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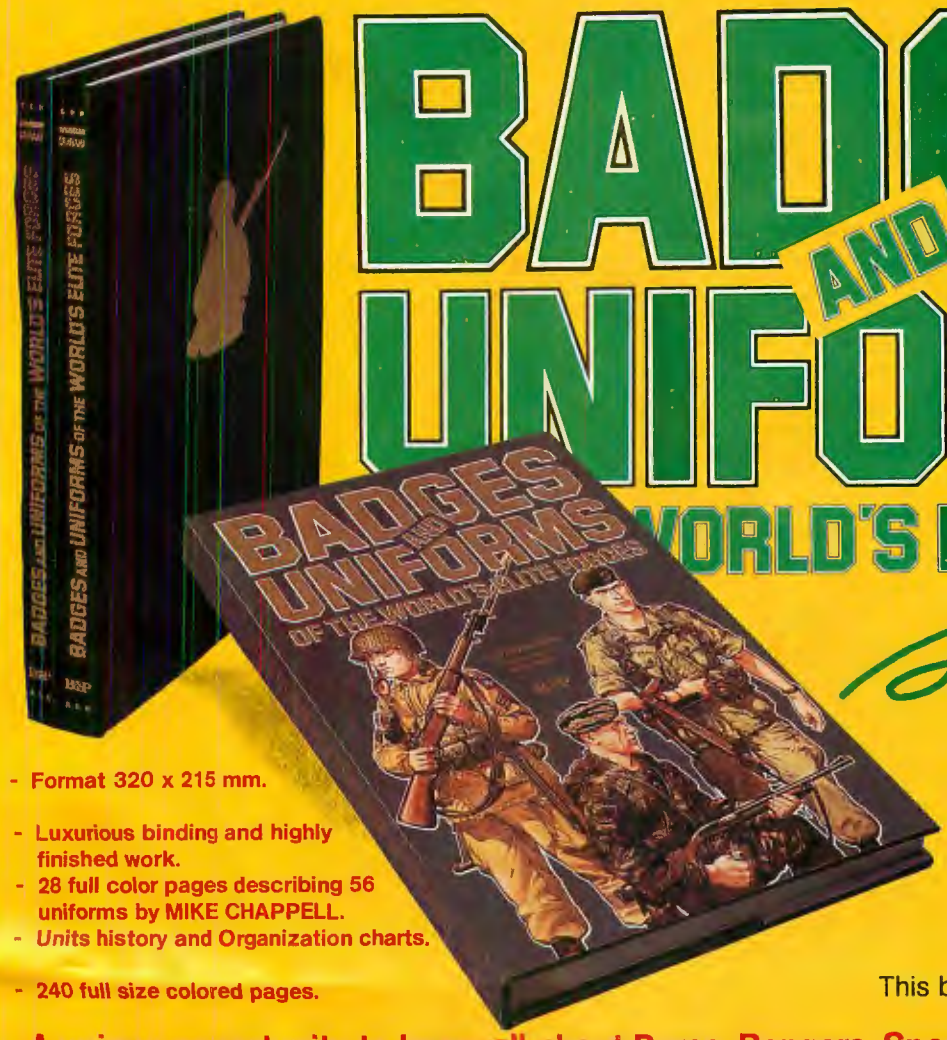

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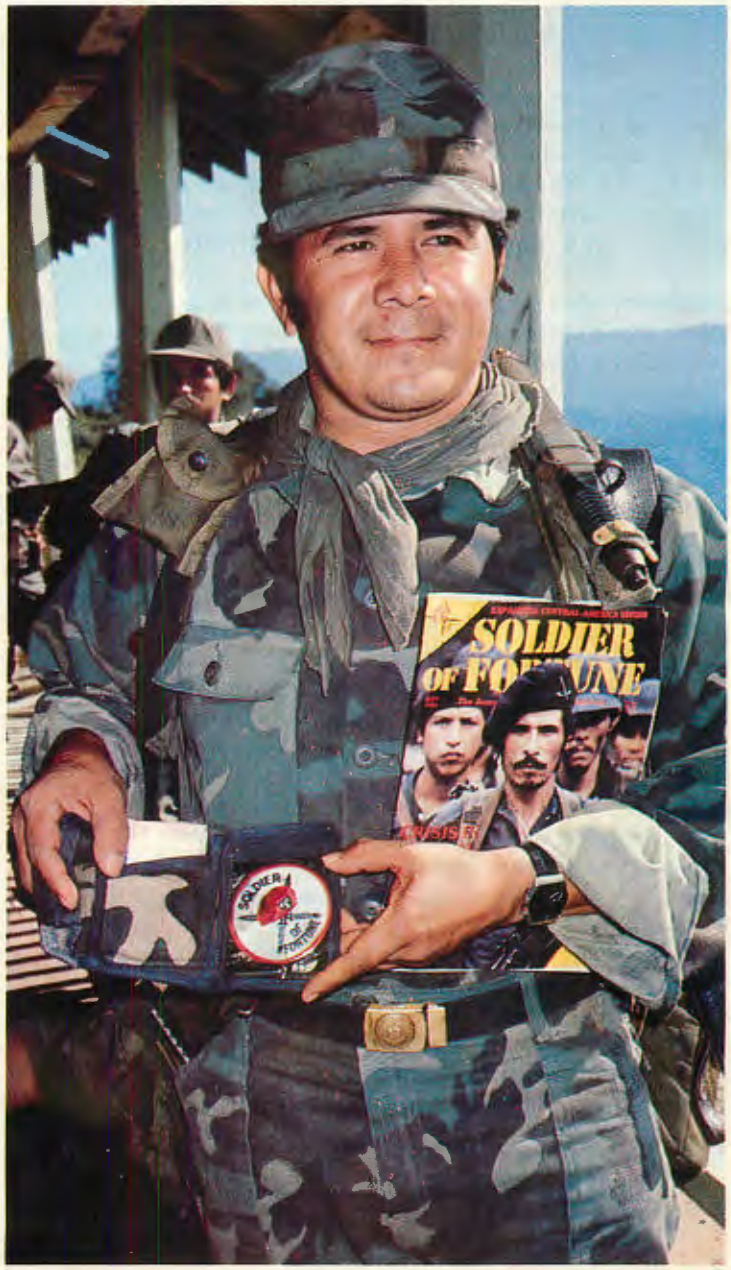
SOF

JANUARY/1984 VOL. 9, NO. 1



Page 56

COVER: John Donovan discusses tactics via PRC-77 radio with other members of the SOF team during ambush, counter-ambush training at the Atlacatl Battalion. Photo: Ralph Edens

EDITOR'S NOTE

Refugee Relief International, Inc., a non-profit tax-exempt organization dedicated to providing medical and other assistance to refugees and displaced persons throughout the world, was founded in 1982.

Its first major commitment has been to help the people of El Salvador with medical aid and education. There are more than 250,000 internal refugees in El Salvador, including over 90,000 in Morazan Department alone. These country people have been driven from their homes by Cuban-supported guerrillas based in Nicaragua and "refugee camps" in Honduras, whose tactics range from extortion to terrorism. Others are jobless as a result of the terrorist attacks on the country's economy.

In response to this Central American tragedy, Refugee Relief International has sent three volunteer medical teams to El Salvador in 1983 as well more than 3,000 pounds of medical supplies and equipment. These unpaid workers treated nearly 2,000 Salvadoran civilians and soldiers and taught personal and public hygiene and health.

Refugee Relief International also has made two medical missions to Honduras to treat the Nicaraguan refugees, mostly Miskito Indians, who have fled the Marxist Sandinista regime and resettled in camps in Honduras. On the last trip, which will be reported in February's *Soldier of Fortune,* RRII medics treated Nicaraguan Democratic Front (FDN) Contras and refugees in a field hospital. They found conditions there similar to those in El Salvador: poorly trained medics, lack of medical supplies and equipment, and little understanding of the relationship between sanitation and health.

Since much of the sickness in El Salvador, Honduras and other Central American countries is caused by unpurified water and lack of even simple public and personal health measures, education in these areas will be of greater long-term benefit than the treatment of individual cases. In addition, the lives of several soldiers of the democratically elected government of El Salvador were saved by quick action by team medics.

But much more remains to be done. The initial donations by Robert K. Brown, Editor/Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune* and *Survive* Magazines, and others made this initial effort a success. These funds, however, are almost entirely spent. The sick, the wounded and the displaced need your help.

Your donation will be well-spent: In three months of 1983 RRII spent approximately $14,000 for medical treatment in El Salvador. The organization continues to need donations of food, clothing, medical supplies and money for Nicaraguan refugees living in areas controlled by the FDN or friendly governments.

The people of Central America need your help. Please contact:

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Small Arms
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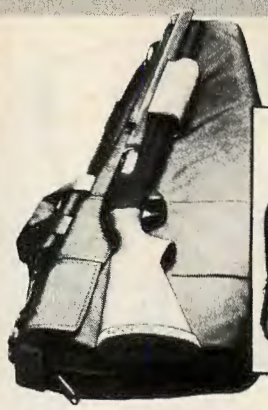

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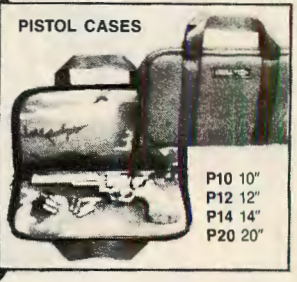

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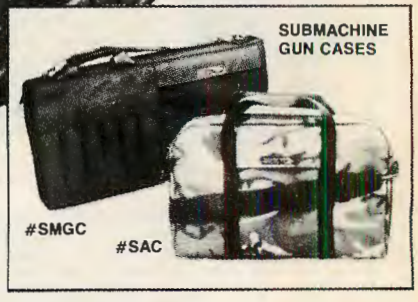

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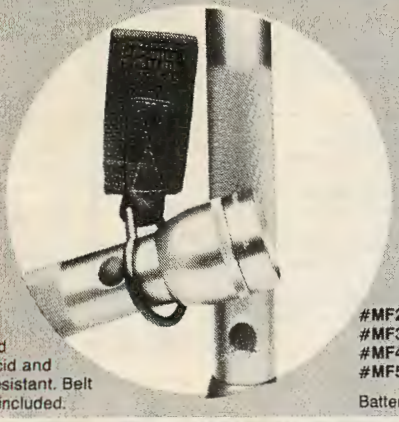

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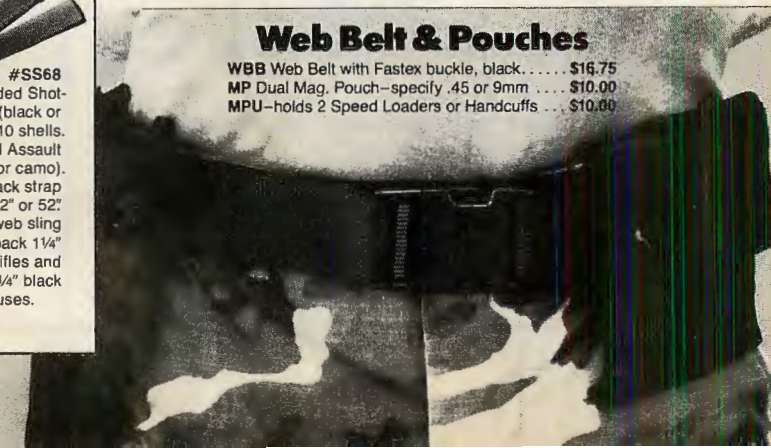

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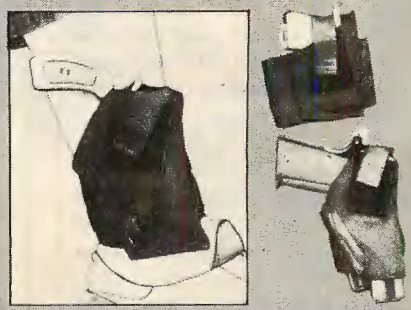

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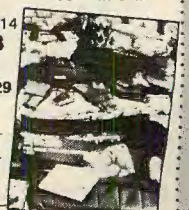

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HEROES DESERVE MORE...

Sirs:

SOF, you've done it again. While reading the excellent accounts of "Three Battles," by Edward Doyle (see SOF July and August '83), I became so involved that I believed I was at Helicopter Valley with the Marines, at the Iron Triangle with the 173rd Airborne and at Ia Drang Valley with the 1/7 Cav. I wanted to reach out and help the wounded and found tears running down my face at the end of each article.

To know what those brave men went through saddened me. I cursed the government for its no-win attitude. How can the politicians of the Vietnam War era sleep at night, knowing what they put those soldiers through? And now they still won't help the vets.

All Vietnam vets are my heroes, and I will continue to support them in every way.

Joe Hlywiak
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

FRAGGING ETIQUETTE...

Sirs:

I liked Thomas Edwards' "G.I. Jargon" (see SOF, October '83). I served in 'Nam myself and have a comment regarding your definition of Frag: "to kill an unpopular officer or NCO."

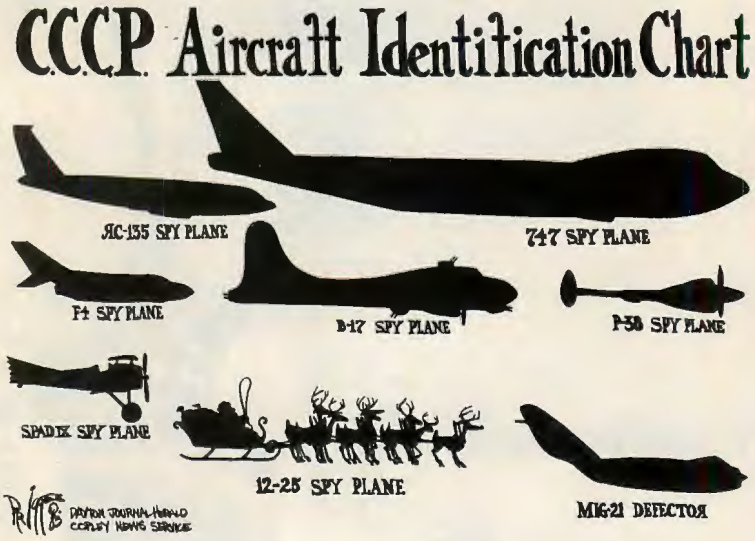
There was a little more to it than that. Even an officer or NCO who was a real prick was safe. The only time he was in danger was when his men considered him a threat to survival. An officer who was a coward or showed no regard for his men's safety could expect a message from his men, but there were "rules" about it. He had to know it was coming and had to be given a chance to avoid it. The most common warning the potential victim received was discovery of a grenade in his boot some morning, pin still in place.

My outfit had an SFC who announced on his arrival that he was going to make his "hound's tooth" and he didn't care how many men had to die for him to do it. Four days later he found a message in his boot. He decided to be hard-nosed about it and two days later his hootch was blown to hell. He got the idea and left.

A threat to our survival was seen as the only justification for wasting one of our own. It becomes a matter of self defense, not murder. It's a sad commentary on the way things were done, but that's the way it was.

Larry Hayes
Warwick, Rhode Island

You are correct, our definition of "fragging" was not specific enough. "Fragging" was not invented in Vietnam; it probably started out as "stoning" with the very first military engagement in history. Like "atrocities" and the "drug problem," it was blown out of proportion by people who were never there. — The Eds.



REMEMBER THE 007...

Sirs:

Enclosed find a check for $100 to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund. We send this in memory of Congressman Larry McDonald of Georgia, who spent much of his life warning us of the evils and dangers of communism.

The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

Eric and Rita Martin
Hannacroix, New York

AT LEAST IT'S NOT McQUICHE...

Sirs:

A Bulletin Board item in your October '83 issue mentioned the installment of a McDonald's at Camp Pendleton. Jim Graves and Bob Poos apparently believe this confirms their idea that the west coast never did turn out real Marines anyway.

I probably speak for thousands of Pendleton graduates when I say we're sick and tired of that east-coast boast. I'd like to know just what makes the Lejeune Prunes think they were such better Marines.

I served with 2nd Bn., 3rd Marines, in Vietnam from February '68 to March '69. I pulled my 13, was wounded twice and received combat promotions up to sergeant in 16 months in the *real* Marines, with decorations aplenty. All of us, from both coasts, served with pride and honor and I've never seen any difference. I might add 2/3 were the first friendlies to fight our way into Khe Sanh during the siege, and plenty of Lejeune grads were there to welcome us.

I was a real Marine then, am now, and I can still prove it.

David Brombaugh
Brookville, Ohio

No insult was intended, for as you know the "Hollywood Marine" bit was always a friendly gig. Our Bulletin Board writer overheard Poos and me giving our Boulder USMC recruiter a little hell one night for not having gone to Parris Island and just dropped in the reference. Marines are Marines, east or west coast, and forever. — Jim Graves.

IS IT AN ADVENTURE?...

Sirs:

I'm interested in training as a mercenary. A mercenary friend of mine spent several years in the U.S. Army learning his trade, and his suggestion is that I do the same. But I'm fairly set in my ways and don't like the idea of spending four or more years being underpaid with no guarantee of actually learning what I desire.

Continued on page 102

"BOMB THE DEVILS"

"We shall bomb the devils 'round the clock 'til they get no rest."—Winston Churchill to the British House of Commons, reporting on his Casablanca Conference with President Roosevelt in January of 1943.

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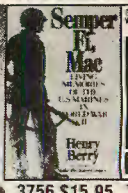

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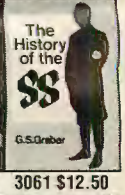

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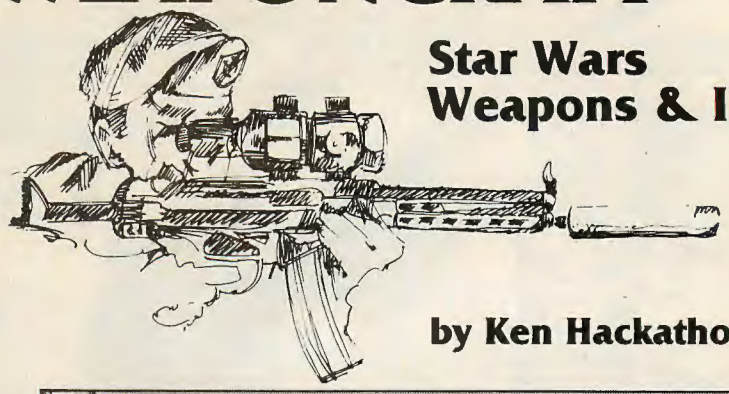

Star Wars Weapons & IPSC

by Ken Hackathorn

PRACTICAL shooting was supposed to stay practical. That's the reason they made the word a permanent part of the name of competitive combat shooting's best organization: International Practical Shooting Confederation. But in national- and international-class competition, shooting isn't practical any more. And it won't be practical until something controls the spread of gadget guns.

Don't get me wrong: I still think IPSC is the best thing going for civilian weapons training. Modern practical courses are fast, demanding, realistic and as much fun to watch as they are to shoot. Because of the flexibility of course design and freedom allowed competitors, nobody is ever going to get a stranglehold on the championship flight. New talent shows up at the top of the charts every year.

But IPSC's first principles left a loophole that needs closing. Jeff Cooper made practical shooting different from any other kind of shooting competition when he said that the contest should be organized around objectives and competitors should be left alone to get results. That's what makes IPSC more like combat than any other competition. But that's what started the gadget guns.

Not too long ago anyone with a full-dress Hoag or Swenson was really getting into custom equipment. By current standards those guns are primitive. At the 1983 IPSC National Championships there was a handful of nearly-stock five-inch Government Model pistols, but 90 percent of the shooters I saw had compensators or pin guns. Out-of-the-box blasters may have been there, but I didn't see a single one.

But I'm not complaining about the guns themselves. They do their job as well as a gun can. Obviously, Behlert, Plaxco, Wilson, Clark, Brown, Heinie and the other dozens of gunsmiths who specialize in IPSC weapons know how to build performance into a firearm. It's just that the products aren't practical.

Now, the people who use these guns to win matches will tell you that custom pistols are as practical as you can get: They are practical for winning matches. I'm not going to argue with them that IPSC competition isn't a game. It obviously is. But the thing that set IPSC apart — from the beginning — was trying to closely reproduce the field conditions under which firearms are actually used by soldiers, police or the private citizen in trouble.

Heavily modified weapons betray that original philosophy simply because soldiers won't be issued, police won't carry and self-defense-minded civilians won't buy a pistol that costs about one-tenth of what the average man in this country makes in a year. That may sound like it doesn't have anything to do with combat shooting. But think about it: Is a Clark's Pin-Gun — as fine as it is to shoot — likely to find its way to a SWAT-team hostage siege? Of course not. It costs too much. And the difference in performance between a custom blaster and a service pistol is great enough that IPSC competition may be on the edge of losing its training value.

Luke Skywalker's sidearms: (top to bottom) Watson's Comp-Gun, Behlert's Heavy-Comp, John Shaw's own ported Clark Pin-Gun, Wilson's Accu-Comp, Greg Moats' Brown Maxi-Comp, Nastoff-Comp-fitted Heinie Combat .45. Photo: Ken Hackathorn

Also, the Star Wars weapons are usually heavier and bulkier than service pistols. A competition piece can be bigger and heavier than one you wear every day. But every fraction of an inch added to the heater will make it harder to hide. Every ounce added for recoil resistance is going to make the gun that much less comfortable to carry.

I'm not going to ask for new rules. Jeff Cooper was the one who said practical shooting competition had to be defined by tasks, not rules, and he was right. I think we need to police ourselves. Only if the competitors dedicate their efforts to keeping IPSC practical will it stay practical. I won't shoot a pistol in a match that is significantly different from the one I carry other times. I hope you feel the same way.

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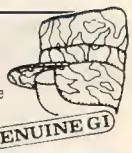

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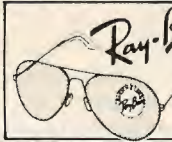

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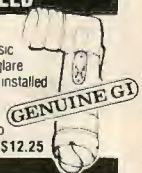

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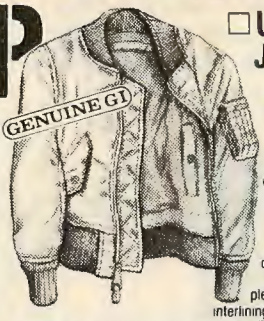

These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for Intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20 ° to 55 °F). Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible; outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features: two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sewn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend.
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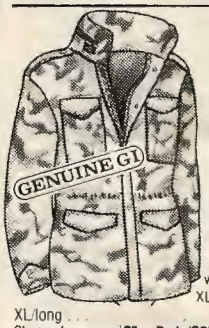

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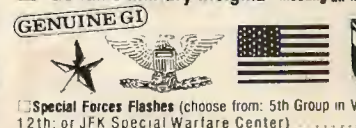

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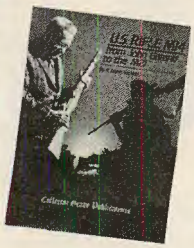
IN REVIEW

U.S. RIFLE M14: From John Garand to the M21. By R. Blake Stevens. Collector Grade Publications, P.O. Box 250, Station 'E', Toronto, M6H 4E2, Canada. 1983. 340 pp. Black-and-white photos and illustrations. $34.95. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.



AFTER reading and reviewing R. Blake Stevens' awesome three volume series on the FN FAL rifle (see SOF, June '82, p. 13), I asked, "What does he do for an encore?" His response, **U.S. Rifle M14: From John Garand to the M21**, is equally impressive and a logical extension of the FAL series. It was, after all, the FAL which so convincingly outperformed the U.S. entries — the T47 and T44 (which was later to become the M14) — in the 1952 Light Rifle Trials at Ft. Benning.

But, as Stevens points out, the twisted, agonizing story of the M14 must necessarily start with the M1 Garand. The United States was the first nation of consequence to issue a gas-operated infantry rifle. After giving a brief history of Springfield Armory and the Garand rifle, Stevens details the important WWII experiments with the M1, such as the roller lug eventually attached to the bolt's cam lug, the M1C and M1D sniper-rifle developments and experiments with the gas system. The M1E5, with an 18-inch barrel and folding stock, exists only as a single prototype in the Springfield Armory Museum, yet it propagated hundreds of counterfeit "Tanker Garands" which continue to surface at gun shows throughout the country.

Because of a selective-fire "paratroop" rifle recommendation in May 1944, Springfield Armory was assigned development of the T20. Firing full-auto from the open bolt and semiautomatically from the closed bolt, this modified Garand featured a slightly longer receiver. Remington's simultaneous efforts on the T22 are discussed, as well as their T27 rifle kit designed to convert the standard M1 rifle to selective fire. As the war soon ended, neither the T27 kit nor T20E2 rifle was ever fielded.

Stevens' fascinating story of raw ambition, power politics and eventual tragedy heats up during the post-World War II and Korea period with the manipulations of the Machiavellian Col. Rene R. Studler, chief of small-arms research and development for U.S. Army Ordnance from 1943 until 1953.

Studler championed the caliber .30 "Lightweight" cartridge (the T65 which led directly to the 7.62mm NATO round) and spearheaded U.S. opposition to the German *Sturmgewehr* concept of sacrificing cartridge range and power to gain weapon controllability and versatility. The vehicle for this cartridge was to be the T25 rifle, designed by Studler's protege, Earle Harvey.

This seven-pound marvel was to replace the M1 rifle, BAR, 1903A4, M1C and M1D sniper rifles, the M1/M2 Carbine and the M3A1 submachine gun. Amazingly, the rifle's weight requirement of seven pounds and the recoil produced by the T65 cartridge were not compatible and the weapon proved to be uncontrollable in full-auto fire.

Competing designs are given their due in Stevens' account. The T28 used a roller locked breech based on prototypes discovered in the experimental shop at the Mauser Werke at the end of the war. John Garand's T20E2 HB (Heavy Barrel) had a novel rate-of-fire reducer. Garand's unorthodox T31, a bullpup, was his final major project, but it was never finished. The Clarke Arms Company's T33 utilized an in-line tubular receiver and unique "clamshell" two-piece stock. Winchester even developed two models of the T35 (the designation applied to the last of a series of M1 rifles altered to fire the T65 cartridge) with the Johnson rotary magazine, as there was considerable user opposition to the idea of a detachable 20-round box magazine (based largely upon bitter wartime experiences with the easily-damaged BAR magazine).

Money vaporized in costly programs to debug the T47, as Harvey's T25 was now called, and Col. Studler finally decided to minimize his losses and abandon the T47 in favor of the M1 Garand-based T44, which production engineers at Springfield had said could be fabricated with only minor modifications to existing M1 machinery. Studler hoped the 1952 trials at Ft. Benning would torpedo the T47 once and for all. While the T47 did not fail conclusively, the test-board documents were juggled to endorse the T65E3 cartridge and the FN FAL and T44 rifles. After receiving the lion's share of time and funding for seven years, the T47 project was canceled.

Arguments for the T44 over the T48 (FN FAL) were that it weighed a pound less, contained fewer parts and springs, and featured a gas system which did not require manual gas-power adjustments. And its American origin was of no small consequence. Thus, after 12 years, this dinosaur of wood and steel was adopted on 1 May 1957 as the M14.

Production of the M14 brought forth a new sea of troubles. Rumors of scandal and production delays dogged the M14 until its final death rattle. Receivers and bolts of Harrington and Richardson manufacture self-destructed during test firing. It was political clout from the very beginning that got H&R its M14 contracts in the face of a dismal record as an M1 Garand producer. Winchester did not even initiate quantity production until a month after their first contract was to have been completed. Only TRW (Thompson-Ramo-Wooldridge, Inc.) and Springfield Armory could be proud of the professional, trouble-free manner in which they fulfilled their M14 commitments.

Ah, but it was little David who slew Goliath. The M14's critics were by this time legion and most banded together under the banner of the then-new Armalite AR-15 rifle and the .223-caliber cartridge. During the later part of 1962, Aberdeen Proving Ground conducted a comparative evaluation of the AR-15 and M14 rifles. The official report stated that "...only the M14 is acceptable for general use in the U.S. Army."

But the evidence seemed to point the other way, and investigation revealed that the following mandate had been received from above: "The U.S. Army Infantry Board will conduct those tests that will reflect adversely on the AR-15 rifle."

The rigged tests proved to be the last straw and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara terminated procurement of the M14. With the conclusion of its five-year production history in 1964, a grand total of about 1,380,000 M14 rifles had been manufactured. McNamara, in his pique over the sordid affair, sounded the death knell for Springfield Armory as well.

The M14's three basic flaws were 1) its poor stability on automatic fire (never corrected even with the M14E2); 2) its 44.3-inch length, which inhibited its ability to replace such specialized weapons as the submachine gun, and 3) its inherent inaccuracy. As Stevens points out in part two of his monumental effort, this latter criticism was squarely met by Lt. Col. Francis B. Conway (USA-Ret.) who turned the M14 into "the finest sniping rifle ever fielded in the history of the world" — the M21 sniper rifle system which incorporates the Leatherwood ART scope.

Appendices covering copies and clones, accessories and ancillaries, and M14 rifle nomenclature conclude this epic endeavor. Stevens' book is without doubt the bottom line on the M14. The illustrations alone are worth the price. The text flows from one nefarious intrigue to the next while we are saturated with technological data in a most painless manner.

Absolutely required reading for students of military small arms and those who wish to know how small men operate in high places and great men are so often shunted aside by the ruthless games people play. The book is as revealing of human nature as it is of the weapons it details. Now what does he do for an encore?

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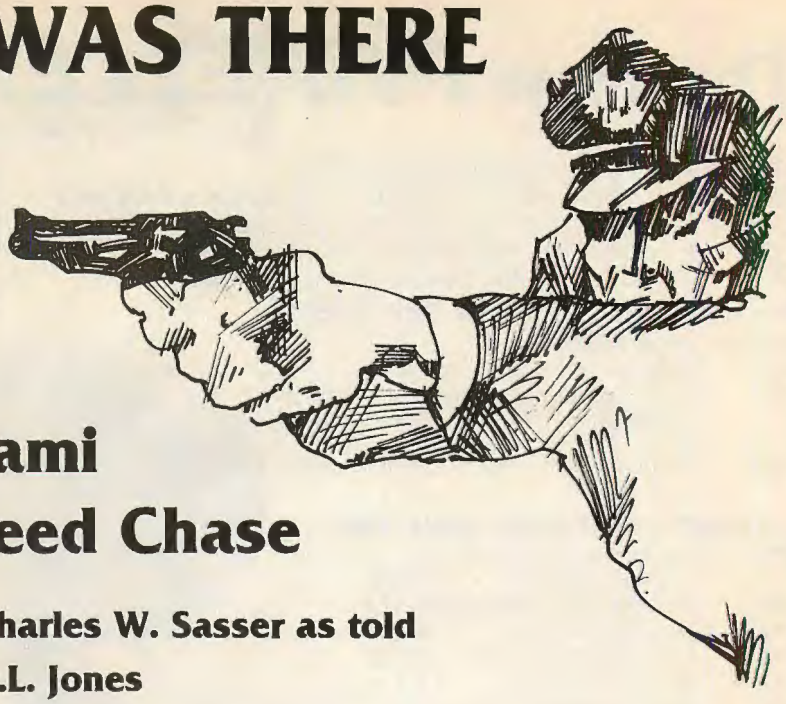


Miami Speed Chase

by Charles W. Sasser as told to M.L. Jones

Charles Sasser is now a free-lance author but his busy career has also included 10 years in the Special Forces (see "Intrigue in Africa," SOF, July '83, and "Korea Waits for War," SOF, October '83) and 14 years as a policeman (see "I Was There," SOF, June '81). As he tells it:

THE emergency beeper interrupted the Saturday night chatter on the police radio, followed by: "Armed robbery in progress. Convenience store at Tamiami Trail and the Miami River. One black male suspect in an older-model black Dodge two-door. Units in vicinity respond."

I snatched up my mike and barked my call number. My backup in the adjoining zone followed with his. Apparently, Officer Albert Harrison's hunch matched mine.

Both of us, Miami, Fla., policemen, worked what was known in 1967 as the Central Negro District, or CND. Harrison was a tall, lanky, black officer who had been my sparring partner at the police academy. Since then, we had worked adjacent patrol districts in the downtown ghetto. We were known as "Salt and Pepper." We knew how each other worked.

"Advise 911, I've got Seventh Avenue," Harrison radioed.

"QSL," I responded. "I've got Fifth Street."

We knew from experience that a black man committing a crime in the Cuban neighborhood on the other side of the Miami River would try to cross back over to hide in the CND. To do that, he would have to run for the bridge at the apex of Fifth Street and Seventh Avenue. Harrison covered one of these streets. I covered the other.

Harrison picked him up highballing it down Seventh.

"He's running!" the policeman radioed. "North on Seventh. A black 1961 Dodge. One black male occupant."

I whipped onto Second Avenue to parallel the chase, flipping on my reds and siren. Second Avenue was the busiest street in the CND. It was lined with "blind pigs" playing raucous music, junk cars and pedestrians. Aside from Seventh Avenue, it was also the only thoroughfare to 12th Street and the nearest entrance to the I-95 expressway.

I suspected the thief would try for I-95 rather than continue north on Seventh and take the chance of being caught in a police roadblock. I was right.

Somehow I managed to run the Second Avenue gauntlet without creaming another vehicle or taking out any pedestrians. But I had fallen behind in the chase. By the time I careened around the corner onto 12th, I saw flashing reds and heard Harrison's siren screaming toward me. I might stand a chance of winning the race to the on-ramp, but even if I did block it I knew we'd all likely end up in a violent three-car crash.

Instead, I whipped my steering wheel hard and skidded the scout car sideways across 12th. Before it stopped sliding, I was out on the pavement with my .38 leveled at the approaching car, intent on blasting the bastard right out of that Dodge.

Harrison was too close on his ass. I might hit him. I held my fire.

The Dodge jumped the curb, sailed 50 feet, and when it had righted itself it was on I-95 roaring north with Harrison on his tail and me after Harrison.

I pegged my speedometer. The squad car rocked and weaved at the high speed. Wind shrieked past my open window. Up ahead, the suspect was whipping his car in and out of traffic, trying to lose us.

Failing that, he began shooting at us. I glimpsed his muzzle flashes and heard the sharp, angry popping of a small-caliber automatic. I couldn't believe it. It was everything I could do to control my car, and here the bandit was driving at more than 100 mph and *shooting* at us!

"This is 912!" Harrison reported to the dispatcher. "This gentleman is shooting at us now!"

"He's no gentleman!" I radioed back. Harrison and I were side by side on the expressway.

At the 36th Street cloverleaf, the Dodge took one of the exits that crossed high over the other driving lanes. The bandit was still popping a round at us every few seconds. We later found where he had riddled the back of his own car.

The Dodge swerved in the cloverleaf curve. There was a final muzzle flash, and then the black car began fishtailing. It bounced off the outer siderailing in a shower of sparks, rebounded across three lanes and hit the inner siderailing in another fireworks display. After that, the car was like a steel ball in one of those perpetual motion machines that keeps going faster and faster until it beats itself to pieces. Flipping once, the car hit back on its wheels and skidded 100 feet backwards before crashing into the railing.

Harrison and I were busy for an incredibly dangerous second as we fought to avoid piling up ourselves. I skidded up beside the wrecked Dodge. Harrison skidded past.

We hit the pavement running, but the bandit was still ahead of us. He tried to fire, but his gun was empty. He flung it aside and, before we could return fire, leaped over the railing toward the driving lanes 50 feet below. Money from the robbery was being picked up by ocean breezes and tossed floating about the cloverleaf.

Fortunately for the thief, he hit a sloped grassy divide and only broke his ankle and knocked himself unconscious. When he came to, he found two police specials aimed at his head. And neither of us cops was driving a car to deflect our aim.

"Move and you're a dead turkey," Harrison promised.

He didn't move, although he had to have the last word: "Say, man, you pigs is always picking on me!"

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

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

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

BULLETIN BOARD

by Donna DuVall

ARMY TRAINING SCHOOL REMAINS IN PANAMA...

Under the terms of the Panama Canal Treaty, control of Ft. Gulick's School of the Americas will pass from the United States to Panama on 1 October 1984. The school, a key military training base for Latin American armies, will be renamed the Panamanian Institute of Military Sciences, will fly the Panamanian flag instead of Old Glory and will be commanded by the *comandante* of the Panamanian National Guard, currently Gen. Manuel A. Noriega, who attended the school.

But the curriculum, though expanded to include instruction in civic action, and the faculty, composed of 131 U.S. soldiers and 30 Latin American officers, will remain virtually unchanged.

Apparently, the worsening Central American crisis convinced the Panamanian civil and military authorities that the training facility, in which the United States will continue to have a "major say," is needed to turn out professional, well-trained Latin American armies. Since 1980, enrollment at the school has tripled to its current daily average of 450 students. Of the 2,500 1983 graduates, nearly half are from El Salvador.

Other graduates of the school include presidents, defense ministers, army commanders and chiefs of staff of most Latin American countries, where politics and the military do mix. Recently retired *comandante* of the Panamanian National Guard, Ruben Daria Paredes, who negotiated the agreement with the U.S. Army to leave the training school in Panama and is currently campaigning for president of Panama, attended the school, also.

Morazan Department Commander Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz (second from left) looks over SOF-donated PRC-77 handsets and flashlights. SOF gave 110 handsets to various Salvadoran units, bringing three battalions up to strength. Delivering the equipment was SOF's Director of Special Projects Alex McColl (right).

FREEDOM FIGHTERS FUNDS...

The struggle to overthrow Soviet-inspired tyrannies in Afghanistan and Nicaragua goes on. The Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters are in need of boots (small sizes), compasses, binoculars, canteens, web equipment, fatigue and camouflage uniforms (small sizes), etc. Donations of cash (not tax-deductible) to help defray the cost of shipping donated items to the Contras is also welcome. (Make checks payable to *Soldier of Fortune* for Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters.) Items for the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters should be sent to Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters Fund, *Soldier of Fortune,* 5735 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80303, or Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters Fund, *National Vietnam Veterans Review,* 2722 Bragg Road, Fayetteville, NC 28303.

For the Afghan Freedom Fighters, distance and customs restrictions make cash the most effective means of aiding the mujahideen in their holy war against the Russians. The money, none of which is used for administrative expenses, will be sent directly to the Afghans who can use it to buy supplies and equipment. Please make checks payable to Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, and send to *Soldier of Fortune,* P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

None of these donations is tax-deductible (we haven't yet convinced the IRS that killing communists is a charitable activity), but donors will receive a certificate of appreciation from SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown.

Death to tyrants.

TEEN CLOBBERS RUSSIANS...

Brandon Hose, 17, of San Diego, Calif., has ruffled the Russians with a T-shirt he designed. The T-shirt, which shows an American fist shattering a hammer and sickle, the word Russia with the letters R,S and I crossed out (leaving, appropriately enough, USA) and the slogan "USA — All the Way!", elicited a response from the Russian satirical periodical, *Crocodile,* comparable to *National Lampoon* magazine.

"Dirty Underwear Made in USA," read the headline in *Crocodile.* The article continued: "For all of $7.50, plus $1.50 handling, you can receive a T-shirt on which is emblazoned the certainty of a full and swift U.S. victory over Russia." Calling the T-shirt design an "example of propagandistic usage of a mass-produced com-

modity," the Russian magazine mistranslated the slogan to read "No Other Way," instead of "All the Way."

Hose got the idea from reading *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine and ran an ad in SOF's March '83 issue. (So the Russians must be reading SOF, also.) He has received orders from all 50 states and Canada, Norway, Denmark and Finland. But none from the KGB.

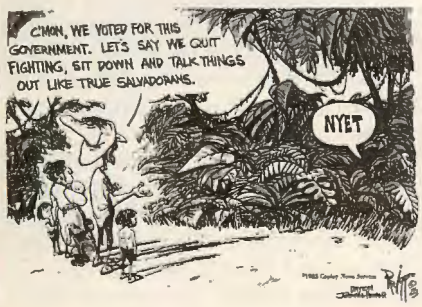
ARMY TANKED OFF OVER M1...

If you're in the market for a new tank and are considering an M1, look under the hood before you buy. It may not have an engine.

Complications resulting from late delivery of the M1 engine from its sole manufacturer, the Lycoming Division of AVCO Corp., have put the Army in a precarious position. Either it must temporarily close down the M1 production lines, which involves paying a substantial penalty to its manufacturer, General Dynamics, or take the engines from finished M1s and reinstall them in new tanks rolling off the assembly lines — at a cost of $11,000 per tank — thus keeping the production lines going.

The Army prefers the latter option because it says it's cheaper than shutting down production. However, the Army's contract with AVCO has no provison for penalizing the manufacturer for late delivery of the engines. In addition to not delivering on time, one congressional report stated that 26 percent of the engines AVCO produced during a 10-month period were "defective and required repair work before they could pass inspection."

Evidently, AVCO's performance isn't even good enough for government work.



REVOLTING MUSIC...

Bob Poos picked up an interesting and rather amusing footnote during his coverage of the unsuccessful July *coup d'etat* attempt in Guatemala — just one month before the successful takeover by former Defense Minister Oscar Humberto Mejia Victores.

Oldtime Guatemalan hands judge a coup's progress by the music played over television. Day- and/or night-long martial music accompanied by taped film of marching troops bodes ill for the government.

On the day of Rios Montt's July confrontation with his generals and colonels, that's the way the music began. Then, later, marimba music signalled an easing of tensions and, ultimately, that gave way to popular American tunes. Said the veterans, all that remained was the cutting of deals and assembling of details.

The easy-listening tunes didn't fill Guatemala's airwaves for long, however. Heavy martial music began again, this time in earnest, on 8 August, communicating an end to Rios Montt's 16-month reign.

TUNED-IN TANK...

When the M1 Abrams tank is fully assembled, complete with engine and all, it is an impressive piece of weaponry. Being justifiably proud of the new tank, the Army gave a VIP demonstration to selected military cognoscenti and journalists. *Armed Forces Journal* reported the three parts of the briefings as follows: The first briefer stressed that, although all components were important, the automotive elements were what made the tank run. The second briefer reiterated that indeed all components were essential to the M1, but it was the communication features that separated this tank from the rest of the field. The third briefer, who explained the gunnery features, said, "Gentleman, while it is true that all a tank's systems are important, I would like to remind you that without its armament, the M1 tank is nothing but a 54-ton portable radio."

BALKING BALTIC BLOC...

There's trouble in paradise — the workers' paradise that is. Western analysts think that Comecon, the Soviet bloc's version of the European Economic Community, is in serious trouble.

As evidence, they point to the surprising announcement by Moscow that the Comecon summit, five years overdue, has been called off indefinitely. It is well known that in his last years, Leonid Brezhnev attempted unsuccessfully to convene the delegation, attendance for which supposedly is mandatory by member states. Yuri Andropov, Brezhnev's successor, also met with the same fate when he tried to convene the members this past year. Apparently, one or more of the representatives (rumored to be Romania and/or Hungary) refused to attend.

Poland, Western experts feel, provides only the most blatant example of what all other Comecon nations — Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia and Romania — have to deal with: Their economic survival depends upon trade with the West. And to trade with the West (and get hard currency in return instead of the worthless communist chits or unwanted in-kind products from other bloc nations), those countries need credit from the West, particularly from the United States. For more on how the West should

Continued on page 97

FULL AUTO

Hot MGs

by Peter G. Kokalis

THE very first time you wrap your bare hand around a hot machine-gun barrel will 1) probably be the last; 2) prevent the authorities from ever taking your fingerprints again; and 3) demonstrate the importance of heat dispersion in automatic weapons. It is to this latter consideration that we will direct our attention.

Squad machine guns are expected to perform three functions, all of which require different rates of fire. Suppressive fire is used to inhibit enemy movement and prevent him from interfering with the deployment of friendly forces. This can usually be accomplished by firing no more than 40 to 60 rounds per minute. The guns should be capable of maintaining these rates for as long as an hour.

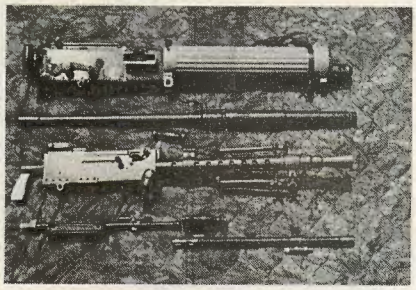
To curtail enemy movement completely and prevent him from returning fire, the rate of fire must be increased to about 100 rounds per minute. This rate can be maintained for no more than two or three minutes. Finally, short intervals at maximum effective rates (more than 200 rounds per minute) are sometimes necessary upon initial contact during an ambush or to establish fire superiority.

Heat is generated at all these levels of fire. While some heat comes from the friction between the projectile and the bore, most results from the propellant gases. The total amount of heat produced is a function of the propellant's charge weight, its burning rate and the flame temperature. Propellant flame temperatures average close to 2,000 degrees Celsius. The amount of this heat which gets transferred to the barrel depends upon the chemistry of the gases, the barrel material, the bore's area and the temperature difference between the barrel and the gases. Heat input is greatest at the chamber end of the barrel and decreases toward the muzzle. For this reason, barrel thickness usually increases toward the chamber. Also, heat input generally increases with increase in caliber.

Three processes are involved in heat movement from the bore to the barrel's surface and thence to the atmosphere. Heat moves from the bore to the barrel's outer surface principally by conduction. Theoretically, a thin barrel would speed conduction of heat to the barrel surface. However, heat loss to the atmosphere remains so slow that overheating would still occur; to minimize this, designers thicken the walls to create, in essence, a heat reservoir.

Movement of heat away from the barrel by natural convection is of small consequence, except in aircraft guns. As the temperature of the barrel rises, thermal radiation becomes the primary form of heat loss. However, heat input remains far in excess of heat loss by convection and radiation and that's when the piper starts to play.

Wear is mechanical abrasion caused by the projectile moving down the barrel. Layers of metal are gradually removed from the bore. Erosion is the etching away of the bore's surface by hot propellant gases. High barrel temperatures accelerate both effects and can destroy a machine-gun barrel in a matter of minutes. To prevent this, bore temperatures must remain below 550 C.



Overheating cures: (top to bottom) water jacket on Vickers MMG, heavy barrel for .50-cal. M2, ventilation sleeve on .30-cal. 1919A6, (left) Beretta 70/78 SAW quick-change barrel and (right) finned barrel from Japanese Type 99 LMG. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

High barrel temperatures also temporarily expand the bore diameter by .028mm per 100 C rise and weaken barrel strength enough to induce permanent deformation. U.S. Army experiments in this area demonstrated that not only will projectile yaw occur with resulting decrease in accuracy, but barrel deformation can be so severe that bullets exit out the *sides* of the barrel!

Premature ignition of the cartridge, referred to as "cook-off," looms as a real possibility when barrel temperatures greater than 250 C are maintained for more than a minute, since ignition temperatures for small-arms propellants range between 180 and 200 C. The cartridge case itself offers some protection because it takes time for the chamber heat to pass through the case walls to reach the powder. So, as long as the round remains in the chamber only momentarily, cook-off is not a problem.

For this reason, most machine guns used in the sustained-fire role fire from the open bolt. Although accuracy is sacrificed, the trade-off is considered acceptable since these weapons are most often used to engage area, rather than point, targets. A notable exception is the Browning system (in both .30- and .50-caliber), which effectively employs closed-bolt operation by use of a low cyclic rate and massive operating parts for greater heat absorption.

The problem of overheating has been part and parcel of machine guns since the beginning of their widespread adoption at the end of the 19th century. Water cooling was the prevalent early solution. Liquids absorb heat far more efficiently than gases. However, the problems of water resupply, the vulnerability of the jacket to puncture by enemy rounds and, most important, the tremendous increase in weight are unacceptable by today's "fire and movement" armies. Ventilated sleeves, supposed to provide air cooling, are of dubious value, except possibly to the gunners who must handle them.

Another early answer was the finning of barrels (most commonly at the chamber end — the area of greatest heat input). The most celebrated examples were the various French Hotchkiss medium machine guns. In theory, increasing the barrel's surface area will increase the rate of heat loss to the atmosphere. But, unless there is an air flow over the fins, the cooling effect is negligible. In addition, finned barrels are costly to produce. This practice has all but faded into obscurity, one notable exception being the new Beretta 70/78 squad automatic weapon (5.56mm NATO), whose quick-change barrel is finned.

Heavy barrels act as great heat reservoirs and can be fired for longer periods at higher rates than lighter barrels. Their usually unpalatable trade-off is an increase in weight. For weapons in which this can be accepted, such as the Browning .50-cal. M2 HB, it will more than do the job.

Barrel liners have been used for some time now to reduce wear and erosion. The Soviets have had chrome-lined bores since before WWII. Stellite (a hard alloy of chromium, molybdenum and cobalt) liners are used in the chamber end of M60 barrels and have been used in Browning barrels since the Korean War.

The Brits never could come up with the necessary mass-production technology and dropped this feature from their version of the FN MAG. My personal experience has been that stellite-lined .50-cal. Browning barrels are not as accurate as unlined barrels at ranges beyond 1,000 meters.

Quick-change barrels are today an almost required parameter of the squad automatic. Although they can be used to avoid the problems of wear and erosion, they will not prevent cook-offs since not much firing is necessary before the barrel temperature reaches 250 C.

The gradual move from IMR powders to ball propellants during the last several decades is partially an attempt to reduce heat input. Although ball powders do burn cooler, they greatly increase fouling in gas-operated guns.

And what's the bottom line on all this to the gunners in the field? If your weapon fires from the open bolt and has a quick-change barrel, fire to win and pitch the shot-out barrel in a ditch when it's all over!

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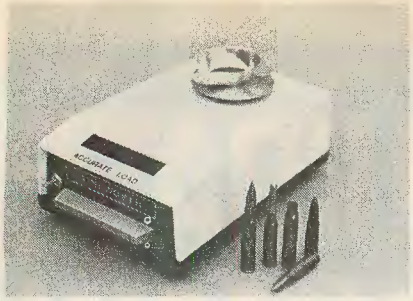
ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by John Metzger



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High technology rolls on, even in that ancient procedure, the reloading of ammunition. The *Ainsworth* Accurate Load scale with LED readout instantly weighs powder charges and bullets with accuracy to ±.1 grain or ±.01 gram. SOF's Peter Kokalis gives it his highest recommendation: "When reloading large quantities for full-auto fire, accuracy and speed are all-important and only the best will do." The scale sells for $499. For information, write the *Ainsworth Division,* Denver Instrument Co., Dept. SOF, 2050 S. Pecos St., Denver, CO 80223.

OPTIC PERFORMANCE

SOF recently tested a 1,250mm lens manufactured by *Celestron International.* With a focal ratio of f/10, the Celestron 5 can be used as a telescope with assorted eyepieces or a camera lens for 35mm photography. Law-enforcement personnel will find it effective for observation of stakeouts, suspects, etc. The lens retails for $650. For high-performance optics, whether for law-enforcement, shooting or military applications, send for Celestron's $3.00 catalog: *Celestron International,* Dept. SOF, 2835 Columbia St., Torrance, CA 90503. Phone: (213) 328-9560.

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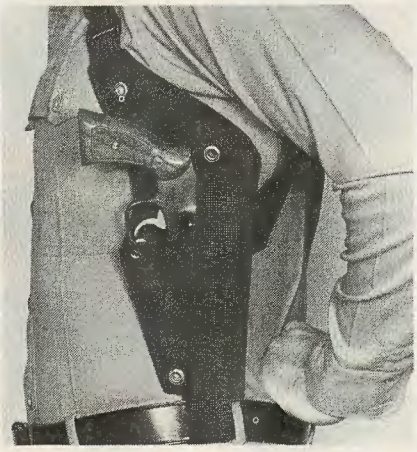
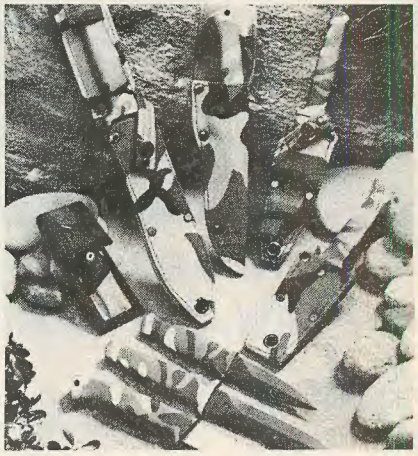
From the people who brought you the Sterling SMG, *Lanchester U.S.A., Inc.* now imports Sterling's new HR-81 high-power air rifle. The spring-piston-operated HR-81 has a lightweight one-inch-diameter piston coupled with a 3¾-inch stroke, resulting in high pressure build-up with minimum spring strength. Available in calibers .177 or .22, the HR-81 weighs in at eight pounds. The factory claims 900-fps velocity with the .177 and 660 fps with the .22. At a retail price of $229, it is available with or without Parkerized finish. For more information contact *Lanchester U.S.A.,* Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 47332, Dallas, TX 75247. Phone: (214) 688-0073.



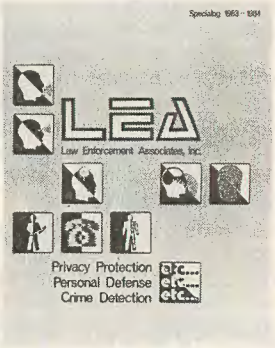
BIANCHI GOES NYLON

Designed with heavy-duty military/police work in mind, *Bianchi's* new Model #M1000 Shoulder Holster is constructed of four layers of ballistic nylon cloth with nylon stitching. The removable-harness holster is equipped with a two-inch pistol belt loop and will accommodate four-inch-barrel medium-frame revolvers and four- and five-inch large-caliber autos. Hardware is high-impact black nylon with adjustable velcro straps. Retail price is $35. Contact *Bianchi Gunleather,* Dept. SOF, 100 Calle Cortez, Temecula, CA 92390. Phone: (714) 676-5621.



GERBER GOES CAMMIE

Gerber Legendary Blades adds another innovative feature to their extensive list of new products. All Guardian-series knives and the A-400 hunting knife are now available with jungle leaf-pattern handles and sheaths (metal-lined Cordura sheaths are available separately). With blackened blades, these knives are just what the professional needs to keep a low profile. SOF staffers use and recommend Gerber knives for just about every job, and the new paint makes them even better. For prices and information contact *Gerber Legendary Blades,* Dept. SOF, 14200 S.W. 72nd Ave., Portland, OR 97223. Phone: (503) 639-6161.



COP CATALOG

Law Enforcement Associates, Inc., has a catalog which offers just about everything from truth and detection devices to training and special services (and everything in between). Called the *Specialog 1983-84,* this 85-page book is a must for departments looking for high-tech equipment relating to all aspects of police work. For all the latest gadgets, this catalog is it. Send $10 (refundable on first purchase) to *Law Enforcement Associates, Inc.,* Dept. SOF, 135 Main St., Belleville, NJ 07109. Phone: (201) 751-0001.

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

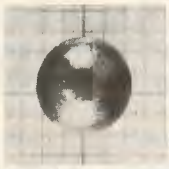
HARD FACTS

A lot of armor makers seem bent on keeping you from knowing much about their products. We don't see it that way. If you are going to stake your life on something, we think you need to know as much as possible about it. So read on.

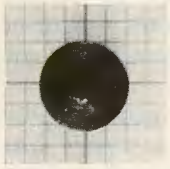
There are nine layers of 31 x 31 count, 1,000 denier, Zepel-D© treated Kevlar© 29 in each SILENT PARTNER© armor insert — exactly the style and weave of Kevlar recommended in the 1977 NILECJ study that set the national standard for police armor. A lot of manufacturers cut their cost by using something less.

We have one quarrel with that study. It says the most powerful round you need to worry about on the street is the .38 Spl. 158 gr. round-nose lead projectile. Since 20 percent of all police officers killed in the line of duty are shot with their own or their partner's gun, that's not very realistic.

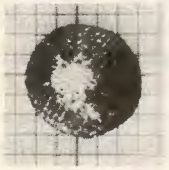
Here's a rogue's gallery of rounds recovered from a standard nine-layer SILENT PARTNER insert under NILECJ test standards. (A more detailed report, covering the full range of rounds tested, comes with your armor.)



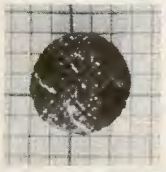
Rem. 230 gr. .45 ACP FMC
Velocity: 836 FPS
No armor layers penetrated



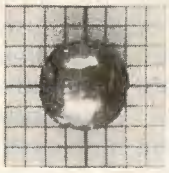
Rem. 250 gr. .45 Long Colt LRN
Velocity: 770 FPS
No layers penetrated



Rem. 210 gr. .41 Magnum LSWC
Velocity: 994 FPS
No layers penetrated

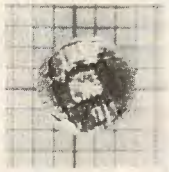


Rem. 158 gr. .357 Magnum
Velocity: 1,151 FPS
One layer penetrated



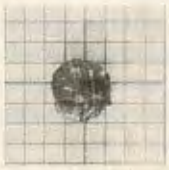
Fed. 123 gr. 9mm Para. FMC
Velocity: 1,069 FPS
Three layers penetrated

CCI 125 gr. 9mm Para. JHP
Velocity: 1121 FPS
No layers penetrated

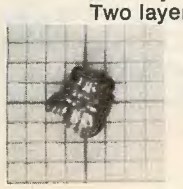


W/W 115 gr. 9mm Para. Silvertip
Velocity: 1,190 FPS
No layers penetrated

S&W 125 gr. .38 Spl. Nyclad
Velocity: 1,001 FPS
No layers penetrated



W/W 40 gr. .22 Magnum JHP
Velocity: 1,210 FPS
Two layers penetrated



CCI 32 gr. .22 LR Stinger
Velocity: 1,283 FPS
Two layers penetrated

SILENT PARTNER©

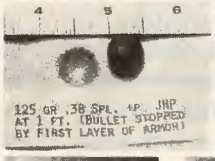
Body Armor you can't afford to be without!

FINALLY! Body armor so comfortable you can wear it all the time . . . so effective it exceeds the federal government's recommendation for standard police body armor . . . and so inexpensive our slogan is literally true — you can't afford to be without it.

This is serious armor — the same style and weave of Zepel©-treated Kevlar© recommended by the federal report that set the national standard for police body armor. But there is 12.5% more armor, **front and back,** in your SILENT PARTNER than that report recommended!

SILENT PARTNER's T-shirt design is unique. It's the first successful combination of a comfortable cotton garment and first-rate flexible armor. You put on your SILENT PARTNER like an ordinary T-shirt. Armor and all, it weighs just 1.5 pounds!

And at this price, it's some of the cheapest life insurance you can buy!



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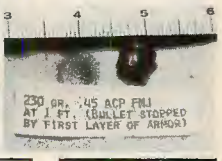
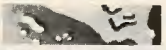


(JC) Jungle Camo



(DC) Desert Camo

(W) Undercover White

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EDITORIAL

Credit in our Armory

by George F. Will

THE shocking thing is how shocked people are. The day the Soviet regime murdered another 269 persons was the 24,041st day since the regime was founded. Since 1917 the regime has killed at least 20 million of its own citizens, an average of more than 800 a day for 66 years. Unless the Red Army massacred another Afghanistan village last Thursday, the regime had a below-average day of blood.

Why are people so startled when the Soviet regime acts in character? Nothing in nature — not even granite, which water wears away over time — is as durable as illusions grounded in a desire to avoid facing nasty facts. Oh, yes, with metronomic regularity the Soviet Union does shatter some Americans' illusions. But Americans are a manufacturing people, so they manufacture new illusions about Soviet willingness to move up from barbarism. In 1979, after 62 years of domestic carnage and international gangsterism, the Soviet regime invaded Afghanistan, and the president of the United States said gosh that sure opens my eyes.

Why did the Soviet regime, after 2½ hours of thinking about it, murder another 269 persons? Well, why not? The benefits are clear enough (the benefits of intimidation, especially of Japan), and the costs are almost certainly going to be negligible, and brief.

The Soviet deed has been the subject of a UN debate. For the Kremlin that was an ordeal akin to being bombarded with marshmallows. Thank God it is not December or some dunce would suggest dimming the national Christmas tree. The state of Ohio, which has a better foreign policy than the United States, has removed Russian vodka from state-run liquor stores. Perhaps the 269 murders will complicate the process of subordinating foreign policy to presidential politics. Perhaps it will now be harder for the president to sally off to an election-year summit and sign an arms-control agreement ruined by American eagerness. But summits and agreements have no noticeable influence on the behavior of the Soviet rainmakers — the "yellow rain" rainmakers.

THE World Council of Churches has not yet had time to condemn Korean Air Lines for aggressively bumping into Soviet air-to-air missiles, but various other "peace" parties, with the impartiality for which they are famous, have announced: The Soviet deed proves the irrationality of "the superpowers" and demonstrates the paranoia to which U.S. policy has driven the Soviet Union. So everyone must disarm, starting now, starting here.

The cotton-candy language of journalism spreads a sticky goo of imprecision over events like the attack on the plane. It has repeatedly been referred to as a "tragedy." Now, when children die of leukemia, that is a tragedy. When they are blown to bits by an act of state, that is an atrocity, and one worthy of Hitler's former allies. But too many persons by now have too large a stake in muzzy language. Remember the merry disdain that showered down upon President Reagan when, in his first press conference, he talked about how the Soviet Union lies? "There you go again," said his cultured despisers, when he recently referred to the "evil empire."

His words are fine, but he has not got a policy worthy of them. What is needed is a policy not merely of punishment, but of steady deterrents and leverage. A suitable policy, one that was desirable even before this atrocity, is at hand. But the hands of this administration are not apt to reach for it at this late date.

Felix Rohatyn, the investment banker and Democratic thinker, says: The Soviet Union has shot down an airplane. We should shoot down a Soviet-controlled country. Western governments should nationalize the loans Western banks have made to communist countries. The government should buy up the debts at a substantial discount — at, say, between 25 and 50 cents on the dollar (that is between 25 and 50 cents more than some of them are worth). Then it should declare Poland in default, drying up the flow of credit to that country and slowing the flow to all other Soviet satellites.

This would give the banks a little liquidity — more than they deserve, given their irresponsibility. It also would force them to quit cooking their books, pretending that virtually irrecoverable loans retain their full face value as assets. But the principal benefit would be for foreign policy.

Credit is a strategic weapon. Like other strategic weapons, it should not be in private hands. Credit for communists should no more be controlled by private banks than the MX should be controlled by Hertz. Loans — if any — for the East bloc should be government to government, so that Western policy will no longer be hostage to commercial calculations.

Continued on page 93

160 Acres, Virgin Fertile Land, $5,900

Down payment only $200–easy monthly payments just $133.86

"THE WORLD'S LAST UNEXPLOITED LANDS"

THERE ARE FEW RICH FARM LANDS LEFT ON EARTH

Because the Bolivian government wants to encourage development, there exists a rare and unusual opportunity in South America for anyone who is interested in becoming a landowner. The benefits go far beyond a chance to own fertile farm land. Yet, 160 acres of virgin farm land for $5,900, a total down payment of only U.S. $200 and easy monthly payments with little interest, is a big drawing card.

YOU CAN PIONEER OR LEAVE THE LAND IN ITS NATURAL STATE

Create a survival or recreational farm. Although we sincerely hope life in the industrial countries will continue to be warm and hospitable, there is the possibility that events could take an unpleasant turn. If this should happen, you could be prepared to secure your own little haven in these fertile Bolivian lands. To become totally self sufficient would merely mean clearing a small portion of your 160 or more acres for a home and garden plot.

There is also the possibility of commercial agriculture. You could manage your own farm, rent or lease to a tenant farmer, or hire someone to manage your property.

Or, you can opt to leave the land in its natural state, privately available to you and your family. There are exotic birds and an abundance of wildlife. You will discover the tapir, oppossum, brown capuchin monkey, armadillo, anteater, agouti, grey fox, ocelot, puma, and jaguar. Although nearly all of these species are protected by Bolivian national law, there are deer, bear and a variety of other game for the hunter and outdoorsman.

Whether for profit, recreation, or securing a future, it is readily evident that this land purchase offer is unusual and quite possibly the world's last frontier opportunity. Recent figures show prime underdeveloped land in Santa Cruz to be appreciating at 20% to 30% annually.

GREAT PROSPECTS FOR AGRICULTURE

Menonite farmers have pioneerd this fertile area and have helped to establish cash markets for a wide variety of products.

Cotton, just one of the major cash crops, has recently been joined by soybeans, corn, wheat and sorghum as proven safe returns on this fine land investment.

Livestock are also very popular among the ranchers coming into this rich fertile area. Many have turned to raising chickens, hogs, beef, dairy stock, fruit and vegetables.

Careful planning and positive ingenuity guarantee huge yields on this unusually fruitful land. You may harvest rice to cotton, soy to sorghum, or raise the livestock of your choice. This virgin fertile land has made real the hopes and dreams of many new owners.

LOCATION

This newly opened land reserve is located in the heart of booming Santa Cruz de la Sierra, an eastern Bolivian state.

These rich, agriculturally suited land parcels are located close to Brazil— the fastest developing country in the world and one of Bolivia's best agricultural and livestock customers. The Bolivian Utah State/USAID Study Team reports, "...the eastern plains of Bolivia should be considered as one of the world's outstanding potentials for agricultural development. Without a doubt, this is a prime growth area offering tremendous values and unusual opportunity.

BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT WELCOMES AND ENCOURAGES FOREIGN LANDOWNERS

Bolivia's progressive government has set important policies to accommodate the new foreign landowner. Special provisions guarantee each purchaser the same rights and privileges as native born citizens.

These affirmative policies create a no-hassle business environment that encourages free enterprise.

160 ACRES, 320 ACRE, OR FULL SECTION 640 ACRE FARM PARCELS ARE AVAILABLE

Because of the growing demand and obviously limited supply of top quality land it is increasing difficult to guarantee large acreages. However, for those fortunate individuals who learn of this offer and act immediately, large parcels can be reserved. A few parcels are actually larger than stated, and will be sold without additional charge for excess acreage. Each property is presented with full descriptions and a free and clear title of ownership.

There is no obligation to buy when you send for a free information packet. If you desire to assure yourself a part of this vanishing farm land, then you will want to include a refundable $200 U.S. down payment with your information request to Bolivian Land and Forestry, Ltda.

Upon receipt of your application and down payment we will select the best acreage in the amount you specify. We will then mail you detailed plans of your property along with your Purchase Agreement. You only sign the Purchase Agreement and soon after begin making your monthly payments of $133.86, including low interest costs of only 6% annually.

ONE FULL YEAR TO INSPECT YOUR PROPERTY

After signing the Purchase Agreement you have one full year to inspect your property in Santa Cruz. If you are dissatisfied for any reason, or if you just change your mind, we will refund in full every cent you have paid our office, including principal and interest. Should you wish to exchange your parcel for any other property, we will be glad to give you your choice of available acreage. Of course, this does not mean you have to visit Santa Cruz during the first year to be a land owner, but we hope you will.

WHEN YOU VISIT SANTA CRUZ

Fly to Miami, and board the Lloyd Aereo Boliviano (L.A.B.) late evening 727 flight to Santa Cruz. You will arrive early the next morning. First class hotel accommodations are available at Los Tajibos, a Holiday Inn affiliate. Or, you may select to stay at any one of the other excellent hotels in the area. If you contact us in advance we will be happy to make hotel reservations for you.

You will need your passport, but no prior visas are required for North American or European visitors. An international smallpox certificate is necessary.

You will find the state of Santa Cruz to be one of Bolivia's richest and biggest, with a population close to 700,000 and a land mass nearly equal to one third of the entire nation.

Hundreds from Canada, Mexico, and Paraguay have already discovered this rich agricultural area and are delighted with their decision. You will be too.

CALL OR WRITE FOR MORE INFORMATION. WE WILL SEND YOU PICTURES, MAPS, AND DESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE.

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Mail this coupon airmail for our immediate response.

Bolivian Land and Forestry, Ltda.
Casilla No. 2369
Santa Cruz, Bolivia

Gentlemen:

☐ Please send me your no obligation information on the properties available at Santa Cruz. I would like to know more about how I can buy 160 acres for only $5,900.

☐ Please reserve some of this rich virgin land for me. Hold 160 acres at $5,900 for me and rush my Purchase Agreement to my address below. Enclosed is my refundable down payment of $200 U.S.

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BULL IN INDOCHINA SHOP

Special Forces in Laos

by Capt. James M. Perry, USA, Ret.

LAOS sprawls in the tepid, steaming heat of the Burma monsoons, summer and winter. Perhaps some of the rain comes across the mountains out of Thailand, but it is the summer rains "outter China 'crost the bay," that turn the Laotian capital of Vientiane into a sweatbox. Between June and September, you can't just stroll around in the warm sun. You swim through a daily deluge of water that often adds up to 50 inches a month.

Into this pool FC-3 of the 77th SFGA dove. Not with a dash and a splash, but more with a slither came the slippery late-evening covert insertion out of Dong Muang airfield in Bangkok. The year was 1959.

The United States Special Forces, not yet famous as the Green Berets, was about to begin its clandestine odyssey into the history of the burgeoning war in Southeast Asia. Lt. Col. Arthur D. Simons, more affectionately known to his men as "The Bull," was its commanding officer. I was one of his A-Detachment commanders.

"White Star" was under the cover of PEO-USOM, the Program Evaluations Office of the United States Overseas Mission. Under the treaty that halted the war between the French and the Neo Lao Hak Xat insurgents in 1954, it was agreed that no foreign nation could ever again interfere in Lao affairs. No foreign troops would be permitted. The Pathets were given two of Laos's northern provinces, Samneua and Xieng Khoang, from which to operate. The other 14 provinces belonged to the Royalists. Ironically, the two communist provinces were right up against the mountain chain that divides Laos from North Vietnam. Down this razorback ridge of mountains, the Viet Minh were just beginning construction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

However, the International Control Commission (ICC), comprised of Canada, India and Czechoslovakia, permitted the existence of a French Foreign Legion 550-man outpost at the Mekong River town of Savannakhet, more to help maintain the shaky peace and continue the training of the 25,000-man Royal Lao Army. It was the only authorized armed foreign force permitted to remain in this Land of a Million Elephants.

Graduate of a Massachusetts journalism school . . . his father had been a ragpicker.

The Lao Army was issued a hodgepodge of WWII weapons, some French, some German, but mostly American. The inept Lao soldier could neither assemble nor disassemble his weapon nor keep it clean. More than that, he barely knew how to shoot it. Most of the weaponry was still sitting in provincial warehouses, rusting through and through, bolt and barrel. If the Royal Army was going to survive, its men had to be taught how to use and maintain those arms. There were no more weapons destined for Laos from anywhere. The Kingdom was broke.

Into this difficult job stepped 107 Green Berets from Ft. Bragg, those of us then attached to its only Group, the old 77th. In the two years to come, as Special Forces increased its worldwide commitment, the 77th was redesignated the 7th.

FA-33 and FA-34 [my detachment] were sent to Pakse, another river town in the south of Laos. We were only minutes from the *Plateau des Bolovenes,* that wide, flat piece of land about the size of New Jersey. New Jersey, that is, if you took into account that the northern edge of the plateau joined on to the Plain of Jars, a hundred klicks or so to the north.

Strange, those "jars." Some sort of calcific formation bubbled up from the bowels of the earth and formed tall mounds that looked like inverted *klong* jars used to store water in Thailand. The first defeat of the Royal Lao Army would come a few months later on this plain. It would be directed by a defector from the Royal Lao Army itself, Paratroop Capt. Kong Le. Kong Le tried a *coup d'etat* in Vientiane, failed and took off for the hills to join the Pathet Lao. They made him a general and it was he who ran the Royal Lao Army off the plain, giving the Neo Lao Hak Xat — the Lao communists — a free hand to attack wherever and whenever they pleased.

The rape was on.

It was during this difficult "twilight war" period that the Bull began to gather fame as a cool-headed field commander. He was volatile enough when he wanted to be, when his patience had been exhausted with some of the bureaucratic crap that came out of Brig. Gen. John A. Heintges' office. Gen. Heintges was then "mister," head of PEO operations in Vientiane. Some years later, I would read that he had returned to active duty and been promoted to major general.

But it wasn't Heintges who harassed the Bull. It was the conglomeration of other Army officers, some of them very inept, also under cover. I remember seeing them in

the PEO compound in their white shirts and shorts, knee-length white stockings and white shoes. Put a scrubby, civilian-clad Green Beret up against one of them and it was like going down Skid Row.

They all wore the heavy gold ring of West Point, a thing the Bull didn't have. He was a Reserve officer on active duty, a graduate of a Massachusetts journalism school and he'd never be a Regular officer (sic) "because he came from the wrong side of the tracks." His father had been a ragpicker.

No one, not even the ICC, knew that the 107 new arrivals in Laos were Green Berets. We posed as everything: agricultural specialists, field engineers, medical personnel. A couple of our medics even went up on the Chinese border to join Dr. Tom Dooley in his clinic there.

In the daytime, the Legion trained the Lao Army in tactics, sometimes quite brutally. I was watching a Legion NCO trying to teach a Lao soldier how to level the bubble on an 81mm mortar. The soldier seemingly couldn't comprehend. The legionnaire told him to look down the barrel. When he did, the legionnaire shoved his face into the throat of the gun, cutting a perfect circle in the Lao soldier's face.

At night, long after the sun had gone down, we trained them in the care and cleaning of their weapons. We designed layout mats for the parts and labeled them in ancient Indian letters. The sight became "eye of the eagle," and the trigger, "tail of the elephant." It changed them dramatically. They began to take pride in their weapons, cleaning them with toothbrushes that the next morning also scrubbed their teeth. Eventually, we received permission to train openly in the daytime, but initially, the need for secrecy dictated long, hard nights for everyone.

Each team had a safe house. Some teams had several. When the Bull was fed up with the way things were going in Vientiane, he'd hop the Air America C-47 and fly off to visit one of his A-Detachments. He might stay for only a few hours. More often, he'd stay for several days, talking, pacing with hands in pockets, eating very little. He was notorious for starving himself for days and then gorging on a large meal of steak, potatoes and salad. He liked his steak rare, his whiskey hard and, as long as I knew him, he was a chain smoker — all signs of a man loaded with nervous energy.

I would have followed him down a 155mm gun barrel.

But he was never out of touch with the reality of command when he made these visits. Each team had a CW capability in its one RS-1 radio, a little black box that transmitted Morse code on any type of power you could feed it. The range was unlimited. It had been designed for use by the CIA and given to us in addition to the AN/GRC-9s we carried because of their limitless range. With good wave propagation, we could hit Ft. Bragg with the RS-1, some 10,000 miles away.

I had now known the Bull about 10 months. I met him when he was the PIO for the XVIII Airborne Corps. I got to know him better when I taught him delayed-fall parachuting. Soon, I knew him well enough to answer unhesitatingly when he asked if I was prepared to follow him to hell.

He demanded that of most of the men in his command. The weaker ones got shipped out to other C-Detachments. He needed the loyalty, but he also inspired it. Anyone who had ever served a full tour with the Bull would have gone to hell with him. I would have followed him down a 155mm gun barrel.

It was in late August 1959 that his C-47 shut down its engines and he hopped out onto Pakse's 6,000-foot tarmac runway. I met him there. There was always an urge to salute. It's hard to break years and years of military training. He could sense the twitching of my right hand. To keep me from saluting, he reached out suddenly, grabbed me by the upper arm and squeezed it.

"How're you doing, Perry," he asked, leading me away from the group of Lao who were starting to unload the plane.

"Just fine, sir," I replied. But I was lying. I wasn't doing just fine. I was going through a siege of headaches, which I attributed to tension. Later, I found out my sinuses had been blocked and got a quick nose job in Bangkok. At any rate, the Bull had known about my headaches for some time and he reached in his pocket and handed me a folded piece of paper.

"This may help your headaches," he grinned. "But somebody in D.A. must be nuts. They've promoted you to captain."

Captain! Hot damn!

I wanted to *whoop!*. . . but I *quietly* folded the paper in half again and tucked it in the top of my jump boot.

"Good!" he said. "Airborne! Read it when we get to the house." Then his smile, which never lasted long, disappeared. He was completely serious, the quintessential field commander.

"I want a couple of days with your team," he said as he rubbed his forehead. He always did that when he was deep in thought. "I need to talk with somebody other than those screwed-up assholes in that crazy-assed capital."

"You've got it, sir," I said. "Take my room."

"Can you get a second bunk in it?" he wanted to know.

"You bet! Will you need a mosquito net?" I asked.

"You got mosquitos down here?" He was already swatting at one.

"Big mothers!" I hit one on my neck. The blood squirted. "I rub some oil and let 'em chew. I don't like it under a net. You can never tell what's going to go down in the middle of the night."

"No net, then," he said. "Find us a bottle. De La Pena's probably got one. Sent him a case last week."

"Sent me a case too, sir," I laughed. "We haven't had time to drink it yet. But don't you want to eat first?"

"I had some beans on the plane, but..." He gave me that inquisitive look he had when something stirred his curiosity. "Eat what?"

"Well, there's a little French restaurant here." I thought again. "Oh, shit, it's no restaurant. Just a little hole in the wall. But they serve the best *bifteck et pommes frites* in town and they've got fresh salad from Jean Cadeaux's farm."

Cadeaux was a French-Vietnamese *metis* born in Hanoi and burned out so many times in the wars between the French and the Viet Minh that he couldn't remember how many times he'd lost everything he owned. Now he had another farm up on the plateau, raised 3,000 head of oxen, and grew vegetables for anyone who wanted to buy them, including the Pathet Lao.

"How is Jean?" the Bull asked.

"He's doing fine, sir," I said, "but he's having to cooperate with the Pathet Lao right now to stay alive."

Several years later, 1963 I think, the Pathets attacked his home, killed his son Tigu, and Jean and his wife barely made it out. The Bull brought him to San Francisco, where he may still be living for all I know.

"If you want, we can take a run up to the plateau tomorrow."

"You go up there?" he asked, incredulously.

"We've got a system, sir," I explained. "We tie a French flag on the jeep, cough up a little bad French at the roadblocks, and they pass us through. I don't think we're fooling them, but I've been stopped twice and I never have to get past *bon jour.*"

"You keep your ass off the plateau until I authorize you weapons!" he said sharply. "I've heard your French. What if you get some wise sonuvabitch maybe graduated from the Sorbonne? How're you gonna talk to him, huh?"

It stung. Cadeaux and his wife were close friends. Jean and I hunted together. Besides, Mme. Cadeaux made the best sausage to be found anywhere. We brought down boxes of it each time we went up Traded team gasoline, which Jean couldn't get, for it.

"You're the CO, sir," I gave in.

"You can bet your sweet ass on that!" he growled. He took me by the arm. "Now let's go try that steak."

The steak was great, the salad even better. We washed it down with a couple of lukewarm Tiger LaRue beers and settled back in the team house to talk.

Col. Simons could be a different man with different people. He'd chew out an officer who was 30 seconds late for reveille roll call — Special Forces officers stood roll call along with their men — then he'd turn around and be kind, empathetic and compassionate with an Sp4 who was having credit problems and couldn't pay his bills. I don't know why the Bull ever took up journalism. He would have made a much better psychologist.

With me, he was always fairly soft-spoken. I don't mean to say he never chewed me out. He did. I screwed up a couple of times under his command and took my turn on the carpet. His favorite expression was, "Mess up on me and I'll chop your fucking head off!"

Several years after "White Star" — code name for the Laos operation — ended, I had the chance to serve under the Bull again, this time in the 8th SFGA, Panama. I messed up once and parked a HALO team, me included, in some 250-foot trees near

COMMANDING AUTHOR

Capt. James M. Perry, USA (Ret.), spent 24 years in the armed forces, serving with both the USMC and Army. Perry joined the Marines in 1944 and fought on Okinawa; after the war in 1946-47, he helped in the transfer of Japanese POWs from China to Japan, protecting them from Chinese communists. Perry next saw combat in the Korean War, participating in the historic Inchon landing and Chosin Reservoir retreat.

In 1958 Perry resigned his field commission in the Corps and agreed to teach the then-new HALO tactics to the Army's Special Forces. It was during his 10-year Army tenure that Perry served three times with the legendary Bull.

Since retiring from the military in 1968, the Los Angeles-based free-lance author has written several articles for military publications and sceenplays. This is his first story for SOF.

James Perry commanded the Golden Knights Army Parachute Team from 1960 to '62. Here he lets Vice-President Hubert Humphrey wear his helmet after unit demonstration during Armed Forces Day at Andrews AFB. Photo: Courtesy of James M. Perry

The man waited until the priest was almost on him, then poked a double-barreled shotgun in Father Bernard's belly and pulled both triggers.

Gatun DZ. The Bull grounded me for 90 days because he thought I should have aborted the mission when we couldn't find the drop zone. He lifted the restriction a month later, but he scared hell out of me: I thought he was going to rip off my HALO badge.

"We're coming up on six months, you know, Perry," he said quietly. Six months is all they had allocated for FC-3. Then it was back to Ft. Bragg.

"I've asked them to extend us so we can finish the job here."

I shook my head. "My team wants to go home, colonel. It's hairy down here. Hell, they could bust in here tonight and shoot this place to pieces. I don't even have a .45."

"I'm going to take care of that," he answered quickly. "In the meantime, I authorize you to get over to Regional and draw some French shotguns. Don't mess with the ammo. I'll send you some double-aught from Vientiane."

Well, that was *something*. We couldn't get any weapons from the Lao Army. They didn't have enough for their own people. They had taken away our M1 Garands and put them in a master armory in PEO. Not so much for secrecy, I suspect, as it was to keep us from going "hunting." The Pathet Lao were all around us. They commanded the plateau.

Only the bravest went up there to live and Father Bernard was one. He had a small Catholic gathering in one of the villages, a congregation of 25 or 30, I guess.

One night, the Pathets came into his village and started conscripting. Father Bernard ordered them out, advancing on the Pathet political officer. The man waited until the priest was almost on him, then poked a double-barreled shotgun in Father Bernard's belly and pulled both triggers.

The next bravest man around, Father Louis, prelate of the Champassak mission, went up and brought the body down. Then he turned around and went back to the same village to take up the slack until Paris could send a replacement. He was still alive when I left Laos, but who knows what happened after the Pathets gained control?

The Bull screwed an eye down on me.

"If we get the authority to do another six, even if your team wants to go home, will you stick?" he asked.

"You bet'cha!" I grinned. "It's just starting to get interesting. Besides, I haven't finished the rifle range. Be nice to see that done." I had been building a range for the last three months, but the monsoons were on us now and the going was slow.

"Then I'll let you know," he said. "Heintges is working on it now." He paused. "How'd you like to make a parachute jump?"

"A *what?*"

"Jump," he said. "You know, leap out of an airplane. You still know how, don't you?"

I stared back. I didn't understand him. Did he want a HALO demo? He handed me a paper.

"Read that," he said softly.

I read. It was another blooper out of Ft. Bragg. If "White Star" personnel were to continue drawing their jump pay for the next three months, they'd have to make a static-line jump somewhere — anywhere. I handed the paper back.

"Mess with me and I'll chop your fucking head off!"

"I don't believe it. They build up a cover story, slap us in civvies, take away our ID and weapons, and now they want us to blow everything with a military static-line jump." The only place I knew we could do that was with the Lao Parachute Battalion in Vientiane.

"Lo Bhurri, Thailand," the Bull said again, just as softly as before. "I'm taking the first 30 over there next week. T-7s. Nobody here knows them. I want you to jumpmaster."

So we did. WWII vintage T-7 parachutes from a DeHavilland "Beaver." Sticks of four. When my canopy opened, I damned near laughed myself to death. The Thai riggers had patched holes with any color silk material they could get their hands on. My canopy looked like a homemade quilt.

The T-7 is a 28-foot, flat, circular canopy prone to oscillations. If you don't touch the risers, you might be okay. I cautioned everyone not to over-control. Not much you can do to make a T-10 oscillate with a riser slip. But somebody snapped an ankle. Another man slammed into the ground and broke his tailbone.

We had no authority to be in Thailand. There were no visas, no passports. The PEO headquarters in Bangkok had slipped us in quietly, told us to get our business done and then get the hell back across the Mekong. Now we had two casualties, both candidates for the hospital.

"Well," said the Bull to the man with the busted coccyx, "at least you won't be sitting around on your ass for a while."

We took the two casualties back with us and they stayed in Vientiane, lucky bastards. Not only was the city safe, but there was the White Rose, where a man could get a Japanese-style hot bath and anything else he wanted. If he didn't get enough at the Rose, he could step down the street a couple of blocks and pick up the rest at the Green Latrine. It was called the Green Latrine because it had a green wicker fence around it and nobody went any farther than the doorway to take a leak.

The message asking me to extend came in the "meat-and-potatoes" list a few weeks later. Cotter, my radioman, and I went through two pages of the Diana pad decyphering the 100-or-so group message. It took us several hours. The three words, "Will you extend?" were sandwiched somewhere in between. Cotter and I were up most of the night, he taking the message and the two of us decrypting it. I sat down and started to write:

"Case catsup X case corn X beans X 4 cases spaghetti," and so on down the line. Somewhere in between, I inserted the words, "Not only yes, but hell yes!" It was a similar 100 groups back to them. Pat was fast with a key. I was beaming inside with the thought of another six months in Laos. Grinding the GN-58 at 60 cycles for the next 20 minutes was a pleasure.

Cotter and I got to bed by 0600 and slept the day through. It was Team SOP. The two men who stood radio watch that night got to sleep in the next day. We never turned off either the RS-1 or the Angry-Nine. Someone watched them hour after hour, listened minute after minute. The message to "Run!" could come at any time.

The Bull's habit of alternately starving

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From Artist's Rendering to Reality

TRACKING THE T-80

by David C. Isby

Infamous DOD "T-80" artist's conception may represent Soviet MBT of the future, but not current-issue T-80. Illustration courtesy Department of Defense

AT a diplomatic reception in a Third World country, a U.S. Army officer was introduced to his Soviet counterpart. Seeking to make non-controversial conversation, he talked about his car at home and asked the Soviet what kind of car he had. "I don't have a car" he replied, "I don't need one. When I go to work in Moscow, I go by subway. When I go to my country house, I go by bus. And when I go abroad, I go by tank."

Tanks are to the Soviet Army what battleships used to be to the U.S. Navy: the weapon of victory. All tactics and all other weapons in the Soviet Army exist to get the tanks where the old men in the Kremlin want them to go. If ever the Soviets feel the tank is obsolete, they are going to have to get themselves a whole new army, because the one they have would no longer work. To prevent this from happening, the Soviets have been working on a new main battle tank (MBT). Western sources decided to call this tank the T-80 — apparently for no better reason than it was a convenient, round number.

For years, rumors abounded as to what the T-80 would do and what it would look like. Of course, this meant the tank became progressively more fearsome as the stories were repeated and embellished. But the more coherent reports, back in the late 1970s, featured two things: The tank would be based on improving the existing T-72 main battle tank and it would feature some sort of combined armor — possibly a Soviet copy of the top-secret (except from Soviet intelligence) Chobham armor currently found on the U.S. M1 Abrams and British Challenger main battle tanks.

In 1981, the Department of Defense published an "artist's impression" of a T-80 that fitted this description closely. The sources of this illustration were either highly classified imagery with the details changed to protect the identity of the sources or just the general expectation of U.S. tank experts and Soviet analysts of what they thought the new tank should look like.

The next time imagery claiming to be of the "T-80" appeared in open sources it was in a magazine entitled *Gung Ho* in 1982. Supposedly from NATO sources, it showed a rear view of a vehicle similar to a T-64. Some experts thought that this was a mistake — the T-80 was going to be a radically different-looking tank, with radical advances in Soviet tank design. By this time, the T-80 had become a Loch Ness Monster on treads, with everyone wanting to be the first to see the beast, but no one being quite sure just what it really looked like. Some even went so far as to doubt its very existence, claiming the U.S. Army had invented the whole thing to support its M1 Abrams tank program (although these critics did not say what they thought the Soviets were cooking up for a new main battle tank).

In 1983, however, the Department of Defense decided that T-80s did not look like any of the illustrations that had appeared. Instead, the Department of Defense decided

Already publicized by Soviets, the T-80 — turret mounted with flare/chaff tubes and laser rangefinder — was introduced as issue equipment at this November 1982 parade in Red Square. Photo: Department of Defense

to give the T-80 designation to an improved version of the T-72 that had been in production since at least 1979, possibly earlier, and had previously been called the T-72 M1980 and M1981. No one has asked the Soviets what they have called this tank. Some Western experts think it is probably designated the T-74, while "Viktor Suvorov," a former Soviet lieutenant colonel now living in the West, says that the "T-80" designation assigned by the Department of Defense to this tank is actually the correct Soviet one.

The Soviets, in fact, had not been keeping this supposedly secret tank a secret at all. They had even published a photograph of it in its T-72 M1980 version in the pages of the September 1980 issue of *Tekhnika I Vooruzheniye* (*Technology and Armament*, a Soviet military magazine). An improved version — the one the Department of Defense used to call the T-72 M1981 — appeared in a photograph in the 10 September 1981 issue of *Krasnaya Zvezda, (Red Star)*, the Soviet Army newspaper.

So no one was very surprised when full battalions of these tanks paraded through Red Square in November 1982. People were surprised when the Department of Defense said these tanks were actually the T-80, and thus something secret. Perhaps the pressure to actually produce a real, live T-80 may have contributed to these reports, or it may very well be this tank is really called the T-80 as Viktor Suvorov said it is.

These tanks differ from early T-72s in details — improved armor over the engine decking, smoke or decoy launchers on the turret sides, different arrangement for the optics for the laser rangefinder (which early-production T-72s may not have had). They also have replaced the folding "gill" armor plates that protected the tank's flank on the T-64 and earlier T-72 models with a

detachable skirt of Kevlar-like fabric armor over the suspension and external fuel tanks. This arrangement is apparently intended to give protection against the 25mm Bushmaster cannon carried on the U.S. M2 Bradley infantry combat vehicle — another example of the Soviets developing a countermeasure for a specific American weapon before we have even deployed it.

One thing the tank the Department of Defense now calls the T-80 does *not* have is the boxy sides of Chobham-style armor, which the "artist's impression" had featured. The version of the T-80 that was previously called the T-72 M1981 also features, as well as a laser rangefinder, additional armor protection over the engine decking to protect against shaped-charge attack from above, such as from antitank bomblets, a pair of devices that look like smoke mortars but may also be used to fire chaff and flares to decoy various precision-guided munitions that would rely on radar or infrared inputs for weapons guidance.

This confusion certainly has not helped Department of Defense credibility. But, in the end, the confusion is meaningless. All it points out is that a tank by any other name is still dangerous. Whether the T-80 is designated the T-72 M1980, T-72 M1981, T-74 or whatever, it is coming off Soviet production lines at a considerable rate — 1,200 in 1982, as opposed to 1,300 earlier T-72 versions.

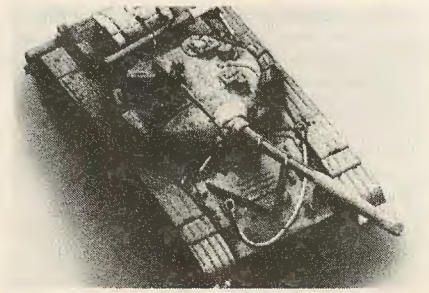
The T-80 is currently the most advanced Soviet main battle tank in production. The Soviets, however, are working on an even more advanced tank at this moment, which is probably going to enter production in the mid-1980s. Remember that the Soviets have always been among the best in the world in their tank designs since the 1930s, and it is unlikely that they are going to fall much behind now. This more advanced tank — which the Department of Defense calls the "T-80 follow-on," the U.S. Army Armor Center at Ft. Knox suggests might be the "T-82" and other sources call the "T-85" — will no doubt feature improvements over both the T-80 and the T-72, because that is the way Soviet tank development has always worked. This even newer tank may very well resemble the tank that the Department of Defense was calling the "T-80" back in 1981. It would also be foolish to believe that such a tank is not going to have state-of-the-art armor protection. But the way the Soviets have developed and produced tanks in the past will provide some excellent clues as to how they will do it in the future.

Despite the importance of the tank to the Soviet Army, they have had comparatively few designs. Soviet tank design is evolutionary in most respects: They like to have a new vehicle about every 10 years and substantial improvements in existing ones every five years. Thus, they change one thing at a time.

Old but able, T-34/85 tanks are still used all over the Communist-supplied Third World. One fired without effect in 1982 at SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Foreign Correspondent Jim Coyne from Afghan Army hill fort. Photo: U.S. Army

In 1943, the Soviet Army received the T-34/85 tank, considered by many (including the Soviets) to be the finest tank of WWII. Then they stretched the design to replace the 85mm gun with a 100mm gun, creating the 1944-model T-44, which, in turn, begat the T-54/55 series. The Soviets produced thousands of these tanks from 1947 to 1979.

During this production run, they introduced many improvements — including nuclear, biological and chemical protective systems and laser rangefinders, among others — but kept the same engine and the 100mm gun. By replacing the T-55's 100mm rifled gun with a 115mm smoothbore, the Soviets developed the T-62, which entered service in 1961 and, while out of production today, must still be the most numerous Soviet main battle tank. All of these tanks used the same basic engine, a lightweight diesel that dates from the 1930s, and the same Christie-type suspension.



Never successful, the "Steel Grave" — officially designated T-64 — was in general issue to European units, but is rapidly being replaced. Photo: U.S. Army

The T-64 main battle tank went into service in 1967. It broke from the standard Soviet evolutionary approach, introducing not only a new gun — a 125mm smoothbore — but a new engine and suspension and a stereo-coincidence rangefinder. Unfortunately, this great leap forward for Soviet tank design apparently did not work all that well. The T-64 may have had extensive developmental and production problems, despite its advances (and quite possibly because of them), and while T-64s are front-line equipment in Group Soviet Forces Germany and some divisions in the western military districts of the Soviet Union, they have not been exported and it is likely that the T-64 will not go into wider service.

Viktor Suvorov reports that T-64s were nicknamed the "Steel Grave" and factory technicians had to be kept permanently on hand to keep the tanks running. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, T-64 production ceased in 1982, although some Soviet analysts think this happened in the 1970s.

The T-64B version, which was apparently only produced in limited numbers, was armed with *Kobra* antitank guided missiles, a little-known weapon that is fired out of a gun tube like the U.S. Shillelagh used by the M60A2 main battle tank. This innovation seems to have been even less successful than the rest of the T-64's design.

In the late 1960s, the Soviets decided to redesign the T-64 to eliminate its innovative but mechanically troublesome suspension and engine. The result was the T-72, which used the same basic suspension and engine as

all the preceding Soviet main battle tanks. It retained the advanced fire-control systems and improved nuclear, biological and chemical warfare protection of the T-64 (the protection of the T-72 has impressed Western experts). The 125mm gun is reportedly fully stabilized, allowing a shoot-on-the-move capability. The T-72 has done a lot better than the T-64. It is in large-scale production and has been widely exported. Soviet T-72s have been in action in Afghanistan, and Iraqi and Syrian T-72s have also seen combat.

The T-72 disturbed the U.S. Army. They had counted on the superiority of individual U.S. tanks to counter Soviet traditional numerical superiority. As succeeding versions of the T-72 each appeared to have greater capabilities, Brig. Gen. Richard D. Lawrence stated, "The T-72 ends, at least temporarily, our qualitative advantage in tanks. The Soviets now have technical as well as numerical superiority in main battle tanks." By the mid-1970s, Soviet analysts were expecting the Soviets to both make

Russian T-62As still fight American tanks, at least at Ft. Hood. Once the Soviet MBT, T-62s have been replaced on the Soviet front line by T-72s and, now, T-80s. Photo: U.S. Army

improvements in the T-72 and make an evolutionary move to another tank that would enter service about 10 years after its predecessor. The Soviets seem to have done both.

What revolutionized main-battle-tank design in the 1970s was the invention of improved types of armor that offered a quantum improvement over the steel plate that has protected tanks since they were invented. The British-developed Chobham armor is the most widely known, and is used on the front and front-sides of the U.S. M1 Abrams and British Challenger main battle tanks. Chobham armor has turned the high-explosive, antitank (HEAT), shaped-charge warhead — as used in almost every antitank guided missile and hand-held antitank weapon — from an excellent tank-killer to a rather indifferent one. The biggest drawback of Chobham armor is that, according to widespread press reports, the British shared its secret not only with their American allies, but with the West Germans as well. From there, properly placed Moles in the pay of East Germany brought the secret eastward, over the wire.

Even if these reports are correct, the Soviets may not have needed Chobham armor. They had been working on their own version for years. It is probably on the T-64, T-72 and T-80. Less advanced than Chobham armor, the Soviets' "combined armor" appears to be steel backed by a layer of ceramic to act as a backstop for the force of a shaped-charge explosion.

Nevertheless, the T-72 and the T-80 are less vulnerable than preceding Soviet tanks. Marshal Dmitri Ustinov, the Soviet minister of defense, has confirmed this, telling the Austrian defense minister that "Soviet tanks are invulnerable to antitank guided missiles." Dr. Perry Pierre, assistant secretary

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ESCAPE FROM SANDINISMO

Refugees' Horror Stories from New Worker's Paradise

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

ON the night of 22 June, Nicaraguan Sandinista soldiers opened fire on as many as 115 men, women and children *campesinos* fleeing *Sandinismo* to Costa Rica in what a former head of the Police of Internal Order called part of a program of depriving peasant support for guerrillas fighting to topple the Soviet-backed, left-wing regime in Managua.

The incident took place less than three miles from the Costa Rican border near the hamlet of La Esperanza Dos on the San Juan River. In this area, guerrillas of the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE), led by the dissident Sandinista hero, Eden Pastora (the legendary *Comandante* Zero), have recently stepped up military activity, despite Pastora's call for a pause, to free their country from what they call "communist oppression," and "to rescue the original ideals of the revolution that were betrayed."

From the accounts of various witnesses — guerrillas and civilians — emerged the following picture:

Around 2300 hours, 49 children, 36 women and 30 men, according to an ARDE tally, met with civilian ARDE contacts under a full moon at a rendezvous point in a damp, grassy clearing in the semi-jungle on the northern bank of the San Juan River. They awaited two small inflatable rubber rafts rowed by ARDE members to shuttle them across the 150-meter-wide river to an insurgent squad which would provide a security escort to Costa Rica.

The first boat arrived several minutes later. It had already taken six men across and was back on the northern bank. At approximately 2330 hours, Sandinista troops on higher ground about 300 meters to the northwest detected the exodus and opened fire with full bursts of their Soviet-made AK-47 assault rifles.

The boat was sunk in the middle of the river; its half-dozen or so occupants disappeared. The rest of the civilians ran screaming in panic into the bush, the cries of children the most prominent.

Pedro Benavides, 62, an organizer of the evacuation, was wounded in the leg. "Ah, no!" he screamed. "Kill me, murderers!"

"What shit! Sons-of-bitches Contras," shouted a Sandinista soldier as his comrades continued their gunfire on the unarmed peasants.

Trying to cover the civilians, the insurgents returned the fire. About 500 meters upstream near the southern bank, other ARDE and Sandinista units battled for an hour-and-a-half with .50 cal. machine guns and Soviet-made RPG-7 rockets used by the Sandinistas and U.S.-made M79 grenade launchers used by ARDE. (ARDE didn't suffer any casualties. Sandinista losses were unknown.)

More information on the event surfaced when Benavides' son, Miguel Antonio, 30, one of the guerrillas with the evacuation squad, talked to a visitor a couple of days later in a rebel camp on the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border. "The *piricoacos* [a derogatory term meaning "yelping street dogs"] captured my father, beat him with their rifle butts and cut his throat. . . . I was at the edge of the river and heard everything." Tears welled up in his hard coffee-colored eyes. "Those bastards will pay," he said, defiantly raising his AK-47.

Women and children were not spared from the Sandinista fire, according to Inez Graniz Casanova, 21, who finally reached

GUERRILLA WAR REPORTER

Steven Salisbury has reported on war-torn Central America for UPI, the *Miami Herald*, Cable News Network and other news agencies, including SOF. In our October '82 issue, Salisury's article, "Bullets and Ballots," covered the war in El Salvador from all sides.

His fluency in Spanish, familiarity with the terrain and culture, and contacts enabled him to uncover the brutal story of Sandinista tyranny and its effect on civilians and Contras who refuse to live under communist domination. Once again, we welcome his informative writing to the pages of SOF.

Costa Rica on the night of 26 June with her husband and two small children. Two days later, she spoke of her experiences in an abandoned laborer's shack being used by refugees a few kilometers from the Nicaraguan border. She cradled her naked, mosquito-bitten, eight-month-old boy against her frail body. Her two-and-a-half-year-old girl, dressed in grimy, tattered clothing, sat quietly on the wooden porch.

"There were many children and old people, but they didn't care," she said of the Sandinistas. "They shot at everyone.... We couldn't go back to our village; they would kill us or take us away to San Carlos or La Azucena and not let us leave. We wandered in the forest suffering hunger and mosquitos until the Contras found us the night before last."

Guerrillas of Eden Pastora's Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) fire U.S.-made M19 60mm mortar (stripped of base and support) at Sandinista positions near Costa Rican border 21 July 1983.

Around 1900 hours, downstream near Boca de Zabalo, the Casanova family, Mrs. Juana Francisca Calderon, 32, and her children, and an unidentified man got into a rubber raft carrying five unarmed members of ARDE and were taken across the river. Two of the five ARDE members rowed back and were boarding the rest of the *campesinos* when Sandinista troops opened fire on them, similar to what happened four days earlier. "Son-of-a-bitch Contras! What are you doing here at this hour?!" shouted a Sandinista soldier.

According to a 19-year-old guerrilla who went by the war name "Mallardo" and was one of the three guerrillas who were dropped off on the southern river bank, four people were killed: Juan Jose Cepada and his two-year-old son, Alcide, a guerrilla with the *nom de guerre* El Cubano and Gladis Estrada. "My husband is lost," stammered Mrs. Calderon, her eyes moist and puffy. "I hope he's not dead."

Other occurrences of Sandinista brutality were related to this reporter during his stay bivouacking and patrolling with ARDE guerrillas from 20 to 28 June.

Abram Capriz Sanchez was one of the six *campesinos* transported across the river on 22 June.

"I had to flee," he said near a farm a couple of kilometers inside Costa Rica.

"Four *piricoacos* entered my house in the afternoon of that day [of the departure] and accused me and my brothers, one just a 12-year-old kid, my father and my brother-in-law of being Contras. They dragged us outside and beat us. When they pulled out their knives and started tying up my brothers, I ran and hid. I saw them taking everyone into the bush and coming out alone. The rope that tied them was bloody, meaning they had murdered them. They held up their blood-stained knives and said to my mother and sister: 'Get out of the house, if you don't want us to cut out your wombs.' Then they took away our animals."

Guerrilla Edurado Aleman, 26, says he was tortured by the Sandinistas when he was working on a farm near San Carlos del Sur about 15 months ago. He walked with a slight limp — a result of the torture — to a tent in the insurgent camp where an interview was conducted.

"At midnight, six militiamen entered my room and awakened me and my brother, and called us Contras. I was in the militia for three months and recognized them. They took us and another worker to the EPS [Sandinista Popular Army] garrison in San Carlos. They beat us there and put me in a two-by-three-meter cell with seven other prisoners. It was dusty. One guy was there for 37 days without bathing.

"They let my brother and the worker go in the morning, but I stayed. At night, they tortured me. They put bullets between my fingers and squeezed them. They yanked out my fingernails and cut my leg."

He showed two badly disfigured fingernails and rolled up his right pant leg, displaying two ugly, black scars along his calf tendon.

"Four days later, they turned me over to the police. . . . It turned out the owner of the farm was a Contra, but my wife still had to pay 5,000 *cordobas* (U.S. $100) for my release. They warned me if I told anyone that I was tortured, they'd kill me.

"I never liked the communists, but after that I decided to join the Contras," he said in a gruff voice.

"I saw six *campesinos* with their throats cut in the woodland," said Rufino Javier Valladares, who looked to be in his 20s, combing his bushy curly hair under the plastic tents of a makeshift mess hall in an ARDE encampment. "We were patrolling through the canton of San Jose when *campesinos* told us of an area where they heard gun bursts some days ago. We went over there and saw the rotting cadavers. They were in a row. The communists fusilladed them and slit their throats."

Some of the guerrillas listening to Valladares were also on the patrol and added frequent remarks. "They were evangelicals," said one who said he knew them. "The *piricoacos* wanted them to join the militia, but their religion prohibited them to fight. . . . They didn't want to join us either, though they gave us food."

The Sandinistas have been burning houses and crops, according to the guerrillas. "They've burned 65 houses and crops," said Valladares, giving a rundown: "Fourteen in Matecana, nine in La Ventura, six in El Pavon, three in San Jose, two in Palo Arquito. . . ."

Former Sandinista security official Urroz gives orders to AK-armed Contras 300 meters inside Costa Rica before re-entering Nicaragua for military operations. "Little Rabbit," second from left in line holding M1, is 12-years-old.

These incidents are part of a plan requested and approved by Interior Minister Tomas Borges, according to Miguel Urroz Blanco, 39, who, after holding a number of important security posts in the Sandinista government and being trained in Cuba for seven months, was Chief of Police of Internal Order (POI) from December 1981, until his defection to ARDE in Costa Rica on 7 April 1982. He is now known by his war name, Julio Bigote, and is responsible for

ARDE military activity in a stretch of territory along the border in southern Nicaragua.

"It's government policy," he explained, staring through wire-rimmed glasses and tugging a well-developed beard. "The way to annihilate the guerrilla is to annihilate his sources of supply — the peasantry.

"When I was chief of adjunct for the police, I was ordered to relocate settlements on the Atlantic coast to Tasbapri, whatever way possible. If someone showed signs of not conforming, he was taken prisoner. Those who would protest were killed on the spot. After moving the people, the houses were burned and livestock confiscated. Walter Ferreti, National Chief of Police, told me this had been practiced in Cuba and had positive effects.

"This tactic was happening frequently. It was formally incorporated in a secret plan called The Plans for Time of War (PTG) approved by Borges three days before I left; I had participated in its preparation. They are plans of repression to crush any resistance or intent of uprising of the people. It's a pretext for changing the manner of operation of the military with respect to civilians. Within 48 hours of being put into full effect, the security forces would incarcerate 1,500 people on lists of the General Direction of State Security (DGSE). Two-hundred-and-eighty of those would be killed immediately and many more would go to clandestine prisons that are horrible places of torture."

Urroz grimaced as he told about an inspection tour he had with Borges and other

security personnel of a large concrete building-turned-clandestine-prison behind the headquarters of an army base 12 kilometers northwest of Matagalpa, Nicaragua.

According to his story, emaciated prisoners, all political, were kept naked in crowded concrete cells with windows without glass while the temperature outside was around 11 degrees Celsius (58 F).

"The prisoners moved back from the iron gratings when we came. They were shaking; they thought we were going to beat them. A guard opened the door and hit prisoners at random. 'Look at your *comandante* when he speaks to you,' he said. Borges laughed and made fun of them: 'I kill them because they're fools.'

"Oh, it was repugnant. Blood, vomit and excrement were on the floor and walls. The smell made me nauseous. The prisoners were coughing up blood from regular beatings. They were starved so that information could be gotten out of them. They were only given that necessary to keep them alive — three spoonfuls of beans a day. Some begged to be killed — they were in so much pain.

"There's no hope for them," Urroz lamented. "They will all die. I was drinking later with one prison official and, in a capricious moment, he ordered the prisoners in some cell to be killed. And they were killed. Do you know the meaning of the word anguish?" he asked rhetorically. "That was it....

"I was a confidant of Borges. He's very cruel. In Puerto Cabeza, I heard him tell a comrade, 'Since you can't make Faggot [Stephen Faggot, now leader of Misurasata, an armed opposition organization of Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indians] disappear, eliminate all those around him.'

"The deceptions bothered me a lot. For example, when Jose Esteban Gonzales [the head of the Nicaraguan Human Rights Commission] landed at the airport among supporters, Borges ordered me to send soldiers dressed in civilian clothing for a demonstration against him. Thirty-two military trucks drove them there. It was absurd.

"But what bothered me more was the domination of our country by Cubans, Russians and Bulgarians...for each departmental chief, there was a Cuban adviser. In reality, it was the advisers who gave the orders and chiefs who did the advising.

"The original project that I fought for against Somoza was betrayed. I didn't fight so that our people could be murdered and tortured and live as refugees. I didn't fight to have a totalitarian communist state. I fought for what you have in the United States — democracy. I fought for the well-being of my people."

BELOW: Former Sandinista security official Urroz (bearded man on right) gives pep talk to guerrilla fighters in ARDE camp along Costa Rican-Nicaraguan border.

BOTTOM: ARDE troopers with FN FALs man outpost overlooking trail used by Sandinista patrols approximately one kilometer inside Nicaragua.

ABOVE: Armed with AK-47, ex-Head of Police of Internal Order Urroz is flanked by Contra squad leaders.

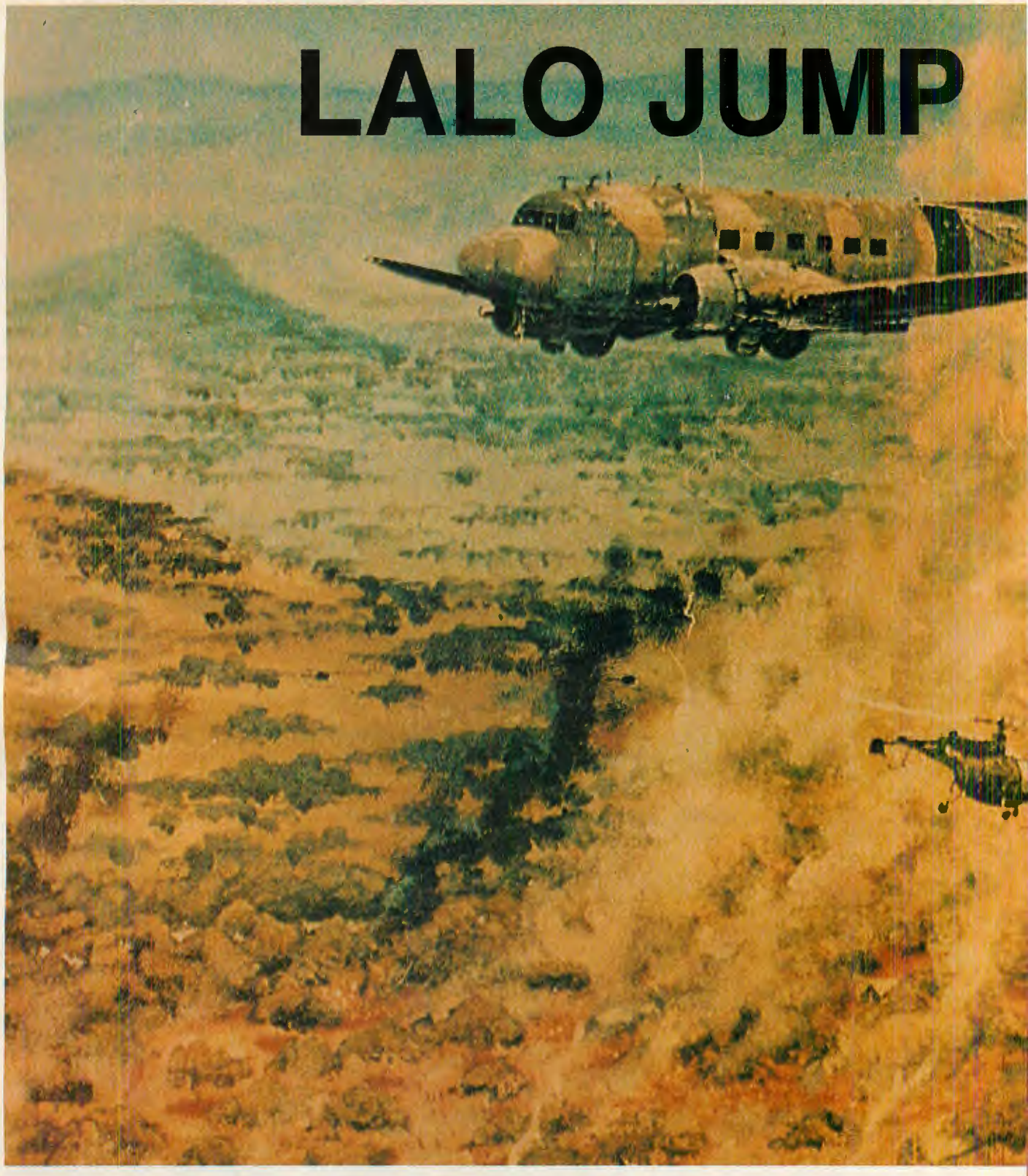
RIGHT: Refugees: Mrs. Calderon (left) and Mrs. Casanova and children. ARDE guerrilla Mallardo on left in civilian clothes, and Mr. Casanova with child at right. Mrs. Calderon's husband disappeared after Sandinista attack on refugee river-crossing attempt.

"We're fighting because of all the injustice and unrest that the communists are making Nicaragua suffer through — murdering whomever they please," Miguel Antonio Benavides said passionately. "We're fighting to save our families."

"We're *campesinos* and believe in God," added another guerrilla, "and they're never going to take Him away from us! What we want is the communism and oppression to end."

"Things are tough in Nicaragua," said Mrs. Casanova, pampering her children. "Everything is rationed: Four pounds of rice, two liters of cooking oil, four bars of soap and four pounds of sugar every 15 days. The government is hard; they kill our men and take us away. It shouldn't be like this. It's worse than Somoza. We'll return to Nicaragua when the boys triumph." ✠

LALO JUMP



TO successfully serve with the Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) Fire Force for any sustained period required two qualities peculiar to most hazardous jobs: a healthy instinct for survival and a lot of luck. It took only a few hot callouts to develop the first; but luck came and went at its own whim throughout all of our bush trips.

During August of 1978, I was serving with 3 Commando, First Battalion RLI, and was acting as the Commando sergeant major during our stay at Grand Reef Fire Force Camp. Ken Reed, our old CSM, had just taken the reins as battalion regimental sergeant major (RSM), and it fell to me as senior NCO to sort out the various sticks required to act as heliborne stop groups (four-man teams inserted along previously determined escape routes), as well as the four sticks necessary to make up the Para-borne sweep line, the extended line formation which moved through the contact area, clearing it of terrorists.

Because of the possibility of injuries and the lengthy recovery time, the Paras rarely jumped unless there was an actual contact in progress on the ground. On many of our callouts this meant that the stop groups did a tremendous amount of humping to clear the bush, and occasionally

RLI (Almost) Inherits the Earth

by John W. Coleman

RLI combat artist Craig Bone lost part of his right leg to a Frelimo mortar round in Mozambique. It put him out of the war, but didn't hamper his drawing ability. This picture shows a typical Fire Force callout. Ground fires would have been started by advance Hunter jet strikes and stop groups would already be on ground as Paras drop from Dak to form sweep line. G-Cars hover around DZ waiting for casualties.

spent the night out due to the limited daylight flying time of our old French Alouette choppers. I always made it a point to put my stick on the jump list, because we knew that we'd have to bust ass only if there were actual terrorists on the ground.

Grand Reef turned into a pretty busy bush trip for the Paras, with operational jumps into the Chiduku and Buhera TTLs (Tribal Trust Lands), as well as repeated trips to the Wiltshire Purchase Area. However, a good part of our days were centered around normal bush routine: volleyball, cards, test-firing and retraining. However, we were never able to relax completely because the callout siren was manned from dawn to dusk, ready to send us out into the Rhodesian bush to sort out a scene.

Just after morning muster parade on 2 August 1978, our radio watch hit the siren. Word had come down from the air force ops room that an African Selous Scout was sitting in a rocky outcrop about 100 feet from eight terrs armed with AKs and two RPD light machine guns. He had politely asked if the Fire Force could come as it appeared that the enemy knew he was in the area.

As per normal procedure, the troopies took off running to the choppers and Para shed while the OC (Officer Commanding), stick commanders and pilots gathered in an ops room to work out a plan of attack. Maj. Snelgar quickly sorted out initial stop positions with the pilot of the K-Car, the Alouette command ship, and worked out an approach route that would bring us in downwind and as low as possible for maximum surprise. As Para commander, I had little to do except brief my sticks on the scene and keep my ear glued to the radio in the event contact was made on the ground.

While we 'chuted up, I passed out information on the jump and ground radio frequencies, as well as what I had heard in the briefing. When I mentioned that the sighting had occurred in the Wedza TTL, a lot of the older hands looked pained. The Wedza was ideal Indian Country, and we had had many hard contacts in its dense scrub, rocky terrain and numerous caves.

The stop groups had pulled out long before our enduring Dakota lifted toward the northeast and the area of the Scout's sighting. Because of the acute difference in flying speeds between the Dak and the choppers, we were frequently put into a holding area some distance

from the scene, but close enough to respond within minutes if necessary.

I was able to follow the choppers' progress toward the Observation Post (OP) by listening in on the spare headphones located by the open jump door. Sitting as first man, starboard stick, gave me the advantage of listening in on the action, as well as landing in the center of the sweep line once we hit the ground.

Maj. Snelgar had planned the route well. The K-Car was only a few seconds from the target area and the Scout had reported no unusual activity from the terr base camp. The Scout had marked his position with a dayglo orange panel, and was keeping a close eye on the terrs should they break when the choppers arrived.

We had been circling for only a few minutes when I heard the K-Car's familiar words: They were pulling up over the target area. In many cases it's hard to pinpoint the terrs when you're circling overhead in a chopper, but this time there was no doubt at all. The K-Car crew chief let rip with the 20mm cannon, sending the terrorists running in a hail of explosive fragments.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John W. Coleman is a professional soldier. He's been at it for quite awhile, in quite a few different places (see "How To Find an Army," p. 40, SOF, February '83). His last contribution to SOF, "Five AK Rounds," appeared in our February '83 issue. In that article, Coleman described his first bush trip with the Rhodesian Light Infantry where he was wounded — five rounds to the body from a terrorist's AK.

We are glad to report Coleman is still alive and is pursuing somewhat safer forms of recreation. This month we welcome his latest story submission — an RLI airborne Fire Force callout with a higher-than-usual pucker factor.

Typical kit carried by Rhodesian Security Forces on anti-terrorist airborne ops. Rifle is FN FAL.

PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER

by John W. Coleman

When I returned to the United States after serving 3½ years with the Rhodesian Army, I found myself repeatedly confronted with the question, "Ah. . . you were a mercenary, huh?" The implications of this question irritated me then, and they still do now. I consider myself a professional soldier, and prefer that title to "mercenary."

To those not involved in military circles, the difference between the two terms may be one only of semantics, yet modern connotations of the term "mercenary" are usually derogatory and demeaning.

During my years in Africa, I had the misfortune of meeting numerous self-styled mercenaries; to the man they had little or no formal military training, and all fit Webster's definition, "Serving merely for pay or sordid advantage." I watched them arrive and quickly depart the Rhodesian scene, leaving little but a bad taste in everyone's mouth. These mercenaries were out for quick profit and had few compunctions as to who their employers were, what cause they served, or who they trampled during the course of their employment. Add to this their lack of training in the basics of soldiering and you have a dangerous and amoral group of outcasts who mindlessly create havoc, willful destruction and death wherever they go. Small wonder the term mercenary carries such a poor image.

On the flip side of this coin, however, lies the class of military man who embodies the moral spirit, traditions and heritage of countless years of military service: the professional soldier. To most, this term immediately invokes the image of a career soldier in the service of his country, serving proudly, but at the whim of whatever political bureaucracy is establishing foreign policy at the time. Many of us were unable to cope with the sometimes mind-boggling contradictions found in these policies, or with the gross mismanagement which plagued our parent services. Yet we were still professional military, and in us was imbedded a thousand years of military spirit: the mental and physical disciplines, allegiance to the cause, respect for an organized and cohesive unit of dedicated men and, above all, the painful and hard-learned lessons which taught us the difference between right and wrong on the battlefield.

These ideals don't just vanish when the discharge papers arrive — they merely lie dormant until a new opportunity arises to put them to use. Rhodesia, Afghanistan and Central America all become worthy battlefields when the professional soldier takes a hard look at both sides, sifts through the political rhetoric to find the underlying causes involved, and aligns himself not with the side that pays the most or has the best chance to win, but rather with the side that comes closest to the soldier's own beliefs and convictions. From that point onward, it becomes less the point of political conversion or allegiance than of personal dedication to the ideals of soldiering.

This may sound like a modern day Don Quixote charging off to fight another windmill, but I believe this is exactly what the professional soldier does. He may willingly join a cause which has little chance of winning, yet in the end scores a personal triumph, knowing he has fought hard and well, and has upheld the traditions and spirit upon which professional soldiering is based.

Simplistic point of view? Certainly. Once the self-employed soldier has made the choice of which side he will offer his services, it does indeed become a simple matter of being a soldier: one who fights for a cause, endures hardships and conducts himself gallantly.

I had the privilege of meeting hundreds of these men during my service with the Rhodesian "Foreign Legion," and have since encountered many more on their way home, or on their way to the battlefields of our contemporary world. For the most part, they're quiet, unassuming and dedicated and have the same aversion to the term mercenary that I do. They're just soldiers doing their job, and that's really what it's all about.

ABOVE: Craig Bone's drawing shows RLI stick commander on DZ after Fire Force callout. Note camouflaged FN FAL. Alouette G-Cars (gunships) land in background.
BELOW: RLI troopie holds equipment line from Alouette G-Car. Photo: Ken Gaudet

I quickly threw off my headset and started to strap my jump helmet on, a signal to the rest of the Paras that we were going out the door. As the pilot began to line up on the hastily chosen drop zone, we went through our pre-jump drills, and I noticed one of our dispatchers literally hanging out the door checking on the upcoming DZ. It was hard to see him through his communications mask, but his continuing chatter to the pilots showed that something obviously wasn't right. (We found out later that he had been arguing for a dry run over the area first to check out what looked to be irregularities on the ground.)

The pilots wanted to get us out, first because of the urgency to get the sweep line on the ground, and secondly, because the troop ships had reported taking RPD fire during their insertion of the stop groups.

The discussion soon ended when the pilots sent back the word for action stations, which put the first man in the door ready to jump. When the green light popped on, 16 paratroops ran out the door in the space of a few seconds, the object being to land as close to one another as possible once we hit the contact area.

When I exited the Dak, the slipstream yanked me back and downward, forcing the static line to pull the Mark One Saviac 'chute out of its pack. I looked up to check for a fully deployed canopy, and started to carry out the rest of the drills when I smacked into the Drop Zone like a meteorite.

I'd had no time to drop my CSPEP (Carrying Straps, Personal Equipment, Parachutist), the series of straps that allowed us to carry our Fire Force kit attached to the parachute rather than under the harness. It was carried under the reserve 'chute attached to the harness by a 20-foot nylon cord. Upon exit, we were supposed to unhook the CSPEP, hoping the cord didn't break and trying not to land on the kit.

I had crashed in carrying more than 80 pounds of kit strapped to my waist, and felt as if every bone were broken. Instinctively I popped the capewells on my 'chute to release the now billowing canopy, and gingerly started undoing the rest of the harness. Aside from a badly bruised shoulder and some scratches, I was unhurt, but shouts along the DZ spelled out that others had creamed in hard and required immediate medevac.

Continued on page 82

HISTORY ON A BADGE

Crests of the French Foreign Legion

Text & Photos by Leroy Thompson

ALTHOUGH the famous white kepi — *le kepi blanc* — is the best-known symbol of the French Foreign Legion, the pocket crest — either worn on a fob or pinned directly to the pocket or the bush hat (as it often was at Dien Bien Phu) — is a subtle but informative symbol. Pocket crests in the Legion date from 1928 when the 3rd REI (*Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie*) adopted the first one. Since that time hundreds of different crests have been worn by Legion units from battalion all the way down to platoon level.

One can tell a great deal about a Legion unit by looking at its crest since certain heraldic elements are symbolic of where the unit has seen combat and what its function is or used to be, as the below discussion of the unit histories and heraldic symbolism of the 27 crests pictured shows. The discussion will give the reader an understanding of why each of these 27 small, enameled pieces of metal is a compact history of courage and devotion to duty and why they are worn with such pride.

No. 1. Compagnie de Discipline des Regiments en Extreme-Orient: This crest was for the Legion discipline company in Indochina during the period 1946-1954. It shows a deceptively mild symbol (since the harsh nature of Legion disciplinary units is well known): The junk sail illustrates that the only way off *l'Ile de Tagne* in Cam Ranh Bay, where the company was stationed, was via ship, and the company's service in Indochina; the letters "CD" stand for *Compagnie de Discipline.*

No. 2. 1er Battaillon de Marche: Formed in Indochina from survivors of the retreat from Cao Bang, this unit adopted a crest which incorporates the map of Indochina to represent service there. The red and green colors of the Legion as well as the Legion grenade indicate a Legion formation, while the word "*Vindicta*" (vengeance) indicates the desire to avenge the losses inflicted by the Viet Minh.

No. 3. 4e Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie: Formed in Morocco in 1920 and continuing today as the Legion's *Regiment d'Instruction,* the 4th Infantry Regiment has a long tradition of service in North Africa and Madagascar. In addition to the obvious use of the Legion's grenade and colors and the numeral "4," this crest includes representations of the minaret of Marrakesh and the Atlas Mountains to commemorate the formation of the regiment in Morocco. Its 5th Battalion served in Syria in 1925-1926.

No. 4. Detachment de Legion Etrangere des Comores: Formed in 1973 to garrison the Comoro archipelago, this unit was redesignated the DLEM (*Detachment de Legion Etrangere de Moyote*) in 1976. The rectangular shape of this crest and its gold color recall the crest of the 3rd REI from which the unit was drawn. The stylized seven-flame grenade represents the Legion; the Southern Cross represents the hemisphere in which the Comoros are located.

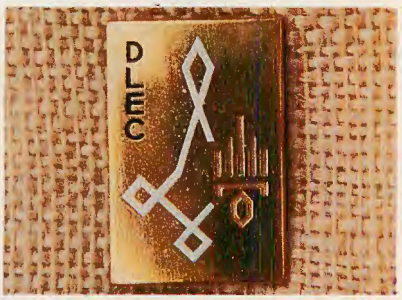
No. 5. 3eme Bataillon de Marche de la Legion Etrangere (BMLE): Formed in 1962 from elements of the 3rd REI and the 13th DBLE (*Demi-Brigade Legion Etrangere*) for service in Madagascar, the 3rd BMLE was disbanded in 1964. In addition to the Legion colors and grenade, this crest bears the numeral "3." The numeral and crest shape are similar to those of the 3rd REI.

No. 6. 3eme Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie: Formed during World War I, the 3rd Infantry Regiment has also seen action in WWII, Indochina and Algeria. Recently, the 3rd REI has been stationed in French Guiana. This crest makes use of the traditional Legion colors and grenade. The rectangular shape is the one normally associated with the 3rd Infantry Regiment, most decorated unit in French Army.

No. 7. Compagnie Regimentaire du 4eme REI: Formed in 1956 for duty around Tebessa. Its crest makes use of the Legion grenade. The blue star and circle are common to all units of the 4th REI.

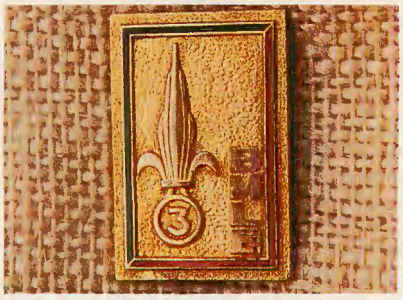
No. 8. Bataillon de Marche de la 4eme

No. 1. Compagnie de Discipline des Regiments en Extreme-Orient



No. 4. Detachment de Legion Etrangere des Comores

No. 2. 1er Battaillon de Marche



No. 5. 3eme Bataillon de Marche de la Legion Etrangere

No. 3. 4e Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie

No. 6. 3eme Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie

No. 7. Compagnie Regimentaire du 4eme REI

No. 10. 6eme Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie

No. 8. Bataillon de Marche de la 4eme DBLE

No. 11. 5eme Regiment Mixte du Pacifique:

No. 9. 5eme Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie

No. 12. 2eme Regiment de Marche des Voluntaires Etrangers

DBLE: Formed in 1946, this unit departed for Madagascar in 1947. It was later incorporated into the 4th REI, which the 4th DBLE had been redesignated. Superimposed on the map of Madagascar are the heads of legionnaires from 1895 — the period of an earlier Madagascar expedition — and from 1947. The red island and green border use the traditional colors of the Legion.

No. 9. 5eme Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie: The 5th Infantry Regiment spent WWII in Indochina, but in 1945 resisted when the Japanese attempted to occupy its posts. Many members of the regiment took part in a heroic fighting retreat to China, but the regiment itself was decimated. It was reformed in Tonkin in 1949, seeing action primarily in the Delta during the Indochina War. The 5th REI moved to Algeria in 1956 where it also saw action. In 1963, this unit was incorporated into the *5e Regiment Mixte du Pacifique* and was sent to French Polynesia. The unit crest bears the Legion colors and grenade but also the dragon, symbolic of the regiment's service in Indochina.

No. 10. 6eme Regiment Etranger d'Infanterie: Formed in 1939 from elements of the 1st and 2nd REI, the 6th REI was in Syria as part of the Vichy garrison and fought against other legionnaires who were with the Free French 13e DBLE. After the peace of Saint-Jean-d'Acre in July 1941, the 6th REI was disbanded, but in the late 1940s was reformed in Tunisia. Its primary purpose, however, was to serve as a pool of manpower for Indochina. In 1955 the remaining battalion, the I/6, became the III/Bn of the 2nd REI in Algeria. In addition to the Legion colors and grenade, this crest bears the numeral "6" and the columns of Jupiter at the temple at Baalbek near Damascus.

No. 11. 5eme Regiment Mixte du Pacifique: Formed in 1963, the 5th RMP inherited the traditions of the 5th REI. Stationed in French Polynesia, this unit includes French Army engineer as well as Foreign Legion infantry and other specialized personnel and among other duties guards the French nuclear test facility located in that area. The Legion grenade with the numeral "5" adorns the middle of this crest. The helmet centered at the top indicates the engineer personnel in the unit, since this is the traditional symbol of French *"Genie"* units. The tikis on the sides represent the unit's being stationed in Polynesia. The black color represents the sacrifices of the 5th REI in Tonkin and is also reminiscent of the background color on the 5th REI crest. Due to the unit's "mixed" status, this is one of the few Legion crests not bearing the colors green and red.

No. 12. 2eme Regiment de Marche des Voluntaires Etrangers: This unit, which is also sometimes known as the 22nd Foreign Legion Volunteer Regiment, was formed in 1939 from a core of veterans combined with East European refugees and former members of the Spanish Republican Army. Because the unit was rushed into combat against the Germans during the battle for France it did not perform too well and was dissolved upon France's surrender. The globe represents the fact that the unit was recruited from all over the world, while the seven flamed grenade, of course, represents the Legion.

No. 13. 13eme Demi-Brigade de Legion Etranger: The 13th DBLE is one of the Legion's most famous units. Formed for service in Finland against Russia during the Winter War and thus trained as mountain troops, the 13th DBLE first saw action against the Germans at Narvik and elsewhere in Norway. Later this unit fought with the Free French forces in North Africa and was involved in the legendary battle for Bir Hakeim. The 13th DBLE was also at El Alamein and fought as part of the British 8th Army throughout its advance against Rommel. The demi-brigade also saw action in Italy and France itself before the war ended.

No. 13. 13eme Demi-Brigade de Legion Etranger

No. 18. 76eme Bataillon Genie Legion -

No. 23. 2eme Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes

No. 14. 2eme Compagnie Saharienne Portee de Legion

No. 19. 1ere Compagnie de Reparation de la Legion Etrangere

No. 24. 3eme Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes

No. 15. 1er Regiment Etranger de Cavalerie

No. 20. 2eme Compagnie de Reparation de la Legion Etrangere

No. 25. 2eme Compagnie du 2eme REP

No. 16. 2eme Regiment de Cavalerie
No. 17. 21eme Co du 72eme Bn du Genie

No. 21. 4eme Co de Batteaux Blindes
No. 22. 1er REP

No. 26. 4eme Co du 2eme REP
No. 27. Chuteurs Ops du 2eme REP

The 13th DBLE was one of the first Legion units sent to Indochina after the end of WWII, landing in 1946, and remained there until near the end of the French presence. The first and third battalions of the 13th DBLE were virtually wiped out at Dien Bien Phu. After leaving Indochina, the remnants of the 13th along with reformed battalions landed in Algeria in 1955 and remained there until 1962 when it was sent to Djibouti where elements of the unit have remained until today. This crest — one of the most recognized in the Legion — bears the Cross of Lorraine to commemorate its service with the 1st Free French Division. The dragon at the base recalls the unit's service in Indochina.

No. 14. 2eme Compagnie Saharienne Portee de Legion (CSPL): Drawn from the ranks of the *Compagnie Saharienne Portee de Legion,* the 2nd CSPL was formed in 1946. This company along with the other CSPL units was a deep desert-patrol unit reminiscent of those shown in Legion movies. In 1963 the unit was deactivated. The crest bears the Legion grenade and the green and red colors common to so many others on this list. As is often the case with Saharan units, it also bears the "cross of Agades" and the five-pointed "seal of Solomon," which usually indicates service in Morocco.

No. 15. 1er Regiment Etranger de Cavalerie (REC): The 1st REC was raised in 1921 in Tunisia, many of the original members being former White Russian cavalrymen. The unit saw action against the Rifs during the '20s (see "Morocco's Murderous Marauders," SOF, March '81), and in 1925 a squadron of the 1st REC was sent to fight the Druse in Syria (see "No Quarter at Messifre," SOF, October '83). Throughout the late '20s and the '30s the 1st REC remained in North Africa, but in 1940 its second squadron was the basis for the GRD 97, a light reconnaissance unit which fought in the battle for France. After the fall of France, the remainder of the 1st REC remained in Tunisia. The 1st REC was shipped to Indochina in 1947 and, using "crabs" and "alligators," operated in amphibious and light armored/recon roles. The 1st REC left Indochina in 1955 and landed in North Africa late that year. During the remainder of the 1950s and during the early 1960s, the unit operated in Tunisia and Algeria. In 1967, the regiment moved to Orange in metropolitan France where it remains based today as a light armored recce regiment. This crest bears the Legion's green and red as well as the cavalry's blue on the shield. The grenade represents the Legion, the sabers the cavalry.

No. 16. 2eme Regiment Etranger de Cavalerie: Originally created in 1939, the 2nd REC was disbanded after the fall of France but was reactivated in Morocco in 1946. The unit remained primarily in Morocco during the Indochina War, though one squadron was in Madagascar until 1952. In 1956 some squadrons were also serving in Algeria. In July 1962, the unit was disbanded — due to its support of the generals' coup — with the 1st REC absorbing much of its strength. In addition to the red, green and blue colors and the Legion grenade, this crest bears the standard of the Dauphin to recall the Foreign Cavalry Regiment formed in 1666 by Louis XIV. The motto — *Pericula Ludus* — also stems from this ancestor of the 2nd REC.

No. 17. 21eme Compagnie du 72eme Bataillon du Genie: This unit crest bears the Legion grenade with unit number and Legion colors. The helmet indicates it is an engineer unit; the dragon indicates service in Indochina.

No. 18. 76eme Bataillon Genie Legion: This unit was formed in 1951 and dissolved in 1955. It bears the Legion grenade and helmet indicating engineers. The tracks indicate the use of heavy equipment, and the pagoda is probably indicative of service in Indochina.

No. 19. 1er Compagnie de Reparation de la Legion Etrangere: This company served in Indochina, repairing various types of vehicles, and was finally dissolved in 1956. The grenade and the colors represent the Legion; the Buddha indicates service in Indochina.

No. 20. 2eme Compagnie de Reparation de la Legion Etrangere: This unit served in Indochina repairing vehicles and artillery and at various times performed security duties at Hue. It also acted as a mobile maintenance unit, at one time carrying out field repairs for the Mobile Groups. This crest makes use of the grenade and Legion colors combined with the dragon, indicative of Indochina service.

No. 21. 4eme Compagnie de Batteaux Blindes: This unit was assigned to armored riverine craft in Indochina. Created in 1949, it served until disbandment in 1954. The grenade and green and red colors symbolize the Legion, while the helmet marks the unit as composed of engineers. The anchor and water indicate its riverine assignment.

No. 22. 1er Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes (REP): *Le premier REP,* despite an existence of only a little over a decade, remains one of the Legion's most respected units. Formed as a battalion in North Africa in 1948, the 1st BEP *(Battaillon Etranger de Parachutistes)* was actually the Legion's second parachute unit, a company having been formed a few months earlier as part of the 3rd REI. However, it is the 1st BEP which really began the Legion para tradition. The unit was virtually wiped out during the retreat from the Cao Bang ridgeline but was reformed in March 1951, with one Vietnamese and three European companies. The 1st BEP continued to see heavy action throughout the remainder of the war in Indochina, and was virtually wiped out a second time at Dien Bien Phu. It was reformed and became the 1st REP in September 1955 in Algeria. In addition to being the best remembered unit in the fighting in Algeria — especially for the battle of Algiers and cleaning up the Casbah — the 1st REP was also involved in the Suez operation in 1956. After taking part in the generals' *putsch* in 1961 the 1st REP was disbanded. Considering the unit's magnificent combat history, its crest is deceptively simple. It bears the Legion grenade and, subtly, the colors. The parachute and wings indicate that the unit was airborne.

No. 23. 2eme Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes: The 2nd BEP was formed in 1948 and landed in Indochina during February 1949. During the course of that conflict the unit made seven combat jumps and was finally virtually wiped out at Dien Bien Phu. It was reformed from members of the 3rd BEP. In 1955, the unit moved to North Africa, becoming the 2nd REP in December and absorbing the recently reformed 3rd BEP. The 2nd REP saw almost as much action as the 1st REP in Algeria, accounting for over 4,000 enemy KIA before the end of the conflict. After Algeria, the 2nd REP moved to Calvi, Corsica, in June 1967, where it remains today as the Legion's only parachute regiment. The 2nd REP carried out the Legion's most recent combat jump at Kolwezi in 1978 (see "Jump into Shaba," SOF, February '79, and "Target Kolwezi," SOF, December '83). The unit's crest bears a dragon to commemorate its time in Indochina, while the green and red rectangle containing the grenade indicates that it is a Legion unit. The number "2" is the unit designation.

No. 24. 3eme Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes: Originally formed in 1949 as the 3rd BEP, this unit was first incorporated into the 2nd BEP, when that unit was reformed after Dien Bien Phu and then merged with the 2nd REP. The winged dagger indicates that this is a parachute unit, while the colors and grenade indicate its Legion origins.

No. 25. 2eme Compagnie du 2eme REP: The various companies of the 2nd REP have their own crests which indicate their specialties. The crest's shape is similar to that of the regimental crest and bears the grenade in green and red. The wings indicate the airborne capability, while the mountain scene indicates this company's specialization in mountaineering and skiing. The number "2" indicates the second company.

No. 26. 4eme Compagnie du 2eme REP: This is another 2nd REP company crest, in this case the fourth company's. The shape is that of the regimental crest, a miniature of which shows in the upper right-hand corner. This company specializes in demolitions — indicated by the red explosion and the green lightning flash. The unit also has many snipers, hence the mention of this in the word "snipers." (*"Destructeurs"* means demolitions experts.)

No. 27. Chuteurs Operationneles du 2eme REP: The proposed crest for the 2nd REP HALO detachment. The green and red stripes circling the crest represent the Legion, while the blue sky and white clouds represent the HALO environment. Two free-fallers flank the regimental crest.

AFGHAN 101

Yale Journalists Tour Jihad Battlegrounds

Text & Photos by Gregory D'Elia & Charles Bork

Mujahideen wait for orders at organization headquarters in Peshawar.

Mujahideen pose with Enfields at port arms beside unexploded Soviet bomb.

IT was snowing when we crossed into Afghanistan on Sunday morning. We climbed a sharp, twisting trail across a white-capped mountain. A dozen mujahideen tramped alongside, guns and bullet belts slung as casually as their cloaks and turbans. Freedom fighters streamed daily toward our destination: Paktia Province, where a force of 10,000 Soviet troops had just been dispatched under orders to clean up the border area.

Four days earlier, a man from the moderate alliance had met us in our room in the Dean's Hotel. His name was Sher Mohammad Itebari and he was to be our translator and guide. We hired a bicycle taxi and travelled to a crowded one-story building on the outskirts of the city. Itebari watched carefully to make sure we were not followed. The building was a safehouse for mujahideen on leave in Pakistan. Itebari warned us before he departed to stay inside so we woudn't be noticed by passersby.

We kept to ourselves most of the evening, separated from our hosts by a language barrier. We left before dawn, disguised in native dress. We boarded a bus which, after seven hours, would take us to a refugee camp only a few miles from the Afghanistan border. The bus took us through the "tribal trust land," an area without civil law. The British established the zone after the failure of their several attempts to conquer Afghanistan. Production and trade in narcotics — and guns — flourishes here. Foreigners are not permitted to travel in this area and our bus was stopped and searched by Pakistan customs officials. We kept quiet and escaped detection.

Our bags, which travelled separately, were not so lucky. Noticing the airline tags we had neglected to remove, the authorities questioned the mujahid who was transporting our luggage. After imposing an im-

promptu "tax," the official let him continue.

Once we were reunited with our bags at the refugee camp, just outside of Afghanistan, we tried to reimburse the mujahid. Although we had just met him and the bribe constituted a substantial sum to an Afghan freedom fighter, he adamantly refused any money, insisting we were his guests.

We left the Afghan refugee camp near Parichnar, Pakistan, after a two-day visit. The camp was nearly empty. Almost every man of combat age had left for Afghanistan to counter the approaching assault. Paktia is a stronghold of Afghan tradition. Tribal law abets the native belligerent spirit: Every family is required to provide a fighting man to the resistance for six months of the year.

This camp had been established by the refugees more than four years back. Atrocities had begun even before the Soviets entered in response to the "Afghan invitation." After the overthrow of the Republic in 1978, Taraki and the communist regime methodically terrorized the populace. In Kabul they decimated the intellectual and religious leadership. At least 20,000 vanished into Pulicharkhi, a prison of horrors likened to Pol Pot's death camps in Kampuchea.

"Yo, dwa, dre." Hands cupped to his mouth, a young freedom fighter playfully mimicked government loudspeakers calling for resistance. "Babrak, Babrak," another shouted a hundred meters up the mountain slope, mockingly invoking the name of the puppet president, Babrak Karmal.

Hours later, arriving in Paktia proper, we stopped at an Islamic school. Adobe buildings swarmed with children of the vicinity's remaining families, who chattered excitedly at our arrival. The mujahideen, or holy warriors, built the school to restore stability to this war-ravaged area. Teaching mathematics, and the local languages — Pushto and Dari — the school attempts to discourage the exodus of refugees. It is ironic that it was the government's effort to establish universal education which helped lay the groundwork for the resistance movement. Angered at the regime's attempt to infuse communist values in schools, some villagers killed teachers. Often the army retaliated, sending more people into the freedom fighters' camp.

After offering us tea thick with sugar, the headmaster had a bomb dragged from underneath some nearby bushes. It was six feet long and marked with Cyrillic lettering. It had landed in the schoolyard but failed to explode on impact. This kind of bomb sends out a shower of smaller bombs and shrapnel on contact.

About 50 students, ages 5 to 20, attend the school. They rely on supplies smuggled in from Pakistan by mujahideen. The headmaster keeps a submachine gun on hand, and frequently leads villagers and students into combat.

The snow had now changed into a heavy rain and our guides led us on a nighttime hike to drier sleeping quarters. We camped inside a mosque in a bombed-out village. As they do five times daily, our soldier-companions prepared to pray. Laying their colored cloaks upon the ground, they bowed to Mecca, kissed the floor, rose to their knees and stood again; all the time they chanted supplications to Allah.

We woke at dawn the next day, breakfasting on bread and tea. Afterward, school children visited us. Itebari, who had been a teacher before the war, indulged them with a brief lesson. Although his family lives in a Peshawar refugee camp, Itebari himself travels widely in Afghanistan throughout the year. He escorts journalists, carries medicine, teaches children and fights the Russians.

After an hour's march over a snow-covered plain, we halted before a cemetery. Green and white flags hung above the graves of recent martyrs of the *jihad*. The mujahideen have abandoned the blood-red used in the wars against the British: Red is the color of the new enemy.

We continued through a village at the foot of a mountain, careful to conceal our foreign equipment and features. A member of the fundamentalist faction was said to live here. We were travelling with members of the moderate alliance. These differences of opinion can be dangerous.

One of the ironies of this conflict is that, although 90 percent of the people of Afghanistan oppose the Soviet invasion, the resistance is factionalized; substantial effort is spent undermining the effectiveness of rival groups. The political parties are divided by ideology, ethnic origin and personal rivalry. The Committee for a Free Afghanistan, in Washington, D.C., had steered us toward the moderate alliance, a group of three parties which tends toward a more democratic, pro-Western outlook than do the rival fundamentalists. The moderate alliance is composed of three groups: the National Front for the Liberation of Afghanistan (led by Sayed Gailani), the National Liberation Front (led by Sebqatullah Mojadedi) and the Islamic Revolutionary Movement (led by Mohammad nabi Mohammad).

There are several factions in the fundamentalist camp. The best known, and most influential, is the Hezb-i-Islami of Hekmatyar Gulbuddin. Gulbuddin is said to use torture to enforce the party line. His goal is to create in Afghanistan a theocratic, Islamic state on the model of Khomeini's Iran.

These rivalries are very likely fueled by agents of the Karmal government. No hard evidence exists, but rumors abound. A few days before our arrival in Peshawar, for example, two military leaders allied with the moderates were reportedly assassinated while drinking tea in one of the city's cafes. The conventional wisdom is that Hekmatyar Gulbuddin and the Hezb-i-Islam are responsible. However, it is the Soviets who benefit most from the infighting which incidents like this spark among the mujahideen: It would have been just as easy for agents of the Russian-backed Afghan intelligence to pull the trigger.

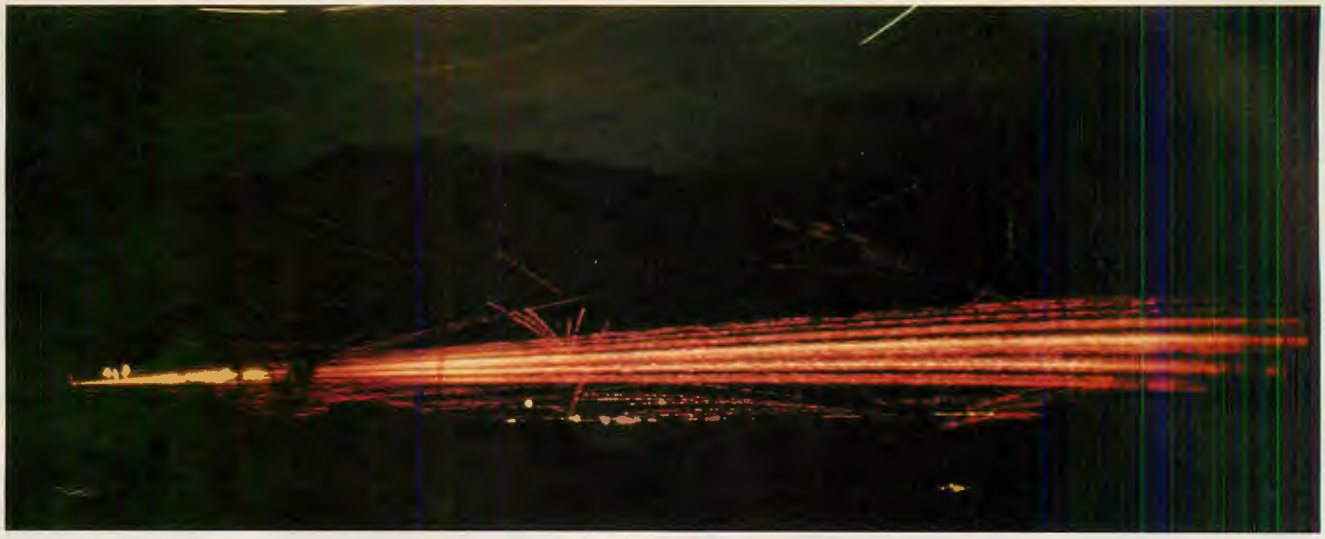
War doesn't stop for the winter, it just gets colder.

WHERE THE MUJAHIDEEN ARE SOMEONE WAITS FOR ME

Charles Bork and Gregory D'Elia were sent to Afghanistan by the *Yale Free Press*, a conservative biweekly newspaper in New Haven. Bork, 24, is a graduate of Yale and a founder of the Yale Free Press. D'Elia, 20, is a student at Yale in Comparative Literature.

The two entered the war-torn country on 6 March 1983, posing as Afghan peasants. They disguised themselves in turbans and cloaks, and Bork dyed his reddish beard black. They spent five days with resistance fighters in the province of Paktia where they witnessed a battle between the mujahideen and government forces. They also visited refugee camps located in Pakistan.

We're sure our readers will agree that this is a fascinating story, and that it was a much better way to spend spring break than hanging out on the beach in Ft. Lauderdale.



ABOVE: Afghan Army base lit by HMG and LMG tracer and mortar explosion. Kabul governs only in sunlight.

LEFT: Afghanistan is now littered with live ordnance, like this 132mm BM-13-16 artillery rocket.

BELOW: Deserting from the Afghan Army, this new mujahid brought his AKM to help the cause of Holy War.

We ascended a steep, zigzag trail, plodding in knee-high snow. At the top we stopped to break bread according to Afghan custom.

On the opposite side a sharp slope assisted our rapid descent. Halfway down we halted at a tea shop, slipped off our boots and entered upon a crowd of nearly 20 mujahideen. Plastic was stretched across window frames in place of glass — which shatters when bombs explode nearby.

A hardened fighter, who requested anonymity, told us of a failed attempt to assassinate Brezhnev. Twelve refugees planned to interrupt a Soviet motorcade touring a non-aligned country in southern Asia. They intended to overturn Brezhnev's armored limousine and douse it with gasoline. Authorities pre-empted the plot; in questioning suspects they submerged them in vats of water and inflicted electric shocks.

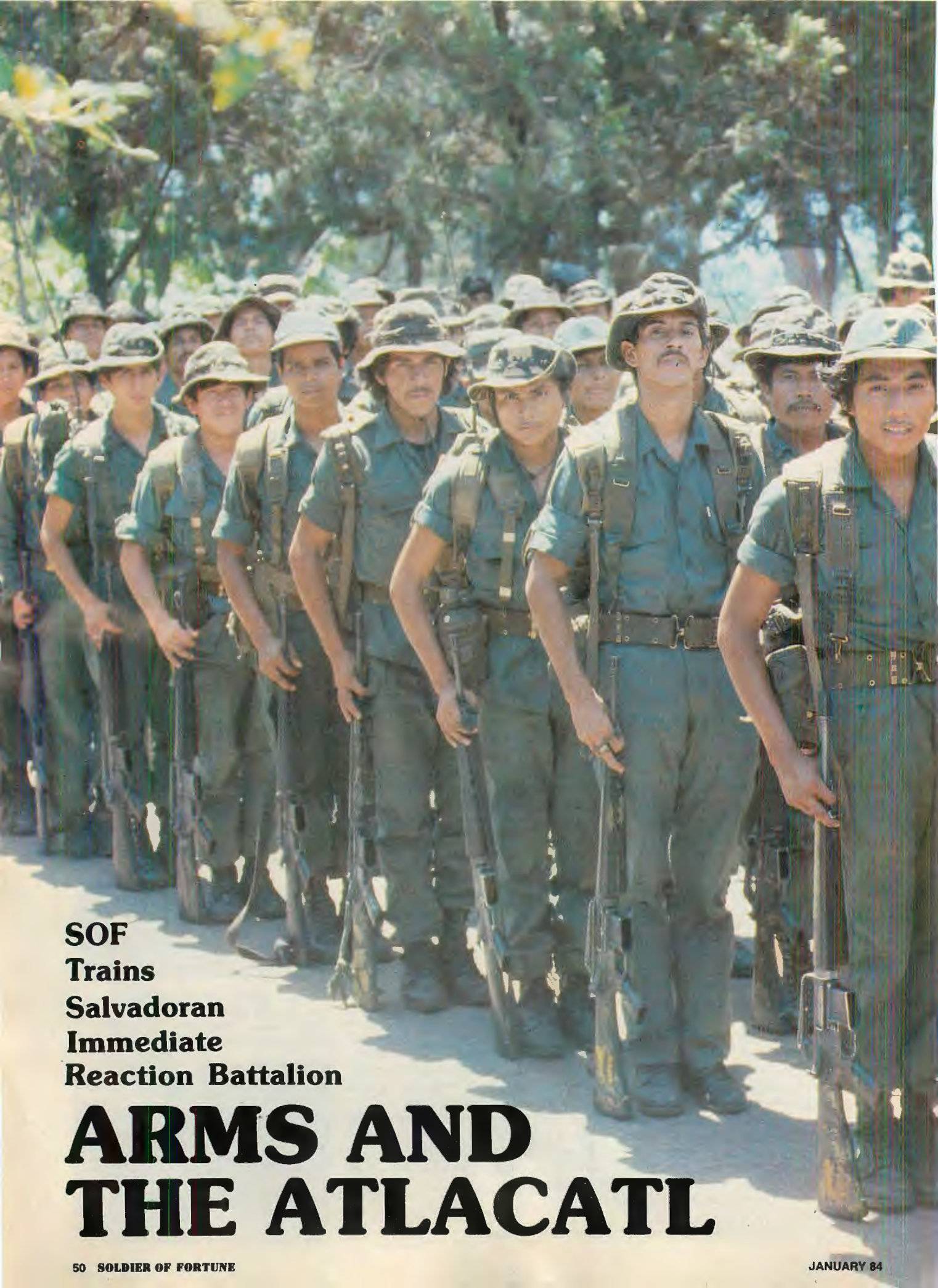
On the road again, Itebari pointed out camouflaged huts concealed in hillsides and caves that serve as air-raid shelters. Many people had abandoned the central village, practically an Afghan ghost town. A few remained, unwilling to totally abandon the settlement. Doing so would allow the Soviets to descend from helicopters to place mines in windows and doorways, making it impractical for the villagers and freedom fighters to return.

We skirted bleak craters and photographed the rubble of houses. The scenes recurred: guns and peasants, bombs and ruins, children and gravestones. To the ring of frequent warning shots we approached the garrison of Charynaw. Afghan troops and Soviet advisers occupy the post. For two years, the freedom fighters have held the government forces at bay. The enemy is surrounded, confined in a state of siege. The garrison relies entirely upon the invulnerability of roving helicopters for supply and relief. Seven times Soviet convoys have tried to break the circle of mujahideen. But fighters rallied to repulse each attempt. Now, 10,000 Soviets were en route from Gardez, the capital of Paktia.

In the meantime, the garrison had begun a calculated diversion. That day tanks and soldiers advanced 400 meters to a neighboring hillside, threatening to break free. We arrived at a mujahideen center buzzing with activity. The large adobe complex was located in a cluster of abandoned homes and ruins a mile from the garrison. A dazed freedom fighter extended a limp, mutilated hand in welcome. Otherwise our arrival made little stir.

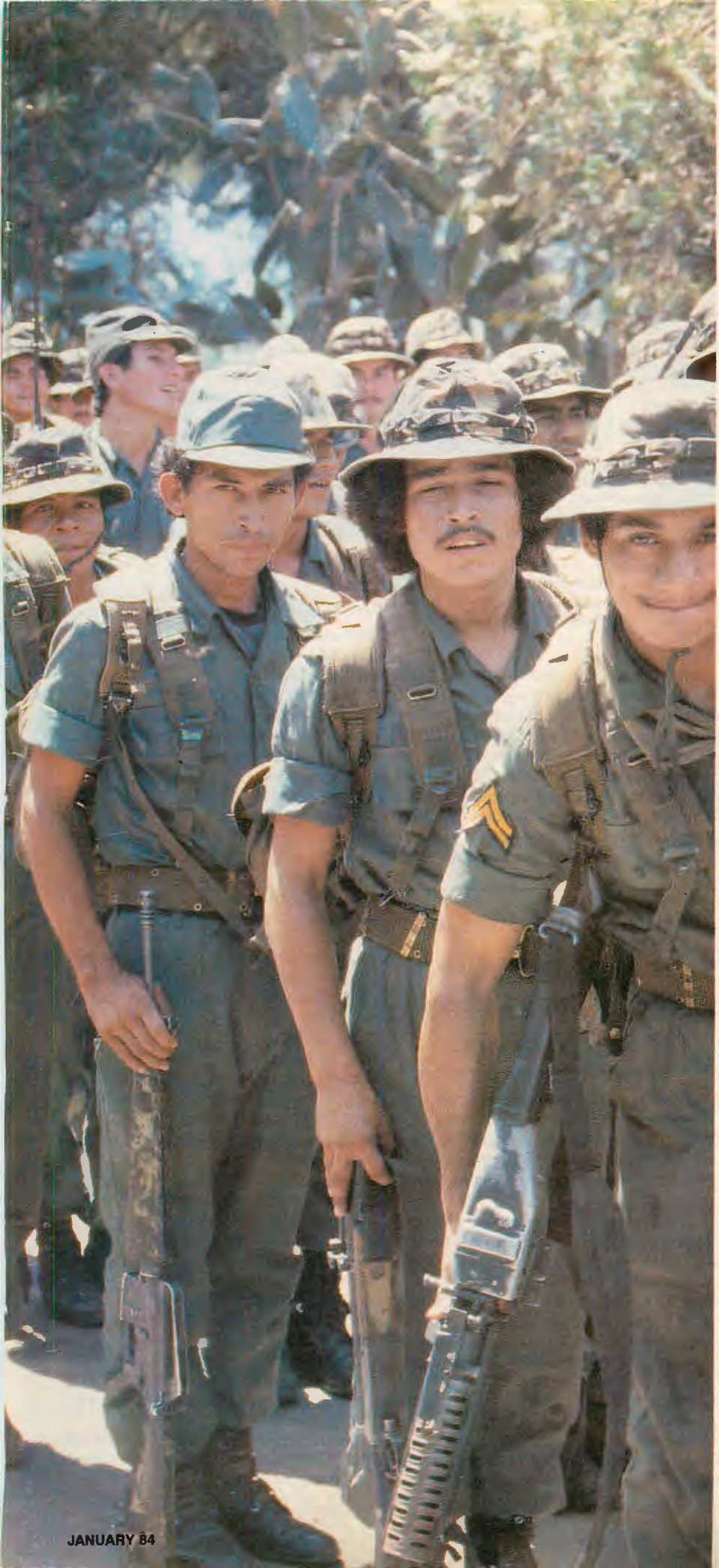
Continued on page 86

Afraid to commit first-line equipment in war they may not win, Soviets deploy WWII-vintage 132mm BM-13-16 artillery rockets on antiquated ZIL-151 trucks.



SOF Trains Salvadoran Immediate Reaction Battalion

ARMS AND THE ATLACATL



Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

"PAPA Kilo, Papa Kilo, this is Juliet Echo, over."

"Juliet Echo, this is Papa Kilo, over."

"Papa Kilo, move out, over."

"Juliet Echo, wilco, out."

Fifteen minutes after I hung up the handset on the PRC-77, every member of my 24-man patrol, except for myself and the point man, was dead. Killed in a classic "line" ambush in the dense jungle just seven klicks north of the Atlacatl Battalion *cuartel* (headquarters). Blown away by claymores and small-arms fire. On paper at least. For this was the final day of an intensive three-week retraining cycle I had just conducted for the elite Atlacatl Immediate Reaction Battalion of the Salvadoran Army.

Since its inception on 1 March 1982, the Atlacatl Battalion has seen more combat than any unit in El Salvador. Composed entirely of battle-hardened volunteers, the Atlacatls have been commanded from their origin by Lt. Col. Domingo Monterrosa, a charismatic leader. The battalion has spent almost 80 percent of the past year on combat operations. This leaves little time for retraining, usually fitted in on a catch-as-catch-can basis that is quickly suspended when the battalion is called out.

Working closely with the battalion XO, Maj. Armando Azmitia, I had timed my arrival to correspond with the battalion's return from a two-month operation in guerrilla-infested Morazan Province. Hopefully, we'd have two to three weeks in the *cuartel* before having to move out on another operation.

The hard core of professional Salvadoran NCO corps: Atlacatl Bn. cadre about to move out to field.

BELOW: Atlacatl Bn. patch.

The Atlacatl Battalion supply room (or *almacen* as it is called in Spanish) is a treasure-trove of undocumented technical intelligence. After logging in the donated supplies, I was free to prowl with 1st Lt. David Koch, commander of the 7th Company, who was assigned to assist me and interpret during my stay with the battalion. Hours passed as we poked through crates and racks of captured materiel.

A wooden crate of surgical instruments captured from a guerrilla hospital contained a number of items marked "H.C.M.S.A. de C.V. (*Hospital Centro Medico Sociedad Anonima de Capital Variable*), which is the general hospital in San Salvador. Stolen? Not hardly. More likely a gift to the guerrillas from communist sympathizers on the hospital staff.

But it was the racks of captured weapons that produced the most intriguing information. How about an Erma M1 Carbine look-alike in .22LR? There were 10 Cuban Army FALs (see "The Cuban Connection," SOF, September '83, page 66), all with the Cuban coat-of-arms removed. There was also an FN-produced heavy-barrel FAL with the Venezuelan crest on the right side of the upper receiver's magazine well, a gift to the Nicaraguan guerrillas from the Venezuelan government, no doubt. The American press corps was not the only early paramour of the Sandinista movement.

Resting next to a 1937-dated Czech Brno Mauser rifle were two BARs. One was a Model 1918 Winchester brought up to M1918A2 configuration and the other was a M1918A2 manufactured by the Royal Typewriter Company, Inc. As they both had been fitted with the late Korean War-vintage three-prong flash suppressor, it's a sure bet they were shipped to Nicaragua from stores sent to Vietnam in the early 1960s.

The six M16s I examined all carried very low serial numbers and represented a complete cross section of M16 evolution. Four of them carried the commercial Colt AR-15 logo on the lower receiver with "Property of U.S. Govt." marked below. Serial No. 142098 was marked XM16E1! Serial No. 234448 was marked M16. Serial Nos. 1251401 and 1644015 were marked M16A1. The final two M16A1s were manufactured by Hydra-Matic Div., General Motors Corp., and were both numbered in the low three-million-digit serial range. Without question, all of these rifles had been shipped from North Vietnam.

A Madsen LMG in caliber 7x57mm lay next to a ChiCom RPG-2 and a basket full of rockets and boosters. Stacks of Madsen M50 submachine guns (the infamous "banana-peel" gun — if the barrel nut loosens while you're firing the M50, the receiver can open up and drop its guts at your feet) collect dust next to old FN HiPowers. The Madsens and HiPowers all carry the Salvadoran crest.

***Las Cincuentas*, favored by both Kokalis and Salvadoran Atlactl Battalion. Now steadily employed in El Salvador, thanks to SOF trainers.**

But I digress.

One of my major objectives was to train some battalion armorers. To that end I had brought down a complete gunsmith's tool and supply kit (including aircraft safety wire pliers and stainless-steel wire for the M60). A sergeant and corporal were assigned to me for this purpose, as well as a permanent room in the *cuartel*. Both men were enthusiastic and highly motivated. Before this, all defective small arms were sent to the *Maestranza* (central ordnance depot) for repair, which often took one to two months. In addition, once a month a truck from the *Maestranza* drove to the battalion *cuartel* to effect minor repairs.

Without question, all of these rifles had been shipped from North Vietnam.

Before I arrived, the typical chain of futility was as follows. There were no headspace gauges for the .50-cal. Browning M2 HB machine guns. Incorrect headspace adjustment frequently caused split cases. As there were no .50-cal. broken-case extractors, the barrel had to be sent to the *Maestranza*. The complete scenario could take up to two months.

Since there are no spare barrels, the gun was lost to the battalion during this entire time frame. So, what's one gun? Plenty. The small, but excellent, Salvadoran Air Force and the artillery regiment are spread too thin. They cannot be depended upon for consistent fire support. The battalion's supplies of ammunition for the 81mm and 60mm mortars, 90mm recoilless rifles and M79 40mm grenade launchers (no beehive rounds allowed, only HE) are running precariously low.

Therefore, the battalion's major fire-support weapons are its machine guns! During one live-fire training session I had five M60s down, out of 26 guns, for one reason or another, during the first three minutes of fire. That's a 20-percent loss in firepower.

To reduce down-time on the battalion's all-important machine guns, I initiated a three-echelon repair system for use during combat operations. The armorers and I would move several times daily, via the helicopter resupply runs, from company to company in the operational area. Weapons that could be repaired in the field would be put back into action immediately.

Those that required more extensive maintenance would be brought back to Ilopango Airport where a battalion armorer's shed would be set up. If the necessary parts and service were not available at this level, the weapon would be taken to the *Maestranza* and the parts obtained — or services effected on the spot. By the next morning, the gun would be returned to action on the first slick out.

The next several days were spent instructing the armorers in disassembly-assembly, trouble-shooting, advanced maintenance and repair procedures on the Browning .50-cal. M2 HB, M60 GPMG, M16A1, M1D Garand sniper rifle, G3 and M79 grenade launcher. These men must eventually be trained to work on the 81mm and 60mm mortars and the 90mm recoilless rifle also.

No less true today than 60 years ago are Maj. Walter C. Short's words, in his classic *Employment of Machine Guns:*

"Of all of the developments of the

World War none is more striking than the remarkable increase in the use of machine guns. Tactically nothing is of greater importance to the infantry and cavalry than the proper coordination and cooperation of the rifle companies and troops with the machine guns that support them."

Starting with this basic tactical canon, I scheduled a section weapons seminar for all the officers and NCOs of the Atlacatl Battalion. Topics included an in-depth examination of such timeless concepts as the cone of fire, beaten zone, plunging versus grazing fire, frontal, flanking, oblique and enfilade fire, techniques of fixed fire, traversing fire, searching fire, and the swinging traverse and free gun systems as applied to the M3 and M122 tripods. The battlefield rates of fire required of the section machine gun: single-shot (used with the .50-cal. M2 HB only, when engaging targets beyond 800 meters), sustained fire (called suppressive fire when used to hinder enemy movement), rapid fire and cyclic rate of fire (employed only to win the fire fight or beat off a determined enemy attack) were defined and specific applications given. Although only marginally useful in the modern battlefield of fire and movement, defilade fire and techniques were also described. The seminar ended with an analysis of the two roles of the machine gun during attack: fire support and assault fire.

The next several days were devoted to the M60 gun crews. During the first session, which stressed disassembly/assembly and maintenance, a specimen was selected at random and inspected. The entire weapon was filthy. The gas system was so badly fouled that the piston was frozen in place and had to be driven out with a punch and hammer. The gas-cylinder nut and extension and gas-port plug were likewise locked tight by fouling. The bolt-plug pin and cocking-lever guide screw were missing. The main spring had so many flat spots that it appeared square.

The black anodized finish was completely worn off the top cover, as it was on all the battalion's other M60s. I immediately started the armorers painting all the top covers with flat-black stove paint I had brought for this purpose.

Instruction in the correct prone, kneeling and standing assault position followed. They have only one M122 tripod, so all support fire with the M60 must be delivered off the bipod.

The M60 gunners were issued bore cleaner, LSA oil, patches, cleaning rods, brass bore brushes, broken-case extractors and combination tools for the very first time — with an explanation of their use. I discussed immediate action for clearing stoppages.

I also initiated a new battalion SOP for carrying the M60 on patrol movements with a 25-rd. teaser belt; 100-rd. belts will be carried and used in the issue cardboard box in conjunction with the cloth bandolier only. Carrying 100-rd. belts across the chest, exposed, like Pancho Villa, is very macho — and very stupid. It exposes the cartridges and M13 links to dirt, corrosion and damage, causing misalignment of the link tab and cartridge groove and frequent stoppages. It is no longer tolerated in the Atlacatl Battalion.

Before Kokalis led arms repair instruction, Atlacatl Bn. could expect at least 20 percent of M60s out at any one time.

The M60s were zeroed as follows. At 25 meters a one-inch-square paster was used as a target. Flipping up the rear sight, the windage was centered by eye-balling. Firing single shots only, the elevation knob was adjusted up or down until the group impacted on the paster. The graduated range scale was disregarded during this adjustment. After the shot group impacted on the paster, without moving the elevation adjustment knob, the screw on the graduated range scale was loosened and the scale slid up or down until the rear sight was set for 500 meters. The graduated range scale's set screw was locked down since the M60 GPMG had then been zeroed for all ranges.

After this we were able to commence live-fire drills. The crews' range estimation was poor and work in this area needs to be expanded. They were taught fixed, traversing, searching and traversing/searching fire techniques. The assistant gunners were instructed to spot downrange impact and call corrections to their respective gunners. They had never done this before. Three guns went down with failures to extract from fouled gas systems, another had the firing pin installed backward and still another had a cracked chamber.

Our finale with the M60, several days later, was a GI party held in the *Plaza de*

Armas (the *cuartel's* open pavilion). Hosting were the ever-present Lt. Koch, the armorers and myself. The somewhat reticent guests were the crews and their M60s. The men used their newly-issued tools for the first time as well as a vat of cleaning solvent, and — overall — did an excellent job. I walked away as the armorers safety-wired the gas systems, feeling confident most of our problems with this beast had been solved.

Working with the Browning .50-caliber M2 HB machine gun, after the M60, " 'tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd," (to quote Hamlet completely out of context). When headspaced and timed and fed a diet of properly linked ammunition, the Ma Deuce will rattle on forever. And, just try to reassemble any John Browning-designed machine gun with parts in backward!

The Atlacatl Battalion's M2 HBs are all AC Spark Plugs manufactured during WWII. Arsenal-reworked and refinished in the late 1960s, they have been upgraded by addition of the bolt-latch assembly for single-shot fire and by minor improvements such as the newer barrel locking spring and substitution of the old sear stop and pin with the modified accelerator stop and lock.

Unfortunately, the dovetailed slot on top of the receiver and to the right of the rear sight has been removed. This prevents installation of a telescopic sight, essential when this machine gun is employed as a sniper weapon on the M3 tripod. With a proper scope (not the Telescope, M1, manufactured by the Prefix Corp. in 1942 for this dovetail groove; although intended for precise long-range shooting, it was little more than a low-powered dial sight), single-shot sniper fire can be very accurate at ranges up to 2,000 meters.

The first meeting of the .50-cal. *(La Cincuenta)* gun crews was attended by the battalion's senior sergeants as well. I asked the sergeants if any were familiar with M2 HB. One who had been to Panama volunteered; he never got past headspacing because he did not know how to use the gauge. I explained headspace and timing adjustments, and sergeants and gun crews alike practiced on the five guns we had set up in the *Plaza de Armas*. The crews then worked on quick employment drills, learning to place the gun into and take it out of action with precision, speed, skill and teamwork. Both two- and three-man carries were performed. The gunners were instructed to fire from the prone rather than sitting position.

During the live-fire exercises, range estimation was again stressed (even more important with the M2 HB with its very real potential for long-range killing). Use of the rear sights was explained. When these guns were refinished, many of the parts were sandblasted before Parkerizing and the rear sight markings are indistinct on several of the guns. These crews were also taught fixed, traversing, searching and traversing/searching fire techniques, as well as the swinging traverse and free gun methods as applied to the M3 tripod.

This M60 shows outward signs of wear that finally stops many Salvadoran MGs.

Once set up properly, no down time was experienced with the Browning guns.

Placing five Ma Deuces together on a ledge 30 meters above an immense lava field, suitable targets were located at ranges of 1,200 to 1,500 meters. The guns were fired single-shot, but in rapid sequence, like an artillery battery. In this fashion, a sustained, full-auto effect is achieved with high hit probability at extremely long ranges.

Successful employment of squad weapons is to no small degree a consequence of the effective implementation of proven, modern concepts of small-unit tactics modified to fit a specific combat environment.

Ambush is an important counter-guerrilla measure since it not only forces the guerrillas to engage in combat at places and times unfavorable to them, but it curtails the freedom of movement on which their success in El Salvador so greatly depends. The final portion of my training schedule covered ambush and counter-ambush techniques. In addition to general terminology, the fundamentals of successful ambush (surprise, coordinated fire and control) were discussed in detail, as well as three-point ambush formations: the "Line," "L" and "T." I was assisted by John Early, who conducted training in demolition ambush, convoy ambush and convoy immediate action counter-ambush drills for vehicles.

Participating were 126 NCOs. Many of these men have received training from U.S. Army personnel in Panama. They are highly motivated combat veterans of many operations. I could fault them in only two areas. Sound discipline during ambush operations was poor, and on patrol far too many individuals used the carrying handle or sling on the M16A1 rifle. It should always be carried in the combat-ready position. British SAS troops remove not only the slings and sling swivels, but the carrying handle from their SLRs. It's just too damn bad that the carrying handle is an integral part of the M16's geometry.

Convoy about to leave as John Early explains placement of men and weapons in vehicles for immediate action counter-ambush drills to 1st Lt. David Koch.

SOFers Kokalis and Early also led trained Atlacatls in ambush and counter-ambush techniques.

Textbook tactics must often be altered by battlefield realities. The TMs state that in an "L" ambush the support element with the squad automatics should be positioned on the short leg. This will, of course, provide enfilade fire which makes the most effective use of the machine gun's beaten zone.

The Salvadorans however, have not been trained to use sector limit stakes and do not have M122 tripods on which to mount the M60 GPMG. Some of the gunners are inexperienced, making it possible for them to take out some of their own people in the assault element on the long leg of the formation. I therefore instructed them to position the M60s on the long leg, where they can be controlled by the commander, so that each could deliver flanking fire along the entire killing zone (or when this is not possible, overlapping sectors of fire so that the entire killing zone is covered).

American journalists, while writing their stories in the bar of the El Camino Real Hotel, are quite fond of tacking a 9-to-5 label on the Salvadoran officer corps. The numbers are correct, but, in their drunken haze they have transposed them. First Lt. David Koch and I, along with all the other officers of the Atlacatl Battalion, most frequently worked from 0500 to 2100 while in the *cuartel* and not on alert. Out in the field on operations the working hours are, of course, extended even more.

Given good and proper equipment and the correct training the Salvadoran Army can defeat the communist guerrillas. They have the will: Let us see to it that they have the means. El Salvador may well be our last chance.

MEDCAP MISSION IN MORAZAN

SAN Francisco Gotera doesn't rate much of an air strip (nor much of anything else), but after a less-than-first-class, 45-minute ride in a C-47, it was a welcome sight.

Our hop from San Salvador, El Salvador's capital city, to San Franciso Gotera, capital of embattled Morazan Department, was made possible by the Salvadoran Air Force.

Our "special flight" turned out to be the eastern El Salvador local with a stop in San Miguel. The Salvadoran Air Force upgraded the plane that day (an Israeli-made Arava usually makes the run) to a "Gooney Bird," to accommodate *Soldier of Fortune* Special Projects Director Alex McColl, medics Phil Gonzales and John Padgett, myself and $10,000 worth of medical supplies collected by the medics or purchased by SOF to distribute to the people in Morazan Department.

The silver C-47 didn't look or sound too worn-out from the ground, but once we had loaded the supplies and clambered aboard, two things were immediately apparent: 1) The ship was badly overloaded with SOF's team and its supplies, some young soldiers returning from leave and the military hospital in San Salvador, one female and some miscellaneous supplies for the garrison at San Miguel, including a 120mm mortar tube, a foreign-made 81mm mortar tube and its base plate; and 2) The plane had a lot of miles on it. Is it a bad sign when the aircraft is not only older than the troopers but older than the troopers' fathers?

As the next to last passenger aboard, McColl wound up in the navigator's seat — navigators aren't used in El Salvador because planes only fly in good weather and no trip is longer than one hour — while I, being last, drew the radio operator's seat just ahead of the fore bulkhead of the passenger cabin. The navigator's corner had two advantages — a small portside window and the door back into the cabin hinged on my side. For some reason the crew chief wanted to be able to see all the way down the slanting deck of the "Gooney Bird," so he tied the door shut once I was in my sweatbox. With the outside temperature hovering at about 90 degrees Fahrenheit and the number of folks on board, it was sweltering inside.

Jutting pieces of metal that used to mount radio equipment, a few knobs that appeared to be wired up to instruments that had not worked in years and the crack of tied-back door obscured my vision so that all I could see was our *piloto*, a cheerful type wearing blue jeans and a *guayabera* shirt. He looked back and flashed me his best Pancho Villa grin before letting off the brakes for a noisy, revved-up roll out.

As we rolled, and rolled and rolled — thank God for long strips — I hoped Alex

had heard my last request as I was being locked into my corner: "If this plane goes down, don't forget to cut the door loose on your way out."

If you have to go to war, go in a C-47. The plane has a certain class and even overloaded it gets off. The takeoff was noisy but so smooth I didn't know we were up until the cold air started rushing into the cabin and back to my corner.

At San Miguel, we lost most of our passengers and cargo, so I grabbed the navigator's chair for the short leg to San Francisco Gotera. En route, there was not much to see: dirt roads, corn and sugarcane fields, houses and ramshackle huts, and steep, bush-covered green hills. The boonies of El Salvador don't qualify as real jungle. They are thick, but not that thick.

On the downwind approach to San Francisco Gotera's airstrip, I was comforted by the fact that it was paved, long, *reasonably* level and all the local cattle were in their fields and off the runway — one good reason to make a low-level, noisy pass of Central American strips.

After we had daisy-chained the supplies off the C-47 and watched its rather spectacular uphill — the runway wasn't as level as it appeared from the air — takeoff, we went through the usual stand-around-and-wait-for-transportation drill, which is the one drill all armies have in common.

The city of San Francisco Gotera was a couple of kilometers away and behind some low hills to the south. The runway was surrounded by low hills on the north and some big hills to the east, which is why the wind sock above the concrete 10x10 shack that served as SFG's terminal was a tattered rag. Regardless of wind conditions, landings and takeoffs are always west to east.

Salvadoran soldiers mounted guard in the terminal shack, had stationed a roadblock at the main entrance and held several positions in the surrounding hills. As McColl said: "An airstrip that definitely suits this wild and primitive place."

Except for the series of metal ribs over the top of the Salvadoran trucks — they were originally designed for canvas covers — which we soon discovered were dangerous head rappers on the rough road, there were no surprises on the two-kilometer ride to the *cuartel*, or headquarters building.

Like most of the *cuartels* in El Salvador, San Francisco Gotera's was a rectangular, stone monstrosity that appeared to have been built for one of the old *Zorro* movies. Painted on the green entrance doors were the words *Boinas Verdes* (Green Berets) above and below a green-bereted white skull in front of a crossed arrow and lightning bolt and a sword.

Until 1979, when the military overthrew the dictatorship of Gen. Carlos

Treating the Symptoms, Battling the Disease

Text & Photos by Jim Graves

Salvadoran C-47 makes uphill takeoff from strip at San Francisco Gotera in Morazan Department.

Humberto Ortega and El Salvador's current problems began, the *cuartel* at San Francisco Gotera had been the home of the Salvadoran Army's Commando School. Between 1979 and 1983, San Francisco Gotera had gradually degenerated into an undesirable assignment. Morazan Department borders on Honduras and is a poor, largely ignored area. As a result, it and Chalatenango were the first departments to become infested with communist guerrillas. Until early 1983 the officers in favor took nice, cushy *cuartels* in places where shots were seldom heard and officers out of favor went to Morazan.

The Salvadoran government is taking the war much more seriously these days and in March assigned Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz as commander of the Morazan Department.

Cruz, a short man even by Salvadoran standards, wearing a camouflage uniform and a round, cammo bush hat tied around his neck, was the first person to greet us as we pulled into the *cuartel*. After giving Padgett and Gonzales a welcoming *abrasso* (a two-armed, bear hug which is a sign of friendship in Latin America), he proudly showed McColl and me his latest goodies.

The day before at Cacaopera, a small village 16 kilometers northeast of San Francisco Gotera, Cruz had caught up with some of the guerrillas he had been chasing for three weeks. During the nighttime 105mm-artillery barrage and early-morning attack, Cruz' troops had killed 11 communists, captured some ammo, grenades, one G-3 and three M16s — two with six-digit serial numbers indicating they probably came from captured stocks in Vietnam and were a gift from the peace-loving Democratic Republic of Vietnam to El Salvador's war-loving guerrillas.

The previous week Cruz had hosted a larger SOF contingent, including Publisher Robert K. Brown, John Donovan, Ralph Edens, John Early, Ben Jones, Tom Reisinger, Gonzales and Padgett, who participated in an operation 12 kilometers west, in the area north of Cacaguatique volcano.

Unknown to Brown et al., the purpose of the company-sized patrol to nearby Cacaguatique was to find the 1,200-man guerrilla column that was moving through western Morazan at that time. Objective two was to fix the guerrilla column in place by engaging them in a fire fight the guerrillas couldn't break away from in time to avoid Cruz' converging forces.

In a briefing later that night, Cruz told us the guerrilla column was composed of communist units brought in from La Union, San Vicente, San Miguel and Usulutan Departments, as well as the local communists from Morazan. A large shipment of arms was brought in from Nicaragua and off-loaded on the Pacific coast Jiquilisco Bay in Usulutan on 31 July. As the arms moved northeast from the coast, bands of communists joined the column until it had swelled to 1,200 men when it

MCDONALD NO LIKE

by Jim Graves

Although terrorist attacks in San Salvador have decreased dramatically in the last year, there remain signs of what the old days were like when the guerrillas actually controlled some sections of the city and frequently staged terrorist attacks.

Typically, communist guerrilla movements finance their wars against established governments through the profits of kidnappings and bank robberies — that's how Stalin got his start.

One of the guerrillas' favorite targets in San Salvador was that well-known purveyor of "capitalist" food, McDonalds, which was hit on a number of occasions in 1982 for contributions to the guerrillas' war kitty. Although McDonalds may be the leader in its field, in San Salvador at least, it does not yet have a monopoly on the fast-food hold-up business. Other franchises get hit as well.

My favorite hit story involved the local Hardee's franchise which was visited by a guerrilla group one night last year. According to a local Salvadoran, three guerrillas came in through both entrances waving their submachine guns and telling customers and staff, "*Los manos arriba.*" The guerrillas then demanded all the money from the night manager. Disappointed with the small amount of money taken from the registers, the guerrilla leader asked, "Where is the rest?" When told it was in the safe, he demanded that the night manager open it "*muy pronto.*" The manager, doing his bit for country and corporation, is reported to have replied, "I don't know the combination," and stuck with the story even when the leader threatened to do unpleasant things to his body.

Eventually, the guerrilla leader believed him and started out the door when, suddenly, he spotted a large pickup truck sitting in the parking lot. He turned to the staff and customers and asked: "Whose truck?"

When a customer identified it as his, the guerrillas took his keys, delegated all the male customers and staff as an ad hoc working party and had them load the safe into the pickup. The guerrillas drove off with truck and safe.

Heists like that have made hamburger selling a dangerous occupation in San Salvador and, as a result, all McDonalds in San Salvador now have a hard-looking security guard, complete with UZI, on the premises.

SOF Contributing Editor John Early found the whole thing so amusing he decided to take a photo of one of the security men standing in front of the McDonalds sign.

But when the guard spotted Early's camera, he moved quickly and forcefully approached Early, shaking his finger back and forth in a negative gesture and said in plain English: "McDonald no like."

ABOVE: Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz displays weapons captured from guerrillas at Cacaopera on 17 August. In the action, 11 guerrillas were killed. Two of the M16s had six-digit serial numbers, indicating that in all probability they came from stocks delivered to Vietnam in the mid '60s.

RIGHT: Painted on entrance door to *cuartel* at San Francisco Gotera is the Commando insignia and the words Green Berets.

BELOW: Refugees wait in line for their turn to draw USAID rations in village of Chilanga. Over 90,000 Salvadorans have fled south of the Torola River to areas controlled by Salvadoran government.

entered western Morazan. The guerrilla plan was to attack San Francisco Gotera and other points on the road connecting Gotera with San Miguel.

Cruz' intelligence agents knew of the communist plan from the beginning and, within 48 hours of the arms delivery from Nicaragua, Cruz had pulled his troops out of eastern Morazan and repositioned them in company strength south, west and north of San Francisco Gotera. In the ensuing 17-day running battle, Cruz' units killed 80 communists and had an additional 40 probable kills, while losing 10 KIA and 24 WIA.

Cruz' tactics were simple but successful. He maneuvered his companies west of San Francisco Gotera until they made contact with elements of the guerrilla column. Once a target was fixed, air and artillery were brought in, then the Salvadoran grunts went in.

Brown and the rest of the SOF team managed to get into the action by joining a company column that made a late afternoon 10-kilometer, forced march to a ridge-line north of Cacaguatique volcano. They had a sleepless night, filled with the sounds of accidental discharges, or shadow shots, as well as some artillery fire from the Salvadoran side and blinking lights from the guerrilla side.

WAR OF WORDS

by Jim Graves

Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz, commanding officer of Morazan Department, in addition to being a fine, aggressive commander, also has a fine sense of humor.

Soon after he arrived in San Francisco Gotera, Cruz had whipped his troops into shape and had them out in the field hunting down guerrillas. One night while Cruz and his troops were out on patrol, his guerrilla counterpart, Comrade Jonas (real name: Joaquin Villalobos, last name appropriately meaning "House of Wolves") of the Guerrilla Army of the People (ERP) came up on his radio net one night.

The guerrilla commander of one of the more militant factions within the *Farabundo Marti Liberacion Nacional* (FMLN) told Cruz he had two hours to meet with his officers and then to announce his surrender.

For the next two hours Lt. Col. Cruz and Comrade Jonas had a battle of wits over the radio.

Moving in for the kill, Jonas gave it his best shot when he told Cruz to surrender because it was obvious he didn't understand the tactics of guerrilla war — a war of movement.

Cruz responded by advising Jonas to re-read his Mao. "Remember," Cruz said, "Mao wrote that the guerrilla is to the people what a fish is to water. But you have a problem because a guerrilla cannot swim from Cuba to El Salvador."

During the night-time artillery strike, the guerrillas came up on the Salvadoran radio net and tried to call off the strike. That ploy failed because the officer in the fire-direction control center didn't recognize the voice on the net. After the incoming artillery announced that his ploy had failed, the guerrilla officer came back up on the net and said: "Don't shoot at us like that, you whores! Come up and fight like men."

Cruz' response was to prep the objective the next morning with air strikes: an 0-2 firing rockets and two A-37s dropping iron bombs. When the SOF team reached the recently vacated guerrilla positions, some blood trails and bones were found but there were no confirms.

Cruz, who has revived the Commando spirit at San Francisco Gotera, proudly pointed to his other coup that day. He had passed the word through the recently liberated Morazan villages that he needed 100 recruits for a scout unit he was forming and 400 volunteers had come in.

The afternoon SOF arrived, 83 of the prospective scouts were being inducted and put through a process similar to U.S. training. The poorly dressed and shod men, most between 20 and 30 years old, were sitting in a rough approximation of ranks, filling out paperwork and waiting for their turn in the barber's chair.

"We could only accept 100 because I don't have enough clothing, food or weapons for 400," said Cruz wistfully. "And all we can give them currently is a leather belt, a uniform, boots, field hats, a G-3 rifle and one magazine."

Cruz didn't have socks, underwear, doggie straps, canteens, web belts, ammo pouches, spare magazines, packs, ponchos or flashlights for the men.

The new recruits were to receive two months of training and then be employed as guides (a considerable number of them had come down from guerrilla-controlled areas north of the Torola River) and scouts for his regular battalions. The scouts would receive 120 *colones* ($32) per month during training and 150 *colones* once they were active.

Cruz introduced us to two of his guerrilla prisoners, two young boys, aged 14 and 12, who had been captured when Cruz' troops had overtaken a guerrilla camp and school. Both youngsters have been "adopted" by Cruz; one boy's parents had been killed, the other's lived in a guerrilla-controlled area. Cruz employs the boys as runners around the *cuartel* in the mornings and sends them to school in the afternoons. Because of the shortage of everything at the *cuartel,* one youngster, who had been with Cruz several months (Rank Has Its Privileges), slept in the hospital, while the other had quarters on the tiles under the patio pool table — the troops' rec room.

The next morning in the officers' mess after breakfast — fried eggs with hot sauce, fried bananas, refried beans, goat cheese, tortillas and coffee: the food was reasonably good for officers and enlisted

Salvadoran soldier waits his turn to see SOF medics at Osicala.

Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz checks out two suspects on streets of San Francisco Gotera. He had spotted two suspicious-looking men with a pack, but papers were in order.

Morazan Department Army band — basic German "Oom-pah-pah" — entertains kids while parents draw rations in civic-action program in Chilanga where SOF team treated civilians.

— Cruz assembled a convoy to escort the SOF team to some forward positions.

SOF's project in Morazan was to distribute medical supplies to Cruz' medics, hold expedient field-medicine classes for the troops and conduct some civilian medcaps. The convoy consisted of a truckload of grunts leading, our blue station wagon/carry-all following and a jeep with Dr. Alcides Caballero Lopez of the government medical center in San Francisco Gotera trailing. Dr. Caballero appeared to have a penchant for things German since he decorated his hospital BOQ with posters of Goethe and Alexander von Humboldt and wore a pearl-handled 9mm Luger (circa 1941) in the field.

The quiet, relaxed and secure atmosphere of San Francisco Gotera — Cruz keeps a couple of guards on every corner, has numerous walking patrols and, to keep down casual violence, has banned the sale of alcohol in the city — had lulled me into forgetting a war was going on there.

Less than a kilometer from the *cuartel* and still well within the city limits, I suddenly was reminded the guerrillas were indeed out there when Cruz, riding shotgun in the truck, halted the column, jumped down and herded two *campesinos* up against the nearest wall. Within seconds, the suspects were surrounded by five troops and in the sights of another five in the truck. After a quick search of a green pack (the reason Cruz stopped them) and their papers — both in order — Cruz shook their hands, apologized and mounted up again.

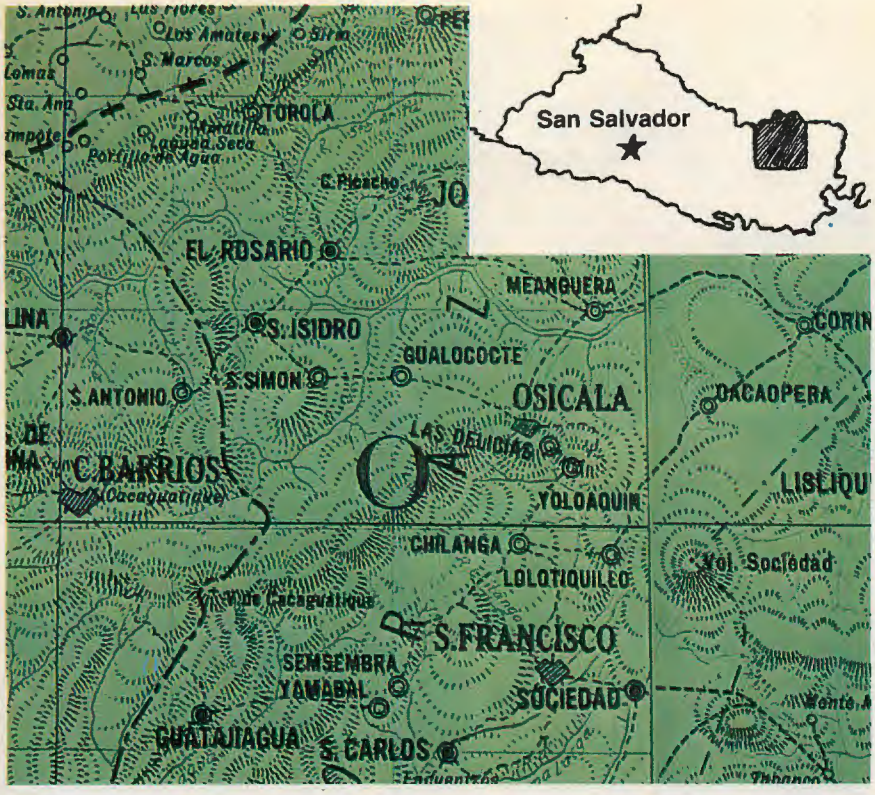
I was to learn over the next two days that Cruz rode shotgun in the less comfortable truck for maximum visibility and quicker reaction time. He was always watching, thinking and reacting.

En route to our destination that day, Osicala (15 kilometers north), we stopped in Chilanga and Yoloaquin, seven and 12 kilometers out respectively, to observe some Salvadoran Army civic-action projects. Despite what Amnesty International, the Red Cross and Senators Ted Kennedy and Chris Dodd have told Americans, living in guerrilla-controlled areas can be hazardous to one's health and some 90,000 Salvadorans have moved south of the Torola to be oppressed by the army.

The refugees live hand-to-mouth wherever they can and depend on a governmental food-distribution program to stay alive. The program is administered by the CONADES (*Comision Nacional de Asistencia a la Poblacion Desplazada,* a part of the Ministries of the Interior and Armed Forces), the Salvadoran Army (Cruz supplied security and his brass band — standard German "oom-pah-pah" with a Hispanic lilt), the local municipal government *(Alcaldia)* and the local Boy Scouts. The food came from the United States, courtesy of USAID, but no USAID officials were present since the guerrillas shoot up such affairs whenever possible and USAID bureaucrats don't like being shot at.

The food distributed that day in Chilanga and Yoloaquin (just short of 2,000 people drew rations in the two towns) consisted of corn, powdered milk, dried beans, salt, sugar and cooking oil. An average monthly ration per person is 13 pounds of corn, three pounds of milk, two pounds of beans, two pounds of sugar, one pound of salt and one bottle of oil.

The brightly dressed crowd of women and men stood in an orderly line that stretched for blocks away from the distribution point, the Church of Santa Maria Magdala, built in 1881 in, as McColl said, the "primitive baroque" style and topped with two yellow-painted cement lions, a clock, two bell-towers and a cross.



WAR OF BROTHERS

by Jim Graves

The war came to Jose Antonio Rivas and his five brothers as they worked in their family's field near the village of Pueblo Viejo, Morazan Department, El Salvador.

An armed group of men approached the boys — Jose was the second youngest at 17 — and said: "We are the authorities. You are now in the army. Come with us."

That probably surprises few here in the United States, since we often read about how the government of El Salvador rounds up its troops by pulling them out of fields.

But so do the guerrillas. Jose Antonio Rivas and his brothers had just joined the ERP, the Guerrilla Army of the People, one of El Salvador's more hard-core leftist groups and the one most active in Morazan Department.

For the next three months, Jose and his brothers moved through a series of seven guerrilla camps in northern Morazan, north of the Torola River, while undergoing what passes for basic training in the ERP. At that time, each camp had a platoon of 50 to 60 men; presently, they operate in company strength, 120-man units.

In the camps Jose was given a FN FAL and learned the techniques of guerrilla war from his Salvadoran compatriots and the *comandantes*: some Cubans, but more Nicaraguans and one gringo. "We had a mountain of *comandantes*," said Rivas.

The gringo, who could speak some Spanish but needed the services of a translator, carried a cut-off G-3 and was reported to be a sharpshooter. He was instructing the guerrillas in machine guns and mortars.

Life in the camps was rough. Arms came from Nicaragua, but there was little medicine and food. Mostly, Jose ate tortillas and sticky rice.

Jose bided his time and just at the beginning of his fourth month with the Guerrilla Army of the People he made his break, surrendering himself with his FN FAL in San Francisco Gotera.

Jose, who came in with his youngest brother, a 14-year old, could have emigrated to another country (Australia and Canada are the favored destinations) under the conditions of the general amnesty regulations in force at that time, but he chose to stay in El Salvador.

He chose to stay and fight — against the Guerrilla Army of the People, as a private in the Morazan Battalion, which is where SOF saw him.

Shortly before we talked with Jose, he had visited his parents in Pueblo Viejo. While there, he saw a leave pass for one of his brothers who is still with the ERP. Jose was told by his parents that his former *comandante* had sworn to cut off his head if he were ever captured by the ERP.

When asked by SOF how he felt about the prospect of fighting against his own brothers, he answered: "They have had time to abandon the way of the guerrillas."

Cruz' brass band, busy "oom-pah-pahing" the kids in the town plaza directly in front of the church, provided just the right atmosphere to turn the whole thing into a quasi-fiesta.

The five-kilometer ride to Yoloaquin was made interesting by our driver — who informed us at kilometer 174 that the Gs had ambushed a convoy with RPGs at kilometer 175 and killed three soldiers some months back — and by some Protestants who were holding a baptism in a river at kilometer 179. The Catholic church, which has embraced "liberation theology," and often supports the guerrillas in Central America, is losing ground to a number of Protestant sects as a result. The Protestants in El Salvador, by supporting the government the villagers voted into power in 1981, are converting villagers and building churches in Morazan.

Yoloaquin was a repeat of Chilanga: the brass band, colorfully dressed lines of refugees waiting for food and soldiers guarding the entire process. But the war was fresh here. While eating an ear of roasted corn and drinking a cold Coke given to us by the *alcalde* (mayor), we saw the remains of the latest visit from the guerrillas. The guerrillas had come to town just days before, smashing and burning the *alcalde*'s office and the telephone exchange. Before leaving, they had also written a few slogans on the walls.

The road from Yoloaquin to Osicala twists and turns through some steep hills, which nonetheless are being farmed. We observed rows of yucca plants (the fiber of which can be spun into excellent rope and is the chief cash-crop in Morazan) right up to the tops of the steepest hills.

Osicala is a bit larger than a village, probably 2,000 or so in normal times, population unknown these days, so it rated a permanent garrison. The troops were brought into the Benito Juarez School (named after a president of Mexico) for sick call and medical class.

Major health problems the Salvadoran troops — and for that matter the civilians in the rural areas — encounter are scabies, intestinal worms, foot fungi, diarrhea, dengue or "breakbone" fever, malaria and infected mosquito bites. After treating the troops in that area, the convoy moved on to another outpost near the village of Aguazarca, about two kilometers farther north, and repeated the drill, except that some civilians heard that medical help was in the area and showed up for aid.

On the return trip late that afternoon, Cruz made a courtesy call in Osicala to talk with his local commander and the local *alcalde*, who wisely spotted SOF's Harvard-graduate/reserve Army colonel, McColl, as a man of means, and hit him up for a "rich man's tax" for the local whatever. Future scientists will be puzzled as to how a Massachusetts species of moth, which flew out of McColl's wallet when he opened it, got loose in the Salvadoran outback.

Just outside of Osicala, Cruz halted the

column again and dismounted even faster than he had that morning. He gathered up some troops and took off through a gap in a wire fence, down a trail and out of sight down a hill without briefing his gringos, so the pucker factor was somewhat higher than it had been earlier. My curiosity aroused, I started wandering down the trail behind the troops but stopped when Cruz came back over the hill. When I asked what was going on, he pointed to a gap in the fence where a bent, nicked fencepost stood and said: "The fence was cut so a truck could get through here. It was too narrow for the truck and you can see where it hit the post. I wanted to see where the truck went." He didn't find the truck or any signs of its unloading, but he was right. A truck had been through there and there was no good reason why it should have; the trail was a footpath that led down to a field.

Until the light faded, I watched the side of the road and never saw another fence that was broken, or a fencepost that was bent.

The next day, as we were leaving, we spotted the scout recruits again. They were lined up in formation in front of the *Cine Morazan* on the plaza outside the *cuartel*, waiting to be marched off to the rifle range. Cruz had had his tailor whip up some knapsacks made out of green uniform cloth since he didn't have packs for the scouts and, although they wouldn't last long in the bush, they were adequate for training.

That day was a repeat of the first day except that we went deeper into "Marlboro Country," another five kilometers down a twisting, reasonably spooky road (bush up to the shoulder and no sign of civilian traffic). All the schools we passed from Osicala on were closed — the guerrillas harrass or kill the teachers in unsecured areas — including the one in San Simon, where the Airborne Battalion we were visiting that day had recently taken up positions.

From the hillside school where we held sick call, we could look across the Torola River to El Rosario, the closest guerrilla-controlled village about five kilometers away. The guerrillas should have talked to the teachers at San Simon before they ran them off. On one wall of the school, the guerrillas had scrawled in Spanish: "Belloso Battalion Murderers," misspelling murderers. The Belloso Battalion had operated in the area earlier in the year.

We were scheduled to move closer to the Torola, but word came over the radio to Cruz that the guerrillas were moving across the river to the east near Cacaopera, the scene of action just three days before. As a result, we left abruptly for the *cuartel* by chopper.

At the helo pad in San Francisco Gotera, we found a crew from CBS-TV waiting for us. CBS had learned we were doing medcaps in Morazan and wanted to do some filming on the following day.

LOVE AT FIRST BITE

by Jim Graves

San Salvador, like every other major city in Central America, has what is referred to as the *Mercado Central*, or Central Market, which is a required stop for all visiting gringos.

Usually the market is open air or has makeshift roofed stalls and is divided into sections which sell typical goods — beads, baskets, colorful Indian clothing, household goods and food.

The food section sells typical Central American fare — corn, spices, oil, produce, meat and fish. Since Central Americans shop on a daily basis for meat and fish, and they want to know what they are getting for their hard-earned *colones*, meat is usually displayed with the hooves — goats, pork and cattle — or alive — chicken, snakes, lizards and iguanas.

Right, baskets of snakes and lizards, all types and colors, and iguanas hanging from poles. Iguana tail is reported to be quite a delicacy by local gourmets. When iguanas are captured, natives break one claw on each leg and pull out the tendons to make a fastener to tie them around a pole for carrying.

Which is how the SOF team came to know Rafael.

He was hanging from a pole in the market and some of the guys thought he would make a great pet. Since his nature was basically surly and nasty, he was named after Contributing Editor Ralph Edens.

Rafael Iguana did a great job of raising the eyebrows of the Sheraton chambermaids and gave John Donovan one of his funniest put-ons: "We've recruited a jungle-warfare expert you wouldn't believe. He can live forever in the jungle on nothing but grass and bugs." As a reward, the gang decided to take Rafael to the jungle on an operation.

Realizing that the airlines and customs might have a word or two to say about Rafael coming back to the States, they elected to drop Rafael off in Morazan bush — making sure that the Salvadoran soldiers were not aware of his location.

Just after the SOF team departed from El Salvador, Radio Venceremos, the Salvadoran guerrilla station that broadcasts from Managua, Nicaragua, announced that if any SOF "mercenaries" were captured by guerrillas, they would be executed.

Somehow, I like to think that somewhere on a hill in Morazan, lounging around on a rock, Rafael is hissing: "You'll never get me alive, Fidel."

Dr. Alcides Caballero Lopez of the government medical center in San Francisco Gotera lends a helping hand during a difficult tooth extraction at an outpost in Morazan while medic Phil Gonzales (left) and Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz (right) watch.

Medic Phil Gonzales explains proper use of foot ointment to troops from Airborne Battalion at San Simon.

Fungi are a considerable health problem for troops in the field in Morazan. Photo: Phil Gonzales

They had driven up a day early only to learn that, in our absence, Cruz' junior officers wouldn't let them go anywhere or film anything. For the price of the coldest soft drink they had in their cooler, I offered to intercede.

When Cruz came in on a later lift, I was able to get permission for CBS to film, but it took my personal word that the film crew's Spanish-speaking guide was not a Mexican. Salvadorans suspect that Mexicans want to control all of Latin America, and have too many ties to the guerrillas. Cruz especially mistrusts Mexicans since one Mexican crew which had visited Morazan had turned over some military information to the guerrillas.

Cruz, before taking a flight to San Salvador to do bureaucratic battle with the *Estada Mayor* (Military Staff) for enough troops to solve his guerrilla problem to the east, reluctantly allowed CBS access. But his parting words to me were, "Are you sure that guy's not a Mexican?"

The next day more of the SOF staff — Brown, Donovan and Edens — came in on a C-47 with another CBS crew in tow. While waiting for the arrival of the 0900 flight, which predictably got there at 1000, McColl pointed out that although the bullet hole in the windshield of the jeep we had borrowed to get to the strip didn't bother him, the large flock of circling buzzards over the road we were to travel on that day did.

But with two crews from CBS, another from ABC and the SOF gringos to protect, Cruz' executive officer had enough troops around the village of Lolotiquillo (about seven kilometers northeast) to dissuade the guerrillas and permit the food distribution and civilian medcap to go off without hitch.

Approximately 1,000 villagers went through the food line and probably 50 percent of them were seen by the medics, Gonzales and Padgett, who found exactly one healthy child among the hundreds they examined that day. Unfortunately, SOF ran out of medicine and the Salvadoran Army ran out of food before the line ended.

In Morazan, that's the problem: There's never enough of anything to go around. Cruz doesn't have enough soldiers to run the guerrillas north of the Torola into Honduras, nor enough basic equipment to outfit all the men willing to fight. Additionally, medicine and food are scarce for troops and civilians alike.

Cruz, by reputation, is one of the hottest officers in the Salvadoran Army and is representative of the generation of officers, just now acquiring field grade commands, who have received extensive modern-military training in counter-insurgency warfare. While Cruz was trained in Chile, there are a number of officers at his level who are among the first graduates of the United States College of the Americas. The College of the Americas, a military-training school in the Panama Canal Zone, stresses low-intensity, low-level guerrilla warfare tactics.

He is aware of and, within his resources, uses most of the techniques necessary to defeat guerrillas. He keeps his troops and his officers out of the *cuartel* and in the bush where the bad guys are located. He patrols aggressively, moving quickly and at night. He takes prisoners and supports civic-action projects. Morale of the troops observed by SOF appeared to be good and generally the interrelationship between the troops and and civi-

NIGHT LIFE

by Jim Graves

Because our 4:30 Monday afternoon C-47 ride back to San Salvador didn't show up until Tuesday morning, we had one night out on the town in San Francisco Gotera.

For the Salvadoran troops and any strange gringos who wander in, that means a night at the *Cine Morazan* since Gotera has no active cantinas.

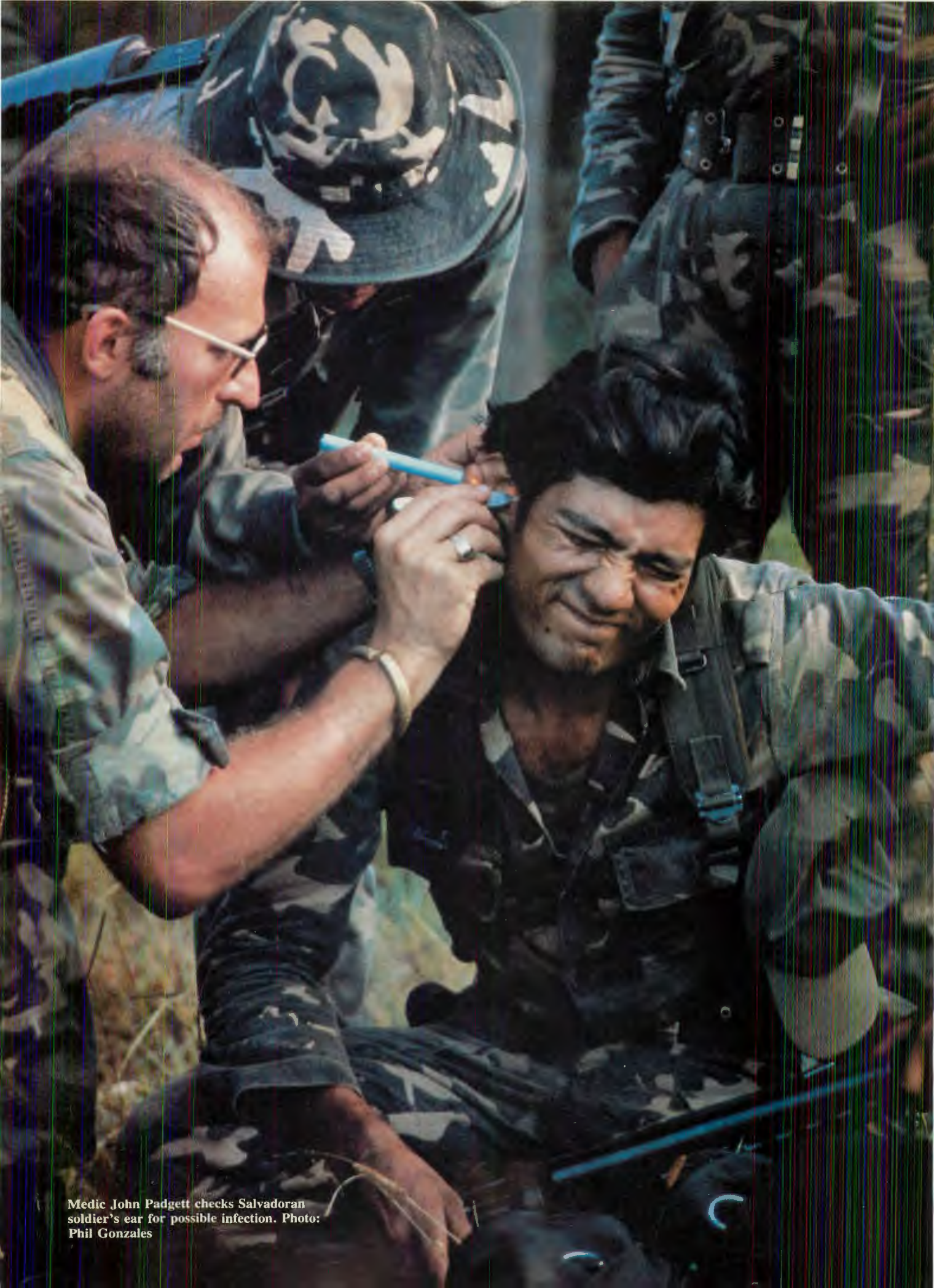
Showing that night in the *Cine Morazan*, which doubles as a warehouse for USAID food supplies for the refugees, was *Forbidden Desires*, a Japanese flick with Spanish subtitles and, as we learned after we were seated, a Japanese soundtrack. It wasn't a skin-flick, either, it was the usual lone Samurai whips hell out of and otherwise chops up a pack of villains over some inscrutable violation of Japanese etiquette.

SOF Publisher Bob Brown loved the price — free to visiting gringos — and the atmosphere, as the crowd took its seats the sounds of a hundred or so M16s being grounded could be heard in the background, but I could only stand about two minutes of the inscrutable film before I bailed out for the *cuartel* reading room, which consisted of a light above the patio pool table.

Approximately five minutes after my departure, the lights went out all over town and the boys came wandering out of the cinema into a pouring rain. Brown noticed that I had acquired a cold orange pop and wanted one so we crossed the plaza to get another. As we walked by the Salvadoran Army movie fans who waited in formation close to the theater door, the lights came back on.

With one voice, the troops cried out, *"El Cine!"* and it was every man for himself as they rushed through the door of the *Cine Morazan*.

As Brown likes to say, "All things are relative," and for a young trooper in Morazan, *Forbidden Desires* was obviously a box-office smash.



Medic John Padgett checks Salvadoran soldier's ear for possible infection. Photo: Phil Gonzales

lians appeared friendly.

He summed up his approach one night in the mess saying: "Now in El Salvador there is no oligarchy. Now it is an army of the people. We are trying to build, not destroy a country."

Cruz' basic problem is resources. As commander of an out-back, low-priority department he has to beg the *Estada Mayor* for scarce equipment, transport, ammo and men. During SOF's two visits Cruz had from 1,600 to 1,000 men, he lost one battalion right after the first visit, to defend approximately 150,000 civilians (with around 90,000 refugees in southern Morazan accurate population counts are impossible) from roughly 1,800 guerrillas.

While Cruz would consider adequate air resources — on any given day El Salvador has about 12 helicopters flying, some days as few as five, and Cruz counts it a good day when he has one up in Morazan — a miracle, he could make significant inroads against the communists with more basic equipment like web gear, magazines, canteens, real packs and sufficient quantities of food and ammo. It was shortages of those items that prevented Cruz from taking all 400 of the volunteer scouts.

Because the amount of military aid the United States Congress had authorized for all of El Salvador is so niggardly there are some in the *Estada Mayor* in San Salvador who question whether Morazan is worth defending and the SOF staff at times wondered aloud whether we were not tilting at windmills.

For me, that question was answered at Lolotiquillo. For some reason, my eye was caught by an old man, barefooted, dressed in a dirty T-shirt and ragged, but patched trousers, waiting patiently in the food line. When he got to the end of the line, the old man didn't have a bag to carry his bean ration so he whipped off his straw hat and filled it. As he shuffled out of the plaza, being rather feeble and a bit overloaded, he lost control of the hat and dumped his beans on the ground.

While some kids picked up every bean out of the dust and put them back into the old man's hat, I pawed through my camera bag for a cloth sack that held my exposed film.

When I gave the sack to the old man and said, "*Para tu frijoles, viejo* (For your beans, old man)," in my badly accented Spanish, the surprised and grateful look in his eyes made me realize that in Morazan the army's little bit and ours may not be enough, but it does make a difference.

Recently recruited Salvadoran soldiers, with field-expedient knapsacks made of uniform cloth slung over their backs, wait in formation in front of *cuartel* at San Francisco Gotera. Just one more example of the supply problem caused by penny-pinching U.S. Congress.

CINZANO, HOMBRE?

by Jim Graves

Lt. Col. Cruz, the Department Commander of Morazan, has outlawed the sale of all alcohol in San Francisco Gotera to reduce street violence.

In both El Salvador and Honduras (and likely in most Central American countries), we were told that alcoholism is pandemic, especially among the poor. In El Salvador on Fridays and Saturdays, the villagers tend to get intoxicated on a potent homemade rum called *tic-tac* and I can vouch that it packs a hell of a wallop for about one *colone*, about 25 cents, a shot.

After several *tic-tacs*, coke and lemons — a poor man's *Cuba libre* — the Salvadorans, just like imbibers everywhere, tend to get a bit rambunctious. However, in the bars of El Salvador's poorer districts, they settle arguments with machetes.

The *alcalde's* office gathers up the bodies the next day and fills out the prepared paper work, and Amnesty International enters it in as another civilian killed by a right-wing death squad.

That's not to imply that there are no death squads. They do exist: It just means they are not responsible for all the headless corpses found in the streets of El Salvador.

Cruz' ban is strictly followed in San Francisco Gotera — much to the disgust of SOF's John Donovan, who likes to close out a hard day's work with a beer or two.

When he asked if I had scouted out the efficacy of the ban, I informed him that the entire liquor stock of Gotera consisted of four dusty bottles of Cinzano in one store. I guess the Salvadorans didn't consider Cinzano drinkable.

Have another orange pop on me, J.D.

SALVADORAN SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

by Jim Graves

SOF Special Projects Assistant Tom Reisinger and I were stranded in San Salvador by administrative matters the Saturday most of the SOF team was in the field so, at the invitation of a U.S. TV representative and his Salvadoran secretary, we wound up in *El Negro Gato*, one of San Salvador's discos.

The Black Cat was exactly like every other disco in the world: dark, with flashing lights, lots of young people, aged 18 to 30, loud music and, for El Salvador, expensive drinks.

But it was nice to get away from the Sheraton (headquarters hotel of the MilGroup Special Forces troops assigned as trainers, all of whom carry weapons), which is surrounded at all times by a lot of tough-looking submachine-gun-toting Salvadoran pistoleros and the Camino Real (headquarters hotel of the press corps) where there are always a few Salvadorans sitting around with their ears on. Presumably, the government, the death squads and the communist guerrillas all keep a duty listener in the bar there.

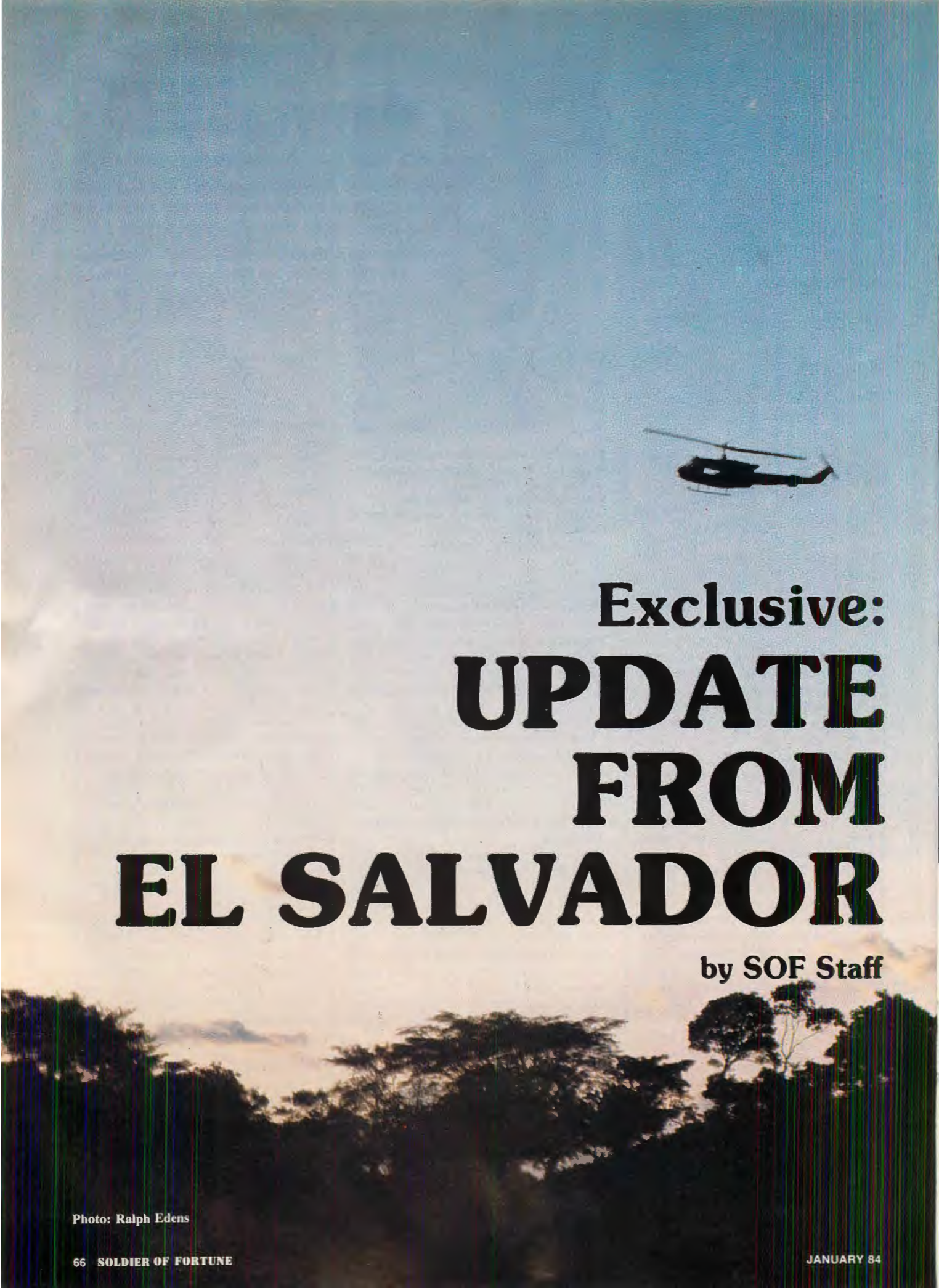
After a week of sitting with my back to a wall, nervously watching the entrance door and being careful about what I said around whom, it was a relief to have a drink in a place where I assumed I was 1) reasonably secure and not likely to find myself in the middle of someone else's fire fight or assassination attempt, and 2) free to say any damn thing I pleased without fear of being quoted or misquoted.

Several days later, I was somewhat surprised when a Salvadoran told me that discos are probably the most deadly place in San Salvador on a Saturday night. Everybody packs and, in a frenzied crowd like that, when someone pops off a round, EVERYBODY shoots EVERYBODY.

Our Salvadoran source told us that one of the most popular discos in town was padlocked because El Salvador's *presidente* happened to be in there one night rubbing elbows with the common folk when an honest-to-god-turn-over-the-tables-and-blaze-away fire fight broke out. Neither he nor his bodyguards, busy blasting away with their UZIs, thought the fire fight funny.

Carlos, my Salvadoran friend who related the dangers of Salvadoran discos, had a friend of his killed by a shotgun blast in one of the discos. Words, then shots, were exchanged and his friend was running to his car to get his M16 when he was taken out by an unknown assailant.

Oh well, in our case, ignorance was bliss.



Exclusive:
UPDATE FROM EL SALVADOR

by SOF Staff

Photo: Ralph Edens

IN August, the attitude in El Salvador was one of guarded optimism.

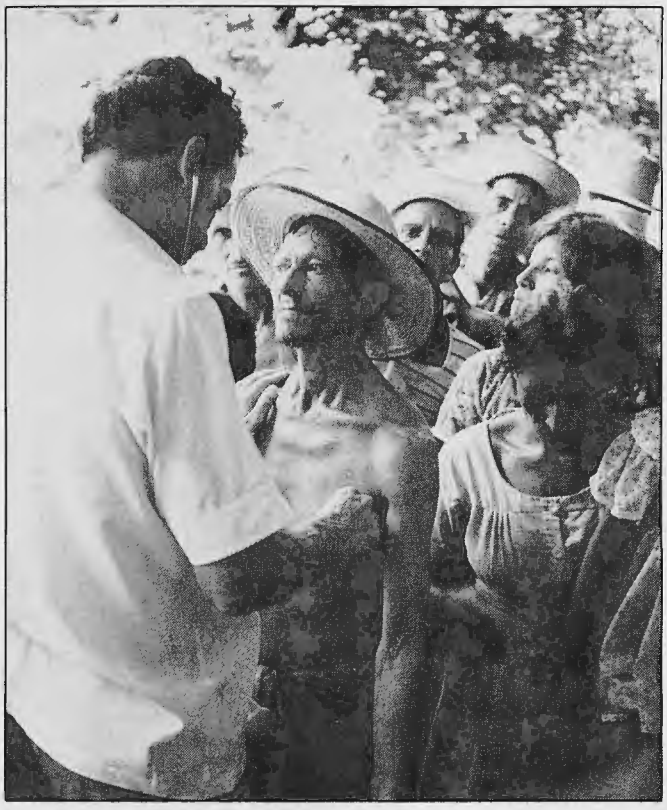
Between *Soldier of Fortune*'s first major trip to El Salvador in April '83 (see our September '83 "Crisis in Central America" issue) and the second trip in August '83, substantial changes took place, which we believe enhance prospects for El Salvador's future.

- In July, Gen. Vides Casanova replaced Col. Garcia as defense minister. Gen. Casanova, former commander of the *Guardia Nacional*, immediately fired up the Salvadoran Army and went on the offensive against the rebels in the key provinces of San Vicente and Usulutan.
- In July, El Salvador initiated, and twice extended, a 30-day amnesty plan that was rigorously and scrupulously followed by the government and, despite all odds, successful. Under its terms, guerrillas or sympathizers could turn themselves in without fear of government reprisal and, if they desired, emigrate from the country. Over 900 had turned themselves in at the time of our visit.
- Following SOF's acclaimed report in the September issue on the inadequate resources available for military and civilian medical treatment in El Salvador, the United States government sent in a special medical unit to upgrade medical training.

INSET: SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown (left) and Morazan Department Commander Lt. Col. Cruz at helo pad in San Francisco Gotera. Cruz carries M16A1 while Brown has Winchester .338 Magnum sniping rifle. Photo: Phil Gonzales

The U.S. personnel working in the medical area are not part of the 55-man trainer limit the administration is adhering to.

- The U.S. administration announced that as part of the Big Pine II exercises currently going on in Honduras, a regional training facility would be established in that country. This will enable the United States to provide the Salvadoran Army with advanced unit training at a considerable savings over the cost of training at U.S. bases.
- Because of a philosophical disagreement over whose Marxist-Leninist principles were better, Melida Anaya Montes, second in command of the Popular Liberation Forces (PLF), a faction of the *Farabundo Marti Liberacion Nacional* (FMLN), was executed by rivals in Managua, Nicaragua. His death was soon followed by the "suicide" of Salvador Cayetano Carpio, head of the PLF and reportedly the most influential guerrilla leader within the FMLN coalition, also in Managua. (*Editor's Note: That's a hint as to the real location of the headquarters of the PLF and the FMLN.*) Following the deaths of Montes and Carpio, the PLF broke a longstanding guerrilla policy of taking prisoners and started torturing, then shooting its captives, thereby losing much of the good will their amnesty program had engendered.



SOF medic Phil Gonzales examines Salvadoran refugee in Lolotiquillo. Photo: Alex McColl

Because of the improved circumstances in El Salvador and the fact that SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown had identified additional areas in which SOF's A Team (eat your heart out, Mr. T.) could help out, he headed a 12-man SOF unit to El Salvador for three weeks in August.

SOF evaluated the current status of the war in El Salvador through talks with U.S. Embassy and Military Group personnel; Col. Juan Rafael Bustillo, commander of the Salvadoran Air Force; Lt. Col. Domingo Monterrosa, commander of the Atlacatl Battalion; and Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz, commander of embattled Morazan Department, which SOF visited on two occasions (see "Medcap Mission To Morazan," p. 56).

In addition, *Soldier of Fortune*'s advisers worked with the Airborne, Atlacatl and Morazan Battalions in the areas of small arms, demolitions, parachuting and medical training (see SitReps following). Furthermore, SOF's medics conducted several civilian Medcaps in Morazan Department.

By far the most encouraging development in El Salvador is the aggressive action inititated by Col. Casanova on 10 July in pursuit of what is being referred to in El Salvador as "The National Plan."

Since that date, Col. Casanova has ordered the Salvadoran Army out of the *cuartels* (headquarters) and into the bush where the guerrillas are. The combination of aggressive, sustained patrolling, increased small-unit and night actions, more rapid reaction to guerrilla contacts by using *Cazadore* battalions (350-man "hunter" units), the success of the government amnesty plan and development of local Civil Defense Forces appears to have set the guerrillas back.

This is particularly true in San Vicente and Usulutan Departments, both east of San Salvador. In both departments, guerrilla activity was heavy in 1982 and through the first six months of 1983. But the Salvadoran Army's aggressive offensive action since 10 July has forced the guerrillas out of those two areas or, at least, underground.

By keeping up the level of action in San Vicente and Usulutan, the government has been able to provide civilians a reasonable degree of security and, as a consequence, more land is being farmed and schools reopened.

However, as a military observer pointed out to *Soldier of Fortune,* intensification of the government's efforts has its drawbacks. The price the Salvadorans are paying for their increased activity is a substantial increase in casualties and rapid depletion of all types of supplies.

The most disturbing shortage is in airlift capacity. The Salvadoran Air Force has a total of 32 helicopters (18 UH-1Hs, five French Lamas, six French Alouettes and three Hughes). On a good day 12 are up; on a bad day, as few as three are flying.

Basically, the Salvadorans have two problems: 1) Socialist fence-straddling France has not been cooperative in supplying spare parts for the Lamas and Alouettes and 2) spare parts for those helicopters cannot be purchased with Foreign Military Sales (FMS) funds supplied by the U.S. government.

The Salvadorans have a problem keeping the UH-1Hs flying because the U.S.-designed supply and maintenance system set up to keep the choppers in the air did not take into account the severe wear-and-tear such sophisticated systems experience when they are flown regularly under combat conditions and get bullet holes in them.

For example, one day during SOF's most recent trip we watched the Salvadorans install the last spare transmission and self-sealing gas tank in El Salvador into a chopper. Had another bird taken a hit in the transmission or gas tank that day, it would have been grounded for weeks awaiting approval and shipment of a replacement.

And, as one Western observer pointed out, *if* replacement parts are available, the money to pay for them has to come from funds earmarked for other critical supplies. "It's a matter of robbing Peter to pay Paul," he lamented.

Shortage of airlift capability is the leading cause of the most disturbing fact SOF discovered on this trip: According to Salvadoran military sources, the ratio of troop fatalities to casualties is a staggering 50 percent. Certainly, inadequate medical supplies and training of troops and medics, and poor conditions in military hospitals also contribute to the unacceptably high death rate of wounded soldiers, but that grim statistic could be substantially reduced if the Salvadorans had more and better airlift capability — preferably, a fleet of full-time dedicated-only-to-medical-evacuation helicopters.

Wounded Salvadoran soldiers usually are carried to the nearest road on litters, trucked to an airstrip and flown to San Salvador via propeller-driven planes or choppers when available.

Any reasonably intelligent observer would conclude that the war being fought in El Salvador is not one for that country alone, but for the entire Central American region. Granted, there is internal dissatisfaction within El Salvador (and some valid reasons for it), but it is clear the war would not be raging at its current level without substantial backing by the Soviet Union (through its client states, Cuba and Nicaragua), giving the guerrillas money, supplies and advisers.

And it is equally clear that the guerrillas' long-range target is not El Salvador, but all of the Americas, including the United States.

Consequently, if we are going to ask Salvadoran grunts to fight this round for us, we should, at least, provide them with enough support to have a reasonable chance of winning — and a better than 50-50 chance of living if hit.

SOF's full report follows.

SOF'S TEAM

Robert K.Brown, Editor/Publisher of *Soldier of Fortune*, and lieutenant colonel, Special Forces, USAR. One tour in Vietnam, including command of the Tong Le Chon Special Forces Camp and experience as an Infantry Battalion S2.

Alexander M. S. McColl, Director of Special Projects, SOF. Colonel, Special Forces, USAR. Eleven years active duty, including two tours in Vietnam (SSO ACSI J2 MACV, District Senior Adviser, MACVSOG). Graduate of U.S. Army War College.

John Early, president, Albuquerque Parachute Center, Albuquerque, N.M., and a SOF Contributing Editor. Former captain, Selous Scouts, Rhodesian Army. Former captain, U.S. Army Special

UPPER LEFT: SOF Demolitions Editor John Donovan and John Early examine charge set by Atlacatl Battalion engineers during demo instruction. Photo: Ralph Edens LOWER LEFT: SOF team in Morazan with Lt. Col. Cruz, following three days in the field. Team members are (left to right, front row) Ralph Edens and John Early; (back row) Bob Brown, Phil Gonzales, John Padgett and Ben Jones. Photo: Ralph Edens BELOW: Gonzales instructs chopper door-gunners in life-saving first-aid techniques at Ilopango Air Base. An estimated 25 percent of Salvadoran casualties die on choppers en route to hospitals because crews are not trained in first aid and no medics fly with medevacs. Photo: John Padgett

Forces. Four years, eight months and 13 days in Vietnam, including the siege of the Lang Vei Special Forces Camp. Expert in all aspects of parachuting and anti-terrorist operations.

Ben Jonès, former major, Rhodesian African Rifles, former first lieutenant, USMC; former first lieutenant, U.S. Army; 24 combat jumps in Rhodesia; expert in anti-guerrilla and anti-terrorist operations.

Cliff Albright, retired Republic Airlines DC-9 captain (13,000 hours flying time, including about 400 in DC-3/C-47 type aircraft); commander, Phantom Division, Tennessee Airborne (a paramilitary/sport parachute organization); master parachute rigger, jumpmaster and instructor with 510 jumps.

John Donovan, owner, Donovan Dynamiting, Danvers, Ill., and SOF Contributing Editor. Major, Special Forces, USAR. Demolitions expert; after the U.S. government, his firm is the largest user of C4 in the United States. Twenty years of law-enforcement experience.

John Doe, weapons instructor, served with the USMC in Vietnam. First sergeant major in the Selous Scouts, Rhodesian Army. Noted weapons instructor and expert in anti-terrorist and long-range reconnaissance operations.

UPPER LEFT: SOFers Early (second from left), Jones (left) and Albright (right) instruct Salvadoran troops in proper cargo-drop procedures. Photo: Tom Reisinger LOWER LEFT: Mario, a 14-year old orphan, who serves as Lt. Col. Cruz' aide-de-camp, with M16A1 and Steiner Commander binoculars. Photo: Ralph Edens RIGHT: Medic Padgett examines soldier who is afflicted with scabies, contagious skin disease caused by mites — a common health problem among troops in Morazan. Photo: Ralph Edens

LEFT: Medics Phil Gonzales (left) and John Padgett (right) treat Salvadoran soldier with sucking chest wound minutes after arrival in San Francisco Gotera. Soldier was lying in a truck unattended, waiting for C-47 to lift him out and back to a hospital 45 minutes away in San Salvador. Prompt medical attention by Gonzalez and Padgett saved his life and that of another soldier who had a stomach wound and was dying from loss of blood. Photo: Ralph Edens

RIGHT: Messages left for the ERP and one left for transmittal to Fidel by SOF staff. Photo: Ralph Edens

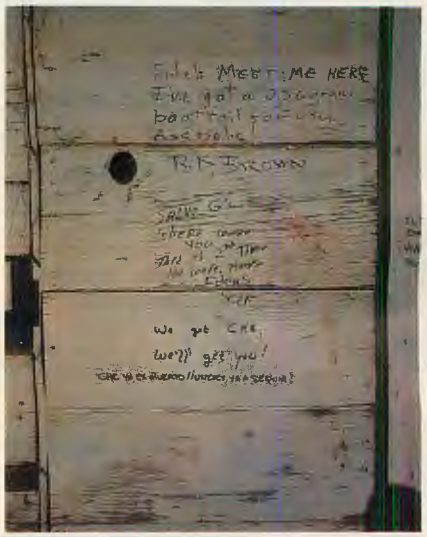
Peter G. Kokalis, SOF Military Small Arms Editor. Served with U.S. Army in technical intelligence branch. Distinguished writer, collector and expert on military automatic weapons.

Ralph G. Edens, president, Security and Research Ltd., Humble, Texas. International security consultant and unconventional-operations expert.

John Padgett, physician's assistant, certified. Three and one-half years as Special Forces medic in Vietnam, one year in Thailand. One year each in rural health clinics in Nicaragua, Micronesia and Alaska. Spanish linguist.

Philip Gonzales, family nurse practitioner. Two years as Special Forces medic in Vietnam. One year running health clinic in San Blas Islands, Republic of Panama. Spanish linguist and photographer.

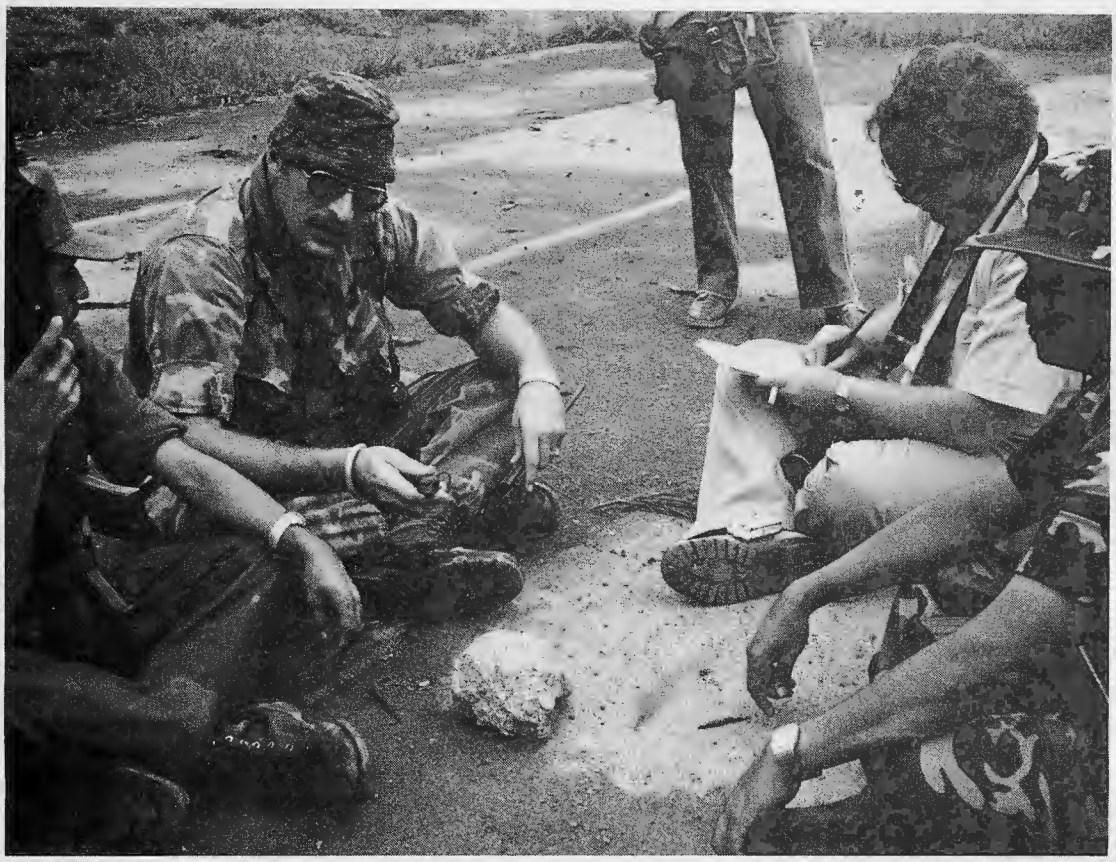
Thomas D. Reisinger, assistant to SOF publisher. President, Refugee Relief International, Inc.; director, Parachute Medical Rescue Service (PMRS).



LEFT: Atlacatl Battalion's 1st Lt. David Koch points out ambush positions for aggressor team in ambush/counter-ambush training while SOF's John Donovan, John Early and Ben Jones observe. Photo: Ralph Edens

Medic John Padgett, assisted by Salvadoran medic, fills bottles with liquid vitamins to distribute to troops near Osicala, Morazan Department. SOF distributed approximately $10,000 worth of medicial supplies to civilians and Salvo troops. Photo: Jim Graves

John Padgett, SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown and John Early (left to right) are joined by kids from nearby village to await helicopter. SOF found Salvo Army and civilians got along well. Photo: Phil Gonzales



Jose Antonio Rivas, who was "drafted" by the Guerrilla Army of the People (ERP), but came over to the government side and is now a private in the Morazan Battalion, listens while John Padgett translates question into Spanish from *Soldier of Fortune* Managing Editor Jim Graves (second from right). At right is Lt. Col. Cruz, commanding officer of Morazan Department. Photo: Alex McColl

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Early, Albright and Jones spent several days working with and improving the operation of the rigger loft of the FAS Airborne Battalion (*Battalion Aerotransportado*). Early and Albright had brought several thousand dollars' worth of parachute-related supplies, equipment and spare parts. As a result of their efforts, most of the airborne-related deficiencies and shortcomings noted in the last report were corrected, and training for riggers was initiated, including cargo-drop training. At the end of August when SOF left, the unit had 480 complete rigs ready to go.

Donovan conducted a follow-up demolitions course for the enlisted engineer sappers of the Atlacatl Battalion and an advanced demolitions course for three lieutenant instructors of the Atlacatl Battalion. He also inspected and inventoried the demolition materiel on hand at the Morazan Battalion at San Francisco Gotera.

John Doe conducted a series of three-day classes for FAS helicopter door-gunners and made arrangements to conduct future classes in basic combat-pistol shooting for FAS pilots, basic sniper techniques for the FAS Airbase Defense Battalion and advanced sniper-training for the Atlacatl Battalion. The door-gunner training resulted in significant improvements in the morale, motivation, weapons-malfunction rates and shooting skill of the unit.

Peter Kokalis completely overhauled the weapons inventory of the Atlacatl Battalion and continued his program of weapons instruction for that unit (see "Arms And The Atlacatls," p. 50).

Early, Jones and Kokalis conducted a three-day ambush and counter-ambush training program for selected junior officers and NCOs of the Atlacatl Battalion.

A team consisting of Brown, Early, Jones, Edens, Padgett and Gonzales visited Lt. Col. Cruz, commander of Morazan Department, accompanying Cruz and elements of the Morazan and Airborne Battalions in the field to observe anti-terrorist operations. Medical activities by Padgett and Gonzales included saving the lives of two wounded airborne soldiers, Medcaps that treated several hundred civilians and field-health and sanitation classes for Salvadoran troops and civilians.

A second team, consisting of McColl, Padgett, Gonzales and SOF Managing Editor Jim Graves, visited Lt. Col. Cruz and Dr. Alcides Caballero Lopez at San Francisco Gotera for further Medcaps and health classes for troops and civilians, which included assisting in the delivery of a child by Caesarean section, and evaluation of military training and civic-action projects.

Padgett and Gonzales also trained FAS helicopter door-gunners in basic life-saving procedures, which should help reduce the death rate of wounded troopers, conducted classes for enlisted medics of the FAS and the Atlacatl Battalion, and made a health and sanitation inspection of the Atlacatl base camp.

SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown and Contributing Editor Ralph Edens insert temporary filling during sick call. Field dental kit was used to treat soldiers and civilians in Morazan.

DEMOLITIONS REPORT

by John Donovan

From 4 through 21 August 1983, I conducted demolitions training for the Atlacatl Battalion. Training consisted of the following:

- Follow-up/refresher training for 46 students who received my basic demolitions course in April '83;
- Advanced training for three lieutenants who will become demolitions instructors for the battalion;
- Basic demolitions training for the sapper, engineer and instructor personnel of this battalion.

On 22 August 1983, I inspected and inventoried the explosives-storage facility of the Morazan Battalion at San Francisco Gotera, which had not been entered in several years. The facility held a substantial quantity of explosives which neither the MilGroup nor the DAO knew existed. Explosives were redistributed to other locations where they would be more useful.

DOOR – GUNNER TRAINING

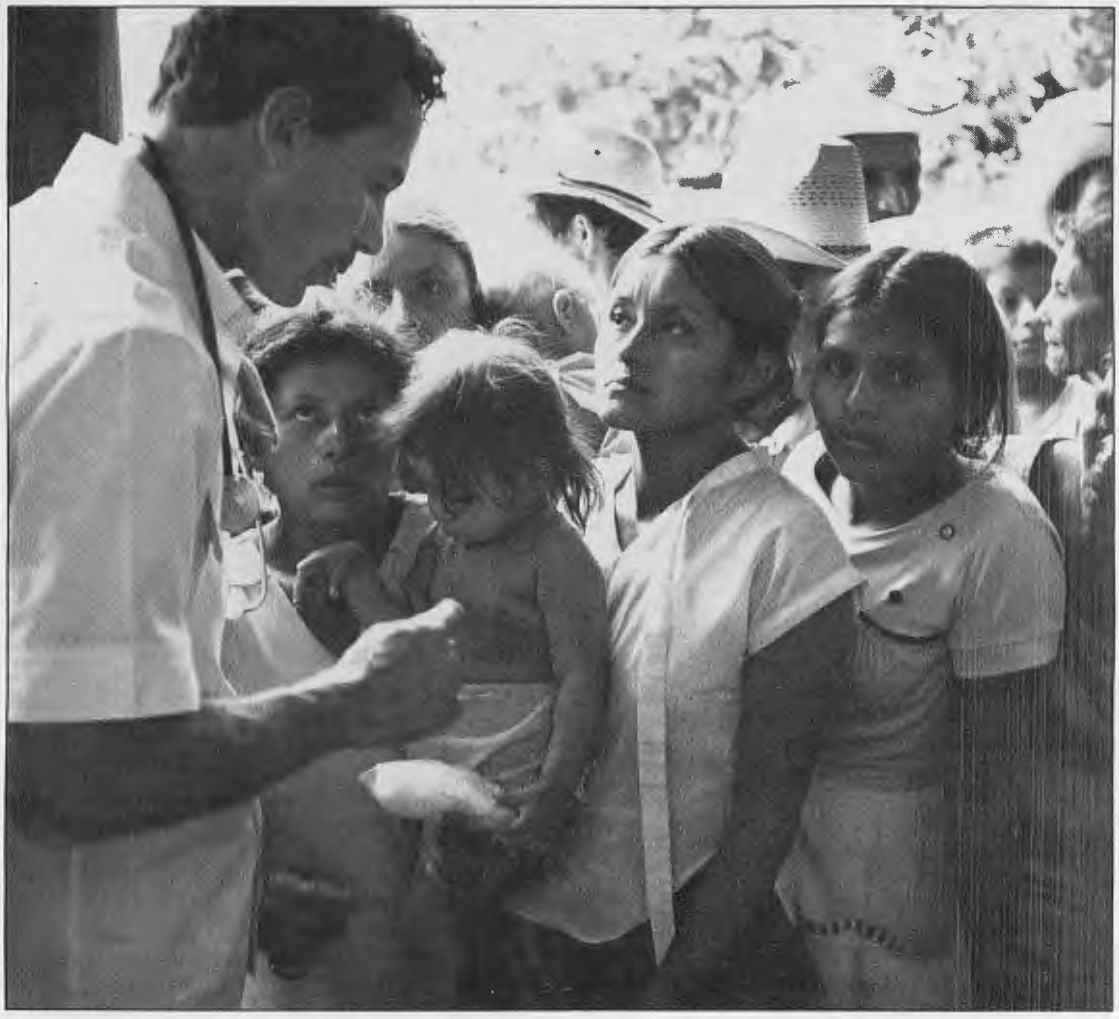
by John Doe

Maj. Jose Armando Asmitia, executive officer of the Atlacatl Battalion, greeted me upon my return to El Salvador with the news that the Atlacatl snipers trained by me in April had reported 17 kills — so far. Success.

My assignment on this trip — at the request of Capt. Perada, CO of the FAS helicopter squadron — was to train all FAS door-gunners (DGs). Observing that the guns often didn't work and the DGs couldn't hit the target, I realized mine would not be an easy task.

Those problems were symptomatic of a larger one: There was no chain of command over the DGs. The FAS NCOs are armorers and bomb technicians of the armaments section. So to ready the DGs for training, and with the full cooperation of Capt. Perada and Sgt. Serrano of the FAS armaments section, I temporarily filled the leadership gap and inspected weapons, made recommendations and offered a reward of 100 *colones* (about $20) for the best design of a

SOF's John Donovan (right) discusses plans with other members of the SOF team via radio during ambush and counter-ambush training with Atlacatl Battalion troops. Photo: Ralph Edens



Salvadoran mothers are all ears as medic Phil Gonzales explains methods for preventing diarrhea, the problem of the child being examined, which is often fatal when medical treatment is limited. Photo: Alex McColl

DG insignia patch and T-shirt. The results were immediate and dramatic: Guns got cleaned and motivation and discipline improved.

With improved discipline and morale, the door-gunner training was made easier. I conducted three three-day courses for groups of six DGs, resulting in the training of 18 of the 24 FAS DGs. The program of instruction (POI) included weapons cleaning and maintenance, fire techniques, practice firing and medical training. Cleaning and checking the guns substantially reduced the malfunction problem. Fire-techniques training included fire discipline and correct aiming procedures. For example, the DGs had not been taught to aim behind the target when firing at a ground target from a moving platform.

Here, as everywhere in El Salvador, supply shortages complicate the war effort. Because of tracer shortages, ammunition is belted at one-tracer-to-10 ball, which is insufficient for feeding the tracer stream into the target. Each DG received a half-day live-firing session, using 100 rounds from a helicopter in flight over Lake Ilopango. We had to improvise targets, using pillow-sized blocks of styrofoam linked by 10-foot lengths of string. Emphasis was on fire discipline, fire techniques and engaging the target with short bursts.

Since there are no dedicated medical-evacuation helicopters in the FAS, ordinary UH-1H "slicks" were used for this training mission.

To make the best use of the trained DGs, I recommended, and the FAS adopted, two simple, but important changes: Each DG now has an individually assigned M60D machine gun and they now have a revised feed system for the guns. Before, the ammunition was in a 1,000-round box fixed to the fuselage of the helicopter about two or three feet under the gun. This permitted the belt to twist and the gun to malfunction when it was turned. The new system uses a 200-round box attached to and moving with the gun, thus greatly reducing malfunctions. The first group to fire over Lake Ilopango, firing with the old feed system, had 32 stoppages out of 600 rounds. The second group, using the new feed system, had one stoppage in 600 rounds, and the third group, also using the new system, had none. There are now 20 of the new feed systems being made locally.

Future projects include: pistol course for the FAS pilots; advanced sniper course for Atlacatl Bn. and a basic sniper course for the FAS Base Defense Bn.

COIN REPORT

by John Early

Operational Area: Morazan Department, northern El Salvador.
Date: 11-14 August 1983.

Objective: Conduct Medcap operations and observe operational capabilities of government units operating in Morazan.
Sequence of events: SOF team departed Ilopango Military Airbase by C-47 for San Francisco Gotera via San Miguel with medical supplies and related equipment.

The team was met at San Francisco Gotera by representatives of the Department commander, Lt. Col. Cruz, and after transport to the department headquarters, received a detailed briefing from the Brigade operations officer. Cruz conducted a second briefing shortly thereafter, outlining future operations in the AO.

The Brigade consisted of the Linca, Morazan and Airborne Battalions, all of which were engaged in counterguerrilla operations to the north of the city near the Torola River.

After the briefing and dinner in the local officers' mess, the team was transported to the local hospital where they were billeted for the night.

12 Aug. '83: After breakfast and a short inspection of the headquarters facilities, the team was airlifted by helicopter to the CP of the Linca Battalion west of Cacaguatique. The battalion was engaged in security operations in the surrounding mountainous terrain as well as civic action programs in the nearby city.

Medical personnel conducted sick-call for the members of the unit as well as local

civilians. Nearly 100 cases were seen and treated before the team moved into the city of Cacaguatique. Meanwhile, two other team members spoke with local commanders concerning employment of troops and support weapons and conducted an inspection of the perimeter area. The support weapons, one M2 HB .50-caliber machine gun and one 81mm mortar were in fair condition but poorly placed to support local troops. Communications appeared to be good: The unit carried more than enough PRC-77 radios. While other army units complain of a shortage of radios, this battalion seemed to have several extras.

Later in the day, the team, accompanied by Lt. Col. Cruz, went into the local village to observe a traditional celebration.

The team moved to the edge of the city and to wait for helicopter transport for link-up with two companies engaged in night-ambush operations approximately six kilometers from the city. After link-up and an approximate eight-kilometer forced march, it established a perimeter in the vicinity of a small farm and settled in for the night.

No enemy activity occurred during the night. During the night march and bivouac, several problems were noted and passed on to the local commander: Light and noise discipline were poor; movement was much too rapid for good security (the local CO had opted for rapid movement to intercept a reported guerrilla column — no contact reported); night-location perimeter security was poor with much talking and several accidental discharges.

13 Aug. '83: Shortly after first light, we moved with the Morazan Battalion to an OP outside Delicias de Concepcion and observed an airstrike on a suspected guerrilla position in an abandoned coffee *finca* by A-37s directed by an FAS 0-2. No enemy bodies or weapons were reported after the airstrike. The first strikes were brought in high; after the pilots became more confident, the strikes were more accurately placed. The aircraft used rockets, general-purpose bombs and machine-gun fire during the attack.

After the airstrike, we were lifted by helo to the CP of the Parachute Battalion, commanded by Maj. Luis Mariano Turcios Chevez. His CP was located on an extremely high, isolated feature that commanded the surrounding terrain. The paras were conducting sweeps of the nearby area; however, we had no opportunity to observe them in the field.

At approximately 1600, we were lifted by helo to the vicinity of the coffee *finca* that had received the airstrike earlier in the morning. The medical personnel again conducted a sick call and treated approximately 75 members of the Morazan Battalion in the field. These troops were more poorly equipped than those observed previously, although their weapons were clean and functioning.

We moved to a night location because of reported G activity and rested quietly through the night. Light and noise discipline was again poor, with several ADs. Some light 60mm mortaring took place during the night with 105mm howitzers, but there were no reported enemy casualties. A small attack supported by 0-2 next morning had no reported effect. We listened with interest to the G activity on radio, which seemed to move from frequency to frequency.

14 Aug. '83: After small-scale attack in the morning, supported by 0-2, we spent most of the day waiting for helo to lift us back to SFG with Lt. Col. Cruz.

After an uneventful ride to SFG, we observed the daily activity of the local garrison until airlift to San Salvador by FAS Arava.

Observations: Lt. Col. Cruz appears to be one of the most effective local commanders in El Salvador. He works hard, leads from up front, shares the hardships of his troops and is popular with them and the local population. His civic-action programs for the refugees are well-managed and effective. He makes good use of his limited assets and maintains an aggressive posture with the battalions assigned to his AO to keep the Gs off balance. He is hampered by the usual problems of a ground commander in El Salvador: poor command organization and lack of Brigade command structure, poor logistics and little air support. Few artillery assets make it difficult to support his troops, although Cruz did have more arty than we saw on the previous trip. Clothing, medical supplies and individual equipment are at a premium. Condition of weapons is poor, although most weapons inspected were clean and functioning. Several M16s were nearly shot-out. No firing tables for mortars.

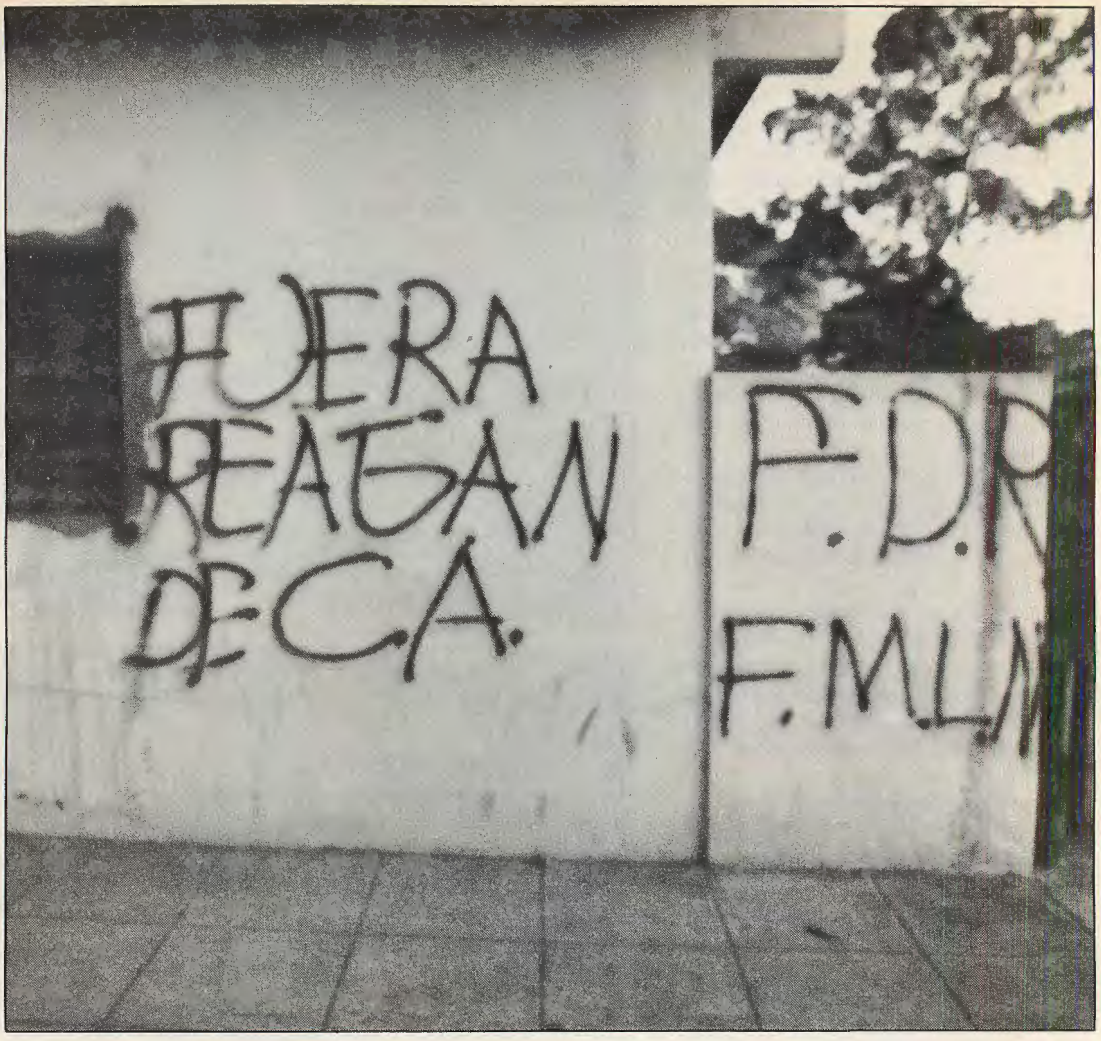
Small-unit leadership is being pushed to its limit due to a lack of NCOs and new officers. Troops are in poor physical condition resulting from long periods in the field without rest. Morale appears high among the ordinary soldiers; they all seem eager to contact the enemy.

Civic-action programs to help displaced persons, although seemingly effective, do not receive a high priority from the general staff and each local commander conducts them at his own discretion.

Departmental troops need teams to conduct training for the basic soldiering skills, as well as retraining for the combat troops. Small-unit leadership and tactics continue to be poor. Commanders at nearly all levels are having difficulty learning how to direct their units. Medical training and supplies are badly needed, as is some sort of medical evacuation plan for the wounded.

SOF medic Phil Gonzales examines Salvadoran child during Medcap in Morazan Department. Photo: Ralph Edens

Approximately 1,000 refugees, who fled from guerrilla-controlled areas north of the Torola River in Morazan, turned out in village of Lolotiquillo to draw rations from Salvadoran government and receive medical attention from SOF's team. Photo: Alex McColl



Communist slogan on wall left by the FDR faction of the FMLN says: Reagan Get Out Of Central America. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

MEDCAP RECAP

by John E. Padgett (PA-C)

SOF's medical team consisted of three former U.S. Army Special Forces medics: Reisinger, Gonzales and myself. Our assignment was to conduct basic lifesaving and combat medical training for local troops (with specific training for Atlacatl and Airborne Battalion medics) to try to reduce the mortality rate of wounded troops and administer to civilians in rural areas as tactical and administrative conditions allowed.

Training of Atlacatl Battalion medics. Classes, which lasted two days, included combat wounds, CPR, and field and garrison sanitation. Students presented their own blocks of instruction in various areas — malnutrition, emergency childbirth, dehydration, etc. — with occasional assistance from the instructors.

Training of Airborne Battalion and Linca/Morazan Battalion medics.

The above two actions occurred almost simultaneously. While receiving on-the-job training working with SOF medics, the Salvadoran troops also administered to civilians. Considerable time was also spent on preventive medicine. On our first trip, we were unable to spend much time with the Airborne Battalion medics because the unit was widely dispersed. On a return visit, however, we instructed them for several hours.

Immediately upon arrival at San Francisco Gotera, we set to work near the airstrip helping to stabilize two soldiers with critical gunshot wounds: one with a sucking chest wound and another with abdominal and upper arm wounds. These patients were probably saved due to the intervention of SOF medics and were recovering when visited by these medics a week later.

Preventive medicine classes: Soon after arrival in Morazan Department, it became apparent that the troops in the field lacked training in elementary sanitation, skin disease prevention and recognition and treatment of dehydration. Classes in these areas were given to unit medics and troops alike, and repeated whenever a group was assembled. These classes were also given to civilians. Recognition, prevention and field treatment of intestinal disease and dehydration is critical in combat medicine or in undeveloped countries. Many people, especially children, are dying as a result of these problems. The need is especially acute now that Lt. Col. Cruz has only sufficient resources to protect half the department and the civilian population of the guerrilla-controlled areas that have become displaced persons (approximately 90,000 thus far).

Training of helicopter door-gunners in basic lifesaving/first aid: For a country with an average flying time of 45 minutes from field to hospital, El Salvador's 50-percent mortality rate for wounded soldiers is unbelievable. One problem is that tactical situations take precedence over medevac operations. Therefore, the wounded may wait for hours before being loaded onto a helicopter.

While many other factors also contribute to the problem (no medevac system or medevac helicopters, too few field medics, a long response time for casualty evacuation), one of the most critical is that the wounded, placed on the helicopter without medical aid, often bleed to death en route to the hospital. To help solve this problem, SOF medics conducted training in basic lifesaving techniques and combat first aid for three classes of door-gunners. This should enable door-gunners, once their aircraft has cleared the danger area, to give lifesaving first aid to wounded troops in their helicopters.

Medical civic action: In combination with refugee organizations from the government and private sectors of El Salvador who distributed needed foodstuffs, SOF examined approximately 400 civilians in their major civic-action effort along with some 50 others at various other locations. Together with military and hospital patients, consultations totalled approximately 1,000. SOF medics assisted the doctors at San Francisco Gotera *Centro de Salud*

(Health Center) on rounds and during surgery. Some $3,000 worth of medical supplies gathered by Gonzales and me were given to the health center along with locally purchased items donated by SOF.

SOF also provided medical bags to the Atlacatl and Morazan medics; they are now equipped to do their job.

The need for the Salvadoran Armed Forces to be provided with helicopters and medical personnel for specific medevac duty has been discussed in detail elsewhere (including reports to the U.S. Army three years ago by Col. Hernan Morales, M.D., currently in charge of the U.S. Medical Team in El Salvador). Immediate implementation of such a system is essential and will provide dramatic improvement in mortality rates and troop morale. Knowing that adequate medical care is available makes a tremendous difference in a soldier's being willing to risk his life and limb in combat.

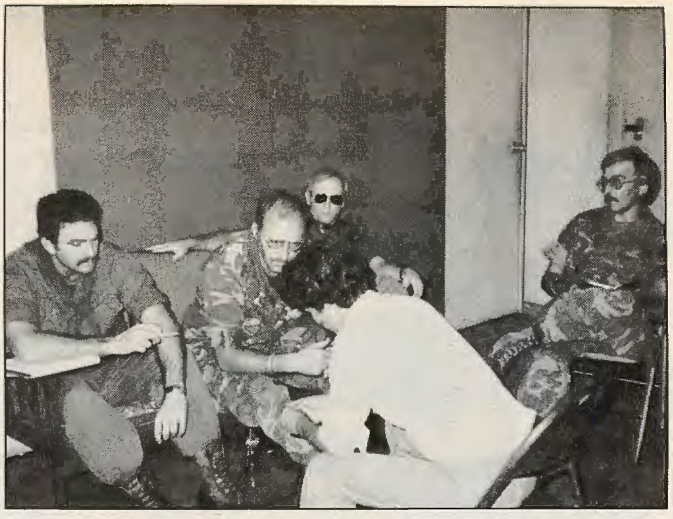
One or two medics per company is not sufficient. Although a training program is underway by the U.S. Army and Salvadoran Armed Forces to reduce the shortage, the training and deployment of the graduates will take another six months or so.

The overburdened hospital at San Francisco Gotera needs nearly everything. Specifically, they need a suction machine, an electrocautery machine and basic medicines. The hospital also is interested in voluntary help by Spanish-speaking U.S. doctors.

Basic first-aid training should be given to all recruits and officer trainees as part of initial and ongoing training. Field sanitation is deplorable as is the lack of attention to basic sanitation in garrison. This needs to be stressed in follow-up visits and as a part of basic military and medical training. Commanders at all levels need to be aware of the problems with field and garrison sanitation and how to solve them. Prevention and field treatment of skin disease (mites, fungus, etc.) and dehydration need to be taught as part of basic and ongoing training.

Salvadoran medical and field supply systems need to emphasize:

- Insect repellent (we saw none with the field troops).
- Foot powder (none seen).
- Water-purification tablets.
- Increased availability of battle dressings and first-aid supplies.
- Medical bags, surplus, M-3 and M-5 type (or any suitable alternate).
- Vaseline or furacin gauze for sucking chest wounds.
- Individual first-aid (battle dressing) pouches, surplus.
- Pole-less nylon litters.
- Any surplus and/or outdated medical supplies that can be scrounged from military medical contacts will be useful, especially battle dressings, cravats, etc.



SOF's Ben Jones, John Padgett, Robert K. Brown and John Early interrogate Salvadoran guerrilla from the Guerrilla Army of the People (ERP) captured by troops in Morazan Department in August. Photo: Ralph Edens

Soldiers mount up on trucks in front of the Cine Morazan in San Francisco Gotera. Ford trucks were shipped to El Salvador with cross-ribs over the top to support a canopy — a great idea in hot, tropical countries where there's no war or danger of an ambush. In normal driving on El Salvador's rough roads and in ambush situation ribs' only purpose is to serve as very efficient head-rappers. Removal of ribs would also allow troops rapid exit over sides of vehicle instead of only from rear. Photo: Jim Graves

SOF TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS:

With minor exceptions, the recommendations in the April trip report still stand. SOF did note some improvement in the areas of medical support (chiefly the U.S. Army medical team under Col. Morales), civic action, psychological warfare and aggressive field operations in guerrilla-infested areas.

The root cause of most of the Salvadoran weaknesses is the miserly, restrictive support provided by the U.S. Congress to El Salvador.

The system of a standing MilGroup and MTTs that come in-country for short periods for specific tasks should be replaced by an integrated Military Assistance Command in which the working-level trainers are associated with their units on a long-term basis and, as discussed in detail in the September issue, the ban on U.S. trainers going into the field with their troops needs to be lifted, as well as the arbitrarily decided limit of 55 U.S. trainers in El Salvador.

The Airborne Battalion should be retrained and used as a national airborne fire force to react quickly to enemy attacks on isolated outposts, to gather intelligence information about enemy targets and to perform other tasks requiring more than a truckborne reaction force — which usually arrives too late or gets ambushed en route or both.

In any military operation and especially in a counter-guerrilla war, victory hinges on the ability to bring decisive offensive action against located and identified enemy units, base camps, supply installations and headquarters.

In anti-guerrilla warfare, the two most difficult aspects of this are timely and

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T-72 differs little from T-80 on the outside, except it has smoke/chaff dispensers and lacks armor skirts. Photo: U.S. Army

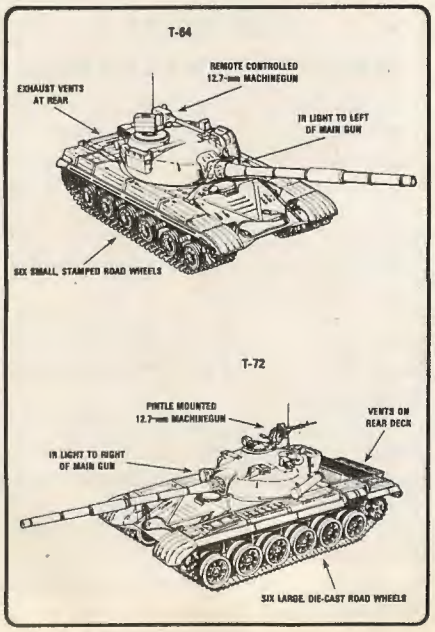
of the U.S. Army, stated in 1979 that the T-72 and T-64 have "at least first-generation advanced armor" including spaced armor and new metallurgical techniques. With antitank guided missiles such as the U.S. TOW and Dragon and the European MILAN unable to penetrate the frontal armor of these tanks, the West's research and development teams swung into action. Reportedly aided by study of two knocked-out T-72s hauled out of Afghanistan by British military intelligence, recent years have seen the design of Improved TOW, TOW II and a whole host of smaller weapons, guided and non-guided, designed to deal with the new threat. It is unlikely that the armies of the West would be spending their scarce research and development dollars, pounds and marks on these projects unless there was a real need — which means that there is more to the statements of the invulnerability of Soviet MBTs than words.

Of course, neither the T-72 nor the T-80 is invulnerable. The Israelis destroyed a number of Syrian T-72s in Lebanon in 1982, apparently by tanks firing advanced 105mm ammunition or TOW antitank guided missiles, fired from AH-1 attack helicopters, which had been fitted with an improved Israeli-made warhead. Yet, like all Soviet tanks, the T-72 and the T-80 are offensive weapons, and are not intended to take punishment.

In the words of Maj. Gen. Moshe Bar Kochba, commander of the Israeli Armored Corps, "The T-72 is equipped with ultramodern optical systems. Its strong firepower, penetrative, zeroing-in and destructive abilities are its most impressive feature." It is unknown whether the "export" versions of the T-72s that the Syrians were equipped with had combined armor. The Soviets will often not put their most sensitive subsystems on exported vehicles, which, according to Viktor Suvorov, are called "monkey-models" by the Soviet Army, indicating what the Soviet soldiers think of their country's allies.

The T-64, T-72 and T-80 all use the Soviet 125mm smoothbore gun with an automatic loader that has allowed them to eliminate the human loader. This means that they have three-man crews, instead of the four-man ones standard in Western armies.

The only drawback was that this wonder of Soviet technology did not always work as intended. The gun automatically elevates to load, necessary because of the small turret size. The autoloader aligns a shell and charge with the breech by using grippers. A power rammer then rams them into the automatically operating, horizontal, sliding breech. However, this loading system apparently has a tendency to grab the gunner and attempt to load *him* into the breech.



In the words of one U.S. Army officer: "We believe that this is how the Red Army Chorus gets its soprano section." There are reports that the Soviets have managed to fix this problem, but it certainly must have lowered morale until they did so.

Is the T-80 better than the U.S. M1 Abrams? No. The M1 is state-of-the-art in main-battle-tank design. The T-80 is, because of its evolutionary design, less advanced. Soviet combined armor is probably not as good as the American tank's Chobham armor. The M1's gas turbine engine gives it unequalled acceleration for dashing from cover to cover (tanks do not cruise into combat like squadrons of battleships anymore). Its manual loader is more reliable than the Soviet's automatic one. The M1 has a thermal night sight for all-weather firing. The T-80 does not, although the 1981-vintage Department of Defense "artist's impression" showed a tank that appeared to have such a sight, and the "T-80 follow-on" might redress this disadvantage.

However, the U.S. Army has comparatively few M1s and the Soviet Army has lots of T-80s. Compared with the M48A5s and M60A3s that make up the bulk of U.S. tank strength, the T-80 has better mobility, firepower and armor. The superior size of the 125mm gun is to an extent balanced out by the uncertain effectiveness of the Soviet's fire-control system and autoloader. But the U.S. Army has a right to be worried, especially with the "T-80 follow-on" on the way.

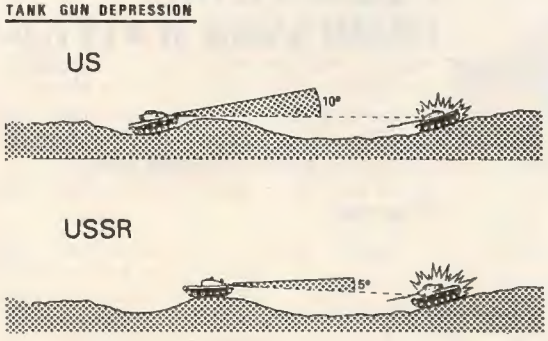
The T-80 may not be as revolutionary as some people said it would be, but it illustrates the problems raised by the latest generation of Soviet weapons — land, air and sea. How does one beat the Soviets? The Soviets have always had numerical superiority over just about anyone else, so weight of numbers is not likely to prevail against them.

Russian's-eye view of T-80's competition: M1 Abrams MBT. Already superior to T-80, no one knows if it can beat the T-82 or T-85 of the next decade. Photo: U.S. Army

If you can't have quantity, it is natural to look to quality to redress the balance.

But now, the Soviets have shown they have weapons which, despite their flaws, can be just as good as those deployed by the West. What the U.S. Army and its allies must do is emphasize the one area where they are still ahead of the Soviets — in tactics and training. We will not outnumber the Soviets. We may not have better equipment. Our soldiers are no braver than those who wear the red star.

Only by fighting smarter than the enemy can we hope to survive against him. That is the challenge the T-80 brings to U.S. tactics. We either have to get smart and train to beat the enemy, or we will surely lose in any future conflict.



To hit the same target from identical defensive positions, the Soviet tank, with its limited tank gun depression, must come to the top of the height and expose itself.

LALO JUMP

Continued from page 41

Half-dragging my jacket webbing, I wobbled over to Boetie Penneken, who was nearly unconscious after crashing in on top of the general-purpose machine gun strapped to his side. Carrying more weight than the average troopie, all the gunners had bounced in painfully; it was a miracle that none had been seriously hurt. Of the 16 jumpers who had bailed out, three needed transport back to Umtali Hospital via medevac choppers; our troop medic sorted out the other injuries on the spot.

By now the rest of the stick commanders were shouting death and destruction to the pilots who had dropped us so low, and they in turn shouted back that we had gone out at our normal 500 feet. Had they not been out of range, I think a few of our more hardened troopies would have sent some 7.62mm ammo flying their way instead of toward the terrs.

Maj. Snelgar finally managed to break in over the radio, telling everyone: "Shut up. Get the sweep line organized, and start moving before the terrs gap it back to Mozambique." He told us he would sort out the situation with the pilots once we returned to Grand Reef, but our priority now was to dust off our injured and get into the contact area.

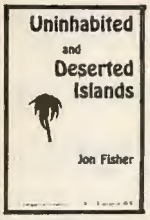
Once things settled down, our sweep bagged three terrs holed up in a cave by flushing them out with white phosphorus grenades. One of the stops nailed two others — and the Selous Scout was overjoyed to see us.

On our chopper ride back, the success of our contact was dampened by the thought of our disastrous jump. Most of us had a good many op jumps under our belts, and we knew damned well that we had gone out far below the minimum 500-foot height. When the chopper blades quit turning back at Grand Reef, 12 angry paratroops stormed out toward the Blues' op room, intending to start another contact with the two pilots who had nearly killed us. We could accept a lot of things on Fire Force, but mistakes like that made everyone boil.

Knowing what our reaction would be, Maj. Snelgar halted us outside the air force hut, intent on keeping the war out in the bush. The Blues' commander had quickly agreed to ship the two pilots back to Salisbury rather than have a fire fight on his doorstep, and would ensure that their replacements were well briefed on operational jump procedures.

BOOKS FOR MERCENARIES

UNINHABITED AND DESERTED ISLANDS
By Jon Fisher



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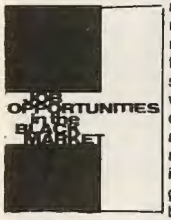

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GETAWAY
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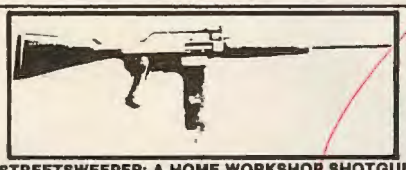

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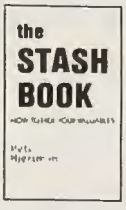

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While the others went off to draw their new 'chutes and supplies, I stayed behind to check on the three injured troopies. Fortunately, they would all be released from the hospital in a few days, but would not be allowed to jump for the rest of the bush trip.

I grabbed my FN rifle and webbing, ready to head over to the Para shed when Maj. Snelgar stopped me outside the door.

"Bad jump, Color. Glad it wasn't any worse than it was."

Still pissed off and shakey from the experience, I replied, "Sir, if we'd gone out any lower we'd all be dead men right now. What the hell happened out there?"

He shook his head and started undoing the armored vest he always wore in the K-Car. "Color, between you and me they fucked it. The pilots misread their approach to the drop zone and threw you out over the wrong end. The dispatcher had seen the ground rising up, but the pilot had already committed himself to the jump. Damned stupid and dangerous, and I'm going to raise hell about it when we get back to RLI."

He turned to walk off, but I had to ask the question: "Sir, just how high did we jump?"

He paused and nodded. "Well, I'll put it this way, Color. For the books it was 350 feet, but between you and me, you would have had to float up in order to reach 300 feet. It really scares me to think of what would have happened if you had been 50 feet lower."

Later that evening, eight cases of Pilsner, Lion and Castle beer appeared — probably donated by a very chastised air force. As the last bottles were finished, we were certain — beyond any doubt — that we had made the lowest operational Fire Force jump in the history of the RLI. To my knowledge, this dubious distinction still stands.

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AFGHAN 101

Continued from page 49

They placed us inside a spacious smoke-filled room. Two horses stood quietly in the corner, and a few fighters paced intently about the chamber. Crashing mortars and crackling gunfire punctuated the silence.

They used the room as stable, mess hall and barracks, despite the surplus of abandoned buildings all around. In some ways the resistance is remarkably disorganized. One of the mujahideen apologized for the rusticity of our lodgings. The provincial leaders reject advice and fear outside influence, he complained.

We tried to sleep on the hard earth floor amid the rustling of the horses. At 0100 hours 50 mujahideen filed into the room to ready themselves for fighting. Snapping rifle bolts and the chattering crowd made sleep impossible.

The mujahideen are prone to let an enthusiastic trust in the will of Allah lead them into reckless fighting. This is a Holy War and a martyr's death guarantees a soldier eternal life in paradise.

Before dawn we arose to discover a different bank of mujahideen occupying the room. Soon, they too set off for battle. We climbed a sentry tower to observe the fighting. A 10-year-old boy looked on with us. He was waiting to receive a gun, Itebari explained. When a rifle became available he would join the resistance forces. "He has not yet the fear," Itebari said.

The child's parents live at a refugee camp. They do not fear for his safety. Islam provides that, should he be killed in the holy war, he will have a place in Paradise and also the privilege of inviting his parents to join him.

When we tried to re-enter the building later that morning, a mujahid urgently motioned us away. Apparently, they feared the Soviets might order an airstrike to avenge the casualties they had suffered the previous evening. We were escorted a quarter mile into the surrounding ridges. The hot sun had followed previous rains; the land was desiccated. The earthen colors of our clothing blended with the terrain. In the event of a helicopter attack, we were to roll ourselves inside our cloaks and impersonate rocks.

The mujahideen have little choice but to hide. Helicopters are the source of Soviet supremacy. With bullet-proofed undersides, they are vulnerable to attack only when their upper halves are exposed, as when flying low through mountains. Otherwise they may roam free to suppress the Afghan population.

Antiaircraft weapons could affect the outcome of the war decisively. SAM-7s are effective: They are handheld, and they can be procured from a number of former Soviet client states. They are standard stock for Soviet-supplied insurgents throughout the world. But the West withholds this type of weapon and the Afghans cannot understand why.

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By early afternoon the threat of a Soviet air-strike had diminished. We emerged from hiding and travelled to a nearby house, belonging to Ayala Jan, age 34, a local resistance commander. He lived there with his sons, brothers, his father and his wife. Only the strongest and bravest of his wives remained in the country. The rest of the family was safe in a refugee camp in Pakistan.

Ayala Jan was appalled to discover we had stayed in such cramped, noisy quarters the previous night. He offered every available hospitality in compensation. In contrast to our earlier diet of boiled rice, potato broth and flat, dry bread, we feasted on a rare meal of hard-boiled eggs, salt and fresh milk. For dinner he promised to slaughter a chicken.

A fellow guest at the house was a deserter fresh from the government garrison. He had slipped away during the night battle three days before. For three straight years he had fought in the resistance, before the Soviets captured him. After imprisoning and torturing him, they conscripted him for service in the desertion-plagued army of Babrak Karmal.

The ordeal he had undergone showed. He sat in silence, head bowed, in a distant corner of the room. He seemed indifferent, perhaps even hostile to our presence. Later, this deserter, Abdul Nabi, displayed his government uniform to a group of freedom fighters. He had a martial walk and shouted out, *"Te shakur! Te shakur!"* when ad-

dressed. (Thank you!) He wore the brown-wool uniform of the Afghan Army and a brace of grenades hung at his waist.

"We can tell who are the Russians — they cannot crawl; the Bulgarians — they throw down their weapons; the Cubans — now they are brave. But the Afghans — they fight the best of all," Itebari had said one night in the refugee camp.

Soldiers conscripted by the Karmal regime must yield to imported Soviet customs. Officers drill them in the ideas of the "Revolution." They teach that there is no God, they prohibit prayer, and they promote the consumption of alcohol in blatant violation of the Islamic creed, Nabi said.

Morale is not strong at the garrison. Many underfed soldiers peddle arms and ammunition for more food and cigarettes. Others even aid the resistance with active sabotage of government installations, he said.

A few soldiers accept the Soviet ways. These men attempt to justify the brutal suppression of the Afghans with visions of a golden industrial age, Nabi stated. They know that chemical weapons are employed against the populace, he added bitterly.

As evening approached explosions became frequent and loud. We could spot the tanks about the garrison position by their muzzle flashes. Bands of mujahideen passed us regularly as they made their way to the government stronghold. They were a ragtag army toting antiquated rifles and wearing bedraggled clothing. Yet these

same people have contained the Soviets for four years, just as their grandfathers drove out Her Majesty's expeditionary forces at the turn of the century.

Throughout the day we had been told that there would be much fighting in the night. When it was dark, Ayala Jan left us for the battle; we mounted the roof to view the fighting. Brilliant ruby flashes streamed across the sky. Glaring spots of white light popped out around the garrison. There were giant blasts, ringing sounds and the angry patter of machine guns. A brief lull, and then the chaos would begin again.

Next morning we began our trek back to Pakistan. Soviet reinforcements were headed toward us, only a day's march away. Fighting was intense already. But if the approaching troops were not turned back, our departure would become much more dangerous.

We forded a river to return to our original route. Hiking was more difficult. As we travelled toward the garrison there had always been bands of mujahideen to provide a wary escort. Moreover, they had helped us to transport equipment over the rugged mountains. Now there were five of us, each with a full load upon his back. One had suffered severe frostbite and was headed for the hospital in Peshawar.

We marched for nearly nine hours that day. The pace was fast as we passed the now-familiar scenes: bomb fragments, cemeteries, camels and shepherds. There were two mountains ahead. We crossed the first one quickly. The landscape itself was breathtaking. A heavy mist, common above the Afghan terrain, created a strange and eerie effect.

A bit further on we deviated southward from the trail. There had been a heavy firefight a few miles away and Itebari wished to show us the remains. He cautioned us to stick closely to the pathway. About us, the hills and fields lay buried in snow, concealing "butterfly bombs."

(Butterfly bombs are a remarkable contribution to modern warfare. They consist of plastic petals around explosive charges, and are scattered from the air in large quantities. These seemingly intriguing toys often engage the interest of children. They explode when touched, maiming the victim.)

Butterfly bombs are representative of Soviet strategy: They do not discriminate between civilian and military populations. The Soviet response to guerrilla warfare is to terrorize the population.

Recently, reports have circulated that the Soviets are carpet-bombing Herat, Afghanistan's third largest city. A statement by the U.S. Department of State accused the Russians of "a massive and ruthless assault on a people who are, for the most part, without any means of defending themselves...." Casualties among the civilian population are placed in the hundreds, if not thousands.

Although they cannot defeat the resistance forces outright, the Soviets still hope to demolish the mujahideen base of subsistence. Thus, they indiscriminately ravage

harvests, bombard villages and machine-gun livestock. We heard repeated reports of the use of chemical warfare in more secluded areas of the country.

Tactics like these have caused as many as 4.5 million Afghans to flee their homes — most of them to live in crowded refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran. The Soviets gamble that a depopulated Afghanistan can only feebly resist occupation; fighters require a network of food, shelter and information to continue their struggle. In addition, the large refugee population serves to destabilize the entire region.

In the midst of this Soviet-wrought devastation, we were struck by the tremendous optimism of the freedom fighters. We, like many, had had preconceived notions about what must inevitably happen when a military super-power like the Soviet Union wages war on an underdeveloped country like Afghanistan. However, rather than losing ground, the mujahideen appear to have improved their position since the war began. The Soviets are bottled up in cities and scattered rural fortresses while the freedom fighters control most of the countryside. The vast majority of the population actively resists the occupation. A joke now popular among Moscow's higher echelons runs:

Q: Why are we still in Afghanistan?

A; We're still looking for the people who invited us.

After a long stretch of careful footsteps we discovered a captured, truck-mounted rocket launcher concealed within a glen. Several of the rockets, 132mm BM13 ground-to-ground missiles, lay strewn about the ground still intact. The central mechanism on the launcher had been smashed.

Freedom fighters preserved the launcher as a war prize. Often they convert Soviet vehicles to saleable scrap metal. We heard a tale of tanks destroyed in an avalanche caused by makeshift bombs. Each found its way to the Pakistan markets in dismantled form.

By dusk we reached the Islamic school. The headmaster greeted us warmly. Now, he said, we were mujahideen. He repeated a familiar prayer: "Thank the God that we are safe."

Since our return from Afghanistan, the war news from the Afghan resistance has been mixed. Along with massive bombing in Herat, reports have surfaced of stepped-up resistance activity in the south in and around Kandahar, the second largest city in Afghanistan. A recent leak in Washington suggested that the Reagan administration has increased aid to the freedom fighters.

It is difficult to assess exactly how much aid is actually reaching the resistance; our personal observations and the reports we heard second-hand suggested that the United States was doing very little, certainly not enough, given the strategic importance of the conflict there.

Obtaining this kind of information is difficult, partly because any U.S. aid to Afghanistan must be covert to avoid aggravat-

ing the already awkward relationship between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. Pakistan and Russia are now engaged in UN-sponsored negotiation in Geneva, and progress in the talks has been reported. However, in mid-May, President Zia denied that any settlement involving Russian troop withdrawals had been reached, calling reports of such an agreement, "propaganda."

Zia has issued several directives aimed at placating the Soviet Union. In April he ordered the resistance groups headquartered in Peshawar to disperse along the Afghanistan border and required that Afghan newspapers published in Peshawar submit to censorship or shut down. The papers ceased publication temporarily, but are reported to be back in business.

U.S. press coverage of the conflict in Afghanistan has been spectacularly mediocre. Few American journalists visit Afghanistan. There are no representatives of the American media assigned to Peshawar as there are "with the rebels in El Salvador." By contrast, the European media cover the war in Afghanistan almost daily. French, English and German reporters are quite common in Peshawar and make frequent, often lengthy expeditions into Afghanistan.

In 1980, the Index to the *New York Times* listed 17 pages of articles on Afghanistan. In 1981, the war raged on, but the number of pages in the Index dropped to three. There was a flurry of news coverage in 1983, but the stories were still filed with Washington or New Delhi datelines.

There was bitterness in the voice of a gnarled old man who accosted us in Paktia. He was bewildered by America's response to the Soviet invasion.

"They tell us they have sympathy. Yet they do not give us arms while the Afghan blood is spilt," he said.

"They are giving lies. They do not help us. They just say the same words every time, every time, every time."

FREE AFGHANISTAN

EDITORIAL

Continued from page 22

WERE credit nationalized, we could say to the Kremlin: You want credits for your basket-case economies? Fine — but it will be contingent on reductions in defense spending. You reject such linkage? Fine — you pay for Poland, and have fun when Romania goes belly up.

During martial law Poland received from the West a substantial subsidy: Its debts were rescheduled. The Reagan administration is a shameful subsidizer: Poland has not paid debts owed to the U.S. government, yet the United States has not put Poland in default. Some bankers say that forcing default would be too kind to Poland, because it would wipe the slate clean. Poland's regime knows better; otherwise it would declare default on its own. Poland today is receiving, in effect, money at six percent from the West while Americans pay more than twice that for mortgages. If Democratic candidates cannot make an issue of that, they should be burned on a pyre of their bumper stickers.

The Soviet Union suffocates entire nations without even a suspension of subsidies from the West. What has it to fear from reaction to the annihilation of a mere planeload of people? A regime whose essential policy is intimidation has added another brutality to its repertoire. But the diplomatic minuet will continue, from Madrid to Geneva. The grain shipments will continue, and so will the subsidized sale of "nonstrategic" goods — as though such a distinction makes sense regarding a totalitarian nation with a command economy entirely subordinated to militarism. Faster than a heat-seeking missile, there will be business as usual, especially for business.

SUPPORT SOF ADVERTISERS

Continued from page 27

then stuffing himself began to take its toll toward the end of our second six months. He lost weight, was too thin. His cheeks drew in, though he had a slightly drawn look anyway. By now, he was losing a lot of weight.

Everyone had worms, *ancylostoma duodenale,* "Old World" type worms they called them. They got into our guts through the skin, mostly through the feet. I quit eating the rice the Lao cooked for us and started making my own. My wife sent me a package of Sargent's worm pills and I gulped two a day until I'd gone through the packet of 24. It got rid of the worms, but I don't recommend the treatment. The pain was excruciating. The diarrhea hung on for days and days. Damned if I know how even the dogs can stand it.

By May 1960, the remaining 17 of us who extended went home with the Bull. We exfiltrated via Bangkok, Manila, then Hong Kong. The Old Man didn't look well at all, but Hong Kong had a healing grace about it in 1960. You wanted something, you just asked for it. When it came, if it wasn't exactly as you had dreamed, the tout went out and came back with another of the same object. You sat there in the Mabuhay Hotel, Jack Daniels in hand, and went through the entire inventory of whatever you were trying to buy, including some of the most beautiful Eurasian women in town.

We learned when we arrived back at Bragg that King Sisavang Vatthana had wanted to decorate us all with the *Medaille des Million Elephants,* one of Laos' highest awards. There were also U.S. decorations for all of us. But Washington nixed the King's award because the area of operations and the specific deed had to be cited. "White Star" was still covert, though the Russians and the Viet Minh had known who we were the moment we crossed the Mekong River.

I went on to other things. I became the first commanding officer of the U.S. Army parachute team, The Golden Knights. The Bull spent his time racing back and forth between Bragg and the White House: President Kennedy got an earful and the Bull got another crack at Laos. He went back in 1961, organizing the Kha tribesmen into a defense group.

But by this time, B-52s were already bombing the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the battle for the central highlands of Laos was on. The H'mong, Gen. Vang Pao's "secret army," were raising hell with the Viets out of Dien Bien Phu, at the beginning of the trail. It was under the Bull's guidance that a good part of that army was born and trained.

In 1963, after being bombed out by Venezuelan terrorists, I and my family were compassionately transferred to Panama. I had finally "arrived in infamy" with the FALN

as Venezuela's Airborne adviser. I had made their hit list!

The dumb SOB who commanded the Army Mission in Caracas told me, "I'm honoring your request to that Special *Services* outfit you wanted." I guess he thought I was scared enough to go back to issuing tennis balls.

The Bull was in command. I was overjoyed. I got an A-Team, a place on HALO and an instructorship in Jungle Warfare.

But things go up and down in the military. Somehow I had lost the need for the nutrient of the Green Beret. My retirement was coming up and I wanted to go home. Gen. Stilwell called me back to Bragg as his temporary aide-de-camp. That lasted four hours. He told me to pick my job on The Hill and get at it.

I took over the HALO committee, Training Group, and worked at that job for six months. Then I heard the Bull was back in Southeast Asia, this time in Vietnam. I went to my wife.

"Maybe I can take a couple more years," I told her. "The Bull's back in Indochina. I'm going to ask for a transfer."

"Why do you torture yourself with that man?" she asked.

"Because he's the best CO I've ever served under."

"And when you die? Is he going to help dig your grave?"

And then I realized. It *was* all over. But several years later when I was a construction worker in 'Nam, the Bull pulled off the deep raid to rescue POWs at Son Tay in North Vietnam. I gloried at the reports as we watched him brief the nation on that desperate but fruitless mission. Later, I gloried again as I watched all of my old comrades receiving their medals at Bragg, including my old friend, Capt. Dick Meadows. Dick had done what I should have done. He followed the Bull back into hell.

And then his wife died. He retreated to his home in Florida and became a recluse. I read that a reporter asked him how he fed himself. He replied, "From a can — any goddamned can."

I wrote him, asked him to take care of himself. He never replied.

But Col. Simons came back from the pit

of despair. In Iran's internal disintegration in late 1978, some civilian employees of Ross Perot, the Dallas millionaire and head of Electronic Data Systems, had been jailed on false charges of having defrauded the Iranian government. Perot, who tried to work through the U.S. government, gave up in disgust and contacted Simons, whom he had met following the Son Tay raid, asking him to lead a rescue attempt to free his employees.

Simons calmly strode into Teheran and snatched them out from under the noses of their guards by instigating the biggest jail break in world history (see "Who Dares Wins," SOF, June '79). Some don't think that took guts, but "revolutionary" justice was the order of the day in Iran and just being there was dangerous for any American. And after the jail break, the group faced a dangerous exit by car to the Turkish-Iranian border. The Bull was cautious — and successful.

A few months later, he was dead of a massive stroke. He was planning something new, a rescue in Africa, but he never got to pull it off. I couldn't go to the funeral so I cried from afar, remembering that day at Pakse, Laos. "Eat what?" he had asked.

"*Biftek et pommes frites,* sir."

None of that came from a "goddamned can." I'd like to think the Bull went to Glory with the taste of that good meal on his lips.

BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 17

use credit as a strategic deterrent to Soviet aggression, see George Will's "Credit in our Arsenal," on p. 22.

MARXISM IN SOUTH AMERICA...

While the world watches Central America battle the advance of Marxism in the Western Hemispere, knowledgeable sources are keeping their eyes on Surinam, which could become the Cuba or Nicaragua of South America. Intelligence information suggests that the Libyan-supplied arms cargo confiscated in Brazil last year was intended for Nicaragua and Surinam. With a leftist government in power, Surinam has become a worrisome factor to its South American neighbors, especially Brazil, which borders Surinam and has its hands full trying to cope with its precarious economic straits.

DARK CLOUDS OVER ZIMBABWE...

The type of justice being meted out in Zimbabwe is just one more indication that Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's government is in serious trouble. Six Zimbabwean airmen accused of complicity in the bombing of air force planes last year at Thornhill Air Base were tried before an impartial judge who deliberated on the case for two months before finding the six "not guilty and discharged," a verdict which met with the approval of those packed into the courtroom. In his opinion, the judge also ruled that the six had been denied their constitutional rights and had been beaten and tortured by policemen.

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However, as soon as the officers, all white, were released by the judge, a policeman rearrested them in the courtroom on charges that they continued to be a "threat to public order."

Other stories of police and governmental brutality in Zimbabwe have surfaced, casting serious doubts on Mugabe's promises to end political corruption, support an independent judiciary and encourage a multiracial society. Such blatant miscarriage of justice is certain to exacerbate the already troubling white flight from Zimbabwe (50,000 whites have fled since 1980) and erode tenuous diplomatic relations with the West. One Western source commented: "I fear for the future of this country."

MEXICO GIVES CUBA CREDIT...

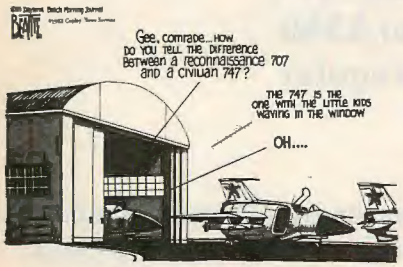
Late last fall, Mexico extended a $55 million line of credit to Cuba, in an attempt to stimulate new markets for Mexican products, according to Mexican sources. But at least part, if not all, of the money came from emergency loans made last year to Mexico from Western banks, predominantly U.S., to keep Mexico from defaulting on its overdue loans and to keep its economy afloat. Mexico's debt, again largely to U.S. banks, is the second highest in the world (next to Brazil's) at $85 billion.

Mexico and Cuba have maintained close relations since Fidel Castro assumed power in 1959 and Mexico has staunchly resisted U.S.-led efforts to sever ties between Cuba and other Latin American countries. Significantly, Mexico also is now Nicaragua's primary oil supplier since Venezuela cut off the Sandinistas because they couldn't pay for the oil. So who's paying for the oil Mexico provides the Nics?

FALLOUT FROM KAL ATROCITY...

Unbelievable, but the following excerpt was taken from a letter written by David Corn, Senior Editor at *Nuclear Times* magazine, to Yuri Andropov and printed in the the *New York Times* editorial section shortly after the Soviets downed Korean Airliner Flight 007. We quote:

"Until September 1, the Soviet Union was ahead in the propaganda war of peace waged by both superpowers. Often you said the right things. At last year's special session on disarmament at the UN, your predecessor, speaking through Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, pledged that the Soviet Union would never be the first to use nuclear weapons in any conflict. Your government has also called for a nuclear freeze, nuclear-free zones, a nuclear-free Europe and even the dissolution of both military blocs.



"Though you waged war in Afghanistan, beat back an independent trade union in Poland and have done nothing to reduce Soviet nuclear forces, these statements were still encouraging...."

DON'T CALL US...

SOF regularly gets requests for help from persons who have been turned down from military enlistment because of medical or legal problems. SOF cannot help in this situation. Enlistment officers for the armed forces are required to follow laws and regulations governing enlistment procedures. The French Foreign Legion has less stringent rules in these areas, but it is an arm of the French government, which is presently Socialist so our enthusiasm for it has dwindled.

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FLAK

Continued from page 8

In various other publications I've noticed a variety of merc schools advertised, but in SOF they're not there. My friend says SOF's lack of such ads should speak for itself.

If anyone can tell me the truth about these schools it would be you. Are they rip-offs? What should one look for in a school or training program?

I must add that, following my friend's advice, I've compared SOF to its competitors in the depth of reporting. The outcome was startling. I'll no longer waste my hard-earned money on the others.

John Smith
Los Angeles, California

Soldier of Fortune *has done an article or two on military-type schools in the past, but of late we have been a bit too busy traveling in Latin America to concentrate resources in that area. We plan to do some articles on various training programs in the coming year, wars permitting.*

Your friend is correct about our advertising policy. There are some schools which in our opinion are not even reasonably close to being a fair value. In addition, we will not accept advertising from some others for reasons of our own. While it is impossible for SOF to assure a reader that any given school will provide a fair value for the money, we will not accept ads from ones we're sure will not provide a fair value. — The Eds.

CHEAP TALK...

Sirs:

In "G.I. Jargon" (see SOF, October '83) Thomas Edwards mentioned Cheap Charlie's, a popular restaurant in Saigon. But that was also the name of a good tailor shop on Hai Ba Taung Street. The prop-

rietor, Luong Vhan, procured or made numerous military insignia for three armies at various times — French, U.S. and ARVN.

I'm happy to report that when the ethnic Chinese were expelled from Ho Chi Minh City, Luong Vhan was able to make his way to Taiwan. I'd give a pretty penny for some of the sample insignia he kept under the counter in his shop.

Ken Sparks
Honolulu, Hawaii

COMMUNISM BUGS US...

Sirs:

You guys are doing a wonderful job. If our newspapers could do half as well there might not be so much confusion in the minds of the general public.

If only all Americans could understand that the back door is made of wood and infested with termites. Soon there will be no door and our American home will be open to whatever predator might want to come in.

Bill Clatterbuck
Fort Littleton, Pennsylvania

GETTING THE Gs...

Sirs:

I'm ecstatic about your idea for a private sector initiative in Central America. I would like to think that, for the price of web gear, a cleaning kit or a few belts of 7.62mm, an individual could contribute to the security of all the Americas. I'm just an ordinary guy income-wise but I've always got a few bucks to wax Red Gs.

On another note, I saw a picture of Fidel in *Newsweek*, 1 March 1982, in which he appeared to be presenting an FN to Sandinista officials. The photo was dated 1979. Perhaps it was one of those "drilled and tapped" models pictured in SOF.

In the same issue of *Newsweek*, on the back page, is an editorial by George Will. SOF readers will find this one of the best pieces ever seen outside SOF concerning Central America and the Gs' disinformation strategies.

John Schrauth
Dixon, Illinois

See our editorial this issue. — The Eds.

PATRIOTISM LATIN STYLE...

Sirs:

My response to your July '83 issue is an appreciative "thank you and well done." The article "We Can/Must Win in El Salvador" prompted me to write letters to my congressmen and senators. And I *never* write letters.

Living in Miami, with its large Latin population, gives me access to first-hand information concerning the wars currently being waged in Central America. When a Cuban/Nicaraguan wife and mother was asked if she would send her husband as part of a United States effort to stop communism, she said, "I would not like it, but yes. I would send not only my husband but

also my son, if he were old enough." This sentiment is shared by every Latin of whom I've asked the question.

We must do everything necessary and proper to help Central America triumph over the insidious evil of communism.

Robert Gryder
North Miami, Florida

CALLING ALL COPS...

Sirs:

I represent an educational organization in northern New Jersey of police officers, sheriff's deputies and security personnel. We are preparing to publish a quarterly journal called *Police Tactical Review*, which will deal specifically with law-enforcement weaponry and tactics for the patrol officer, SWAT member and weapons-training officer.

We would like to have readers and contributors from around the country. I'd appreciate your mentioning us to your readers.

Randolph Liebeck,
Editorial Director
201 Preakness Ave.
Patterson, NJ 07502

BEAR IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING...

Sirs:

We have recently been subjected to a barrage of propaganda regarding a fast one the Russians pulled on the American public. A sweet little girl from Maine, Samantha Smith, was cordially invited to Russia and treated just beautifully. Wonderful propaganda for them, which most of us ate up.

I was born behind the Iron Curtain, in Czechoslovakia, and spent most of my youth there. I never found the Russians to be such congenial folk. I had to leave my country two months before it was taken over in 1968 and two days before being picked up by the KGB — that's Kremlin Generosity Bureau, I guess. They disapproved of some of my actions and points of view.

I spent many years fighting the spread of communism in many parts of the world and it saddens me greatly to see people like little Samantha being used in a political charade.

Peter York
San Diego, California

As the world has learned, the USSR does not treat all tourists equally. — The Eds.

RANGER REUNION...

Sirs:

I'm requesting information on or contact with men who served with any Korean War Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) or with the Ranger Training Center in 1950-1951. I'm preparing a Ranger reunion and a history. Thanks for your help.

Col. Robert Black (Ret)
355 East Baktunire St.
Carlisle, PA 17013
Phone: (717) 249-6709

ADVERTISERS INDEX

EL SALVADOR

Continued from page 79

accurate target acquisition, and sufficiently rapid and flexable mobility for the attacking force so that it can attack and destroy the target before it gets away. The Salvadoran Armed Forces do have adequate target acquisition means. For movement of an anti-guerrilla strike force in this circumstance, the optimum means are helicopters but in-country resources are totally inadequate to move more than about a platoon at one time, which is not a large enough force to do the job. Road-bound movement by truck is too slow and too exposed to ambush.

With not too major improvements in their aircraft maintenance situation, the FAS can muster enough air assets, chiefly C-47s and Aravas, to lift a company-sized force. Under these circumstances, airlift and parachute insertion are the only viable way to provide the required mobility to an anti-guerrilla strike force. This was the original rationale justifying creation of the airborne battalion. Unfortunately it has chiefly been used as a conventional infantry force and never fully trained and utilized in its intended role.

Operational Concept: It is envisaged that the Airborne Battalion would be exclusively dedicated to the fire force or strike force role. At any given time, one company and the appropriate airlift would be on strip alert at Ilopango, ready to launch within 30 minutes. In addition to the airlift, the air element of this force would include at least one AC-47 (C-47 modified by installing electrically-driven Gatling guns with a variable cyclic rate of fire up to 3,000-rounds per minute firing broadside out of the left side of the aircraft, suitable sighting apparatus and a load of parachute flares) fitted with radio-direction (RDF) gear; this aircraft would act as 1) airborne command and control ship, 2) direct fire support of the troops when inserted and 3) could locate and immediately neutralize at least the transmitting antenna of whatever enemy command post was involved in the ground action.

The operational sequence would be 1) intelligence acquisition of the target. 2) Verification of the target by a RECON team, which would also act as Combat Control/Pathfinder team. 3) Alert, move out and parachute insertion of the strike force. 4) The ground attack on the target, supported by fire from the AC-47 and other air assets; at the same time a parachute recovery team recovers the air items, which are later returned by truck or helicopter to Ilopango for repacking. 5) Redeployment by truck, helicopter or foot march to the nearest C-47-capable airstrip for the ride back to Ilopango. Meanwhile, as soon as the alert company moves out, another company goes on strip alert. Ideally, by the time the air assets from the first insertion are recovered and refueled, the next company is ready to go.

Variants on this scenario include reaction to enemy attack on a friendly outpost, presenting a target of a massed enemy force; and employment as a ground blocking force to cut off a retreating guerrilla unit.

Training Phases. You learn to walk before you run. The first phase consists of getting the rigger shed squared away, training riggers, jumpmasters, parachute instructors, aircraft loadmasters, and for the transport aircraft pilots, the specific techniques of putting out jumpers. Simultaneously the decision has to be made to use the Airborne Battalion for this role, the appropriate C-47s reconfigured to AC-47s and their crews trained. Then refresher jump training for the battalion, one company at a time. Then we gradually work up to the full strike force type operation: the first field jumps might be no more than insertion of individual replacements for an airborne company already on the ground. Next insertion of a company as a blocking force in front of a standard ground sweep, then a strike-force mission carefully planned to minimize the chance of a confidence-destroying failure. It will take some practice at these things before the unit has the skills and confidence to strike out "into the blue" as outlined above.

Medic Phil Gonzales examines child in Lolotiquillo during civilian Medcap. Photo: Alex McColl

The Salvadoran *Estado Mayor* should establish prodecures to prioritize the distribution of critically short supplies and resources according to the operational situation.

Resources must be found to upgrade the equipment and training of the *Guardia Nacional*, National Police and Hacienda Police, if not with U.S. funds, now prohibited by U.S. law, then with private-sector or third-nation resources. One of the fundamental lessons that emerged from the counterinsurgency operations in Malaya, Vietnam and Rhodesia was that coordination among the military, law-enforcement and civil administration agencies was critical.

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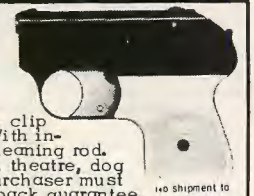

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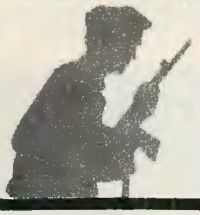

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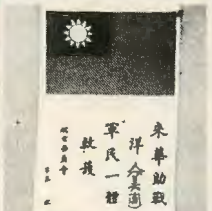

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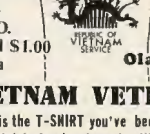

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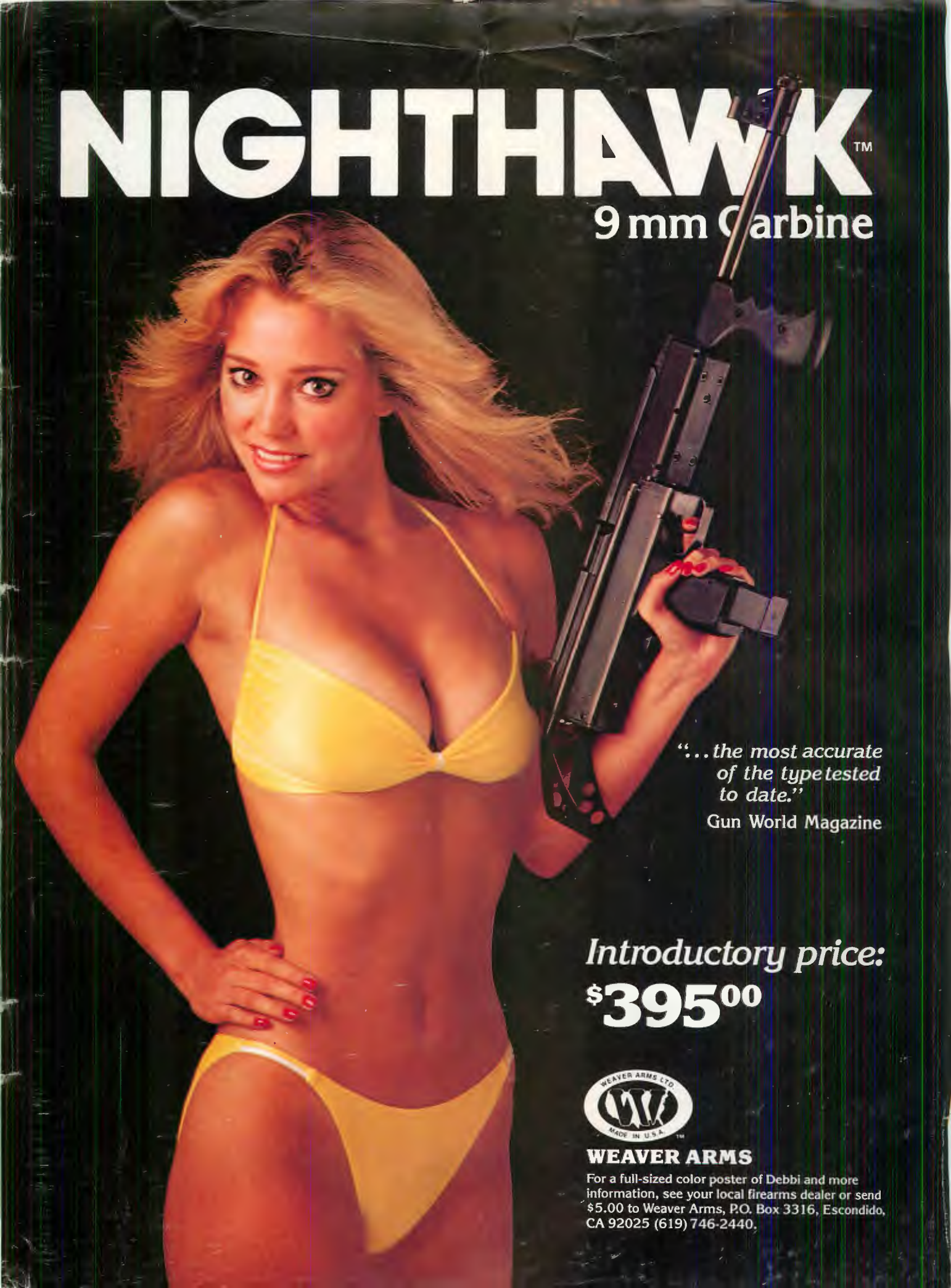

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