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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

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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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This is the warmest flight jacket that the military issues. It features full pile hood which drapes over the shoulders when not needed. This is the cold weather version of the Intermediate Weight Flight Jacket - Type MA1 featured elsewhere in this ad. This jacket is designed for subfreezing temperatures. Waterproof and Windproof.
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This is the basic issue combat jacket. Designed for complete utility, these water repellent and windproof jackets feature: 4 super large utility pockets; gusseted back for complete mobility and freedom of movement; epaulets; adjustable cuffs and collar; drawstring waistband; hidden hood in collar.
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Choose from: Olive Drab (OD) Green
 Camouflage, Woodland Pattern (latest GI issue to Army).
 Desert Tan - (NATO issue). Camouflage, Tiger Stripe - (Commercially made in a US mill to military specs).

M-65 liner - Genuine GI - designed to quickly and easily button into M 65 Jacket to provide complete warmth by sealing in the body heat. Brand New XS, S, M, L \$19.00/each; XL \$20.50/each

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- 101st Airborne Crest** \$3.00/each
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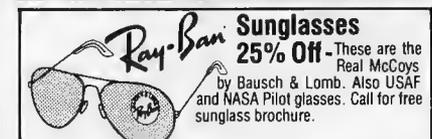


Pants feature: 6 pockets (thigh pockets are below); drawstring cuffs; adjustable waist band. Jackets feature: 4 pockets; bellows style. Tell us your chest, height, and waist measurements when ordering. Choose from:

- Woodland Pattern Camouflage** - 50% cotton/50% nylon. Army's latest issue; the pants have a reinforced seat and knees; the jacket has reinforced elbows. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$30.00/each; \$57.50/set.
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- Tiger Stripe Pattern Camouflage - Commercial Manufacture** - these are made by a US Government contractor to military specs. The tiger stripe pattern is true. They are reinforced as the Woodland Pattern Camouflage, above. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set.

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US Navy Cold Weather Deck Jackets

Type A2 - These jackets feature windproof cuff and hip closures plus a full zipper front with button over-closure. The Olive Drab (OD) green shell is 50% cotton/50% nylon. This blend allows the jacket to be water-repellent (not waterproof) while at the same time it has the softness of the natural fibre. It is lined with double face pile in both the body and sleeves. It sports two hip pockets and a breast pocket with snap closure. The Deck Jacket is cut slightly below the waist so large or tall persons will find it quite comfortable.
 XS,S,M,L \$47.75/each; XL \$50.75/each; XXL \$62.75/each.
 Specify Olive Drab (OD) Green or Woodland Camo Shell.



SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Angle Head Flashlight - This is the heavy duty olive drab plastic flashlight issued to basic and stealth units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation; operates on 2 standard D cell batteries; and comes complete with a spare bulb.
 Brand new, sold in the GI box \$6.50/each; 2 for \$12.25

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set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24")
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Genuine Leather Chin Strap

..... \$2.00/each

Acorn Hat Cord

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 (Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue).

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latest Army issue. This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tucked into the hat when the weather's balmy. Sizes run small. Also available in Olive Drab (OD) Green.
 Sizes: 7 1/4, 7 1/2, 7 3/4 \$9.00/each

All Orders Shipped Within 24 Hours

Watch Cap, 100% Wool

This is the genuine GI, tightly knit, and all-wool watch cap. Used by commandos and troops alike, this tightly knit cap fits snug on any size head for maximum warmth on extended cold weather operations. Sides can roll down to protect ears. Choose between dark blue/black (Navy Seal or Marine Recon teams) or OD (olive drab; army) \$6.00/each

Commando Sweater

Patterned after the famous British Commando Sweater, this is manufactured in the USA for US military use. The USMC sweater is crewneck, olive drab (OD) green in color. The Army sweater is V-neck, in black and has epaulets and a breast patch for nameplate. The natural 100% wool fiber content makes the sweater super warm; the long cut and tight knit ribbed design makes it windproof. Sleeve and shoulder patches provide protection at abrasion points. Specify size: S, M, L, XL
 Choose: Olive Drab (OD) Green (USMC) or Black (Army).....\$39.75/each.

Commando Sweater - Commercially made

patterned after the GI ones, these are commercially made in easy care 100% acrylic. Although they are copies, they are constructed surprisingly true to the all wool ones, complete with sleeve and shoulder patches.
 Choose between: Olive Drab (OD) Green or Black. Specify Size: S, M, L, XL \$21.75/each.

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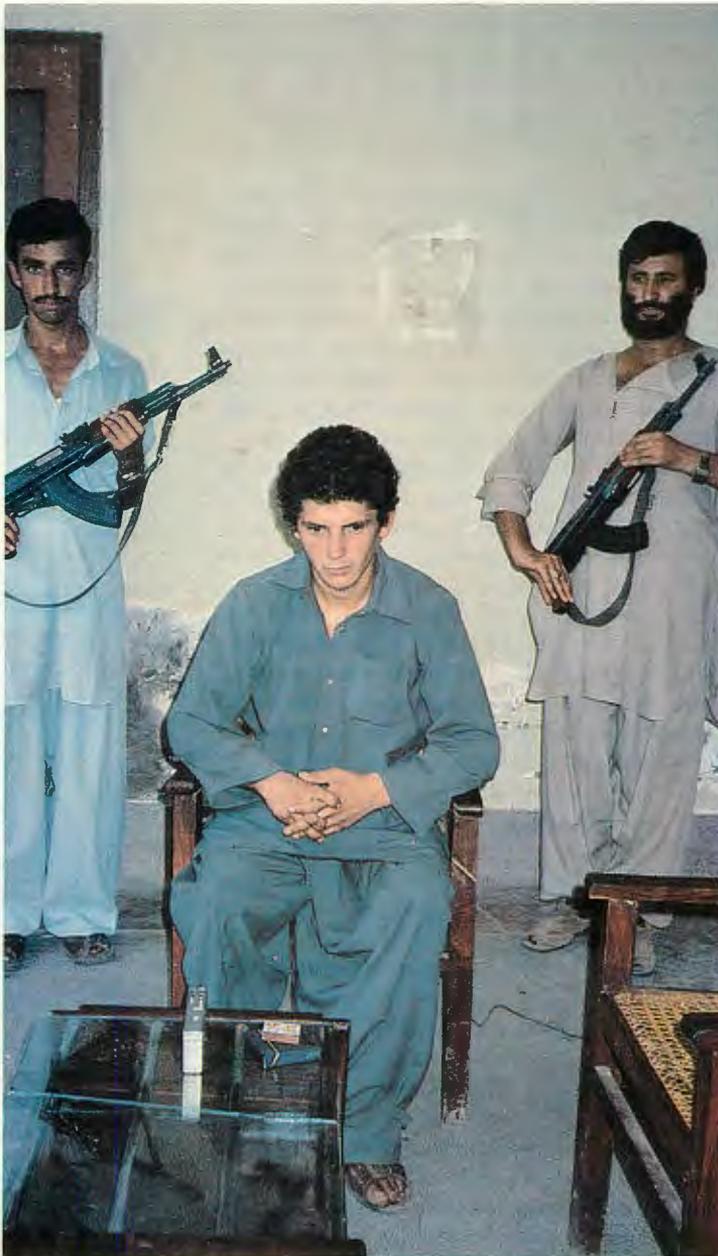
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COVER: Trooper from 82nd Airborne Division sits atop 105mm while waiting for convoy to move out from Point Salines to Pearls Airport on Grenada on sixth day of operation. Soldier is holding M16A1 with issue 3X scope attached. Photo: Jim Graves

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EDITOR'S NOTE

"IT'S great to be an American again," remarked a friend when he heard about the Grenada operation.

"It's great to have a president with balls," said an unknown trooper from the 75th Rangers on Grenada.

The Grenada operation could be a crucial turning point in the modern history of the United States. That's a broad statement to make about an operation that won't go down in the books as one of America's most memorable military campaigns, but, finally, after many years of looking the other way at Soviet-sponsored subversion and aggression, America showed its mettle.

There certainly can be no doubt about President Reagan's courage. He launched the Grenada operation to protect American lives and to restore order and democracy on the island. He knew his actions would be condemned by America's liberal media, the United Nations, most Democrats (this is an election year and Reagan can't be attacked on his economic policies which are working) and many of America's allies.

Further, the risky operation was launched only two days after 239 American servicemen were killed in Beirut. Had the Marines, Rangers and 82nd Airborne Division who took Grenada faced serious opposition from the Cubans, the People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) of Grenada or the Grenadian civilians, many more casualties — U.S. and Grenadian — could have resulted, turning the operation into a disaster. Another 200 or 300 American KIAs that week would have all but ensured a Democratic victory in 1984 and a resultant descent into minor-power status for America.

But Reagan's judgment proved sound. The PRA folded almost as soon as U.S. forces arrived; sufficient force was applied to take care of the Cubans without significant casualties and the people of Grenada welcomed the Americans with open arms — according to a CBS poll 91 percent favored the action.

U.S. public support of the operation was also overwhelming. Even critics of the operation could not ignore the sight of returning American medical students jumping off evacuation aircraft in Charleston, S.C., to kiss the ground and praise their rescuers. Clearly Americans will support use of military force to protect American lives, end tyranny and ensure America's security in our own hemisphere.

And U.S. interests in the Caribbean were threatened. All collected evidence indicates that the Soviet Union and Fidel Castro were molding Grenada into another Nicaragua, from which more leftist terrorists and supplies would be exported to troubled Caribbean and Central American countries.

The Grenadian operation should make Nicaragua nervous. Godfather Fidel Castro proved he couldn't guarantee security to his leftist proteges, even with a 24-hour advance notice. Even more significant for Nicaragua, however, was Castro's announcement that he would not aid Nicaragua if the United States acted in Central America.

One image clearly illustrates the shift in power marked by the Grenada operation: the wonderful shot of Castro at a press conference the day after the operation. Castro, his face contorted with frustration, has both hands raised to his temples in a gesture of total helplessness.

The evil old man of Havana looked finished.

— Jim Graves

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Kyle Smith

TYPOGRAPHERS

Thomas E. Vivrett

Eileen Bernard

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Military Small Arms

Peter G. Kokalis

Small Arms

Ken Hackathorn

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Africa

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BUSINESS OFFICES:

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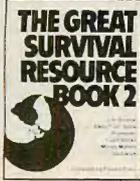


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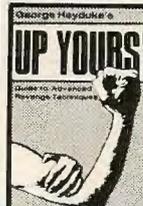


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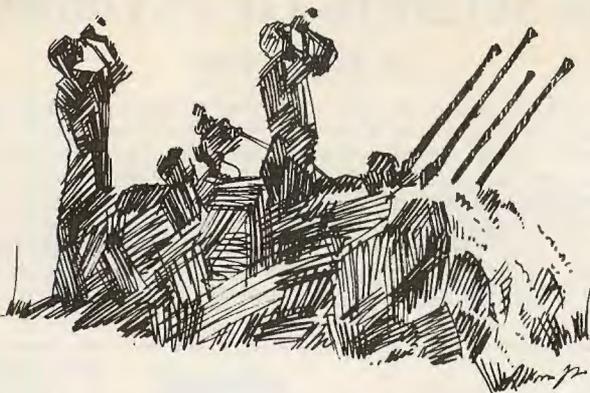
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Sirs:

I saw *The Last Option* in France, where it opened under the title *Commando*. It was excellent and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in the SAS or just adventure films.

I have two questions. Can a U.S. citizen with or without prior military service join the SAS? Also, will you be doing any further stories on the SAS or possibly uniforms of the elite forces: SAS, Special Forces, Rangers, Marine Recon? That would really help the serious memorabilia collector.

Jon Winker

Arlington, Virginia

A U.S. citizen cannot join the SAS, but

Americans have served with the SAS through several cooperative programs between England and various branches of the U.S. military. SOF has run three feature articles on the SAS: "SAS Dares and Wins," September '80; "SAS at War in Malaya," April '81 and "SBS and SAS in the Falklands," December '82. We don't normally do "uniform" articles, but will continue to do articles on elite units. — The Eds.

LEFTIES' M16?...

Sirs:

Because I am left-handed, the photograph on pages 46-47 in the November '83 issue immediately caught my attention.



Weapons I understand, photography I do not. As the staff sergeant's name tape and U.S. Army read backwards, I can only assume you reversed the negative. At any rate, a left-handed M16 is an interesting idea.

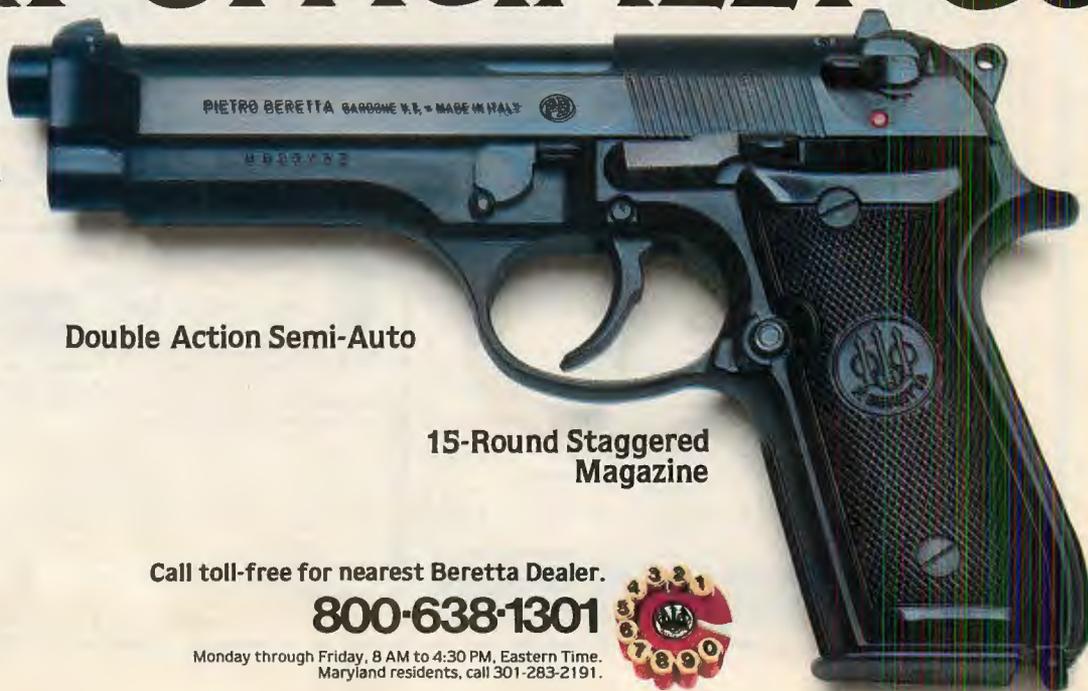
C.G. Lagrone

Vicksburg, Mississippi

SOF had a better idea but, unfortunately, we couldn't sell it to the Pentagon. The Army doesn't have a left-handed version of the M16 and there is none in develop-

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You saw the first left-handed M16 in the November issue. And the last. Here's the flopped offender printed right. Photo: Jay Mallin

ment. We reversed the negative. Happens about once a year and it's always hara-kiri time around here when it does. — The Eds.

FRONT ROW AT THE WAR...

Sirs:

As I read Ken Rose's "Charlie's Luck at Dak To," memories came rushing back to me. Ken had been one of my first mentors in Special Forces. I worked with him in the 403rd RR SOD, 5th SFGA and shared with him a bottle of Old Grand Dad at Dak To in celebration of my 21st birthday in September 1967.

I enjoyed an unusual vantage point of the action of 17 November 1967, which Ken wrote about, that destroyed the C-130s on the airstrip at Dak To, and the other C-130 that made a successful escape.

I was returning to the Special Forces B Team in Kontum after being released from a convalescent hospital. I had hitched a ride with an Air Force Forward Air Controller (FAC) pilot from Pleiku to Kontum — with a brief stopover at Dak To.

As the FAC pilot was coming around for a landing at Dak To, mortar rounds pelted the runway and one of the C-130s on the ground below burst into flames. The FAC pilot pulled up and circled the plumes of smoke rising from the mortar craters sporadically erupting on the airstrip. We watched, praying silently, as the lumbering bird attempted takeoff in a shower of enemy mortar rounds.

When it became evident that the C-130 was airborne and could make it back to Pleiku, the FAC pilot headed for Kontum. I was most anxious to learn of the situation at Dak To.

Once back in the commo bunker of B-24 in Kontum, I monitored the radio traffic between B-24 and A-244. I was re-

lieved, to say the least, to hear Ken's voice throughout that night.

Friendships established in Vietnam were powerful forces in our development as human beings. Ken Rose taught me a lot.

I have not seen Ken since 1971. It's good to know he's still around and still setting a positive example for others to follow.

Soldier of Fortune is new to me. My subscription is forthcoming.

Duane LaGuire-Quinn
Fenton, Michigan

BOYCOTT RUSSKY VODKA...

Sirs:

The enclosed \$100 to the Afghan Freedom Fighters was donated by customers of my tavern in upstate New York, angered over the Soviet murder of 269 civilians aboard KAL 007.

I'm selling off my remaining stock of Stolichnaya vodka for \$1 a bottle, all of which will be donated to the Afghans.

Michael Bennison
Holland Patent, New York

DRING A GREAT LOSS...

Sirs:

Thanks for Leroy Thompson's article on the Bergen pack (see SOF, November '83). Those of us who've read *Inside the SAS* are aware that the Bergen has yet

Continued on page 103

HANDGUN ARMS CONNECTICUT.

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FIRST-ROUND failure to feed is the most common assault-rifle malfunction. It is certainly the most irritating stoppage — and probably the most dangerous — and is usually caused by bad magazine design or a combination of case design and magazine construction. But you can do something to keep first-round malfunctions from ruining scores . . . or killing you.

It's sad to say that there are practically no feeding malfunctions with Kalashnikov magazines. The 7.62x39mm ComBloc was developed to work in a magazine-fed automatic weapon. Kalashnikov magazines are heavy, but sturdy, and the feed lips are rugged beyond any need. Smooth cartridge movement is encouraged by the curve of the magazine body and the feed angle is just right. The AK magazine is one of the few military rifle magazines in the world that work when filled to capacity.

A good example of a family of magazines that doesn't work when crammed full is the M16. To my mind, the 5.56mm NATO case isn't tapered enough to move regularly through an automatic-rifle magazine. Then, not only do M16 magazines malfunction when filled to the 20 or 30 rounds they are supposed to hold, if you try hard enough you can push 21 or 31 rounds in an M16 box. Then you'll have something that *really* doesn't work.

You can cure most of the M16 magazine's ills by stuffing it with two less than the recommended number for the 20-round magazine. There's more opportunity to bind or for dust to cause friction in the 30-rounder, so you should only put 27 cartridges in it.

Although I think the 5.56mm NATO cartridge isn't shaped right, the M16's problems may be a function of magazine design. At least that's what the success of the Galil 5.56 mags suggests. Israeli Military Industries' 35- and 50-round boxes work perfectly when filled to the number they're designed for.

Rifles designed for 7.62mm NATO have heavier springs for the bigger, heavier cartridge. This causes a new set of problems. The main difficulty is trying to reload under stress with the spring at its greatest compression. You have to push the magazine into the well against the tension of the spring after the magazine has been fully loaded. This is not a problem with rifles like the M14, FAL, G3 or SIG when the bolt is held open.

(That's too late to be reloading in a real fight. You need to reload every time you think about it that you aren't sure you're full. Round-counters say that shouldn't be necessary, but I don't think very many can keep count to 50 while they're being shot at.)

But if you have to reload a 7.62 rifle with the bolt closed, it'll be a lot easier if you leave one round out. That little bit of relief to the spring will make it less likely that the magazine will fall out after your

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT



Ready, Aim . . . Click

by Ken Hackathorn



Garth Choate's latest: a new stock for Winchester's Defender. Photo: Ken Hackathorn

first shot.

For whatever reason, most military rifle magazines do not work exactly as advertised. But you don't have to be a victim. Just be smarter than the magazine.

JUST a quick word on accessories. Garth Choate has a pistol-grip stock out for the Winchester M-1200 Defender. This could be a valuable accessory for your Defender, because the pistol grip makes the gun more manageable with one hand, and the firm hold it offers makes working the pump easier with the other hand. Contact Choate Machine & Tool, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 218, Bald Knob, AR 72010. ☒

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

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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.

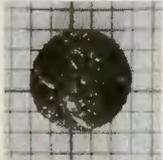
Here's a rogue's gallery of rounds recovered from a standard nine-layer SILENT PARTNER insert under NILECJ test standards. (A more detailed report, covering the full range of rounds tested, comes with your armor.)

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



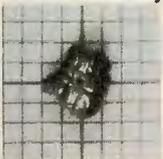
CCI 125 gr. 9mm Para. JHP
Velocity: 1121 FPS
No layers penetrated

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



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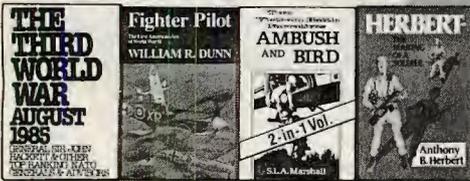
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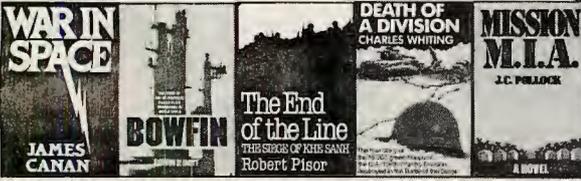
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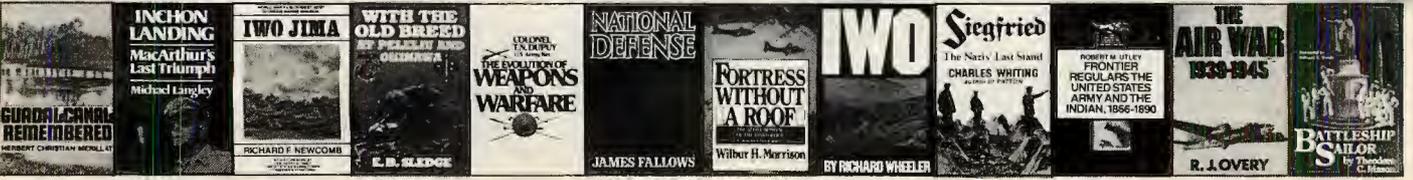
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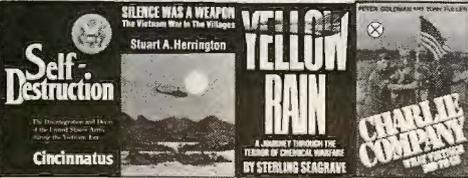
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KGB TODAY: The Hidden Hand. By John Barron. New York: Reader's Digest Press. 1983. 489 pp. \$19.95. Review by Jay Mallin.

BEFORE the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Moscow decided to assassinate the president of that country, Hafizullah Amin. Makhail Talebov, an officer of the KGB, entered Afghanistan posing as an Afghan chef. He obtained a job as a cook at the presidential palace. He had with him an odorless, colorless poison. Twice he dropped the poison in fruit juices ordered by Amin, but the attempts at assassination failed. Amin warily filled his glasses with juices from different containers; he never took enough of the poison juices to harm himself seriously.

Finally, the KGB tried another tactic. An assassination team, backed by Soviet commandos, was sent in to do the job, and the Afghan president was killed.

The murder of a foreign leader was dramatic commentary on the ruthlessness of Soviet foreign policy. The killing was not merely an action of the KGB; it was the result of a decision by the ruling Soviet Politburo itself. John Barron comments in this book:

"The spectacle of the most exalted leaders of the Soviet Union taking time from critical matters of state to plot murders and petty forgeries, to fete and consort with itinerant spies, may strike foreigners as odd, if not unseemly. Yet the intimate personal involvement of the leadership in such intrigues is the natural consequence of inordinate Soviet dependence upon clandestine action, a dependence inextricably rooted in both past and contemporary realities of the Soviet Union."

Barron is a *Reader's Digest* senior editor and former U.S. Navy intelligence officer. Drawing on his training as a journalist and intelligence specialist, Barron researched his first book on the KGB over a decade ago. **KGB Today** brings the information up to date.

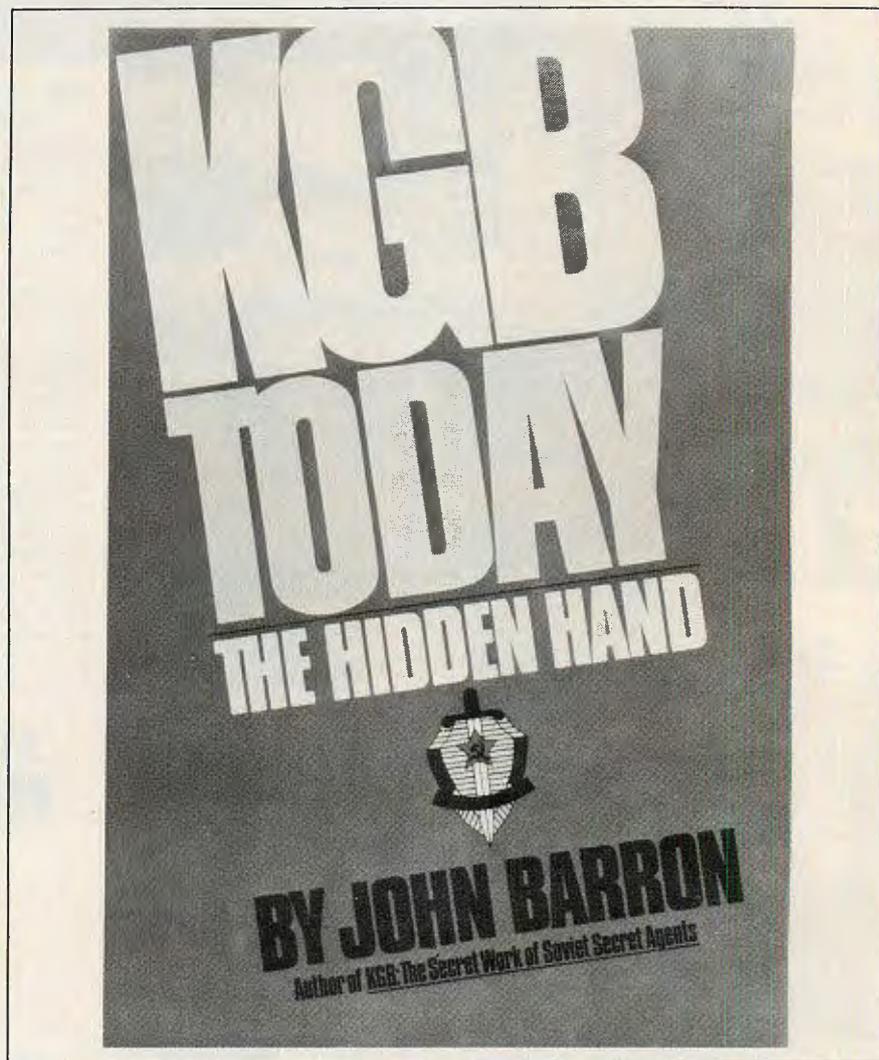
The KGB is so much a part of the Soviet system that it is to a large extent the system itself. A rough equivalent in the United States would be if the FBI, CIA, Border Patrol and portions of the Army and Navy were combined under a single command. The KGB not only conducts espionage throughout the world, it also is the police instrument that keeps the Communist Party in power in the Soviet Union itself.

This book is primarily about the KGB's foreign intelligence operations. Barron presents detailed accounts of the lives and work of three former agents, giving the reader an inside look into the intelligence organization, including discussions of specific KGB successes and failures. It provides a rare opportunity to learn about this ultrasecret spy system.

For the KGB, the United States is, in Barron's words, "the main enemy." Barron writes about Soviet espionage in the United States, and particularly Russian efforts to steal American technology.

(Russian espionage in the United States

IN REVIEW



dates back at least to the U.S. Civil War. *Lincoln and the Russians* by Albert A. Woldman, [Greenwood Press, Publishers, Westport, Conn., 1952] tells of the work of Edouard de Stoeckl, Russian charge d' affaires in Washington: "... He obtained information about Union Army enlistments from Gen. Halleck. ... Even Secretary of War Stanton took the Russian envoy into his confidence on occasion. He obtained plans of battles, fought and to be fought. He procured the designs and blueprints of the ironclad *Monitor* and sent them to St. Petersburg. He reported on secret maneuvers of federal troops and inferred that he knew more about the Confederate armies than Lincoln did. He saw, heard and reported on everything.")

As the United States moves ever more

rapidly into the high-tech age, the Soviet Union desperately attempts to keep pace, and the only way it can do so is by theft of technology. In one case the KGB obtained from the United States all the elements needed to build an entire semi-conductor factory. By the time U.S. and West German customs officials cracked down, at least 300 shipments of embargoed materials had been shipped through front companies set up by the KGB. (Need it be noted that one of the greatest espionage coups of modern times was the theft of the plans for the atomic bomb from the United States by agents of the Soviet Union?)

The KGB is a "main enemy" of the United States, and the more we know about it, the safer we will be. This book helps considerably. ✕

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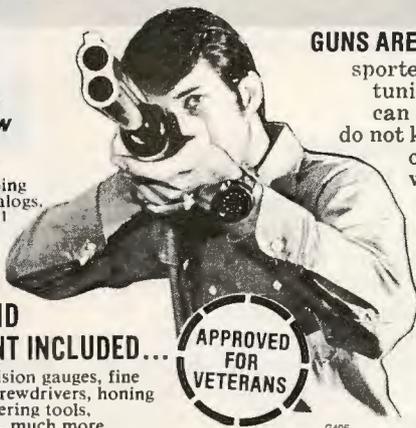
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BULLETIN BOARD

by Donna DuVall



TELLING TIME...

Soldier of Fortune scored its own intelligence coup in Grenada. Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Managing Editor Jim Graves "liberated" several important Grenadian documents that clearly showed the international terrorist connection in Grenada.

In fact, SOF's captured documents (primarily from the offices of Lt. Col. Ewart J. Layne, Dep. Sec. for Defense, and the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement) were so interesting, *Time Magazine* flew a correspondent, Christopher Redman, to Boulder to examine them. *Time* reported in its 14 November issue:

Additional documents were shown to Time by Soldier of Fortune, a Boulder, Colo., monthly magazine that specializes in military weapons and tactics; it said the papers had been overlooked by U.S. forces. The documents indicate that Grenada also had military agreements with Vietnam, Nicaragua and at least one Soviet-bloc country. A top-secret paper dated 18 May 1982, records a shipment of ammunition and explosives that arrived from Czechoslovakia via Cuba. One document, signed last November by Nicaragua's Vice Minister of Defense, provides for

the establishment of a course in Grenada to teach English-language military terminology to members of the Nicaraguan army.

SOF has a full report on the captured documents in "The Grenada Papers" page 54.

MISSIONARIES OR MERCENARIES?...

When St. Mark charged the early Christians with going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature, he couldn't have envisioned modern-day missionaries using this network to distribute arms to terrorists. And when God-fearing citizens in Dubuque give charitable — and tax-deductible — donations to the National Council of Churches, they probably don't expect that their alms could be used to buy arms and provide sanctuary for Marxist guerrillas.

But that is often the case in Central America, according to several former "Christian soldiers" who testified before Sen. Jeremiah Denton's Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism in October 1983. One of those testifying was former Sandinista official, Miguel Bolanos, who claimed that Moira Clark, one of four nuns slain last year in



El Salvador, had provided Sandinista guerrillas with arms and refuge during their 1979 revolution against Somoza. Clark, a Central American circuit rider of sorts, left Nicaragua after the Sandinista victory to work in El Salvador. Intelligence sources in El Salvador insist that she continued her ministry to the guerrillas of that country, which resulted in her death.

Bolanos, who defected because of disillusionment with the Marxist junta, said Clark used to "hide guns, propaganda and all that, and the National Guard wouldn't suspect because she was a nun." He also claimed that the Sandinista intelligence agency, the SDSC (which is controlled by Cuban and Soviet advisers), had infiltrated and gained control of the churches in Nicaragua.

A former Guatemalan Marxist and Jesuit priest, Luis Pellecer, testified that he had received money from several religious and humanitarian groups which knew what the money was to be used for. Among his donors were the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Relief Fund of Canada.

ADERHOLT HEADS AIR COMMANDOS...

Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt USAF (Ret.), SOF's unconventional operations editor, was elected president of the Air Commandos Association at their annual meeting held last October. Aderholt served in the military for 34 years, 26 of them in unconventional warfare operations, including a tour as the Air Officer for MACVSOG in Vietnam. He is now president of Air International Resources, Hong Kong.





U.S. Army troops, in Honduras as part of Big Pine II exercise, supervise distribution of food, medicine and clothing to Miskito Indians at refugee camp near Puerto Lempire, Honduras. Some 20,000 Miskitos have fled their Nicaraguan homeland because of Sandinistan atrocities against them. Photo: Rick Venable



MARINES LOOKING FOR FEW GOOD GIRLS...

The new Marine recruiting poster in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., read: "Girls, Girls, Girls... Need 1,200 Bikini-Clad Girls." Although the recruiting mission was for the Marines, so to speak, it was not done by the USMC, who usually advertise for a few good men.

The Marines have the good men, and they're stationed in Lebanon, said Helen O'Shea, whose son, Dale, is among them, to a *Miami Herald* reporter. And to show how appreciative Ft. Lauderdale is of the Marines in Lebanon, Mrs. O'Shea and friends ran a newspaper ad/recruiting poster to entice women to pose in cheesecake shots to be sent to the Marines in Lebanon.

They didn't get 1,200 volunteers, but they did get 50 bikini-clad patriots, including one super-patriot who wasn't clad at all.

Three uniformed Marine reservists were on hand to assist in the recruiting. They didn't seem to mind the extra duty, but they did become flustered when one bathing beauty requested her pictures taken with the nice "sailors."

BRITS TO LEAVE BELIZE?...

The *Washington Times* reports that Belize is alarmed over widespread rumors that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is pushing for the removal of British troops from that country by the end of 1984. Belize, one of the few peaceful countries in war-torn Central America, believes that its stability comes from the presence of the 1,800 British troops; without this presence, leaders fear that Guatemala, when it settles its guerrilla problems, will invade.

Belize, formerly British Honduras, gained independence from Great Britain in September 1981, and the British promised to stay "for an appropriate period of time." Belize interpreted this to mean until it and Guatemala could reach an amicable agreement or until an alternative defense arrangement could be made.

One rumored defense alternative is for the United States to assume part of the responsibility for this Central American "forgotten domino." In fact, heightened U.S. interest in this underdeveloped country of approximately 150,000 residents is evident. The U.S. Embassy staff in Belize City has doubled since independence, and aid has increased from \$5 million to \$19 million in the past three years.

But Belizeans are satisfied with current arrangements. British troops keep Guatemala honest and the economy humming. One bar owner in the capital city lamented: "If they were to leave, I would go out of business."

PERU PANS AMNESTY INTL....

The Peruvian Chamber of Deputies accused London-based Amnesty International of intentionally trying to "discredit the Western style of democracy" and said that AI's claims of human-rights violations in Peru were unfounded. To prove this, the Chamber invited journalists to come to Peru to see for themselves the "true conditions and put down this calumny."

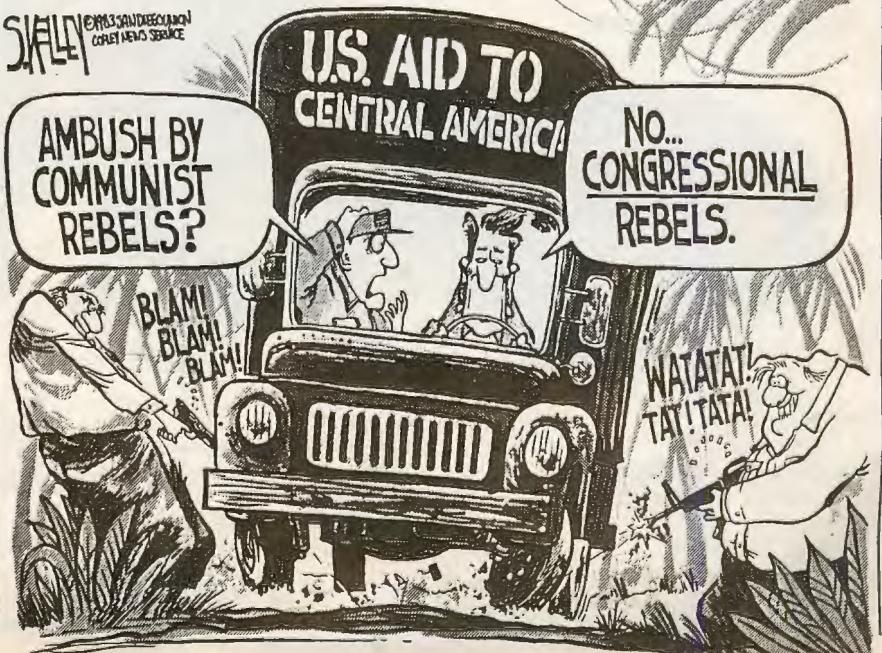
Amnesty International claimed that the eight journalists killed last summer in the Peruvian Andes were killed by government order. However, evidence links the murders to Indians living in a remote Andean village reachable only by foot. The villagers killed the journalists because they mistook them for Shining Path guerrillas, who had recently attacked the village.

MISKITO GENOCIDE...

In an interview with Free Press International, Miskito Indian leader, Steadman Fagoth, charged that Cuban and Soviet advisers in Nicaragua have taken an "active hand" in Sandinista attempts to eradicate the Miskito, Sumo and Rama Indians from northeastern Nicaragua. He charged that the Soviets and Cubans were "pushing" the Sandinistas toward Indian genocide to take over the "strategic location" of their homeland.

During one week last October, according to Fagoth, Sandinista planes bombed four Miskito villages continuously until the residents either fled to the mountains or were dead. The four villages no longer exist. Sandinistas closed the Indian-occupied territory to journalists in 1980 so the claims could not be independently verified.

Continued on page 102



I WAS THERE

The Sands of Vung-Tau

by Murray Holley
as told to M.L. Jones

Murray Holley was in 'Nam in 1966, '67 and '68 as a Spec. 5 and staff sergeant. He served without injury (nearly died with the fever) in the 199th Light Infantry and 101st Airborne, then rotated home, got out of the Army "and stayed the hell out of it." As he tells it:

AFTER some 20 days on a convoy of troopships, the men of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade (Sep.) were tired, sweat-soaked, irritable and downright apprehensive. During the night we had stopped somewhere off the coast of South Vietnam. It was a time of reflection, of consternation, of fear and hollow bravery; we had been informed that the brigade was to assault the beaches of the Mekong Delta area at dawn

the following morning.

The 199th Light Infantry Brigade was formed in the summer of 1966 at Ft. Benning, Ga. Levies had been put out in Europe for most of the officers and cadre. The majority of the enlisted troops had come from the Airborne School (myself included) and various other units in and around Ft. Benning.

Of course, when the levies for senior NCOs and officers hit the various units, you can imagine that every commanding officer saw a chance to get rid of all Section-Eight psycho-cases, malcontents, malingerers, AWOLs, article 15s and misfits he could clean out of his unit. There must have been a helluva lot of smiling commanders in Europe during November 1966, as our troop convoy lay off Vietnam.

As a demolitions specialist, I had been leaving the Airborne School at the wrong time and was pulled into this conglomeration with about 900 other airborne troops. We didn't like the assignment to the "leg" unit because we'd been told there would be no requests for transfer — and no jump pay.

Looking at the first full parade of the 199th was like looking at the casting call for a Mel Brooks movie. My greatest fear in those early days was of my getting blown away by one of these Barney Phyffe-types by accident. Months later, in 'Nam, I discovered that my fears were well-grounded: One of our sergeants lost both hands trying to disarm his own booby trap.

Anyhow, it was a musky, sleepless night as we anticipated the raging hell that surely

lay in wait for us on the beach at dawn. Guys were swearing holy oaths to each other that the survivor would protect the other's wife and family, some were writing wills, some were vomiting, and three crusty old NCOs were getting roaring drunk on a liter of sake they had stashed. I spent most of the night on deck looking for any sign of activity on the beach, which was shrouded in fog.

About 0300, we started getting our equipment ready. Issue of real, live ammo told us somebody was serious — this wasn't a trip to the PX. Somewhere around 0500 we were locked and loaded, heading down the ladders and nets into the bobbing landing craft. A priest was feeding wafers to a bunch of kneeling soldiers on the fantail and I was getting a real nervous feeling about this whole damned affair.

We were low in the landing craft: No one could see over the gunwales and no one knew what the hell was happening. *The Sands of Iwo Jima* and a few other John Wayne classics flashed through my mind as I saw the dawn sun. Puke and tears were everywhere as we sensed the boats slowing up for the beach. The ramp started down, everyone grabbed their M16s and tensed for the run.

As we hit the beach, a full-dress Army band struck up a tune, TV cameras went into action, and two Vietnamese kids ran up to us to sell us Cokes. We had just made a full-scale sea-borne assault on Vung-Tau, the main R&R center in country.

It still blows my mind every time I recall that this was the way it was. ☒

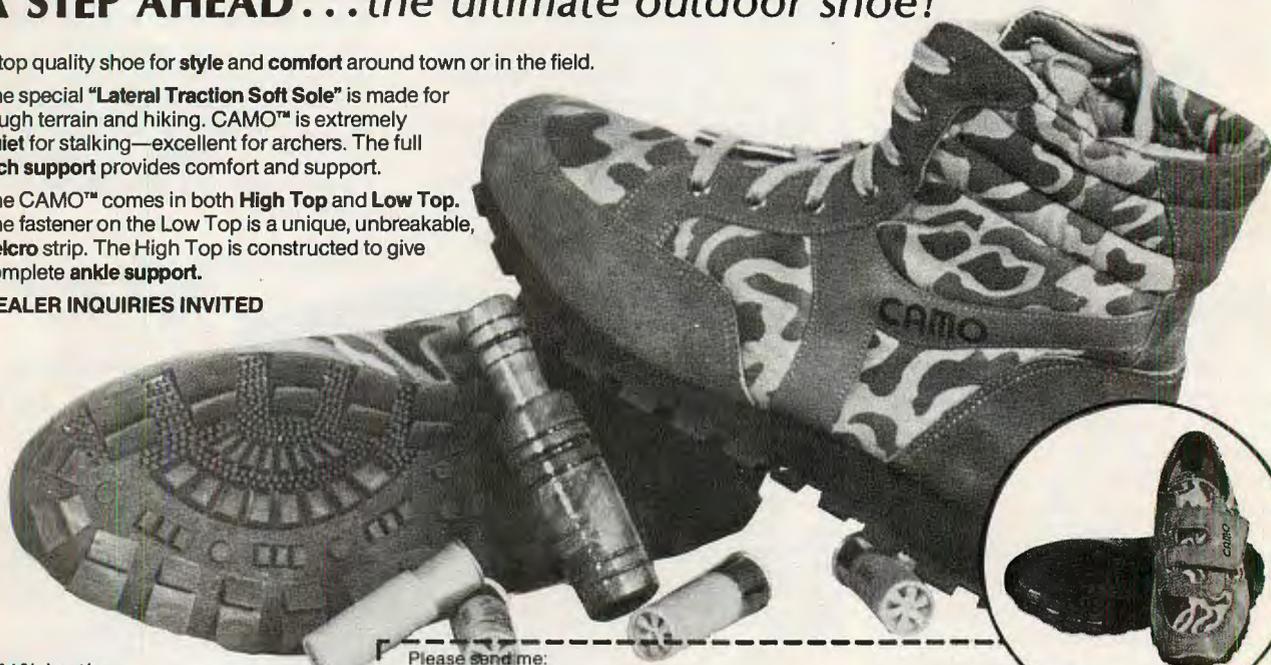
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Only Way Left For Little Guy To Get Rich

Here Is the Uncensored Message My Wife Asked Me Not to Write

I love my wife. And I understand why she wants me to keep my mouth shut. She just wants to protect me from the IRS.

But I can't be quiet any longer. I'm angry. We are really getting jerked around. And I'm tired of it.

The government says one thing. Then does the opposite. Especially Reagan. And I even voted for him. One of my biggest mistakes.

First the feds talk tax cuts. Then they pass the biggest tax increase in history. Who are they kidding?

Average taxpayers, you and I, are getting screwed.

The new law doesn't bother the rich fat cats much. They still have loopholes galore. Let's face it. They always will.

But recently I ran across a workable angle. It's cheap. And it's legal. It's meant for the rich. But it's perfect for us little guys. You don't need any money. And we can get the same breaks the rich get.

I can hardly believe it. Catch this. I formed a corporation. Of my own. For peanuts.

It's my way of fighting back.

Now I have a small, one-man corporation. I operate out of my apartment. My work? I'm a commercial designer. Freelance. Brochures, fliers—stuff like that. On my income, I didn't think I could save much. But I'm paying almost zero taxes. And it's legit. Just like the fat cats do it. I have no guilt. Uncle Sam already gets plenty. Too much from all of us.

One thing the feds didn't bother much under the new tax laws—corporate tax goodies. Guess they figured right. Burden business too much. Result? No jobs for anybody. Including them. Not to worry. They know better.

From a buddy, I heard about this unusual book. It's called **How to Form Your Own Corporation Without a Lawyer for Under \$50**, by Ted Nicholas. Damnedest book I've seen. Has the forms right in it. Pages are perforated. You just fill in some blanks and rip 'em out and mail them in. A couple of days later you've got a corporation. No wonder it's a best seller. (They tell me over 650,000 copies have been sold.)

No need to bring in other people. You can be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer all by yourself. Just like me.

You know, lawyers charge \$300 to \$2,500 for incorporation. Talk about rip offs! And their secretary fills in the form—a single page with two blanks. Now you don't need a lawyer. And there is no hassle at all. It's simple. No wonder lawyers like you to think everything is so complicated.

You don't have to employ anyone either. Just by your lonesome. And I always thought corporations had to have lots of employees.

Oh well. Now I know.

Let me tell you something. I'm a skeptic. I like to shop by mail. But I've been ripped off in mail order. So, before I sent my check, I checked out the company. Called consumer

and business bureaus. And the Chamber of Commerce. Found out publisher has a good record. And the book is guaranteed. So, what the hell. I spend that much on a few beers. That's how come I ordered it.

Damned if it didn't come in a couple of weeks.

I expected a shlocky-type mail order book. What a shock. Instead the book was type-set. Has a silver cover. And it's big. 8½ x 11.

I've had it for only three months. Already I've given myself all kinds of fringe benefits. Kind employer I am! Put in a medical reimbursement plan. A one-page form did it. Makes all my doctor, dentist and medical bills tax deductible—for me, my wife *and* my kids.

Now, my wife has been seeing a shrink. Guess living with me is no picnic. We deducted over \$600 in the last two months alone. Also just got myself new teeth. Caps, I should say. Cost me \$2,500. My son's braces figure to cost \$2,000 next year. I can deduct it. Right off the top. And my wife and I are into special vitamins. Heavy. Those pills cost over 400 bucks. Couldn't get into them before because of cost. Tax-deductible now. Imagine this too. Right off the top!

Savings have been scarce for me. I have a helluva time saving bread anyway. But, with this little corporation, I'm really socking it away. How? First, I tax deduct any cash I don't need. A corporation makes this easy to do. And then I invest it. Interest and dividends are completely tax-free. Until I retire. In the meantime, I can even borrow the money back. So I don't lose the use of it like in an IRA or Keogh. This gimmick is called a Pension/Profit Sharing Plan. Again, I just filled in a couple of blanks on a standard form.

Now, I'm no financial genius. But I'll tell you this. I'll be a fat cat myself soon at this rate. It may not be as bad as I thought. Incorporation

is the only way left. Now little guys like me have a shot at the big money.

This little corporation even covers my rear end. I could get sued. Everybody likes to sue these days. Something for nothing. And some judge might not like me. But you know what? The only thing anyone can get is what's in my little corporation. Big deal. A drafting table. A desk. And a little paper. Nobody can touch the real bucks. My home, cash, cars—even benefit plan monies are protected.

Maybe you've got some little business deal going. Or maybe you can get something started. Even a part-time business. This book can help. It can make the difference between just making it or operating just like the big boys. Even better, since you don't have their expenses.

For a real shot at big bucks, isn't it time you looked into incorporation?

It worked for me. So well that I wrote a fan letter to the company. They asked me to write this message. In my own words. But I did ask them not to print my name. Who knows? Maybe my wife is right. You can't be too careful. The IRS might want to hassle me. Even though everything is 100% legal. They may not like my message.

If you order now, the publisher will throw in a free bonus. A report called *The Income Plan*. Worth 10 bucks by itself. Shows you how to turn most jobs into a corporation. Outlines how to operate as an independent contractor instead of an employee. You can increase take home pay up to 40%. Taxes will no longer be withheld before you get your hands on the money.

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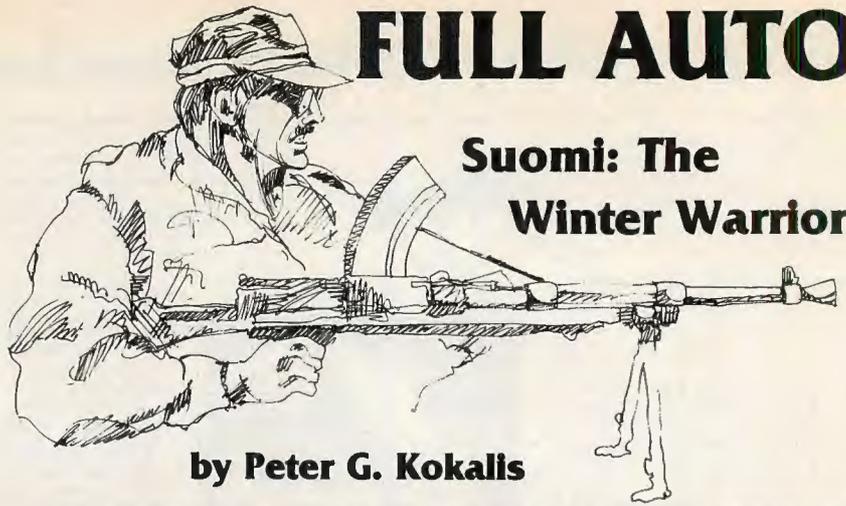
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FULL AUTO

Suomi: The Winter Warrior



by Peter G. Kokalis



Perhaps the best of the earliest: author's Swedish Suomi 37/39. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

separate compartments containing 25 rounds each. Guides on the interior magazine walls regulated the alternate feeding from each compartment. While innovative, it was almost impossible to load without a tool and was prone to frequent stoppages. It was eventually replaced by the well-designed, effective 36-round box magazine used on the Carl Gustaf Model 45 (the "Swedish K").

The Finnish Model 1931 Suomi weighs 10.34 pounds empty. The shorter Swedish Model 37/39 weighs 8.75 pounds empty. Both are far too heavy by today's standards, but, as a consequence, highly controllable in the full-auto mode. And this is in spite of a fairly high cyclic rate of 900 rpm. The Suomi is capable of smaller burst dispersion than any submachine gun ever made. Its sight settings of 300 and 500 meters are not really flippant: Rather surprising results can be achieved at these ranges.

Well-designed, beautifully executed, strong and reliable, the Suomi was one of the very best of the early submachine guns. It provided a standard of excellence that was rarely surpassed, even to this day. A limited number of Swedish Model 37/39 Suomi submachine guns are available from Armex International (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 252, Broderick, CA 95605) to law enforcement agencies and qualified Class 3 dealers. The specimen I received was in almost new condition. It came out of Guatemala and carries no Husqvarna arsenal markings. Ah, the games people play — especially the arms merchants. ✕

It has been said that nearly 70 percent of the estimated 250,000 Russian casualties suffered during their invasion of Finland were the result of the Suomi submachine gun. It's possible. The Soviets were impressed: The PPD 1934/38 and PPSH 41 submachine guns were based upon the Schmeisser MP-28II and the early Suomi design. Using these weapons during WWII, the Russians brought the submachine-gun concept to its zenith.

The Model 1926 Suomi (this is the Finnish word for Finland) submachine gun was developed by the well-known Finnish designer, Aimo Johannes Lahti. This unusual weapon (chambered for the 7.65mm Parabellum cartridge) had a unique buffer assembly which allowed adjustment of the cyclic rate, a non-reciprocating retracting handle, a floating firing pin and a complicated trigger and selector mechanism. While all this — for its day — was more than a little remarkable, it proved to be entirely too complex and few were made before Lahti moved on to the much simplified Model 1931 in caliber 9mm Parabellum.

The Model 1931 Suomi was manufactured in Finland at the Oy Tikkakoski Ab arsenal and under license by Hispano Suiza in Switzerland, Madsen in Denmark and Husqvarna in Sweden. This model and the subsequent Swedish Model 37/39 Suomi were adopted and used by Finland, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Indonesia, Egypt and numerous Latin American countries. It performed well in the Spanish Civil War, for the Finns in WWII and untold numbers of killing games south of the U.S. border. During the Chaco War between Bolivia and Paraguay (1932-35), the Suomi undoubtedly accounted for many of the 100,000 lives which were lost in that small footnote to humanity's everlasting insanity of territorial imperative.

As major features, only the barrel retention system and non-reciprocating operating handle of the earlier gun remained on the Model 1931 Suomi. The Suomi barrel is held in place by the barrel jacket, which is easily removed by rotating its catch lever 90 degrees on the right side. Then just twist the barrel jacket 45 degrees counterclockwise and pull forward to remove the barrel from the receiver. Removal of the bolt and recoil spring is accomplished by unscrewing the knurled end cap while the retracting handle is held rearward.

The Model 1931 bolt was reduced in diameter and a fixed firing pin press-fit into its face. The selector lever was relocated to the front of the trigger guard. When pushed to the rear ("safe") position, the bolt remains locked in the open or closed position. The lever's middle position results in semiautomatic fire, while completely forward is full-auto. In full-auto the entire sear assembly remains disengaged from the bolt. During semiautomatic operation, continued pressure on the trigger after sear release pushes a platform under the sear lever, causing it to rock backward and separate from the sear pro-

jection, freeing the sear to rise up again and block the bolt's forward travel.

The Swedish Model 37/39 was a further refinement of the Suomi system. The barrel was cut back from 12.5 inches to 8.25 inches. An enlarged "winter" trigger guard was incorporated. The rear sights were changed from the original tangent type, adjustable from 100 to 500 meters, to a U-notch flip-type, adjustable for 100, 200 and 300 meters. The cocking handle was given a hooked shape rather than the large knob used previously. The stock was beefed up considerably behind the receiver body (an area of weakness on the Finnish Model 1931), which destroyed any aesthetic pretense there may have been. The 37/39 certainly has the most grotesque-looking stock ever fitted to a submachine gun.

Over the years quite an assortment of magazines was produced for the Suomi submachine guns. Drum magazines of both 40- and 71-round capacity were widely employed. The 71-round drums of the Soviet PPD 1934/38 and PPSH 41 SMGs are patterned directly after those of the Suomi. A simple 20-round staggered box magazine was also produced. Most unusual was the Swedish 50-round box magazine. Fabricated from stamped-steel pressings, this single-position feed, staggered-column magazine consisted of two

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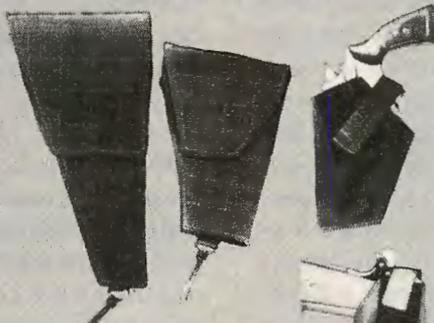
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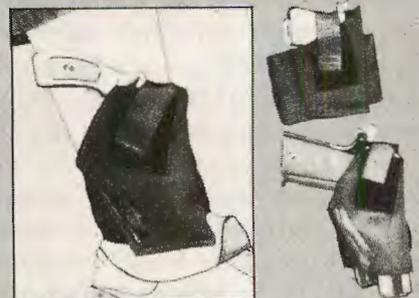
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EDITORIAL

Christmas Bombing of Hanoi: An Eyewitness Account

by Adm. James B. Stockdale

On 27 January, the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Vietnam Peace Accords, CBS morning news commemorated the event by showing old Vietnam War scenes narrated by a correspondent who declared that on 18 December 1972 "came the Christmas bombings of civilian targets... which had nothing to do with ending the war... The number of civilian casualties has yet to be released." Adm. James B. Stockdale, a prisoner in Hanoi during those bombings, was so incensed by this statement that he responded to the network in a Special Correspondence column, printed by the American Spectator in its June 1983 issue. The following excerpts, reprinted with permission, demonstrate the difference between the viewpoint of CBS, and someone who was really in Hanoi during those 11 days of bombing.

THOSE 11 days of bombing at the end of 1972 are a subject I could discuss on CBS morning news with *real* credentials. I was an eyewitness. And the truth is that not one bomb was dropped on Christmas; civilian targets were never deliberately hit (and far fewer were accidentally hit than in any bombing of a large industrial complex since the invention of the airplane); the raids broke the will of the North Vietnamese as did nothing else in that war; and the number of total casualties (some lesser part of which were undoubtedly civilians) was publicly released by the North Vietnamese government and printed in the *New York Times* within a week after the last bomb was dropped on 29 December.

The casualty number was extremely low — 1,318 killed — no more than a scant percentage of the casualty numbers common for European and Japanese cities bombed with *comparable* tonnage during World War II. Moreover, North Vietnam persisted, and still persists, in the validity of their figures. These facts have been in the public domain for years, yet they have been ignored again and again and again. So let me make a few points you won't normally hear on CBS.

If I learned nothing else during eight years in wartime Hanoi, it was that Clausewitz is as right today as he was during the Napoleonic

Wars; the name of the game in war is to break the enemy's *will*.

Now airpower's greatest utility is its shock effect, its ability to create fear and panic, particularly among the uninitiated and undisciplined. By the time our tactical raids crept up to Hanoi in 1966, every civilian in the city had undergone months and months of instruction in civil defense.

"The scenario goes like this," the party-cadre's man might well have explained to the people on his block: "The air-raid siren wails in midmorning, you run and get in your hole, the planes roll in, there is a lot of noise, a bridge is bombed, the 'all clear' is sounded. By then there are a few fires and the trucks wheel past; there are also likely to be a few casualties, particularly at the antiaircraft batteries, and one or two ambulances might be heard en route. Meanwhile, the other 99.99 percent of us can chop chop by the numbers back to our work stations. And that's all there is to it until afternoon when it will all start and end within 15 minutes just like it did in the morning."

City life can seemingly go on forever under mere tactical bombings if the population is well-indoctrinated. (Bloomington could cope, too, with prior instruction like this.)

In Hanoi, in those years of tactical bombings, there were few surprises. Everything seemed programmed. The Americans were constrained by self-imposed rules that were public knowledge on the streets of North Vietnam's capital city. Though the guards of the prisons feigned wide-eyed hostility during the few minutes of the raid, the street sounds were back to normal right after the "all clear" siren. Patriotic music was soon blaring from the speakers at every corner, while our interrogators strutted about the prison yards defiantly.

By nightfall an almost carnival atmosphere could be sensed. Songfests went off as scheduled in the guards' quarters and in the city parks. Clever American prisoners with a good ear for lyrics could identify the targets hit that day from their mention in songs sung that night.

Thus went life in Hanoi throughout the latter half of 1966, all of 1967 and through March of 1968 — until President Johnson halted the bombing. In Hanoi, this stoppage brought about no change in the brutality with which we prisoners were treated. For many of us, our very worst tortures occurred during that Johnson-initiated hiatus of bombing. Our North Vietnamese captors seemed contemptuous of our government's sheepishness.

In late 1971 in Hanoi we began to hear air raid sirens again, and a new generation of prisoners started to trickle in to join us. Off and on for about a year, we had the tactical raid situation we had known five and six years before.

BUT a totally contrasting atmosphere swept the city about an hour after dark on that 18 December night in 1972. At first we (in the very center of Hanoi in Hoa Lo prison) thought it was a regular tactical raid of the sort that came in every few nights. The bombs were hitting out where they usually hit — in the railroad yards, power plant and airfield areas. Some of the prisoners did detect higher-level explosions early in the bombardment, but it wasn't until these explosions were still being heard 20 minutes later that the cheers started to go up all over the cell blocks of that downtown prison.

This was a new reality for Hanoi. These were big explosions — and the bombs kept coming! Though landing thousands of yards away, they shook the ground under us and plaster fell

from all the ceilings. The days of Mickey Mouse were over! Our wonderful America was here to deliver a message, not a self-conscious apology.

"Let's hear it for President Nixon!" went the cry from cell block to cell block, all around the courtyard.

And the bombers kept coming, and we kept cheering. Guards, normally enraged by loud talk, guards who normally thrust their bayoneted rifles through the bars and screamed at us if we had the temerity to shout, could only be seen silently cowering in the lee of the prison walls, their faces ashen in the light reflected from the fiery skies above.

So it went, hour after hour, night after night, with frequent tactical raids in the daytime. Once in a while prisoners on the far side of the compound, looking south, identified a particularly brilliant torch among the array of bursting anti-aircraft shells and surface-to-air missiles. Some claimed they could then make out a tumbling, burning B-52.

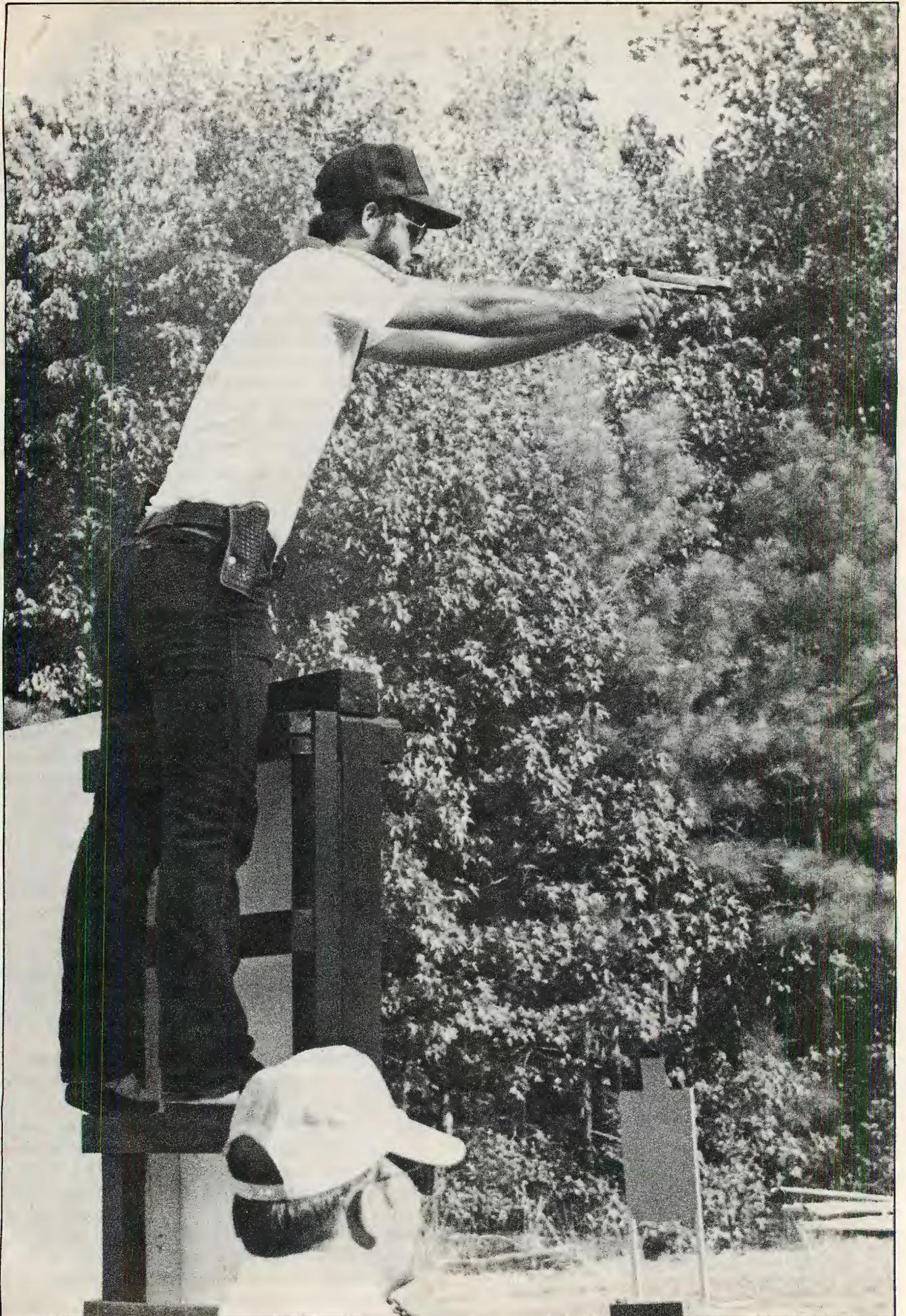
But if they could see one, all Hanoi could see it too. For the North Vietnamese to see that and the bomber stream continuing to roll right on like old man river was a message in itself: proof that all that separated Hanoi from doomsday was an American national order to keep the bombs out on the hard targets. We prisoners knew this was the end of North Vietnamese resistance, and the North Vietnamese knew it, too.

At dawn, the streets of Hanoi were absolutely silent. The usual patriotic wakeup music was missing, the familiar street sounds, the horns, all gone. In prison interrogators and guards would inquire about our needs solicitously. Unprecedented morning coffee was delivered to our cell blocks. One look at any Vietnamese officer's face told the whole story. It telegraphed accommodation, hopelessness, remorse, fear. The shock was there; our enemy's will was broken. The sad thing was that we all knew what we were seeing could have been done in any 10-day period in the previous seven years and saved the lives of thousands, including most of those 57,000 dead Americans.

By 29 December, Hanoi was almost out of ammunition. (The mining of Haiphong harbor worked, too.) There was no need to continue the bombing. The North Vietnamese negotiators (who had come home to Hanoi in a huff just before the B-52s rolled in on 18 December) were anxious to rejoin Henry Kissinger at the conference table. In less than two weeks they accepted our terms. And in less than a month I was back in Coronado, Calif., with my wife, Sybil, and our four kids to whom I had said goodbye eight years before. ✕



Capt. James B. Stockdale holds ramp rail as he leaves plane at Clark Air Base, Philippines, on 12 February 1973, ending eight years of captivity in Vietnamese prison camps. Shot down in September 1965, Stockdale was incarcerated in Hoa Lo prison in the center of Hanoi during the bombings at the end of 1972. Photo: Wide World



YANKEE VICTORY

Americans Sweep World Shoot VI

Text & Photos by Jake Jatras

“AUSTRALIA,” World Shoot VI Match Director Dave Arnold announced over the loudspeaker as the green-clad five-man Aussie team raised their flag to join the 12 other national colors flying over the main range at the Lafayette Gun Club in Yorktown, Va.

The team from down under joined the United States, South Africa, West Germany, Venezuela, the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and South West Africa at the sixth biennial International Practical Shooting Confederation's (IPSC) world championship. When the smoke cleared, the United States had swept the competition, placing 15 competitors in the top 16, taking the Team Championship and crowning Arizona's Rob Leatham as the new World Champion.

The IPSC world championship not only presents entrants the opportunity to take the world title, but each country is also shooting for a team award. This year—as in 1981—the U.S. Gold Team ended up competing with the Republic of South Africa's Springboks for the championship.

The U.S. Gold Team had been chosen from the past two U.S. Nationals and consisted of team captain Ross Seyfried, Mike Plaxco, Tom Campbell, Brian Enos and Rob Leatham.

South Africa's Springboks represented the cream of their practical shooting community: Peter Slack, Sidney Thorne, Roger Stockbridge, Gary Haltman and Jimmy Von Sorgenfrie.

Ten matches were shot over a period of eight days. The opening round was on Saturday, 10 October, with the speed test—the Double Kansas. Speed matches are essential in any major practical event and this one was a modified stage from the 1983

U.S. Nationals. Competitors stood in a firing box, facing a pair of targets and a stop plate. Beside each “shoot” target was a rectangular steel plate. On the start signal each shooter first had to hit the steel plate. This caused a “no-shoot” to pop up in front of the buff silhouette. A slow shot or bad timing meant a hit and a 10-point penalty on the no-shoot. The next target was engaged in the same manner, and finally the stop plate.

Rob Leatham led the U.S. team as they came out smoking on this stage. Leatham scored 29.4494 points. Springbok Peter Slack had two runs in which a no-shoot target was hit and the penalty was reflected in his score of 9.97405 points. The United States had an early lead, but nine tests remained.

Later in the day the Yanks and 'Boks gathered for a walk-through on the assault match—the Wailing Wall. Shooters began seated in an automobile. On the start whistle one had to draw and engage two standard IPSC Milpark targets from the car—one at 25 meters and the other at 20 meters. Each target had to have a minimum of two hits or a 10-point penalty was assessed for each dropped shot.

After a 20-meter dash competitors leaped to a short platform, hung on a rope loop, swung around the edge of the wall and engaged two more silhouettes. Moving to the left, contestants had to shoot at a target partially hidden by a log, using a small window as a firing port. Finally, competitors had to holster and climb up a ladder to the top of the wall. From the top, two more targets were engaged (one was half-hidden by a no-shoot) and the stop plate at 10 meters. This match was scored Comstock—point score divided by time.

SOF's Mike Plaxco, '82 U.S. champ, claimed this match with a perfect run, all A hits in a hair over 30 seconds. His 2.960 factor was the best. The rest of the U.S.

Gold Team turned in respectable scores, but bad breaks continued to plague the Springboks. Jimmy Von Sorgenfrie, '79 World Champ, had a clean target (that's no hits) from the vehicle and scored a 1.875. The United States gained in its lead.

Sunday found the U.S. team with only one match to shoot in the early afternoon, the demanding assault—Don't Fence Me In. Before the match, Leatham and Enos practiced vaulting the 50-inch fence by using one of the end poles as a hand rest. Team captain Ross Seyfried looked things over and advised against such an all-out move, noting that the dangers outweighed any advantage.

Each shooter began in a firing box, facing silhouettes 30 and 10 meters, each partially covered by a no-shoot. Once again the match was scored Comstock and two hits were required on each shoot target. After the first two buffs were engaged, it was a short run to a wooden fence for a leap to a barrel on its side on the ground and a couple of shots through it at a target 20 meters downrange. Next one could crawl under a fence, or jump it.

Twine strands made up the simulated wire on fence No. 2, and breaking one of the strands was a 10-second penalty. Once under the second fence shooters had to fire on the move at a target hidden by a no-shoot. For safety reasons a foul line was placed so that shooters had to have their shots off before crossing it. Slowing down, but still moving without crossing the line required some tricky stepping. Finally, shooters fired through a window at two silhouettes partially covered by no-shoots, then proceeded to a firing box to shoot the stop plate resting on a log.

Our U.S. team began well with Bill Wilson (the Gold Team's sixth man) leading off. Wilson turned in a time of 28.18 seconds. Brian Enos ran next and turned in a time of 24.83 seconds. Reigning World

Rob Leatham fires over assault course wall.

Champ Ross Seyfried of Colorado was next.

Seyfried handled the fences well, but on the run to the wall missed his safety. Breaking so as to not overrun the target (which had to be shot on the move), Seyfried approached the foul line. On tiptoes he managed to get his two shots off, then complete the run. One range officer called Seyfried for a penalty, but was overruled by the chief range officer. The question was whether or not Seyfried had stopped to shoot the target on the way to the wall. Seyfried also dropped a shot.

Springbok's team manager filed a protest on the call, which went to the International Arbitration Committee. Seyfried was assessed two procedural penalties. Seyfried's run was an omen of things to come.

Leatham took to the course next. After the first two targets, he headed full-tilt for the fence. Backing off is not in this U.S. champ's vocabulary and when he landed after a high vault over fence No. 1 a loud "pop" could be heard in the grandstands. Leatham crawled under the second fence and found it difficult to stand. Once on his feet he began to stumble toward the wall. He engaged the target on the move and managed to complete the course, remarkably in 28.12 seconds. Meantime both the Springbok Team Manager Tony Ellingford and I dashed onto the field and Match Director Dave Arnold brought out a golf cart to carry the injured Leatham off the course.

After Campbell and Plaxco finished their runs, the entire team gathered in a motorhome where Leatham had been taken. An old injury had torn and Leatham was taken to a hospital for X-rays and treatment. His knee was in bad shape. Should Leatham be pulled from the team and alternate Wilson inserted? Could the U.S. team maintain its lead with Leatham at less than 100 percent? The next day the team had to shoot only two matches, but one involved some quick movement.



John Sayle (left) and Mike Dalton just finished the shoot-off. Who won?

WORLD SHOOT VI

Contestant/Country	Score
1. Leatham, Robert/U.S.A.	97.8792
2. Shaw, John/U.S.A.	97.7001
3. Plaxco, Mike/U.S.A.	95.5301
4. Carter, Ross/U.S.A.	94.5849
5. Castelow, Rick/U.S.A.	93.5793
6. Campbell, Tom/U.S.A.	93.5684
7. Seyfried, Ross/U.S.A.	92.4553
8. Dixon, John/U.S.A.	91.8019
9. Enos, Brian/U.S.A.	90.9309
10. Dalton, Mike/U.S.A.	88.6316
11. Wilson, Bill/U.S.A.	88.5588
12. McCormick, Chip/U.S.A.	88.1042
13. Sayle, John/U.S.A.	87.8779
14. Thorne, Sidney/South Africa	87.4052
15. Brown, William/U.S.A.	86.9391
16. Rogers, Bill/U.S.A.	85.2390
17. Stockbridge, Roger/South Africa	79.4546
18. Fichman, Mike/U.S.A.	79.1997
19. Butler, Brad/U.S.A.	78.4194
20. Ploner, Peter/West Germany	77.7867
21. Byfield, Rick/U.S.A.	77.5649
22. Boulton, Freddy/Venezuela	77.2387
23. Slack, Peter/South Africa	76.5903
24. Burgess, Roger/South Africa	76.5455
25. LaPrade, Chris/South Africa	76.5144

Unanimously the team members decided not to count out the plucky Arizonan.

In each major contest some type of "standard" exercise is run as an accuracy test. World Shoot VI organizers had, however, boldly chosen to conduct the standards as a

Members of U.S. Gold Team, (left to right) Brian Enos, Ross Seyfried, Mike Plaxco and Tom Campbell, hoist new world champion Rob Leatham.

Team captain Ross Seyfried holds umbrella for SOF's Plaxco. Bad weather hindered and helped.



"limited Comstock" event. This translated to score divided by time, but the number of shots would be limited. Some IPSC rule purists objected, but most competitors expressed their delight at adding a new dimension to the match.

It was anticipated that the British team would protest, but I had the opportunity to discuss it with them before the shooters' meeting, and they were willing to try something new.

Go For It was a 48-round exercise with ranges from 40 to 10 meters. Good hits were important, but speed was the key to a good scoring factor. Normally at ranges of 40

meters, shooters under fixed times have the habit of going prone, but with the time factor most chose to stand and shoot. Shooters faced two Milparks and shot stages to 20 meters, then targets were changed and shooters fired the closer stages.

Rick Castelov factored a 6.03892 to take the match. Leatham held up, scoring 5.60844. The U.S. team did well overall, and the Springboks failed to gain any ground. Gary Haltman dropped quite a few shots and only managed a factor of 3.44006.

The Ultimate Mover was next on the schedule — and the match would test Leatham's recuperative powers. Competitors began in a firing box and on the start signal had to engage a target on the left, then one on the right. Two seconds after the whistle the "mover" started and could be engaged with two shots. Next, shooters moved to the right to firing box B and re-engaged the two stationary targets — right first, then left. Meanwhile the mover was traveling again. Two more shots and then the stop plate.

Leatham showed his mettle when he ran the course in a record time of 9.68 seconds. He also tagged the mover with two A hits. His factor of 5.888 was the best of the team.

Tuesday was a day off for the competitors, but Leatham found himself back at the doctor's office for more tests. Then a day of rest. The match still had some tough assault courses left and Leatham's knee was swelling and sore.

Bad weather is normally a curse for match officials and shooters, but as the rain clouds hovered over the range on Wednesday morning the U.S. team actually got a break. After a three-hour weather delay, it was decided that the platform on Bubba's Bad Dream should be removed because competitors could hit the top and slide off.

This meant that Leatham would not have to climb the stairs and make the four-foot-plus jump. It still would be a grueling course, but the absence of the platform eased the minds of the Gold team. Although 1981 had found the U.S. team going into the stretch at a slight disadvantage, this go-around we had a lead, spirits were high and, after the day off, the Gold team was looking forward to the last five tests.

Devil's Hold Defense was a close-in combination speed/standard exercise. As in the past it was running slow due to the number of rounds fired (33) and the miserable weather. The contest involves facing three silhouettes at four, five and seven meters. The middle seven-meter target is partially covered by a no-shoot.

Team members alternated holding an umbrella over one other in between strings of fire and a strong wind added to the discomfort. The ROs did their best and the team held its ground.

Nine of the matches for the World Shoot VI (World War VI, as Match Director Dave Arnold dubbed the contest) were pre-published, but Match No. 10 — the Surprise — turned out to be a real challenge. A one-meter wall was erected with a firing slot on the left and on the right. Twelve meters

Contestant/Country.....	Score
26. Bartell, J./South Africa	75.7429
27. Chapman, Ray/U.S.A.	75.4168
28. Miller, Paul/South Africa	74.7415
29. Schmid, Vance/South Africa	74.5711
30. Dunkley, Robert/United Kingdom	74.2599
31. Kressibucher, Peter/West Germany	73.9880
32. Fisher, Randy/Canada	73.8771
33. Barnard, Marcel/South Africa	73.7328
34. Bromfield, Paul/South Africa	73.7301
35. Barnhart, Jerry/South Africa	73.4379
36. Neal, Ray/South Africa	73.2745
37. Haltman, Gary/South Africa	72.9328
38. Harris, John/South Africa	72.0051
39. Hoy, Harold/U.S.A.	72.0038
40. Von Sorgenfrie, Jimmy/South Africa	71.7061
41. Nakling, Vidar/Norway	71.5661
42. Silbitzer, Hans/Austria	71.4584
43. Gardner, Murray/Canada	69.9281
44. Smith, Dave/Canada	69.5071
45. Chittleborough, R./United Kingdom	69.4082
46. Maxwell, John/United Kingdom	69.0469
47. Fernandez, Jose/U.S.A.	68.9388
48. Moore, Mark/U.S.A.	68.8838
49. Janssens, Bill/South Africa	68.8202
50. Cole, Jason/U.S.A.	68.2819



FIRST U.S. WOMEN'S TEAM

by Jake Jatras

This year's IPSC World Championships were unique in two ways. It was the first time that the U.S. Region served as host for an international event and the first time the United States entered a woman's team in a world match.

In July a special National Women's Championship was conducted to select the top 10 women handgunners in the land; then the 10 competed in the regular U.S. Nationals to earn a spot on the six-person team.

The team consisted of Judy Culbertson, Kelly Steward, Sally Van Valzah, Susi McHugo and Lee Cole, who also

Lee Cole, U.S. women's team captain, shoots Bubba's Bad Dream.

served as team captain. Joanna Fichman was the alternate.

Early in the match our women held the lead, but as the more experienced South African Springbok Women's Team settled down they eroded the U.S. lead and in the last three days moved out in front to retain their World Title.

Women's numbers in practical shooting are growing. In 1984 another Women's Championship is being planned. For information on this program contact: IPSC, P.O. Box 626, Sioux City, IA 51102.

The United States will be ready when next we meet up with the Springboks!

downrange stood a line of six silhouettes — four partially covered with no-shoots.

Competitors began standing with hands on the top of the wall. On the start signal from CRO Steve Herberth, shooters dropped to their knees and engaged T-4, T-5 and T-6 freestyle with at least two rounds each, then reloaded (mandatory) and engaged T-1, T-2 and T-3 — weak hand only — then the stop plate. The disaster factor of shooting weak-hand-only at targets covered by no-shoots was extremely high. Also, if one had a malfunction, or had to reload to hit the stop plate a procedural penalty was assessed.

This match was taken from the Canadian Nationals and proved to be a crusher for many teams and individuals. The no-shoots had plenty of taped holes to testify to the problems facing the aspirants.

U.S. Gold team competitors once again were up to the task, but the Springboks felt the sting of dropped shots and no-shoot hits.

Thursday the weather broke and the U.S. team was optimistic as they chatted before the tough assault course, Bubba's Bad Dream. Assistant Match Director and United States Practical Shooting Association official Lloyd Harper never should have eaten that pepperoni pizza before retiring. As he slept like a baby — snooze for an hour, up and cry for a half hour — he envisioned an assault test including a platform to climb and jump off, a tunnel to crawl through, a wall with a window to hold open, etc.

Although the foul weather necessitated the removal of the platform, it was replaced with a shooting box on the ground. It was still a long, tough match.

Competitors began at a wall with a window high on the left side. On the start signal each had to engage two silhouettes with two rounds each, one at 20 meters and one at 25. Moving to the right edge of the wall, each faced a lone target half-hidden behind a log at 35 meters.

After the first set of targets, shooters moved to the box that had replaced the wall and shot a Pepper Popper and a target lying on its side behind some tires. A quick shift around a view-blocking wall and two shots at a cardboard opponent at seven meters and two at another at 10 meters partially hidden by a barrel. The tunnel barricade was next. A standard Cooper tunnel, it was two meters long, 1.5 meters wide and .5 meter high. The difference was that there were no knock-off bars.

Finally one reached the last wall after a 10-meter jog and, holding open a shutter, fired at a target at five meters. A drop to the ground to a small opening and each entrant engaged another Popper at 10 meters, a full-size silhouette at 15 meters and a stop plate at 10 meters.

Tom Campbell turned it on and won the stage with a factor of 3.04552. On the team side the United States scored a total of 13.87798 to the Springboks' 13.08169. Even with Leatham injured and Mike Plaxco's torn muscle, the U.S. team managed another stage victory.



Only a real U.S. disaster could pull the South Africans into contention, and that was on everyone's mind as Friday's Son Of Colorado speed match approached. In past U.S. nationals many of the well-known top guns had fallen flat when facing the array of targets — all partially covered with a no-shoot. While labeled a speed match, accuracy is the priority. A 10-point ding for a nick on a no-shoot makes this one tough contest.

Each shooter faced four targets at ranges from five to 20 meters. Three targets had to have two hits, and one could be designated as a single-hit target. Most chose the 20-meter target as the single-hit. After the targets had been engaged, one had to shoot a six-by-six-inch-square stop plate to end the run. Each competitor had three strings.

Gold Team pistoleros cinched the championship, with runs totalling 63.25660 points to the Springboks' 52.28238. Those innocent no-shoots took their toll on the South Africans. American Rick Castelov, though not a member of either team, made his mark by scoring an outstanding 18.8254 points.

Slammin' Doors was the last test of skill for the 200 competitors. In 1981 the Basin Shoot was considered the most difficult, and Slammin' Doors proved to be just as tough.

One began seated in a chair. The weapon lay on the table, loaded, safety on. Any spare ammo had to be carried in the hands, or — in most cases — in one's mouth. On the start signal, one had to pick up the weapon and crash through a door to face two IPSC Milpark targets, one on the left at

Leatham leaps for first door in Slammin' Doors with official Frank Repass hot on his heels.

seven meters, and one on the right at 10. Each required at least two hits.

Meanwhile, three seconds after the start, a mover began to cross the range. After engaging both stationary targets one had to go through another door to get a shot at the moving target. Finally, a stop plate had to be hit to end the run.

This was fast action, and for many of the competitors the mover disappeared before he got through the second door. Ross Seyfried, '81 IPSC World Champ, took this stage with a factor of 10.0028. Leatham, nursing the torn knee, still managed a solid factor 9.47743.

Shoot-offs in practical handgunning are always a popular event, and in International Competition actual match points may be gained. In 1981 the man-versus-man event counted for 32 percent of the whole contest, but most felt this was too much. This year, the shoot-off winner was eligible for 10 match points, and lower places were factored down.

The shoot-offs consisted of four Pepper Poppers and a stop plate. No mandatory reload or fancy shooting. The pressure would take care of those who missed.

The four top shooters got "bys" and did not have to face each other, or those who moved up, until the final rounds. Jostling for places was confined to the middle of the

top 16, but conspicuously absent from those 16 were the South Africans. Only current RSA Champ Sidney Thorne made the cut-off.

John Shaw shot hard to make it to the top, but, alas, he did not gain enough points to overtake 1983 World Champion Rob Leatham. The final score was Leatham, 97.8792, and Shaw, 97.7001. It was a remarkable feat for Leatham. In one year he had won both the U.S. championship, and the crown jewel of IPSC — the world title. Congratulations.

Individually, the American shooters performed as if they were all capable of making anybody's team. If the story sounds a bit one-sided, it is. Never in any international match has one country so dominated the contest.

Was it the home court advantage? I don't think so. The level of competition in the U.S. Region has increased so much in the past two years that American practical shooters have established themselves as the ones to beat. While the United States is only allowed to enter one official team eligible for the gold medal, our second and unofficial team, the Silver Team, would have come in second. We could have entered five competitive teams.

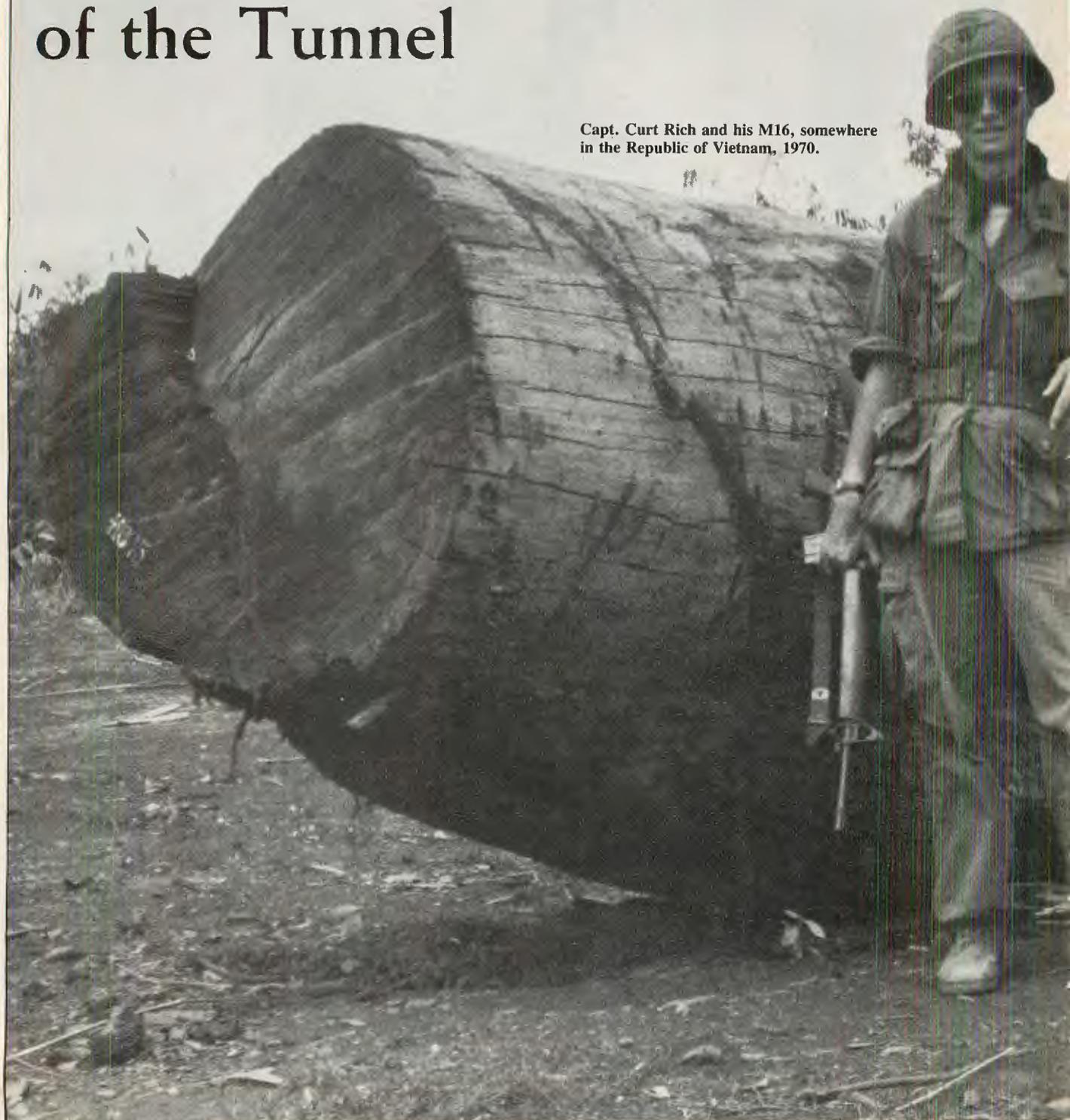
The next big international meets will be the Paris International in the fall of 1984 and a contest in Vienna, Austria, in 1985. The following world championship will be back in the United States in 1986.

Why wait? Now is the time to get into practical shooting. Contact IPSC, P.O. Box 626, Sioux City, IA 51102. ☒

'NAM SOUVENIR HUNT

The SKS at the End of the Tunnel

Capt. Curt Rich and his M16, somewhere
in the Republic of Vietnam, 1970.



Text & Photos by Curt Rich

MAY 25, 1970:

I knew things weren't going to go well when I tried to sit down and dump my pack for the noon chow break.

"*Dai Uy!* No! No sit!"

"Shit!" I was overbalanced and didn't know what I was about to sit on — a mine? I had the heavy pack about half off. If it had been full, I probably would have fallen backward. Since we hadn't been resupplied in three days, my normal load of C-rats was about gone, so I was able to catch myself and lunge forward. I scrambled to my feet and turned around.

The ARVNs were pointing at a small, brightly-colored snake slithering off from my planned sitting place. I knew enough about biology to know that a small snake with bright colors usually survived because he had a hellaciously poisonous bite. Predators can afford to be brightly colored. Prey must be camouflaged.

The ARVNs were telling me if he'd bitten me I'd have taken two steps and died. I was too tired to be scared. I just moved over and sat down.

We'd been in Cambodia two weeks, I guess, beginning with an assault on an NVA training center and ending up with a long chase into the jungle. A particularly obnoxious CBS reporter had tagged along to screw things up. He left to get his nightly Vodka Collins and massage in Saigon. We were still there. The only reason we hadn't shot his chopper down was we didn't want to hurt the crew. Anyway, my ARVNs couldn't hit a building from the inside.

We'd spent a week in the fifth layer of hell, deeper and deeper into swamps till we had leech bites up to our armpits and smelled like the rhino tank at the zoo. Despite my prayers that the NVA wouldn't be in that goddamned swamp because they weren't dumb enough to spend time there if they didn't have to, we wasted our time and energy there because some fool general had drawn some lines on a map without decent recon — even a flyover by chopper — and said go to it. But at least now we were out of the swamp and on higher ground.

I was a very young captain serving as senior adviser to a leg battalion in 9th Regiment, 5th ARVN Infantry Division. I had a lieutenant and two enlisted men, both SP4s, one a big black man in his 30s we called Wyatt because he carried an S&W .357 Magnum on his hip.

By now, that pistol was four pounds of dead weight because Duke, the other EM, had dropped it while playing grabass and broke the mainspring. Duke was a fat, whining teenager whose great desire was to get back to his mother's Tastee Freeze in New Jersey. In fire fights he was semi-useless while Wyatt was very cool. Duke bitched 24 hours a day. I had dreams of sticking my K-BAR through him and slowly twisting it, just to stop his bitching.

The lieutenant had been in the bush too long. He'd received pictures of his new daughter, and it changed him from a brave, gung-ho go-getter to a very cautious non-fighter. I didn't blame him then, and certainly don't now. I'd been scared half to death for 10 months. I was tired, frazzled and ready to leave this, too.

He'd been driving me crazy with talk of souvenirs. He had some Ho Chi Minh sandals and bragged about them constantly. He knew that I had almost gotten the semi-ultimate souvenir, a K-54 pistol (the ultimate souvenir being an NVA medal) but it had been stolen by my trusty ARVNs. He rubbed it in.

Today the thought of any souvenirs sounds silly. Who cares? Why would a grown man fighting for survival care about a damned souvenir? What kind of a nut would risk anything to get one? After months in the bush, though, the brain snaps. I would risk. I was an idiot.

I sat there with a small square of C-4, heating my last C-ration (pork — which I hated and always saved for last, hoping for a reprieve, maybe a medevac before I had to eat it), when I looked up and noticed a guy was walking toward us wearing khaki.

Since I was in the middle of a deployed infantry battalion of at least minimal competence, I'd felt fairly safe.

Wrong!

He was carrying an AK-47 at a loose port arms. I dove for my Colt Commando (XM177E1) and flipped the selector to full auto, yelling, "VC!" and firing a four-round burst.

I was not the only one. The ARVNs all seemed to shoot at once. Firing erupted all over, and not all of it directed in the right direction, so I lay behind a log with my nose in the dirt. When it calmed down I looked over the log to see how the hapless dumb NVA was doing.

He was lying on his back, leaking in several places. His AK was out of reach several yards away and appeared damaged. He had new Ho Chi Minh sandals on his feet.

"Aha, a souvenir," said my addled brain, still not recovered from having an NVA walk into the middle of our unit.

I ran over to him and grabbed one sandal. He looked up at me. I was shocked.

"Son of a gun, you're alive!" I said.

Then a grenade went off, and firing began again. I dove behind a tree, bringing something to my senses. (Rich's first rule of combat: Always know where to hide.) This time I didn't move from behind the damned tree until the all clear.

He had had a partner. His partner had been caught by surprise, too. Both of them had been carrying AKs, and both had taken hits in the chest. Amazingly, both AKs had hits in the breech area by .223 bullets and would not function. All the firing had been



ARVN. The second NVA had tried to throw two grenades. One had reached an unoccupied clearing. The other had blown off his buddy's foot just after I had gone *didi mau*. Consequently I couldn't find the other sandal — or his foot.

Despite the best American, ARVN and NVA efforts, his buddy was still alive. Our medic went to work on him, since my ARVNs were undamaged. This was a bit unusual. They tended to shoot themselves and each other under stress. STRAC troops they were not. The NVA's right elbow was blown away by a .223 round, and he had a sucking chest wound, among others. He was not in great shape. We began to question him.

"Where is your unit?"

"I can't tell you that."

He had a wallet. I opened it. In it were photos of his girlfriend and two of himself, one in a pith helmet, one with a chest full of medals.

I had the interpreter ask, "Did you win these?" I understood a good deal of Vietnamese, but I pretended not to. It extended my life span. The ARVNs were more dangerous to advisers than NVA.

"No, no. Just for girlfriend. For picture. Borrowed."

"Come on. This is a medal for killing an American. Did you win it?"

I knew what one looked like because one of my sergeants months before had gotten one off a dead NVA and bragged about it through six beers.

"No, no! For pictures!"

"Where's your unit?"

"I can't tell you."

"Look, you want to be medevacked? Helicopter? Hospital? You want to live?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"I can't call a helicopter till I know where your unit is."

This was, of course, true.

"Across from the clearing one kilometer.



Wounded NVA had this picture of himself in wallet, found by author during interrogation. Unlucky NVA died as medevac circled overhead.

Five hundred, 600 men. In training. New troops."

"Armed?"

"AKs, like me."

"Okay, sucker, we're even."

I got with Maj. Hung, the ARVN CO. We moved to the edge of the oval, football-field-size clearing. We were to get resupplied there. We'd had a bad experience calling in Air Force F-5s for a previous bombing mission. They had been armed with 750-pound bombs, and they wouldn't drop them within 300 meters of friendly troops. In heavy brush and occasional multiple-canopy jungle like this, we didn't worry

RICH AGAIN

It's literary exorcism, if you will. Curt Rich has been spending more time at the typewriter lately, getting his Vietnam experience on paper. And SOF has been pleased with the results so far, as readers will recall from his last contribution in our December '83 issue, "The Lieutenant's CIB." This month's story is a bit more bush-oriented, and may remind many of our 'Nam vets what things were usually like across the pond: Situation Normal: All Fucked Up.

Rich makes his home in Pasadena, Texas, where he is continuing work on a novel about U.S. advisers in Vietnam. SOF looks forward to publishing more of his work in future issues.

— John Metzger

Author Rich, today, proudly shows off one of few souvenirs he brought back from 'Nam: SKS rifle.





about anyone 300 meters away. They might as well be in Saigon for all we cared. We needed bombs *close*. I'd taken responsibility and given my initials and serial number over the radio, but they still dropped 200 meters from our frontline marker.

So this time we called VNAF "Spads" (Skyraiders) and a couple of heavy fire teams.

The Spads came in with 500-pound bombs. After their first run I decided they could hit the ace of spades on a poker table. They were good. We had them dropping 50 meters away, eventually 30 meters when they flushed the NVA in our direction. We got shrapnel through the trees. The heavy fire teams cut off retreat on three sides and us on the fourth.

This was a fairly successful ploy and not much was left of the NVA unit by late afternoon.

Our NVA captive died as the medevac Huey circled, waiting for Cobra escorts so he could come in and pick him up.

The resupply chopper came in on time and took away my enlisted men. Battle or no battle, they had a promotion board! I was given a cool, third-tour E-6 in trade. I was happy. To get rid of Duke, I would have taken a rabid Bengal tiger, but someone who actually knew what he was doing was too much to ask. Anyway, he didn't bitch.

We moved into the enemy's base camp and counted bodies. Then we found the rice — 20 tons of rice.

I called it in. No one believed me. One of my fellow senior advisers, of a sister battalion, had called in a huge weapons cache, and when they started sending in Hueys for it, the "weapons cache" didn't fill the first Huey. Several senior officers had reported the find — all the way to Nixon. Now all reports were suspect.

"Count the bags yourself. Can you weigh them?" came the order. I looked insanely at my handset.

"Gee, ah, sorry. My truck scale isn't available. Look, I've counted 200 100-kilo bags. Add it up yourself. If I'm lyin', fire

me and send me to Vietnam."

Author and ARVNs on op somewhere near Song Be in August 1969. "I thought I was just sweating more than the ARVNs from lack of hot weather acclimatization," said Rich, "but the next day I was medevacked with heat stroke, and was delirious for a couple of days."

me and send me to Vietnam."

"Count 'em again. And believe me, if you're lyin', I will fire you."

"Bravo, foxtrot, delta," I said, but I didn't say it on the radio. (If you don't know what BFD means, use your imagination.)

Swell. Walking around a mile-square area counting bags of rice while NVA pop out of holes and take potshots at you is not my idea of fun. I was pretty sure of my first count, so I simulated a recount and called back in two hours, verifying my original count.

We were ordered to secure the area and start preparing an LZ to bring the rice out.

So we stayed the night.

We stayed the week. We had to cut an LZ. In 100-degree weather with 100-percent humidity, choppers aren't too efficient (as if we grunts were), so we had to keep making it bigger. After taking out a few loads by UH-1H, it was apparent we needed a "Shithook" (Chinook)-sized LZ. That meant cutting down trees — lots of trees.

Then we found the bunker full of AK-47s, SKSs and other goodies.

Maj. Hung asked me, "You want a souvenir?"

"What kind?" I said, not knowing yet what was in the bunker.

"CKC!" said Hung. ARVNs called SKSs CKCs. I'm sure some reader or staff member will write in to tell me why. Maybe there's a difference. I don't particularly care. He held up a Chinese-built SKS complete with bayonet in nice condition.

"Sure!"

"Okay, *Dai Uy*. You-go-down-bunker, pick-out-three-CKC-for-you-men."

Fine. Swell. Great. I was not made for

crawling around in bunkers. Mrs. Rich didn't raise that big a fool. But I thought of the lieutenant's jibes about souvenirs and my failure to come up with even two sandals. I grabbed a flashlight and went in.

DUMB.

In the beam of the flashlight were over a hundred SKSs and AK-47s. On the top row was a particularly clean SKS. I started to grab for it when my bullshit alarm went off in my head, and I stopped and shook for a second. I started examining it with the flashlight and found a string going from the trigger guard to the wall, where a nail had been used to direct it down to the bottom mine in a stack of 13 antitank mines.

I stopped breathing for at least 20 minutes (or so it seemed) and stood there transfixed, with visions of how far the pieces would have gone had I picked up my souvenir.

Then I realized the string was slack. That meant it didn't have an anti-tamper device. I cut it with my knife and brought out the "clean" SKS and two other nice ones. After I recovered I gave my lieutenant and sergeant one each.

The story didn't end there, though. I was going to shoot the rifle one day while we were still at LZ Mother (named unofficially because cutting it was a "mutha," according to my sergeant). I was cleaning it out with its in-butt cleaning kit when the interpreter ran in wanting a medevac. It seemed that one of the troops had the AK he was firing blow up in his face. We didn't know anything about "Bol Bean" then. Word about such U.S. boobytrapping of enemy caches was not given out to ARVN units.

I handled the medevac and put the SKS back together, having no need for a bolt in my eye.

But the SKS's saga didn't end there, either. A few nights later we took some short rounds from ARVN 155mm artillery. They hurt some ARVNs and put the lieutenant over the edge. He'd been asking for a rear-area job for months. I sent him back on the next chopper with the three SKSs.

Unknown to us, the ARVN regimental CO was selling the captured weapons in Saigon, supposedly to the Cambodian Army, but, knowing him, probably to the NVA. About then he realized he was three short. He wanted those three SKSs. He showed up at Mother with an armed escort. I had a rather disagreeable confrontation in which the new E-6 had me covered from the tree line, his M16 aimed at Fatso's head.

Then Fatso realized the rifles were with my lieutenant, so he radioed to have the chopper boarded at An Loc, Regimental HQ. I radioed, too, and when the Huey landed, surrounded with 9th Recon with machine guns, no SKSs were found.

Mine is now on my wall at home, one of the few souvenirs I got away from that unfortunate, lamented conflict. I also have one of the two photos of the NVA. My lieutenant got the other one. I may be the only person in the world who remembers him. I would much rather be remembering him than having him remembering me. ☒



YOU can saw your way out of an airplane fuselage, bash your way through the busted glass of a wrecked vehicle, build a snare, seriously damage an attacker, shuck an oyster, slice a steak, chop firewood, or pound a nail or tent peg with one of Keith Nelson's handmade fighting or survival knives. Best of all, you won't feel guilty about scratching your new \$300 knife.

All the above is possible for under \$155, if you want a good, tough, working knife that is not only a small work of art but a darned good tool.

Keith Nelson is a medical doctor, adventurer, soldier and a fine up-and-coming knife designer and maker. Nelson is a professional man who builds fighting and survival knives for use, not for decoration.

"I want my knives to be used," he said.

"I'm not really interested in making collector's knives. I'd rather turn out 10 good, functional knives than two decorative ones."

Nelson knows whereof he speaks. He served as a medical specialist in the U.S. Army Special Forces and later as a medical NCO with the Rhodesian Light Infantry. In Rhodesia he was severely wounded by a landmine and forced to give up his career as a soldier.

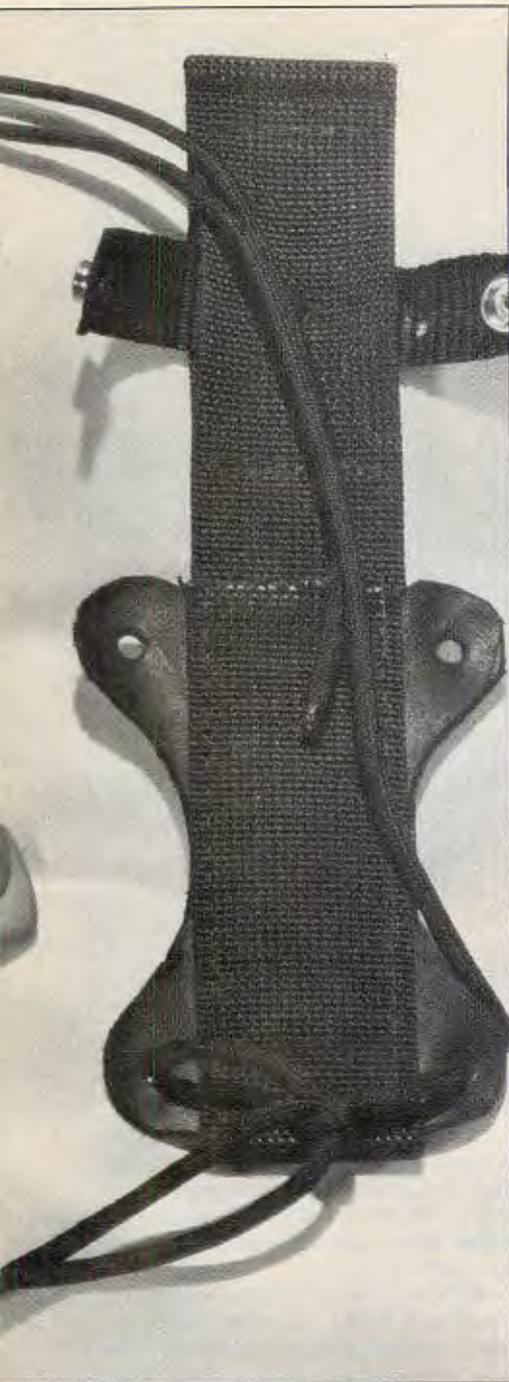
Nelson refused to be pensioned off by the Rhodesian government and sent back to the United States. Instead he enrolled in the University of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and proceeded to become a medical doctor. As politics continued to shift to the left, Nelson, realizing his future would be less than secure in a country run by former terrorists, returned to the United States with

his family. While waiting for admission to a medical residency, he began to design and build knives.

Nelson has specialized in fighting and survival knives, since these types see more use and require a rugged design. He builds knives that will see long, hard use in the field, rather than gather dust on the collector's shelf. "These survival knives are practically indestructible. You can't do much damage to them," he claimed.

One of his customers took him at his word and insisted on throwing a Nelson knife against a concrete wall several times. Nelson had to resharpen the knife, but other than that, the blade was fine.

All Nelson's knives are constructed from 440C stainless steel and are heat-treated in a vacuum furnace. The blades are then quenched in liquid nitrogen to harden the



NELSON'S KNIVES

Just What the Doctor Ordered

Text & Photos by John Early

LEFT: Purely functional, no-frills survival knives with multiple-attachment leather and nylon sheaths.

BELOW: Combat knife Nelson made for John Early.



steel to the desired temper. The blades are vapor-blasted to a dull finish to reduce shine, although polished blades are available on request. Nelson will construct a knife to any specification upon request. Current waiting time is less than two months.

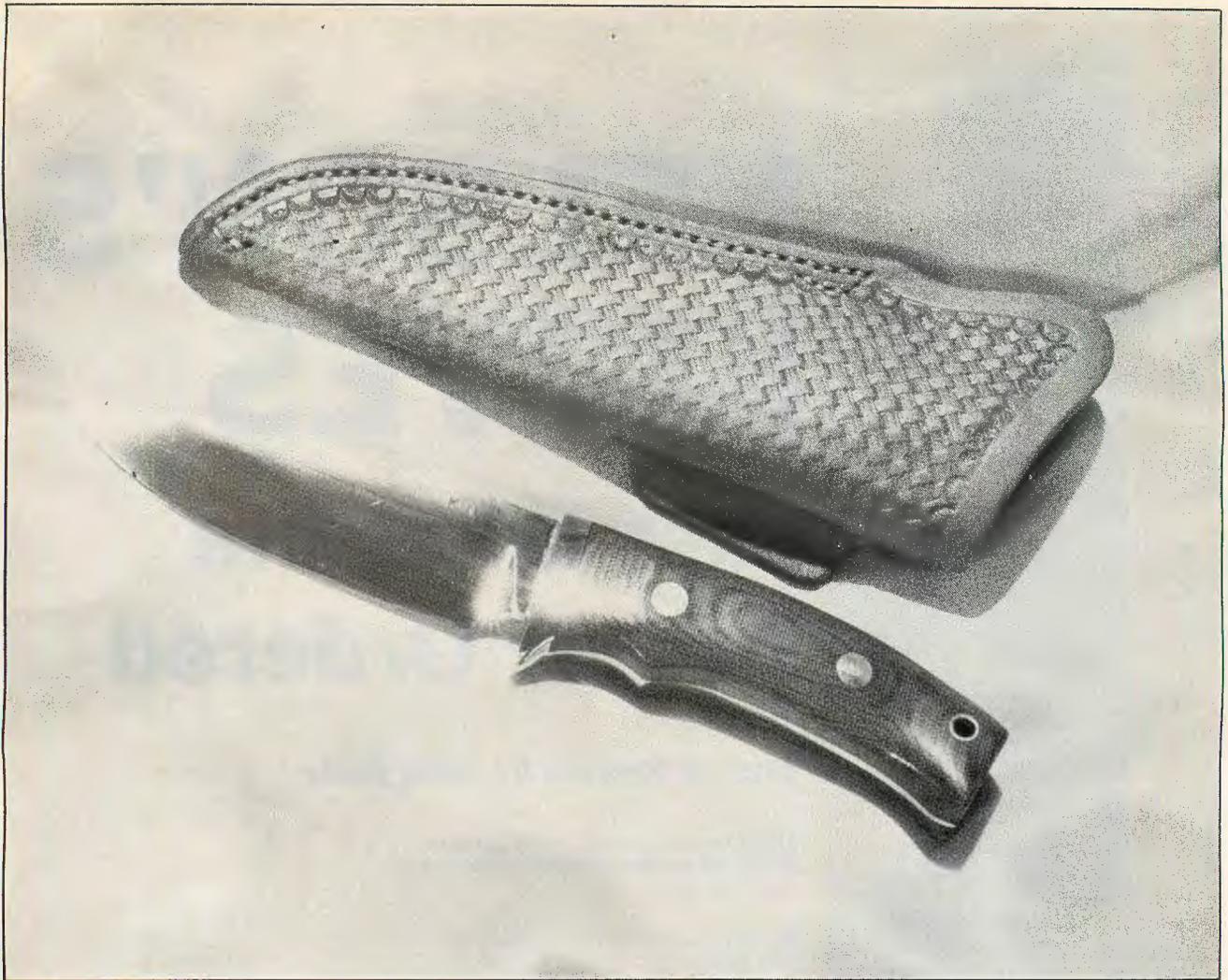
There are a variety of options available for each blade. These include saw-teeth, single- or double-edged blade, a variety of micarta and wooden handles or parachute cord in several colors and several guards. Each knife comes with nylon or leather sheath and some with both. The knives bear no serial number and can be ordered without any identifiable markings for use in sensitive operations. Each knife is delivered with a razor-honed edge, ready to go to work. All his standard knives are priced well under \$200. Some are under \$100.

"People who pay \$200 to \$300 for a knife tend to look at it more than use it," Nelson said.

Several of his knives are already in the hands of working professionals, as well as some elite military units. Nelson currently makes about five standard models. All of his knives feature full tangs for added

strength and durability.

His survival knife comes in two sizes, the four-inch and the five-and-a-half-inch blade. The five-and-a-half-inch model has saw-teeth and both models have handles wrapped with parachute suspension line. Each knife is issued with nylon sheaths in OD or black. The pommels of Nelson's



TOP: Classic heavy-blade drop-point hunter.

ABOVE: Black-micarta-handled straight-blade hunter made for SOF's Robert K. Brown.



survival knives can be used to break through plexiglass, open cans or crack skulls.

The utility knife also comes in two sizes, a four-inch drop-point hunter and a five-inch straight blade. The hunters come standard with wet-molded boot sheaths and either wood or micarta handles in a number of colors.

Nelson's top-of-the-line knife is his seven-inch fighter. The blade can be constructed in any configuration desired. It features a pommel that can be used for fighting or breaking through plexiglass like the survival models, saw-teeth and the vapor-blasted finish. Each fighter comes with dull green or black micarta handle grips and a variety of guards to suit the owner. Each knife comes with a leather or nylon sheath and a razor edge. Finger grips are available upon request.

Nelson's custom knives are all reasonably priced for a handmade product. The survival knives sell for \$85 while the fighters go for around \$155, depending on options. You can't beat these prices for a custom knife these days.

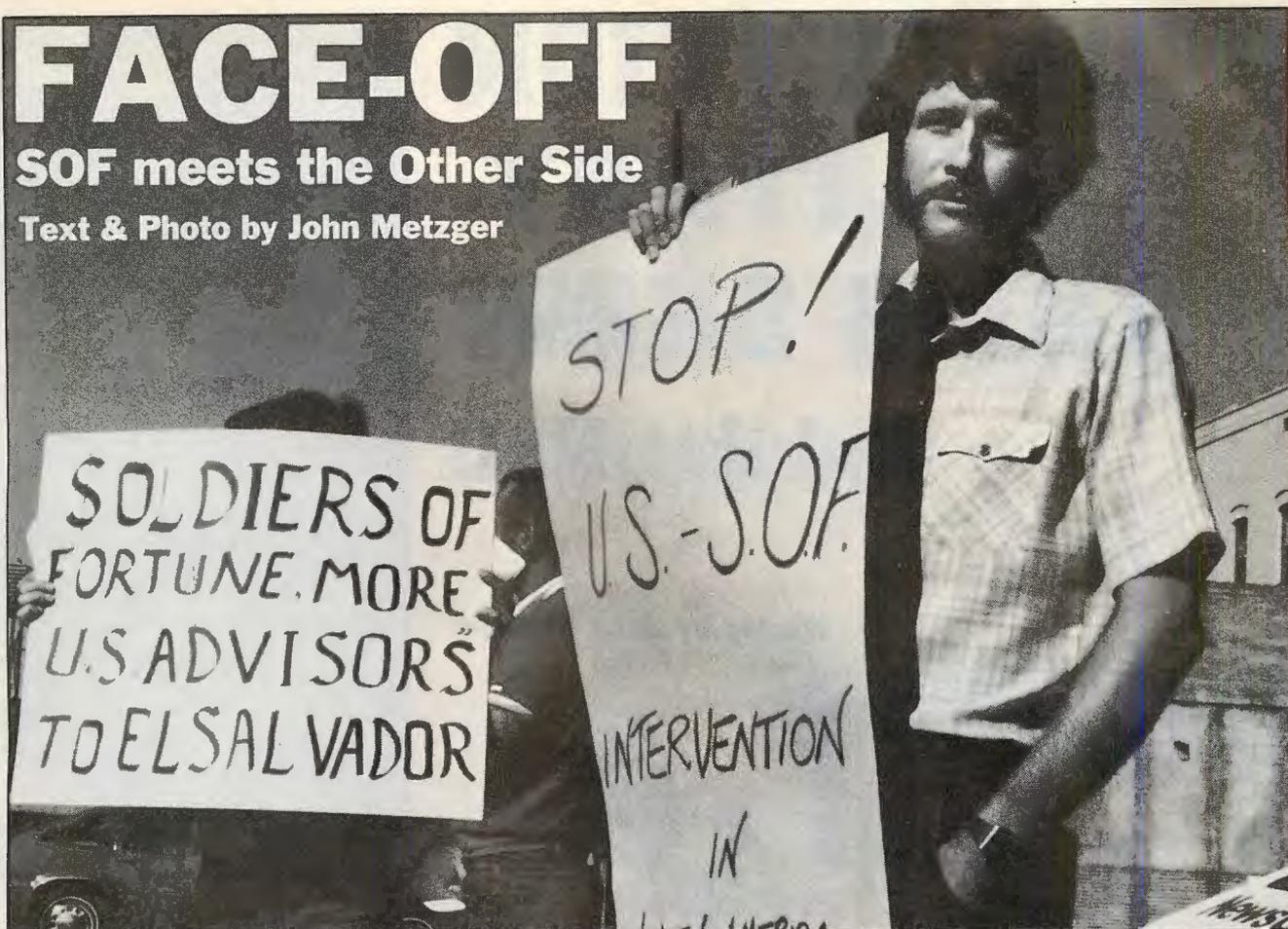
For a complete list of knives and options, send \$3 for postage and handling to Nelson Custom Knives, Dept. SOF, 3021 Frontier NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106.

For the professional who wants to get and keep the edge, a Nelson knife is a good investment and a great tool. ✕

FACE-OFF

SOF meets the Other Side

Text & Photo by John Metzger



“**D**ID you make a lot of money killing civilians in El Salvador?”

The question was directed at SOF's Tom Reisinger.

“Fuck you, asshole,” replied Reisinger. Tom is one of those easy-going types who rarely get ruffled, but he was pissed off now. The cowering protester slithered off.

The '60s holdover was one of 11 demonstrators who stood outside Denver's KOA Radio 85 building while talk-show host Peter Boyle interviewed Bob Brown, discussing SOF's involvement in Central America. The protesters told us that they “represented the consensus of the People of the United States of America.” We asked them if they had consulted with the People of the United States of America first, to make sure they weren't misrepresenting anyone.

“We are an ad-hoc group of concerned citizens who are opposed to mercenary activity around the world,” said the leader. One thing these people do brilliantly is change subjects.

The delegation of 11, who allegedly represented the entire population of the United States, dwindled to five by the time we left. Their signs carried messages such as “Mercenary Intervention Is Part Of U.S. War Plan” and “Stop U.S./S.O.F. Intervention In Latin America.” They screamed slogans: “Soldier of Fortune, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide!” and “Hands off Nicaragua, U.S. out of El Salvador!” Heavy stuff.

Brown fielded listener questions during

the 45-minute broadcast, most callers voicing support of SOF efforts to help El Salvadoran government forces. Brown heard about the planned demonstration and sent Reisinger and me down to take a look. We were the only journalists there. The leader asked who we were, and hurried away when we told him. He spread the word, causing some of his cohorts to hide their faces behind placards as we began taking pictures. I guess they figured we were doing groundwork for an SOF “hit list.”

The protest was predictable. Nothing unusual about it, really, and I hardly expected to get a “story” out of it. But after hearing what they had to say, I realized that these people were on the *other side* — they are fighting the war, just as surely as a left-wing lobbyist in Washington or an FMLN guerrilla in the bush. They believe every word they say — and it was startling to hear.

They told us that the government pacification programs in Guatemala and El Salvador are “systematic attempts to murder everyone not supporting the oppressive dictatorships.” They even accused Tom and me of personally taking part in this genocide program. And the Miskito Indians? Why, they are strongly backing the Sandinista regime. “The Sandinistas are a godsend to the Miskitos. Now they can live in peace,” we were told.

“But what about the refugees from torture who are fleeing Nicaragua?” we asked. The subject was changed. We further discussed the Miskitos with an expert in the

field. I assumed he had been raised by the Indians, the way he was carrying on, so I asked him.

“Well, I've never been there,” he said meekly. Then his face lit up: “But, a friend, whom I trust, has been there!” Typical of left-wing “proof.”

They spoke of villages destroyed, civilians murdered — the work of government troops. Subjects changed when we asked for any clarification, such as names of villages leveled by right-wing death squads. Then we found out another interesting fact.

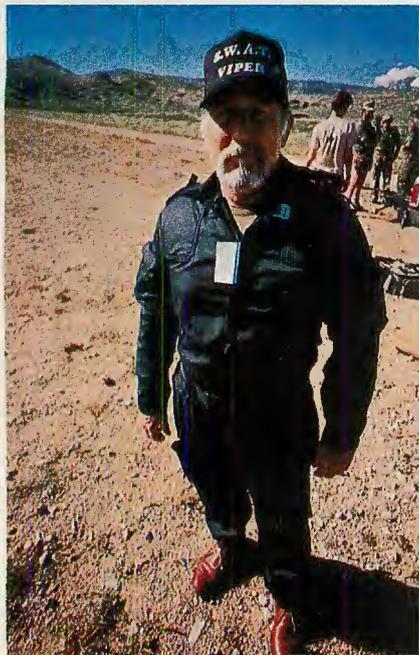
“We have an Indian genocide policy in the U.S. right now,” said the Miskito expert. “The Guatemalan and Salvadoran government policies of murdering the Indian population are greatly influenced by U.S. anti-Indian policies. You didn't think the Guatemalan and Salvadoran governments came up with that idea themselves, did you?” More left-wing drivel.

The conversation was frustrating — each side so set in its ways, each side so sure the other was wrong. But the whole point of this is that Reisinger and I had been there and seen the situation first hand.

What it's going to take is for everyone reading this, everyone who believes in fighting the spread of communism in the Americas, to write his congressmen, the president, everyone. Tell them what you think — don't let the sign wavers speak for you. Let's go, people. The war is being fought right here. ✕

CONVENTION MILITARY- ARMS SHOW Exhibit Hall

Photos by John Metzger

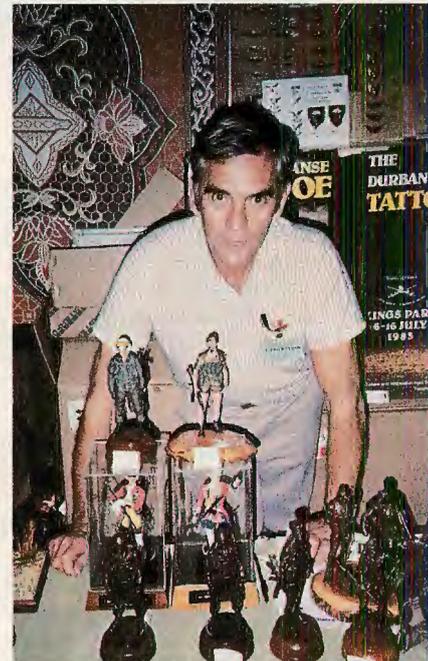


ABOVE: I tried to grab hold of Delbert Gilbow's "Black Widow" SWAT suit, but its tough poly-cotton material makes it virtually impossible. The fabric is non-melting (unlike polyester) and won't stick to skin when on fire. Shoulders, knees and elbows are neoprene-padded. Designed for use with Silent Partner body armor inside and out, it has been well-received by pilots and parachutists for its comfort, well-placed pockets and non-burn features. It retails for \$149.95 and is marketed by Silent Partner (Dept. SOF, 230 Lafayette St., Gretna, LA 70053).

RIGHT: Aaron Wood of Combat Weapons Systems, Inc. (Dept. SOF, Box 96, Waurika, OK 73573) makes and sells full-auto shotguns that work. (Finally!) He proved it at the range demos. Shown here is the ASG-12 assault 12-gauge shotgun (about \$750), cyclic rate 400 rpm. This is just one configuration of the many machine shotguns available to qualified buyers. Look for test and evaluation in future issue.



ABOVE: Heckler & Koch (Dept. SOF, 14601 Lee Rd., Chantilly, VA 22021) brought their new PSG 1 sniper rifle to the show. Shotgun match winner Bill Rogers put the weapon through its paces at range demos. Watch for a full report on the PSG 1 in a future issue.



ABOVE AND ABOVE LEFT: Peter Schofield (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 16063, Brighton Beach 4009, Durban, South Africa) displayed his limited-edition, cold-cast-bronze military figurines at the show. Schofield is a perfectionist: "I'd like to break into the American market. But if someone wanted a Special Forces soldier, it would have to be commissioned [minimum of 10] so the detail would be perfect. I can't afford to make a model unless it is absolutely accurate." Schofield served with South African Forces, the major influence in his work.

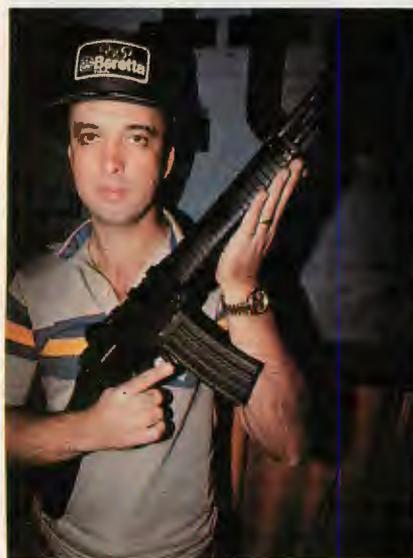


ABOVE: Dick Swan of A.R.M.S. (Dept. SOF, 230 W. Center St., W. Bridgewater, MA 02379) with his Swan G3 Universal Scope Base (\$145). It fits all HK G-3 weapons, and will take on about any scope made.

LEFT: Dick Swan donated \$2,100 worth of A.R.M.S. products (G3 Scope Base, bipods and Mag-Pacs, the dual magazine fasteners) to El Salvador's immediate reaction battalion snipers. Swan is shown with Bob Brown as he donated merchandise to Salvadoran battalion delegate. With the profusion of scopes in Central America, the G3 Scope Base is needed.



LEFT: They may look busy, but they're probably not. SOF staffers manned information booth in exhibit hall. Photo: Marty Casey



ABOVE: Warren Barron of Beretta U.S.A. (Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607) shows off new AR 70/SPORT rifle — semiauto version of AR 70. Watch for Peter Kokalis' full report in SOF.

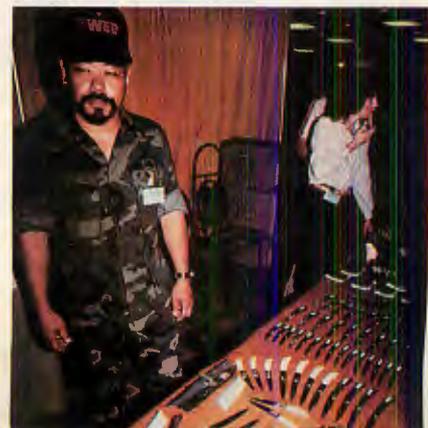


LEFT: Watch for this one: Garth Choate's prototype military/police assault shotgun. First-place match sponsor Choate Machine & Tool Co. (Dept. SOF, Box 218, Bald Knob, AR 72010) had custom parts and modifications for all applications and just about every weapon at the show. Photo: Ernie Husted



ABOVE: "Maybe I should buy all their books," thinks conventioneer Benn Squires at Paladin Press booth. Photo: Marty Casey

BELOW: Knifemaker Al Mar displays his wares.



CONVENTION '83

SOF Draws Full House in Vegas

Text & Photos by John Metzger

AN unconventional convention. . . . One might think that 900 hard-looking men in camouflage fatigues and combat boots invading and occupying a peaceful southwestern U.S. city would raise a few eyebrows. In most places, yes, but not in Las Vegas, Nev.

Nothing fazes this town. And so it was business as usual for this desert town when *Soldier of Fortune* let loose its Fourth Annual Convention, 5-9 October 1983, at the Sahara Hotel & Casino.

Vegas might have taken it in stride, but some conventioners definitely were fazed (and dazed) after a week of whooping it up in traditional SOF style. This year's convention was bigger and better than ever — the only real disappointment being cancellation of the jump school. But it was a great show: The Three-Gun International Combat Match went off without a hitch, seminars were well-attended, weapons demonstrations wowed the crowd at the Desert Sportsman Rifle & Pistol Club Range, the exhibit hall overflowed with all the latest goodies, the banquet hall filled up for speeches and awards presentations, and the whole shindig culminated with the customary "Let's go" - "Why not?" pool party.

Lanny Provienc of Germantown, Tenn., took overall honors in the match, as well as winning the rifle stage. First-place sponsor, Garth Choate of Choate Machine and Tool Co., presented Provienc with \$5,000 cash, a trophy and a customized Mini-14. He was also awarded a presentation bowie knife valued at \$1,100 from Bill Bagwell of Bagwell Precision Knives. Bill Rogers came out on top in the shotgun match, receiving a Benelli shotgun and trophy from L.L. Baston & Co. World pistol champ Rob Leatham went home with a .45 and trophy from Detonics .45 Associates after winning the pistol match. Watch for complete match coverage in March's SOF.

Seminars were more popular than ever because of better scheduling, which allowed everyone to take in all events, and the timely topics presented. One that had them craning their necks from the hallway



Robert K. Brown
addresses conventioners
before SOF Central
America slide show.

was Peter Kokalis' "Assault Rifle: History and Future Employment." Kokalis knew how to please *this* crowd. Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt, SOF's Unconventional Operations Editor, gave an informative lecture on unconventional air operations in support of unconventional ground operations, and a sit-rep on air ops in El Salvador. Phil Gonzales and John Padgett presented a slide show of SOF's recent medical aid mission to Central America. Robert Caldwell, editorial writer for the *San Diego Union*, and Karl Phaler, SOF writer, rounded out the Central America discussion with an analysis of Soviet activities in the area.

Dr. John Peters, SOF's Paramedic Operations Editor, gave an eight-hour, hands-on survival medicine training course. Noted science-fiction and strategic-defense author Dr. Jerry Pournelle opened some eyes with his lecture: "Deterrent and Defense of America in the 1980s." David Isby and Jim Coyne presented the latest developments regarding the Soviets in Afghanistan — not the stuff you read in the papers, including Coyne's interview of two Russian POWs found on page 74.

For the numerous police-types attending,

Ken Pence of the Nashville Police Academy conducted a lively discussion/demonstration on police defensive tactics. For SOFers interested in refining their art to a science, two seminars attracted attention: "Mercenaries, Foreign Armies and International Law," by Dana Drenkowski, SOF's Aviation Editor and a practicing attorney, and Andy Langley's "Freelancing as a Military Adviser." The POW/MIA issue was addressed by Col. Chuck Allen, SOF's Vietnam Veterans Affairs Editor, in his seminar, "POW/MIA Accountability: Government and Private Ventures." Col. Allen is probably the most knowledgeable person in the country on all aspects of this subject.

One of the most interesting of all seminars was conducted by a man known as the "Luftwaffe's master interrogator." Hanns Scharff, now a well-known mosaic artist from California, discussed "POW Interrogation: Correct Technique and Philosophy." Scharff dealt with the cream of the crop of prisoners during WWII: downed Allied fighter pilots.

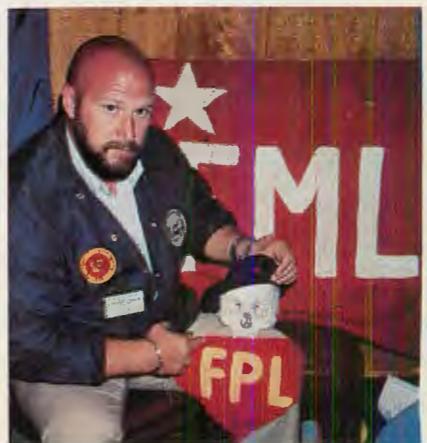
A heartwarming sidelight accompanied Scharff's visit to Vegas. John Scharff, 25, a former Navy Seabee and four-year convention vet, asked a friend if there were any seminars worth catching. "Yes," replied the friend, "one on POW interrogation." John Scharff looked at the schedule and saw the name of the father he had never met. Hanns married an American girl after the war, but they separated before John was born. John and Hanns met here in Vegas for the first time.

"I thought this might happen some day," said a beaming Hanns.

"I always thought my life was complete," said John, "but now I know it wasn't. I'd really reached a low point recently, and came to this convention solely to relax, and maybe get a better grip on life. Then this happened, more than fulfilling my wildest dreams." John will visit his father's home in California, and meet three half-brothers he has never seen: "I'll be playing catch up with my 'new' family. I'm on



ABOVE: A few VIPs were speakers at convention banquet Saturday night: "Chargin' Charlie" Beckwith, G. Gordon Liddy, Robert K. Brown. **LEFT:** John Scharff met his father, Hanns, for the first time at 4th Annual Convention. **CENTER RIGHT:** Shooter Raul Walters concentrates on shotgun course. **LOWER RIGHT:** SOF's John Donovan and friend (a former Salvadoran guerrilla).





ABOVE: Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt discusses Salvadoran air operations.



ABOVE: Demos on Saturday drew a full house. **CENTER LEFT:** Poster girl "Bo" gets into convention spirit. **LOWER LEFT:** Ex-guerrilla came all the way from El Salvador to pose with SOF duffel bag.





UPPER LEFT: Peter Kokalis and Carlos Davila get ready to fire "Ma Deuce" in firepower demo. **LEFT:** Two DAV conventioneers discuss SOF with Robert K. Brown. Photo: Tim Oest **LOWER LEFT:** "Who needs elevators?" Fred Borchardt prepares to have a few drinks by the pool — seven stories below.



ABOVE: Conventioneers attending awards ceremony had a lot to cheer about. **LEFT:** One hell of a way to get to the pool party.



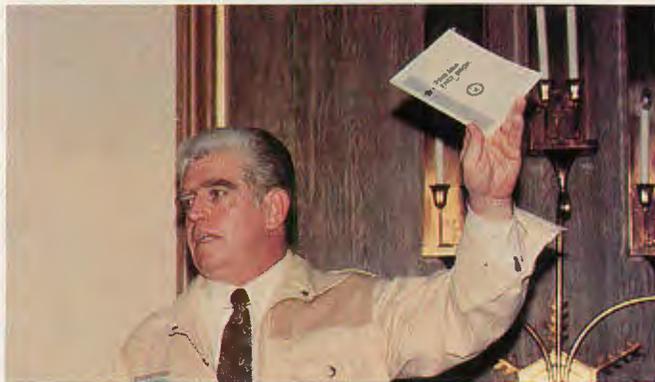
Rockin' and rullin' with the SOF Firepower Demo Team.



BELOW:
SOF
Firepower
Demo team
member Sam
Urschel
shows off
M16A1
Carbine.



ABOVE: Steyr representative fires AUG on demonstration day. **RIGHT:** Col. Chuck Allen addressed POW/MIA issue in his seminar. **LOWER RIGHT:** Sam Allen of SOF Firepower Demo team fires FN FAL. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The "Luftwaffe's master interrogator," Hanns Scharff, gave seminar on POW interrogation techniques.



RIGHT: Phoenix PD chopper pilot Al Nordeen fires .30-06 Browning 1919A4 LMG during firepower demonstrations. **LOWER RIGHT:** John Satterwhite put on his phenomenal trick shooting exhibition.





ABOVE: SOF's Jim Coyne shows off award presented to Robert K. Brown.

Inscription reads:
 "Presented to Col. Robert K. Brown (USAR) — Soldier of Fortune Magazine — from the brave people of Afghanistan in recognition of his continued support and assistance in the fight for freedom against Soviet aggression and forces of occupation in Afghanistan."

LEFT: Robert K. Brown plugs his ears as SOF Firepower Demo Team blows up range. Photo: Tim Oest

indefinite vacation right now." SOF, and our readers I'm sure, extend congratulations and best wishes to the Scharffs.

Saturday was demo day at the range. Various firms showed off their latest inventions, including suppressed SMGs, body armor, knife demos, automatic shotguns and weaponry of all ilks. John Satterwhite put on his *amazing* shotgun show, with the usual "How did he do *that!*!" crowd reaction. Peter Kokalis ran the demonstrations, and ended the program with a thunder of machine guns: The SOF Firepower Demo — pyrotechnics courtesy of SOF's John "Dynamite" Donovan.

The demos, and the whole convention for that matter, were filmed and the video is available on videotape from Marketing Dynamics, Dept. SOF, 4550 Kearny Villa Rd. No. 107, San Diego, CA 92123.

The convention wound down that night with speeches and the awards ceremony in the Sahara banquet hall. Master of Ceremonies Donovan kicked things off with his usual tall tale, and introduced the speakers. "Chargin' Charlie" Beckwith, the recipient of this year's Bull Simons Award from SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, offered a few words, reminding us of what it means to be an American: Love it or leave it. But he was preaching to a choir. Hoots,



ABOVE: SOF writers John Padgett and Phil Gonzales compete in traditional pool party diving trials. **BELOW:** Dr. Jerry Pournelle discussed America's global defense situation in his seminar.



Marine grunts and applause followed his every word. Medal of Honor winner Lew Millet offered thanks to the man who made this all possible, Robert K. Brown.

Then it was the keynote speaker's turn: G. Gordon Liddy. "I'm going to finish the talk I started last year," he said, referring to the Third Annual Convention in Charlotte where he also spoke. He compared NATO forces in Europe with the Warsaw Pact, criticized the nuclear-freeze movement and lashed out against U.S. intelligence policy trends, outlining how America has sabotaged its own covert intelligence and espionage capabilities. "We are our own worst enemies," he said. His final statement, "I feel at home in this room!" brought the house down.

After awards were handed out, it was time for a few drinks by the pool. As a smoke grenade blew off from behind, enveloping me in sparks and smoke, I thought, "Yup. I'm really at the convention." Not that there was any doubt before, but the pool party drove the point home. Then the first revelers jumped in the pool with full cammies and boots. It was over — the 1983 SOF Convention. And what a fine way to end it. Thanks for coming, and we'll see you next year! ☘

Crack SADF Unit Earns SWAPO Hatred

32 BATTALION

AN aura of mystery and intrigue surrounds the elite 32 Battalion of the South African Defense Force (SADF).

The unit grew out of the chaos of the Angolan Civil War in 1965-76 when remnants of Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) lost out in a three-cornered civil war after the Portuguese gave up their former colony in 1975.

The arrival of Cuban troops and Russian advisers coupled with the curtailment of U.S. aid to pro-Western factions in Angola allowed the Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) to seize power in Angola.

Fearing retribution from their enemies, the MPLA and many members of FNLA and their families fled south under the protection of the South African Army, which was leaving Angola after Operation Savannah in 1975-76.

The South Africans — recognizing the determination and fighting spirit of these troops — retrained, re-equipped and formed them into a battalion led by SADF officers and a sprinkling of regular SADF NCOs.

Its existence was secret until 1981 when the public was told officially that it existed, although this was no news to anyone who had served with the troops in fighting SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization) terrorists. Even today though, most of its operations are still shrouded in secrecy.

In 1978 the battalion received a large influx of soldiers of fortune, most of them Rhodesians fed up with the way the political winds were blowing in their struggle with communist terrorists.

Most of these soldiers of fortune, according to battalion spokesmen, have been phased out and only 15 or 20 remain. So they say, and there is no way to disprove their statements as they are quite tight-lipped about the subject. One thing is certain, 32 Battalion's mercs are kept under wraps and out of sight from prying eyes.

Although 32 Battalion has spearheaded all major South African incursions into Angola, most of its missions are covert small-unit seek-and-destroy operations above the "cutline" — SADF terminology for the border with Angola.

Search for SWAPO terrorists and destroy them when found is the order of the day. 32 Battalion uses stealth, surprise and speed to slip in and out. But the search is nearly always long and difficult. It demands skill in bushcraft, the ability to live off the land and not require constant resupply. It requires the ability to track as keenly as the Bushman, to travel swiftly and silently at night and during the heat of the day across some of the toughest terrain in Africa. Searchers must be on constant alert and poised for sudden, quick and deadly contact with SWAPO.

32 Battalion troops at captured SWAPO weapons cache in southwestern Angola display Soviet-made SA-7 Grail SAM and ComBloc antitank mines. Photo: Al Venter



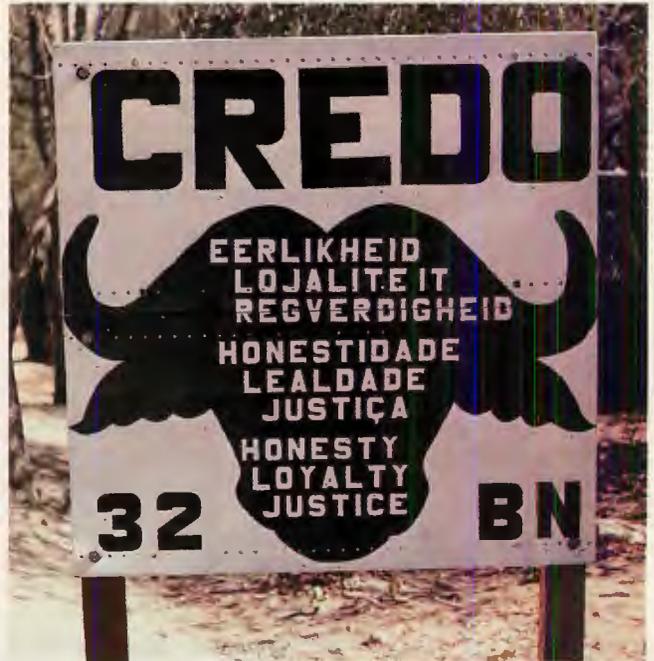
Text & Photos by Morgan Norval

GUN WRITER GOES TO AFRICA

Based in Washington, D.C., Morgan Norval is a former Marine who now makes his living as a freelance writer. His work has appeared in *Conservative Digest* and *Reason* magazines, and he previously served as editor for the newsletter, "Political Gun News." Norval has authored a book as well, *Take My Gun If You Dare* (Desert Publications, 1978).

This is his second contribution to SOF. His first article, "BATF On the Hot Seat" (co-authored with David T. Hardy), appeared in our December 1979 issue. Norval visited the SADF's 32 Battalion in July 1983. We welcome his informative work once again to *Soldier of Fortune*.

Sign with 32 Battalion credo outside Camp Buffalo Battalion HQ says it all in Afrikaans, Portuguese and English.



Troopies of 32 Battalion in training prior to six-week bushtrip. Cammies are similar to SWAPO's. SOF was not permitted to photograph troopies' faces for fear of retribution on soldiers' families in northern Angola.

The SWAPO guerrillas have well-stocked supply sites ready for the taking by the men of 32 Battalion.

Once contact is made (unless the mission is strictly recon), the troops attack the terrorists, who often outnumber them. The result is usually a decisive SADF victory. The battalion's kill rate is high and has earned it the bitter hatred of SWAPO.

The size of the COIN (counterinsurgency) units varies with the mission but they are normally platoon-size.

A platoon consists of three sticks of 12 men each and is commanded by a white officer. The individual sticks may be

commanded by either a white or a black NCO. The rest of the sticks are black troopers. The platoon's capable black leadership cadre is trained to take over and command the platoon if white officers or NCOs become casualties.

ComBloc weapons are normally used during operations. This simplifies the resupply problem — the SWAPO guerrillas have well-stocked supply sites ready for the taking by the men of 32 Battalion. Use of Russian-supplied weapons captured by

SWAPO: NOTHING MORE THAN BLOODY TERRORISTS

by Morgan Norval

The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was founded in Capetown, South Africa, in 1957. It was originally known as the Ovamboland People's Congress, since it was, and has always been, primarily made up of members of the Ovambo tribe, the largest tribal group in South West Africa. Other name changes followed, first the Ovamboland People's Organization, then the South West Africa People's Organization, its current *nom de plume*.

SWAPO originally focused its action on political means to exploit grievances among the Ovambo tribe and to agitate for independence from South Africa. They weren't successful. In 1962 SWAPO leadership decided to prepare for armed struggle. Many leaders of the party, including President Sam Nujoma, left to seek overseas support for their cause and to have terrorist fighters trained abroad.

They found their guardian angel in the Soviet Union and its surrogates, who agreed to train and finance their activities.

The first shot in SWAPO's so-called "liberation struggle" was fired at Onulumbashe in Ovamboland (north-central part of SWA/Namibia) on 26 August 1966. This border area with Angola, in which only a few policemen had been stationed, now became an operational area against terrorists.

The collapse of Angola and its subsequent takeover by the Marxist MPLA gave SWAPO a much-needed shot in the arm. Portuguese pressure in Angolan sanctuaries was now replaced with MPLA backing and open involvement of Soviet-Bloc instructors and specialists. Infiltration across the border into their tribal base in Ovamboland became easier as a result.

Mounting terrorism resulted and SWAPO stated with great regularity that it was interested in nothing less than a direct handing over of power in SWA/Namibia.

In 1978 Sam Nujoma told the German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, "We have fought. We are entitled to have the power. And we will not share the power with anyone."

To emphasize their point, two years later SWAPO's central committee published a declaration stating, among other things: "The short-term aim is the achievement of national independence; the long-term aim is the establishment of a classless society, free from exploitation, based on the ideals of scientific socialism." In short, SWAPO is going to impose equality via the muzzle of an AK-47 assault rifle!

The South African Defense Forces moved to more active countermeasures early in 1978. On 4 May, the South Afri-

cans launched a combined airborne and mechanized assault against two of SWAPO's important bases inside Angola. One base, 250 kilometers inside Angola, was the target of the airborne attack, the other, 28 kilometers from the border, by a mechanized column.

Both attacks were astoundingly successful: 1,000 SWAPO military personnel killed and 200 captured. Large amounts of equipment were seized or destroyed and a lot of valuable intelligence gathered. The South Africans lost only six men. This loss of trained personnel was a serious blow to SWAPO, one from which they have not yet fully recovered.

An incursion by SADF into Zambia in 1979 had the salutary effect of stopping Zambia's aid to SWAPO.

In 1980 and 1981, SADF again attacked SWAPO bases inside Angola, killing large numbers of terrorists and capturing huge amounts of equipment.

This has forced SWAPO to pull its bases further and further back into Angola under the protection of MPLA and their Cuban praetorian guard. Thus, the terrorists now have to travel great distances before reaching their target areas, greatly increasing the risk of discovery and destruction by security forces.

Another problem SWAPO faces is Jonas Savimbi's UNITA forces (National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola). Up to 40 percent of SWAPO is now tied up fighting UNITA.

SWAPO's operations are thus limited to general intimidation using terrorist methods: selective murder of headmen, politicians and shopkeepers as well as their families; laying mines and sabotage. They have resorted to abduction of civilians, usually youths or children, to "recruit" new members for their cause.

This has alienated the local population even if they are fellow tribesmen. The security forces are the main beneficiaries, as it has resulted in gaining the cooperation of a significant portion of the local population. A valuable flow of intelligence has resulted about the presence and movement of SWAPO terrorists. Many SWAPO units have been surprised and destroyed or captured while resting or eating as a result of this information.

While the situation seems promising for the destruction of SWAPO, as long as there is sufficient assistance and support from friendly allies, an insurgency can weather almost any setback. SWAPO may be no different.

But the true fate of SWAPO is in the hands of politicians. If left-wing elements throughout the world impose their political solution via the United Nations upon SWA/Namibia, SWAPO will be handed its prize. On the other hand, if political stability is achieved in Namibia without UN meddling, then political conditions can be created that will confine SWAPO to the dustbin of history.

When shooting it out with SWAPO, the familiar Kalashnikov sound adds an element of uncertainty to terrorists under fire.

PKM and RPG-7 armed 32 Bn. troopies guard captured cache of AK-47s. Photo: Al Venter



Cape buffalo, 32 Battalion symbol, shown on cap badge. INSET: Six crossed arrows denote 32 Battalion shoulder patch.

SADF also adds an element of confusion for the enemy. A group of armed blacks encountered in the bush carrying SWAPO weapons can more readily pass as fellow SWAPO comrades than if they were carrying normal-issue SADF weapons.

When shooting it out with SWAPO, the familiar Kalashnikov sound adds an element of uncertainty to terrorists under fire. They are not able to target their attackers by the gunfire sound

Continued on page 88

OPERATION SUPER: 32 BATTALION IN ACTION

by Morgan Norval

During March 1982, 32 Battalion was involved in a rather hairy operation that typifies what the battalion usually does.

Intelligence sources indicated that SWAPO planned an intensification of the war by opening up a new area of operation in Kaokoland, in northwestern South West Africa. SWAPO's military wing, PLAN (People's Liberation Army of Namibia) was set to the task.

The reconnaissance wing of 32 Battalion was sent in to locate and pinpoint PLAN units involved in the incursion into South West Africa. The recce struck paydirt, spotting a large concentration of terrorists near the small town of Iona in southwest Angola.

The recce intel indicated some 250 terrorists were gathered in Iona, which was to be a staging area before deployment south across the "cut-line" into South West Africa. And 32 Battalion sprang into action.

Seventy-five troops, under the command of Capt. Jan Houvgard, who was awarded the *Honoris Crux*, South Africa's equivalent of our Medal of Honor, for his gallantry in the Iona action, were heliborne into an immediate attack on the terrorist concentration.

The Puma helicopters were directed to their targets by the troops of the recce wing, who were still hidden on the ground in the target area.

Thirty troops were deployed as a blocking or — as the South Africans call them — "stopper" group, to cut off escape routes of those terrorists who preferred flight to battle.

Forty-five men launched the actual assault on the terrorists, so suddenly and unexpectedly that it achieved total tactical surprise. The attack completely shattered the SWAPO unit. Those fortunate enough to survive fled in terror into the bush.

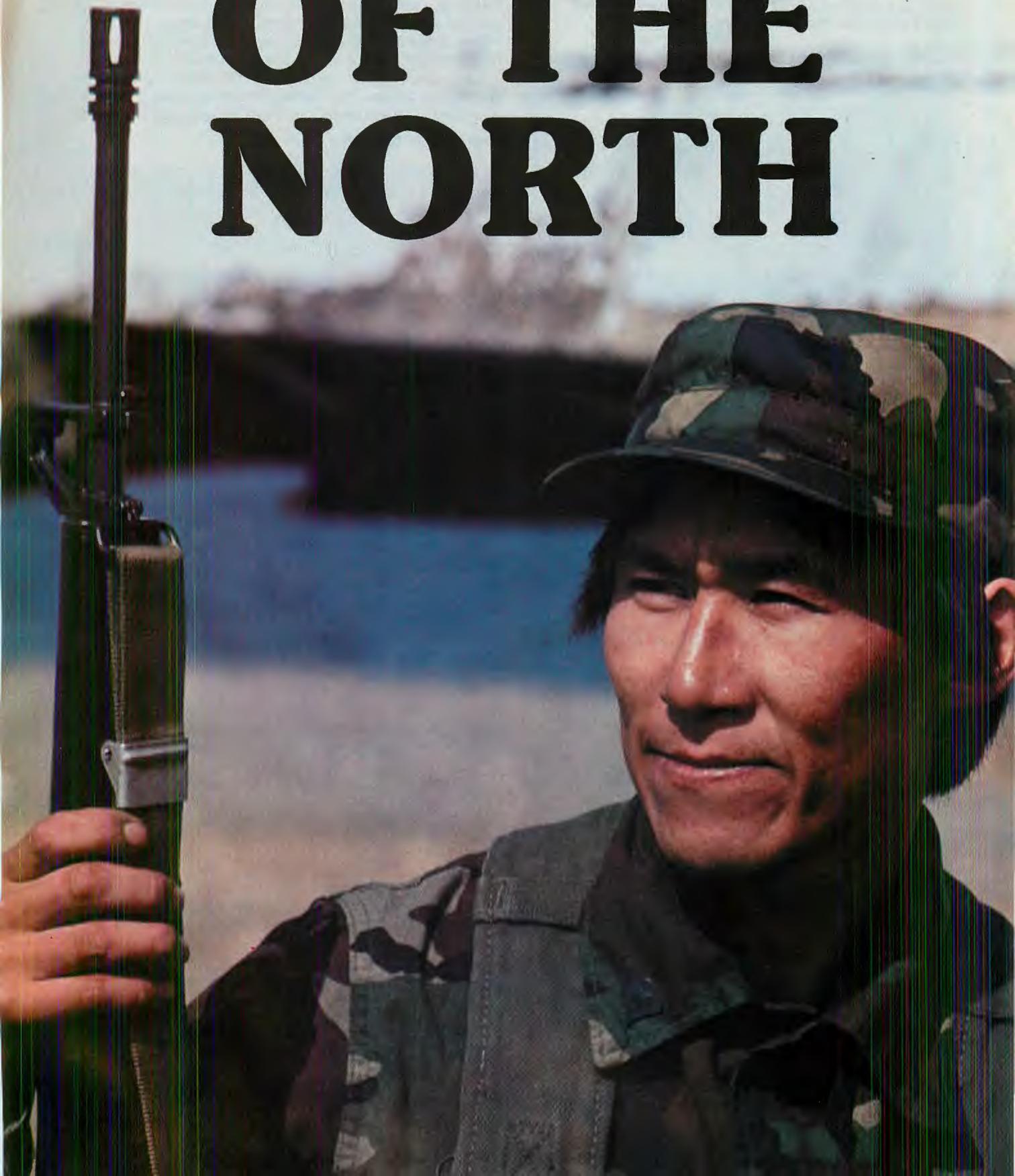
Although outnumbered almost five to one, the assaulting troopies of 32 Battalion killed 201 terrorists; 32 Battalion casualties were two men slightly wounded.

Many of the surviving terrorists, who fled into the bush, left spoor indicating that they had been wounded. Because of the limited, primitive nature of the terrorists' medical supplies it is reasonable to assume that quite a few of the guerrillas died from their wounds in the bush.

Huge quantities of arms and ammunition were seized and brought back to Oshakati, SADF headquarters in the Ovambo sector of South West Africa.

The terrorist target, Kaokoland, has since become quiet and inactive due to this successful raid by the men of 32 Battalion.

EYES OF THE NORTH



Eskimo Guards Patrol Alaska's Frontier

Text & Photos by Rick Venable

SELAWIK, ALASKA — The arctic tundra stretches away to nowhere around this village of a few hundred Eskimos — endless, flat northern desert splotched with lakes that look like puddles. Rivers curl crazily, having no downhill to follow. The lakes, shallow and sometimes still frozen on the bottom, gleam like mirrors. Nothing moves. Roads don't exist. Getting here from the nearest civilization — Kotzebue, which is barely civilization — took more than an hour by UH-1. On a hot day in summer, a long-sleeved shirt is comfortable. In winter... well, don't even think about winter.

I spent the afternoon looking over the village with troops of the Eskimo scouts, one of the best, strangest and least-known outfits in the Army. The scouts are Guard, not active Army, but they are a funny kind of Guard. Being subsistence hunters, they can't go active or their families would starve. Their exercises take place only in seasons when the men don't have to hunt, fish and look after traps. On the other hand, they are never really off duty. One of their missions is to serve as the Army's eyes and ears in the far north and, since they are there anyway, they report anything they see any time they see it.

The village is a collection of flimsy houses — not igloos (those days are gone) — that would not look out of place in backwoods Tennessee. They are on stilts. Boardwalks connect them. The tundra here is soft and treacherous, prone to flooding, and gets mushy in summer.

The soldiers showing me around were young, good-humored guys, slight of build but athletic, and spoke unaccented English that might have come from California. They are pretty much like other GIs: "Hey, you gonna take our picture? Can I get a copy? Think I could get a job in Hollywood?" One of them ran into his house to get a prize beaver pelt to show me. They listen to rock. Just ordinary guys.

Except they aren't. When the weather hits 60 below or worse, these guys get in snowmobiles and sail out into that white blankness for weeks at a time. When the mercury gets down to the minus-60 mark, it isn't cold. It is unimaginable. Touch metal with bare flesh and you leave the skin behind. Batteries die immediately. Film becomes brittle, won't wind without breaking, loses sensitivity. Gun oil turns solid, making an M16 into a low-grade club. Metal things get brittle and break. A trip to the latrine is an adventure.

You can teach troops from the lower 48 to survive in that kind of cold — sort of, barely, maybe, for a short time. The Eskimos don't know that there is anything to survive. They think their weather is normal.

One of them asked me, "Hey, why don't you come up and go out with us for Brim Frost? It's fun. You don't get cold if you eat enough seal oil. It keeps



Arctic C-rats are packaged in fur, feathers and scales. Eskimo woman filets the day's catch.



you warm — from inside, you know?”

Brim Frost is a big exercise held in February, the dead of winter, when even some of the Eskimos think it's cold. Having no judgment, I said I would. I say a lot of damned fool things from time to time. Usually associated with this magazine.

The Army knows it has a good thing going in these people.

One officer told me, “From a commander's point of view, they are all you could ask for. They are already trained. They already know how to survive here, and that's the hard part of the mission. You and I just can't do it the way they can. We'll never be able to. For them, it's nothing.

“We don't even have to teach them a lot of military stuff. They can already shoot, for example. They live by stalking some very wary game. Patrolling and recon are things they learn as kids. We just show them how to use the radios.”

Should the bad guys come into Alaska — and Russia is very close — the scouts are not expected to do more than harassment as far as actual fighting is concerned. Recon is their real job. An active officer who has worked with them in training exercises says they are superb. “We know where the opfor was down to the company level. I seriously think we sometimes had a better picture of what those guys were doing than their own commanders had.”

Their equipment is a curious blend of modern gear and their own traditional stuff. For example, most of them wear mukluks instead of military boots. One reason seems to be that the Eskimos, being Asian, are not shaped exactly like whites. The boots fit them a bit wrong and cause blisters. Another reason is that they just flat like some of their own equipment better.

In winter, their transportation on missions is the snowmobile, or snow machine as they call it, although some still have dogteams for personal use. The machines are good for about three years before they become too worn to be trusted. Snowshoes are standard for hoofing it. Graphited M16s and M60s provide firepower. The men I asked said the 16 performed well.

Night-vision goggles are important to them: In winter, nights last most of the day so you have goggles or you don't see much. The scouts report that the night-vision gear works well. The problem is that the batteries are perfectly useless after a few minutes' exposure to the weather. The solution: Keep them inside clothing with wires running to the goggles.

Another job for the scouts is to

In war troops like this Eskimo will be assigned to recon, but they also help protect U.S. electronic eyes and ears.

protect the Alaskan oil pipeline. The Army doesn't talk about just how they plan to do it. The reality is that they can't protect it against a determined enemy: When I flew up to Prudhoe Bay, where the well-heads are, I could see the pipeline running below for hundreds of unprotected miles. Anybody who can live in the tundra bush and really wants to get to the line can do it.

Incidentally, the oil fields are worth seeing if you have a taste for weird places. The land is flat, cold, far north of the Arctic Circle and almost without features at all. The oil workers live in huge, square buildings that look like modern apartment houses. Inside they are luxurious — carpeted, colorfully painted and clean. Food in the restaurants is excellent — not just good, but super. Trees and plants made the one I ate in look like a rain forest. One building has a basketball court on top under glass, and another building offers volleyball. There are weight rooms and swimming pools. The fields are run mostly from the computer room.

It isn't really a hardship post.

When I was there, caribou wandered unafraid around the grounds. It was chilly even in summer. In winter if you turn off your truck without plugging in the heaters for oil, water and so on, don't plan to drive it before summer.

In summer the Eskimos use Japanese big-tired three-wheelers to get around. They come bounding over the terrain like wild men on the things, rifles and cargo stuck everywhere. I'm not sure I could think of a better tactical vehicle

for one man in the tundra. They are much more stable than motorcycles and, for the terrain, probably as fast.

In the villages, watching them gut fish for the drying racks, or seeing the remains of cleaned whales, you realize that these people don't really need modern military equipment to do a good job of scouting. I don't think all of the lower-48 Army guys quite understand this. One officer during a briefing asked a senior enlisted scout how long his men could stay out on patrol.

The fellow had trouble coming up with an answer: They can stay out until they die of old age if they have to. Resupply? Nice if you can get it, but an Eskimo's C-rations have antlers and say moo, or whatever a caribou says.

Another officer who works with them summed things up well. "They're nice people. But if I were on the other side, I wouldn't want to screw with them. They can do it to you." ✕



ABOVE: Remote, hostile, strategic Selawik, Alaska. BELOW: Alaskan transport, old and new: Dogs get rarer as snowmobiles and trikes take their place.



LEFT: Alaska Air National Guard Hueys are the only fast way to Selawik. BELOW: Food often arrives by whale. Remote outposts like Selawik are largely self-sufficient.



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THE GRENADA PAPERS

SOF Scores Intelligence Coup in Caribbean



Text & Photos by Jim Graves with Robert K. Brown



“WHERE’S the war?” the journalists demanded as they rushed through the streets of Grenada’s capital, St. George’s.

Smiling Grenadians answered in their singsong English, “The Cubans have gone to the hills. Welcome to Grenada. Are the Americans going to stay? We want them to. It’s a good thing you didn’t wait a few more days.”

By Sunday, 30 October, the liberation of Grenada was almost complete.

It was a liberation, not an invasion. Or at least that’s the way the Grenadians saw it when *Soldier of Fortune’s* team (Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, former Ranger Rod Hafemeister and myself) arrived on Grenada.

Although rumor had it that significant numbers of Cubans were retreating into the hills to conduct guerrilla operations, in the next 48 hours, SOF’s team observed only six recently captured prisoners and only three of those were Cubans.

En route to St. George’s from Point Salines Airport, through swirling dust kicked up by aircraft (C-141s, C-130s and helicopters) swarming around the strip and motor vehicles (either hauled in from the United States or confiscated from the Cubans and relettered “USA” by America’s 6,000-man landing force), we observed few signs that a military action had taken, or was taking, place.

In a quick tour of the area around Point

LEFT: SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown checks out in-basket on desk of Grenada’s Deputy Minister of Defense. ABOVE LEFT: Some of “*muy secreto*” documents SOF liberated. ABOVE: U.S. OH-60 “Blackhawk” helicopter used in Grenada operation.

RANGER RODNEY

Rodney Hafemeister accompanied the SOF team to Grenada because he was intimately familiar with the Ranger Battalions. Having spent over half his active duty career with the 2nd Bn. Rangers in Ft. Lewis, Wash., Rodney was eager to watch “the boys” in real action.

Rodney, who readily admits to having a strong bias concerning the Rangers, said of their Grenada showing: “I’m glad that after nine years of training, they finally were given the chance to show what they could do. I only wish I could have jumped with them.” Once a Ranger, always a Ranger.

SOF is glad Rodney had the opportunity to contribute to its Grenada coverage. He is currently a free-lance writer in Ft. Bragg, N.C.

Salines airport, we observed an artillery battery from the 82nd Airborne on the northeast end of the runway, some troops on the perimeter, some foot patrols along the road, troops in vehicles on the road, numerous vehicle checkpoints manned by 82nd Airborne troops, some abandoned Cuban anti-aircraft guns and several shot up BTR-60s, but it was obvious that any real resistance had long since crumbled.

SOF’s team got to the island with the first big load of press (there were about 160 of us) five days after D-day. Once the mad rush for the limited number of rooms in the St. James Hotel — we arrived after it was filled, but got a room anyway — was over, the press hit the streets to find the war and Grenadians to interview.

Most of the press was infuriated about being kept off the island during the fighting and quite a number of them wanted to prove America wrong in taking the island — exclude SOF from that category — so the next day or two came as a shock to many in the press corps. Grenadians everywhere on the island greeted us with the same smiles and question: “Are Americans going to stay? We want them to.”

There was almost no sign of fighting in St. George’s. The objectives of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 75th Rangers, were south of town, and the Marines from the 24th Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) operated on the other side of the island and north of St. George’s proper.



With the exception of Fts. Frederick and Rupert, which had taken a pounding from carrier-launched A7s and C-130 Specter gunships, the only signs of damage in the center of St. George's appeared to be inflicted by looters, who had broken into a number of stores and attempted to knock off one of the city's banks or by the police, who had set their own station on fire.

Marines who moved into St. George's on Wednesday (it had not yet been assaulted and was theoretically still in hostile hands) were as puzzled about their reception on the island as most of the press who arrived with us on Sunday. One young Marine approached *Miami Herald* reporter Don

Bohning (one of seven newsmen who had slipped onto the island by boat on Tuesday, 25 October, the day of the invasion) and asked: "Hey, wait a minute. Can you tell us what's going on? Is the Grenadian Army with us or against us?"

The Marine's confusion was understandable. The 1,200-man People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) started laying down their weapons, stripping off their uniforms and putting on civilian clothes to join the crowd welcoming the American liberators shortly after the dawn sky over Point Salines filled with C-130s and parachuting Rangers, and the ocean filled with huge, gray U.S. Naval warships.

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ABOVE: For Americans, like these three 82nd Airborne Division men, Grenada was a "smiler." Troops wear field-expedient rope assault slings on M16A1s; soldier in center's '16 sports accessory M203 grenade launcher. Photo: Alan Oxley, SIPA/Black Star. LEFT: Robert K. Brown and Jim Graves check desk of People's Revolutionary Army intel officer for documents. Previous visitor had left sign for communists. Photo: Rod Hafemeister. RIGHT: Field-gear storage room at Ft. Rupert with new Soviet canteens, packs, mess kits and entrenching tools was unguarded when SOF arrived. Field-gear supplies were soon depleted.



GRENADA

SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

by Jim Graves

It was the most magnificent sight on the island of Grenada.

It wasn't in the best of condition since it had crashed through three floors of the Butler House (home of the prime minister) when that building caught on fire from 40mm cannon rounds fired from an AC-130 Specter.

Even though the roaring flames had done some damage to its exterior, the safe was still intact and unopened.

Ah, what treasures we imagined inside. Yuri Andropov's order to the

Trooper from 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division is saved from serious injury by his comrades. Trooper lost his balance and almost slid under restraining strap when OH-60 "Blackhawk" banked into LZ on search operation for Cubans in Grenada's interior.



Bulgarians to hit the Pope. Delivery dates for weapons shipments to Latin American revolutionaries scheduled to arrive at Grenada's new tourist airport in 1984. Blueprints for the submarine base Grenadians thought the Russians were going to build on Grenada's east coast. Castro's list of comrades throughout Latin America. Bishop's list of politicians and journalists he had working for him in the United States.

Gold.

Since SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, *Washington Times* reporter Jay Mallin and Lionel "Chu-Chu" Pinn, an old friend and 30-year Army veteran who started in Darby's Rangers and finished in Special Forces, found the safe just before the 2000 curfew, they were unable to open it that night. Consequently, the only topic of discussion at dinner for our little group at the St. James Hotel was how to get our treasures out of the safe.

Although there were lots of unexpended ordinance lying around the is-

land, none of us were too excited about ripping apart enough cartridges to get sufficient black power to blast the door off. I also knew where some perfectly good ZSU 23mm cannons and 23mm ammo were located, but the trick to pulling a "Thunderbolt and Lightfoot" routine is figuring out how to get the cannon in front of the safe. Since we hadn't yet found a demo locker (we did the next day), we had no idea where to obtain plastic explosives, dynamite and detonators. A crowbar was obviously not going to work; the safe appeared to be a solid, sophisticated one, although we had not seen the front because it had been blocked by debris, and light was fading fast when we found it.



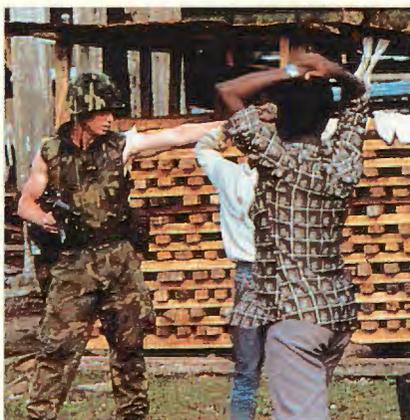
Chu-Chu had a great idea. Back in his old SF days, he had learned to operate an acetylene torch and there was a fire department with lots of nice East German equipment just a couple of blocks from the hotel. All fire departments have an acetylene torch around to cut people out of wrecks. Since Grenadian firemen were government employees, and the government no longer existed to provide the firemen with a weekly check, Chu-Chu assumed the firemen would loan us their torch.

Chu-Chu was delegated to check out the site early in the morning. His mission was to see if it were possible to open the safe with a torch and also to ensure that Butler House was still clear of guards.

After clearing away some of the debris, Chu-Chu got very excited when he saw that the safe's front had sprung partially open from the fall or the heat. It was going to be a piece of cake.

Chu-Chu got down into a position where he could shine the flashlight through the crack and see into the safe. There it was: wads of currency — Eastern Caribbean, Barbadian, U.S. and, apparently, currency from other countries.

Apparently, since Chu-Chu couldn't really tell. All the stacks had burned. All that was left of our fortune were bits and pieces. □



Continued from page 56

Cuban "construction workers," some actual laborers and some from a military engineering unit, put up stiffer-than-expected resistance around Point Salines and some PRA elements did fight back on the first and second days at Point Salines, Frequente and Ft. Frederick. However, most of the PRA, like the overwhelming majority of the population, had little love for its own commanders and none whatsoever for the Cubans.

At the time of the invasion, Grenada was, in theory, under the control of Gen. Hudson Austin and the 16-man Revolutionary Military Council, but, in fact, power was shared by Austin and Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard, and coordinated with the Central Committee of the New Jewel Movement.

Austin and Coard, dedicated pro-Cuban Marxists, engineered the house arrest and subsequent execution of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop on 19 October, which trig-

ABOVE: On interior wall of AC-130-blasted building at Ft. Rupert is New Jewel Movement slogan "We will rather die than become puppets of U.S. imperialism." **LEFT:** Cuban and Grenadian PRA prisoners who elected not to die are directed to temporary holding area by U.S. Marine from 24th Marine Amphibious Unit near Point Salines Airport. Photo: Alen Oxley, SIPA/Black Star

gered the U.S./Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) assault on 25 October.

Directing the NJM from behind the scenes were Soviet Ambassador Gennadiy I. Sachenev, a four-star general and expert in covert actions with ties to the KGB, and Cuban Ambassador Julian Enrique Tores-Riza, a senior intelligence officer of the *Direccion General del Inteligencia* (DGI), Cuba's KGB surrogate.

After American forces had punched through their initial objectives, they moved out into the hills to hunt down Cubans and PRA soldiers who had fled there. To the GIs' surprise, they encountered no hostile looks, much less any hostile fire. Instead, convoys of American troops were greeted by Grenadians offering gifts of cold soft drinks, melons, cheers and information about the hiding places of hold-out Cubans and New Jewel Movement leaders.

Information from locals led USMC Capt. David Karcher to the house near St.

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GRENADA



LEFT: Troopers from 1st Bn., 505th Infantry take shelter at Cuban base at Point Calivigny. Photos found there indicate it was used as training base for Pan-American guerrillas. **ABOVE:** Jay Mallin holds up lid of some Cuban economic aid. Boxes were labeled "Pack Rice, 100 Pounds" on front and "Oficina Economica Cubana" on top. Boxes contained 7.62X39 cartridges for AK-47s. Photo: Rod Hafemeister. **RIGHT:** Troopers from B Co., 307th Infantry, 82nd Airborne display guns found in five warehouses near Grenada's airport: (left to right, front row) Soviet PKM GPMG, M1944 Carbine, British Sterling SMG, folding-stock AK, Brit L7A2 GPMG, (back row) Federal 203A 38mm Riot Gun, FN MAG, Czech M26 SMG, Lewis Gun, M1944 and Sten Gun. Photo: R. K. Brown

THE INSERTION

by Rod Hafemeister

It was well after dark when the C-130s departed Hunter Army Airfield, Ga. On board, the Rangers made themselves as comfortable as they could in the cramped quarters of the Hercules aircraft. Most planes were packed with equipment filling the length of the cargo bays. Some were loaded with jeeps crammed with radios, machine guns and recoilless rifles. Others carried the "little birds": OH-6 helicopters converted into gunships.

The lead planes carried the men of 1st Ranger Battalion; 2nd Battalion followed close behind. Commanders huddled around commo equipment, receiving the latest intelligence and updating plans. Some Rangers tried to catch a little sleep in jeep seats or on the limited floor space of the cargo bays. Others checked weapons and equipment for the thousandth time. Most of the men had never seen combat. Nerves were tight.

Intelligence updates kept coming in, and the commanders made a decision. Two hours out from Grenada, they announced a modification of the original plan. Instead of sending in a small airfield-clearing element by parachute and landing with the rest of the Rangers, they decided to jump as much of the force as possible. Only vehicle drivers and other personnel necessary to bring in the heavy equipment would remain on the aircraft. Rangers commenced in-flight rigging of their parachutes.

On the crowded aircraft, normal jump procedures were abandoned. There was no way to conduct "station-rigging,"

the safest in-flight way to rig. Instead, the Rangers resorted to "buddy-rigging" each other and inspecting each other's equipment. Machine guns and mortars were stowed in M-1950 weapons containers and attached to the jump harness. Rifles and grenade launchers were clipped to the harness by snap-link. Second Battalion decided to forego reserve 'chutes; the commander felt that at the 500-foot jump altitude the reserve could not be deployed in time. Non-jump personnel were pressed into service as jump safeties and, if qualified, jumpmasters.

Beyond Grenada radar range, the Hercs dropped to low altitude. Thirty minutes out, the final decision was made: The jump was a "GO." The Rangers attached their rucksacks to harnesses and made final equipment checks. They knew that the only supplies they could count on were the ones they carried. The rucks were stuffed with ammo, and personal equipment was packed into what little room they had left: water, a ration or two, poncho and liner, and an extra pair of socks — no Ranger goes anywhere without a spare pair of socks.

Shortly after dawn, the Hercs roared across the coast of Point Salines at 500 feet. Cuban defenders, prepared for an amphibious assault by Marines, looked up in shock. Dozens of paratroopers spilled from the open doors of the aircraft, exiting via the "shotgun" method, where the jumpers use both doors and exit without hesitation. No jumpmaster commands are given. It's the fastest way to clear a bird; it also carries a greater hazard of mid-air collisions between jumpers. The Rangers decided to minimize this hazard by jumping non-steerable T-10 parachutes instead of their normal MC1-1B (steer-

able) canopies. Of course, as happens in every military operation, not everyone gets all the information.

One Ranger described the jump: "I hit the turbulence outside the aircraft and saw my ruck start twisting in the breeze, tangling up my attaching straps. As soon as I felt opening shock I glanced at my canopy and reached for my [steering] toggles. Surprise! No toggles! I figured I had a malfunction and my toggles were missing until I looked at my 'chute again. I realized there were no cutouts in the canopy. My first thought was, 'What the fuck?!' My second was, 'It's a god-damn T-10!'"

"By now I was getting pretty close to the ground, so I untangled my ruck and pulled the quick releases. As I reached for my risers to pull my landing slip, I noticed I hadn't felt the jerk of the ruck on the end of my lowering line. Just then I heard a big explosion and looked down to see my ruck smoking on the ground.

"I hit, got dragged and got my 'chute under control. I got out of the harness and tangled my 'chute in some concertina wire to keep it from blowing back on the airstrip. Then I snatched up the remains of my ruck and headed for the assembly area.

"When I got a chance to examine it, it was obvious what had happened. In the turbulence my lowering line had been jerked loose. When the ruck hit, the LAW [Light Antitank Weapon] had exploded — I couldn't find a trace of it. I cut open the container of the mortar round I was carrying and found the fuse hanging out; I abandoned it. My rations and water had gone up in the blast. Of the 400 rounds of machine-gun ammo I had, I salvaged about 25."

As the Rangers rained down from the aircraft, the Cubans attempted to fire on



them with their air defense weapons. As the planeload after planeload of Rangers filled the sky, the Cubans realized they had made a serious tactical mistake: They had placed their guns on the surrounding hills and could not depress them enough to bring effective fire to bear. They were prepared for an amphibious landing, but had never expected an airborne assault from 500 feet at 150 knots.

AC-130 Spectre gunships started suppressing the defenders as soon as the jump started. The first planes discharged the jumpers of the 1st Bn. and, right behind, came the planes of 2nd Bn. One Ranger described the jump as "max pucker-factor." While some of the men said they realized there was ground fire coming at them, others said they were too busy to notice until they hit the ground. One Ranger said he just relied on the "Big Sky/Little Bullet Theory: There's a lot of sky up there and those bullets are awful tiny."

The 20-knot ground winds were well above peacetime safety restrictions. Despite that, 2nd Bn. suffered only one serious jump casualty, a broken leg. Of course, a number of bruises, contusions and sprains resulted, but the intense discipline and professionalism of the Rangers allowed them to carry on their mission.

As soon as the Rangers hit the ground and started linking up with their comrades, the worst fear was over. The greatest terror to a soldier is being alone; once he is with the men he has worked and trained with his confidence increases dramatically. Teams of Rangers started challenging pockets of defenders and, from these encounters, "hero stories" abound. One team captured 17 Cubans and 15 automatic weapons, including an RPK, while going after a

sniper.

The Cubans had driven spikes into the runway to prevent its use. One Ranger commandeered a steam roller and commenced to run up and down the strip, driving the spikes into the ground. Some Rangers set up security while others cleared the airstrip of equipment and construction materials.

The Rangers were able to minimize their casualties for several reasons. One was the ineptness of the Cubans: Their weapons were brand-new (still dripping cosmoline) and most had not been zeroed. Also, the Cubans had much of their force in the wrong place. Only one company was on the airstrip, near the tower. The other two were on the reverse slope of the hills, guarding the sea approach. When these two companies attempted to withdraw later, they ran into a large element of 1st Bn. and were defeated in a major fire fight.

Probably the biggest factor in the Rangers' favor was the use of overwhelming firepower. At every contact, the Rangers utilized their available weapons to maximum advantage. Key among these were the Spectre gunships. One Ranger described Spectre as "just like having a sniper in the sky."

While the Rangers consolidated, the insertion aircraft flew to Barbados and refueled. As soon as the strip was secured and sufficient runway cleared, they airlanded the rest of the equipment. The first C-130s started landing less than 1½ hours after the jump. By this time the Rangers realized they were faced with significantly more resistance than had been expected. The message went out to higher headquarters: Send the reinforcements. Units of the 82nd Airborne Division already on alert were on the way; the rest of the 82nd and the 18th Air-

borne Corps were put on alert.

By early afternoon, the Rangers owned the airstrip. They decided to push a large movement-to-contact out the northeast side of the strip to eliminate opposition. Ranger units are too light to go into a defense. Their best defense is to keep pushing the enemy so hard he has no time to regroup.

Unfortunately for the enemy, this was the time they chose for a counterattack. As the Rangers started to move out, three BTR-60 armored vehicles came roaring across the open area.

"It was great," said one Ranger. "Every guy with a 90 [recoilless rifle] or a LAW was yelling, 'Let me at 'em! Let me at 'em!' Tubes were firing everywhere. The rest of us were busy getting out of the way and avoiding the backblast. Then Spectre joined in and there was shit flying everywhere! They blew those suckers to king shit!"

The Rangers totalled two of the BTRs. The other tried to escape but didn't get far. The "flying sniper" opened up with his automatic weapons and finished him.

Later that afternoon, members of both battalions formed a team that went down to the True Blue medical campus and brought out the first group of students. By dusk, elements of the 82nd had started landing. The Rangers turned over some of the perimeter and were able to decrease security slightly. Some elements went to 50 percent and were able to allow their people some well-earned rest. Rumors started flying that, with the arrival of the 82nd, the Rangers might be extracted the next day. Little did the men of the two battalions know they faced two more major operations on Grenada before they could leave. □

GRENADA

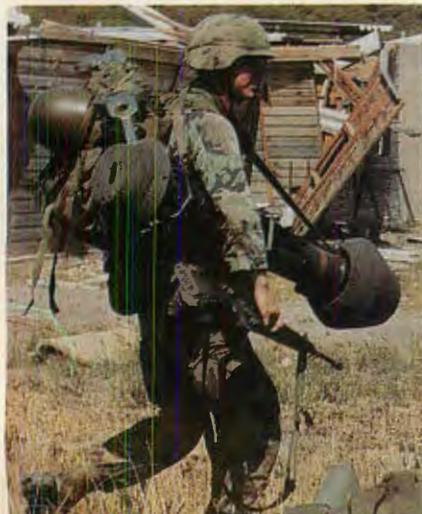
Continued from page 59

George's where Coard, his Jamaican-born wife, Phyllis (also a prime leader of the anti-Bishop forces on the Central Committee), and some other NJM leaders were hiding on Saturday, 29 October. Coard initially indicated he would not surrender, but changed his mind when the Marines targeted antitank weapons on the house. Capt. Karcher reported that Coard came out muttering, "I am not responsible. I'm not responsible." While Coard waited in the Marine compound at Queen's Park to be heli-lifted to the USS *Guam*, a hostile crowd of Grenadians gathered to mock him, chanting, "C is for Coard, Cuba and Communism."

The next afternoon, 30 October, Gen. Austin was captured in a similar fashion: Locals tipped the 82nd Airborne that Austin was hiding in a house at Westerhall on the east side of the island.

With the invasion action virtually completed, the only thing for SOF to do was to

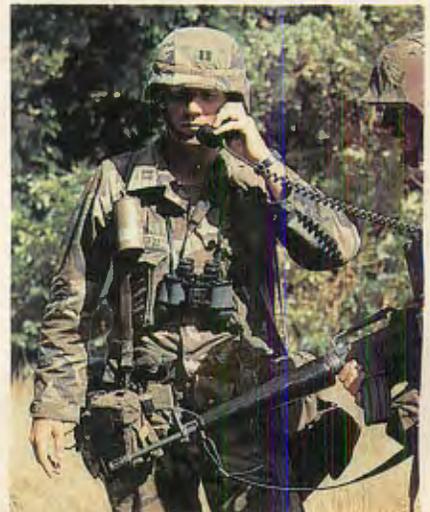
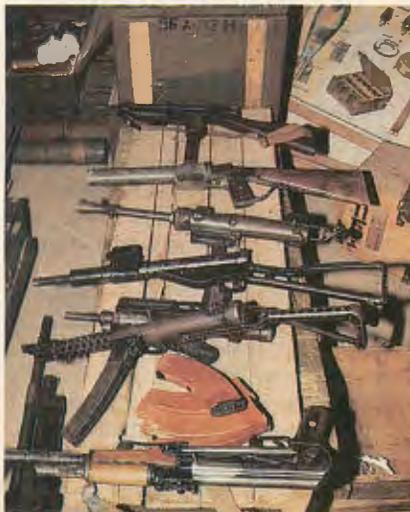
piece together from the troops what had taken place (see Rod Hafemeister's stories, "The Insertion," p. 60 and "The Raid," p. 64), to find out what had led to Reagan's decision to send the troops to this Caribbean island.



Flight of four OH-60 "Blackhawk" helicopters approach landing zone at Point Calivigny to pick up troops from 1st Bn., 505th Infantry for search operation. Effective resistance ended 72 hours after operation started but 82nd Airborne Division continued for weeks search operations in the interior for Cubans who refused to surrender and for weapons discarded by fleeing PRA members.



FAR LEFT: Trooper from 505th Infantry overburdened with basic load and "basic load" of Soviet souvenirs from Cuban training camp at Point Calivigny. Strapped to his pack is Soviet/Cuban helmet; he carries U.S.-issue Dragon M47 antitank/assault wire-guided rocket. **Photo:** Rod Hafemeister. **LEFT:** Cuban, who went civilian and hid for five days in botanical garden in St. George's, made the mistake of firing round at 82nd Airborne troops. Handcuffed, Cuban hero waits for transportation to POW pen. **RIGHT:** "Construction tools" found near Point Salines airport: Czech M24 SMG, U.S.-made Federal 203A Riot Gun, M3A1, Sten and Sterling SMGs, and AK-47S with recent-issue composition magazines. **FAR RIGHT:** Capt. Blatti, Operations Officer, 1st Bn., 505th Infantry, 82nd Airborne, coordinates "Blackhawk" flights to LZs in search operation for Cubans on Grenada.



GRENADA



ABOVE: Soldiers from 307th Infantry, 82nd Airborne with their unit color and captured People's Revolutionary Militia flag in front of arms warehouse. Photo: Rod Hafemeister. **LEFT:** Soviet BTR-60PB, also called BTR-60PKB, rests upside down at north end of Point Salines airfield where 75th Rangers left it. At least three BTR-60PBs were used in Cuban and PRA counterattack. Rangers knocked out these with 90mm recoilless rifles. Photo: Rod Hafemeister



Some Grenadians claim Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, two of his ministers and two labor leaders were executed by PRA in front of this portrait of Che Guevara in Ft. Rupert.



Somehow we suspect Cuban POW at Point Salines holding pen did not like "Peace Through Superior Firepower" T-shirt SOF's Managing Editor Jim Graves wore while taking this photo.

THE RAID

by Rod Hafemeister

By Thursday noon, the Rangers were ready to go home. All the students had been rescued, the airfield was firmly under the control of U.S. forces, and large numbers of the 82nd Airborne Division troops were on the island. Plus the Rangers were reluctant to be placed under the control of another unit (in this case, the 82nd). Historically, Rangers have been misused by other commanders and put into situations beyond their unique capabilities. There was some worry that this could happen again. Unknown to the men, they were about to get handed one more mission. In this case, however, it was to be a classic Ranger mission — a raid.

The commanders had determined that it was time to clean out the training camp that had been established at Calivigny Point. They decided that the best way to do this was by an airmobile raid, using the Rangers.

It was another case of "here's the mission, do it now." The men had less

than an hour to prepare for it, but the Rangers constantly practice raids in training and their experience had prepared them for quick action. The real strength of a Ranger unit is the high level of professionalism in even the lowest-ranking troop. Once on the objective, the average Ranger sees what needs to be done and does it.

The men loaded up on UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters late in the afternoon. The plan was to assault the camp with four choppers per lift, each carrying about 15 Rangers. Prior to the assault, A-6 Intruders and AC-130 Spectres would prep the camp. For the first time since the operation started, the Rangers were faced with a strictly military target and did not have to take measures to avoid civilian casualties.

Best available intelligence indicated a sizable force of People's Revolutionary Army (PRA) [Grenadians], Cubans, and possible other foreign nationals in the camp. The Rangers intended to hit it with as much firepower and shock action as they could muster. While the first lifts of Blackhawks circled offshore, the air

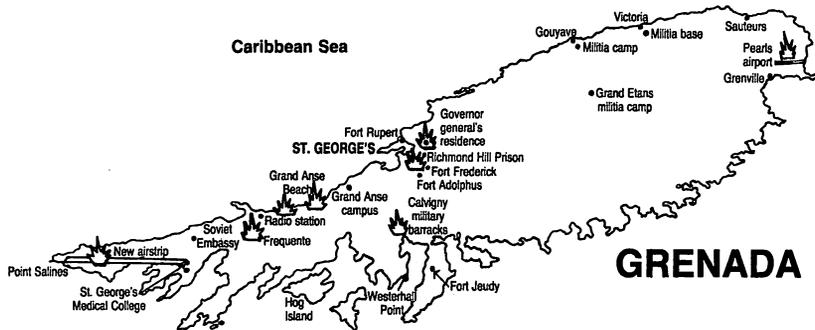
assets, supported by 105mm howitzers of the 82nd, bombed the camp.

The first four Blackhawks roared in across the water and popped up over the seaside cliffs. As they hit the ground the Rangers boiled out, firing into the compound. As the choppers started to lift, one pilot was hit by small-arms fire and lost control of his bird. It crashed into another of the Blackhawks and a third, trying to avoid the collision, hit a building. As the second lift popped over the cliff, they were greeted by the sight of three UH-60s wrecked on the ground. One of the Rangers on the second lift described it:

"As soon as we saw the LZ, the pilots started getting kinky. They didn't know what was down there and were not at all happy with the situation. They landed on the first piece of open ground they could find and we dove off the birds. They didn't want to stay on the ground and I damn sure didn't want to stay on the bird if somebody was shooting at it. As they took off, we realized that we were on the wrong side of the objective. We maneuvered around to where we were sup-

Operation Urgent Fury Tuesday, 25 October:

1. Navy SEALs make predawn landing.
2. 400 Marines heli-lifted from USS *Guam* conduct helicopter assault on Pearl's airport. Airfield secured within two hrs. & USS *Guam* moves to west coast.
3. Army Rangers parachute into new airstrip at Point Salines and meet heavy resistance. Airport secured in two hrs.
4. Rangers secure True Blue medical school campus, then move north to Frequente, encountering heavy fire.
5. Two battalions of 82nd Airborne head into Point Salines to join Rangers.
6. Rangers continue north from Frequente to rescue students at Grand Anse Campus, encountering heavy resistance along way.
7. 250 Marines with five tanks and 13 amphibious vehicles land and secure Governor's house.



A quick trip to Ft. Rupert, just about 100 yards up the hill behind the St. James hotel, by *Washington Times* reporter Jay Mallin, Lionel "Chu Chu" Pinn, an old friend of SOF, and myself uncovered the fact that no one was guarding the NJM Central Committee headquarters, the deputy minister of defense's office nor the equipment stores at Ft. Rupert.

On Monday morning, Mallin and the SOF team searched all three locations. In addition to a fine collection of new Soviet

helmets, canteens, mess kits, packs, AK-47 bayonets, military manuals and the NJM flag that had flown over the fort, SOF picked through the papers scattered around the office of Lt. Col. Ewart Layne, Grenada's deputy minister of defense.

The intelligence finds (we also located documents in Ft. Frederick and Butler House, the prime minister's office) were significant: shipping manifests of weapons from the USSR, through Cuba to Grenada; a defense treaty between the USSR and Gre-

nada; a roster of Grenada's militia; a summary of Political Bureau meetings; a top-secret report from a Grenadian double agent who was trying to infiltrate a CIA operation on Barbados; a counter-intelligence summary; rosters and correspondence relating to the training of Grenadian PRA members in the USSR, Cuba and Vietnam; a training agreement between Grenada and Nicaragua; and miscellaneous correspondence from Cuba, including one letter from Fidel Castro to the Central Committee written after Bishop was arrested.

In general, the documents and other physical evidence observed by SOF and information gleaned from other documents recovered by the U.S. forces and released in November indicated that: 1) Cuba and the USSR were turning Grenada into a strategic military base; 2) as in Libya and Nicaragua, more weapons than Grenada could ever use had been shipped to the island; 3) Bishop was killed because of a power grab by Coard and because he was not as pro-Cuban as other Central Committee members thought he should have been; 4) the NJM was losing control of the country because of its excessive pro-Cuban and pro-communist attitude; and 5) some well-known Americans had highly questionable dealings with the NJM.

Highlights from the documents recovered by SOF:

- A USSR-Grenada treaty and three shipping manifests show that the USSR was pouring in more arms than was reasonable for Grenada's 1,200-man PRA. Based on the shipping manifests and examination of

Continued on page 82

posed to be and started moving in."

Opposition on the objective was nonexistent. The majority of the enemy forces had moved out earlier, leaving only an eight- to 12-man element. During the prep fire, they had apparently moved to the next ridgeline and were firing on the assault troops from there, one having caused the chopper crash.

As the Rangers swept through the objective and secured it, medics went to work at the crash site. The crash caused the deaths of the only members of 2nd Battalion killed on the entire Grenada operation. Three men were killed when the choppers collided. Several more would have died except for the prompt action and skill of the Ranger medics.

The A-6s and AC-130s returned and silenced the fire from the opposite ridgeline. As darkness approached, the Rangers established a defensive perimeter and dug in. They would have to hold the camp until morning, when the wrecks of the Blackhawks would be extracted.

Ranger intelligence teams began collecting documents and information. They determined the size of the defend-

ing element from the number of bunks made up in the barracks and the quantity of food left cooking on the stove. They discovered that at one time there had been as many as 400 Cubans in the camp. They confiscated rosters of unit personnel, weapons sign-out sheets with weapons serial numbers, and pictures of graduating classes. The pictures showed a motley assortment of troops and uniforms from several different nations. These pictures were later put to good use by the Multi-National Force in identifying suspected guerrillas. The Rangers determined that the school had been established to train forces for the overthrow of other Central American and Caribbean states. The school had an obstacle course, weapons range, air defense site and barracks. Captured literature showed that the school conducted political indoctrination and basic combat training. Command Sgt. Maj. Voyles, 2nd Bn., described the camp as "Fort Benning South."

After an unopposed night, the Rangers prepared for extraction. CH-53 helicopters arrived and back-hauled the

three wrecked Blackhawks. Then other Blackhawks outloaded the Rangers back to Point Salines. Word came down that the Ranger mission was over and that they could expect to be flying back to the States that night.

As the Rangers prepared for their departure, Lt. Col. Ralph L. Hagler Jr., commander of the 2nd Bn., addressed his troops. "You accomplished all missions in an outstanding manner," he said. "It doesn't get any better than this."

That night the Rangers started extracting. Ahead lay reunions with comrades and loved ones, memorials for the dead and decorations for the living. Because of the intensity of combat, the normal time requirements were waived for the award of the Combat Infantryman Badge. Additionally, everyone who jumped was awarded the combat star for his jump wings. The Rangers had faced their first real test since being formed in 1974, and had demonstrated that Rangers truly "Lead the Way." □



SOF Has Beef with ARDE CONTRA COMMUNIST COW ROUNDUP

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

THE setting sun cast a coppery glow over the jungle clearing on the Nicaraguan side of the San Juan River, illuminating a ramshackle hut that housed a *campesino* family and 34 guerrillas of Eden Pastora's Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE). About a dozen Contras lounged on the porch. Some played cards on an ammunition crate; others cleaned their AK-47 and FN FAL automatic rifles and shot the bull; the rest slept. I sat hunched over on a splintered bench, elbows on knees, and laughed at their raunchy jokes.

Israel, the easy-going chief of *peleton* (roughly, captain or first lieutenant), sauntered in and cracked a few jokes of his own. The 40-year-old native Nicaraguan, with Panamanian and Costa Rican citizenships, is a natural jokester, but he is serious about his work. A weapons expert, he has served in Panama's secret service (and claims to maintain ties). He fought under Pastora's command against Somoza and was wounded six times; he almost died when mortar shrapnel ripped through his kidney and partially disembowelled him. He quickly became disillusioned as a sergeant in the Sandinista Popular Army (EPS) and deserted in early 1980, joining the Milpa, an early counterrevolutionary band.

He was imprisoned and about to be shot when, by a twist of fate, a sympathetic colleague of then-Militia Chief Pastora intervened and secured his release. He went to Panama, but 18 months later was back in the southern Nicaraguan rain forest with eight men, laying the groundwork for ARDE's entrance into the fight to free Nicaragua from the ruling Sandinista junta.

Israel slumped into the rocking chair next to me. His skinny ass sagged through the fraying yarn-strung seat and his hands

gripped the arm rests to keep him from sliding through. Above him on the grimy, peeling, aquamarine-colored wall was a collection of Nicaraguan folk art: a superbly sketched portrait of *Comandante Zero*, Eden Pastora; a stylized magic-marker drawing of the famous Iwo Jima flag-raising by U.S. Marines with the Stars and Stripes replaced by a banner lettered FRS (Sandino Revolutionary Front, the armed wing of ARDE); and two almost-identical hand-colored posters of the black-outlined face of the national hero of the 1920s and '30s, Augusto Cesar Sandino, superimposed on a red map of Nicaragua.

The guerrillas, like most Nicaraguans of every political persuasion, revere Sandino. "Sandino fought for the *campesinos* and a free Nicaragua," said one. "Nine of the present Sandinista junta are Russian lackeys who enslave and kill us. They defile Sandino's name. We're the true Sandinistas."

Israel rocked slowly, as though trying to grind the grit underneath into yet smaller particles. His wiry legs were spread and bent. He tucked the toes of his U.S. jungle boots under the ends of the rockers, which lightly pinched them with each roll.

"How would you like a good steak?" he asked me in a nasal voice, his beagle-like brown eyes flashing.

"It's too early for me to go back to San Jose," I responded.

"No, no. You can eat it here in two, three days, but," he paused, "you'll have to get it."

"Yeah, from where?"

Israel straightened his legs and threw his hands over his head. He smiled as if thinking, "I know something you don't," then broke the suspense after I repeated the question.

ARDE soldiers fire Soviet B-10 recoilless gun.

"From the communists," he chuckled, brushing his thin brown hair over a small bald spot. He pulled a self-drawn detailed map of the area from his back pocket, and explained a plan to rustle four cows from a Sandinista "toad," or informant. "The communists stole them from the *campesinos* and gave them to the toad for squealing."

The cattle grazed in a clearing two or three kilometers from *El Castillo*, The Castle, a colonial Spanish stone fortress overlooking the San Juan River five clicks from the border. Here, 250 to 300 Sandinista troops had holed up after being repeatedly and severely bloodied trying to drive Contras out of their jungle redoubts downstream. Israel delicately slid his index finger over the paths the guerrillas would follow to snatch the cattle, and then pointed out the spots where they would lie in ambush for any enemy patrol that happened by.

"Would you like to go?" he asked.

"Sure," I agreed.

It was close to 1800 hours, dinner time. The guerrillas gently leaned their rifles against the porch wall or picket railing and shuffled over rotted floorboards into the candle-lit room. One by one they entered the squalid kitchen and grabbed unwashed spoons and tin plates, upon which the cross-eyed Panamanian *brujo* (sorcerer) and Dona Julia, the frail *senora* of the house, ladled generous helpings of greasy fried rice, frijoles and hard-boiled bananas.

The kitchen's fire had turned into embers and ash on a blackened stone slab. The dark brown faces looked caramel-glazed in the ebbing glow as they licked their chops; these ARDE guerrillas are *campesinos* who have been raised on this diet. I too was hungry, but tired of eating the same bland food two or three times a day. I thought of the beef and how good it would taste.

My stomach finally won out and I reached for a plate. Some guerrillas had already finished and were filling dirty tin cups with coffee from a big black-metal pot. After filling my plate, I headed for the porch. Everyone on the porch ate quietly and listened to the clandestine radio broadcast of ARDE's "Voice of Sandino." Pastora's voice crackled distortedly from the faulty, cheap transistor radio. He was talking about the impact of the U.S. Navy gunships off Nicaragua's coast, but I couldn't catch much of what he said. Dona Julia's husband, Don Domingo, was feeding the pigs and their squealing drowned *Comandante Zero's* words. The pigs hushed in time for me to catch the anthem that closes the broadcast at 1900 hours.

The guerrillas stayed up for another hour talking quietly about Pastora's message or the war in general, then unraveled their white *macem* hammocks from thin beams overhead, took off their boots and fell asleep in their clothes. Their sleeping faces appeared completely relaxed, with no apparent worries. After all, their accommodations were luxurious compared to the rain forest where many guerrillas stayed. They



Unlikely cowboys, ARDE troops are ready to rustle red beef with S&W SMG and AKMS.

had a roof over their heads, plentiful (if not tasty) food, running water and self-service laundry — if you counted the river. And they were securely ensconced in the rear of a network of encampments stretching at least 60 kilometers into the bush and along the banks of the San Juan River. They didn't have to worry about the Sandinistas sneaking up on them.

I stayed with Israel in his private eight-by-10-foot quarters in the rear corner of the house. Since I was the guest, he gave me his bed: a wooden platform with a thin foam-rubber cushion. He took the green nylon hammock parallel to it. We listened to the "Voice of America," broadcast in Spanish, while drifting off to sleep.

At 0500 hours, I was awakened by the thudding of boots on wood and Israel's hacking cough. I climbed out of bed and put on my leather workman's shoes. I ducked under Israel's hammock and looked out the window. Fog shrouded the landscape. From the wet grass, I knew it had rained during the night. Israel made a gallant effort to get up but surrendered to the fever, chills, inflamed throat and sore muscles.

"Oh, I feel lousy," he moaned. "I never get sick. What could have happened?" I could guess: He was just the latest victim of an apparent streptococcus epidemic encouraged by unsanitary habits.

I walked onto the porch where the guerrillas were drinking coffee and waiting for

breakfast. One handed me a cup. It was tepid and loaded with sugar. Salsa music blasted from the radio. Someone flipped it to the "Voice of Sandino" 0500 broadcast. Israel managed to force himself out of bed for the 0700 breakfast: rice, beans and boiled bananas (surprise).

Other than the two who took their turns as sentries for three hours, the guerrillas were free to do whatever they wanted. The fog had disappeared and the sun shone bright and hot. Many slouched listlessly on the porch, fanning themselves with their green caps, lost in their own thoughts. The seemingly interminable card game continued, and clean rifles were cleaned again. A Bible was passed around, and the few who could read at all struggled to read aloud to themselves and their illiterate brothers.

Chapatin enlivened things with his sleight-of-hand antics. His smile gave him an impish look and revealed a gold-framed front tooth, which only drew attention to the spaces where teeth had been that didn't receive dental treatment. He looked 10 years older than his 36 years. He reminded me of a Hollywood Indian medicine man dressed in khaki. He was squat and paunchy. His weathered, mahogany, whiskered face was endowed with high cheek bones, and his black almond eyes crinkled at the corners. Put a feathered hat and a caretaker's coat on him and he'd definitely look the part.

"Hey, mister, these are your cows," he said, setting nine beans on a stool. "My hands are rustlers. I'm going take away your cows with your complete approval." I vowed he wouldn't. Then he jumped me through the hoops and did exactly what he said, leaving me shaking my head.



ABOVE: One of three boatloads of ARDE soldiers on San Juan River en route to cattle-rustling mission in El Castillo. They are armed with AKs.

BELOW: ARDE guerrillas practicing with four B-10 recoilless guns in front of encampment. Israel mans first B-10 from right; Tadeo, El Castillo zone commander, is behind B-10 second from right.



ABOVE: Back at ARDE encampment, guerrillas butcher one of three "communist" cows for feast.



LEFT: Bullet-scarred *Bremen*, cargo ship donated to Sandinistas by East Germany, is grounded in low water on San Juan River after being taken out of action by ARDE guerrillas in May '83.



"Oh, mister, I'm sorry," he said with a crocodile sigh. "But *muchas gracias*. Ha, ha, ha."

"Hey, Chapatin, make water," yelled someone. He supposedly had squeezed water out of a spoon, but he would not do the trick for us.

Chapatin has some stories which aren't so funny. He tells a harrowing tale of how he had been just an ordinary *campesino* when the Sandinistas accused him of being a Contra and arrested and tortured him. When he refused to become their stooge, they planned to shoot him. But he escaped and joined ARDE.

Dona Julia's 5-year-old daughter ran down the porch steps to help her mother hang out laundry. A pack of emaciated, flea-infested dogs sprang out from under the porch and jumped around the child. The 93-year-old grandfather squatting nearby lifted the machete he was sharpening on a pumice block and shooed them away. His failing eyes were as gray as his hair and scraggly beard. But otherwise he was in great shape and very lucid. He interjected funny remarks into the conversation of the four guerrillas leaning on the rickety fence behind him. They were joshing the mute who did chores around the camp about his baggy pants. They gestured that it was women's dress. He gestured his disagreement and laughed along.

I asked Israel when the mission would begin. "A little later. We have to wait for Tadeo," the man responsible for the 700 guerrillas in the zone.

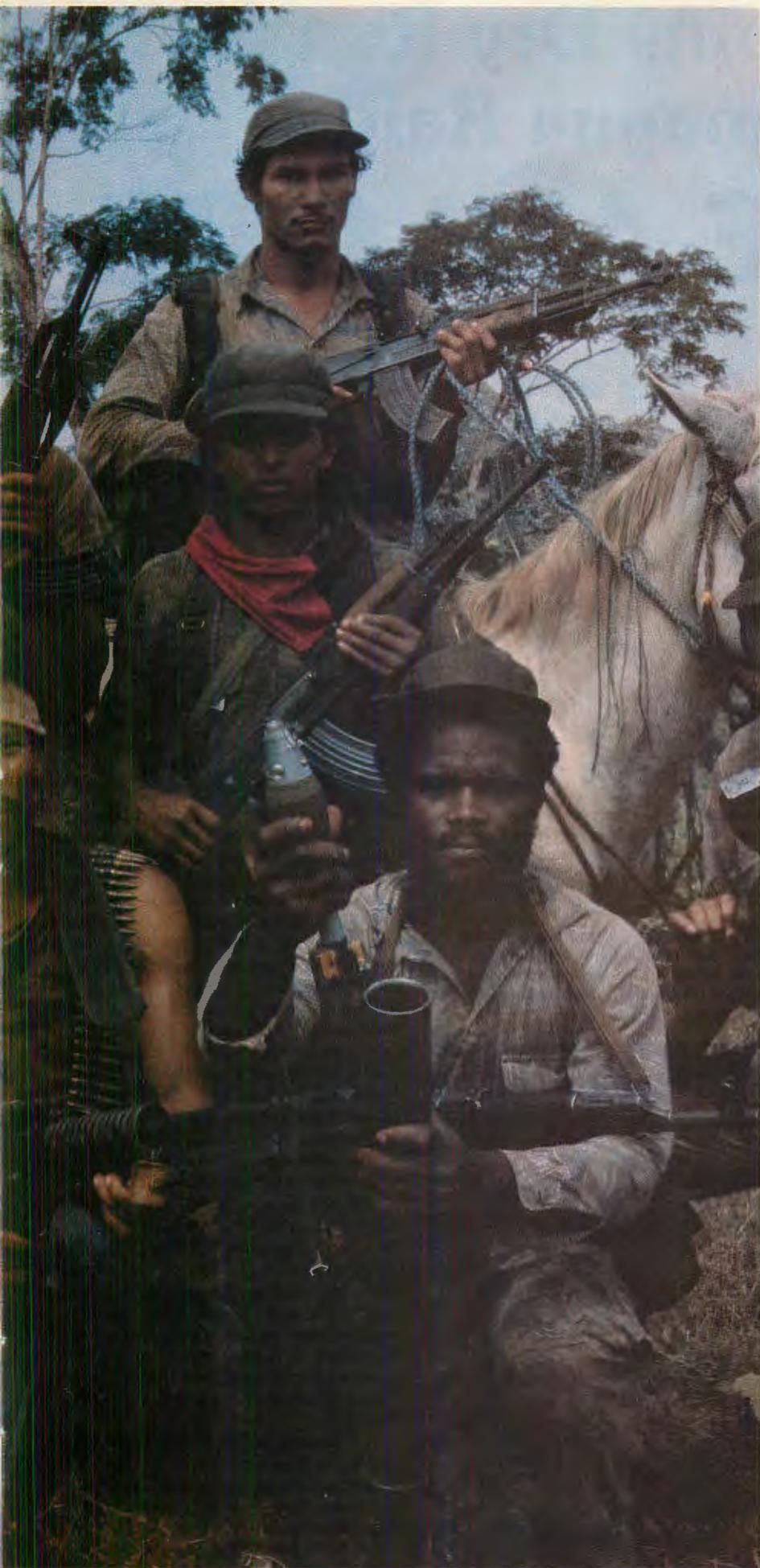
At 1000 hours Israel formed eight guerrillas on the now-dry grass. Dragonflies swarmed around them. Cans of sardines with mixed vegetables, Nestle's sugared, condensed milk and packs of cigarettes, soda crackers and oatmeal were handed out for them to put into their U.S. Army knapsacks. After he gave instructions and a pep talk, he turned to a guerrilla and told him to fetch me a knapsack and show me how to fasten it.

It wasn't necessary. I figured it out myself. This wasn't my first military operation with ARDE guerrillas. I had accompanied them a month-and-a-half ago on an op near La Esperanza Dos against Sandinistas who were strafing unarmed *campesinos* trying to flee to Costa Rica (see "Escape from Sandinismo," SOF, January '84).

I packed my rations, then climbed along with eight others into a long, narrow boat. The bearded pilot sat on the stern's edge. He looked like he had downed too much *guzusa* (moonshine) last night. His puffy cheeks jiggled with each bob of the boat. His long, greasy hair was stuffed under his sports cap. He yanked the starter rope of the topless Johnson outboard a couple of times, reattached the top, then slowly lowered the buzzing propeller into the murky water. It churned out a muffled gurgle. We were off.

Eden Pastora's ARDE guerrillas after successful raid on El Castillo.





First we made a quick stop on the Costa Rican side to pick up supplies for an encampment on our way upriver. Chief of Zone Tadeo double-checked the inventory; two large sacks each of rice and beans, one 50-kilo bag of sugar, medicines, etc. Tadeo knew I had fought for ARDE before and, seeing me suited up for combat, lifted his big, bony right hand to the heavy-set protruding bones under his thick eyebrows and gave me a good-humored salute. He appeared in his late 30s and had been a small farmer before the Sandinistas took his land. His thinness and the wide-brimmed green hat on his bushy hair made him look taller than his five feet eight inches, despite the fact that he slumped his shoulders. His most noticeable characteristic, though, was his thick, well-groomed beard.

"Ready to get some beef?" he asked enthusiastically, softly holding my arm.

"Of course," I said as I loaded onto another boat.

Boat loaded, we cut up the slow current; a spray flew back in a V vortexed at the bow. I waved to Matallana, who was on the northern bank fishing. He was the oldest guerrilla I've known, a 63-year-old Costa Rican, but with the body of a 30-year-old. The fish weren't biting and he was frustrated. Being too familiar with the daily diet of rice, beans and green bananas, I empathized.

We navigated a series of curves and came across the bullet- and rock-scarred hulk of the *Bremen*, a cargo ship donated to the Sandinistas by East Germany. In May '83, the guerrillas hit it with RPG and rifle fire and grounded it in the low water near the Costa Rican side. The EPS detachment aboard fled into the Costa Rican bush and the guerrillas recovered a large cache of arms, munitions and supplies. As we turned the bend beyond it, the waters turned choppy. We plodded through and it was smooth sailing the rest of the way to Chief of *Peloton* Javier's encampment, where we tied up and unloaded the cargo.

Tadeo's boat pulled up shortly with more men. He gathered them, the guerrillas I came with and some who had come down from another encampment, under the small skinny trees next to the decaying planks of what used to be a dock. Rations for those who didn't have any were distributed, and then he formed two units of five men each and one of eight. I was one of the eight. Instructions were given and we embarked for the mouth of the Bartola River, seven kilometers downstream from El Castillo.

My group was the first shuttle. The boat turned a curve and slowed to the pace of an Australian crawl when the straw-thatched house on the corner of the San Juan and Bartola became visible 500 meters away. The men tensed. Just two weeks earlier Sandinista border guards ambushed and killed three guerrillas nearby. *Campesinos* said the Sandinistas had withdrawn recently, but maybe they were mistaken.

Continued on page 90

SOF Joins Dry Run for Managua Raid

ARDE AIR OPS

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury



IT was a lazy Central American Sunday morning some weeks after my cattle-rustling adventure. I was drinking coffee at an ARDE checkpoint in northern Costa Rica waiting for a supply truck to return me to Israel's river encampment when "Nathaniel," a Costa Rican logistics man, asked if I'd like to go out for a ride. I had nothing else to do, except lounge in the hammock of an enclosed living room/veranda or try to put the make on the radio girl, so I agreed and squeezed in the red Toyota with a half-dozen other people.

Half the guys were pilots, but that wasn't odd; they often laid over at the checkpoint and went out for meals or beer. But it soon became evident that this wasn't an ordinary Sunday drive in the country.

We drove to the comfortable home of an expatriate American farmer/gun runner, who asked to remain anonymous. We exchanged pleasantries, then rolled out his two 206 Cessnas from their rusting hangar out back and onto a grassy runway.

"Yeah, you're really going to get some 'cattle' this time," he joked, after hearing of my recent foray into crime. The sun shone bright through the almost-clear sky. The old WWII pilot climbed into the cockpit of the white-and-red-trimmed lead plane, revved the engine and took off. His 39-year-old U.S. partner rode co-pilot and Nathaniel and a Nicaraguan sat in back.

The six remaining Nics and I followed in the beige-and-brown sister plane. We flew in tandem. The planes' double-cross shad-

Camouflaged C-47 airplane that delivered arms to ARDE soldiers was flown by Nicaraguan Contra flier named Viking. Photo: BBJ

Comandante Zero, Eden Pastora, former Sandinista hero and now ARDE leader, met with author at Nicaraguan encampment to discuss the planned "Death to Kings" operation.



ows glided over the varying greens of jungle, mountains, meadows and pastures. Grazing cattle and sheep appeared as grains of salt and pepper at 1,500 feet. A flight of geese was a meshed white kite to the east. Rivers mazed everywhere. My companions, like tourist guides, pointed out a volcano below. The mood was festive. Salsa music blasted over the din of the propeller and wind. Strong air currents tossed the plane and the guys hoorayed. I popped my ears. Soon the clandestine Costa Rican airstrip came into view. Condor circled it a couple of times, then, 10 to 15 minutes after takeoff, touched down on the bumpy grass at 0915 hours. A half-dozen *compas* greeted us. The other plane landed shortly after and we pushed both behind a thicket and waited.

Old newspapers, tortilla bags and cigarette packets littered the leafy ground. Day-old chop suey rotted in plastic containers on a stick rack. Guys sat on rocks and a triangle of split logs. A couple lay in hammocks. The rest lounged in the copper-colored Dodge van parked to the side. It was hot. Shirts were unbuttoned. At last, a pleasant breeze souged through the foliage. Conversation centered on James Bond gadgets.

"Let's put explosives in a radio-operated toy plane and fly it into the dais of The Nine [members of the junta] at a rally," someone suggested. We munched on sweet bread and drank soft drinks.

At 1135 hours the green-and-tan-camouflaged C-47 swooped overhead and

bounced down to the end of the airstrip. We piled into an aquamarine Toyota pick-up and raced after it. The plane had turned around when we arrived. Two of the three crewmen stood in the doorway. I knew Viking, a Nicaraguan flier, from the day I had flown on an arms drop deep inside Nicaragua, and I recognized the other's face, but I couldn't place him. He waved to me.

They reached out and pulled the coordinator of logistics, "Sanchez," and a few others inside, and we formed a chain to the Toyota. We pitched out at least 200 brown-paper-wrapped Soviet-bloc or Chinese-made SKS semiautomatic rifles and 20 boxes of 1260 7.62mm bullets from man to man into the pick-up's bed and on the grass. A troop of *campesino* boys walked by, looking at us puzzledly. A yellow crop duster made a couple of passes, then returned to its work over the adjacent sugar-cane field.

Our people jumped out and the visitors waved good-bye. Who was that guy? He gave the thumbs-up from the cockpit and the plane, which kept its propellers whirring the five minutes it was with us, departed. Then my memory clicked. He was a lieutenant or captain I had seen in El Salvador.

A green diesel cattle truck pulled up and we transferred the cache to a hidden compartment inside. It then left for storage or distribution points. We reentered our planes and returned. At the checkpoint I saw Sanchez reading the day's issue of San Salvador's *Diario de Hoy*. He acknowledged the shipment came from El Salvador. With the Sandinistas funneling tons of arms and



ARDE guerrillas remove paper-wrapped weapons from C-47 plane.

Author (in plaid shirt) helps move brown-paper-wrapped Chinese SKS semiautomatic rifles for ARDE guerrillas into cattle truck. "The Cat," the pilot with whom author practiced dropping rocks from airplane, is removing guns from larger truck. Photo: BBJ

materiel to the Salvadoran guerrillas, it was good to see the Salvadoran government reciprocating.

The following day ARDE practiced dropping rocks from a Cessna. They removed the back seats, inserted a large box full of rocks, and, while flying in a tilt over a practice target, pulled a trap door. But the stones wouldn't fall out. They were too big and the chute was faulty. The guys worked on the kinks and brought smaller rocks; we were ready for another test. But it was "The Cat's" turn to take his debut flight and nobody wanted to accompany him. I didn't know this and, enjoying flying, volunteered to pull the rope that would open the trap.

The guys on the ground had reason to be wary. The Cat was a wild flier. He impetuously flipped levers and turned dials, jerking us through the air. But I concentrated only on executing my job. I had wrapped the rope tightly around my hand between the index finger and thumb, and made a fist. I held it under my chin and turned my shoulders toward the doorway.

When The Cat tilted the plane and yelled, "Now," I threw it like a shot putt as hard as I could. The rope cut into my palm, but the rocks fell out perfectly. The Cat grinned crazily; his big gray eyes grew even bigger. He threw his fist over his sun-bleached curly hair and plunged into a hammerhead stall, pulling out a couple of hundred feet from the ground. I choked and gasped for breath. We

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IGOR Fedorevich Chedikov is the first Soviet prisoner of war I have ever met. Igor, a truck driver from Bukhara, USSR, was captured and dragged from his crippled BMP-1 armored infantry fighting vehicle in a mujahideen ambush near Kandahar, Afghanistan, 2 July 1983. He had been a prisoner of the Afghan guerrillas for 37 days when I interviewed him and another Russian POW in a camp on the Afghan-Pakistani border.

The young prisoner — I judged him to be about 20 — shuffled worriedly in front of his Afghan guards, staring down at his feet as he advanced toward me. His light blond hair was cropped closely to his head, accentuating his Slavic features and making him appear very young. His unbuttoned khaki shirt hung damply from his pale body; dark sweat stains formed large crescents under his arms. He wore dirty, brown, double-knit, Western-style pants and sandals.

The tough-as-nails mujahideen soldiers who had captured him are ruthless in their quest to drive the Soviet invaders from their country and Igor was lucky to still be alive. He knew that and was obviously scared to death.

Without doubt, never in Igor's short life had he been prepared to meet the people he had met lately. He had no idea who I was, or what to expect. Almost certainly, he had not contemplated chatting with an American journalist — from *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine — about the complexities of daily life in the Soviet Army. His fearful, suspicious attitude showed that he thought that whomever, or whatever, I represented boded no good for him.

My Afghan friend and Russian language interpreter was himself once a prisoner of the communists in Afghanistan. His teeth were extracted during one "interview" before he and eight others escaped; the remaining 67 Afghans imprisoned with him were executed. He looked at the Russian kid in a vague, fraternal way — as if to reassure the prisoner that, eventually, we are all going to die.

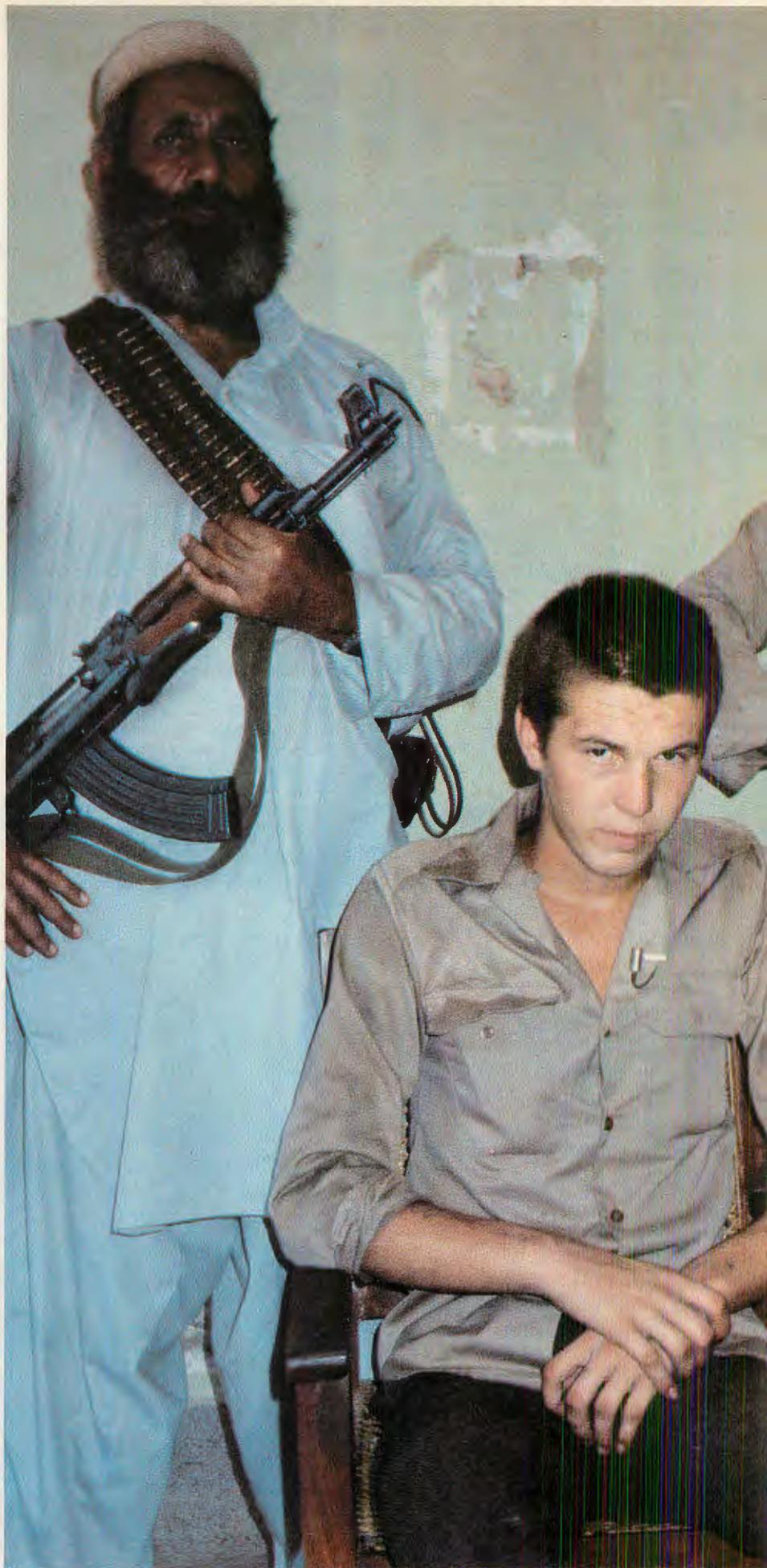
I had asked my Afghan hosts to bring the prisoners before me separately. The interview required elaborate translation from English into Pushtu into Russian and back.

Igor began chain-smoking as I took notes. I noticed his tattoos: He looked like a punk-rocker. He had crude, self-inflicted ink symbols and initials pricked beneath the skin of his hands and arms — juvenile-delinquent style. The flaming-torch tattoo on his right forearm was better drawn than the others, but I didn't attach much significance to it until I noticed a similar tattoo on the second Russian prisoner.

According to the Geneva Convention game rules, name, age, rank and serial number are permissible questions so I decided to start with these — even though the Soviet Union is not a signatory to the Convention.

"He says his name is Igor and he is 21," came the answer back through the multi-layered language nexus.

"Tell him he has three names," I said, unsatisfied. "I want his patronymic too."





Exclusive

SOF INTERVIEWS RUSSIAN POWS

Text & Photos by Jim Coyne

Soviet prisoner of war Igor Fedorevich Chedikov is guarded by Afghan freedom fighters after his capture 2 July 1983 near Kandahar, Afghanistan. His unit, the 70th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Independent), suffered heavy casualties during mujahideen ambush; BMP-1 the prisoner drove was destroyed. Guards carry folding-stock AKs.

"Igor Fedorevich Chedikov," he repeated softly.

"What is his rank?" I asked.

A circle of Afghan mujahideen, with their AKs resting on their laps, sat silently around us, watching the strange proceedings and listening intently to the Pushtu part of the translation.

"He says he's just an ordinary soldier," the translator replied with a shrug.

"I asked him for his rank," I repeated. "I know he was a soldier. What was his job? What was his monthly salary?"

The Afghans crowded closer at the change of tone in the interpreter's voice.

"He says again that he was just a soldier — a private, a driver/mechanic. He was paid 12 rubles every month, plus four rubles for duty in Afghanistan."

"What is his soldier's number?"

Igor lit another cigarette as he waited for the chain of translation to reach him.

"He says he cannot remember his number. It was a long number. He did not think it was important. Only his officers kept his number."

So much for the rules.

"Where was he and what was he doing when he was captured?" I asked.

"He says he was not captured; he defected to fight on the side of the mujahideen freedom fighters against the Russians. He says he is a Muslim. He and his other friend walked away from their unit near Kandahar, then surrendered two days later to mujahideen."

One of the Afghan guerrillas sitting near-

by spat contemptuously into the dirt and ground his heel into the spot.

"Tell him I don't believe him. Ask him the question again." I waited.

"*Pravda, pravda!* [true, true]," the young prisoner shouted.

The Afghans squatting near me laughed at his answer and poked each other.

"Is that true?" I asked the Afghan mujahideen political/intelligence officer, who had arranged the interview. He was monitoring and taping the answers.

"No," he said evenly. "This man was captured during a confrontation with Soviet troops outside Kandahar 2 July. He is being stupid. He thinks we do not know how he was captured. He is saying what he thinks we want to hear. He has asked for hashish every day — we give it to him."

"Do you believe he is a Muslim?" I asked the officer.

"I cannot be certain about that. A man's religion is his to decide, but if it is true, then Allah appeared for him at a very fortunate time."

The kid lit another cigarette from the glowing tip of the one in his hands as he watched us talk.

"What unit is he with?" I asked.

"He says he was with the 70th Motorized Rifle Brigade."

"Where is his home in the Soviet Union?"

"He came from Bukhara, Uzbekistan, USSR."

"When did he arrive in Afghanistan?" I asked.

"On 20 April 1982." (According to this date, he had completed 16 months of service in Afghanistan. The normal tour of duty for Soviet enlisted man in Afghanistan is 18 to 21 months, but sometimes only six months for airborne troops.)

"How did he come to Afghanistan?"

"He says he came by air; there were about 40 or 50 other people on the airplane."

"When did he 'defect'?"

"He says he joined the mujahideen 2 July 1983."

"What is the morale of soldiers in his unit? What is the morale of Soviet forces in Afghanistan in general?"

"Morale is very low, he says. Fighting spirit in the ranks is absent in his unit. There have been instances of Russian officers executing soldiers for not doing their duty. The majority of the Soviet people are unenthusiastic about the idea of fighting in Afghanistan, but the people have been told only one percent of the Soviet Army will have to serve duty in Afghanistan."

"What would happen to him if he returned to the Soviet Union now, after being a prisoner of war?"

"He has been told that he would be killed if he goes back to the USSR. His officers have said that 'the enemy will change your mind.' So he would not be welcomed back."

[There is no real prisoner-of-war policy in the Soviet Army. Being captured is equivalent to treason according to Section 58.1.b in the Soviet penal code. It is assumed that POWs will be "turned" by their captors and interest in them ceases once they are reported missing or captured

in action.]

Because of Igor's tattoos, I asked if he had ever been to jail in the Soviet Union for any reason.

Surprise registered on Igor's face as he heard the question repeated in Russian. "He says he was imprisoned for two months for dancing, drunkenness and fighting with a knife. He joined the Army because of this and was later sent to a penal battalion after he caught his wife with another man and there was trouble."

Igor, it seems, had not led a charmed life.

Former Soviet Lt. Col. Viktor Suvorov, who was a Soviet officer before his defection to the West, discusses Soviet penal battalions in his new book, *Inside the Soviet Army* (see In Review, SOF, December '83). "Penal battalions and/or brigades originated in May 1942. Each penal battalion has an administrative group, a KGB-guards company and three penal companies. The permanent component of the battalion — the command staff and guards — consists of ordinary soldiers and officers selected for their obtuseness, ferocity and fanaticism. They are rewarded with privileges. Officers, for instance, receive seven times normal pay — for each year of service they receive seven years toward pension and retirement.

"The penal battalions themselves contain soldiers and officers sentenced for various crimes and offenses. Officers sent to such a battalion lose any decorations they may have, together with rank, and join the battalion as privates. For all ranks, time spent in a penal battalion does not count toward military service.

"In peacetime, penal battalions are known as Independent Disciplinary Battalions. Each penal battalion consists of 360 men. The basic strategic and tactical premise is that on the order 'Advance to attack!', the penal units have little choice between the KGB-guards company behind them and the threat of death before them. If they succeed in advancing, the process is repeated again and again. If, eventually, they die, the guards company returns to the rear, assembles a new battalion and the process resumes — or one is sent to a mine-clearing penal unit."

Life in a Soviet disciplinary battalion is designed to break the strongest characters within three months. Rarely, if ever, do Soviet soldiers who have spent time in such units show the slightest trace of disobedience or lack of discipline upon their release. As Suvorov noted, "After a soldier is released from a disciplinary battalion, he talks to no one and carries out all orders or instructions uncomplainingly. It is impossible to get him to say a single word about where he has been or what he has seen. His answers are monosyllabic and expressionless — yes and no seem to be the only words left in his vocabulary."

Igor certainly fit the description.

"How long had he been in the Soviet Army?" I asked, resuming the questioning.

"He was called up soon after his 18th birthday [over two years service, not count-



Second Soviet POW, Khlaime Lefzhevulevich, after capture by Afghan resistance troops. Prisoner had tattoo of winged parachute on right forearm that is new insignia of Soviet airborne assault troops.

AIRBORNE ASSAULT TROOPS

by Jim Coyne

Airborne assault troops wear the same uniform as airborne troops, but are tactically and organizationally different. Airborne troops are, in peacetime, under the direct control of the Minister of Defense, and are considered almost a separate service arm from Soviet Land Forces; they use transport aircraft and parachutes for their operations. In contrast, airborne assault troops form part of the Land Forces and are operationally subordinate in peacetime to a military district or in wartime to a Front Commander. They are transported by helicopter and don't

do combat jumps; sub-units are also equipped with Mi-26 heavy-transport helicopters and gunships of the Mi-24 class.

For Soviet Land Forces, the helicopter has nothing in common with conventional aircraft. Troops transported by conventional aircraft cannot seize territory; helicopter-transported units can seize territory and, therefore, are considered part of the Land Forces.

Airborne assault troops are organized in brigades. Each brigade can be lifted in one helicopter assault regiment (64 aircraft) and one squadron of Mi-26 heavy-transport helicopters. Each brigade has three airborne rifle battalions, one heavy battalion and a wide range of supporting weapons, and is 1,700-men strong.

In each MR brigade that the Soviets have formed in Afghanistan, one battalion in three is trained for air-assault operations with helicopters.

The number of airborne assault brigades increased throughout the 1970s and may continue to increase in the future.

ing time in penal service].”

“Was he ever a member of KOMSO-MOL [Communist Youth League]?”

“*Nyet.*”

“Would he tell me again what his job was in the 70th Motorized Rifle Brigade?”

“He was a driver-mechanic.”

“What kind of vehicle did he drive?”

“He says his vehicle carried troops — a BMP-1.”

“What does the tattoo on his right forearm signify?”

“He says he was part of an army sports club and the tattoo is a symbol used in Soviet sports groups.”

Sports? This kid didn't look like an athlete. I remembered a long lecture by a Soviet expert on sports in the USSR and its links with military and intelligence circles — in particular with specialized diversionary units known as “SPETSNAZ.”

“Ask the prisoner if he has ever heard of a special Soviet military unit called SPETSNAZ?”

Igor reacted visibly to the word when he heard me say it in English — he immediately scratched a match to flame and lit another cigarette. He asked for *aow*, the Pushtu word for water — he was offered a metal glass from the tray nearby.

“Yes, he has heard of SPETSNAZ.”

“Has he ever seen any SPETSNAZ troops in Kandahar?” I asked.

“He says it is a secret unit. No one knows who they are. Its members wear Afghan clothes.”

“How many SPETSNAZ troops did he see in Kandahar?”

“He thinks there were about 50 in his unit, he is not sure. He does not know about other units.”

“How many SPETSNAZ troops are in Afghanistan?”

“He says there are about 900 (a brigade) in Kabul, but they are divided into small groups throughout Afghanistan.”

“What does SPETSNAZ do in Afghanistan?”

“He says he is not certain. There are many Tadzhihs [people of Iranian descent with European features who live in Afghanistan and Turkestan] among them who act as Islamic advisers to the Soviet Army.”

“Was he SPETSNAZ?”

“*Nyet, nyet!*”

“Where is his Soviet soldier's book? [Each Soviet officer and enlisted man carries a book, numbering as many as 14 pages, of personal military records — name, service entrance location, schools, special training, weapons qualifications, etc. See “Bulyaev's Background,” by David C. Isby, page 74, *SOF*, May '81.]”

“He says he left it behind when he joined the mujahideen.”

At this point the Afghan political and intelligence officer stopped the proceedings and asked me to explain SPETSNAZ. I shared what I knew about the secret Soviet military unit as he wrote furiously in a small notebook.

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Afghan freedom fighter guards two Soviet POWs (Lefzhevulevich on left and Chedikov on right) with AKMS, the weapon of choice of Soviet motorized and airborne troops.

MOTORIZED RIFLE TROOPS

by Jim Coyne

At the lowest level, each motorized rifle section has a strength of approximately 11 men assigned to one BMP-1 infantry combat vehicle, BTR-60, BTR-70, or MP-LB armored personnel carrier — two or three men of which are the vehicle crew. One rifleman acts as assistant to the antitank rocket launcher gunner and carries three additional rocket warheads, booster, sustainer engines, spin stabilizers and fin assemblies in a satchel.

The section BMP-1 is equipped with four 9-M-14 “Malyutka” rail-mounted antitank rockets (NATO designation: SAGGER) with an automatic wire guidance system. Each company is also equipped with three shoulder-fired, heat-seeking antiaircraft missiles of the SAM-7 type. Each BMP-1 has eight individual armored firing ports, a rear hatch and top hatches for all troops.

The section's BMP-1 combat vehicle has an automatic 73mm gun turret and 12.7mm coaxial heavy machine gun and two vehicle-mounted machine guns. The BMP-1 has sufficient firepower, maneuverability and armor protection to engage any light tank or armored personnel carrier. It is amphibious and may be sealed and pressurized. Many military experts consider the BMP-1 the best armored infantry fighting vehicle

(AIFV) in operation. The BMP-1 also has a radio set and sensors for the detection of radioactivity and gas.

At this, the lowest level, Soviet motorized rifle troops must not be regarded as an infantry formation, but as a hybrid of tank, antitank, SAM, chemical, sapper and other sub-units. It for this reason that today's Soviet officers are called neither infantry nor motorized rifle commanders, but combined-arms commanders.

A normal Soviet motorized rifle regiment consists of the following: command HQ; reconnaissance company; signals company; tank battalion (three companies); three MR battalions (each having three companies); one battalion of self-propelled howitzers (three fire batteries and one control battery); one battery of “Grad-P” multiple-rocket launchers; one SAM battery; one engineer company; one chemical-defense company; one maintenance company and one motor-transport company.

In all, an MRR has 27 companies comprising approximately 3,000 to 4,000 troops.

At Soviet MR division level, the organizational requirements call for 165 companies and batteries (only 28 are MR companies), 23 tank companies and 67 artillery batteries (mortar, AA and rocket). The remainder is made up of recon, signal, engineer, chemical and other companies.

The MR troops make up the bulk of Soviet forces and are organized into 123 divisions and an additional 47 independent regiments or brigades. Motor-rifle units, because of their concentrated firepower and maneuverability, are the trump suit in the Soviet Land Force pack.

HIGH RISK HALO

Jumping on The Bull's Team in Panama

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

THE door. I had to get to the door. I couldn't catch my breath. We'd been at 18,000 feet for more than 40 minutes without oxygen. We weren't blue yet — hypoxemic — but were beginning to get that way. Oxygen starvation starts like that: Suddenly you can't breathe and your legs won't reach all the way to the floor. I stumbled to the door. I had to get me some engine exhaust. I stuck my head out in the wind and took in several huge gulps. . . .

Gatun DZ in the Panama Canal Zone warms its backside just a few hundred meters from the Gatun locks, those huge 25-ton gates that let the water in and out of Limon Bay. This is all on the Atlantic side and despite what the meteorologists say about the consistency of tropical weather, the Atlantic side of the isthmus gets the worst.

The HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) team of the 8th SFGA (Special Forces Group [Airborne]) devised a way to locate Gatun DZ in bad weather, even with complete cloud cover. We picked up the OMNI signal at French Field and whirled to a heading of 273 degrees as soon as the cone of silence told us we were immediately over the marker. A flight of 176 seconds on that heading and you had covered the 5.1-mile air distance from the airfield to the drop zone. It depended on the pilot maintaining a true groundspeed of 105 mph. That wasn't hard to do. Our creaky old C-47 didn't like

SECOND-STORY MAN

This is the second article to appear in SOF by Capt. James M. Perry, USA (Ret.). His first, "Bull in Indochina Shop," which told of working with Lt. Col. Arthur D. "Bull" Simons on Operation White Star, appeared on these pages last month.

Perry's military career spanned 24 years and two services, U.S. Army and Marine Corps. In the Army he worked with the Green Berets, teaching them High-Altitude, Low-Opening parachute tactics. He also did three stints, for better or worse, under The Bull. This month's adventure, under Simon's watchful eye, was not one of the better.

Perry now works in Los Angeles as a freelance writer for several magazines.

to fly much faster than that anyhow. The pilots loved to fly those tests, as it proved their professional ability.

God! Won't this headache go away? I'm gulping propwash like a dying man. If we stay up here 10 minutes longer I'm going to abort this flight. They can't find the drop zone! Jesus Christ, it's down there somewhere — and the clouds are bound to bot-

tom out at 10,000 feet! Let's punch through and get oriented! Come on, somebody! Make a decision!

Dick Meadows and Jesse Ramos joined me at the door. Ramos was senior officer present and Meadows was jumpmaster. We couldn't determine the ground wind speed or direction because we hadn't been able to throw a wind drift indicator and get a visual release point. Dick was damned worried. There was a whole bevy of South American dignitaries on the DZ waiting to watch the team perform. The three of us had a conference at the door.

"Give me some input," Meadows pleaded, his hands at his heart. Maj. Ramos was chewing on his lower lip. I was just a fill-in member of the team. What the hell did I have to say about who makes what kind of decision? Our fourth member, McNally, was nodding peacefully in his bucket seat.

"Whatever it is, Dick," I replied, "jump this mission in the next 10 minutes or abort. It's starting to get to me."

"ABORT!?" Ramos screamed. "The Bull'd take us apart! Do you know the god-damned *Presidente* of Bolivia is down there? Abort, my ass!"

"All I know is I'm getting hypoxemic, Jesse. That's all. Who in the fuck ever decided we didn't need oxygen for this mission?" I stuck my head out the door and took another gulp.



"Who knew we'd climb up to 18 grand?" Meadows said numbly. "We're here — and we don't get here very often. I say we use the altitude."

"Okay, then," I answered, "use the French Field beacon approach. We've practiced it a dozen times. Now let's see if it works."

Ramos grinned and nodded approval. "Yeah!"

Meadows socked a hard fist into his palm. "It'll work?"

I nodded back, though I could have shrugged my shoulders. "We're never going to find out until we try it."

Each of us studied the others as if we'd reached the same decision separately but at the exact same moment. Dick reached for the intercom. Jesse backed off and lit a cigarette. I stuck my head out the door for another gulp. It might've been better if I could have just puked.

I could hear that little voice ringing in my ears: "How long have you been jumping, Perry?" I wanted to answer, "Too damned long." It had all started in 1946 at the Orange County airfield in California. My head was fuzzy. Calculate, asshole! "Twenty years," I told that little voice.

"... And you never took a chance?" it asked me. "No, never." I shook my head. "Never. That's why I'm alive today."

Meadows pulled me out of the door and took a gulp of the propwash himself. "You're right," he frowned. "It's starting to get me, too."

Meadows was a cool master sergeant, an ops and intel team sergeant. He was stuck with jumpmaster duties today only because he was climbing another rung in the HALO ladder. I would evaluate him and recommend whether or not he was to be certified as jumpmaster. When he pulled his head back in out of the propwash, he grinned, then stuck a thumb in the air.

"We're on," he said. "Pilot's going back for the marker now." A few years later, Meadows would join the Bull at Chiang Mai, Thailand, as an officer and the two of them, along with a double handful of Green Berets, would attempt a deep raid into North Vietnam to try to rescue POWs from Son Tay. I've always heard it was Dick who was the first man to leap out onto enemy territory.

But today he was a master sergeant, jumpmaster and senior decision maker, all rolled into one. The yellow caution on the jump light winked on. "He's got the marker," I said matter-of-factly. Dick agreed. He clapped his hands together several times.

"All right, people, let's start checking equipment!" He looked over to McNally, who was now fully asleep and nodded to Ramos with a sly wink. Ramos grinned back then kicked McNally's legs out from under him. "Jump time!" he yelled.

Jump time! Remember the time when we were down in Venezuela instilling equipment confidence to novice jumpers — and everyone was afraid their static line might

break? Harry Lewis, my NCO assistant, and I decided to use bravado — machismo. Harry unhooked my static line and held it in his hand while I jumped. Later that night, as he rubbed a sore shoulder, he would say to me, "The method seemed to work, Skipper, but damn! Skin off a few pounds before we try that trick again!"

The crew chief made a frantic signal with all 10 fingers, spread twice. Twenty seconds! Dick took the door, a style not familiar to airborne static-line jumpers.

A HALO jumpmaster is just that, master of the jump. It's been that way ever since I've been in HALO: The jumpmaster goes first. Ramos stuffed himself behind Meadows, McNally behind Ramos, and I cleaned up the stick. I checked my gear once again, quickly:

... Rifle tied down, helmet on tight, rucksack a little loose at the knees, but only because I preferred it that way. I gave the reserve handle a slight twist under its elastic band so I could grab it with my heavily gloved hand if it came to panic time. The jump light went to red, shifted back to yellow, then flashed green.

"Go!" screamed the crew chief. We went.

It's like floating, man, floating! Once you get outta the propblast and into some still air, it's like, man — you're in your own cocoon. You dig? It's like saying to your woman, "Mama, hold me tight 'fore I blow away" — and she does that — and you feel good! Same's with your own little pocket of air. Scared? Naw, never! Say, my man, gimme another drag off that roach, will ya?

We're out over the fucking water! We're all gonna be shark bait!

The cloud cover is a solid, unbroken blanket of gray below us. It must be raining underneath, I think. I sneak a hand down to my knee and grab the piece of 550-cord taped there — my foot smoke. Pull the pin and you're trailing red smoke, marking your path for the audience below. But not now, stupid! Wait until the clouds bottom out!

Where's the rest of the team? Meadows is on the left in that orange flight suit of his. The guy behind him has to be McNally. That puts Ramos on my right. I look and there he is. He gives me a slight wave and I return it. Now to work. I'm the Tail-End Charlie, the formation packer, the sucker that comes down looking like an Apache right out of Yuma. I eat everyone else's

smoke trail.

I have to move in, slowly force the team to wedge itself into a small diamond. Bow your arms a little, roll your shoulders inward and straighten your legs a little. You start to move laterally in a method called "tracking." And, as the formation packer begins to move, so does everyone else, closer to each other than we've been since we stepped out of the C-47 10 seconds back. There! Now we're in a good two-meter spread. A slight movement and you can reach out and take your teammate's hand.

God, it's nice and cool up here! The wind tugs at your mouth and you open it a little, let it blow your cheeks out. Open it wide at 125 mph and it'll blow you up like a balloon. No, that's crazy, Perry. If you were a balloon, you could hang up here forever! Thump! We just screwed into the cloud layer, a big fat wad of wet cumulus. It's difficult to see the others clearly. Hold your heading, Dick! Hold your heading!

Water streams off goggles. Be nice to have a little windshield wiper going — swish, swish! Hold your heading, Dick.

And then we're out. We're out together as a team and my altimeter reads 9,800. Meadows extends his arm and pulls it back quickly. Smoke! I pull the pin and feel the grenade ignite. It doesn't make any difference whether it did or not because I'm already eating everyone else's smoke.

But what the hell is this? I turn my head slightly to the side to take a look around — and we're out over the fucking water! We've missed the goddamned DZ and in three or four minutes we're all gonna be shark bait! Limon Bay is full of them — big mothers!

Meadows turns left and we all turn with him. Suddenly he falls into a hard track and it's difficult to hold pace with him. He's spotted the drop zone and he's going after it!

Tracking. It's a kind of like a ski jumper's position just after he's left the ramp. When I was CO of the U.S. Army Golden Knights, we put our best tracker, Loy Brydon, on theodolite cameras, a sort of surveyor's quadrant. Loy sank back in a deep track and began to move. He was like a streak across the sky. It was like he had... well, like he had a jet up his ass. When the film was analyzed, they determined that for every 1.8 feet down he fell, he moved forward exactly one foot! Tracking!

Now a line of green pops up in my peripheral vision and tells me we're back over land. I'm glad. Nobody is wearing flotation gear other than the B-7. I glance at my altimeter even though I know it's going haywire during a hard track. The needle jiggles around like it's doing ragtime. I interpret mine at 5,000 feet.

I'm still eating red smoke but it's thinning out a little and I can see the spectator area... but wait! Dick, you're going too far! Drop down now! Timers are getting ready to go off! But he continues on.

You think it's foolish to follow the leader even though you feel he's wrong? Not in HALO it isn't. Team integrity is every-

thing. Perhaps he sees something you can't. The whole point behind HALO is that you remain together, open together and land together so you can fight together.

Damn! The automatic opener just went off. I brace myself for a bad opening shock. We've been traveling forward at about 60 mph and downward at a hundred. When the timer goes off, we say, "The mouse bit me," and here it comes!!

The G-force is a positive 5, enough to make all those little red, white and blue bubbles race around in your goggles. It's like almost fainting, but not quite.

I look around and everyone is open. We're riding modified T-10 canopies with holes cut in the right places to enhance steerability.

Crash! Limbs and branches break as we plunge into the green canopy.

On that day in time, the canopy was designated an MC-1A. Today, HALO rides a new generation of parachutes — air foils that parachutists like to call "flats," or "blankets." If only now could have been then...

We're so far past the stands that I can see the Chagres River coming up, a thick finger of red water racing through an equally thick growth of banyan and balsa trees — high-fucking balsa trees! Dick is going to make the river but the rest of us won't. No dropping of rucks now, though there's a 16-foot suspension rope for that. Drop a ruck in the trees and you may end up with the rope around your neck.

"He's up here, Lieutenant! Up high! See him?" Yes, I can see him. His GP bag is hung up in the top of the tree and the drop line is wrapped around his neck as surely as a hangman's noose. Yes, I see him. A damned death when you're DZSO! It's like taking a voluntary guilt trip. Poor bastard! Pilot carped the whole plane load into the pines on the north end of Normandy DZ!

Jesse Ramos is close enough so that we can yell to each other. We've still got about a thousand feet before we hit the trees.

"Which one are you taking?" he yells over. I point to a balsa I've already chosen.

"Okay! Have a good one! I'll take the one next to you!"

... And suddenly we're there... *crash!* Limbs and branches break off as we start our plunge into the green canopy of the upper growth of a third-growth balsa. Let me explain that.

Trees in any jungle are always fighting for their place in the sun. Their tops are called canopies. As other trees around them grow higher and branch out, masking out

their portion of the warmth, they grow greedily. This causes a new canopy to grow higher, reaching above the others. The tree has now become a second-growth balsa, with a thick top canopy and a thinner second canopy beneath it. If the process continues, it's called third-growth jungle — and that's exactly what I sailed into.

I shoot through the top of the tree and down into the second canopy. I hold my breath. Will I hang up? (We later estimated the tree to be better than 150 feet high.) If your parachute doesn't hang up, you'd better know how to do a good PLF — parachute landing fall!

As we both crash through our separate trees, I think I hear Jesse yell, "Jesus!" — but it could be me. I'm snugged tight now and oscillating gently back and forth, the parachute wrapped tightly around a large grouping of branches. I can look straight down between my feet and see the ground. I figure it at about 90 feet.

Getting out of your harness in a tree landing isn't the easiest thing to do, but here goes. Drop the ruck on its line, unhook one side of the reserve and let it dangle from one D-ring. Work your cheeks back into the harness as far as you can and unhook the chest strap. A little more shoving and you're seated in a swing. Then you can unbuckle the leg straps.

I did all this and when I was finished, I was exhausted. I sat back and looked around.

"You okay, Jim?" Jesse yelled over.

"Perfect!" I yelled back. "How about you?" No answer. "Jesse? You okay?"

"Yeah, but I can't get this damned rifle off! I'm hung up about 50 feet in the air."

"I'm about 90," I called back, "but I'm not going to try and come down just yet." I looked over my shoulder and I could see the Chagres. I could smell it, it was so close. I muttered to myself, "Jesus! Just 50 feet more!" We'd get a lot of ribbing later on about "bad canopy handling."

"Did Meadows make the water?" Ramos wanted to know. I twisted back again. I couldn't see him. "I didn't see him go in!" I called back. A pause and then a curse from his tree.

"Jesse, you going down now?" A short silence.

"Yeah, I finally got rid of this damned rifle!" Pause. "Don't go away now. I'm coming over to give you a hand." I could hear him sliding down his rappel, and then his comment, "Boy oh boy, is the Bull ever gonna be pissed about this!"

I twisted my reserve handle and let the canopy spill down. That gave me about 25 feet of something to work my way out of the harness and shave that many feet off what I'd have left before I could get both feet on the ground. Well, here goes something! I gathered the suspension lines into a bundle and carefully began lowering myself. My feet touched the nylon canopy and I quickly froze and locked a leg around the lines. The parachute canopy is inverted at this moment and it doesn't take too much. . . .

"Here he is, Lutenant!" But nobody had to tell you that. He was screaming like a banshee, all neatly tucked away in the bottom of his parachute canopy. He had slid down the lines, missed the rappel over to the nylon and dropped down inside, where he now nestled in the gossamer folds of a 24-foot reserve. "Get me the fuck outta here!" he cried down. The DZNCO laughed back. "Hug it, baby, hug it! You may be wearing one'a them canopies made by Lady Lee!" When they weren't turning out bras, panties and slips, they made 24-foot reserve parachutes.

Jesse was underneath, guiding me. I slowly transferred to the nylon and went down that, winding my fingers through the maze of suspension line that runs through the apex. "You're still about 30 feet off the ground!" he called up. "You gonna let go?" I looked down. Thirty feet? Bullshit! More like 50.

The Bull was a fearful CO when he was mad — same as a cobra hypnotizing the Paddy Rat.

"Will you try a catch?"

"Sure," he said, "come straight down. I'll do what I can."

I calculated the risk for a moment, took a deep breath and yelled as I let go, "Hut thousand, two thousand. . .!"

Meadows had gone in the river and fished himself out. McNally was in the top of a small palm tree when we found him, contentedly chewing his way through a cluster of sweet grape dates. It took the recovery crews two days of hard chopping to get our rigs out of the trees. Then one morning or so later, I got a call from the adjutant. "The Old Man wants to see you." I hurried in that direction.

Now full colonel, Arthur D. "The Bull" Simons was a fearful CO when he was mad. His eyes would steel and you got the feeling it was the same as a cobra hypnotizing the Paddy Rat. He seemed to have the capability of looking straight through you. This morning he was mad. I reported properly and saluted. I started to go to parade rest, thought better of it and remained at rigid attention. He thought it insolent.

"Are you trying to play games with me, captain?"

"Sir?"

"Rest!" he demanded, and I did. He tapped his pencil against the palm of his hand. "Do you know how much that little fiasco of yours is going to cost my S-4?"

"Sir? . . . Mine, sir?"

"You were the most skilled officer present. You should have aborted the jump when you knew you were in trouble."

" . . . But sir, we were never. . . ."

"You missed the goddamned DZ, didn't you?" Pause. Declaration. "You were in trouble."

"Sir, I was neither SOP nor the jumpmaster. Surely their statements. . . ."

He waved a bundle of papers at me. "I've got their statements — and I've got yours. They all agree but for one thing. It was you who suggested the beacon route."

"Sir, HALO was built on ingenuity. It had to be tried some day — sooner or later."

"Not at the risk of lives!" I closed my eyes briefly, for I could hear the tone of punishment rising in his voice. It wasn't my first tour with the Bull. I had been with him in Laos under some extremely trying conditions, and I guess that's why I knew the man so well. (See "Bull in Indochina Shop," SOF, January '84).

"I'm grounding you, Perry," he said rather matter-of-factly. It stunned me.

"Grounding me, sir? Me? Grounded?"

He nodded his head as if satisfied he'd done the dirty deed neatly and cleanly. His finger jabbed out to emphasize the point. "You! Grounded!"

"May I ask for how long, sir?"

"Until it's my pleasure to lift the restriction. Kiss your jump pay goodbye for a while, captain."

I suppose I could have appealed it, asked for a court martial. But who in the hell wants to risk a conviction against \$110 a month? Still, \$110 a month pays a lot of bills. I shook my head in disbelief as I crossed to the adjutant's desk. "The Old Man just grounded me. He says I'm to tell you it's an indefinite suspension."

"I know," replied the adjutant, "and here's another piece of bad news for you." He handed me a paper. It was a quartermaster deduction for \$58.40 from my pay.

"What the hell is this?" I asked.

"Airborne rules, Jim. They couldn't find your rifle." He thought a moment. It was necessary to him that his next statement be philosophical. "Lose a weapon in the airborne — find it on the payroll."

"Shit!"

I walked out into the middle of a sun shower. Two Green Berets hurried past me but slowed long enough for salutes. I didn't feel like returning them. It was raining harder and I still had 500 meters or so to make the B-Team barracks. Then I did something petulant. I stopped, rolled my collar up against the rain, shoved my Green Beret to the back of my head and slowed my pace. I was talking to myself.

"I'll show 'em. I think I'll just take my time and stroll back to the barracks." Music from the coffee shop was playing the latest, most popular song:

" . . . Silver wings upon his chest. . . ."

Editor's Note: Perry survived the grounding. In less than a month, they needed a HALO jumper and he was the only qualified one available. In exchange for a demonstration jump, the Bull put him back on airborne status and restored the lost pay. The rifle was never found. ☒

Continued from page 65



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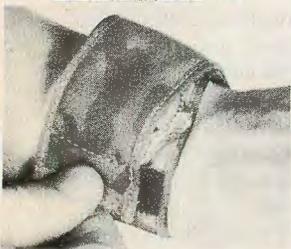


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the arms recovered in the five major warehouses at Frequente, it appears the USSR and North Korea had shipped in enough arms to equip a division. A curious condition of the transfer of arms was that all shipments from the USSR and its satellites were via Cuba.

Interestingly, even though there were vast quantities of rifles, ammunition, uniforms, boots and other military supplies in stock, the documents recorded frequent examples of Grenadian junior officers complaining of lack of equipment for their men. It is entirely possible that Grenada was being used to warehouse arms intended for use elsewhere. (Other East Caribbean nations, including Dominica, Jamaica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent, feared they might be used to arm leftists guerrillas on their islands.)

- A counter-intelligence report taken from the deputy minister of defense's office by SOF indicated that President Ronald Reagan's assertion that the American students at St. George's Medical School were endangered, one of the three reasons given to justify the operation, was well-grounded. The CI report described one medical school employee's husband, who was being "monitored," as "suspicious," and five students as "dangerous and posing as medical students, but really working for the U.S. government."

- A number of our "liberated" documents revealed that Grenada had sent military students to Russia, Cuba and Vietnam. A note in one document indicated that the students in Cuba "will undergo courses for a one (1) year period studying up to the level of Division and possibly Army." Why Grenada would need Division and Army commanders is interesting in its implications. Another training document revealed Grenada had plans to send 40 comrades to Vietnam and that Russia would pick up the transportation costs for those students.

- A series of reports on combat readiness of the militia in August and September reveal why the PRA folded up so quickly when U.S. troops arrived. The 5,000-man Grenadian militia was intended as the backup to the 1,200-man army. According to reports, turnout for drill averaged 15 percent; and transportation problems, faulty weapons and lack of leaders (in some units they couldn't get anybody to take the job) turned most of the drills into political discussions. However, on 27 September the mortar battalion had a better idea. The report states that only 12 out of 39 showed up and that "transportation affected the carrying out of the class, so they held a football match."

- SOF found one document outlining a proposed training program between Nicaragua and Grenada. The NJM was offering to train 15 Sandinistas in Grenada in basic English with a concentration on military terminology and the military phonetic

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alphabet.

● One letter addressed to General of the Cuban Army Raul Castro (Fidel's brother) from Maurice Bishop indicated that the Soviet Union's traditional equipment and resupply weaknesses continue. Bishop asked for Castro's help because the USSR had sent a complete shipment of uniforms and other gear; however, "a vast quantity of boots are much too small in size." Secondly, Bishop needed help securing spare parts and tires since 23 of Grenada's 27 trucks and eight of 10 jeeps were inoperable because of lack of parts or tires.

SOF's on-site examination of Grenada and its people, and a thorough analysis of the documents we brought back gave us a clear view of what was happening on the island — and who was in charge. The documents also indicate that the New Jewel Movement was using U.S. citizens — apparently, even one congressman — in pursuit of its foreign-policy goals.

● One of the most interesting documents SOF has is a "secret" report from a double agent named "Mark," who was attempting to infiltrate a counter-revolutionary group of Grenadians on Barbados. In it, Mark and an unknown CI officer, who wrote a follow-up to Mark's report, surmised that the Grenadian exile counter-revolutionary group on Barbados was working on behalf of the CIA, which was trying to determine the size and strength of the PRA and the militia.

But the kicker in the report was a comment by Mark that the Barbados-based counter-revolutionaries had learned "that the PRG (People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada) was paying someone at Harvard University Radio Station."

● An undated "secret" document that appears to be a report from the Grenadian Ambassador to Cuba or a Grenadian intelligence officer in Cuba states that "Elen (sic) Rey" of *Covert Action* "has picked up the news that the CIA plans to use Trinidad as a base more than they have in the past." The report's Elen Rey is Ellen Ray of *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, a Washington, D.C.-based publication that specializes in exposing CIA intelligence operations. CAIB is a successor to *Counter Spy*, a publication started by Phil Agee, a former CIA type who wrote *Dirty Work* and who is well in the leftist camp. Agee and Ray are both on the board of directors of CAIB. Ray's tidbit of information passed to Grenadian intelligence could indicate a closer relationship between CAIB and the communist intelligence apparatus than previously has come out in public.

● A memo to Bishop from Dessima Williams (Grenada's Ambassador to the Organization of American States who took refuge in Nicaragua when Bishop was executed) outlined plans for Bishop's visit to the United States in June 1983. Bishop came to the United States at the invitation of TRANS-AFRICA (TRANS-AFRICA is a spin-off from the Institute For Political Studies, a left-wing think tank) and the Black Congressional Caucus but without an official

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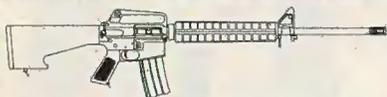
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USG invitation.

Williams reported that she was quoting verbatim Randall Robinson, executive director of TRANSAFRICA, who said that their invitation to Bishop "is to say to the Reagan administration: 'Maurice Bishop is our man, a black man. You mess with him, you mess with all black Americans. And we are bringing him here to show you that we are friends with him.'"

Later in the report, Williams wrote: "Further, in my opinion both Randall Robinson, but more so the members of the Black Caucus, such as Judge George Crockett [Editor's Note: Crockett, a congressman from Michigan, was counsel for the Smith Act defendants in the 1950s. The Smith Act required communists to register with the FBI.], want to step up their participation in national politics, and especially in foreign policy. Maurice Bishop and the Grenada Revolution represent very controversial but 'meaty' political issues. As national black politicians, they want 'to score one both with the black community, but particularly with the white establishment with whom they maintain love-hate relations.'"

Williams also reported that Robinson, Crockett and Congressmen John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) wanted to keep "white liberals" out of Bishop's trip "at the organizational level." Williams reported she was going to set up meetings with Conyers and Dellums to insist on "involving the progressive internationalist community and the peace community."

● Dellums also was mentioned in a New Jewel Movement Political Bureau meeting summary. The PolitBureau meeting minutes, dated 15 December 1982, read: "2.2 Ron Dellums: His assistant, Barbara Lee, is here presently and has brought with her a report on the International Airport that was done by Dellums. They have requested that we look at the document and suggest any changes we deem necessary — they will be willing to make the changes. Cde. [Commander] Layne was assigned the task."

The Reagan administration had claimed on a number of occasions that the airport at Grenada was being built for military purposes, not for tourism. Dellums, in public statements and in a report read into the *Congressional Record*, took the New Jewel Movement position: The airport was strictly for tourism. SOF finds it most intriguing that a U.S. congressman was willing to let Grenadian communists "suggest any changes" they would like made and to assure them that the changes would be made.

When I called Cong. Dellums' office on 11 November, aide Max Miller confirmed that Barbara Lee was a member of Dellums' staff in 1982.

After reading the quote from the Grenadian PolitBureau meeting regarding Dellums to Miller, I asked to talk with Dellums and was told he was not in the office since it was Veteran's Day. I asked if he could be reached on Monday and Miller said: "You can call back Monday. We would appreci-

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ate receiving the document in the mail in full context so that if any statement is warranted by us it will be made at that time."

After giving SOF Dellums' address, Miller asked: "How did you come to have access to this document?"

"I found it on the floor of the deputy defense minister's office," I answered.

"You found it — you were allowed access even though the congressional delegation wasn't?" asked Miller.

"I got there before they did. At the time I got there there was no one there," I replied.

"You got there before the invasion force?"

"Oh no, I got there a couple of days after."

"A couple of days after? I thought no one else was allowed on the island."

"We got in on Sunday and at that time you could still get in there."

"Sunday, 6 November, or Sunday, 30 October?"

"Sunday, 30 October."

"If you could send that express mail I would appreciate having it."

"OK. If you want to call us back the area code is 303 and the number is 449-3750 and I'm Jim Graves, G-R-A-V-E-S."

"That's fine. I've read your material before. Enjoy your weekend."

"Same to you," I concluded, but somehow I think he may not have meant it.

But once SOF gathered its intelligence reports from Grenada, we still had deadlines to meet. After the mad rush to get our stories, most of us journalists faced another scramble for transport back to the United States to get photos processed and stories into print. Back in the States, after being cut off from news for almost a week, we learned of the international and national reaction to the Grenada rescue mission.

On the international scene, the United Nations, including those member states who are our allies, "deployed" the American action in Grenada.

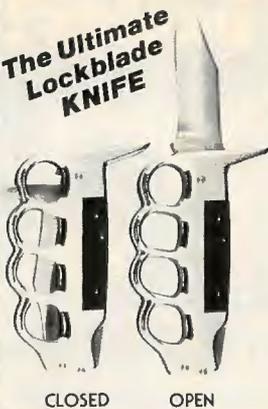
Meanwhile at home, during the operation, in Miami the Grenada National Steel Band entertained a crowd of Grenadians, who were celebrating the liberation of the island. Two days later, a crowd of 3,000 Latins turned out for a flag-waving rally where the most popular signs were "Viva Reagan" and "First Grenada, Nicaragua Later and Cuba Third."

According to a nationwide poll, the American public enthusiastically favored the operation — by a 9-to-1 majority — primarily because the American students evacuated off the island returned with thanks for their "rescuers."

Relieved medical student Jeff Geller summed up the students' feelings in thanking Reagan and the American troops who were on Grenada: "Prior to this experience, I had held liberal political views, which were not always sympathetic with the position of the American military. There's one thing to view an American military operation from afar and quite another to be rescued by one."

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expected to concede that the operation was the wise thing to do did so. Democratic Congressman and Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" O'Neil, who had been an outspoken critic of the operation, said he had changed his mind after hearing the report of the congressional delegation that went to Grenada. SOF suspects he actually saw the poll results indicating the overwhelming popular approval of the action.

CBS News announced it had polled 304 Grenadians and found that 91 percent "are glad the U.S. troops came to Grenada," while only eight percent were opposed. Also 76 percent of those polled said they believed Cuba wanted to take control of Grenada's government, and 65 percent said they believed the airport was built for Cuban and Soviet military purposes.

On the liberal front, columnists Anthony Lewis, *New York Times*, and Mary McGory, *Washington Post*, questioned the

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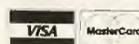
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Grenada operation. Of course.

Congressman Dellums, a member of the congressional delegation that went to Grenada, stated that he disagreed with the majority conclusion that the venture was justified as a means of protecting American lives.

Congressman Conyers joined six other Democratic congressmen in seeking the impeachment of Pres. Reagan because they contend he violated the U.S. Constitution by ordering the invasion of Grenada.

SOF strongly suspects that Lewis, McGory and Dellums are not happy with the liberation of Grenada. But the Grenadians, the American public and SOF are.

SOF's Grenada coverage will be continued in the March issue with additional articles on the weapons captured on the island and accounts of the soldiers who liberated it. ✕

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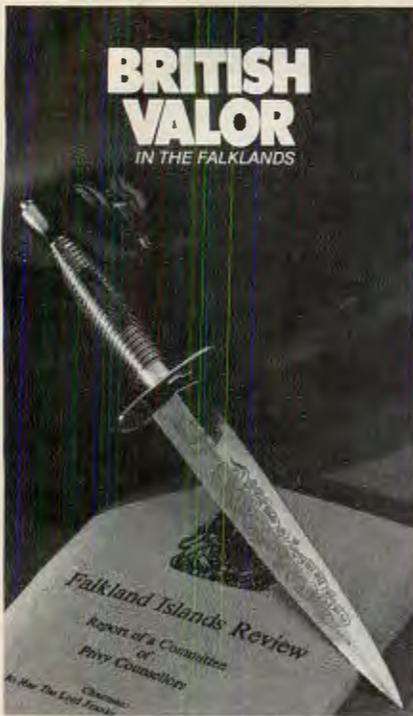
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Continued from page 49



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as they could if the unit were using standard SADF weapons. For some reason (easily explained by Peter Kokalis, no doubt), each assault rifle sounds different than its competitor — an AK-47 sounds different than an M16 and both sound different than a South African R-4. The split-second hesitation during the initial outbreak of a fire fight caused by hearing their side's weapons can give the men of 32 Battalion that brief, but vital, tactical advantage. Often, that is all they need to successfully carry out their search-and-destroy mission.

The units of the battalion are continually deployed, spending six weeks in the bush, then rotating back to Camp Buffalo in the western Caprivi of South West Africa for six weeks' R&R.

Although R&R for battalion troops means a chance to visit their families who live in the native town, or *kimba*, some seven kilometers from the camp, not all is fun and games. This period back at base is used for retraining, reoutfitting and preparing for the next bushtrip.

Physical fitness is emphasized continually during the period spent at Buffalo. No private motor vehicles are allowed although the troops may own bicycles. But they can't ride their bike from the *kimba* to the base. They must walk or run.

The unmarried troops live in typical company-style barracks. The white officers live with their men. There are no separate officers' quarters in 32 Battalion.

The officers assigned to 32 Battalion are a special breed of men. They are all volunteers and must be psychologically equipped to spend long periods of time living in the bush with native troops. When you consider that these officers come from a society that practices racial segregation, and that they now must live intimately with and trust their lives to the black troops of the battalion, it is apparent that it requires a dedicated, open-minded, adaptable individual to be an officer in 32 Battalion.

Since all commands are given in Portuguese, the South Africans assigned to the unit must be fluent in that language (or they learn very quickly). They must be well-versed in bushcraft and tracking in addition to executing their normal leadership tasks.

Their men are veterans of many battles on the African continent. Some have been fighting since their officers were tiny children. They are skeptical of outsiders and a new man must prove his mettle before being accepted by them. The officers of 32 Battalion must lead by example and from the front, not back in some company CP.

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It is a tough but rewarding duty for the officers of 32 Battalion.

A major inconvenience for all whites in the outfit, officers and NCOs alike, is that they must always keep their exposed skin areas camouflaged with black dye. A white face or hand sticks out like a sore thumb in Africa. The lighter skin of the whites also reflects light, which can instantly be picked up by sharp-eyed bush-wise terrorists. Living constantly in the bush with black dye smeared all over one's skin requires an individual who can adapt to most anything.

The troopies of 32 Battalion are also exceptional individuals. Many have been fighting in the bush for years, first against the Portuguese, seeking independence from a colonial power, then, after independence, in the ensuing civil war, and now against SWAPO terrorists.

The troopies are from the Bokongo tribe which lives in the border area of northeastern Angola and southwestern Zaire. In fact 30 percent of the battalion troops come from Zaire. Replacement personnel also come from the same tribe.

The bush-telegraph system, seemingly unique to the wilds of Africa, not only gets information to and from the folks and relatives back home, but also serves as a vehicle for recruiting replacements.

Consider — the new recruit must work his way south down the length of Angola through hostile areas controlled not only by the MPLA and SWAPO, but also Jonas Savimbi, an old enemy from the Angolan Civil War. All this effort just to get to the battalion does not guarantee acceptance by the outfit. Yet, they come south in droves, seeking to serve with their fellow tribesmen. Now *that* is dedication! No wonder the battalion has had such tremendous success in the SWAPO terrorist war, when filled with such highly motivated individuals.

Like our Special Forces, the individual troopie in the battalion is cross-trained to perform other stick-member's jobs. As a battalion spokesman told SOF, "Everybody can do everybody else's job."

The men of 32 Battalion are referred to by other South African officers as "our Special Forces." Unlike U.S. Special Forces, they are not airborne qualified. Given the caliber of the officers and men serving in the battalion, one can make a safe bet that, if required, they would take to airborne training like ducks to water.

Special-forces "purists" should overlook this lack of airborne qualification — 32 Battalion's mission doesn't require it. In spite of this, these men *are* special forces: They are an elite, special breed of soldier. They are tough, dedicated, highly trained individuals carrying out extremely dangerous, mostly clandestine, missions. They are a credit to the profession of arms. Any nation in the world would be privileged to have soldiers like them serving in their armed forces. ✕

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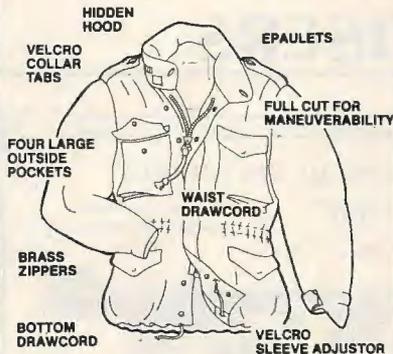
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Continued from page 71

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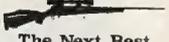
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The guerrillas' faces tightened with worry the closer we got. Any minute a fusillade could turn the boat into splinters and us into bloody feed for the sharks (the San Juan River, along with Lake Nicaragua, is one of the few fresh-water bodies in the world that sharks inhabit). Four-hundred meters Three-hundred. "We shouldn't have come this close; we're helpless," said the middle-aged guide in the bow. He fidgeted and dabbed the sweat from his lined face with a greasy cloth.

At a hundred meters the guerrillas' faces were fleshy knots. Suddenly, they relaxed somewhat; the house looked abandoned. We had to be sure, though. I was the second man off the boat. We cautiously trudged up the steep bank with our Kalashes level, stepped over a shallow trench and checked out the place. Nothing. The only evidence of the Sandinistas, besides the trench, was a stick blind over a foxhole and a rotting FSLN alphabetization book (read: indoctrination tract) among a heap of dusty, sheared wool in the otherwise empty house. I leafed over its tattered, curling pages. Pure propaganda: "Lesson 1: Long live the FSLN"; "The Yankee plunder was finished off"; "Death to Yankee Imperialism." And to top things off, on the final page was the FSLN hymn with the lines: "We fight against the Yankee/Enemy of humanity." I stuffed the book in my shirt and walked into the adjacent shed. A couple of guerrillas were rummaging through hundreds of blanched corn cobs. Outside the others were lying in the grass.

I sat down with the three Panamanians. Two of them were trading barbs. The six-foot, 190-pound Sampson, a black guy, had more than he could handle with the five-foot-six-inch, lean, quick-witted Beto. Yunya, sitting cross-legged with his goateed chin propped on a fist, smiled wryly and enjoyed the show. Frustrated, the big man turned to me and complained in perfect New York jive talk. (Sampson had lived in Brooklyn as a youngster until after high school.)

Flees, chiggers, lice...

Tadeo was on the third and final shuttle. He gave us final instructions and saw us off into the bush. Jose, our squad leader, counted us into Indian file. I was number six, sandwiched between Beto and Sampson in front, and Yunya in back. Waiting for the first group to leave, I reached out and plucked a mini red pepper from its bush and cautiously bit into it. Sweet. As I chewed, Jose waved his hand forward and led us into the jungle around 1230 hours.

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copious swig from another *compa's* canteen didn't quench my thirst.

Jose checked to see if everyone was present. He snapped his fingers and we continued our trek. A half-hour later, we rendezvoused with the other squads at the wooded creek adjacent to the clearing where the unattended cattle were pastured. We slaked our thirst, and then about half of us fanned out to form a security ring while the rest rounded up the cows.

It was almost a rodeo. The stomping beasts kept dodging us and running in circles. Finally, three were lassoed and dragged off by Buffalo's squad. The fourth was too violent and had to be left behind. That done, my unit recrossed the creek and walked backward up a hill — to throw off anyone tracking us — and set up ambush positions. The remaining squad lay in wait on the hill upstream from ours. Another five guerrillas were supposed to be ready for action on the other side of the river. But the Sandinistas didn't come.

Just before sundown, we opened up our cans of sardines and syrupy milk with knives and mixed the contents with crackers for a tasty meal for a change. This was one of the little pleasures of going on missions. At 1800 hours I took my shift on watch. Darkness soon swallowed up the surroundings so I sang The Who and Doors tunes to myself and counted stars to keep myself alert. An hour-and-a-half later, I handed the bandless glow-in-the-dark watch to the next man and stumbled about for a place to sleep.

The guerrillas had either spread their black plastic sheets on the ground or over branches to make *champas*. I had forgotten mine, so I just cleared the moist leafy earth, lay down and rested my head on my knapsack. I closed my eyes but couldn't fall asleep. My skin was clammy; ants crawled all over me and mosquitoes buzzed in my ears. I sat up, plucked lice out of my greasy, snarled hair, then played with chips of phosphorescent, decaying bark, which was everywhere, as if the Milky Way had been miniaturized and scattered around us. I tried to extinguish the bark's bluish-white glow. The peasants used it to decorate Christmas trees. Now it made a perfect, if bizarre, night light. Fatigue finally caught up with me and I drifted off to unconsciousness.

We stirred awake just as the crest of the sun touched the horizon, ate a quick breakfast of milk syrup and crackers and headed back for "home." Someone thought he heard human noises during the night, so Jose, not wanting to take any chance of falling into a counter-ambush, ran us through a detour twice as long and arduous as our original route.

It rained off and on throughout the trek and we, soaked to the skin, slogged shin-deep through mud up and down steep jungle hills, occasionally breaking into clearings where the high grass scrubbed us. We waded a couple of creeks and rested at an abandoned straw-thatched hut at the base of a grassy hill. We found orange trees and sugar cane nearby. I spotted some red peppers identical to the one I'd eaten yesterday,

and popped one into my mouth. It was hot! I could have spit more fire than a dragon. Sampson came to my rescue with some cane. The sugar juice neutralized the acid. I washed it down with a swig from a canteen. The guys had a good laugh.

We hiked up the hill and sat on burnt stumps and felled trees while Jose called for a boat over his walkie-talkie. We descended down the other side and walked another 20 minutes through the semi-jungle until we came to a small abandoned house on the grassy bank of the San Juan River.

Jose mixed oatmeal and water in his canteen tin with the bent-handled spoon he unhooked from his harness and ate sloppily. He reminisced about how he "dispatched" six toads on separate occasions who had been tipping off the Sandinistas on when and where there would be exoduses of refugees.

"They couldn't believe I was going to bring them to justice because I was a democratic guerrilla," he said. "They laughed. But when they saw I wasn't joking, they cried and pleaded. I told them not to be frightened, that we wouldn't torture them.

"Some were slick. One tried to pitch a grenade at me and another pulled a pistol. *Pla-la-la-lak!* I gave them full bursts in the chest." He smiled and swiped at the flies buzzing around the goo at the corners of his mouth and in his beard. His face turned hard. "Innocent people were being murdered because of those *hijos de putas*."

The boat picked us up about 20 minutes later. It was towing two *campesinos* in a half-water-filled canoe. They untied and paddled upstream, looking for *platanos*.

We arrived at the encampment at 1000 hours. There was more color and life. A squad coming down from Nueva Guinea had brought a macaw, and finally there was a big catch of fish. The rebels were especially happy when the cattle arrived in the afternoon. Mission accomplished.

The guerrillas slaughtered a cow in the morning. They stabbed it in the chest with a kitchen knife and bled it. If it died too quickly, the blood would coagulate and poison the meat. The cow stood firm. Blood sloshed out of the wound like water pumped through a port the size of a quarter. Fifteen-year-old Machalin taunted it. It weakened and swayed, then its legs buckled. It struggled to keep itself up, but collapsed. Its eyes blanched; its breath slowed; it went into convulsions and then apparently passed out. But when the guerrillas approached, it sprang to life and kicked violently. They scrambled away, laughing. Soon the beast stopped breathing and the guerrillas kicked it to make sure it was dead. They were skinning and dismembering the carcass when a Cessna flew high overhead.

"Don't shoot!" shouted Israel. "It's ours." But the light airplane turned around and barrelled in low. Some ran for cover; others stood in the open and aimed their AKs. Mistakenly strafed a couple times by Salvadoran helicopter gunships last year, I took no chances and dove headlong into a trench.

"Don't shoot," Israel shouted again and again. But several guerrillas, including a machine-gunner on a hilltop, didn't hear and opened fire. Luckily, the plane, flown by U.S. farmers surveying their Costa Rican property, wasn't hit.

The surrounding encampments had enough beef for several days. (It was preserved in salt.) We ate it roasted. It was delicious, better than anything I had in San Jose a week later. ✕

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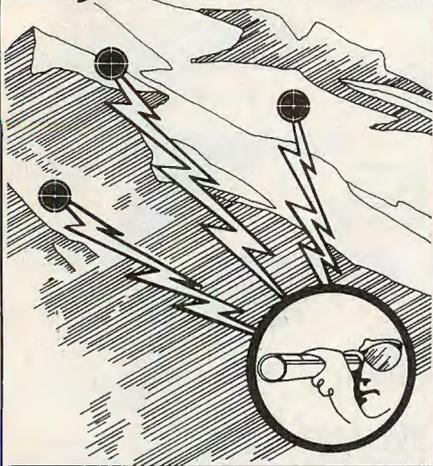
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ARDE AIR OPS

Continued from page 73

went up again and executed another drop, this time with bigger stones.

(A SAM blasted The Cat and his co-pilot out of a blue sky two weeks afterward. He couldn't resist the temptation to fly over the Castillo on a resupply drop.)

At 2330 hours I hopped on an arms "convoy." When I saw the green cattle truck at a safe house, I expected to see the SKSs, not the five Russian 82mm recoilless guns and three mortars. They moved it and dozens of crates of their projectiles into the two Toyota trucks and Bronco and we were on the road. It was tortuous and muddy. The vehicles coughed and sputtered. They occasionally bogged down, but we would rock out and plow on. We passed over a firm, crowned stretch and the engines relaxed.

Crash! The right rear of our truck popped off. We teetered precariously. Nathaniel and I — the only occupants — carefully got out. His face was bloodless. "Oh, God! If this happened anywhere else, we would be dead," he said breathlessly.

They moved as many ammo crates as could fit into the Bronco. I entered and we continued. Nathaniel stayed behind while the other truck went to get assistance from ARDE collaborators.

A similar accident happened to the Bronco; three lug bolts had broken. We caught it and cautiously struggled the final clicks to the San Juan. At 0600 hours, we loaded the delivery into a launch and motored to Israel's encampment inside Nicaragua.

The guerrillas were jubilant. They had been complaining about the inactivity of the past couple of months and the supplies gave substance to the rumors that heavy action was about to go down.

Tadeo kissed a recoilless gun. "With this, we shall really rock the Castillo," he shouted. Everyone cheered. Operation "Death to the King" was born. Now they truly would have a feast.

The high spirits were boosted even higher on 31 August when the legendary *Comandante Zero* swaggered into camp with his escort. The guerrillas crowded around him in the drizzle. He embraced them and made light-hearted jokes, then crossed the river to stay the night and discuss "Death to the King" and logistical problems with Tadeo.

I talked to the *comandante* in private for 15 or 20 minutes the following morning. He sat on a seedy bed and spoke passionately in a rhythm and tone honed by many interviews.

"Nicaragua is suffering. Tomas Borge is a murderer," he said with fury in his voice. He rolled his wrist and jabbed his finger through the air. "We are fighting against old Stalinism. . . .

"We're advancing, but we need help." He laid his hands open. "We have 3,700 combatants, but many need guns, boots,

even clothes. We especially need these." He pointed to his U.S. jungle boots.

"Anything is welcome, but we shall not be manipulated. The CIA must understand this. The gringos can finally do something right and help us. But they have a price; they want control. Well, I can't necessarily promise you an American democracy, but I can promise throwing out the communists and their Cuban and Russian masters . . ."

We stood and he put his arm over my shoulder and stroked his graying beard. "You can carry your rifle," he said, "but at all costs don't get captured. If you're dead, they can't prove anything. However, if you're taken prisoner, they'll make you say anything — that you're CIA or an adviser." He tucked his military shirt over his protruding belly and walked me out, vowing September would be a black month for the junta.

An hour later he sped off in his "Free Country or Death"-emblazoned motor boat for another encampment.

Editor's note: The "Death to the King" operation promised by ARDE for September did take place. Early one morning last September, two ARDE twin-engined Cessnas flew into Nicaragua's capital city on a bombing mission. One swooped over Managua's Augusto Cesar Sandino Airport and dropped a 500-pound bomb on the adjacent military airfield, destroying a military vehicle, a hangar and injuring several soldiers, before being hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashing into the airport tower, killing the two pilots. The other Cessna bombed a residential section of the city, hitting near the residence of Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, who was out of country at the time. The second plane made it back safely to ARDE headquarters.

This aerial assault meant that the Contras were now attacking the Sandinistas from land, sea and air.

According to the author's sources, ARDE's "air force" once numbered 10 light airplanes, a helicopter and 14 to 18 fliers. Last winter, it had eight to 10 fliers and five planes. Two planes had been shot down (killing four pilots); two were out for repairs and one had been grounded by Costa Rican authorities, ostensibly for insurance reasons. Costa Rica impounded the chopper for counterrevolutionary activities and at least two pilots have been detained by Costa Rican immigration. ✕

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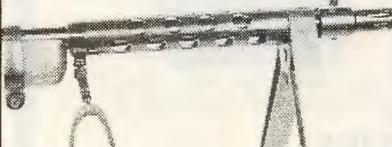
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Russian POWs

Continued from page 77

SPETSNAZ is equivalent to the U.S. military concept of Special Operations Forces. Like its U.S. counterpart, SPETSNAZ includes many different types of troops. Some SPETSNAZ troops wear the same uniform as airborne troops, but they differ from normal airborne troops in not having heavy equipment and by operating covertly. They are used in the enemy's rear to carry out reconnaissance, to assassinate important political or military figures and to destroy headquarters, command posts, communications centers and nuclear weapons.

Each SPETSNAZ company consists of 115 other ranks, nine officers and 11 warrant officers comprising a headquarters platoon, three diversionary platoons and a communications platoon. Depending upon the task, a SPETSNAZ company may divide into as many as 15 diversionary groups operating as a single unit, or as one intact unit.

If necessary, a SPETSNAZ brigade can operate at full strength, using between 900 and 1,200 troops against a single target. Such a target might be a nuclear installation, large military or industrial complex, or even a national capital. A SPETSNAZ brigade is made up of four battalions, one headquarters company and three diversionary battalions. Each battalion can split into as many as 45 diversionary groups — three battalions into 135 small groups.

The headquarters company of a SPETSNAZ brigade is of particular interest — it is made up of between 70 and 80 specialists unknown to many of the other SPETSNAZ officers. This company of specialists is concealed within the sports teams of the Military District. Boxing, wrestling, karate, marksmanship, running, skiing and parachuting are the special sports they practice. As members of sports teams, they often travel abroad, including areas where they may become operational in the future.

In addition to these small companies within the diversionary brigades, there are also SPETSNAZ long-range reconnaissance regiments. The best of these regiments is stationed in the Moscow Military District and, periodically, this regiment travels abroad in full strength. On these occasions, it goes as the "Combined Olympic Team of the USSR."

The KGB also trains diversionary specialists. However, SPETSNAZ members belong to the Central Army Sports Club, while KGB athletes are members of the "Dynamo Sports Club."

Several years ago in Washington D.C., one of my favorite spooks finally gave me his business card and on it was printed: "Friendship Through Contact Sports" and his name — no address nor telephone number. I never fully appreciated its message until I learned about SPETSNAZ.

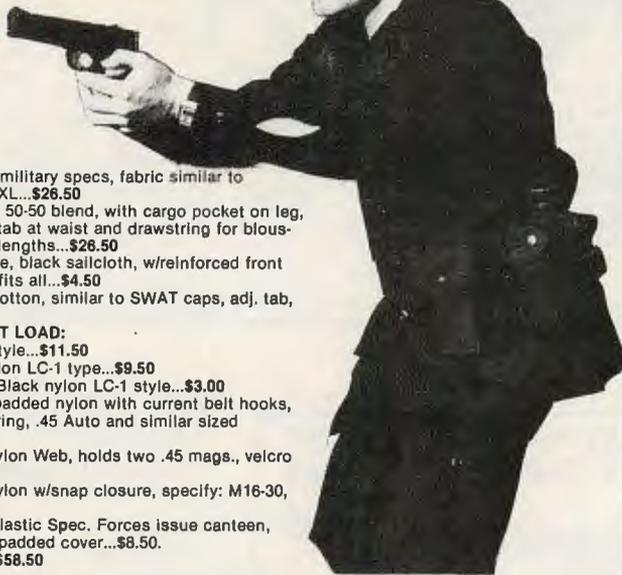
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cates an increasing degree of Soviet sophistication regarding Afghan/Islamic intransigence gleaned from the bitter Soviet experience of the past four years.

"Ask the prisoner if he has anything more to say. Would he like me to send word to his family that he is alive?"

We had been at this interview for two hours in midday heat. I was tired and I needed time to think about his answers before I saw him again. I also wanted time to prepare better questions for the second prisoner with whom the entire grueling process would soon be repeated. My brain kept slipping into neutral.

"He has nothing else to say."

I stood, signalling the interview was over. Igor reluctantly got to his feet and was escorted wordlessly away. We did not shake hands or say goodbye.

As I watched him walk away, I thought of the book I had been reading while I waited in my hotel room in Peshawar for the interviews to be arranged. Somehow Nikolai Tolstoy's *Stalin's Secret War* had seemed appropriate to the situation. The book contained a report by two Russian-speaking British intelligence officers dispatched to Finland during World War II to interview Soviet prisoners of war captured there in 1940. Their findings remain valid to this day and deserve mention.

"All [Soviet POW] ranks, with a few communist exceptions, are genuinely terrified of any notification being made of their capture, as they had been warned that, should they surrender, dire retribution should fall on their families — all ranks refuse to return as exchanged POWs — they are confident of being instantly shot."

Later in the war, after Hitler's attack on his previous ally, in September 1941, a Secret Military Order was issued (the first of many), ordering soldiers to commit suicide rather than surrender. The chief purpose of this order was to prevent Russians from defecting to the enemy — it was assumed anyone escaping Soviet power necessarily would work against the Soviets. For the same reason, the USSR refused to accede to the 1929 Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War, and denied prisoners any comfort or contact with home or the International Committee of the Red Cross.

I thought about the Soviets' traditional policy toward their soldiers who were taken prisoners as I waited for the second Russian to appear. Afghan guards peeked periodically through the rusted iron door-slits overlooking the flat, parched road leading to the walled warehouse and temporary jail where we waited. More guards rotated in a routine patrol from one corner of the brick wall to the other, unslung AKMs at the ready.

Nearby, less friendly guards stood a fearful frontier watch over what has become the *de facto* southern border of the "Evil Empire" itself. A precursory study of Russia reveals its unabated appetite for other people's property, coupled with a paranoid obsession with the security of its ever-increasing national borders. And, like the 900-pound gorilla, the Soviet Union gets whatever it wants.

From where I stood looking north, the world did not appear a very pleasant place. It's hotter, meaner and more dangerous than a fast-moving forest fire.

Abruptly, the second Soviet prisoner was brought forward from the rear of the compound, his mujahideen guards walking silently beside him. The second prisoner looked older than the first. His hair was long by U.S. military standards. He walked truculently toward us as if his appearance here were an annoying inconvenience. He sat with an arrogant slouch and asked for water immediately, checking me out with a quick sideways glance — tough-guy style. Prisoner number two was a veteran. On his right forearm he had a tattoo of a winged parachute with a star in the rigging, the new Soviet airborne assault wings. Three Cyrillic letters were centered below the symbol.

"What is his name and age?" I asked, contemplating the prisoner.

"His name is Khlaime Lefzhevulevich. He is 21 years old."

"Where in the Soviet Union is he from?"

Prisoner number two shifted irritably in his seat as he waited for the translation.

"He is from Tashkent [Tashkent is the Military District Headquarters closest to Afghanistan. It is also in Uzbekistan]."

"What is his rank?"

His answer was slurred and guttural. "He says he was a private," the translator said.

"What unit was he with?" I asked, showing my irritation with his attitude. He slouched lower in his seat and stared at me over crossed arms.

"He was with unit number 70."

"Tell him I already know the answers to many of the questions I will ask him. Tell him I only want the truth. Ask him if he was in the 70th Motorized Rifle Brigade."

"Yes, he was with the brigade."

"When did he come to Afghanistan?" I asked. There was some confusion when he answered — apparently the question was garbled during the translations.

"The Soviet Union has been in Afghanistan for five years," he stated flatly. (Interesting and, to a degree, more truthful than I expected.)

"Five years?" I asked. "Why was he only a private?"

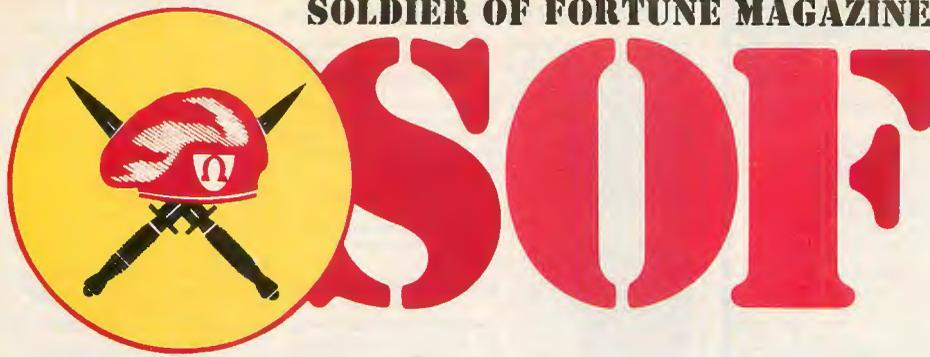
"He has only been in Afghanistan for 18 months; the Soviet Union has been here longer. He says he was only a driver-mechanic."

(There is some discrepancy in his story here. In a second interview, Khlaime mentioned guarding "Amin's Palace." Afghan President Amin was shot by Soviet troops in the initial phase of the December 1979 invasion. The confusion may be that the Soviets still refer to the building as "Amin's Palace" in a propaganda-type manner, or the prisoner could have served longer than his professed 18 months.)

"How long has he been in the Soviet Army?"

"He says he has been in the army for one and a half years [an obvious lie since he stated previously he had been in Afghanistan for 18 months]."

The process of translation was tedious



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and lugubrious. I was hot and the prisoner was an uncooperative son of a bitch. I decided to jerk him up short in a manner not taught by the Columbia School of Journalism.

"When and where was he captured?" I demanded.

"He says he was not captured, but defected to join the mujahideen near Kandahar, July 2nd. He says he comes from a God-fearing family in Tashkent. He is himself a Muslim," the Afghan translator related with obvious disbelief.

"Ask the prisoner if he thinks the Afghan mujahideen are stupid."

The interpreter smiled widely. The assembled mujahideen laughed out loud as the question was repeated in Pushtu — the prisoner abruptly sat up straight as he heard them.

He hesitated, unsure where the question led. The interpreter asked him again.

The prisoner looked trapped as he replied. "He doesn't think the mujahideen are stupid," came his response.

"Ask the prisoner what the tattoo on his right arm means?"

"He says it is the insignia his unit wore on their collar tabs." He shifted in his seat and asked for more water. The Afghans ignored him as they waited for my next question."

"Ask the prisoner if he is airborne, a parachutist?"

"He says he is not a parachutist; they trained for one year but never made a jump."

"Has the prisoner ever heard of a group known as SPETSNAZ.?"

"Da." The quick, simple answer needed no translation.

"What do they do?" I asked.

"He says he doesn't know what they do; it is a secret unit."

"Does he know about Soviet chemical weapons used in Afghanistan?"

"He says they only trained in the use of chemical weapons because they were told the United States or the mujahideen might use them."

"What is his morale now that he has been captured?"

He shrugged as he heard the question. "He has accepted his fate. There is nothing he can do about it."

"Ask the prisoner why the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan?"

He listened hard to the translation as he lit another cigarette. For the first time, it seemed that he was trying to explain the truth to me.

"He says the Soviet Union was invited to Afghanistan, and went there to protect the southern flank of the Soviet Union from aggression by the United States. But it has been very hard. He says Soviet troops would like to fight alone, without the help of the Afghan Army, but they must work with them to understand what is happening around them. He says when they have not used Afghan troops, they have suffered heavy casualties. When one unit crossed into Iran by mistake, the entire unit was killed by the Iranian Army."

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"How and why did the unit cross into Iran?" I asked.

"He says he is not sure, but he thinks they were parachuted beyond the border by mistake. They were chasing the mujahideen and got lost."

"What are you told to do if you are captured by the mujahideen?"

"They told us to keep our mouths shut — say nothing."

The Afghan political and intelligence officer with me advised we would have to leave soon since it was getting late. The prisoners, he said, would continue to receive the best conditions under Islamic law, but for how long he could not say. It depended on many things. The Russians have never released captured mujahideen to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"It is difficult to decide what is best now," the officer said. "The prisoners will be provided with radios, hashish, Fanta, cigarettes... but eventually the leaders will decide what to do with them."

I gathered my notes together. I had only a couple of questions left. The prisoner was handed a steel cup of ice water.

"What would he say to Andropov now, if he had the chance?" I asked.

"Andropov?" he said, and shook his head no.

"What would he say to his friends back in the Soviet Union if they came to Afghanistan?"

He stubbed his cigarette out in the ashtray overflowing with butts. The guards waited for his final answer.

"He says he would tell them they were going to die."

70th MOTORIZED RIFLE BRIGADE

by Jim Coyne

Existence of the 70th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Independent) was, until recently, classified information. The 70th MRB is significant for two reasons: 1) It is a hybrid unit combining the characteristics and capabilities of Soviet Airborne Assault troops (helicopter airmobile tactics) with the more elite troops and officers of the Soviet Airborne Forces (ABF) which, in the Soviet military system, is considered an almost independent branch of service, under direct command, in peacetime, of the Minister of Defense and/or the Supreme Commander. 2) It is an independent brigade and, as such, it reports to and is commanded by Soviet 40th Army Headquarters in Kabul.

SOF has learned through reliable intelligence sources that the 70th MRB was created on the spot in Afghanistan, most likely from battalions of the now-disbanded 105th Guards Airborne Division which invaded the country in December 1979. It was a "shadowy unit not listed on the charts prior to Afghanistan." Since its inception, it has been in

the vanguard of Soviet counterinsurgency efforts in Afghanistan.

Comprised entirely of Soviet airborne troops assigned to an airborne assault role (airmobile), the 70th MRB signals the trend of future Soviet operational thinking. By combining airborne-assault tactics of the Soviet Land Forces with the independent nature of the Soviet Airborne Forces, the Soviet General Staff and the Central Committee may have in mind transforming the ABF into a sixth independent armed service. (Currently, Soviet Armed Forces consist of five armed services: Strategic Rocket Forces, Land Forces, Air Defense Forces, Air Forces and the Navy.)



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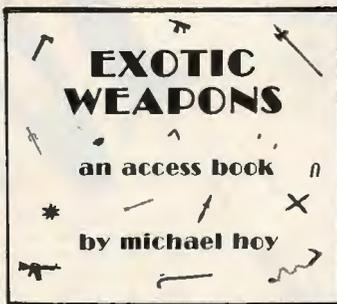


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Continued from page 15

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND INSIGNIA...

The 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM), formed in October '82 to consolidate all U.S. Army special-operations units, has new unit-crest and shoulder-patch insignia, which were selected in a design competition.

The crest, in the Special Forces' colors of black and silver, features a Trojan horse (the universal symbol of subversive activity) superimposed over silver wings (symbolizing airborne capability) and a silver lightning bolt (referring to the unit's speed and maneuverability). In a black scroll at the top of the crest is the motto: *Sine Pari* (Without Equal).

The shoulder patch features a green (green and silver are Special Operations' colors) shield with a white horse's head (symbolizing the knight in chess, the only piece which moves in two directions at a time) superimposed over a lightning bolt (for speed and striking power). The word "Airborne" appears at the top of the patch in yellow letters.

BASQUE TERRORISTS IN COSTA RICA...

Costa Rican authorities apprehended several Basque ETA terrorists, as well as terrorists from other Western European countries, including Italy, who had infiltrated into Costa Rica from Nicaragua. Apparently, the terrorists were in Costa Rica to assassinate several ARDE (Democratic Revolutionary Alliance, the anti-Sandinista group) leaders, including *Comandante Zero*, Edén Pastora.

The capture of these terrorists, who had infiltrated through Nicaragua, further exacerbated the tense relations between the Sandinistas and the Costa Rican government, and it also strained the relations between Nicaragua and Spain — where the ETA terrorists are active — which had previously supported the Sandinista regime. One Madrid newspaper, *ABC*, reported that ETA guerrillas had been trained in Nicaragua for the past year. Spanish officials threatened to withdraw \$40 million line of credit to the Marxist state.

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Continued from page 7

another use that will appeal to any GI — the frame can be used to make a still!

Jim Graves' moving tribute to Larry Dring made a lasting impression. I met Larry at the '81 SOF Convention in Scottsdale and was impressed with his knowledge, wit and his no-bullshit discussion on Lebanon. Over the years, his articles in SOF were always the first ones I would read. His last article, on the Armbrust (see SOF, November '83) should be required reading for all those in the "Wonderland on the Potomac." Many who Larry didn't even know will also miss him.

G. Lowe
Miami, Florida

VERSATILE BERGEN...

Sirs:

I have a little to add to Leroy Thompson's "Lots O' Ruck" (see SOF, November '83). The SAS (Special Air Services) Bergen evolved from the A-frame Bergen used in Malaya, Borneo, Aden and Oman by the SAS and the Parachute Regiment Patrol Companies. The SAS has always been fond of this particular shape, although the design led to the nickname "kidney killers." The Bergen was designed by the SAS Ops research wing during operations against communist rebels in Oman in which it was necessary to carry heavy weights to the top of the *jebel* (mountain plateau) as there were few unmined roads, and helicopters destroyed any chance of surprise. The rucksack is designed for three functions, thus the distinctive L-shape of the frame. The primary task is to carry personal equipment, the second is to carry ammunition liners or jerrycans of water (the sack can easily be removed from the frame) and the third is to carry a casualty, either with his back to the carrier or with his legs around the sides of the frame.

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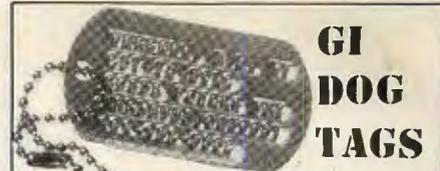
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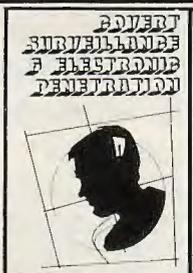
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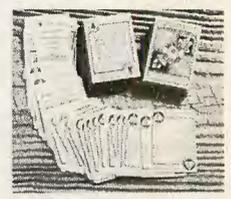
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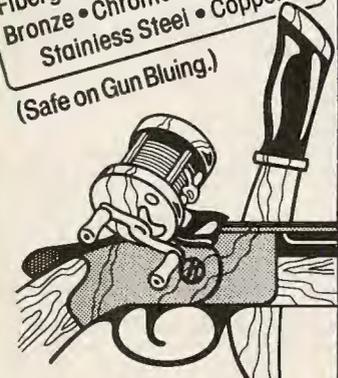
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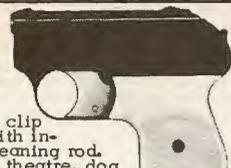
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