarding our POW/MIA situation.

In addition, we have started an IRA account with our bank, the proceeds of which are payable to the Laotian Freedom Fighters Fund in the event of the death of my wife and myself. As time and finances permit, we will continue to support these and other projects as administered by *Soldier of Fortune*. Please feel free to contact us if we may be of service to you in any capacity. We remain, as you so aptly put it, Going and Doing,
Capt. N. Beckwith Shannon
Director, Normandy Ltd.
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FRENCH MIAs ...

Sirs:

After the United States military presence in Indochina ended, reports surfaced that several French POWs (some captured at Dien Bien Phu in 1954) left-over from France's colonial involvement in Vietnam were released with the American POWs.

Allegedly, the United States government quickly debriefed the men before shipping them directly back to France. And the whole matter was hushed up to avoid any confrontation with the MIA-POW groups which might say that if 20 years after the French formally left Vietnam, Hanoi still held French POWs, the Hanoi government might still hold Americans.

I am surprised with SOF's involvement in the POW-MIA controversy and that you have not attempted a follow-up to determine whether the above story is true; if it is legitimate, why has SOF not tried to look up any of these French soldiers to get their story?

Perhaps, more could be brought to the public light about the workings of the Hanoi government and whether it still holds American POWs, or whether the French POW story is just another story to raise false hopes among the POW-MIA families.

Ralph J. Johnson III
2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment

P.S. I have already sent a check to Project Freedom.

SOF is in the process of following up a number of intriguing aspects of the POW/MIA issue, including several of the stories regarding French POWs. "The French Connection" is one of the more difficult stories to track because of time, distance, language barriers, etc. If and when we can print a story which we know to be true we will. — The Eds.

TWO-CLASS PRACTICAL MATCHES ...

Sirs:

Regarding the comments of Bill Guthrie ("Practical Shooting: Practical Guns?", SOF, January '83, p. 56), that same question is frequently debated here in Canada. Oddly enough, the main proponents of the all-out target/gamesman approach are the members of the "old guard" who collectively welcome and endorse any and all technological gadgetry so long as it helps them do one thing — win! All pretext concerning the practicality or suitability of guns in a duty application has effectively gone by the board.

By and large, the same can be said of many of the courses of fire at "practical" matches. The handgun, hitherto thought of as suitable weaponry in a defensive role, is frequently applied in a role more suited to offensive armament such as shotguns, assault rifles and submachine guns.

Perhaps the time is right for a change of format (and perhaps SOF is the vehicle best suited for instituting such a change) in practical shooting. Why not establish



two classes of competition at practical matches?

Unlimited or Open Class: Here the sky (or your budget) is the limit and there would be no restrictions on sights, barrel length, accessories, gadgets and holsters. This would be the proving ground for high technology and the arms industry.

Duty or Service Class: This would be the domain of the "martial artist," the serviceman, policeman or soldier of fortune. Weapons would be strictly duty or issue type with minor concessions as to sights, safety, trigger and grips. Other than that, the gun is in an out-of-the-box configuration. The same strict regimen would apply to holsters, which would have to be of duty or issue configuration or easily defined as such under simple guidelines.

Both would continue to meet the current ammunition requirements but there would be slight variations in the courses of fire to allow a "tactical" approach to be taken by the Duty Class competitors. It would be interesting to compare the results of such a competition.

We can continue to spin our wheels going nowhere with this ongoing debate or we can do something to preserve and put back the practicality in practical shooting. How about it?

Regards,
D.T. Birch
Past Coordinator
IPSC British Columbia, Canada

RAKKASANS REUNITE ...

Sirs:

I served as a paratrooper with the 187th "Rakkasans" during the Korean War and would appreciate your help now. The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, known as the "Rakkasans," the only Regimental Parachute Combat Team to fight and serve in that war, has recently formed an association. They are conducting a campaign to locate all former "Rakkasans" and members of Airborne/Ranger companies.

Please have them contact Robert F. Gilbert, National Membership Coordinator, 3657 Irwin Way, Columbus, GA 31906, phone: (404) 687-6027 for details of the association, as well as details about the reunion.

Robert F. Gilbert ✕

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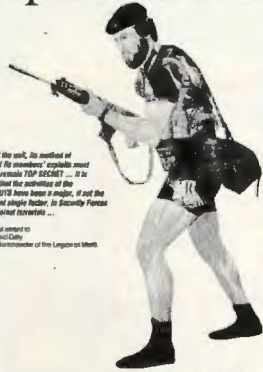


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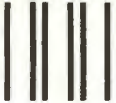
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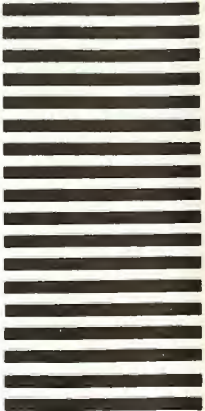
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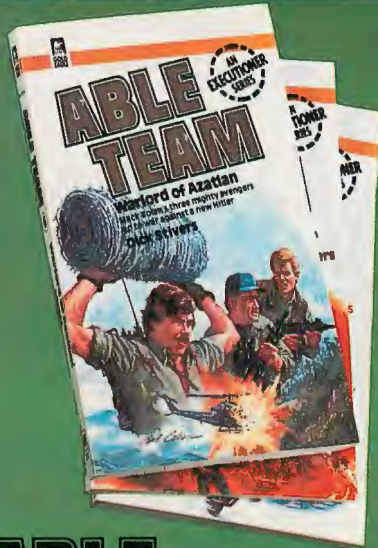
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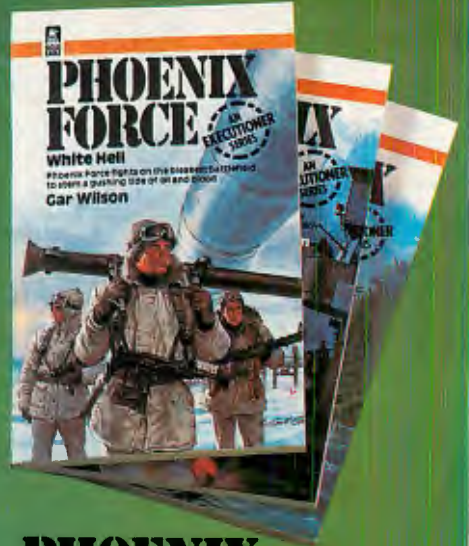
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