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JULY  
1984

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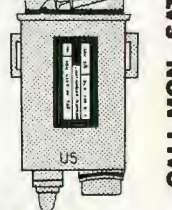


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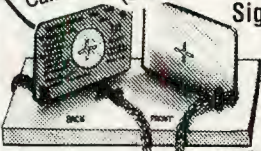
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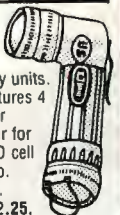
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**COVER: Royal Regiment of Wales NCO covers street with L1A1 while deploying and directing each soldier in his command by means of Clansman PRC-349 manpack radio. Tight tactical control is vital in this dangerous mission: backing up civil police as they deliver court summonses in republican neighborhoods of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Walk the beat with them, starting on p. 42.**

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**T**HE end of March 1984 was a bad week for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. We could learn some lessons from their misadventures.

A Vietnamese MiG-21 overflew Pingxiang, China, on the Vietnamese border, about 80 miles northeast of Hanoi on 28 March. It got shot up.

About the same time a Vietnamese force moved across the border at Phra Palai Mountain Pass into Thailand from occupied Cambodia. The Thais weren't sleeping, either. On 30 March Royal Thai Air Force A-37 Dragonflies flew in support of Thai troops, and when the smoke cleared there were 35 Vietnamese dead, 40 captured and two T-54 Main Battle Tanks destroyed.

(That's one for the good guys.)

As much evil as these two events prophesy for the uneasy peace of Southeast Asia, they do help dispel two important public myths about the military effectiveness of the Vietnamese and U.S. relations with nations plagued with insurgencies.

Thailand is a pro-Western constitutional monarchy with total defense forces numbering about a quarter of a million, based on a population of about 47 million. Vietnam is a Soviet-backed military dictatorship with total armed forces and militia numbering over 2.5 million, based on a population of just over 15 million. Thailand and Vietnam share no border, but Vietnamese colonization of Cambodia has caused friction. After the communist Vietnamese supposedly beat the United States, their military stock went up. Surely the Vietnamese were going to tear up Asia.

Well, the Thais (and even the Chinese) may have something to say about that.

The other myth illuminated by these events is that the United States of America was the only real problem with Southeast Asia. It wasn't long ago that critics at home and abroad said that if we would just get out of Vietnam, the "peace-loving people" of North Vietnam would reunite the divided country and peace would reign in Indochina.

The Thais obviously have a different opinion from the critics (and more direct information), and if the People's Republic of China agreed with our critics a decade ago, they're probably having second thoughts now.

And for those who still characterize the United States as "imperialist gangsters," I've got another news item. The communist Vietnamese responded to the Thai defense of their borders with characteristic honor and good faith: Their patrol craft — based in captive Cambodia — took 10 Thai fishing trawlers, with about 200 fishermen whom they are holding in hopes of getting their soldiers back.

Maybe we should try the Vietnamese POW/MIA policy.

— Robert K. Brown

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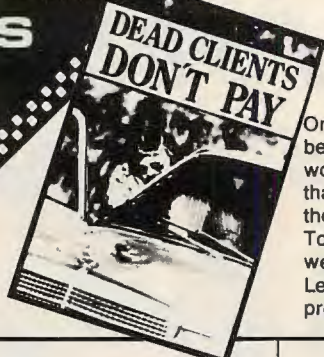
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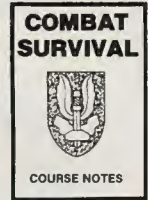
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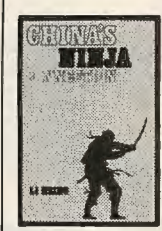


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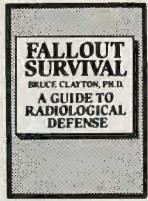


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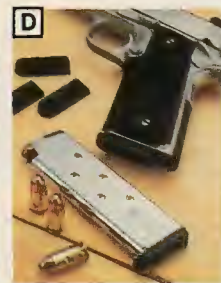
**A** The Ultimate for Your AR-7 New! Mitchell AR-50 Accessory Package. Black space age nylon pistol grip and nickel-plated steel telescoping buttstock. Locks open and closed. Compact—26" overall when closed. Regular size open. Unique design grip will house original 10-round magazine. Ventilated forend covers 50% of barrel and allows continuous shooting even with hot barrel. This accessory reduces overall weight by approx. 1/2 pound. Order No. 242000 **\$69.95**

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**Ruger® Mini-14®, 20-shot Magazine Blue.** Order No. 190720 **\$ 6.95**  
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**Mitchell 50-rd. Magazine for 10/22 Rifle.** Order No. 193000 **\$29.95**

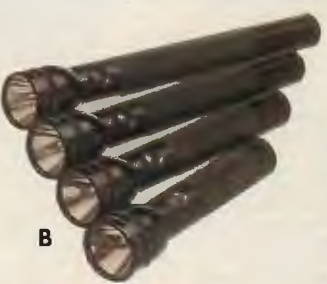
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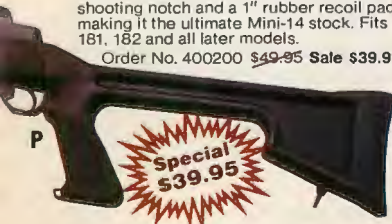
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**S The Bionic Ear.** Extremely sensitive pointable, electronic listening device the size of a flashlight. Amplifies sounds and passes them on to the user through stereo headphones which are included. Warning: this device is not intended as an eavesdropping device. Used extensively by hunters, bird watchers, security and law enforcement personnel. It can hear a whisper at 100 yds., feet scuffing in a warehouse at 200 ft., a car door shutting at 5 blocks and a coon dog on the trail up to 2 miles away. Uses 9 volt battery.  
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**P Mini-14 Pistol Grip Stock.** Made of DuPont Zytel® ST-801, the toughest plastic made. The same material used for military rifles. This stock has an offhand shooting notch and a 1" rubber recoil pad making it the ultimate Mini-14 stock. Fits 181, 182 and all later models.  
Order No. 400200 ~~\$49.95~~ **Sale \$39.95**





## THREE CHEERS FOR THE A-TEAM...

Sirs:

I have been following SOF's comings and goings in Central America for some time. You have been doing an outstanding service to both our allies and our country.

I am particularly interested in SOF's work with the small units. The bald-headed, bearded giant, John Donovan, not only instructed the men of the Salvadoran Army about the proper way to arm and use demolitions, Big John probably also showed them that demo could be used properly without fear.

Pete Kokalis gave those men some needed tips on maintenance and use of their weapons. A man is more willing to stand and fight when he knows his weapon is in working order and he can hit something with it.

The classes Dr. John Peters gave on proper field medical operations should boost morale in those units 100 percent. No man likes to go into battle knowing he does not have proper medical personnel and equipment.

And there are some pretty macho men among the Central Americans, but even they had to appreciate the pointers of airborne expert John Early.

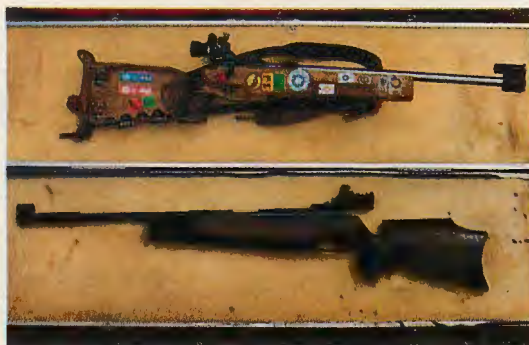
There were a number of pictures of men going out on combat missions with small units. They were Alex McColl, Ralph Edens, Peder Lund, to name a few. It goes to show that there are some Americans who not only do not fear combat, they will jump at the chance to churn that old adrenalin. And hang in there, Alex. I think you're in my age bracket, and as a veteran of the Korean War, as well as the Vietnam War, I ain't no spring rooster no more.

I don't use the word outstanding loosely, but you are doing an outstanding job.

Captain D.L.  
"Pappy" Hicks  
Troup, Texas



## FLAK



Anschutz .22 and Feinwerkbau air rifle are part of Don Nielsen's '84 Winter Olympics Biathlon auction package.

## OLYMPIC AUCTION...

Sirs:

After three Olympics and the loss of my farm, there remains a training debt of \$12,500 that I must get out from under before commencing a teaching career.

I hope SOF, which supported my training during the crucial preparatory period, will be able to help me sell my rifles: "Thunderstick," a custom-barreled Anschutz .22 LR biathlon rifle with the rare proven ability to group the same in the cold as it does when warm, decorated with stickers from the last two years of international competition from the United States to the USSR and this year's Winter Olympics, and a Feinwerkbau match air rifle. Included in the sale are U.S. 1984 Winter Olympic Team warm-ups, a Biathlon Team jacket, a Finnish automatic knockdown target for biathlon, spotting scope, cases, cleaning equipment and accessories.

Because of cash value, competitive value, potential collector value and the depth of my personal indebtedness, bidding should start at \$6,000.

Thank you once again for your help.

Don Nielsen  
Boulder, Colorado

Interested parties should write BIATHLON, c/o Soldier of Fortune Magazine, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, or call Bill Guthrie at (303) 449-3750. — The Eds.



## SAFARI SAFETIES...

Sirs:

In a reply to a letter from a reader inquiring about an ambidextrous safety for the AR-15/M16 series of rifles, you stated that you knew of no one who manufactured such an item. Our company has been making AR-15/M16 safety/selectors for over three years and had them on display at the SOF convention in Scottsdale in 1981.

These parts have been submitted to the U.S. Army, but other than an acknowledgment of their receipt we have had no response. This was over a year ago. The Army may just not care about their "lefties," but the reaction from the public has been very favorable. These parts retail for \$29.95 each and are available in blue steel.

Michael F. Meacham  
Gunsmith  
M-S Safari Arms  
Phoenix, Arizona

## CAPTAIN'S NOT A CAPTAIN...

Sirs:

I noticed on the cover of your March '84 issue that the officer is a captain (at least that's what we called them in the Air Force). Yet you say that he is a first lieutenant. You repeat this statement on page 57, so it does not seem that it was a misprint.

Having spent five years in the Air Force I learned, among many other things, the ranks from airman to master sergeant and from second lieutenant to God. Please enlighten me on this matter.

George Jakubowicz

Salvadoran Army and Air Force office ranks and insignia follow the usual international, not U.S., system, with the exceptions that second lieutenants are known as sub-lieutenants and that there is only one general officer grade. The insignia are: one black bar — cadet; one gold bar — sub-lieutenant; two bars — 1st lieutenant; three bars — captain; one star — major; two stars — lieutenant colonel; three stars — colonel; and a single laurel leaf worn on shoulder straps is a general. — The Eds.

Continued on page 92



# SOF CONVENTION 1984

## 19-23 September

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE will hold its fifth annual convention at the Sahara Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nev., 19-23 September 1984. The headquarters hotel has 800 rooms available at \$43.00 per single or double occupancy. The Sahara reservation line is (800) 634-6666. One-hundred

additional rooms are available at the El Rancho Hotel at \$40.00 per single or double occupancy. Phone (702) 739-2222. You must identify yourself as an SOF Conventioneer. The entire Sahara Hotel has been reserved for this convention, but you must register early.

### CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Three Gun International Combat Match .....	19-21 September
Parachute Assault and Jump Course .....	19-21 September
Rappelling Course .....	19-21 September
Seminars by Noted Experts and Authors .....	20-22 September
SOF Arms Show '84 .....	21-23 September
Operation Headhunter .....	20-21 September
Firepower Demonstration .....	22 September
Awards Ceremony .....	22 September
Convention Banquet .....	22 September

**THREE GUN MATCH:** The world-famous Three Gun International Combat Shooting Match will be held at the Desert Sportsman Rifle and Pistol Club 19-21 September. Entrance is by invitation only and competitors must write for an application. Send SASE to David Arnold, 130 Duff Dr., Grafton, VA 23692. This year 150 shooters will compete for more than \$50,000 in cash and prizes. First prize is \$10,000. All shooters wishing to bring a guest to the range must purchase a range guest pass for \$35. Range guest passes will also allow the guest free access to the banquet Saturday night. Transportation to the range will be provided for all shooters and guests. Shooters must register at the Sahara Space Center lobby between 1200 and 1900 hrs. Tuesday, 18 September. Shooter registration fee is \$200.

**CONVENTIONEERS:** Preregistration fee is \$100. This provides free admission to all activities and events and includes one banquet ticket. All convention activities, with the exception of the SOF Arms Show, are closed to the public. Preregistration forms must be postmarked NLT 31 August 1984. You may pick up your convention schedule and badge anytime between 1200 hrs., 18 September and 1400 hrs., 22

September at the Sahara Space Center lobby. Requests for refunds must also be postmarked NLT 31 August 1984. All conventioneers must preregister. Optional activities (Operation Head Hunter, Parachuting, Rappelling) are NOT included in Preregistration fee.

**OPERATION HEADHUNTER:** Off your ass and on your feet! This year the Great Plains Shooting Association, Inc. will host the first annual "Operation Headhunter." The Headhunter is a military obstacle course covering approximately five miles of rough desert terrain. It may include running, climbing, rappelling, load carrying and the use of map, compass and knife. Only 70 conventioneers can compete. This is strictly for professionals; the arm-chair commandos need not apply. For information send a large SASE to: ALECTO Group, P.O. Box 253, Elkhorn, NE 68022.

**PARACHUTERS:** Contact Rick Olshovik, 1523 S. 58th Court, Cicero, IL 60650.

**RAPPEL:** If you want to rappel send SASE to Fritz Borchardt, POB 548, Nederland, CO 80466.

### 1984 SOF CONVENTION PREREGISTRATION FORM\*

Mail to SOF CONVENTION '84, P.O.Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306

— Find my conventioneer's check or money order (\$100 per person). Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

— Find my shooter's check or money order (\$200 per person). Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(List each Conventioneer's name, address and telephone number)

(ARMS SHOW EXHIBITORS SEE FORM ON P.103)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Preregistration form and refund requests must be postmarked NLT 31 August 1984.



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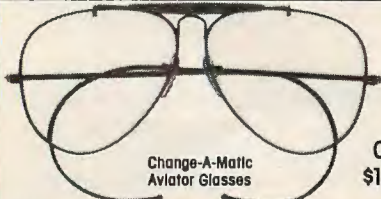
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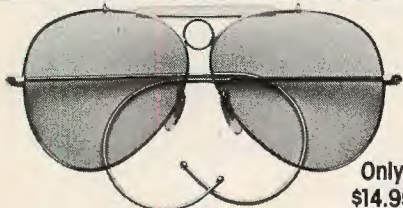
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# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

## Bar-Sto's Competitor's Barrels Best

by Ken Hackathorn

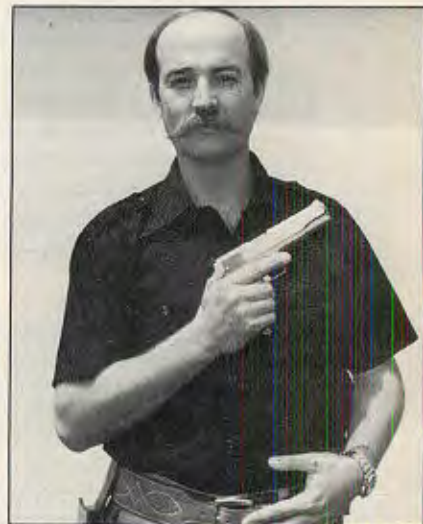
A professor's job is to think otherwise." That's as true of competitive shooters as it is of professors. Just look at two national-class shooters' Colt .45s, side by side, and you'll see different sights, different triggers, different stocks . . . the list is limited only by the number of parts in the guns. The only optional-equipment similarity you're likely to see is the pistols' Bar-Sto barrels.

That's because Bar-Sto's Irv Stone is as careful and as savvy as anybody in the pistol business. He really cares and it shows in the whole line of Bar-Sto precision barrels. Like any other IPSC shooter with several competition pistols, I have two 1911s with Bar-Sto barrels. The barrels are beautifully finished, accurate, reliable and fit perfectly. But they aren't my favorites.

My most cherished Bar-Sto barrel is fitted to a Colt Government Model in .38 Super.

Shooters with experience with this high-performance cousin of the 9mm Parabellum have usually had trouble with accuracy. The .38 Super cartridge is semi-rimless — unlike the .45 ACP or the 9mm — and the Colt designers took advantage of that characteristic to head-space the chambered cartridge on the rim. Since the cartridge is often loosely held between the bolt face and the chamber's counter-bore, the cartridge mouth and bullet usually lie asymmetrically. Part of this is built into John Browning's self-loading pistol system. Since these autos head-space off the mouth of the cartridge case, the cartridge seat is a lot more vague than with other systems. A little more slop in the chamber than is absolutely needed to assure mechanical reliability has disastrous consequences in the accuracy department.

Naturally enough, mass production of a part that is so sensitive to machining dimensions isn't easy. Tooling up to such tight tolerances would increase price and limit production of anything. I think guns are expensive enough already. But if you want your combat



SOF contributing editor Ken Hackathorn prefers Bar-Sto barrels for precision pistols.

auto to drive tacks, you should be able to fix it. That's what Irv Stone's barrel does.

A Bar-Sto barrel's clean machining and near-perfect adherence to all ideal barrel specs gives unbelievable accuracy from the problematical .38 Super.

Stone has recently introduced barrels for S&W 9mm autos and for the Browning P-35. Performance improvement is as spectacular with these pistols as with the Colt. Especially reassuring was the critical barrel fit on the P-35. This is often the major problem with inaccurate out-of-the-box Brownings, but Irv Stone seems to have solved the problem.

To give you an idea of what you can expect, the S&W M459 shoots 1.5-inch groups at 25 yards with a Bar-Sto barrel.

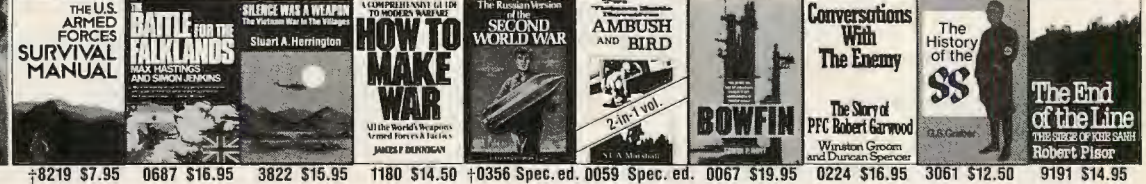
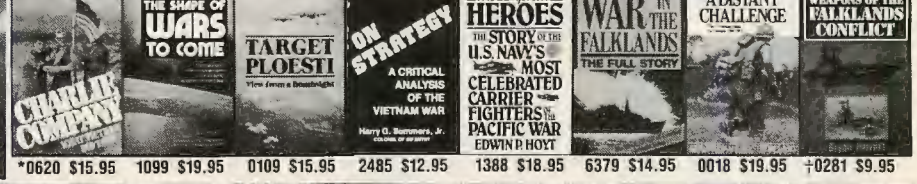
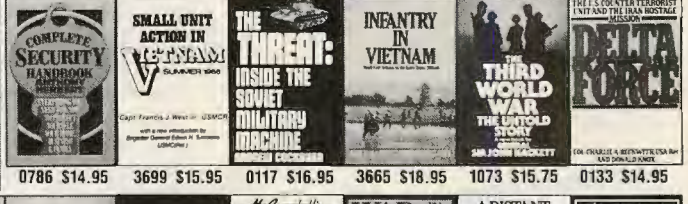
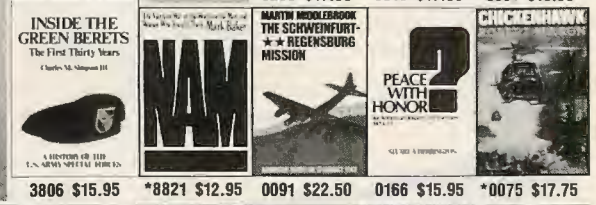
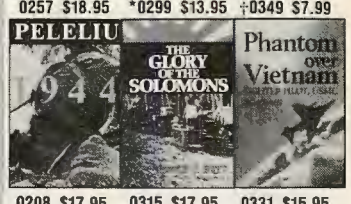
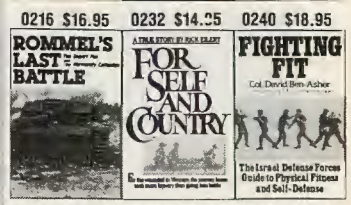
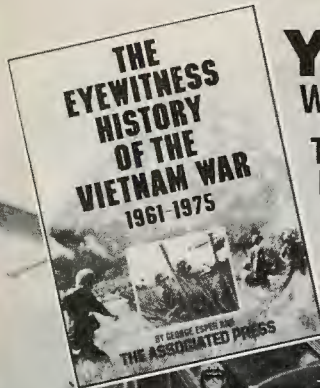
Bar-Sto barrels for the P-35 and for Smith & Wesson 9mm autos go for \$135. But barrels are available for a variety of pistols in a variety of calibers. A price list can be had for the asking from Bar-Sto Precision Machine, Dept. SOF, 7337 Sullivan Rd., Twenty-nine Palms, CA 92277. ☛



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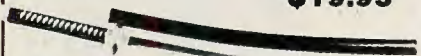


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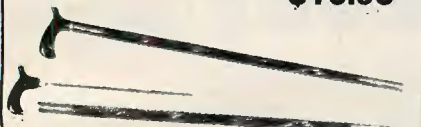


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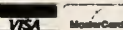
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# IN REVIEW



**MAKING THE MOST OF IT: A Manual for the Army Family.** By Maj. Clifford Bernath. Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books. 1983. 198 pp. \$11.95. Review by Archibald M.S. McColl, LTC JAGC (Ret).

**T**HE author, a major in the Adjutant General's Corps and formerly Editor of *Soldiers* magazine, has written a useful, one might even say essential, book.

Primarily intended for enlisted soldiers and their families, *Making the Most of It* should nevertheless be relevant and helpful to officers, both in command and staff positions, and to civilians who associate with soldiers and their problems.

The book covers enlisted personnel management, assignments, permanent change of station, moving, housing, reenlistment, pay and allowances, family assistance, education, recreation, medical care and veterans and retired benefits, and does so in well-written, easily followed style. With regular references to Army regulations and other sources of more detailed information, the book should prove handy as a starting point as well as a guide.

Obviously, it is aimed at the good soldier, for it has little on disciplinary matters and procedures to be followed by those in trouble; obviously, it is more aimed at stateside soldiers than at those overseas, since it omits information which might prove useful to those stationed in foreign lands, like procedures for marriages to local nationals, Status of Forces Agreements and inter-Allied social organizations.

One wonders if the price, \$11.95, will deter those who would benefit from it from purchasing *Making the Most of It*. Considering what it offers, considering how well it is written and how easy it is to follow, however, the price is a small amount to pay for what it can provide in helping members of the Army and their families.

In addition, *Making the Most of It* should be included in the library of every orderly room, legal office, Inspector General's office, Army community service office, chaplain's office and AG office for use in assisting the soldiers.

All in all, a most useful book.

## Making the Most of It

A Manual for the Army Family



- how assignments are made
- how promotions work
- where to get family assistance
- how to influence your housing assignment
- what medical care to expect

Major Clifford Bernath

**WALTER H. JUDD: Chronicles of a Statesman.** Edited and with a preface by Edward J. Rozek, Ph.D. The Center for Science, Technology and Political Thought, P.O. Box 4654, Boulder, CO 80306. 1980. 403 pp. \$16.00. Review by J. Lourdes.

**W**alter Judd's chronicles were prepared by Prof. Edward J. Rozek of the University of Colorado in the hope of passing on Judd's visionary message. The work represents 50 years of insights into the workings of U.S. foreign policy.

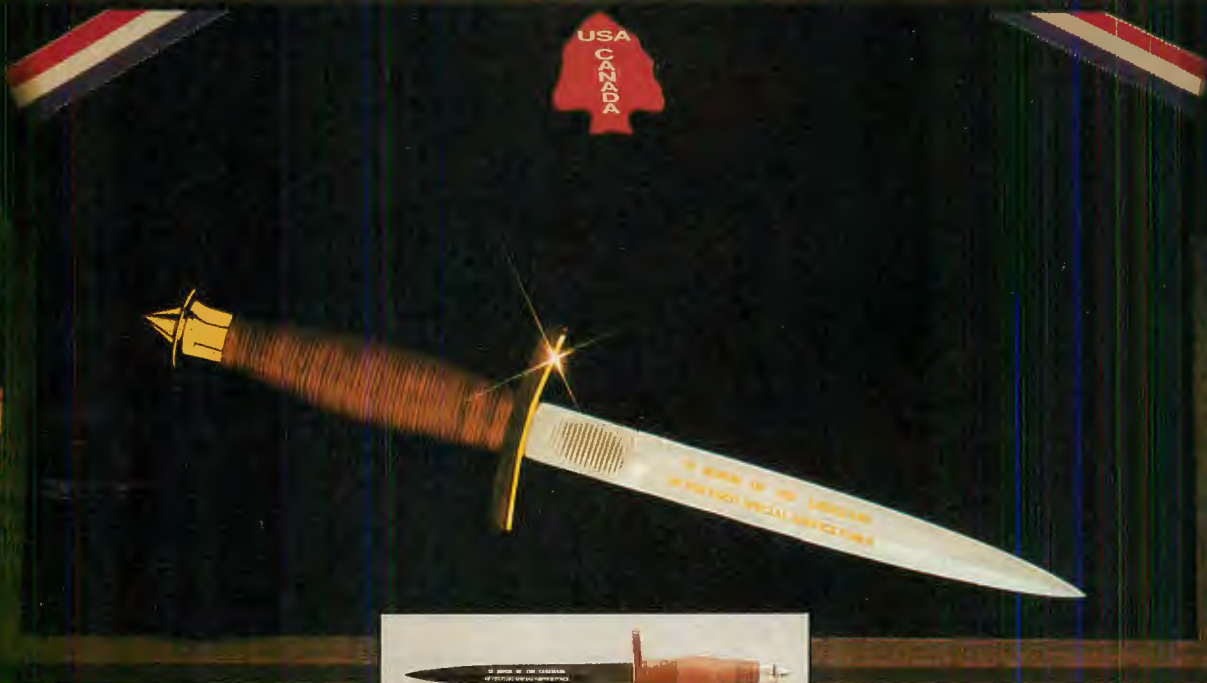
The urgency of his message can be realized in that history seems to once again be repeating itself. What the world witnessed in China and Vietnam is now occurring in Central America. Even though much of the misinformed U.S. public believed that China and Vietnam were civil wars which did not merit American military meddling, Judd points out that both situations were "armed communist rebellions to overthrow a legitimate government as part of the communist drive for world dominance."

This book provides a comprehensive overview of communist goals and U.S. foreign policy in light of such goals. Judd points out that "there can

Continued on page 91



# THE MOST IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT TO MILITARY COLLECTORS SINCE 1942.



"In the Second World War there was...the First Special Service Force... They trained together as paratroopers, demolition experts, ski troops, and then, as an amphibious unit. They were neither Canadian nor American. They were, in General Eisenhower's term, liberators."

*Ronald Reagan*  
President Ronald Reagan  
Address to Canada's Parliament

**O**f all the military knives in the world, one stands ahead of the rest in fame and value. It is the V-42 Stiletto.

To own one is the mark of an advanced collector. Two originals recently brought \$1,550 apiece at a nationally publicized auction—an indication of their value.

Designed in 1942, everything about the V-42 made it one of the most dramatic fighting knives of all time. From the menacing "skull-crusher" pommel to the stiletto-sharp blade point, the knife quickly gained glory in combat and became the symbol of the U.S.-Canadian First Special Service Force.

The Force was a small, hand-picked elite unit. Many men volunteered—but few were chosen. Even fewer V-42 Stilettoes were made. The design of the knife and the mystery of the men who carried them have combined to make the V-42 Stiletto the single most valuable military fighting knife in the world today.

Now the surviving members of the First Special Service Force, through their Association and in conjunction with The American Historical Foundation, have commissioned a strictly limited edition of their famous Stiletto, made by the original wartime maker, W. R. Case & Sons.

Because the Force was the first unit to be formed of serving soldiers from two sovereign nations, two commemoratives—one honoring the Americans and one honoring the Canadians—have been created.

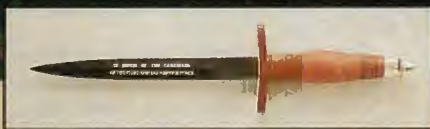
## Presentation Grade

Like the wartime originals, both commemorative Stilettoes have the distinctive "skull-crusher" pommel and leather crossguard cushion and grip, skillfully grooved by hand. Each hardened and tempered high-carbon steel blade is double hollow ground on both sides and bears the distinctive "thumb position" on the blade shoulder. Below this the wartime Case trademark is deeply stamped—just as on the originals. Each knife is 12½" long.

For this limited edition, the craftsmen at Case are specially finishing each Stiletto to presentation grade—mirror polishing all steel surfaces and plating the crossguards and pommels with precious metals.

## American Commemorative

The American commemorative features a 24-karat gold plated "skull-crusher" pommel and crossguard. The



blade is mirror polished, and the commemorative inscription, "In Honor of the Americans of the First Special Service Force," is etched and gold-gilt inlaid. On the blade shoulder reverse is etched the spearhead shoulder insignia of the Force, inlaid in red.

## Canadian Commemorative

The "skull-crusher" pommel and crossguard on the Canadian commemorative are plated with genuine platinum. The blade is mirror polished and blued to a high-gloss, black finish. The commemorative inscription, "In Honor of the Canadians of the First Special Service Force," is etched and silver-gilt inlaid. On the blade shoulder reverse is etched and silver-gilt inlaid the Force's crossed-arrow branch insignia.

## Limited Edition: 1500 Each

To assure these official reissues an equal place of honor alongside the World War II production, only 1500 of each of the two commemorative Stilettoes will be made. This is even fewer knives than made during World War II, assuring owners of these commemoratives that their knives will also always be rare.

*The V-42 forms the center of the crest of the U.S. Army Special Forces—which organization carries forward the battle honors of the FSSF in the U.S.*



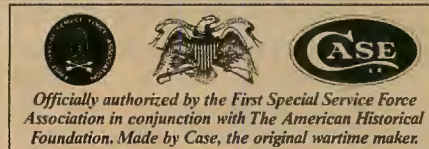
Each knife is serially numbered from 1 to 1500; matching numbers will be assigned when both knives are requested, as long as they are available. The limited edition serial number is engraved on the reverse of the blade shoulder and inscribed on the accompanying Certificate of Authenticity. The purity of the precious metal plating is also attested on the Certificate.

The optional case is solid mahogany, furniture finished, lined with black velvet and fitted in the inner lid with the bright red insignia of the First Special Service Force and red, white and blue sashes.

When you submit your reservation, you will also be made a Member of The American Historical Foundation. As a Member, you will receive interesting information about military history and learn of our projects prior to the public. Additionally, you will receive a notice from the First Special Service Force Association thanking you for supporting this project, which is assisting their Rome Memorial Fund. (The Force seized the northern bridges over the Tiber and was the first Allied unit to enter the Eternal City on 4 June 1944. They are dedicating a memorial there in honor of the 40th anniversary.)

## How To Reserve

This is a rare opportunity for collectors. Once the limited edition is spoken for, registration will be closed. Reservations are now being accepted on a first-come,



Officially authorized by the First Special Service Force Association in conjunction with The American Historical Foundation. Made by Case, the original wartime maker.

first-served basis, as long as knives are available. Due to the high value of the originals, the fact that these commemoratives are being made by the original wartime maker and that they are authorized by the association of combat veterans who carried the knife on to victory, this is an opportunity which is not expected to be available for long. Prompt action is suggested to avoid disappointment. You may reserve both knives with a small deposit, spacing payment and delivery between the two. No shipping charges. Satisfaction is guaranteed or return in 30 days for a full refund.

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24-hour toll free reservations: (800) 368-8080  
I wish to reserve the following V-42 Stiletto(s) in the limited edition of 1500 each (matching serial numbers if both knives reserved). Free delivery.

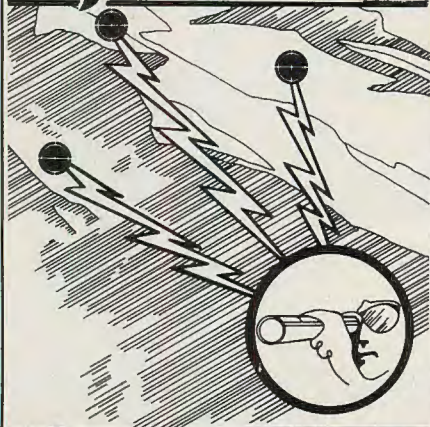
- The American Commemorative with 24-karat gold plated pommel and crossguard and mirror-polished blade.
- The Canadian Commemorative with platinum-plated crossguard and pommel and mirror-polished and blued blade.
- Please send a display case for each Stiletto reserved. Please deliver...
  - One knife at a time.     Both knives at once.
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# I WAS THERE

## Front Yard Fire Fight

by Larry Ingraham  
as told to M.L. Jones

*Officer Larry Ingraham is now a member of the San Diego PD SWAT team. But on 6 June 1981, he was a member of a six-man team assigned to stop narcotics violations along San Diego's beaches. His supervisor, Garry Evans, was also on the department's SWAT team. The violence of Ingraham's introduction to SWAT contrasts sharply with the staged mayhem of television shoot-outs:*

**O**N that warm June afternoon the beach team gathered in the Western Division locker-room to suit up for work. It was 4:30 p.m.

The joking stopped when our boss, Garry Evans, approached us and said, "Something's going on in Linda Vista. Officers might be hurt." Linda Vista, a suburb of San Diego, was known for its mixture of cultures — black, Oriental, Hispanic and white — but it usually had no-more-than-usual patrol problems.

As a SWAT team member, Garry was already armed with his .308 rifle. The beach team quickly got ready and drove in three marked cars to the 2400 block of Crandall St. in Linda Vista. One hundred people lined the barricaded streets in a one-block perimeter away from the scene. Thirty officers protected the area from a distance, directing traffic and people away from it. As a special team, we were waved past the barricades.

As we drove through, we heard rapid, large- and small-caliber gunfire and the radio crackling: "He's shooting at anything and everything!" A half block away, we took cover from the heavy gunfire. Here we learned that about a half hour ago two officers had answered a disturbance call — shots reported by neighbors. They had not been seen or heard from since. No one could see either the sniper or the officers, but we all heard the constant, heavy gunfire at midblock.

The team's first job was to evacuate the neighbors, and we set to work against the constant background noise of gunshots and whining ricochets. As I rushed a terrified old man to safety, Garry approached me, saying, "I want to try and get a vantage point on the sniper — will you spot for me?"

"Spot" meant to go with him and back him if he got in trouble.

As we jumped backyard fences, working down the opposite side of the street, the gunfire continued: large- and small-caliber, rapid and slow firing. It seemed like an eternity before we reached the house we thought was across the street from the armed madman. We worked our way through it to a front bedroom window.

Peering out, we saw a police car in flames at the curb directly across the street. In the driveway of the house two officers lay motionless, side by side on their backs in a pool of blood. Twenty feet behind them, crouched behind a two-foot retaining wall near the front porch, a middle-aged man was firing a rifle at anything that moved — down the street and in the air at a sheriff's helicopter. This madman had several weapons — a .30/06 rifle, an M1 carbine, a .22 rifle and handguns. I felt sweat rolling down my back as I watched Garry raise his Bushnell-scoped rifle. He took careful aim through the partially open slide window, then fired.

The round ricocheted off the front of the wall.

The sniper wheeled around, trying to spot us.

It was like a slow-motion nightmare, Garry adjusting his scope, and the sniper raising his carbine rifle to his eye, aiming directly at us.

I shouted, "Hit the deck!"

We dropped to the floor just as several rounds shattered the window and tore through the wall behind us.

When the shots stopped for a moment, Garry got in position again at the window. Sweat rolled down his face as he aimed. I watched in horror as the sniper saw us and raised his rifle. I thought, "My God, we're going to die."

Cheek pressed against the rifle butt and eyes squinting in concentration, Garry squeezed the trigger. I heard the rifle roar from the cradle of his arms and saw the sniper jerk uncontrollably, losing his rifle and dropping to the ground — dead. It was over ... we had won. The eternal day had ended.

*Both officers and the sniper died that day on Crandall St. It was later determined that he had fired more than 140 rounds at the police. — The Eds. ✕*



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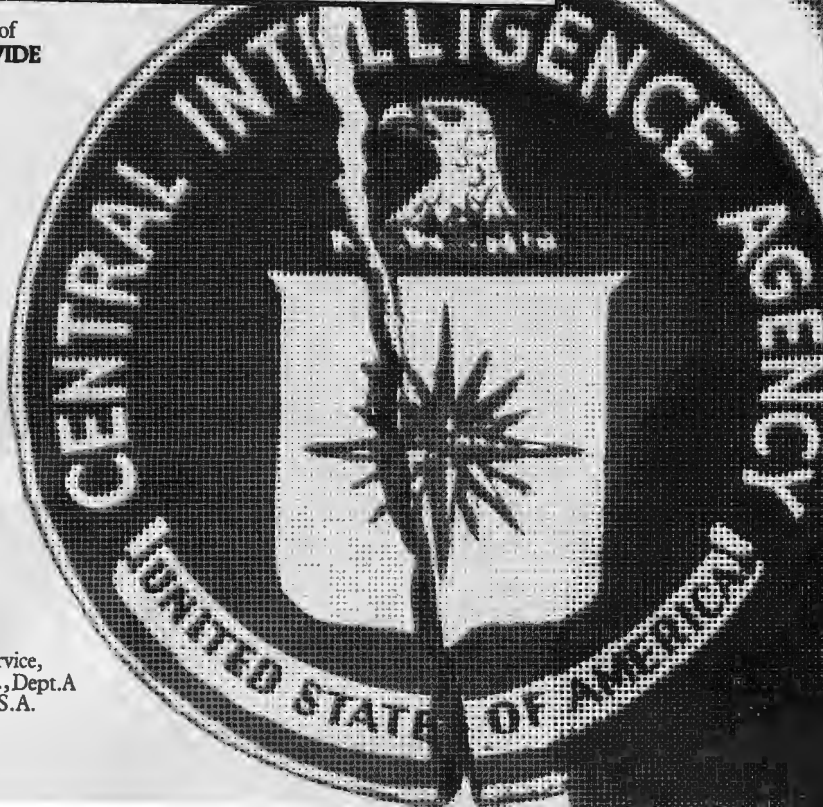
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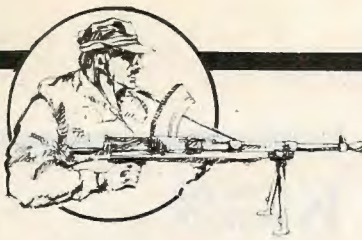
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# FULL AUTO

## FBP Series: Unimaginative, Undistinguished and Undeserving

by Peter G. Kokalis

**T**HE FBP series submachine guns were originally designed and developed by Maj. Goncalves Cardoso of the Portuguese Artillery. The history of Portuguese military small arms would have been less dreadful had Cardoso restricted himself to cocking cannons.

The series was initiated with the Model 48, a poorly executed distillation of the worst features of the WWII German MP-40 and U.S. M3/M3A1 submachine guns.

In operation the FBP submachine guns are conventional: FBPs fire 9mm Parabellum ammo at an appropriate 500 rpm from an open bolt with advanced primer ignition. The Portuguese arsenal of Fabrica Militar de Braco de Prata builds FBPs from a combination of sheet-metal stampings and traditional milled components. The barrels of the later versions are hammer-forged from chromium-molybdenum steel which offers good accuracy potential, long life and desirable heat resistance.

Outwardly the Model 48's bolt mechanism resembles that of the MP-40. The firing pin, however, is fixed and the long, massive bolt is not hollow like the MP-40's. Thus, only about an inch of the recoil spring fits into the rear of the bolt. Fire is full-auto only, so there is no selector. The safety system is exactly that of the MP-40. The bolt can be locked in the forward position by pushing in on the retracting handle, which will then engage in a cut in the receiver tube. To lock the bolt in the open position, the retracting handle is pulled rearward and up into a recess cut above the cocking handle's receiver slot.

The stepped barrel with its integral bayonet lug is mated to the receiver tube with a muzzle nut of the MP-40 type. The barrels are usually difficult to remove as firing slams them against the receiver, peening the rear surface. The



Portuguese FBP Model 63 SMG: imitative and creative incompetence (author's collection). Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

same problem is often encountered with M3/M3A1 and S&W M76 submachine-gun barrels. This annoyance can be prevented by turning a 45-degree radius on the barrel's chamber end with a lathe.

The 32-rd. MP-38/40 single-position feed magazine is used. This is not one of the MP-40's best features and two-position feed magazines (i.e., Beretta, UZI, Thompson, Sterling, etc.) are preferable. The FBP magazine is distinguished from MP-38/40 magazines only by its markings (VIG/M1/D) and black painted finish.

The Model 48's magazine well is .25-inch wider than the magazine, which permits easy insertion under stress but also allows the magazine's feed angle to shift during firing. As a consequence, stoppages are frequent unless constant forward pressure is applied to the magazine. The magazine catch release button has been taken from the M3 "grease gun." Completely exposed, with no protective shroud like that of the improved M3A1, bumping it against one's leg or any other reasonably hard object will release the magazine, usually at the most inauspicious time. There is no excuse for this easily-corrected design *faux pas*.

The retractable stock is also taken from the M3/M3A1 submachine guns. The locking button's spring has been beefed up so that this ill-conceived, so-called "wire" stock is now more difficult than ever to open and close. With the stock retracted, overall length of the FBP submachine gun is 25 inches — too long by contemporary standards. The collapsed length of the Beretta M12S is only 16.4 inches. At 8.2 lbs., empty, FBP submachine guns are not lightweights. The Beretta M12S (6.6 lbs.) and the Heckler & Koch MP5A3 (5.6 lbs.) offer considerable weight advantages.

The fixed-blade front and single-aperture rear sight are unprotected and easily damaged. The sling swivels, attached to the left front side of the receiver and the receiver's end cap are non-rotating, which slightly inhibits their usefulness.

The trigger group is also of M3 origin (taken in turn from the British Sten gun). While a relatively reliable mechanism, it's difficult to reassemble. The trigger pull is spongy. But, with its low cyclic rate (a function of the massive bolt) and heft, the FBP is very controllable with high-hit potential . . . when it's firing without malfunction.

The FBP Model 63 is an almost unknown transition between the earlier Model 48 and the current Model 976. The barrel step has been removed and the safety incorporated into a selector, which offers an additional semiautomatic mode. Located on the left side above the trigger, this selector system is the worst I have ever come across, bar none. Not only are the positions reversed (i.e., safe is the forward position, full-auto in the middle and semi-auto to the rear), but the spring-loaded lever must be pulled outward, away from the trigger housing, before it can be moved to another position. Try this while a half-dozen terrors run screaming through the doorway!

Gratefully, only a few Model 63s were manufactured. I have one of two imported into the United States by ARMEX International (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 252, Broderick, CA 95605). ARMEX imports a raft of far more useful items for law enforcement agencies and qualified Class 3 dealers.

The current FBP Model 976 has addressed some of the more obvious defects of its unworthy predecessors. The rear sight and magazine catch release are now protected. The selector has been completely redesigned. The magazines fit more snugly in the magazine well. An optional barrel jacket is available and the bayonet lug has been dropped, although an equally problematic grip safety has been added.

By and large, the Portuguese FBP series is unimaginative, undistinguished and undeserving of more than a footnote in the history of the submachine gun. ❧



# BULLETIN BOARD



## KHOMEINI'S MURDER, INC...

Concerned about reports that counter-revolutionary movements were gaining secret international attention and support, Khomeini had Olam Ali Oveissi killed in Paris a few months ago.

A general of Iran's land forces under the Shah, Oveissi led an organization of former officers who planned a military counter-revolution against Khomeini. Baghdad was the original base for the group, but Oveissi moved to Paris when the other officers went into self-imposed exiles around the world as the invasion became unlikely. Finally, Oveissi went into hiding under pressure of threats from revolutionary Iranian agents.

The Iranians had imprisoned Gen. Oveissi's brother, Olam Hussein Oveissi, but released and tracked him from Iran to Paris, where an assassin shot both brothers.

## AFGHANS STILL FIGHTING...

While most of the world outside the Kremlin seems to have forgotten the war in Afghanistan, bloodshed has not lessened.

Hampered by shortages of everything, some resistance organizations may be driven to deal with the Russians. Although talks are taking place in several areas, the rumor that Shah Ahmad Massoud is seeking a separate peace in the Panjshir Valley is probably disinformation. Hassan Gailani recently visited SOF and informed us that he had sent men and materiel to aid Massoud, and would be surprised if there were any substance to the charges.

Although Afghanistan is rarely in the news these days, the mujahideen need help more than ever and are getting less. You can do your part by sending your contribution to SOF's Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

## SALVADORAN MISSION...

SOF sent a study group in January and a training mission in February to El Salvador to help the Salvadorans prepare for anticipated violence during the elections.

The missions consisted of five major elements. First — the study group — led by Special Projects director Alex McColl, was formed of military small-arms editor Pete Kokalis, Leon Gebauer from Laser Arms and contributing editor Ralph Edens. It arrived in San Salvador 20 January to survey the situation and to define the areas in which SOF could help.

SOF's training mission departed 20 February under the leadership of editor/publisher Robert K. Brown. This mission comprised the remaining four elements of SOF's Salvadoran election project directed to the Airborne Battalion, the Airbase Defense Battalion, the Morazan Battalion and elements of the Third Brigade at San Miguel.

Associate editor Bill Brooks and Sam Allen conducted tactical combat training and trained armorers. John Donovan and Ralph Edens lectured and demonstrated demo techniques. Paul Fanshaw conducted village clearing training and accompanied COIN combat ops with the Cazador Battalion. John Doe trained snipers for the Atlacatl and Airborne Battalions and doorgunners for the Salvadoran Air Force Helicopter Squadron.

Look for *Soldier of Fortune's* unique on-the-spot reporting on the military operations surrounding the Salvadoran elections in the August issue.



Wounded Thai Border Patrol Police officer carried away from Burmese attack across Moei River. Photo: Bangkok Post

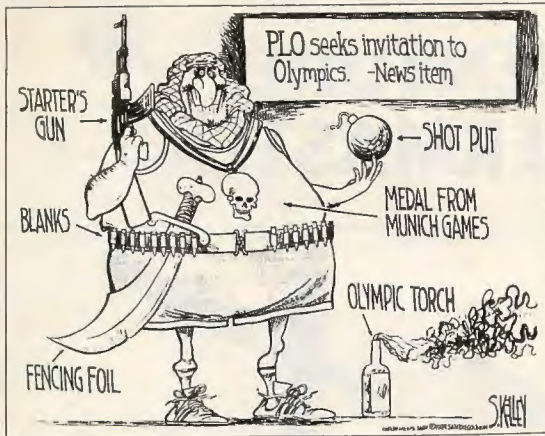
## VIETNAMESE FOREIGN AID...

The Vietnamese think Cambodia is a great place to live, says SOF foreign correspondent Jim Coyne, except that there aren't enough Vietnamese.

Coyne's Cambodian sources tell him that the Hanoi-backed Heng Samrin government has granted citizenship to 300,000 Vietnamese "settlers" and that 200,000 applications are pending.

The only serious resistance to this trend is the newly-formed coalition of resistance groups called Democratic Kampuchea (DK), headed by former Cambodian head of state, Norodum Sihanouk. DK spokesmen claim significant gains against the demoralized 170,000 soldiers the Vietnamese Army posted in Kampuchea. Supplied with Chinese materiel, DK forces have recently attacked Siem Reap, Battambang and even Phnom Penh, focusing their efforts on supply depots. Sihanouk claims to have destroyed over one million liters of gasoline, aviation fuel and diesel, and to have damaged four Mi-8 helicopters during the raid on Siem Reap.





## OLYMPICS GET HOT SHOTS...

The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) announced recently that Robert E. Petersen, chairman of the board of Petersen Publishing (which publishes *Guns & Ammo* and *Hunting* magazines), will replace Dr. Sherman L. Kearn as Olympic Shooting Commissioner. An avid sportsman, Petersen will supervise the 1984 spring shooting events at the Olympic shooting site, Prado Recreation Park in San Bernadino, which is now under construction.

Petersen said of the appointment, "With my interest and background in the sport, I hope to make a valuable contribution. We're planning to give shooting more exposure than it has had in prior Games. With more than 150 countries expected to compete, we hope this nucleus will promote and otherwise benefit the sport of shooting for many years to come."

LAOOC also announced that Michael Tipa, on loan from the National Rifle Association (NRA), has assumed the duties of sports manager for shooting. Tipa has served for 19 years as director of international shooting activities for the NRA and has been an International Shooting Federation (UIT) technical delegate to the Olympic Games since 1964.



BEATTIE  
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## CONTRA RESUPPLY...

Robert K. Brown and Alex McColl delivered 300 pounds of uniforms, web-gear and weapon-cleaning materials to the FDN and Miskitos fighting the communist regime in Nicaragua. A box of camouflage sweatshirts were donated by SOF Exchange.

We still need boot socks, boots, uniforms, web-gear, cleaning kits, foot powder, insect repellent and suppressed-color cold-weather gear, such as sweaters, sweatshirts and ponchos, all in small and medium sizes. Send donations to the Nicaraguan/Salvadoran Defense Fund, 5735 Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80303.

## LOBBYING FOR LIVES...

Our Washington sources tell us that SOF's April '84 issue is being circulated in the Pentagon and among legislators by Sikorsky. "Are Navy Pilots Worth Saving?" argued that Sikorsky's UH-60 was the best combat search and rescue (C/SAR) chopper currently made, but that C/SAR units were still flying old, outmoded HH-3As. Needless to say, Helicopter Combat Support Squadron Nine (HC-9) was happy to see their old beefs aired in public.

Let's hope it does some good.

## RECOGNITION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Any individual who contributes 1) funds, medical supplies or medicine to Refugee Relief International, Inc., 2) funds to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund or 3) equipment to the Salvadoran Army or Miskito Indians has the option of having his name mentioned in SOF with the amount of money or equipment donated. If you wish to be so recognized, please indicate this with your donation.

## KISSINGER REPORT...

Most of us learn of our government's studies through scraps quoted (or misquoted) in the national media. Since today's troubles in Central America are probably the greatest direct threat to American security, and since there is so much information, disinformation and simple ignorance available on the subject, SOF recommends that its readers buy *The Report of the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America*.

The Kissinger Report — as it is called — represents the commission's study of history, economy, politics, possible future and its solutions to the region's difficult problems.

Buy your copy locally for \$7.95, or write MacMillan Publishing Company, Dept. SOF, 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022 for the distributor nearest you.

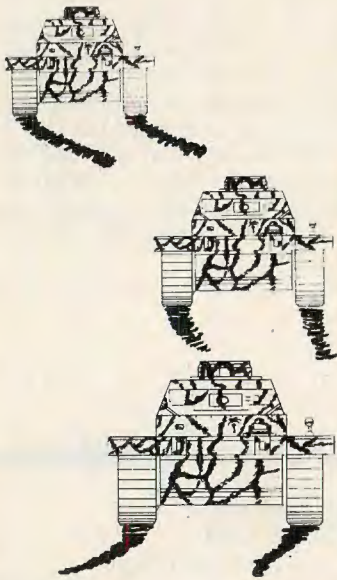


SOF-sponsored U.S. Winter Olympic Team competitor Don Nielsen presents SOF senior editor Bill Guthrie with USSR sport pennon.

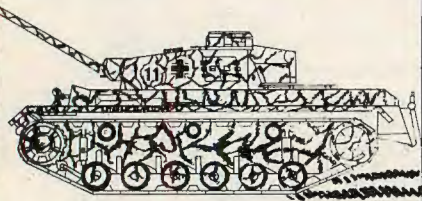
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# MOVING?



Artwork by Paul Jones



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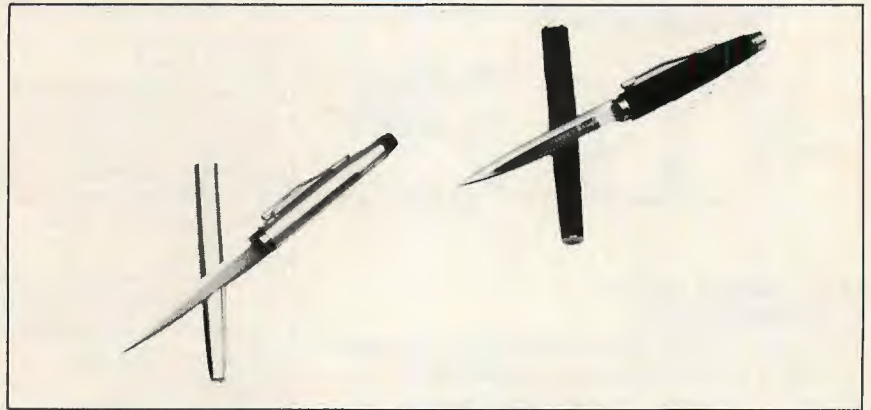
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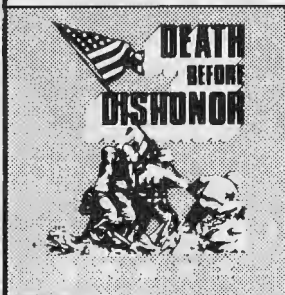
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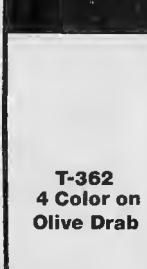
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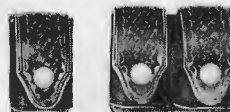
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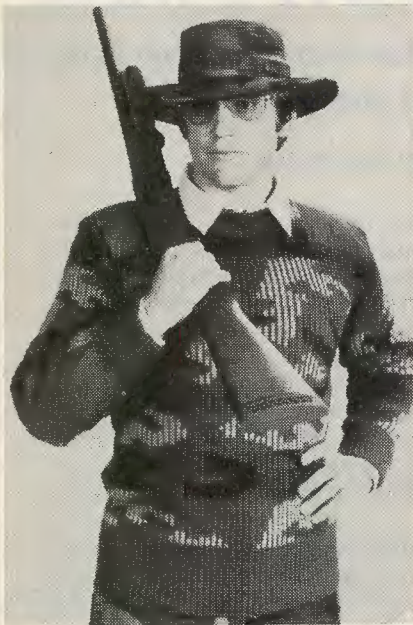
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With this issue, SOF begins a new series: Election '84. For the next six months, Robert Caldwell and Karl Phaler will alternate discussion of a wide range of issues concerning the armed forces and national security of the United States. Each topic will be analyzed in terms of how it will be affected either by (1) the reelection of President Reagan or (2) the election of former Vice President Mondale or Senator Gary Hart to serve as Commander in Chief for the next four years.

In this series we will examine (1) the status and public perception of the armed forces under either a Republican or Democratic administration; (2) the implications for arms control of Democratic policies; (3) the prospects for the intelligence community under another Reagan term or under renewed Democratic control; (4) the military use of emerging "high" technologies under either administration for the next four years; (5) the global non-NATO foreign-policy implications of the coming election; and (6) the prospects for the North Atlantic alliance as a function of the November vote.

The comparison and analysis will of course be heavily based on the historical record. In the case of Reagan, we have a rather clear understanding of what is and what is intended to be. In the case of Mondale or Hart, we may draw heavily upon the experience of the Carter administration, although we will attempt to point out those areas where the Democrats' currently stated policies differ materially from those of former President Carter.

As you might expect, we will be expressing some strong views, both supportive and critical, on this vast range of issues. Because this is opinion, we are absolutely certain to cause heartburn on both sides. (Anyone who would agree with everything we say is probably dangerous, and certainly should be under observation.) We hope your own views will be stimulated by this series, and we welcome reader input on the entire range of matters under discussion. Most importantly, we hope that you will make damn sure you get to the polls on election day, no matter whom you plan on voting for: After all, it's your country, your vote, and it will be your next President in November.

**T**HERE are two main factors affecting the degree of esteem that Americans as a society feel for their military. First, there is the attitude of the civilian administration, whose own actions with respect to the armed forces strongly influence public opinion. Second, there is the success or failure of the armed forces in action, which profoundly adds to or subtracts from public esteem of the military. Finally, while contrasting recent Democratic and Republican attitudes toward and use of the armed forces, we must remember the true and overriding lesson of Vietnam: Without broad public support for the armed forces, they cannot be effectively employed as instruments of national policy. Bluntly put, an American military without widespread public support had better stay in barracks.

#### 1. Administration Attitudes Toward the Armed Forces

To predict the future we must look to the past. Let us contrast the beginning of the Carter administration with the approach of Ronald Reagan, as there is no reason to suspect that Reagan's underlying attitude will change, or that new Democratic policies would differ substantially from those of Carter.

**Carter 1977:** In the first hours of the new presidency, a momentous step is taken. The draft evaders, who had refused to wear our country's uniform, are restored to positions of honor in our society. Never mind Agent Orange, unemployed veterans, the disastrous state of our readiness, or an Army at that point composed of large numbers of enlistees from the bottom rungs of society. First, the hand goes out to those who bit it, ahead of those who served loyally no matter how unpopular the cause.

**Reagan 1981:** Before the new President is even properly sworn in, the hostages are on their way home from Iran. It seems that people in Teheran understood that the Reagan team was going to do things differently. (Rumor has it that they were considering whether further negotiations would



# EDITORIAL

## Election '84: The Fate of the Military

by Karl Phaler

involve a high-altitude low-yield device or a low-altitude high-yield device.) Reagan's stated program of rearmament and respect for the military, including those who served in Vietnam, sets a wholly different tone from that of four years earlier.

#### 2. The Armed Forces in Action

In comparing Democratic and Republican use of our armed forces, we must examine later events in each of the last two administrations, April 1980 for Carter, and October 1983 for Reagan. Each event represents the high point for the employment of military force by that administration.

**Carter 1980:** It is April, in the sandy wastes of the Iranian hinterland. Strewn over a wide area are mounds of aircraft wreckage, fire-blackened and charred. Among the wreckage lie smaller blackened objects, the remains of brave Americans desecrated by joyous mullahs. Welcome to the apotheosis of Jimmy Carter's military ventures: Desert One. In the subsequent humiliation our Secretary of State resigns, not because we failed, but because we tried. The hostages remain in captivity.

**Reagan 1983:** It is October, and the President has just learned that our Marines in Lebanon have been decimated in a terrorist attack. Nonetheless, he proceeds to order the armed forces to proceed with the Grenadian rescue mission, which succeeds brilliantly, even in the face of an outraged press. (When is the last time we saw American students praising the arrival of the Airborne?) Early in 1984, the State of the Union address is delivered. Before the assembled houses of Congress, Reagan introduces an Army sergeant, a hero from Grenada. Astoundingly, in America, the assembled elite of our national political cadres first applaud, then rise to a standing ovation for an American serviceman. We are far, far indeed from Desert One.

All of this, of course, tells us much about Ronald Reagan directly, but is only indirectly informative about, for example, Walter Mondale and his attitudes. We do, however, have some direct evidence of Mondale's concern for the military and their employment. In his book, *Delta Force*, Col. Charlie Beckwith tells of the secret White House meeting on the eve of Delta's departure for the hostage rescue attempt. President Carter is neatly attired, while Ham Jordan wears Levis, although matters of vital national importance are at stake. Most interestingly of all, Walter Mondale comes to this critical briefing wearing a jogging suit and fancy sneakers. Then, during the briefing, Mondale becomes engrossed in playing with a set of flexible handcuffs!

**P**ERHAPS Reagan's respect for our armed forces is reflexive rather than reflective, and thus changeable. Perhaps Mondale's indifference to the fate of the American hostages and their would-be rescuers has little to do with his or other Democrats' underlying thinking on the military. Perhaps the Soviets really do not care which candidate prevails in November. Perhaps. But if history has any meaning, there would seem to be a clear choice indeed this fall for the future well-being of our military, upon which may well depend the future of all of our freedoms. ✕



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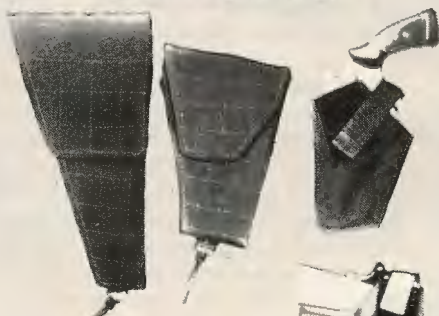
**Concealable Shoulder Holster (Top).** Fits most any gun. Elastic back strap allows free movement of right arm. Fully adjustable 1 1/4" nylon web harness. **SHC \$40.**

**Military Shoulder Holster (Bottom).** Constructed of 5 layers ballistic nylon. Sewn in sight channel. Fully adjustable 1 1/4" nylon web harness. **HN45B for auto's \$35; HN45BR for revolvers \$35; HN45BL for 6" BBL \$40.**

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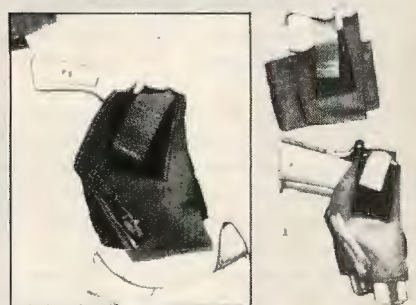
### Belt Holsters



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**AHA for auto's \$30**  
**AHO for 3" and 4" revolvers and large auto's \$30**

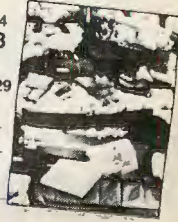
Also available: **SPB ankle pouch for money, credit cards, etc. \$24.50**

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# BURMA: THE BATTLE CONTINUES

*SOF interrupted Sterling Seagrave's analysis of the rebellious hill tribes in Burma ("Karen Rebels of Burma," "Burma's Golden Triangle," SOF, April, May '84) to bring you Jim Coyne's bulletin on Burma's current offensive against the Karens ("The Last Battle?" SOF, June '84) and this month's update. Next month we'll conclude the series with Sterling's article on the Kachins.*

**T**HE Burma Army dry-season blitz that was supposed to wipe out Karen rebel strongholds near the border of Thailand has become an embarrassment. Instead of overrunning the rebel bases with ease, the assault has bogged down before the rebel town of Mawpokay for more than two months.

This is the first time in 35 years of ethnic civil war that the Burma Army has not quit after two or three weeks. Bombardment with artillery, mortars and recoilless rifles, including phosphorus barrages, only burned out the flimsy thatch marketplace.

The well-armed Karen defenders, no more than 400-strong, are holed up in concrete bunkers beneath an earthworks, behind a barrier of landmines and three layers of barbed wire. All efforts by 3,000 Burmese troops to storm this bastion so far have failed but have resulted in heavy casualties and required continual reinforcements.

What causes the Burmans severe loss of face is that it's all happening before an international audience of hundreds of observers across the Moei River that forms the Thai-Burma border. The shallow border river curves in a tight oxbow around the Karen base, sheltering it on three sides, while the fourth side is protected by the furiously defended Masada-style fortification. The Burma Army can only attack Mawpokay through that narrow salient, which is barely 200 yards across, or violate Thai territory

and risk a diplomatic or military incident with Thailand.

Already, stray mortar and artillery rounds have fallen across the river on Thai villages, killing or maiming a number of civilians. The Thai government rushed elements of the 4th Infantry Division and Rangers of the Third Army to bolster the Border Police garrisons in Tak and Mae Hong Son Provinces adjacent to Burma, operating with scores of V-150 armored cars and helicopter gunships.

Across from Mawpokay the Thais have also positioned a forward section of their "Special Action Force." Thailand's Maj. Gen. Siri Thivapant of the 4th Infantry revealed that Bangkok has filed a strong protest with Rangoon over the shelling of Thai soil, and called Burmese denials "ridiculous."

Last June, the Burma Army launched a surprise dawn attack on Mawpokay and was able to briefly infiltrate one platoon, which sneaked across the Thai border in the dark and swam into the rebel base from the rear before being forced to retreat. The Karens rallied and shot down a Burma Air Force T-33 and two American-aid Hueys, given to Burma ostensibly for opium suppression.

After barely a week of fighting with losses of 150 dead and 40 wounded, the Burmans hastily withdrew from the large rebel-controlled valley. But they held on to strategic Nawtaya Pass in the rugged Dawna Range, which is the only way into the Karen sanctuary from the rest of Burma. They used that highpoint to harass the Karens with artillery until just before Christmas. Then, apparently intending to destroy the Karen rebellion once and for all, the Burmans sent in 3,000 troops with air cover and artillery, elements of the 66th Division.

They hit the rebel town of Mae Taw Wah in January and burned down its market with phosphorus barrages, in the process gaining control of a nearby calcium karst peak that dominates the northern end of the valley.

From that highground, they used artillery and phosphorus rounds again to burn down the second rebel market town of Klerdey, five kilometers away, in mid-February.

But reports in the Thai and U.S. press that the Burmans had actually "overrun" these two bases turned out to be premature. Klerdey remains in rebel hands, and a Burmese Bell helicopter doing artillery spotting there was downed 12 February, crippling the four crewmen. The 400 Burmese troops left to occupy Mae Taw Wah have since been cut off and besieged by the Karens, and are running low on ammunition and food. Mawpokay was the third town to be attacked.

The siege began 7 January with three days of pounding by artillery, including 120mm and three-inch mortars from a Burmese camp six kilometers west at the village of Ban Ka Tae, and another at Tu Pa Joh two kilometers to the northwest. (On the second day, Burmese troops seized a rebel teak sawmill south of Mawpokay. That sawmill has now been retaken by Karen commandos under Maj. Mutu.) On 8 January, 200 tough Yakhai and Thongsu headhunters, brought from western Burma's Arakan Mountains because they have no contact with the Karen cause, were thrown against the fortifications from the north and south sides of the salient, but took heavy losses in the mine field. Repeated storming over subsequent days decimated the mountainmen, and they had to be replaced by another 200-man contingent of Yakhai and Thongsu aborigines before the end of February.

While the unfortunate aborigines are being sacrificed on the barbed wire and minefields, the 2,500 Burmese regulars based one kilometer to the rear are attempting to dig narrow tunnels into the rebel fortress. These are the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 6th, 9th and 10th Battalions of the 66th Division.

Inside Mawpokay, the defenders are hardcore Karen soldiers, manning heavy



# Karen Comeback Shakes Burmese Army

by Sterling Seagrave



machine guns, M79 grenade launchers, recoilless rifles, mortars, M16s and Kalashnikovs. They have been resupplied at night across the river, and are reinforced by combat veterans from the Shan and Kachin rebel armies far to the north, who have joined the Karens in forming a combined National Democratic Front against the Burmese dictatorship. On the Thai side are mortar and artillery emplacements around a small but heavily reinforced hard base called Command 34, just outside the town of Tha Song

Yang.

Meanwhile, the Karens have not been idle. With between 8,000 and 10,000 men under arms, they have at least 5,000 regulars standing by within a hundred kilometers of Mawpokay, ready to defend three other Karen main bases, and to hit the Burmese if Mawpokay falls. They have also launched counterattacks in other parts of Burma.

On the western bank of the Salween River, there was a major battle on 27 February, with the Burma Army losing 39 dead. A

Burmese train rushing fresh ammunition toward the border battle zone was hijacked and emptied by 100 Karen commandos in Ta Hang Province. A convoy of 20 Burma Army supply trucks was sabotaged and burned in Kammanong District.

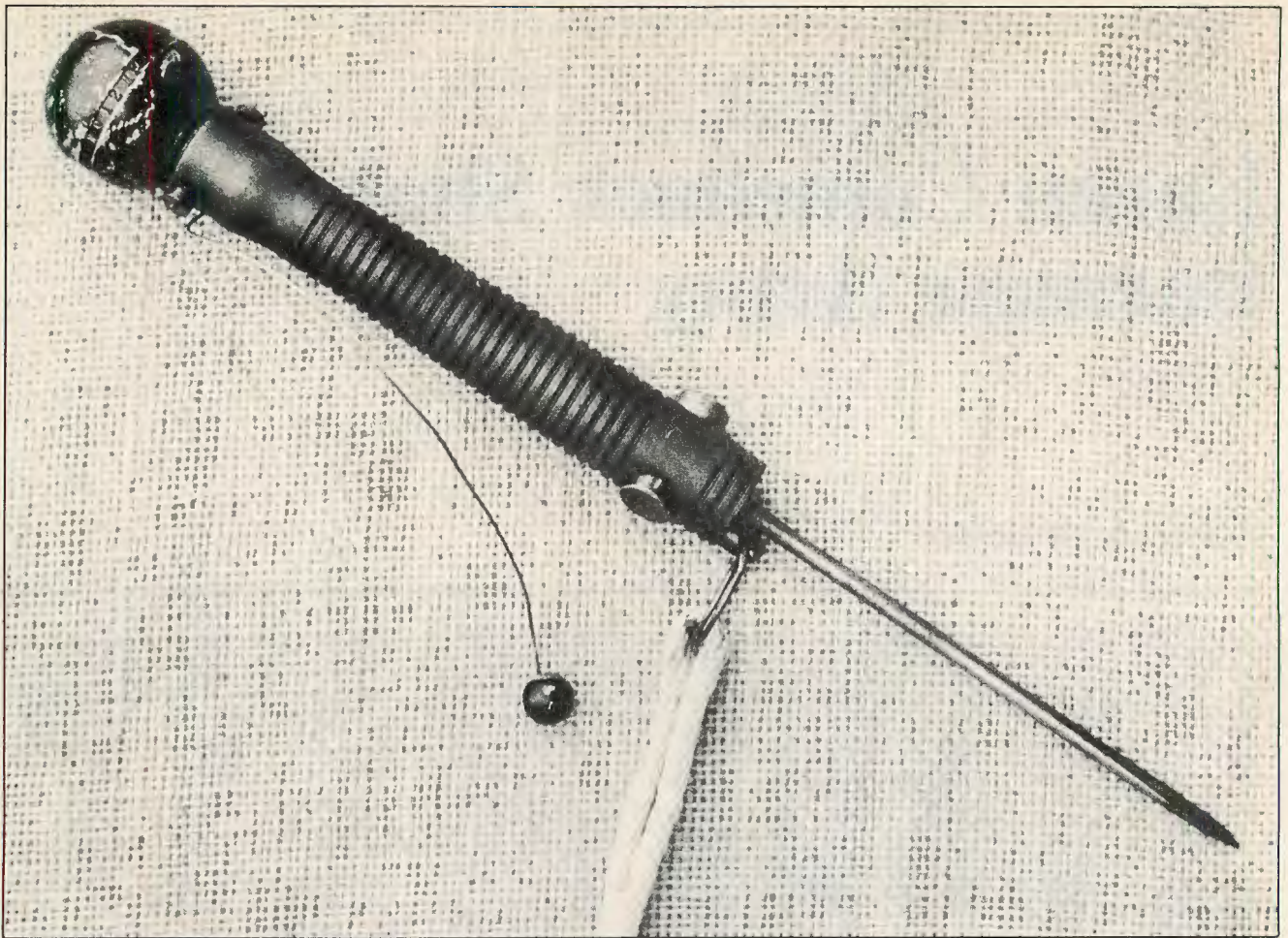
All around the siege at Mawpokay, Karen commandos in groups ranging from 20 to 200 have been hitting the Burmese rear, cutting supply lines, setting fire to the jungle around the artillery bases, and assaulting the Burmese holding Nawtaya mountain pass. Negotiations have been underway to spread the fighting to other rebel areas, and even to involve the notorious opium armies of Khun Sa and other drug warlords far north in the Golden Triangle opium-growing region.

Aside from the replacement battalion of aborigines rushed to Mawpokay at the midpoint in the siege, other Burmese reinforcements apparently have not been able to reach the front. Food and ammunition resupply has been possible only by helicopter, removing casualties on return flights. But the Burmese are short of planes and helicopters, and there is some question how much longer they can press the rebels before giving up the siege.

This siege has brought the Karens more publicity for their cause than ever before. Their main headquarters upriver at Manerplaw, and major economic centers downriver at Mae Lah, Wang Kha and Phalu, have not even been touched. It now seems unlikely that the Burmese will achieve any startling victory unless they bring in another division or two, which would drain troops from other parts of Burma and leave them vulnerable elsewhere. A Burmese withdrawal before the arrival of the monsoon rains in June would be a humiliating blow to the Rangoon dictatorship.

Although SOF's original battle report stressed the odds against the Karens, today retreat and humiliation for Burma seem increasingly possible. ✕





Close Combat Weapon with garrote partially unwound and stiletto blade extended.

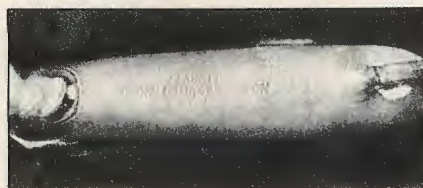
## SOF WEAPONS

# THREE-WAY KILLER

## WWII Commando's Close Combat Weapon

Text & Photos by Leroy Thompson

**D**URING World War II a group of alumni of the Shanghai International Police, including such notables as W.E. Fairbairn, E.A. Sykes and Pat O'Neill, developed a curriculum for turning nice British and American young men into some of the best close-quarters silent killers the world had ever known. Serving with the Commandos, SAS, SBS, Special Operations Executive (SOE), Rangers, Raiders,



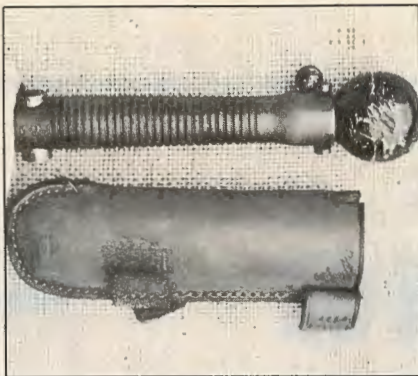
MPCCW leather sheath has maker's name and model number imprinted.

1st Special Service Force, Special Allied Airborne Reconnaissance Force (SAARF), OSS or other such units, these men became proficient in the methods of clandestine mayhem. To help them commit this mayhem, special weapons were created, ranging from air guns which fired phonograph needles to small daggers concealed in pencils. The most famous of these weapons was the Sykes-Fairbairn stiletto, which





MPCCW close-up shows spike blade and the catch which releases it. Rotating catch also locks blade in place.



Compact killing tool: Close Combat Weapon and its sheath. Small ball at top of barrel is garrotte tab and catch at bottom drops spike blade.



Cosh head has small ball (left) attached to garrotte wire. Screw near barrel top keeps cosh head from pulling loose when used as bludgeon.

would become the most famous fighting knife of all time.

Though the S-F was by far the most widely issued close-quarters weapon for "Special Forces" during WWII, it was not the only issue weapon. For example, the Commandos — most famous users of the S-F dagger — were also issued the Wilkinson RBD knife, the BC 41 knuckle knife and the Middle East Commando Dagger, among others. A few other special close-quarters weapons were also developed for limited issue or private purchase.

Though not the most numerous special-forces weapon — only a few dozen were manufactured — the McLacklin-Peskett Close Combat Weapon Mark I was one of the most versatile and interesting. Available from Cogswell and Harrison on special order, this weapon was designed to give the agent or raider a cosh, garrotte and dagger all in one weapon.

The basic weapon consists of a 5.5 inch-long, phosphate-finished, ribbed barrel surmounted by a 1.5-inch heavy-metal-alloy sphere. Near the top of the barrel is a small ball attached to a wire which disappears through a hole in the barrel. Near the base of the barrel is a knurled circular latch. A ring is affixed at the base of the barrel so that a wrist thong — usually parachute line — can be attached. (This simple device is well-loved by those who've been involved in

clandestine or COIN ops and have learned the hard way how easy it is to lose track of a blade.)

The globe located at the top of the barrel is blackened and rotates on a bobbin. Stamped into the globe are the letters "M.P.C.C.W.," a patent number and a serial number. The serial number on the device examined for this article is "12."

When gripped and pulled out from the barrel, the small ball attached near the spherical bludgeon-head unwinds a 24-inch wire garrotte. To rewind the garrote, turn the head of the device until the wire is wound in and the small ball abuts the barrel.

Anyone who knows much about the Commandos and other Fairbairn- and Sykes-trained units of WWII knows that coshing and garrotting were all very nice, but that the stiletto thrust to the carotid artery was the preferred way to help an enemy die for his country. Hence, the McLacklin-Peskett Device also incorporates a spiked dagger blade which functions as a gravity knife for such situations. Just rotating the latch located near the base of the barrel 180 degrees allows the 5.5-inch spike to drop from within the barrel. Rotating the latch another 180 degrees locks the spike in position. When one has finished with the spike, presumably after wiping it off on the deceased sentry's uniform, he can rotate the latch back 180 degrees and let the blade

retreat back into the barrel. Rotating the latch back into the lock position assures that the blade will then stay within the barrel until needed.

The MPCCW is surprisingly well-balanced in the hand, its 25 ounces being well-distributed. Its design is such that when one handles it, he can see that it is actually a relatively effective compromise, though not really as workable for garrotting as the old reliable broomsticks and piano wire nor as efficient for bladework as the S-F. Still, bearing in mind that the MPCCW is a compromise among three different close-quarters weapons, it's not too bad.

The close-combat weapon's sheath is leather and is stamped with the words, "PESKETT/CLOSE COMBAT WEAPON/MK I." Like the sheaths for the S-F Commando knife, the device's sheath is equipped with leather tabs so that it can be sewn directly to the battle-dress trousers or elsewhere. It could also fit conveniently into one of the special pockets on the jump smock issued to SOE operatives who were parachuting into occupied Europe.

How many enemy troops — if any — fell to the McLacklin-Peskett Close Combat Weapon is unknown, but it certainly ranks as one of the more creative of the special-warfare weapons of WWII. Even if its owner never got a chance to use it in anger, it must have been a great conversation piece.



Commando student practices dagger thrust to carotid artery. Photo: Imperial War Museum



WWII commandos learned to kill with whatever came to hand. Here students practice using helmet to crush enemy's larynx. Photo: Imperial War Museum



MPCCW is useful tool when enemy must be eliminated quickly and silently. Photo: Imperial War Museum



# KILLING FOR THE GOLD

## Olympiad '84: Ominous Parallels to the Munich Massacre

by Kevin E. Steele

Photos courtesy of AP/Wide World



**O**430 hrs., an hour before dawn. Darkness clung like a cloak to the new high-rise buildings that housed the Olympic athletes. Eight men, dressed in athletic garb and carrying athletic equipment bags, easily scaled the 6.5-foot security fence. Once on the other side, they quickly shouldered the athletic bags that contained the instruments of their trade — Soviet assault rifles, handguns and grenades — and hurried to meet their appointment with destiny. Gold medals meant nothing to them.

Twenty hours later a final body count revealed 17 dead — among them 11 Israeli athletes. Five of the eight terrorists were killed, along with one German policeman. How did this atrocity occur, and why was it allowed to happen?

This was the infamous “Munich Massacre,” carried out by the Black September faction of the PLO during the 1972 summer Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany. The televised drama that unfolded that September day ranks with the dark days of Dallas in 1963 as a vivid, step-by-step portrayal of murder and mayhem indelibly etched on our consciousness.

Random and senseless acts of terror continue to this day. The terrorists themselves are not important, nor are their warped beliefs and perceptions of injus-

tice levied against their causes. It matters not what breed of rabid dog bites, only the pain and death that follow. The presence of terror, and the means by which it is inflicted on innocent citizens, should be all that concern us.

Why is the Munich Massacre important today, 12 years later? Haven't we learned how to cope with terrorism? Or are we victims of the complacency bred by the successes at Entebbe, Mogadishu and London? Certainly we know how to combat these vile creatures who prey on innocent civilians — *or do we?*

Los Angeles is about to host the 23rd Summer Olympiad. What security precautions have been taken to safeguard both the athletes and the spectators, and have the Olympic organizers learned the tragic lessons of Munich? Unfortunately, it seems they haven't. Let's review the 1972 Olympics and the events that led up to the slaughter at Furstenfeldbruck Airbase, then compare these to the security arrangements made for the L.A. Games. The ominous parallels are all too evident.

The West Germans welcomed the 1972 Olympic Games as a chance to set the record straight, and to exorcise the specter raised by the 1936 Games hosted by Adolph Hitler as a propaganda extravaganza to prove the invincibility of the Aryan race.

A new Olympic Village was constructed in Munich (ironically the birthplace of National Socialism) where the athletes could live and compete in the spirit of sportsmanship and harmony. Security precautions were made, to include the 6.5-foot chain-link fence that ringed the village perimeter. Checkpoints were established at all village entrances, and the original intent was to restrict entrance. However, the press complained of these “Gestapo” tactics, and the village was opened for all. (Once again the general press rears its ugly head.) The police presence was intentionally downplayed, to prevent further references to German “militarism.” The responsibility for village security was under the jurisdiction of the Munich police, under the command of Dr. Manfred Schreiber. An “easy and relaxed” atmosphere prevailed.

Eight PLO terrorists quickly infiltrated this “easy and relaxed” atmosphere with no difficulty as part of the 30,000-worker contingent hired for the games. No background checks were made, and the Arabs did not attempt to hide their national origins.

On the morning of 5 September, the eight terrorists disguised as athletes met no resistance scaling the relatively low “security” fence. The building that housed the Israeli team was not locked,





**Hooded Arab commando appears on balcony of Olympic Village building where Israeli Olympic team members were seized and held hostage the morning of 5 September. At this point, West German police had taken positions around the building. Two Israelis were killed in the Village attack; nine others died in subsequent shoot-out at Furstenfeldbruck Air Force Base.**

**Policeman (armed with Walther MPK SMG) and detective stand guard the morning of 5 September near the building (visible just above policeman's right shoulder) where Arab terrorists held Israeli team members hostage. Two officials of the Israeli Olympic team were killed in the Olympic Village attack.**



and when the murder team knocked on the doors of the Israeli apartments they were opened. Only when the barrels of the Kalashnikovs were visible to the Israelis did they expect the worst — and by then it was too late.

Within hours the Munich police were aware of the situation and had begun to take action. Under the orders of Schreiber, 600 policemen were alerted to cordon off the area with armored personnel carriers. A command center was established a short distance from the Israeli quarters, and Schreiber initiated the first discussion with the terrorist leader. It is at this point that the situation becomes interesting, and ultimately tragic.

If a single blame can be leveled on the handling of the Munich Massacre, it would have to be placed directly upon the German officials who allowed disorganization to rule the day. In 1972, there was no GSG-9 (although this debacle was directly responsible for its formation), no SWAT, no Delta Force. The responsibility for the use of force to free the hostages rested on the shoulders of not one but three individuals; their use of the decentralized police/paramilitary apparatus became their worst handicap.

Schreiber commanded the Munich municipal police who initially took charge of the situation as it unfolded. Later in the day, Schreiber was supposedly supported

by units of the Bundeswehr under the control of Bruno Merk, Bavarian interior minister, and the Federal Border Police, under the command of Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Federal interior minister. The ultimate failure of these units to successfully free the hostages rests on the fact that no single individual commanded and, rather than the typical German penchant for organization, *disorganization* characterized the remainder of the operation.

By late afternoon, the German authorities had decided that the terrorists would not be allowed to leave Germany with their hostages. The terrorists requested transportation for themselves and the hostages from the Olympic Village to the Munich airport, where a waiting jet would carry them to Cairo. The Germans granted the terrorist request, then began preparing an ambush for the terrorists.

During the day, intelligence reported that five terrorists had carried out the attack. Using this information, the Germans came up with a final plan they intended to implement. A bus would enter the Olympic Village and transport the terrorists and hostages to a field adjoining the village, where they would board two Bundeswehr choppers and be transported not to Munich airport, but rather to Furstenfeldbruck Airbase, some 20 miles outside Munich.

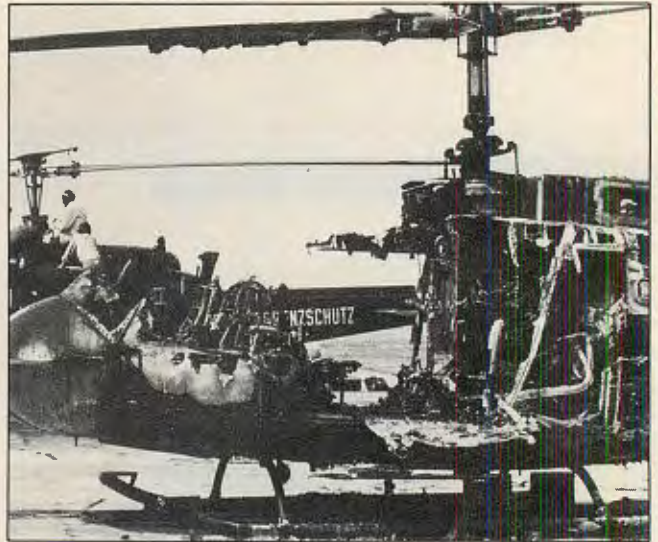
At Furstenfeldbruck, a Luftwaffe base,



# TERRORISM



**West German policeman wearing sweatsuit and armed with Walther MPK submachine gun gets into position on the roof of the Munich Olympic Village building where armed Arab commandos held Israeli Olympic team members hostage.**



**The two West German border-police Hueys which carried armed terrorists and their nine Israeli Olympic hostages stand at Furstenfeldbruck Air Force Base 20 miles west of Munich. The burned-out shell in front resulted from hand-grenade thrown by terrorist, apparently committing suicide rather than risking capture on evening of 5 September. Nine Israelis died in the shoot-out at the base.**

a Lufthansa 727 sat waiting. Unknown to the terrorists, the 727 held no crew, for the Germans did not intend to allow them to board the jet alive.

Atop the tower at Furstenfeldbruck, three German Border Police sharpshooters had taken up positions. Two additional marksmen were positioned on the airfield itself. Within 50 meters of the snipers' positions, the choppers holding the terrorists and hostages would land. According to the plan, the terrorists would be shot as soon as they exited the choppers and made their way to the waiting 727.

The sharpshooters were armed with bolt-action sniping rifles equipped with telescopic sights. Maximum range to their intended targets would not exceed 40 meters. However, by the time preparations had been made, darkness had fallen on the airbase, and the killing ground was crisscrossed by eerie and confusing shadows caused by the spotlights illuminating the area.

At the last minute, Bundeswehr officials offered the use of semiauto rifles equipped with infrared sighting devices. However, the police marksmen were not trained in their use, and turned down the offer. The stage had been set for the final option.

At 2235 hrs., three choppers approached Furstenfeldbruck and landed. Two held the terrorists and hostages, while the third contained police and negotiators. By this time it was learned that the original intelligence was in error. Eight terrorists guarded the hostages — not five. This placed the police sharpshooters in a

no-win situation, as it is tactically and practically impossible to simultaneously kill eight terrorists with five bullets. In the interim between firing the initial volley and reloading, something was bound to go wrong.

Four terrorists exited the choppers. Two approached the waiting 727, and two held the chopper pilots as shields. Satisfied with the 727, the two terrorists began walking back to the chopper. At this point the fire command was given to the sharpshooters. Inexplicably, only one round reverberated around the tense airbase, quickly followed by four more.

Two terrorists went down for the count in the initial volley, with the remaining six returning police fire. The nine hostages, still within the chopper and mute to the horror that surrounded them, were gunned down where they sat. A terrorist tossed a fragmentation grenade among the contorted bodies in the chopper for good measure. At the end of an hour-long fire fight, three additional terrorists were killed, and three eventually surrendered. The Munich Massacre had become reality.



**Blood stains and bullet holes mark the place where Israeli weightlifter Moshe Romano was slain 5 September by Arab commando inside Israeli Olympic team's quarters at Olympic Village in Munich.**

The following scenario shows one possible replaying of the Munich tragedy.

Los Angeles, July 1984: The catering truck pulled up to the Olympic Village entrance on the Westwood campus of UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles). At 0600 hrs., the caterers were running an hour behind their routine schedule for the 0700 breakfast serving. As the truck stopped at the barricade, the uniformed policeman on duty heaved his middle-aged bulk from the chair in the guard-shack and approached the open window of the van.

The day promised to be a beauty. The early-morning fog normal for this time of year, hanging heavy and oppressive from Santa Monica to downtown, was missing — a warm Santa Ana wind had blown in overnight from the Mojave, replacing low clouds with brilliant stars.

As the guard reached for the caterer's extended I.D. card, a bleating BMW horn on nearby Freeway 405 distracted his attention: Six 9mm slugs chewed their way through his thin uniform shirt and buried themselves in his chest. As the policeman slid to the pavement, the catering truck bolted through the barricade and roared into the Olympic Village, making directly for the apartments of the Turkish team.

Jumping the sidewalk, the catering

*Continued on page 34*





**Dutch troopers manning security cordon around train held by South Moluccan extremists cluster around their APC, 31 May, some using optical devices to view the train.**



**Accompanied by two South Moluccan terrorists, negotiators Dr. Hassan Tan (second from left) and Mrs. Josina Soumokil (wearing light scarf) leave hijacked train near Glimmen, northern Netherlands, on night of 4 June 1977. Negotiators held lengthy talks with South Moluccan separatists who kept 51 passengers hostage. Train was hijacked 23 May on the line between villages of Assen and Groningen.**

## DUTCH DOCTOR

It's night in one of the great cities of Europe. The row houses in this once-prosperous but now slightly seedy district are bathed in harsh floodlights. Access to the street is barred, and combat-suited figures flit through the deep shadows to take up firing positions. Obviously, hostages have been taken.

But what of the actions that are closed to public scrutiny? The key elements that usually ensure a satisfactory ending to the siege? Who are the experts and advisers behind the scenes who manipulate the terrorists and make them receptive to negotiations? One of the first men on the scene is usually a middle-aged Dutchman. His coming excites no comment among the media gathered to witness the drama unfold. His photograph has never been published, he doesn't give interviews, and his address is a closely guarded secret. He, perhaps more than any man alive, knows the mind of the modern-day terrorist and the sinister men in the shadows who direct their actions. Police and intelligence agencies eagerly seek the advice of this

mild, bespectacled doctor of psychology. His handling of the South Moluccan train and the Hague Embassy sieges have given invaluable lessons to the strike teams that battle the web of international terror.

The scenario is distinctly different from a siege in which a criminal has taken hostages to try to escape retribution for some action. The political terrorist takes hostages to get a message across. He needs to legitimize his act and so must talk, which opens the door for a skillful negotiator to turn the tables and give the advantage to the security forces. The negotiator can also mentally prepare the terrorists for the violent intervention of the strike teams.

Among the first objectives of the good doctor is the establishment of an immediate dialogue. Without this nothing can be achieved. Before replying to the terrorists' initial statements, he must listen attentively. When responding, he must try to establish a basis of complicity between the terrorists and himself. He must never approve of their actions, but still make it clear that he and only he can help them obtain some of their legitimate grievances.

Before the violent intervention of the strike teams he must prepare the terrorists psychologically and work toward getting them to accept the idea that every man has the right to be tired, to be sick, that nobody can bear such an enormous burden indefinitely. He must try to get them to describe their physical ailments, to erode their feeling of invincibility and get them to sleep. This restores their mental rhythms and also creates favorable conditions for the attack.

For the hostages, the two most dangerous moments are the initial seizure when the terrorists are fired by an almost psychotic zeal and could massacre them without a moment's hesitation; and when the captors' position weakens and they are tempted to try some violent act to regain the initiative. It is at the latter stage that most lives are lost.

The negotiator must use an almost confidential tone to speak to the terrorists — almost like doctor to patient — with no bluntness or the slightest hint of threat. He must insist that the captors maintain discipline with the hostages and ensure that they remain unhooded: Eye contact is crucial. A man will kill someone whose eyes he can't see.

The negotiator must ease the terrorists into a climate of submission by establishing a routine, setting times for meals ("Do you want chicken or hamburger?") and deluging them with questions ("Leg or wing? Rare or well-done? Mustard or ketchup?"). These questions do not change the basic situation, but take the terrorists' minds off their obsession, put them back into contact with outside reality and weaken their will to resist. The doctor suggests sending food in on china, making the captors maintain standards of hygiene ("Be sure to wash the plates and utensils"). The terrorists are made to realize that objects are breakable — and also, unconsciously, that their hostages are fragile.

The doctor vetoes sending in playing cards or board games, to avoid disaster should a terrorist lose to a hostage. Instead, he recommends trying to build up the leader and perhaps allow him a small success to increase his standing in the eyes of his men. He is then less likely to resort to violent means to regain authority or make a point.

These are a few of the steps by which the Dutch doctor manipulates the terrorists to prepare them for the end.

— Roger Ingram



# TERRORISM



**Members of the FBI's new hostage-rescue team rush mockup of building to rescue young woman being held by "terrorists" in training exercise at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va. Dummy figures in the windows represent terrorists.**

truck screeched to a halt beside the fire exit of the high-rise apartment building. The door to the building was locked, but a well-placed burst from the suppressed MAC-10 quickly gained them entrance.

A startled security agent in the building corridor reached instinctively for the holstered Beretta 92 under his jacket. Unfortunately, his effort was rewarded with another burst from the furious Ingram.

Five men entered the corridor behind the submachine-gun-wielding point man. Moving instantly to the pre-planned target, the point man took up a position beside the door of the Turkish suite, as a second man moved into position in front of the door. The point man squatted, waiting for the door-breaker to employ the cutdown 870 loaded with #000 Buck on the twin door hinges. At this point, the blast of the shotgun charges mattered little. As the door slid from the wall, the two men rushed in, quickly followed by their four comrades.

The six-man Turkish team was rounded up from their beds in moments. The Armenian terrorist team had accom-

plished their first objective. At 0608 hrs., a telephone call to the Olympic security building assured the officials that the Turks were being held hostage for crimes committed against Armenia in 1917.

As in Munich, preparations have been made to ensure the security of the L.A. Olympiad. But unlike Munich, the '84 Games will be spread over an immense area of Southern California, reaching over 200 miles from Santa Barbara to San Diego. Security will be provided by an army of uniformed and plainclothes police, in excess of 17,000 individuals, comprising over 100 different and overlapping jurisdictions.

Once again the question is asked, "Who is in charge?"

At the present time, Olympic security is being coordinated by the Los Angeles Police Department, under its chief, Daryl F. Gates. Actual day-to-day responsibility has been passed on to Commander William Rathburn. The Olympic Committee has also hired a former FBI agent as its security coordinator, Edgar Best. On top of these is William Webster, Director of the FBI.

Webster and Gates have been trying for quite some time to overcome the problem of decentralized leadership. In a *Los Angeles Times* article (6 January 1984), Webster said that he "... had no doubt that the FBI and the LAPD will resolve their differences over which agency will



take the lead in responding to any terrorism within the city [read: LAPD's jurisdiction] during the Olympics." Both Webster and Gates have pledged to work together toward a "common agreement." So far as we know, none has been reached.

The FBI has also been hamstrung recently in the area of preventive investigations. In a suit filed in Federal District Court in Chicago by the ACLU and the Alliance to End Repression (a front for the U.S. Communist Party), Judge Susan Getzendanner issued an injunction which disallows implementation of new FBI domestic security guidelines initiated by Attorney General William French Smith in 1983. Under the new guidelines the FBI would have been able to investigate individuals or groups who advocated criminal activity or intent to commit a crime of violence. The outcome is that the FBI can investigate only committed crimes, not individuals *planning* to commit crimes.

Regarding security checks on workers hired for the Games, the police are permitted to instigate background checks, but are not allowed to take workers' fingerprints nor administer lie-detector tests.

In the event of an act of terrorism which involves the taking of hostages, exactly what would the response be? Well, we have several options.

One is the use of the LAPD SWAT Team. Another is the use of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department SWAT





**Squad of the new FBI hostage-rescue team approaches mock building, right, to rescue female hostage from "terrorists" in a demonstration by the unit at its Quantico, Va., Academy.**



**H&K MP5-toting agent runs to aid two colleagues in subduing revolver-armed "terrorist" and securing "hostage" during FBI training exercise geared toward the possibility of terrorist attacks at the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.**

Team. Another is the use of the FBI SWAT Team, and still another is the use of the one-year-old, untested FBI Hostage Rescue Team. Perhaps more "final options" than we need?

The police have been given the job of Olympic security and terrorist-action response over the military for a number of reasons, all of which seem to evolve around image rather than action. To quote FBI Director William Webster (op. cit.): "Because of the FBI's readiness, there is no need for stationing a special Army Commando team close to Los Angeles during the Games." Webster went on to state that the Army does not concentrate on training that will allow the saving of lives, and that the FBI team will provide a "... civilian response, not a military response." Unfortunately, this thinking echoes back to the Munich debacle.

Unlike Munich, the Olympic Villages in Los Angeles will be ringed with tight security — at least in the beginning. What will happen if the press complains again of Gestapo tactics? The two villages in L.A., one on the UCLA campus and the other

on the USC (University of Southern California) campus, will be surrounded by high-security, alarm-wired and electronically monitored fences. Entrance checkpoints will be guarded by armed police, and athletes and press will be required to show a special photo I.D. which features an electronic bar code. Metal detectors will be set up at the village gates and will also be used at the entrances to all events. At least L.A. will not be as "easy and relaxed" as was Munich in '72.

However, even with the security precautions already under preparation, the most glaring error that persists is the lack of a centralized control over all security forces.

The Olympic officials are convinced that the proper response to terrorism is a police response. But do the police have the right background for the job? The effectiveness of the LAPD SWAT team is highly touted in law-enforcement circles — but is it for their response to terrorist activities, or for their response to drunk or drugged-out husband/boyfriends who threaten to kill their mates in a moment of insanity?

Professional terrorists are not momentarily insane. They are cold, ruthless killers who practice their trade on an international front. They consider themselves soldiers and "freedom fighters" — not criminals.

While the LAPD SWAT team may be

good, I can only cite their performance against one terrorist group — the Symbionese Liberation Army in the famed shootout of 17 May 1974. In that fiasco, the SWAT team literally tore apart the house holding the terrorists with uncontrolled gunfire, finally bringing the siege to an end with tear-gas canisters that ignited the home and created a blazing inferno. None of the terrorists were captured alive. Is this what Webster terms a "police response"?

What steps could we take to augment current Olympic security plans? To start, a centralized command must be established. This centralized command should be capable of dispatching the correct response to any terrorist activity at a moment's notice. The commander should not be affected by local politics, nor be concerned with "public image." An impartial commander should be selected — and all local forces should be subjugated to his control. In short, the overall security commander should come from the ranks of the military — not the police. But then, I suppose "image" is far more important than innocent lives. ✕



## SOF FEATURE

# TOOLS OF TERROR

## SOF's Guide to Underground Weaponry

by Bill Guthrie



**F**EAR is the first weapon, but after that guns are the tools by which terrorists move nations and men to act against their wills. Firearms of "liberation" organizations can be defined by necessity and taste (simple weapons are best — since many of the grunts in a terrorist "army" are qualified more by zeal than by experience — and certain weapons have emotional appeal) but the guns found most often are the guns that are available.

The distinctive banana-magazine outline of the Kalashnikov is the symbol of revolution even to those who have no idea what an AK-47 is.

Simple, rugged, relatively inexpensive and manufactured from Egypt to China, the AK may be the greatest small-arms contributor to world destabilization.

Some analysts believe total production of AKs and AK variants must be near 30 million. The older USSR-made AK-47, the newer AKM and the Chinese Type 56 are most numerous in terrorist weapons caches, but East German, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Yugoslavian, and North Korean versions can be found.

M16s are valued by many armies for mechanical simplicity, low recoil, accuracy, lightness, compactness and ease of training. All of these characteristics make them fine weapons for amateur and professional killers.

Colt claims that about five million M16s have been made in the United States and by licensees in the Philippines and South Korea, but there may be political reasons for not revealing a larger figure. Unofficial estimates of total production are double official figures. Our abandonment of about a million M16s in Southeast Asia has made a great contribution to the world terrorist arsenal. Vietnam-issue '16s have been used in terrorist acts and communist insurrections from neighboring Cambodia, Burma and Thailand to Central America. The Irish Republican Army has received M16s from communist sympathizers, and IRA buyers have been in Vietnam to purchase U.S.-made arms and ammo from our old enemies.

The first rifle issued to use the AK's M1943 7.62x39mm cartridge was the SKS. Strong and simple, production figures are not available, but Pete Kokalis figures that 10 million must have been made. SKSs lack selective-fire capability, and are relatively unsuited to urban and jungle fighting. But

**This photo of members of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola shows the variety of weaponry available to "unofficial" military organizations in Africa: (right to left) new UZI, RPG-7, G3 and a WWII German MP44. Photo: Thomas Johnson/NYT Pictures**

**Raider killed in South West Africa still has his AK. Photo: SADF Magazine**





SADF troop (British Mk VII landmine at his feet) displays Soviet SVD sniper rifle captured on raid against SWAPO bases in Angola. SVD was a favorite of VC cadre and fires 7.62x53mm Russian Rimmed cartridge — ballistically similar to 7.62mm NATO — from Kalashnikov-type action. Photo: Al J. Venter

they were made in East Germany, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, China and North Korea and are still found wherever communists are killing people.

Some have called the U.S. M2 carbine the original assault rifle. The M2 fired an intermediate round, was light and compact with 30-round magazines and it featured selective fire. Official production figures are in the 6,000,000 range and World War II spread them over most of the globe. Semi-auto M1s and full-auto M2 and M3 carbines have been taken from basements and bodies of terrorists from Ireland to Africa and from Vietnam to South America.

Since terrorist organizations do not have the same supply networks as an army, members of the same group may have different weapons. Czech vz.58 assault rifles are a good example. The Model 58 is visually similar but mechanically different from the AK, and parts are not interchangeable. It has the additional inconvenience of the capability of being misassembled, with potentially disastrous results.

Still, the weapon is robust, accurate, and mainly well-designed. Since it is something different, some people like it for that reason alone. One of the terrorist cells of the Japanese Red Army named itself for the Czech rifle.

Submachine guns and machine pistols are light, small and lethal. Many millions of them have been made since World War I, and by no means are all of them accounted for by either Free World or communist

states that made them. All makes appear in weapons captured from terrorists, from the latest UZI to the oldest Thompson or the most delapidated PPSH-41.

For power, compactness and shock value, hardly anything short of C-4 beats the MAC-10 in .45 ACP or 9mm Parabellum. Expensive on the open market and virtually non-rebuildable, the Ingram's high rate of fire (1200 rpm in .45) and small size make hit probability low at ranges beyond toe-to-toe. All that aside, it is available with an excellent Sionics silencer, is unbelievably concealable, and is very hard to argue with at very close ranges. Numbers are hard to get, since covert services are the governmental agencies that buy them and the manufacturing history is Byzantine. But they've been produced in some numbers for the last 17 years, were originally cheaply and easily available to civilian buyers, and have been purchased by more than 20 governments, including Yugoslavia.

The real sex-appeal weapon for enemies of order is the Czech Skorpion machine pistol. The Red Brigades of Italy are particularly fond of this 2.8-pound, 10.6-inch-long, folding-wire-stocked select-fire weapon. Available in .32 ACP (most commonly), .380 ACP, 9mm Makarov and 9mm Parabellum, the Skorpion is relatively controllable, highly portable and reliable. Originally designed as a police and vehicle-crew weapon, Omnipol (the Czech sales organization) has found good foreign markets, so the Skorpion is available all over Africa and throughout much of Europe.

Common handguns are most popular for terrorist operations. Pope John Paul II was shot with a Browning Hi-Power 9mm, and Walther auto-pistols are so popular (and illegally available) in Europe the Red Brigades have been nicknamed "P-38ers." Compact .38 Special S&W revolvers are also popular.

The world's terrorists have found other means when they didn't have guns — *plastique* in France in the '40s and industrial dynamite in Peru today — but firearms remain their most important tools. Other weapons, such as nuclear devices or toxins, might be more ideally suited for terrorist operations, but guns are compact, inexpensive, require little training or experience for basic use and are available all over the world. The great numbers of military weapons and the lack of control over dispersion in times of war define what firearms are available to terrorists. But whatever guns are found and wherever they are used, they are implements of slavery in the hands of terrorists as they are tools of freedom in the hands of informed citizens. ✕

SOF's (then Uncle Sam's) Robert K. Brown practices with MAC-10 in Vietnam. Photo courtesy of Robert K. Brown



SADF troops captured these weapons: AK-47s, a G3, Mosin-Nagants (the old Russian bolt-action service rifle), clips of 7.62x39 cartridges and recoilless-rifle ammo in cases. Photo: Al J. Venter



Captured Russian PPSH SMG becomes small-arms lesson for members of Vietnamese MIKE Force team. Photo: 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne)





# TERRORISM

## SOF FEATURE

# DEATH IN THE AFTERNOON

Basque Separatists Wage Europe's  
Longest War

Text & Photos by Adrian Wecer



**T**HE young Basque terrorist walked out of the apartment house on Calle Reina Cristina, heading toward his car parked a short distance away. He froze in mid-stride, slapped a hand to the side of his head — as if he had just remembered something very important — and keeled over. He was dead before he hit the ground.

The bullet that killed him had been fired by a fellow terrorist, an old friend of his hidden in the lobby of the building he had just left. It punched through a plate-glass panel on the exit door, drilled into the back of his head, spun

**From ETA support to protest: Here hundreds of Basques march in anti-terror protest in Bilbao, Spain.**

**Basque nationalist flag marks doorway before which ETA gunman fell.**

around inside his skull a few times, and finally came to rest deep within the bloody mess that had once been his brain.

It happened at 7:45 in the morning, while dozens of people on their way to work casually watched from doorways and passing cars. Within seconds the lifeless body was dragged off the street





**LEFT: Hole left by bullet fired at radical ETA hold-out seen dead in photo sequence to right.**

into the back seat of a waiting automobile, which quickly drove off to dispose of it at some unknown location. But there was no need to hurry. None of the witnesses would have dared call the police to report the killing — not this one, anyway. And even if someone had, the authorities would certainly have taken their sweet time about coming out to investigate — if they decided to come at all. Getting involved in a settling of accounts between ETA gunmen did not exactly rate high on their list of choice duties.

The killing, which this reporter had been invited to watch and photograph from a nearby rooftop, took place several months ago in the Basque provincial capital of San Sebastián. To be sure, it was nothing more than murder, plain and simple. But it was also the single most important political development in Spain's struggle against Basque terrorism in the last 15 years. ETA had gone to war against itself.

Earlier interviews with Basque political leaders and ETA militants — including the two who later invited me to that rooftop on Reina Cristina — provide us with a fairly clear idea as to how this situation came about.

According to these knowledgeable sources, *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA Basque Country and Freedom), the ruthless left-wing underground organization that has been striving for Basque independence from Spain through a bloody campaign of terror launched in the late '60s, had suffered a series of political and military setbacks over the past two years which have deprived it of its leadership, eroded the vast popular support it once enjoyed, and invalidated any claim to a just political cause it may have had.

The first of these setbacks occurred early in 1982 when José Martín Sagar-día, ETA's top leader and principal strategist, was assassinated in a southern French sanctuary during a cross-border retaliatory raid conducted by members of an obscure extreme-rightist group known as *El Batallón Vasco Español* (the Spanish Basque Battalion). The subsequent capture and incarceration of his most trusted lieutenants by Spanish border police certainly didn't help matters any. It quickly transformed the organization from a highly disciplined urban-guerrilla movement, with brilliant military strategy and well-defined political goals, into a disorganized band of thugs desperately striking out at any target of opportunity for



**These pictures show aftermath of execution of incorrigible ETA assassin. Top to bottom: Tan car (right center) is faced against traffic as colleagues of sniper approach to confirm kill, three meters in front of left front bumper. Next, accomplices begin to drag body to car. Finally, dark sedan pulls up to pick up helpers after car carrying body has left for disposal site.**

mere publicity value. Given this situation, the second major setback was as predictable as it was unavoidable.

Horrified by the mindless slaughter that since June 1982 has claimed the lives of 14 military officers and more than 150 innocent bystanders, the Basque people began to deny ETA the unquestioned support they once offered so freely. The cities of Vitoria and Bilbao — alleged birthplace of ETA where militants were once openly paraded through the streets and hailed as heroes







— have since become staging areas for massive rallies denouncing the depredations of this terrorist group. Recent outrages such as the killing of a baker (for delivering bread to the families of policemen during a strike), and the kidnapping and cold-blooded execution of an Army pharmaceutical officer (after the government had already met their outrageous demands for his safe release) triggered a nationwide protest the likes of which had not been seen in Spain since the outbreak of the Civil War in 1936. Thousands of people marched through the streets of every major city in the country to denounce the murders and to demand from the government in Madrid nothing less than the total extermination of these rabid killers.

The third and potentially most damaging setback was a decision by the Madrid government to restore to the Basque provinces the political autonomy revoked by Generalísimo Francisco Franco during the Civil War.

In 1937, the second year of the war, Franco suppressed the self-governing powers of Guipúzcoa, Vizcaya and Alava — the three provinces that presently make up the Basque region. They were officially proclaimed “punished provinces” for having fiercely resisted the onslaught of his rebel armies. His hatred for the Basques was so intense that he even went so far as to forbid them the use of their native language, Eskuara. People were forbidden to teach this ancient language, or even speak it in the privacy of their own

### Wall graffiti reads “ETA Assassins” in city of San Sebastian, Spain.

homes. To ensure compliance, Franco’s political police often stopped Basque families on the street and questioned the children as to whether they had heard their parents speaking anything other than Spanish at home.

The Madrid decision to restore the rights of the local Basque government to levy and collect taxes, to establish its own police force, and to finance schools teaching the native language, met the home-rule demands of the moderate Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) which for years had been trying to undercut ETA and all other extremists who believe that political autonomy can be had only through the warm barrel of a gun.

From the time the decision was implemented in 1982, ETA tried to show

that it had not been seriously hurt by this or any other setback. More than anything else, it tried to show that it was still an armed political force that had to be reckoned with. Indeed, the ever-increasing number of indiscriminate killings attributed to the separatists in recent months, and the appalling savagery which has come to characterize all their actions, certainly gave that impression.

However, ETA defectors were telling a totally different story regarding the organization’s strength and capabilities. They described a terrorist organization that had been forced to plan and direct its “struggle for independence” from the relative safety of a foreign sanctuary due to the fear its “freedom fighters” had of being turned in or even killed by the very people whose cause they claimed to champion. The organization was so reduced in numbers by internal strife and mass defections that their last *Asamblea* — a kind of Revolutionary Congress convened by the entire membership of ETA every few years in order to discuss and evaluate past and future strategies — was held in a shepherd’s shack high up in the Pyrenees. Nothing larger was required, as only 47 militants showed up.

According to two former ETA gunmen who attended that *Asamblea*, a motion was presented to end hostilities if and when the Madrid government agreed to the following three conditions: first, that all “forces of occupation” such as transit patrolmen, national police, and all members of the *Guardia Civil* that normally patrol and protect Spain’s foreign borders, be recalled from the Basque region; second, that the Madrid decision to restore self-governing powers to the Basque provinces be amended in such a way as to acknowledge the right of the Basque people to eventually obtain their independence and secede from the Spanish Union; and third, that the neighboring

## BASQUE RESISTANCE

The history of Basque resistance to incorporation by neighboring national and ethnic groups is long and bloody. *The Song of Roland* tells of a treacherous attack on Charlemagne’s rearguard at Roncesvalles by the Moorish army. It’s a fabrication designed to save face for the French. Charlemagne’s rearguard got wiped out by the Basques.

The Basques live in the Pyrenees in the border regions of Spain and France. Rejecting both cultures, they hold to their own ancient ways.

Eskuara, their language, is unrelated to any other European language. The Basques probably represent the aboriginal population of Europe.

Basques have settled in the United States, especially in sheepherding and farming areas of the Northern Rocky Mountain states.

Aside from their successes against the Franks, the Basques also invaded and occupied Gascony in the 6th century, and have fought, usually enthusiastically, in every war in the area since then, especially in the Spanish Civil War and World War II.



province of Navarre be acknowledged as part of the future Basque nation.

"That last condition," remarked one of the former gunmen, "was like the Armed National Liberation Front of Puerto Rico (FALN) promising to end their campaign of terror bombings in America if only the U.S. government agreed to grant the islanders their independence and recognized their right to claim New York as part of the future island nation."

Of the total number of militants in attendance, the gunman recalled that 16 voiced their satisfaction with the gains already made by the PNV moderates and presented a counter-motion to end the armed struggle throughout Spain unconditionally. When their proposal was rejected, the group turned in their weapons and walked out. Another 12 also quit the gathering when their motion to abandon all attempts at a negotiated settlement in favor of escalating the violence was shouted down. This group did not turn in their weapons when they left. The remaining members, unable to get a consensus on their original motion, adjourned to their sanctuary in southern France where they now spend their time dodging cross-border raids by Spanish secret police and trying to figure out what went wrong with the revolution.

It is known that the dozen pro-violence extremists who quit the *Asamblea* are responsible for the current wave of indiscriminate killings sweeping over Spain. It is also known that their primary objective was, and still is, to provoke the Madrid government into declaring a state of national emergency and ordering a full-scale military intervention in the Basque provinces — a move that would discredit PNV efforts and reunite the general population behind their extremist cause. They came close to doing just that a couple of times — so close, in fact, that by the end of 1983 they were publicly proclaiming themselves rightful heirs to ETA's name and cause. They had also augmented their numbers by forging a loose alliance with a group of free-lance murderers who called themselves the "Autonomous Commandos of the Revolution," the ones who actually carried out the hits and placed the bombs.

"They are like a pack of wild dogs that have been turned loose on the streets of our cities," explained the gunman with obvious distaste. "Their senseless acts have made a mockery of our cause and have brought nothing but shame and sorrow to our people. Shooting an innocent man while his children beg for mercy on television is



**"Retired" ETA gunmen announce their satisfaction with gains of moderate nationalists, and pledge to neutralize the few renegades left.**

**Some ETA fundamentalists will not keep the new peace: They ambushed this patrol car outside Durango, Spain.**

not what this struggle is all about.

"We don't really know who these people are or what they stand for, but we do know who holds their leash . . . and we are going to stop them. That's a promise."

Early the next morning, standing on the roof of a building looking down on Calle Reina Cristina, I saw that same gunman fulfill the first part of his promise. ☒





SOF FEATURE

# BLOODY BELFAST

## Brits Hold the Line against the IRA

by David Mills & Rick Venable



**Business as usual:** Regular U.K. Army units reinforce police to keep "peace" in neighborhoods where every shop's security is better than a U.S. suburban bank's.

From harder cover, sharpshooters survey patrolled blocks with Trilux optical sights on LIAs.

**BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND —**

As we drove into the city from the airport, cold rain fell in an unrelenting drizzle. Belfast's buildings are low, old and dirty. So are many of the people: Diet is lousy here, unemployment fearfully high, and the commonest sport seems to be alcoholism. All take their toll.

An air of decay hung over everything. Graffiti proclaimed the virtues of the Irish Republican Army or — more common — that Johnny loves Mary. An occa-

sional Brit patrol drove through the ugly streets in armored trucks.

We were on our way to HQNI (Headquarters, Northern Ireland) but first managed to get thoroughly and professionally lost in the maze of rain-slick streets and crumbling buildings. At a vehicle checkpoint an Irish cop told us we were in bandit country. Here you can have a car hijacked by being in the wrong place.







# TERRORISM



Much-maligned "baton gun," Enfield's L67A1 Riot Gun saves lives by supplementing conventional small-arms fire in riots.

Belfast is a hardship post for soldiers who must expect attack from any quarter in what is largely a happy, prosperous, friendly population.

At HQNI, a press spokesman was at first not happy to see us. A little discussion revealed that numerous British newsmen had been visiting Northern Ireland and making it sound like a cross between Tet and the Normandy invasion. When it comes to sensationalism, Brit journalists seem to be even worse than Americans, which I had thought impossible.

The view of the British government, which happens to be perfectly correct, is that nothing very sensational is happening here. Life in most of the city is poor, cold, wet, grim, unpleasant — but all of these are, for Northern Ireland, normal. Except for an occasional patrol driving through, I saw little to indi-

cate that anything more serious than industrial decay was taking place.

Most of the trouble is concentrated in a few small areas, and even there not too much happens — usually. It is only the professional watchfulness of the Brits that keeps things calm. The IRA hasn't repented. It just can't get away with much these days — unless the Brits let their guard down.

We ducked quickly through the steel doors of a Brit position downtown. If you stand too long in the wrong place something, probably in .308, may happen. The bad guys know the Brits have to go through these doors and try to put snipers in positions to cover them.

Nine o'clock on a cold, dark morning. The outfit we were visiting was the Royal Regiment of Wales. Several men in combat gear were milling around the concrete courtyard, kidding with each other. I noticed this cheerfulness again and again: After months cooped up in fortresses, in god-awful weather, they remained alert and good-humored.

Armored vehicles stood dripping in the murk. Most were Humber one-ton trucks upgraded with armor. Rifles were the old L1A1 SLR (self-loading rifle) with two-power scopes. When we got out on patrol, I realized that for picking a sniper out of a

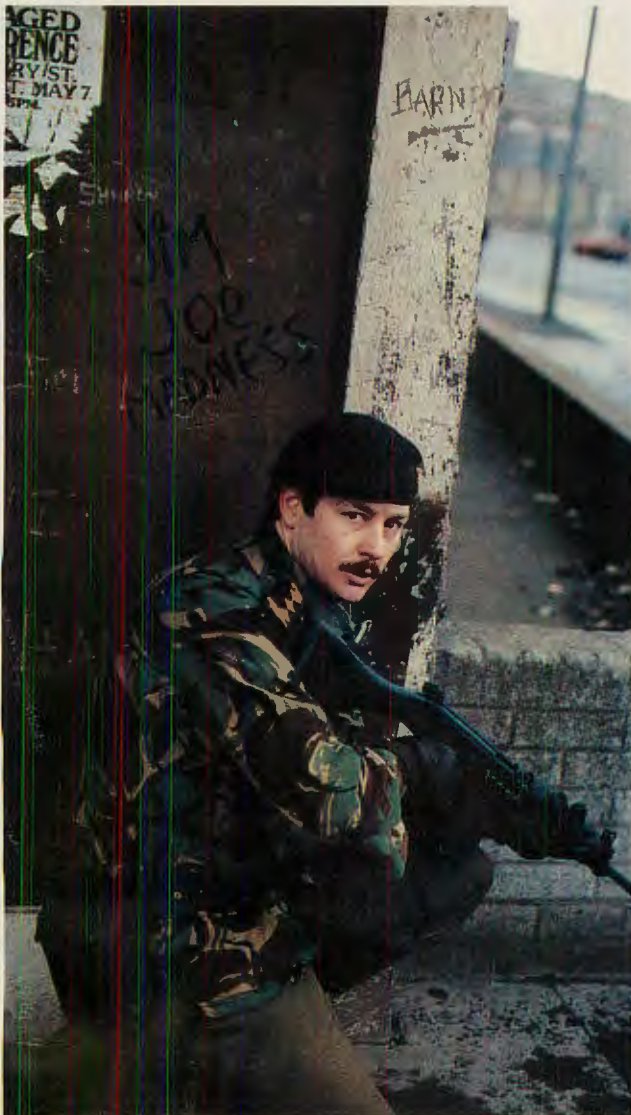
window at 300 meters, a long gun with glass sights rather than one of today's squat assault rifles was the right way to go.

We went into the duty room with our escort officer, a captain. The walls were covered with maps, and radios stood on tables. On the walls were several television monitors attached to cameras that could be pointed and zoomed to show what was going on outside. I won't detail what the Brits have in the way of surveillance and control, since I don't really know what information the bad guys might find useful.

A blond sergeant showed us the area we would patrol. He knew every inch of that map by heart, what kind of neighborhood each was, what had happened there recently, what the buildings were. These guys definitely know their business.

Another trooper explained, "The worst neighborhoods are the poorest ones. As soon as a neighborhood gets rebuilt and the people have decent houses, trouble seems to diminish. I think a lot of the problem here is that the economy is so bad."

After a cup of coffee we went down to the vehicles where the patrol was waiting. We climbed in, camera bags catching on everything. The heavy-steel rear doors clanged shut. The cab is armored with swing-down shutters. The two men in the rear of the troop compartment poked their rifles out the rear slits. I noticed they kept their



## BRITISH PHOTO-JOURNALIST

David Mills' British Army service has taken him all over the world: he has spent time in such diverse places as Oman, Northern Ireland and Belize in Central America. He is now working as a free-lance photo-journalist, specializing in military operations.

Mills has recently covered military exercises with the 10th Gurkha Rifles in Belize and military operations in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for SOF (see "The Pink Panther," page 54).



fingers on their triggers and a careful eye out the back. Unlike American forces, they don't fool around.

The engines cranked up, and we pulled into traffic. Having been on patrol with the Marines in Beirut some months earlier (see "Marines in the Middle," SOF, November '83), I found myself carefully watching cars that pulled up behind us. I saw two important differences:

While the Marines patrolled in open jeeps, the Brits stay behind armor — and cars behind us were looking into the barrels of two rifles.

When the Brits took to the streets in Northern Ireland in 1969, their street-patrol and riot-control tac-



**Careful to bow to the Church during U.S. fund-raising tours, IRA hoists its communist colors at home.**

## HIDDEN LINKS

The IRA: Just the initials bring to mind the quintessential terrorist organization — responsible for the murders of hundreds of people, many of whom were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Car bombs in front of busy department stores, midnight knocks at the door, masked men who nonchalantly knock off those whose loyalty is suspected, weapons caches, ties with organized crime and huge hauls of smuggled weapons intercepted on their way either in or out of Ireland.

The IRA didn't start out this way, of course. At the beginning of this century an Irish nationalist movement called Sinn Fein (we, ourselves) was founded. It wasn't powerful at first, advocating passive resistance to things English, but after World War I opposition to Ireland's dominion status grew. In 1916 Michael Collins organized remnants of rebel units of the Irish Volunteers into the Irish Republican Army, a military wing of the Sinn Fein. The British countered acts of IRA terrorism by sending in military irregulars known as the Black and Tans, which enraged the populace, and hundreds of supporters flocked to Sinn Fein and the IRA.

The Irish Republican Army was the stuff legends are made of. Intellectuals (Yeats and O'Casey) and movies (*The Informer*) immortalized the struggle, and fundraisers convinced supporters of a free Ireland to donate millions of dollars to the cause. Southern Ireland received its independence from England in 1922, but the IRA continued to fight the division of north and south. Popular and effective at first, the IRA gradually lost public support because of its violence and pro-German agitation during WWII, and was officially outlawed on both sides of the border. Although its members continued sporadic terrorist acts, it wasn't until the late '60s that they again burst into headlines. And this time it definitely wasn't the IRA of Yeats.

In 1969 the IRA split into two groups: the majority "officials," who advocated a united socialist Ireland but publicly disavowed terrorist activities, and the minority "Provisionals" (or Provos), who claimed terrorism as necessary for unification.

The Official IRA was closely related to the Russians. It endorsed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and openly demanded a "National Liberation Front for an Irish Socialist Republic" allied with the Soviet Union. When Northern Ireland started heating up in 1969, the Soviet Central Committee set up channels of regular contact with the Official IRA, through the British and Irish Communist Parties, but the Soviets weren't ready to publicly support terrorism in Great Britain.

So it was the Provos who went in search of arms. The Provos privately criticized the Officials as a bunch of com-

munist who wouldn't fight, but they didn't talk about their differences with the Official IRA when they went fundraising — those heading for America had orders to "make copious references to the martyrs of 1915 and 1920-22 . . . the potato famine and the Black and Tans . . . By no means should anything be said against the Church" (according to former-Provo Maria McGuire's IRA autobiography *To Take Arms*). The 15 million Irish-Americans who donated money to the Provisional IRA's war were told that the Ireland the Provos were fighting for would be free and united.

What they didn't know was that the Provisional IRA was rapidly becoming a member of a "Terrorist Multinational" which would fight against not only divided Ireland, but against capitalism in all of the Western World.

Though the Soviets were linked with the Official IRA, behind the scenes they were making arms available to the more radical Provos. In 1971 a Provo shipment of arms from Czechoslovakia was seized at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport. The shipment, which originated at Omonopol, a Prague arms factory run by Czech Security Service and tightly controlled by KGB, included 166 crates carrying 4.5 tons of bazookas, rocket launchers, hand grenades, guns and ammo.

During the '70s the Provisional IRA became more and more powerful. The Official IRA became distrustful of hotheads, and in the spring of 1972 declared a unilateral cease-fire and dropped out of the terrorist game. This suited the Soviets, who did not want their name linked publicly with the ever more radical Provisional terrorists.

The Official IRA was splintered further when Seamus Costello led his own group out to form the Irish Republican Socialist Party and its military arm, the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) in 1974. The INLA is now one of the most ferocious of all the splinter groups of the IRA.

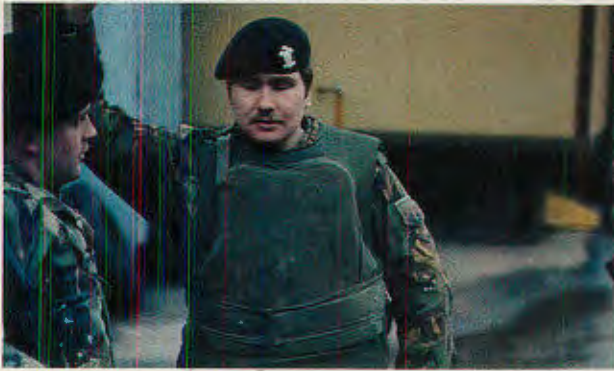
Today the IRA — in the broadest sense — has contacts with terrorists all over the world. IRA terrorists have been trained in South Yemen under Cuban and East German instructors. Although the Soviets do not officially support them, they have made arms available to them through the international terrorist network.

It seems that each group thinks it is using the other. The Provisional IRA will accept arms from any source. There is evidence they have accepted arms from Libya's Col. Khadafi and the Vietnamese, and the Soviets are certainly happy that someone is doing their work for them throughout the West, not just in Ireland and Britain.

An *Phoblacht*, the Provos' journal, has proclaimed, "The Irish Republican Movement has shown that it is not just insular and inward-looking. It is spreading its wings worldwide."  
— S. Max



# TERRORISM



Body armor is fashionable in some parts of Belfast.

Potting unarmed cops is a favorite sport of IRA terrorists: Royal Welsh trooper guards policeman's back during process-serving.



tics were more appropriate for a Gilbert and Sullivan opera than modern civil disorder. Platoon-sized squads patrolled in a box formation which protected a justice of the peace, a photographer, a reporter and a pair of banner carriers. When the squad met a mob, the unit commander hailed them through a loudspeaker, ordering them to disperse. The banner carriers held up their placard so that the side reading, "Disperse or we will use gas," faced the crowd. Then the justice read the

Terrorists are no respecters of life, peace, commerce or their countrymen's well-being: Public servants need protection even in public markets.

riot act, and the photographer and reporter began to record the developing incident.

Squad troops were equipped with riot shields, batons and standard weapons (SLRs). If the rioters were merely throwing garbage or stones, the British were too gentlemanly to fire warning shots. Only if the crowd grew uglier the commander would order the front rank of his squad to take up firing positions. First, however, he pointed out the ringleaders and had the banner men reverse their placard: "Disperse or we will fire."

If this stunning display of force didn't work, the commander identified a specific target and ordered the men of the front rank to each fire a single shot. And it was truly a single shot — all weapons but one were loaded with blanks. (This practice was supposed to prevent identification of the shooter.) The file then ejected the spent cases. The theory held that the crowd would then disperse.

Naturally, these patrols became popular targets for snipers who took cover behind the crowd and vanished after firing at the squad. But the British soon became streetwise and developed the tactic of "satellite" patrols, as I discovered



when we reached the patrol area.

We piled out of the vehicles — 20 soldiers and one lone cop from the RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary). The cop was important. Because the British were uncomfortable with military rule in Northern Ireland, they restored civilian government as soon as possible. Therefore the cop was at least formally in charge here. The soldiers were to protect him as he went about his ordinary duties: handing out parking tickets, rescuing cats, delivering summonses. And that's what he did. It takes guts to be a cop here. Policemen don't live in fortified positions. And they are vulnerable to attack at home.

The way a patrol works is this: The 20 troops divide into five "bricks" of four men each, all linked by radio. The command or primary brick walks the cop's beat with him, keeping him in the middle, while the other four bricks form a multi-brick which patrols a block away. These satellite patrols protect the central one and, in practice, a sniper can't get

off more than a couple of shots before the patrols have sealed off the area. The multi-brick also protects each unit from snipers when crossing intersections. In south Armagh the troops patrol on the double along preplanned but apparently random routes in which they have worked out exactly where each man will take up his firing position to protect the others when crossing open areas and intersections.

Bricks are usually commanded by corporals. In fact, Northern Ireland has been called the corporal's war. The CO can also call up some "piglets" — armored Land Rovers — to surround his brick. "A ring of steel," as one officer called it.

The neighborhood we were patrolling was grim — blocks of flats with windows, warehouses with windows, high-rises with windows, commercial buildings with windows. You notice which windows are open. People wandered





by, barely looking at us. We looked at them — carefully.

Fortunately the IRA is more vicious than courageous. An Iranian

nutball would walk up and blow a trooper away, but the IRA is afraid of getting caught. They tend to go for soft targets — off-duty cops at home, for example. The doorbell rings, the guy opens it, and blam, he's dying in front of the TV

with his kids watching. If you have any romantic ideas about the IRA, forget them.

The day was drizzly, the light bad. The bricks fanned out to take their positions, each man staying well apart from his buddies. They wore flak-jackets. I took out my bright-blue, very un-military shirt tail and tried to look conspicuously like a gringo photographer. I wish these guys well, but it's their war.

They fight it well. The men never bunched up. They stayed alert, squatted behind cover whenever it was possible, and kept an eye on the windows. This is a mark of good troops. Staying careful is easy when you are getting shot at a lot. The hard thing is staying careful week after week, month after month, when nothing much happens. You get a little bored, a little slack. Then comes that hypersonic

crack, and somebody bleeds to death on the way to the hospital.

We came to a warehouse with several rough-looking characters standing around. They didn't like it when our patrol approached them to check them out, nor did they like our cameras. Well, nobody promised them a rose garden. The troops were courteous enough, and I suspect they would have been even without press around.

The real danger here is bombs. The bad guys will plan a command-detonated bomb and wait for a patrol to come by. The Brits do enough patrolling in the same areas that sooner or later they are likely to go by the wrong place. Boom! Further, the bomb is likely to be detonated from out of sight.

*Continued on page 89*

## DEFENDING NORTHERN IRELAND

The men of eight British Army battalions and the Ulster Defense Regiment are on patrol every day in the six counties of Northern Ireland and its capital, Belfast.

The British battalions are divided into two brigade areas, 39 Brigade at Lisburn and 8 Brigade in Londonderry. There are six resident infantry battalions on two-year tours of duty. The Roulement battalions, whose tour is 4½ months, are based in West Belfast and South Armagh. The average British soldier works about 100 hours per week.

The 7,000-member UDR is the largest regiment in the British Army (see "On Northern Ireland's Front Line," SOF, August '81). Its duty would be tough for any line regiment, but 4,000 of its soldiers are part-timers who don their uniforms after finishing their regular jobs. Created in 1970, today's UDR is 98-percent Protestant; 10-percent are women, called Greenfinches from their original radio code-name.

The Army has a 300-mile border with the Republic of Eire to patrol, but there is no direct army-to-army communication between the Brits and the government of Eire. The Royal Ulster Constabulary has been responsible for law and order for the last four years which, in effect, means that the police now plan all patrol activity, vehicle checkpoints and operations such as arms searches. The official title for this military-police cooperation is framework activity.

Some of the troops on the ground criticize this hierarchy, declaring that the police do not actually patrol a district, but merely enter it under heavy escort to perform civilian duties like delivering traffic fines. British troops also charge that the RUC is soft on offenders charged with

drinking and driving or road-tax evasion, claiming that the police don't want to offend the locals.

In what is known as bandit country in South Armagh, all troop movement is by helicopter or heavily armored convoy. Soldiers are armed with Armalites, shotguns and SLRs. The IRA gunmen in this part of the world are skilled in the use of concealment. They plan their operations down to the last detail, often studying their target for days. Therefore, many Army operations are covert. Small groups may lay up for days and observe areas thought to be centers of terrorist activity. South Armagh has accounted for most of the British casualties.

In recent years the nature of the war in Northern Ireland has changed. In the early '70s most terrorists lived in their area of operations. Local people were sympathetic to them. They left their doors open at night in order to help gunmen escape and to illuminate passing street patrols. They also whitewashed the bricks of their row houses so patrols would be silhouetted against them.

Now, however, the gunmen are strangers, coming in from the border for a specific operation. This facelessness has led to a change of tactics with command-detonated bombing. Before, the sapper had visual contact with his concealed bomb so he could detonate it by radio or wire when he saw his target — whether patrol or vehicle — passing. Now the bomber works well away from the target area and detonates the explosive on visual signals from others. Since there may be as many as three people in the chain from the bomb site to the detonator, it's now more likely that innocent bystanders will be injured when the bomb goes off.

Both soldiers and civilians in Northern Ireland must be constantly alert. —David Mills



# THE ULTIMATE ARMORY

## Enfield Pattern Room Traces Military Small-Arms History

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



UPON table after table, in rows of rows, on racks from floor to ceiling, there was no end to the weapons. Bren guns marched into infinity. My connoisseur's brain aches from visual images of more than 5,000 different military firearms under one roof. I am in the Enfield Pattern Room, which houses the largest collection of modern military small arms in the world.

As I casually examined the MkI Bren factory cut-away in the reception lounge, waiting to be greeted by Pattern Room custodian Herbert Woodend, I could not anticipate how stunned I would be by the lower-floor exhibit area. Hundreds of mounted machine guns, from Gatling's serial no. 1 to the latest L7A2 GPMG stand as mute, yet powerful, testimony that man has always channeled his greatest ingenuity into his most obsessive pastime — the killing of his fellows.

The Pattern Room received its name from the early practice of selecting a perfect specimen of every adopted weapon to serve as the ultimate reference for subsequent manufacture, since drawings and specifications were not sufficiently detailed in those days. These sample weapons, which carried official red wax seals, were called Sealed Patterns. Surviving examples of Sealed Pattern guns exist from as early as 1720 and the act of physically sealing newly adopted small arms did not cease until the 1920s.

Originally all Sealed Patterns were stored at the Tower of London. However, after a fire there in 1841, the Royal Small Arms Factory (RSAF) at Enfield Lock assumed responsibility for the fabrication and storage of all small-arms patterns. The Pattern Room itself was established around 1850.

The Pattern Room's *raison d'être* began to change at the turn of the century, when — during the Boer War — large quantities of captured foreign weapons were added to the collection. Since then the Pattern Room has kept up-to-date with worldwide small-arms developments and has become a renowned reference for small-arms technologists and researchers, in addition to its purely historical function. Weapons are also loaned to British service personnel (such as the SAS) for proficiency training. Although the Pattern Room is not open to the general public, those conducting legitimate research can obtain limited access to the collection by writing PQE/QAD (Ordnance), The Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, Middlesex EN3 6JL, England, well in advance of their anticipated visit.

However impressive, the Pattern Room represents a small portion of small-arms activities at Enfield Lock. In all too short a time I was dragged away to the ranges where I was to test-fire samples of the RSAF's product line.

**Arms for a small army: Enfield Pattern Room saves thousands of examples of modern small arms for record, research or special training.**

**Brens without end: display encompasses complete run from Czech 7.92 ZB26 to 7.62 NATO L4.**





Perfect samples of hundreds of modern assault rifles fill Pattern Room racks.

Twin German MG34s in unusual AA mount.

Vickers MMG with elevator mount and extended trigger fired from WWI trenches without exposing gunners.



British fascination with bullpup designs dates back to 1902 when a prototype rifle in this configuration, invented by J.B. Thorneycroft, was submitted to the War Office for test by the Small Arms Committee. The magazine was behind the trigger and the barrel extended further rearward than on a normal bolt-action rifle. Lock-up was by means of an interrupted thread and the bolt handle was a flat bar which rested flush with the stock when closed. Performance was unsatisfactory and in 1903 Thorneycroft — together with the well-known arms designer, M.G. Farquhar — redesigned the rifle, using a shorter bolt with two conventional locking lugs. The rear of the bolt, on the specimen I examined, was covered by an odd cheek-piece which moved with the bolt. The buttstock featured two pistol grips, the rear grip being designed for bayonet fighting. Other models followed, but none were adopted.

In 1944 work commenced at Enfield on a new bolt-action sniper rifle called the S.R.E.M. 1 (Sniper Rifle Experimental Model I); which was also a bullpup. The bolt traveled rearward in a housing which declined 12 degrees from the bore's axis. Increasing emphasis on self-loaders halted further development.

The EM 2 followed, but it and its admirable 7mm cartridge were doomed by power politics. The British adopted, under con-





siderable pressure, the Belgian FN FAL rifle and the U.S. 7.62mm round.

Tenacious people that they are, the English revived the bullpup once more with the Enfield Weapon System (EWS), originally chambered in another so-called dream caliber, the 4.85x49mm. During the NATO Standardization Trials of the late '70s, this caliber was dropped and the system rechambered for the 5.56mm M193 cartridge. With NATO standardization of the Belgian SS109 ammunition, the EWS was once again rebarreled to accommodate this round.

The EWS comprises two weapons, the Individual Weapon (IW), known presently as the XL70E3, and the Light Support Weapon (LSW), or XL73E2, conceived as a Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW). It was the former rifle that I fired, and a thoroughly robust and innovative weapon it is — rumors to the contrary.

The IW is gas-operated and has a three-position gas regulator with a normal setting, a larger opening for fouled conditions and a closed position for grenade launching. The piston and bolt mechanism is that of the Armalite AR 18. The rotary bolt locks on lugs in a barrel extension welded to the receiver body behind the breech. Since the trigger is in front of the magazine well, a long bar is used to connect it to the sear, as in the Finnish Valmet M76 bullpup. While the barrel length is 20.4 inches, overall length of the IW is only 30.3 inches. Weight of the IW, empty, but with the optical sight, is 8.2 lbs. (The SUSAT scope weighs 1.3 pounds.)

Modern construction methods are used throughout and the receiver is a welded-sheet-metal stamping. Cost-effective mass-production techniques and ease of maintenance and disassembly have been stressed in the EWS. Only the bolt, its carrier and the barrel are machined. Furniture is made of olive-drab, high-impact plastic. The issue sight is the 4X SUSAT scope, which is a further evolution of the Canadian Leitz Tri-lux used on Commonwealth SLRs (FALs). Range and zero adjustments are incorporated in the scope's mount.

Iron sights are strictly secondary and consist of a rear sight stowed in the carrying handle and a small front-sight blade on the gas block. It is intended that rear-echelon personnel will be issued IWs with iron sights only. The SUSAT scope is a pretty sophisticated piece of equipment and there can be no doubt that its adoption will increase weapon cost significantly.

The EWS is a classic example of an evolving series of small-arms prototypes. Now ready to be fielded by the British Army — after its incubation almost a decade ago — the EWS features a raft of improvements in addition to the caliber changes. The receiver has been simplified, flash hider altered, ejection cover streamlined, new trigger mechanism installed, magazine well adapted to accept M16-type magazines and the bolt-release combined with a hold-open device. Safety catch, magazine catch, change lever and extractor have been rede-



Hundreds of square feet of mounted MGs stand in rank.

Venerable British Vickers in elaborate twin AA mount.



signed. A new forearm has been permanently fitted, simplified iron sights added, the optical sight and its base modified, and minor changes made to the indexing of the gas settings and the trigger-housing shape. Finally, the ESW has been equipped with a more effective bipod (offering greater stability and articulation) and a new hammerless rear sear mechanism.



Swedish 6.5mm Model 36 Browning was capable of accurate indirect fire in this complex mount.



Maxim MGs from several nations on sled and wheeled mounts.

The Individual Weapon I fired was the latest model — probably the final preproduction specimen. Although it was disconcerting at first to see empty cases ejecting a few millimeters away from one's eye, the IW is an impressive piece of ordnance. Target acquisition with the massive combat post of the 4X SUSAT scope is faster than with any other system I have encountered. Using the Radway Green Arsenal ammunition provided, no stoppages of any kind were incurred.

Compact and well-balanced, the IW boasts a high hit probability and no felt





recoil. The cyclic rate appeared to be about 750 rpm, and experienced operators will have no trouble consistently ticking off 2-3-round bursts in full-auto fire. If any rifle will erase the stigma from military bullpup designs, it will be this Enfield. My reservations stand, however, concerning the Light Support Weapon because it has no quick-change barrel or belt-fed capability.

The British ended WWII with the Vickers as their sustained-fire medium machine gun and the Bren as a squad automatic. Both were chambered for the .303 cartridge. After the .280 project died in 1952, Enfield developed the X11E2 machine gun in 7.62mm NATO. It was essentially a Bren gun converted to belt feed with the piston operating the feed mechanism. Trials began in 1957 and the contenders included this highly modified Bren, the FN MAG, the U.S. M60, the French AAT 52, the Danish Madsen-Saetter, and two Swiss SIG designs. The X11E2 and the FN MAG made the best showing, but by 1958 the X11E2 was abandoned because the feed system performed marginally under adverse conditions. Final adoption of the FN MAG took place in 1961 after the piston and locking lever were modified.

The first 1,500 weapons were produced for the British by FN. By the end of 1963 RSAF started production under license. The gun was originally intended to be fielded with a stellite-lined heavy barrel for the sustained-fire role and a light barrel for section use. However, tolerance problems caused the liners to fail after prolonged firing and the stellite project was forsaken in

**SOF's Kokalis fires new Brit infantry rifle: the Enfield Individual Weapon (IW) at Royal Small Arms Factory.**

**Author fires L7A2 GPMG, version of FN MAG produced at Enfield.**

favor of chrome-plating.

Originally known as the L7A1, the designation was changed to L7A2 after an additional safety bent was added to the sear, two-section pawls for better alignment were installed on the feed mechanism, and a 50-rd. assault pack was adopted.

The L7A2 I fired was right off the production line and had a black-plastic buttstock and carrying handle. Functioning was indistinguishable from that of my FN MAG, although parts are not interchangeable. Operation was flawless, as I would expect from the world's finest GPMG chambered for the 7.62mm NATO round.

The only major criticism that can be leveled against the FN MAG/L7A2 is that at 24 lbs., it's a bit on the heavy side. And, in fact, many British troops still prefer the lighter (21 lbs.), magazine-fed Bren gun (Royal Marine Commandos used L4 series Brens with great effect during the Falklands campaign). RSAF still offers conversion of the Bren to caliber 7.62mm NATO. The L4A4 Bren conversion features a new barrel with an improved flash hider, modified magazine well with 30-rd. magazines (interchangeable with 20-rd. Commonwealth FAL magazines), replacement magazine catch, ejector block, bolt, extractor and rear sight, numerous modifications to the receiv-

er, bipod sleeve cover (to shield the gas cylinder ports) and, naturally, a coat of Enfield's famous black paint.

ARWEN 37 (Anti-Riot Weapon Enfield, 37mm) is RSAF's clever response to the British Army's requirement during the late 1970s for a multiple-shot replacement to the modified single-shot 37mm flare projector used to propel plastic batons ("rubber bullets" to the media) at Irish troublemakers.

Due to cuts in defense spending, the weapon's priority dropped and Enfield was forced to continue development as a private venture. Their efforts have now paid off in a system loaded with potential. The ARWEN 37 is a five-shot launcher with more than a few ingenious technical features. Loosely based on the revolver principle, use of extremely low chamber pressure obviates the requirement for supporting cylinders, and the rebated rimless case (the extracting rim is smaller than the case diameter) relies solely on its own inherent strength to avoid rupture.

In essence, the ARWEN is a pair of tandem-mounted tubes with an open cylinder in between. The front tube is the five-groove rifled barrel and the rear tube holds the bolt group and the adjustable buttstock assembly with the trigger mechanism and pistol grip underneath. Upon pulling the trigger, the bolt is driven forward and pushes the cartridge mouth against the rear of the barrel in a manner reminiscent of the Russian Nagant Gas Check revolver. At this moment, should the operator decide to abort, he merely relaxes pressure on the trigger and everything goes back to square



one. Further pressure locks the bolt and the cartridge is fired. Release of the trigger unlocks the bolt and an indexing catch forces the open cylinder to rotate, ejecting the empty case and placing the next round in alignment with the barrel. Like the rotary

magazine of the Johnson M1941 rifle, the open cylinder can be topped-off with fresh cartridges at any time.

Use of high-impact plastic and light alloys throughout has kept the ARWEN's weight to only 6.8 lbs., empty, and 8.4 lbs.,

loaded. The stock has six adjustable positions, so the length varies from 30 inches to 33 inches. Because of the in-line stock and low chamber pressure of the round, felt recoil is negligible: far less than that of the U.S. M79 40mm grenade launcher.

## IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM — BEDLAM REIGNS

The Imperial War Museum: two 15-inch naval guns guard a former lunatic asylum. Only in England would such a juxtaposition and unspoken commentary on man's ultimate insanity (more than 100 million people have died as a direct result of warfare in the last 200 years) be possible. The building housing the museum was formerly the Hospital of Saint Mary of Bethlehem (or "Bedlam"), which began to care for mental patients in the 14th century.

The museum was founded in 1917 to collect and display material relating to World War I, which was still being fought. Since then, the museum's frame of reference has been expanded to include both world wars and all other military operations Great Britain has been involved in since 1914. This is the period Winston Churchill called the "Age of Violence."

The centerpiece of the museum's public galleries is the War Exhibition, which chronicles the changing nature of warfare over the past 200 years. World War I remains a principal theme and the guns that fired the first British shells of the war at sea (a four-inch gun from the destroyer HMS *Lance*) and on land (a 13-pounder from E Battery, Royal Horse Artillery) are on display.

In the static environment of WWI trench warfare, the machine gun ruled supreme, as its defensive capability was crucial. The famous German Maxim and British Lewis and Vickers guns can be seen along with full-size reconstructions of a British trench, officer's dugout and regimental aid station. The devilish weapons of trench fighting are also displayed: knives, clubs, brass-knuckle daggers and a German crossbow used as a grenade launcher.

Massive artillery bombardments and poison gas were extensively employed in attempts to end the stalemate. Nearly 100 million rounds of 18-pounder ammunition were fired on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918 — an average of 43 rounds for every minute of the war! A full range of British, French and German artillery pieces is shown. Other intriguing World War I exhibits include Lawrence of Arabia's Lee-Enfield rifle and the engine salvaged from the wreckage of the Fokker D7I triplane Baron Manfred von Richthofen piloted to his death.

Second World War exhibits are equal-



Formerly a madhouse, the Imperial War Museum holds spoils of war and collections for scholars.



Model of ANZAC soldier sports complete uniform and kit.



Representation of Sikh soldier in service of the British Empire.

ly exciting. German *Vergeltungswaffen* (V1 and V2 rockets), weapons and equipment of the Resistance fighters and Allied agents, reconstructions of a Japanese pillbox, the cockpit section of a Mitsubishi Zero-Sen A6M5 fighter, British MKII "Matilda" and U.S. M4 Sherman tanks, British Halifax, Lancaster, Mosquito and Spitfire MK IA aircraft, German Focke-Wulf 190 and Heinkel 162 fighters, a German one-man Biber submarine and Field Marshal Montgomery's HQ caravans highlight this period of the museum's collection.

Warfare since 1945 is illustrated by displays of the uniforms, weapons and insignia of the Korean and Arab-Israeli wars, guerrilla weapons from the spears and home-made guns of Kenya's Mau Mau to Kalashnikovs and RPG-7s, a tableau of a U.S. "search-and-destroy" operation in Vietnam and a reconstruction of a typical VC tunnel network.

All in all, there is enough here to keep you busy for at least a day. Access to specific items in the reserve exhibits not on display is by prior arrangement only. This could keep a serious researcher down in the museum's musty basements for years, climbing over piles of small arms including submachine guns that belonged to King George VI and Sir Winston Churchill, an MP44 *mit Krummlauf* (curved barrel), one of Maxim's first machine guns which incorporated a variable cyclic rate, the famous MP40 with dual-feed assembly and hundreds of other rarities — many of which are stacked in bins like cord wood.

The Imperial War Museum also houses one of the largest military movie, still-photography and book archives in the world. If this isn't enough for you, the museum offers the HMS *Belfast*, one of the largest cruisers ever built for the Royal Navy, on public display at its moorings opposite the Tower of London. Finally, the museum operates Duxford Airfield, a former Battle of Britain fighter station near Cambridge, which houses 80 military and civilian aircraft as well as many other exhibits ranging from armored fighting vehicles to a gigantic 9.2-inch coastal gun.

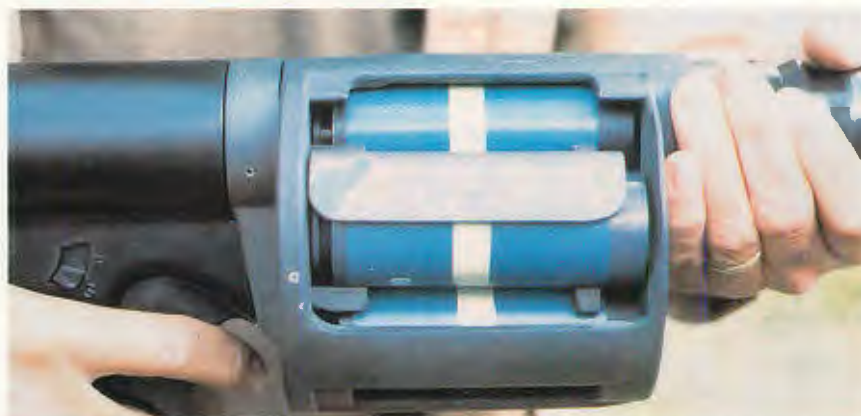
The Imperial War Museum is located on Lambeth Road in London. It's open seven days a week and closed only for holidays like Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday and, of course, Boxing Day (Brits exchange gifts the first weekday after Christmas). Admission is free and it's a *must* stop for any visitor to this tight little island who is interested in military affairs. — Peter G. Kokalis



I fired the current cartridge line-up which includes the plastic baton round, a CS/pyrotechnic cartridge which discharges a plastic sleeve containing four CS canisters that disperse downrange, a frangible projectile that releases its micronised CS charge upon impact with the target, and a practice round. Hit probability up to 100 meters was excellent and certainly meets the 80-percent stipulated specification. Although public prejudice and pressure in the United States would never allow use of the plastic baton load, the ARWEN and its other cartridges should enjoy justified popularity with law-enforcement agencies in this country. The U.S. representative for the ARWEN is Sage International, Ltd. (Dept. SOF, 1856 Star-Batt Drive, Rochester, MI 48063).

Personally, I am more intrigued, however, by the ARWEN's military potential. An

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Eagerly anticipating development of HE round, Military Small Arms Editor Kokalis fires ARWEN 37 anti-riot weapon. **RIGHT:** ARWEN's open cylinder holds five shells and can be topped off at any time. **BELOW:** Rare and infamous M91 tripod mounts early M60. **BOTTOM:** WWI BSA Lewis Gun with spade grip and proto type large-capacity magazine mounted by means of adaptor to Vickers tripod.



HE/fragmentation round is under development. Combined with an appropriate spread of smoke, signal and illuminating rounds, the ARWEN could be a serious contender in an area that has recently seen renewed interest by infantry-weapons technologists and tacticians.

RSAF Enfield is one of the most respected small-arms manufacturing facilities in the world. They can bore barrels from 5mm to 30mm in diameter up to 10 ft. long, spit out a G3 barrel every two minutes, precision-cast (using the lost-wax technique), metal-finish, heat-treat, chrome-plate, anodize, seal quench and produce complex contoured components at high volume. In short, RSAF Enfield can do all that's needed to produce a product line that, in addition to the above-mentioned items, includes a 51mm mortar, the L1A1 Self-Loading Rifle (FAL), the Aden 30mm aircraft cannon, the 30mm Rarden gun for combat vehicles, the Enforcer 7.62mm NATO sniper rifle (based on the No.4 action) and such sundries as anti-riot helmets and blank-firing attachments. In addition, they are the European distributors of the Hughes EX-34 7.62mm NATO Chain Gun and now manufacture certain components, under license, for Heckler & Koch G3 rifles and MP5 submachine guns.

Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, is a class act. They've been in business for a long time. Their products have been battle-tested throughout the world and have rarely been found wanting. They will undoubtedly continue to meet the challenges of modern infantry warfare for a long time to come. ✕



**P**INK would be a bad color for Marine or Special Forces patrol vehicles: There would be a mutiny. But the Special Air Service (SAS) — legendary for innovation — has deployed a whole family of pink-painted vehicles.

Land Rovers modified by SAS mechanics were painted a delicate fuchsia-tinted pink before issue. This pink paint was developed in the '40s by DuPont for the U.S. Army Air Force to camouflage vehicles on the ground in the African desert from air reconnaissance and attack. The nickname of these vehicles — Pink Panther — comes from their distinctive color as well as from the famous cartoon character.

The SAS itself was also born during WWII's desert war. It was formed in Egypt in 1942, the brainchild of the now-legendary David Stirling, who was then a subaltern of the Scots Guards. Stirling envisioned small parties of raiders striking deep behind enemy lines, disrupting communications and destroying aircraft and supply dumps. Dropped by parachute, the men would move on foot to their targets, attack and then link up with reconnaissance patrols of the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG). However, the first raid went disastrously wrong due to adverse weather, which scattered the raiding party and left a number injured and missing.

The ever-resourceful Stirling then managed to acquire several U.S.-made jeeps, which became available in 1942, fitting them with machine guns front and rear. These vehicles were used with devastating success against airfields and installations in Africa. After D Day they were used in Europe in a reconnaissance role, linking up with resistance groups and operating in advance of the main Allied armies to give mobility to small teams of SAS soldiers, who organized vital sabotage and intelligence-gathering missions.

These units used Land Rovers modified by SAS mechanics. In the mid-50s a trial Land Rover (short wheelbase) was fitted with twin Vickers-Berthier aircraft MGs on the front and a .30 Browning MG on the rear. It carried a bazooka as a crew weapon, but the design was not adopted. In the mid-60s when hostilities in the Arabian Gulf flared up, the need for a standardized SAS vehicle was again recognized.

In 1964 the SAS drafted a set of requirements — the result of studies and field experience — to convert the MK9 Land Rover to an SAS Pink Panther. In Britain the development of fighting vehicles is vested in the Fighting Vehicle Research Division Establishment (FVRDE). SAS-adapted Pink



## **SOF ARMOR**

# **THE PINK PANTHER**

## **SAS Patrol Vehicle Puts Claws in Desert Ops**

**Text & Photos by David Mills**

Panthers had been overloaded as a matter of SOP, due to the nature of their operations. So FVRDE took the SAS recommendations and concentrated on reducing weight without sacrificing user requirements.

A vehicle design was formally adopted in 1967, and the first of 76 vehicles were delivered in 1969. Apart from minor modifications for the different operation theaters, the vehicles were identical. Some idea of the attention to detail given by the planners can be seen from the official de-

scription of the vehicle.

The Pink Panther is a three-quarter-ton Land Rover MK9 (later MK11) with a long wheelbase. The aluminum body is fitted with armament, pyrotechnics, navigation and camping equipment for extended operations. Standard equipment includes two L7A2 GPMGs, a Carl Gustaf antitank weapon, L1A1 Self-Loading Rifles (FALs) fitted in scabbards on the front wings (fenders), three two-compartment grenade holders, four sets of three

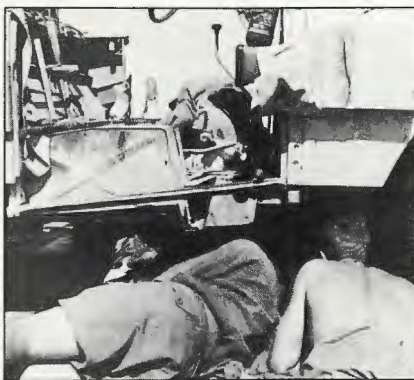




Believe it or not: This was DuPont's idea of desert camouflage during WWII, applied to most-recent-issue SAS Land Rover.

Long-range patrollers work on temporarily disabled Rover in Iran in the early '70s. SAS affiliation betrayed by round weapons holster attached to front fender.

Mk3 short-wheelbase Land Rover in SAS dress: Late '50s version bristled with Browning 1919 A4, twin Vickers-Berthier aircraft MGs and a Bren.



smoke dischargers and a signal pistol.

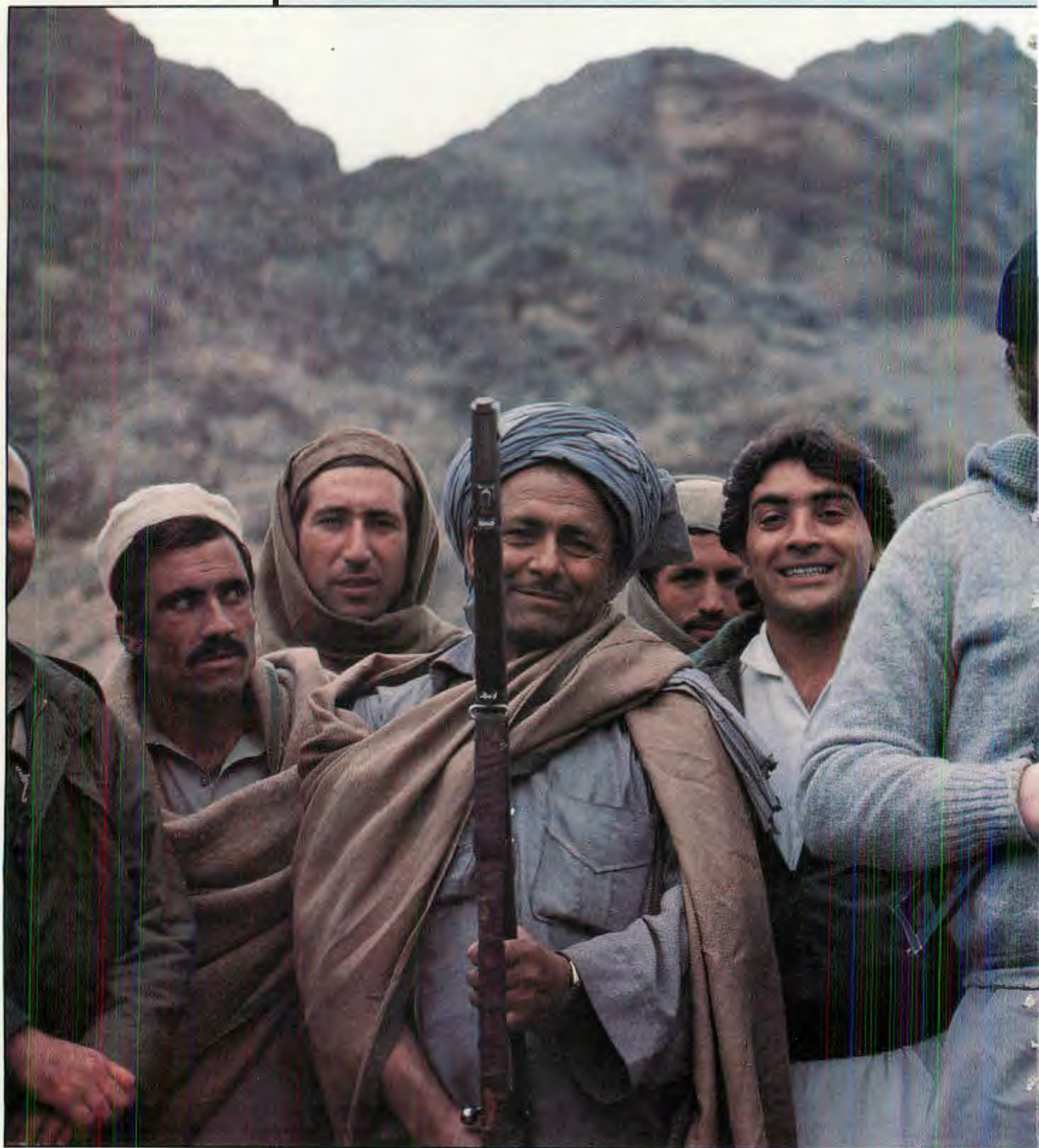
Navigation equipment includes a sun compass, illuminated magnetic compass and a theodolite. More recently, sophisticated Navsat equipment has also been used. Communications equipment consists of type A43 and A123 radios. Two 40-gallon auxiliary fuel tanks and stowage for two one-gallon tins of engine oil give the vehicle a range of about 1,200 miles. The ancillary equipment includes a camouflage net, camping and cooking equipment, stowages for water containers and two pressed-steel planks, two shovels, a pickaxe, and tow-rope to facilitate unditching. The vehicle suspension is strengthened and both differentials have fitted guards. The desert versions are fitted with large-section sand tires.

SAS squadron vehicles are operated by the mobility troop, a crew of approximately 16 men, who specialize in overland movement by whatever means is compatible with the task at hand. Crewmen are trained in all aspects of vehicle operation and normally stay in the troop for the duration of their SAS service. The majority of training is done in the United Kingdom but — as with the rest of the British Army — overseas exercises are held regularly, vehicles and other stores and equipment being stockpiled in what are known as "prepositioned training packages."

In recent years, Pink Panthers have also been deployed to Northern Ireland, Belize and the Arabian Gulf, but they have not been used in major conflicts, because their high visibility and unwieldiness make them easy targets for modern battlefield-surveillance equipment and because better means of moving men and equipment are available. When used, however, they normally operate in patrols of three: a command vehicle, which also carries the ground-to-air radio, the navigation vehicle and a supply vehicle, crewed by two men. The others usually have two-man crews.

Pink Panthers have now become unsuitable for the SAS's covert role and for current NATO thinking. Other SAS vehicle options which have been considered include use of the new Rover V8 (one criticism leveled at the old vehicle was its lack of power), changing the armament to miniguns (dropped because of the need for excessive ammunition) and use of two-wheeled vehicles. Private manufacturers have also moved into the field of patrol vehicles, the oil-rich Middle East being a lucrative market. Perhaps they will produce the next successful generation of Pink Panthers. ☒









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**SOF EXCLUSIVE**

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# AKR

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## SOF Scoops CIA, Field-Tests Mysterious Krinkov

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Text & Photos by David C. Isby

**A**FRIDI warriors formed the reception committee. Lean and tough as the Khyber's mountains, their Kalashnikovs and Lee-Enfields seemed natural extensions of their leathery hands. In the waistbelts of some were the long hilts of Khyber knives, which could easily put an inattentive sentry — Mughal, British or Soviet — off-duty forever. Their head chief and the local *malik* were both there, and had killed a sheep — Afghan C-rations — in our honor. Had they not been expecting us, they could have easily sniped us a thousand yards away.

Many things had brought my friend, the major — Maj. Karen McKay, U.S. Army Reserve, sometime paratrooper and the executive director of the Washington-based Committee for a Free Afghanistan — and myself — *Soldier of Fortune's* Soviet analyst — to meet with these men in the mountains. We were looking for the real situation in Afghanistan, something you are not too likely to find on the six o' clock news. We were also looking for hardware — specifically, Soviet weapons that had

been used in combat in Afghanistan and had not been seen before in the West. Before we left Washington, we sifted through reports from Afghans and journalists alike, trying to decide what was rumor and what was real.

For a week before we deployed to the field, we talked to every Afghan who was willing to talk with us, holding an open-air *darbar* (court or audience) over tea on the scraggly lawn of Peshawar's Dean's Hotel. The Afghans ranged from farmers to Ft. Benning-trained officers. But they were all friendly, without a word of bitterness at America's failure to come to the aid of their fight for freedom. With great patience, they answered our questions about the war in general and also about the weapons we sought. By the time we were ready to go up the Khyber Pass, we knew what to look for.

The Krinkov is real. This new, cut-down, Soviet assault-rifle, used like a submachine gun, is probably designated the AKR in Soviet service. We had first heard about it from Ian Hogg, editor of *Jane's Infantry Weapons*, who had, in turn, heard of it from Peter Jouvenal, a British journalist who has spent so much time inside Afghanistan that

Atypical Afghan: Six-four Isby dwarfs Afghans and AKR.





the mujahadeen use *him* as a guide. No one else in the West knew about the thing, as a few discreet inquiries revealed. Until now, only a few photographs of it have been seen in the West.

The AKR's designation is uncertain, and it passes by a variety of nicknames — Krinkov, Shinkov or Sheshakov. It is a cut-down, submachine-gun-sized version of their 5.45mm AKS-74 infantry assault rifle, firing the same round as the full-sized weapon: the Soviet equivalent of the CAR-15. Hassan Gailani, the military chairman of NIFA — the National Islamic Front for the Liberation of Afghanistan, one of the three “moderate” Peshawar-based parties — saw a captured Krinkov about two years ago, taken from a shot-down MiG pilot. But it was only in the later half of 1983 that Krinkovs started to show up in quantity in the hands of Soviet 40th Army Troopers in Afghanistan.

Abdul Haq first encountered the Krinkov about that time. The tough, charismatic Kabul Province mujahadeen leader of the Hezb-i-Islami Party of Younis Khalis had taken one from a shot-down helicopter pilot. He regretted he could not show it to us — it was being put to good use by his urban guerrillas operating inside Kabul itself, who appreciated its ease of concealment and its handiness in confined areas. Engineer Muhammed Ayub, military chairman of the Jamiat-i-Islami, one of the four “fundamentalist” Peshawar-based parties, also has a Krinkov, captured in a fire fight in Kabul Province in October 1983 by a group of mujahadeen under Cmdr. Sayid Baba. It was thought to have been used by the bodyguard of a Soviet general. Other uses for the Krinkov reported by Afghans include arming MPs and tank and vehicle crews.

The Soviets seem to be looking to this new weapon to perform a variety of roles normally associated with both pistols and submachine guns. Although they had been the largest user of submachine guns in World War II, the Soviets abandoned them in the 1950s, as the AK-47 assault rifle replaced both the wartime PPSH submachine gun and bolt-action and semiautomatic carbines, which have not been

**AKR with stock extended is 2cm (less than an inch) longer than stock-folded AKMS.**

readopted since. The standard Soviet pistol, the 9mm PM Makarov, is a light, compact piece, useful for self-defense but not really suited to combat pistol shooting.

There is a need for such a weapon in Afghanistan. Reintroducing the submachine gun would not have made sense, for the cut-down assault rifle is filling its missions throughout the world, as exemplified by weapons such as the CAR-15, XM177E2, AR18S, HK33KA1, Beretta 70 SC and Galil SAR. The consensus among small-arms experts is that these new, cut-down assault-rifles are the wave of the future for battlefield self-defense and that submachine guns will be limited to missions where pistol-cartridge ammunition is preferable (i.e., when silencers are used).



**Sloppy, but effective gas-expansion chamber allows AKR to function in spite of gas-tube chopped to half of AKM's.**

**Bolt group (here facing opposite to position in weapon) and disassembly are same as rest of Kalashnikov family.**



If you're looking for a new weapon anywhere between the Indus and the Oxus, Darra Adam Khel is a good place to start. In the gun-making, gun-running center of Pakistan's Tribal Territories, Pakistani law literally ends at the side of the road. If you shoot someone testing out your purchase at Darra, you have not violated the law of Pakistan, but rather the tribal law of the Pathans, a code which has raised vengeance from a duty to an art form. Furthermore, the Pathans have never heard of plea bargaining.

We did not want to appear more conspicuous on our journey than was truly necessary — Americans being rather rare in the Tribal Territories — so our Afghan host was prepared to explain to those curious about the major's milk-white complexion that it was simply paleness after recovering from wounds. I just jammed my Nuristani cap down over my blue eyes and tried to look like your basic six-foot-four Afghan trying to doze as I nonchalantly rebounded off the inside roof of the jeep. We jolted uneventfully up the dusty track to Darra.

Darra is a great place. Goats and sheep wander around like pet dogs, while the average inhabitant carries enough weapons to qualify as a Third World nation. The sounds of gunfire as prospective customers test out firearms echo off the surrounding mountains every few minutes. Fortunately, the prime shopkeeper in Darra was an old friend of our Afghan host, and not only extends generous discounts to *bona fide* freedom fighters, but keeps an eye out for interesting weapons coming back from Afghanistan. The Afghans have little use for one-off copies of new and sophisticated hardware. Because of the length and difficulty of their supply lines and the fact that they capture 80 percent of their modern weapons, resupply of rifle ammunition other than standard .303, 7.62x39mm and, to a lesser extent, 5.45x39mm is limited. Thus, the Afghans will often sell high-performance but non-standard weapons in frontier towns such as Darra, Tera Mangal or Miram Shah and use the money to buy more ammunition or standard weapons.

We drank the shopkeeper's sweet green tea, politely declined his snacks, made from a recipe known locally as The Pathan's Revenge, and examined his wares — a Soviet PKM 7.62mm general-purpose machine gun, an East German MPiKM assault rifle, and racks of the Darra-made Kalashnikovs and Lee-Enfields that, despite their copied Soviet and British proof marks, are not trusted by the mujahadeen, who will use them only if factory-made are unavailable. The British used to tolerate Pathan gun-making because, it is said, they would rather they made unreliable guns than smuggled in reliable ones. We let the merchant know that we were not interested in home-



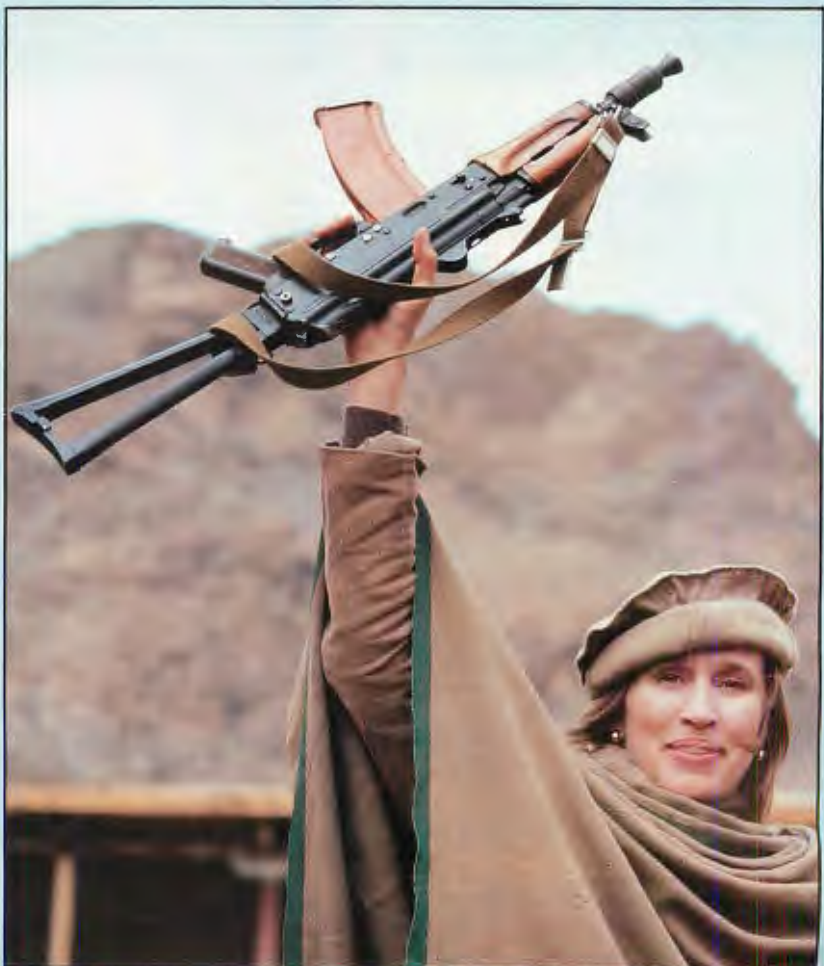


Maj. McKay sights newest Sov assault rifle during SOF firing test.

McKay's reaction to firing test was ambivalent, but found AKR handy in vehicles.

made Enfields today. We wanted to see the Good Stuff. With the winking slyness of a Times Square bookseller reaching under the counter, he produced a list full of impressive items: suitcase *Sagger* antitank guided missiles, aircraft rockets — and a Krinkov!

They had heard of the Krinkov up in Darra. One of the first captured examples was acquired from an Afghan group in exchange for *five* DShK 12.7mm machine guns. The asking price became 154,000 Pakistani rupees — \$11,000 — and when word got around that there were two Americans, a man and a woman, asking about these things around Peshawar and the Tribal Territories, the price quickly went to \$16,000. The Krinkov, it seemed, was valued as much as a blue-chip investment as it was as a weapon — the Afghan equivalent of municipal bonds. After sending his partner to fetch the weapon from its hiding place, the merchant brought it to us as we were examining other items on his list. The new weapon created a great deal of excitement for the locals who waited outside the shop. Major shopping expeditions are obviously not an everyday event in Darra. Although we were able to examine and photograph the Krinkov, we decided that







we would obtain our examination sample elsewhere.

We were up the Khyber Pass when we finally got our hands on a Krinkov from Hassan Gailani who, as always, came through for us. He was able to extract a Krinkov from an arms cache over the border. Hassan is also related to the chief of the Afridis, Nadir Khan, the gentleman who had arranged for us to be greeted with shish kabob rather than .303 rounds as we roamed through his mountains on our quest. Hassan knew Karen from her work with the Committee for a Free Afghanistan, as did seemingly every other Afghan guerrilla or political leader we encountered. Hassan's abilities and contacts made him a useful chap to know when banging around the borderlands.

Hassan has fortunately picked up some Western ways that have eluded his fellow freedom fighters, like putting weapons on safety with an empty chamber while we rode in a captured Soviet-built UAZ-469 jeep over paths that would shake a camel's kidneys but, fortunately, show up on no one's maps. We could appreciate the handiness of the Krinkov. With its stock folded, the major could keep it in her lap and quickly bring it into action from the cramped confines of the jeep if needed, an impossibility with a full-size AKM.

It was a long trip, only a part of it on the main Khyber road to Landi Khotal fort and beyond, each height crested with a British-built blockhouse, the fields of fire cleared in all directions. The Khyber Rifles are in residence in most of them: locally recruited Pathans in khaki uniforms, carrying Pakistani-made G3 7.62mm rifles. They remain the first line of defense for Pakistan as they were for the British Raj.

Hewn into the rock along the way were the badges of regiments, British and Indian, that had passed this way in earlier innings of The Great Game, when a Russian-occupied Afghanistan was just a bad dream rather than cruel reality. Tank traps flanked the road and the railroad parallel to it and ran through the bed of the Khyber River. They were built in 1939, when the British feared

Stock folded, it's just 1cm (less than half an inch) longer than an UZI. AKR may replace pistols and SMGs for most Comblot military.



Pressed magazine guide in welded sheet-steel receiver show structural relation to AKM.

Stamped, rivetted construction identical to related AKM and AK-74.



Recoil spring and control layout are classic Kalashnikov.

the Hitler-Stalin pact would lead to an armored thrust out of the Soviet Union into India; the Pakistanis must appreciate having them today.

An examination of the Krinkov showed some of the ways the Soviets had indeed succeeded in packing a rifle's punch in a submachine-gun-sized package. The barrel and gas tube have been dramatically shortened from the AK-74, giving the Krinkov a snub-nosed appearance. The flash-suppressor attachment apparently also functions as an expansion chamber, without which the gas-operated system would present problems, with full-power 5.45mm ammunition being used in a smaller weapon. Otherwise, with the gas being tapped off closer to the breech than with a standard AK-74, the weapon would suffer from high pressure and violent action, to say the least, of the gas piston and breech mechanism. The Krinkov uses the standard 30-round AK-74 red-brown-plastic banana magazine. Although some ribbed magazines have been seen in Afghanistan, perhaps indicating that the design needed reinforcement, all three Krinkovs we saw — Engineer Ayub's, the one in Darra, and the one we got from Hassan — had the standard ones.

We tried out the Krinkov on a firing range used for mujahadeen training. Although the location is supposed to be secret, the Afghans had a 12.7mm machine gun nearby which would have offered some cover in case the Soviets decided to come by with a few helicopter gunships to turn the occasion from a weapons test to a firepower demonstration. The Afghans were proud of their firing range, which was relatively new. The existence of the range is evidence of the increased seriousness and professionalism that they are starting to display. In the early years, shortages of weapons and ammunition, combined with ignorance of the level of training required in modern war, limited the scale and scope of Afghan training. The firing range was laid out by a Western-trained former officer of the Royal Afghan Army. It featured both known and unknown distance targets, ranged differently for Kalashnikovs and Lee-Enfields. As we left, they were rigging some pop targets, made out of scrap steel. The long, bitter war has taught the Afghans that heroism and motivation are not enough to win. Neither are weapons. In 1983, the Afghans received more modern equipment — the fall of "Little Moscow" near Khost in Paktia Province last autumn yielded a rich harvest of Kalashnikovs, for example. But they have learned through bitter and costly experience that giving these weapons to enthusiastic but untrained Afghans is only a quick way to create new martyrs. Martyrs are the one thing of which the Afghans have a surplus.



On the firing range, the Krinkov presented few surprises. As with so many things, the problem now was not getting what we wanted; it was liking it once we had gotten it. Karen was not impressed when she finally got to open fire. She thought it similar to the UZI submachine guns she had used in the Middle East, during the Lebanon War, but with unclear sights and excessive recoil. However, she managed to put most of a magazine, fired on semiautomatic, onto the 60-meter targets — three whitewashed rocks — with a consistency that even with her accurate shooting would not have been possible with a 9mm weapon.

The major's specialty is unconventional warfare — which means she has to be able to arrange to have the enemy give his life for the Motherland without the aid of lots of artillery, air and tanks. Because these troopers may have to obtain their weapons resupply the same way the Afghans do — capturing them — they have to know how to use foreign hardware, and Karen was very good indeed with this strange weapon. I, normally more of a menace to the range party than any targets, decided to try out the Krinkov the way Kalashnikovs are intended to be used.

Flipping the selector switch — standard Kalashnikov type; always keep it full up for safe — to automatic, I tried three-round and five-round bursts. There was some muzzle climb, but no worse than a standard 7.62mm Kalashnikov. Simple physics dictate that there is going to be more recoil force with a smaller weapon than a larger one, the cartridge remaining the same, but the Krinkov was not out of line with our experience of earlier Kalashnikov-action weapons. While Karen's judgment on the recoil was correct, apparently the expansion chamber functions as advertised. It was difficult to judge accuracy with only a couple of magazines of ammunition, but the fast 5.45mm round makes the AKS-74 lethal out to its 400-meter effective range, and the Krinkov is comparable. But, like any Kalashnikov on automatic, it is a weapon intended to be pointed rather than aimed.

I estimated trigger pull at about seven to eight pounds, with the long, smooth travel and "surprise" touch-off that is a treat for first-time Kalashnikov users.

Disassembly is also straightforward. After clearing the weapon and unlatching and removing the magazine, a catch at the rear of the receiver is depressed, unlatching the receiver cover by putting pressure on the return spring buffer. You then flip the receiver cover forward — it is attached to the gas tube retainer — and can then remove the return spring. Pulling back on the cocking handle permits removal of the bolt. The muzzle attachment unscrews in the same way as that on the AKS-74. As the Afghans



**Mujahideen chief Hassan Gailani, came through for SOF with test sample of Krinkov.**

looked on, we figured out how to get the thing back together.

The Krinkov is 72cm long with the butt extended and 48cm with the butt folded. Weight appeared to be about 3.5kg with a loaded magazine and a little over 2.5kg unloaded, although I cannot vouch for the accuracy of Afghan scales. I estimated effective range at 300-400 meters, with cyclic and effective rates of fire the same as those of the AKS-74.

While we did not get to keep the Krinkov — or "Mr. Krinkov," as we had called it over open phone lines for the benefit of our

friends in Pakistani intelligence — we realized that, for its limitations, it had enough value to the mujahideen that they could use it effectively.

The Krinkov is not revolutionary in concept or mission, but it gives the Soviet soldier a new and superior self-defense weapon, and serves as a reminder that Soviet hardware can be as good as anyone's. It should also serve as a reminder of the need for effective technical intelligence. There has been a lot of hardware coming back from Afghanistan that had, until now, been unknown to experts.

Exactly what weapons, large or small, the Soviets will use in combat is known, like Soviet intentions, only to themselves. ✕





**SOF** CENTRAL AMERICA

# NICARAGUA: THE OTHER SIDE

## Three Tense Days with the Sandinistas

Text & Photos by Mike Sullivan

**J**ALAPA, Nicaragua — The dirt roads of northern Nicaragua are where you see first-hand how the war is going.

It's the numerous Sandinista Army patrols, outposts along desolate stretches, and the darting looks of soldiers in trucks and jeeps in Nuevo Segovia and Jinotega Provinces — fearful of an ambush — that tell you all is not well.

In a word, it's "tense."

But for the Sandinista soldiers of the Nicaraguan Army the word is "tranquil, more or less."

A pointed indication of the heightened tensions along the border from Ocotal to Teotecacinte are the regular Sandinista



"Walks in the sun" are what most soldiers hope for: These Sandinista soldiers are happy to relax.

Army troops sent to beef up the local militias who had been carrying the brunt of this hide-and-seek guerrilla war against U.S.-backed "counterrevolutionaries" operating from neighboring Honduras.

Although soldiers questioned in the area were vague as to the reasons behind their added presence, it was obvious enough traveling the hard, dirt border roads. From Ocotal to San Fernando to Santa Clara, there was fighting almost every day of December. "Tranquil, more or less."

Three days along the border area and inland near the towns of Matagalpa, San Juan de Rio Coco and Jalapa showed the Sandinistas to be well-organized, alert and





## NICARAGUA'S BLIs

JALAPA, Nicaragua — To counter the threat of Nicaraguan rebels based in neighboring Honduras and Costa Rica, the Sandinista government has organized three specially trained “hunter” battalions to track down Contra units in the field.

Known as *Batallones de Lucha Irregular* — irregular fighting battalions — the units are highly mobile and designed to stay in the field for weeks at a time to get the job done.

While little is known of the BLIs, there are three 700-man units: the Simon Bolivar, Coro de Angeles and Jerman Pomares Battalions. Sandinista troops in the units wear the standard government camouflage uniform and carry mostly Soviet-bloc weaponry. But their distinguishing item is the Soviet summer field cap, frequently worn cowboy fashion with the sides rolled up. While there are a lot of these caps in the country, only the BLIs wear them as a standard uniform item.

The BLI headquarters, located outside Jalapa, is unmarked and well off the beaten path. On a visit to the HQ, reporters were curtly informed by MPs on duty that while we had indeed found the BLI base, the units were “all in the field” and it was not known when they would return. — Mike Sullivan

all over the place. Traveling in a Toyota Land Cruiser rented from the state-owned “Turnica” travel agency, I was with a freelance photographer from San Francisco and a photographer/reporter from Colorado.

In Nicaragua, as in most other countries where a war is going on, it’s usually best to travel with someone — otherwise it’s too easy to go “missing,” to disappear. We had been given passes by the Defense Ministry in Managua that allowed us to travel the border road and into areas controlled by the Sandinista Army.

**Sandinista soldiers appear everywhere as roving patrols and village garrisons try to protect the coffee harvest.**

The border area we were in and the central hills just to the south are vital to Nicaragua, being both a primary Contra infiltration route and a major coffee-growing region. Rich coffee-growing areas are primary targets for both sides. Nicaragua, already suffering a severe drain of hard currency, needs the money the coffee will bring on world markets.

The Sandinista strategy appeared twofold: First, to actively patrol the border with roving four- and five-man patrols, trying to interdict Contra groups entering from Honduras, and second, to cut off escape routes of Contra groups trying to slip back across the border. At night the patrols, made up of







both regular army and local militias, would slip out from their bases and into ambush or patrol positions.

If a patrol ran into any Contras it more than likely would be on its own. Armed mostly with AK-47s, AKMs and light machine guns, the Sandinista patrols were mobile enough to either follow up a contact or get the hell out of the area.

In the morning, patrols would filter back into the small, dusty towns stretched along the border, to grab a hot meal and rest.

On our first day out we got as far as Teotecacinte, where we were politely but firmly told to go away. At the entrance to the village was a well-manned roadblock with unit signs showing that the crack BLIs (*Batallones de Lucha Irregular* — irregular fighting battalions) had previously been stationed there. But they apparently had been pulled out of the region several weeks before, and the roadblock and village were manned by regular Sandinista Army troops.

Along with the roadblock were two community bomb shelters, one still under construction and the other well-dug-in with air vents poking out through a three-foot overhead dirt covering. Both were reinforced with heavy logs and packed earth and looked like they could easily take direct heavy-machine-gun, mortar or LAAW hits with no damage.

Back-tracking down the dirt border road we were stopped at Santa Clara because of a contact two miles west of the town, a region we had passed through in the morning. When we told the local Sandinista Army commander that the fighting was exactly

where we wanted to go all we got was a firm but polite "No."

As it was dark, and the border roads weren't a healthy place to be, the commander pointed to a grassy clearing by their HQ and told us to pull the Toyota over there for the night. We asked, but there was no accommodation in Santa Clara, so we decided to sleep with the vehicle.

But because of the nearby activity (we could see starlight shells illuminating the area) the commander came back about 10 minutes later and said we'd better move further down the road: He didn't want us caught in any crossfire or mortar rounds if the Contras did decide to hit.

So we drove about 200 yards down the road — toward the fighting — wandered into a local cafe for a typical Nicaraguan meal of chicken, rice, beans and beer and vaguely contemplated taking a night-hike to see what was going on.

Deciding discretion was the better part of valor, and not wanting to get needlessly blown away in the Nicaraguan bush, we curled up in the Toyota for the night. There wasn't a lot to do in Santa Clara anyway.

Although there was a contact nearby, we didn't see any checkpoint on the edge of town and would have been able to wander around to our heart's delight. After the Sandinistas told us to move down the road no one bothered to check on us for the rest of the night.

In the morning the patrols came filtering

**Sandinista Army presence is evident in every town in coffee country.**



**Inheritors of the Soviet love of military display, Sandinistas turn out pretty public guard units.**

back into town — walking up the main road or slipping through backyards — but no one would tell us anything of the night's activities.

The Sandinista forces I saw, both along the border and in the interior, used a variety of East European equipment, captured U.S. gear or stuff left over from the regime of Anastasio Somoza. Uniforms usually were plain green utilities or camo, but a uniform-like brown shirt also was worn by some troops. Militia usually wore just their civilian clothes.

M16s, M79 grenade launchers and LAAWs were common sights as were AKs, AKMs, the odd FAL, Israeli UZIs and Galils. In Managua I even saw a WWII-vintage PPSH and an M1 Garand.

Once the sun was up we had to decide whether to wait for another vehicle to "clear" the road or if we were going to go first. (Checking for landmines in Nicaragua is real easy: You just drive down the road and hope you don't hit one.) The Sandinistas told us the Contras often use the first vehicle down the road in the morning for target practice and said we were welcome to be No. 1 that day.

We waited half an hour and, when no one else drove by, we said, "The hell with it." We took off for the 20 kidney-rattling miles to Ocotal, pounding the shit out of our rent-a-jeep as we tore down the road.

Although we had "TV" plastered all over our blue rent-a-jeep we weren't sure if the Contras would use the signs as targets or honor our neutrality.







(We decided if the shit did hit the fan we'd just try to drive through it.)

Picking up three Sandinista troopers, who climbed into the back, we tore down the road, dropping them off halfway at the town of San Fernando.

Thirty minutes later we were on the veranda of the Hotel Frontera in Ocotal, having a breakfast of eggs, toast, beans and coffee when we heard the first mortar rounds drop around San Fernando.

As we listened to a local radio station (which told us nothing about the border skirmishing that had been going on for a



**"Tranquil, more or less," seems an accurate characterization of most of government-controlled Nicaragua.**

week), about a dozen shells could be heard hitting in the distance. But we never learned what came of it all.

Later, when we got back out to the Pan-American Highway, Sandinista soldiers were blocking all traffic to Ocotal because of the fighting.

"Tranquil, more or less."

From the border we drove back down the highway several miles and hung a left, turning onto another dirt road for the bone-rattling drive to San Juan de Rio Coco.

*Continued on page 90*

## AMERICAN IN NICARAGUA

SAN JUAN DE RIO COCO, Nicaragua — He was easy to spot right away. It was the Sears & Roebuck Co. boots that did it.

Everything else fit, though, from the loose-fitting green Nicaraguan Army uniform to the chest webbing, AK-47 over his shoulder and bayonet on his hip.

But the 24-year-old wasn't a Nicaraguan, or a Cuban adviser to the Sandinistas. He was an American named John who was armed with a Soviet assault rifle to fight for the Nicaraguan Sandinista government.

At this rural northern town to aid in the annual coffee harvest, John spoke of his three years in Nicaragua in support of the revolution that overthrew the regime of Anastasio Somoza in July 1979.

He would not give his last name or what state he was from. Dressed in the drab green uniform of the Sandinista militia, he was carrying an AK-47 assault rifle, bayonet and extra ammunition when we spoke. He gave no apologies for his life in Nicaragua, carrying a weapon, or the fact that he has been in combat against U.S.-backed Contras fighting to topple the Sandinista regime.

In the town as part of a student production battalion — or BFP — picking coffee for three months, John said he was a teacher in Managua, Nicaragua's capital, and had been helping with the coffee harvest for three years. But besides picking coffee, John was providing

security for others helping with the coffee harvest, a vital commodity and hard-cash earner for this country of 3 million.

"We have to get the coffee out," John said earnestly, "an invasion [of U.S. forces] will come in the next few months . . . It would take something drastic to avert an invasion."

John discounted the threat posed by U.S.-backed Contras as a "totally mercenary force." Withdraw the American support, he said, "and they will collapse."

"If the United States wants to overthrow this revolution they have to invade; what else can they do?" he said. "In the meantime we have to get the coffee out; that's the important thing now."

John's odyssey to this dusty town began in mid-1980, he said, when he left the United States to see the then-new Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. "I left for six months to see what a revolution is, why people fight and die," he said with conviction. "Basically I'm committed to stay here until the revolution is defined . . . My politics are clear," he added.

John said he was arrested in both El Salvador and Guatemala before reaching Nicaragua. He will be in the countryside helping both with picking the coffee harvest and providing security until early next year when school resumes.

"If I were to die here it would be for not only the Nicaraguan people, it would be for the American people also," he said.

John admits that the Contra activity, both from Honduras to the north and Costa Rica to the south, has had an impact on Nicaragua — "A slowing down of the revolution, more to defense, so a slowdown of social services and construction," he said.

Currently about 15 percent of the Nicaragua budget goes toward defense. The coffee harvest is a vital source of foreign exchange and is expected to be between 20 and 40 percent lower this year than last year. Nicaraguan government officials say the lower crop estimates are a combination of a smaller harvest and stepped-up Contra activity.

Many feel that the Contras must prove their effectiveness this winter in disrupting the coffee harvest in order to retain their funding by the U.S. government. As a result, the Sandinistas have stepped up army patrols in the border provinces to cut off infiltration routes and have formed special battalions to track Contra units inside Nicaragua.

To others outside Nicaragua, John has a simple message.

"Unite, decide who the enemy are, stop bickering like children, think optimistically. The time has come . . . We need militant solidarity because halfway at this point doesn't go very far.

"Many things can be done here," he continued. "The question is whether we'll be left alone to do them."

Whether you agree with him or not, John puts his money where his mouth is.

— Mike Sullivan



# ARMSON'S DEADLY DOT

## Atlatl Snipers Take Aim

Atlatl sniper learns advantages of O.E.G. — quicker target acquisition, faster back on target, better peripheral vision.

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



**D**EVELOPED and manufactured in South Africa specifically for combat operations in a bush environment, the Armson O.E.G. binocular gunsight is a refinement of equipment used by Col. "Bull" Simons in the Son Tay prison raid. Now it's waxing Gs in El Salvador. SOF recently donated six Armson gunsights to the Atlatl Immediate Reaction Battalion. Several confirmed 200-meter kills have already been logged.

The Armson O.E.G. (Occluded Eye Gunsight) is called a "binocular" gunsight because both eyes must be employed in its use. One eye is blocked (occluded) by the aiming device while the other eye continues to view the target. Only those with binocular vision may properly employ sights of this type. Individuals with manifest ocular muscle imbalances ("cross-eyes") must stay with iron sights or scopes.

In use, the rifle is quickly snapped to the firing position with both eyes open and focused, at all times, on the target only. A red dot, composed of 160 millicuries of tritium, appears immediately, in sharp focus, on the

target. It takes some getting used to, as many have spent years shooting with only the master eye, but once mastered, the Armson offers exceptionally fast target acquisition on both static and moving multiple targets. In addition, a significant amount of peripheral vision is maintained—a life-and-death consideration in fire-fight scenarios.

The Armson has no batteries to change. Its radio-luminous tritium lamp will last up to 10 years before the cell must be replaced. Construction is to military specifications throughout. The sight's body is machined from a solid, extruded, octagonal bar of heat-treated, aircraft-aluminum alloy and then anodized. The double-coated lens system is encased in shock-resistant rubber. The light collector is acrylic. It's surrounded by a lens of unbreakable polycarbonate — identical to the material used on the face shields of the Apollo astronauts' space helmets. The result is a rugged, drop-resistant piece of hardware that will withstand all the abuse inevitably encountered on a battlefield.

With an overall length of only 5.25 inches and weighing but 4.25 to 5.5 ounces (depending upon the mount), the Armson presents a compact, lightweight package as well. While marginally limiting its flexibility to



Atlatcatl Bn. sniper shows proper use of Armson O.E.G. Both eyes open as one eye finds target, other follows tritium dot for weapon alignment.



non-military users, to further enhance the system's robust nature, all the mounts are integral and cannot be removed. The Armson combat gunsight can be ordered with mounts for the M16, FN FAL, H&K series, Ruger Mini-14, UZI, and Beretta, Browning, Mossberg and Remington shotguns. Models fitting standard one-inch ring mounts and special-order mounts for other specific weapons are also available.

The Armson O.E.G. is provided with windage and elevation adjustment knobs for zero to the weapon and shooter. The adjustment knobs are notched and each click will move the point of impact 25mm at 100 meters. Zeroing the sight can be somewhat frustrating for those accustomed to precise bench-rest methods. When stared at for long periods the red dot will often disappear, due to eye fatigue. Blinking will cause the dot to reappear. Firing swiftly, immediately after target acquisition, is the secret to successful alignment of the O.E.G. gunsight.

Let it be known that the Armson Combat Gunsight was not designed for shooting titmice at 500 meters. Those out-of-date advocates of methodical aimed-fire techniques will find little to admire in the Armson. It was developed for the fire-and-movement conditions that

have prevailed on battlefields since WWII, when pointed fire became predominant.

Because its luminous dot is ever visible, the Armson is especially effective at dawn and dusk when contact with guerrilla forces is most likely. The Salvadorans are among the world's finest natural marksmen. Intelligent and enthusiastic, training them to score first-round kills is made simpler with the Armson mounted on their M16A1 rifles. By all criteria of evaluation I have found it to be the very best of its type. Hit probability is significantly increased at all ranges up to 300 meters.

The Armson O.E.G. Combat Gunsight ranges in price from \$190 to \$240, depending on the mount required. Further information can be obtained from the exclusive importer, Leadership Keys, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 25304 Farmington Road, P.O.Box 2130, Farmington Hills, MI 48018). ✕





## SOF CENTRAL AMERICA

Some contras guerrillas look more like regulars than the Nicaraguan Army. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group

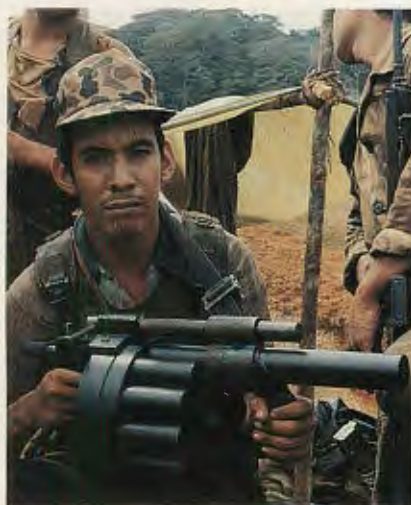
# CONTRA CRISIS

## SOF Reports from Nicaragua's Front Line

by Steve Salisbury

**T**HE situation for the guerrillas of Eden Pastora's Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) is critical. A Sandinista dry-season offensive has closed in on their strategic river encampments, and they are retreating by the hundreds into Costa Rica — not from lack of courage, but for lack of arms, munitions, supplies and money.

ARDE has always operated on a shoestring, but shortages became particularly serious at the close of 1983. On 27 December the Sandinistas started five days of mortaring, firing hundreds of rounds, and tried to establish bases in rebel territory just across the Bartola River. The insurgents repelled the attack, but at high cost, expending all their 82mm mortar and B-10 recoilless-gun shells and most of their small-arms ammunition. On an average, each guerrilla had only a hundred bullets and only two-thirds of the perhaps 6,000 men had guns — mostly old SKSs. And *campesinos* were still streaming into ARDE's ranks.



Arsenal or museum? Heavy, short-range, rare 37mm Manville Gun beefs up ARDE patrol. Photo: Steven Salisbury

Old, stripped-down M19 mortars become ARDE's field artillery. Nicaraguan windage is identical to Kentucky variety. Photo: Steven Salisbury

Comandante Pastora issued an S.O.S. But his Latin and European friends were reluctant to help, blinded by specious Sandinista offers of social and democratic reforms. And the United States held back, wary of Pastora's unpredictability, unsure of his true political alignment and disappointed by ARDE's lack of military progress (no major operations have been launched since last September). Supplies still trickle in, but the wrong things: for example, boots sizes 10 and 12, too big for Latin feet, and 7.62 NATO ammo when ARDE has few FALs or G3s. Pastora chafed at receiving FDN leftovers and threatened to turn the supply planes back and "die with dignity."

I was with the guerrillas when ARDE



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went on the defensive. They feared another Sandinista thrust and dug in along the San Juan River. However, they failed to occupy the abandoned Sandinista encampments and put ambushes upstream from the Bartola River. These oversights would come back to haunt them.

On 20 January, in the Bear 9 frontline encampment 500 meters east of the Bartola, guerrillas heard enemy boats on the San Juan during the night. The following morning I joined a 10-man patrol. We trudged four hours through the jungle and reviewed dozens of old Sandinista trenches scattered along the trails and on a hilltop — no new enemy tracks.

The same dozens of empty Swedish and Canadian fish cans were rusting away, and bloody bandages had turned black. However, on the wall of an abandoned shack, a Sandinista lieutenant had scrawled that his squad had visited and that anyone crossing the Bartola was dead. It was a definite possibility. The Sandinistas were massing forces in the hills two kilometers away on the other side of the Bartola, and the guerrillas were powerless to do anything about it. They could only step up patrols in their own territory.





On the morning of 23 January the Sandinistas slipped back into their old positions and ambushed a rebel patrol. One guerrilla was killed. The river encampments went on red alert. That afternoon I joined rebel *peleton* chief Israel and his 10-man ambush team on a hilltop on the Costa Rican side of the San Juan just upstream from the Bartola's mouth. It was a fine observation point, but nothing was happening. We began to whisper jokes and throw mud clods at each other. That nonsense ended when all hell broke loose.

At 0725 hours as an insurgent squad climbed a hill near the enemy encampment, a Sandinista ambush at the crest let loose with machine-gun fire and hand grenades. The rebels sprawled in the knee-high grass and answered with AKs and an M79. With bullets whizzing inches overhead, the guerrillas slithered through the grass into a nearby patch of jungle. Although their own troops were nearby, the Sandinistas had no compunction about mortaring. Shells were exploding uncomfortably close.

We were about a kilometer-and-a-half away; nevertheless, Israel ordered Little Tiger to open up with his .30-caliber machine gun, hoping to divert the shelling. Tiger blasted a hundred rounds in several bursts and twitched, anticipating the enemy's mortars. But the Sandinistas continued to concentrate their fire on the squad. The counter-shelling of a rebel 57mm recoilless rifle downstream silenced them 25 minutes later.

Miraculously, only one guerrilla was superficially wounded with a grenade fragment in the shoulder. But the ambush stunned the rebels, who didn't know how to respond.

The next morning, 25 January, a guerrilla 60mm-mortar team in Costa Rica traded a few rounds with the Sandinistas, but this time the rebels had to go after their adversaries with infantry.







At 0700 hours, 26 January, I hooked up with a 30-man contingent in what was supposed to be just one element in a decisive multi-pronged thrust. After two hours prowling through the bush, we came across a principal path and heard the Sandinistas. They were chopping wood at each end of the path and hunting a couple of hills ahead. Fearing a trap, we discreetly withdrew. We radioed the other units for coordination, but they were spooked, too. They had bugged out even before the operation began.

The communists took advantage of the insurgents' nervousness, fanning out through the jungle and firing periodic, random shots. Cuban advisers cut into rebel radio communications, threatening destruc-

**LEFT:** Firing range sessions keep contra small-arms skills high. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group

**BELOW:** Field soldiering isn't limited to men among the contras. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group



**LEFT:** Contra troops are under Nicaraguan pressure, but better equipment and regular training help them bear it. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group

**RIGHT:** Same guns, same scenery, different people: Vets are often struck by similarity between this war and 'Nam. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group

**BELOW:** Horse patrols are an efficient way of quickly checking relatively peaceful countryside, something contras don't see often. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group







tion and boasting of their part in the offensive. Their vocabulary and hoarse, brusque accent were unmistakable.

"It's true. We're Cubans, there're five of us, but we're the real defenders of the Nicaraguan people," said one who identified himself as a captain, according to Geronimo, an 18-year-old guerrilla. "You're lackeys of the CIA. We're going to smash you and hang that gringo by his temples." (Another Cuban said he would fry me in oil and skin my face.)

Geronimo quipped that his base was 5,000 men strong and ready to kick ass.

The Cuban laughed. "We know you have only 30," he scoffed, "and we're going to take you by assault. Maybe today, perhaps tomorrow, but soon."

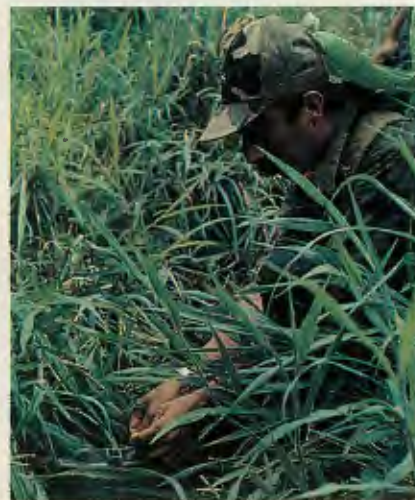
Bear 9 was indeed vulnerable on a grassy hill 800 meters from the San Juan, and the guerrillas were painfully aware of it. The night of 28 January, Israel visited it and Bear 8, the preceding encampment, telling his squad leaders, with a lump in his throat, that the positions were indefensible and that a general retreat to Costa Rica was under way.

Squad leader Enardo couldn't bring himself to break the news to his men. He asked me to do it. I stammered out something. Enardo composed himself and explained the situation. The rebels were bitter. After angry recriminations, fear set in. The men tried to hide it, but their imaginations galloped. Every moonshadow became a Sandinista; every fluorescent fly a muzzle flash. Rustling leaves sounded like gunfire, the wind bombardment. Some vowed never to get involved in war again, but just as many swore to fight on. They cracked a few tension-releasing jokes and finally, with an attitude of *que sera, sera*, the men of the Bear 8 encampment hit the hammock, letting the sentries wrestle with the phantoms



Range work hones combat skills under trainers' skillful direction. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group

"FRONT TOWARD ENEMY": ARDE learns modern ambush techniques. Photo: Steven Salisbury



What ARDE troops lack in STRAC they gain in enthusiasm. Photo: Steven Salisbury

and things that go bump in the night.

The next afternoon Bear 9 was evacuated. But Israel didn't want to retreat without firing a shot, so he unfolded a plastic-covered map on the dirt, set a compass on it, and calculated the distance and direction of enemy positions. (The Sandinistas were now advancing steadily in a corridor parallel to the San Juan River in an apparent effort to cut off the insurgents to the north and roll up the river encampments from behind.) A couple of teenagers adjusted their respective pieces accordingly, then boomed the last four 57mm recoilless-rifle rounds and four of the nine remaining 60mm mortar shells.

There was no Sandinista response, but that night a guerrilla radio operator reported he overheard a Sandinista radio message urgently requesting helicopters and medics to evacuate numerous dead and wounded. Israel half-smiled and said, "At least I have the satisfaction of knowing we killed some *piricoacos*; this should stall them for a while."

"We may be outgunned, but we're tough," another rebel seconded.

However, the news hardly revived morale. It was even worse in the rearguard encampments. Dozens of guerrillas were waiting for the boats which would take them to Boca de San Carlos, Costa Rica, where a couple of hundred of their comrades were languishing. Almost everyone prayed. Some sang hymns at the top of their lungs long into the night.

Contra women share the burdens of war with men. This one carries short, handy Hungarian AMD-65. Photo: Steve Clevenger/Picture Group





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Yet the fear couldn't compare to that of the hundreds of guerrillas trapped deep inside Nicaragua. They radioed desperately for instructions. Pastora advised them to break up into small units and post ambushes in the jungle but, at all costs, not to ditch.

The future of ARDE is uncertain. Pastora wants to house thousands of his men in Costa Rica until they can be re-equipped with better arms. However, the Costa Rican government adamantly maintains this would be an affront to its neutrality and threatens to intern and deport the combatants to other countries under the terms of the 1932 Havana convention.

"Save us, United States!" urged an old peasant rebel on the verge of tears. "Do what you did in Grenada." ✕



**SOF VIETNAM**

# OLD GLORY

**Battered Banner  
Stands Tall in 'Nam**

by **Bill Gabella**

**S**TREAMS of white, green and red machine-gun tracers crisscrossed and spun a surrealistic web of death in the muggy tropical night 3,000 feet be-

low our helicopter. The red tracers came from our guys; the white and green came from "Charlie" and his North Vietnamese Army ally. And, in this area, there were more NVA than Viet Cong. In the cockpit, our concern escalated to apprehension, for it was obvious from this vantage point that there were many more sources of the green and white tracers than of the red. Was our side being overpowered?

Our guys, affectionately called "the

## VETERAN PILOT

Lt. Col. W.S. "Bill" Gabella is a veteran master army aviator who served two tours in Vietnam with the 1st Cav. Div., 1st Aviation Brigade, Americal Division. He also commanded the 242nd ASH Helicopter Co. in Vietnam under the 1st Aviation Brigade.

Gabella didn't give up flying when he became a civilian. He recently returned from Saudi Arabia where he was chief pilot for Lockheed Arabia. This is his first article for SOF.





grunts," were an infantry battalion blocking the mouth of a valley which originated some 90 miles west, and which provided a natural avenue of approach from Laos to the South Vietnamese coastal plain north of Chu Lai. It was a major supply route for the VC and NVA. At the north end of the valley was Landing Zone Baldy, established by the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) to control the mouth of the valley. LZ Baldy was manned by green troops who had never experienced combat. Our helicopter had departed from there scant minutes before.

My preoccupation with the battlefield was broken when the copilot unaccountably hauled the 'copter into a tight climbing turn to the left. He had thought that the trajectory of a stream of white .51-caliber tracer, raised at maximum elevation, was coming toward us — an understandable error in the gathering darkness. Sheepishly he headed back on course to Chu Lai, our tactical operational center (TOC).

We looked down at the arena of death below — now slowly drifting behind the right side of the helicopter — and, re-

lieved, saw iron-red rosettes of 105mm howitzer shells bursting among the sources of the green and white venom. One by one the streams of green and white winked out as their gunners sought deep cover.

But the activity below was only the overture to a deadly and exhausting night for the grunts in the field, and especially for the new troops at LZ Baldy. Some of the action at Baldy was heard on the radio of one command post in Chu Lai — voices of young soldiers an octave higher than normal as they directed fire at points where Charlie tried to breach the perimeter. But these young Americans were equal to the task, and before long the tenor of their speech lowered and became almost calm and businesslike.

Still, it was a rough night complicated by the smoke of battle mingling with the ground fog. There were many dead on both sides when the sky behind the South China sea paled with false dawn. Battered though it was, LZ Baldy survived the first of many severe tests.

Later, with a brassy sun well above the horizon, our 'copter once more cir-

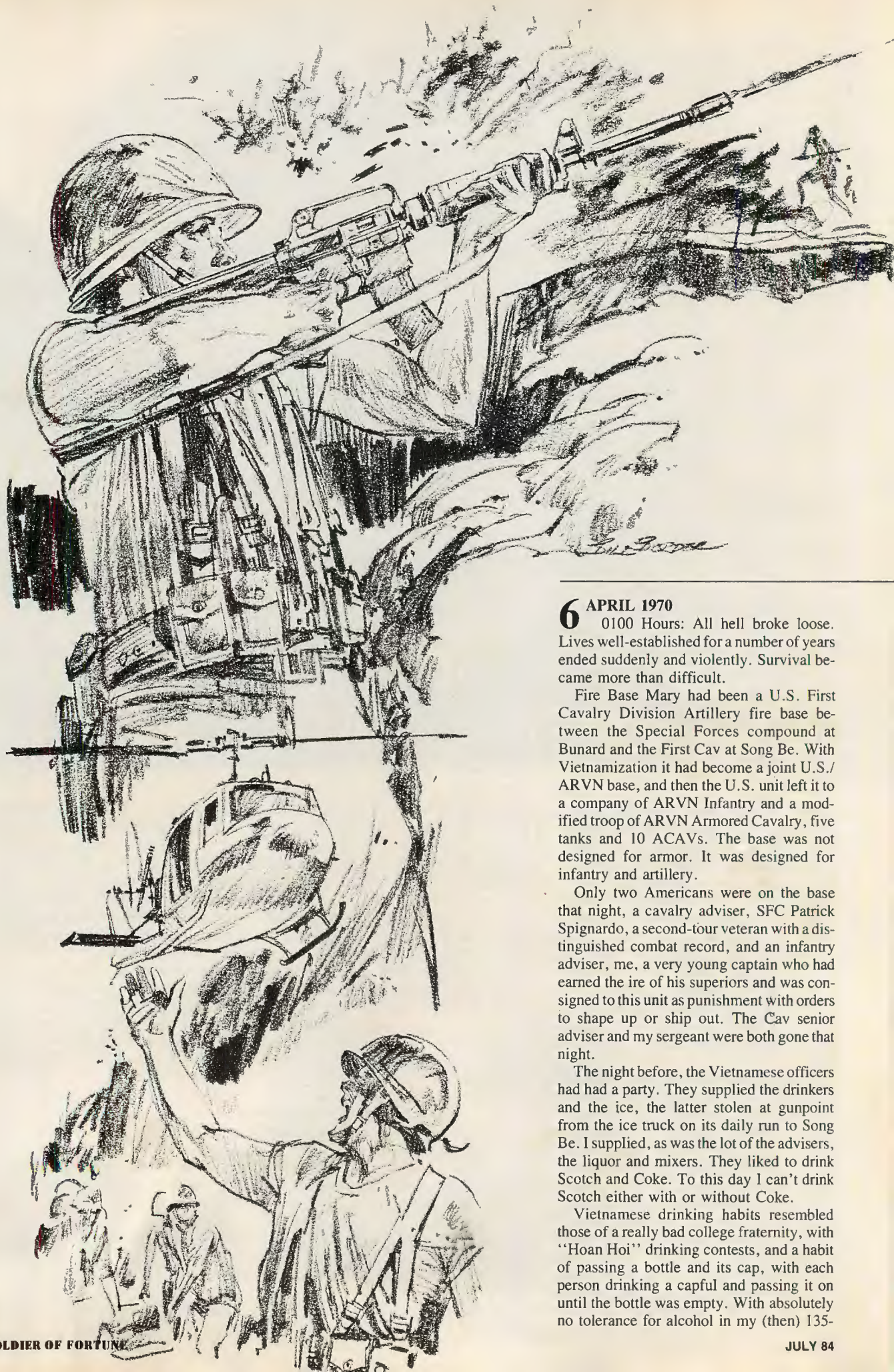
cled "Mt. Baldy" — that prominent hill which gave the firebase its name. Landing on a helipad across a deep gully and below the hill, we looked up through rising wraiths of mist and saw a familiar splash of color gently furling and unfurling against the bright blue sky. It was the Stars and Stripes victorious over the terrors of the night.

Involuntarily there was a sting behind the eyes and a crawl of gooseflesh up the spine. Long after the 'copter blades stopped, the crew sat silent and unmoving, staring at the red, white and blue banner lashed to a rude flagpole at the top of the hill.

Seeing Old Glory move gently in the breeze 9,000 miles away from home, a survivor of a brutal and murderous night, was a profoundly moving experience — it stands out above all others during my two years of service in Indochina.

On the 4th of July this year, when I honor Old Glory, I'll remember all the gallant and decent young men who fought that day to defend LZ Baldy, and all the gallant and decent young men throughout our history who have sacrificed themselves to defend our nation. ✕





## 6 APRIL 1970

0100 Hours: All hell broke loose. Lives well-established for a number of years ended suddenly and violently. Survival became more than difficult.

Fire Base Mary had been a U.S. First Cavalry Division Artillery fire base between the Special Forces compound at Bunard and the First Cav at Song Be. With Vietnamization it had become a joint U.S./ARVN base, and then the U.S. unit left it to a company of ARVN Infantry and a modified troop of ARVN Armored Cavalry, five tanks and 10 ACAVs. The base was not designed for armor. It was designed for infantry and artillery.

Only two Americans were on the base that night, a cavalry adviser, SFC Patrick Spignardo, a second-tour veteran with a distinguished combat record, and an infantry adviser, me, a very young captain who had earned the ire of his superiors and was consigned to this unit as punishment with orders to shape up or ship out. The Cav senior adviser and my sergeant were both gone that night.

The night before, the Vietnamese officers had had a party. They supplied the drinkers and the ice, the latter stolen at gunpoint from the ice truck on its daily run to Song Be. I supplied, as was the lot of the advisers, the liquor and mixers. They liked to drink Scotch and Coke. To this day I can't drink Scotch either with or without Coke.

Vietnamese drinking habits resembled those of a really bad college fraternity, with "Hoan Hoi" drinking contests, and a habit of passing a bottle and its cap, with each person drinking a capful and passing it on until the bottle was empty. With absolutely no tolerance for alcohol in my (then) 135-



## In the Wire!

# NVA HITS FIRE BASE MARY

by Curt Rich

pound frame, I had learned, the hard way, to work against their best efforts in order to retain some ability to function. A previous party had put me out for three days.

They liked to see the *Co Vans* (advisers) drink and enjoy themselves.

Shortly after midnight, we had run out of liquor, mix and ice simultaneously, and Spignardo and I had returned to our bunker (the former U.S. command bunker) and gone to bed. For the first time in weeks, I took off my pants and boots, feeling secure. Perhaps it was the alcohol.

The CO of the infantry company was a 10-year veteran with a boy's face. *Trung Uy* (1st Lt.) Tuy had recently been promoted to that post. Like his adviser, he possessed little in the way of diplomatic skills. A Catholic refugee from the north, he had fled Hanoi in 1954 after his family was murdered by the communists. He existed for three things, he said: drinking, fucking, and killing communists. Members of his unit wore a tiger patch on their shoulders. They were not tigers, but he was. We got along well.

The CO of the Cav unit was an almost equally gung-ho *Trung Uy Minh*. My low opinion of the ARVN parallels that of most vets, but Tuy and Minh were exceptions.

The ARVNs had taken the old U.S. medic bunker as their headquarters. It was underground and the most fortified.

A couple of weeks before, an attack on a battalion of the ARVN Seventh Regiment at Chon Thanh had succeeded. The mortars had cleared antennas off the bunkers, leaving the unit unable to call for help, and the senior adviser was killed running between his bunker and the command bunker. Over

120 ARVN bodies were found in their own wire the next morning versus 10 NVA bodies.

At Mary, several NVA regulars acted as sappers under the cover of a mortar attack. They carefully cut wires and marked a path through the labyrinth of trip wires, booby traps and mines that circled the base for a hundred yards.

One sapper, a tall, muscular youth of 19, a veteran of several attacks like this, threw a satchel charge into a bunker and ran past it, threw another into a second, and then saw an even bigger bunker with a fence around it. But he had run out of satchel charges. He cursed his stupidity at wasting them on the smaller bunkers, and threw a grenade into the fenced area, aiming carefully at the small window in the bunker.

It was a dud. Otherwise, he might be telling this story.

Inside, I sat up, frantically putting on my pants and boots. Perhaps it was the alcohol, but I thought it was outgoing, not incoming. We had been surprised by mad minutes before. Spignardo was smarter, or more sober. He said, "Incoming."

"You sure? Sounds like a mad minute to me."

"Nah, can't you hear the mortars coming in, Cap'n?"

"I sure don't. It sounds like a mad minute to me."

I put on my pistol belt and harness over my T-shirt, grabbed my helmet and my M16 and headed for the door. My M16 had an assault sling, which I slipped over my shoulder, leaving it hanging just right so that the pistol grip fell naturally to my hand.

"Get HQ on the net while I talk to Tuy

and Minh. I'll find out what the fuck's goin' on."

"Rog."

I pushed aside the blackout curtain and went out into an eerie world of shifting shadows from descending flares, streamers of tracers going out, and blossoming mortar rounds.

An APC was on fire.

I started to the medic bunker.

"*Toi la Co Van My*," I said to the guard. At other times I'd been kept out of places because the guard was told not to admit anyone who didn't know the password. If that was the case this time, I was in trouble.

He shouted at me for the password.

"*Toi la Co Van My. Dai-Uy Rich. Co Van.*"

He motioned me in, muttering "*Du ma* [Motherfucker]."

Then an AK-47 erupted to my right.

The guard at the door crumpled and fell down the stairs of the bunker.

I turned in shock, realizing several things simultaneously.

1. It was not, repeat not, a mad minute. We were being overrun.
2. I was suddenly very sober.
3. Someone was about to kill me.
4. I think I wet my pants.

I flipped off the safety shakily and pointed at the muzzle flash, firing the M16 in a traversing full-auto burst of three rounds. I was rewarded by seeing a tall, muscular NVA dressed in khaki shorts blown backward, arms outstretched, AK flung away. His body sprouted guts and blood from two rounds in the belly.

Then I put the weapon to my shoulder and fired more accurately into his face because



he was still moving. It was like shooting a melon.

"*Trung-Uy! Trung-Uy Tuy! It's Dai Uy Rich. I come in. Okay?*"

"*Dai-Uy! Come in! Quick!*" came from down in the bunker.

I went down the stairs. Two ARVNs were bent over the broken figure of the guard, who was still moving, clutching one shoulder and emitting animal noises.

On what was normally Tuy's dining table was another wounded ARVN, blood glistening in the dim light of hand-held lanterns. Two men were working on him. He was groaning and squirming in agony. I glimpsed intestines and looked away.

Tuy was on the radio along with his exec. "*Dai-Uy! You get helicopters! VC inside base!*"

"I can tell. How many? How bad? Must tell HQ."

He turned to his exec, and they exchanged guesses.

"Fifty, 70, many. I have casualties. We may lose. Much damage."

"Roger. I'll call it in and come back with the radio."

"We must go to perimeter."

"Roger." Gee, I thought, I like it down here in this nice, safe bunker.

I ran back to my bunker and grabbed my radio. Spignardo had already asked for a heavy fire team (three Cobra gunships). My CO, five miles away, had already called for a medevac.

"We're not secure for a medevac, over."

"Roger. I know. I'm going to have it sit down here 'til you're secure, over."

"Roger. Good. What is ordnance load of heavy fire team? Over."

"Guns and 40 mike-mike. Over."

"Rog. I request another heavy fire team, this one with ARA, also a Shadow, a FAC, and some napalm-equipped close air support. Got that so far? Over."

"Roger, copy. Call sign of first fire team is Cobra Two. They'll call you on this push. Lima [liaison with first U.S. Cav] is on Blackhorse push calling for rest, over."

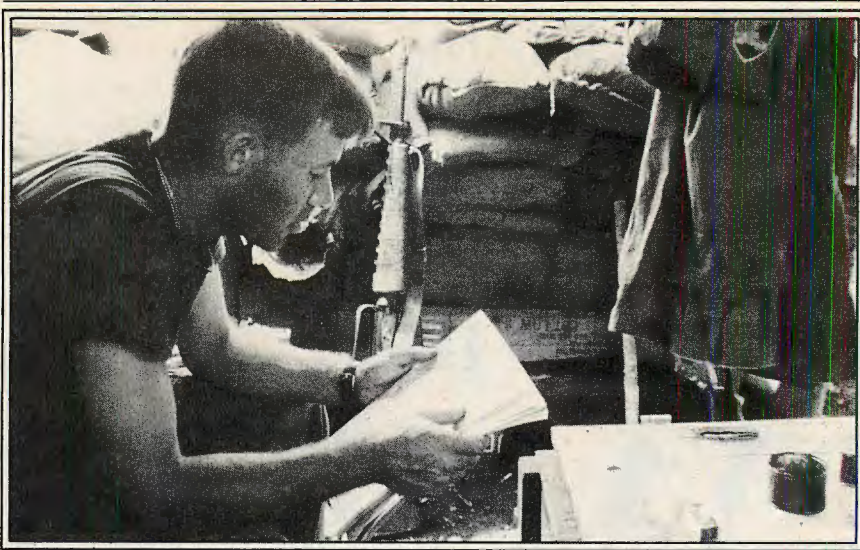
"Roger. Also bring Sierra Bravo [Song Be, the nearest eight-inch artillery] eight-inch into points Bruce and Cadillac, the one-oh-fives from Bunard onto Gladys, over."

This was a quick and dirty code. Bruce was a boy's name. A certain map coordinate had been coded Boy. Next time I might call George and refer to the same place. Another point was coded Girl, another Car. Map coordinates took too long when the shit was hitting the fan.

Then I ran back to the medic bunker where Tuy was waiting for me to go to the command track.

Spignardo went to the cav exec's track 180 degrees from the one Tuy and Minh and I ran for.

I adjusted the eight-inch artillery. Just when I got it where I wanted it, the FAC called in and asked me to stop. His F-100s were almost on station and didn't want to run into any eight-inch rounds. He needed



**SFC Patrick Spignardo enjoys quieter day at Mary — and as author puts it, "Not only did Spignardo stay cool in fire fights, he shared his care packages of Italian food from home."**

more illumination.

Fortunately, "Moonshine Six," the flare ship, showed up with a four-hour flare supply. He put one high center continuously and more on call. Then he did a low pass while we kept our heads down, flying over at about 100 knots just above our antennas, M60 machine guns in the doors firing continuously, not hurting the NVA much, but

## STILL RICH

The assault on Fire Base Mary is only one of many memories that Curt Rich has of his July 1969-July '70 tour of Vietnam.

This hard-packed action story is the third of Rich's articles to appear in SOF — see also "The Lieutenant's CIB" (December '83) and "'Nam Souvenir Hunt" (February '84).

Rich told us that he didn't notice the flopped photo on pp. 30-31 of "Hunt" at first: "It took me 15 minutes and a picky wife to figure out something was wrong."

He also noticed the change from FUO to "heatstroke" in the caption on p. 33 of the article, commenting, "It was probably changed by a non-vet."

"FUO, fever of unknown origin, probably got stamped on every combat vet's medical records at one time or another. You had a high fever, vomiting sometimes, diarrhea always. Nightmares you wouldn't believe accompanied the high fever. It came, put you out long enough to get you to a doctor, and showed nothing on tests, so they said FUO and sent you back to your unit when the fever broke."

Thanks, Curt — we'll add the definition to "GI Jargon" (see SOF, October '83).

making the beleaguered ARVNs cheer.

The mortar attacks were the first target for the F-100s. We couldn't napalm our own troops, but we still had NVA popping up inside the perimeter. So we stopped the mortars first.

The track next to ours was hit by a B-40, and flames shot into the air.

The gasoline tank blew. ARVNs were given old, gasoline M113s, while U.S. units had diesel ones which didn't burn. We called ours Zippos. The ammo from the track started going off. Tracer bullets were flying, and 40mm grenades bloomed out a few yards and fell harmlessly to the ground, unarmed. The heat was intense. Minh ordered our track to move.

Too late!

This time the B-40 operator was less accurate, and he hit the front slope of our APC with a glancing blow, knocking those of us on the top to the ground, and killing the driver. I saw blood about my chest and panicked. I wiped my hand over it. It wasn't mine.

Tuy was on his hands and knees, shaking his head. He turned to me and said, "B-40."

Then I realized the .50-caliber in the burning track next door was firing an interrupted stream.

The gunner was standing in the middle of the flames, hands reflexively on the triggers, and .50-caliber bullets were going into bunkers down the line. The next morning we would find five of my men dead of .50-caliber wounds. Finally the gunner slumped, and the gun shot upward, tracers erupting from the orange flames.

Minh was hurt. His right arm was almost cut off. It was his blood on my chest.

"*Bac Si! Bac Si!*" I yelled. A medic ran from another track and went to work on him.

Minh was one of the few real soldiers in the ARVN, so it was more tragic that he was hit.

Tuy and I crawled to the next track, and I worked with the FAC till the F-100s were empty of ordnance. At least they let me use



napalm up close, below the "minimum safe distance." The berm gave us some protection, and the perimeter was an easy target. Mistakes were unlikely. Spignardo controlled the first heavy fire team, working it close to the jungle on his side of the fire base. We divided Mary in half so we could work both sides simultaneously. It was nice having Spignardo there to double the firepower. Usually when the shit hit the fan, I was alone. When we started taking fire from our own bunkers, resulting in more casualties on the tracks, I called for the ARA, which had finally arrived.

"Cobra Four, This is Six Six Yankee, we're taking fire from one of our bunkers. I'm going to fire a .50-cal. at it. I need you to rocket where the tracers hit. Break, Moonshine, three more flares would be nice, over."

"Yankee, Moonshine. Wilco, over."

"*Trung-Uy*, fire on that bunker with the .50-caliber. Use it to mark for the helicopter."

"Okay, *Dai-Uy*."

The .50-cal. fired a stream into the bunker, tracers pointing to it accurately.

Then came the words I had expected, "Six Six Yankee, Cobra Four. Be advised, your target is within 50 yards of friendlies, and 50 yards is below our minimum safe distance. Over."

"Roger, Cobra Four. My initials are Charlie Romeo. I say again, hit that bunker, over."

That's it, I thought, pass the buck, asshole. If you hit a bunch of ARVNs I'm the one who gets the court-martial.

The first Cobra screamed in low, firing a rocket seemingly over my head. It was very hairy. If the pilot sneezed, he could take out my track or a bunch of my troops, and if I were still alive, it would be my fault. The 2.75-inch rockets packed quite a wallop.

The first Cobra blew the bunker to bits.

"Cobra Four, good shooting. Now —"

Green tracers converged on my track just below me. I dived inside as they raked the top of the track. The gunner was killed despite the ACAV gunshield. A later inspection would show that the shield didn't fail, but the bullet must've missed it somehow. Maybe it was just that gunner's turn to die. Soldiers become very fatalistic, with reason.

"Cobra Four. I have another target. Did you see the source of the green tracers? Over."

"Negative, Yankee. Over."

"Roger, Cobra Four. Wait one. We'll shoot at the new target. It's another bunker, over."

We couldn't fire .50-cal. from our track 'til we got the dead gunner out, so we used a .30-cal. Understandably no one wanted to stick his head up to shoot. Angrily Tuy fired the gun himself.

"Got it. The bunker on the sierra getting all the fire, over three from the other. Over."

"You got it. Hit it. Over."

"That's within minimum safe distance.

Over."

"Okay, okay, you got my fuckin' initials! Hit the goddamned bunker! Over."

"Roger, Six Six Yankee, I need your ASN. Over."

Jesus H. Christ, I thought, but I gave it to him. "Now hit that motherfucker, will you? Over."

"Roger, Six Six Yankee, next bird is going in now. Adjust. Over."

"Roger. Over."

The next bird accelerated in its dive and fired two rockets. They missed short. In case you've ever wanted to know, two 2.75 rockets are very loud from 30 yards.

"Cobra Four, Six Six Yankee, short five yards. I say add five yards. Over."

"Roger. Let me have some more illum, over."

"Roger, Cobra Four, this is Moonshine. More coming. Over."

Moonshine dropped seven more flares. The world was red with them, and the shadows changed constantly. I was in a different world, a new part of Disneyland called Combat Land.

## GLOSSARY

ACAV: armored cavalry assault vehicle.

APC: armored personnel carrier.

ARA: aerial rocket artillery.

ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

ASN: Army Service Number.

B-40: NVA/VC designation of RPG-2.

CGUSARV: Commanding General.

U.S. Army, Vietnam.

CS: tear gas.

FAC: forward air controller.

Illum: illumination, flares.

LBJ: Long Binh Jail.

REMF: rear-echelon mother-fucker.

RVN: Republic of Vietnam.

Sierra Alpha: SA, small-arms fire.

SOI: standard operations index.

40 mike-mike: 40mm XM129 automatic grenade launcher.

"Roger. Good. Heads down. Here we come. Over."

The Cobra dived in. I felt very naked. I was on a direct line to his target. I knew how the other side felt when those things dived in.

The pucker factor was definitely high.

The bunker exploded in an orange ball, and all was quiet inside the perimeter.

Two NVA ran from another bunker. Orange tracers converged on them, and they fell in sprawled heaps.

I directed Cobra Four at other targets, outside the compound, and Spignardo had some targets for Cobra Two.

Shadow was on station. Shadow was a C-119 with three 7.62mm miniguns which each fired 2,000 rounds per minute.

They fired all tracers.

The NVA hated them.

We let all the flares burn out, and the

place went black. Shadow dropped flares below it to illuminate the target and block their presence, and a stream of red fire came out of nowhere onto the treeline in likely places. I saw NVA moving, trying to get away from them. They failed. Every square yard around the perimeter took a bullet. The word awesome came to mind.

A phougas container in the perimeter exploded, adding to the fireworks, as if all the powers of hell were at my command.

Some NVA were still at large inside the compound, trying to get out. Green tracers scared me back into the track.

I talked to Tuy; then we spread the word to button up, and I had Shadow shoot up FSB Mary. "God help any of our people who aren't under cover," I thought, "and God help me if they're hit. Life's hell in the LBJ."

As the bullets clattered on the lid of that tin can I hoped none of them were armor-piercing.

As soon as we unbuttoned and climbed up onto the flare-lit scenario of hell, Spignardo was on the radio.

"Six Six Yankee, Forney Hustler One Alpha, we've got gas over here, over."

"Gas? What kind? Over."

I looked over and saw a cloud of white gas enveloping the far side of the perimeter. Spignardo coughed and sputtered.

"CS."

"CS? Where did they get CS?"

"I don't know, but they're choking us."

"Wait a minute. That's our stuff. The U.S. had CS canisters in the wire. I'll bet the Shadow blew one away. Over."

But I couldn't go far. The chopper was touching down.

I turned around. All the ARVN troops with the wounded were gone. The ambulatory crowded on the chopper.

"No! Goddamn it! Get off!"

I was motioning and screaming, excited at last. The crew chief helped me shove them off. Then he and I put the first six stretchers on and the worst two ambulatory. Minh was on the chopper. I felt some relief.

The chopper lifted off. Then it shrank and disappeared above the flares.

I turned around to pick up my rifle. It was gone.

"*Trung-Uy*. I need a radio and my rifle."

He turned to one of his men and barked an order in Vietnamese. The man ran off. He returned with a radio quickly.

"Tomorrow we find rifle."

"No, *Trung-Uy*," I said, as I tuned his radio to my frequency. "I bring no more medevacs 'til my rifle's returned."

I turned on the radio. I got Cobra Two to pound the sector where the sniper came from.

An ARVN sergeant handed me my rifle. It had taken less than two minutes.

Medevac One-Two called back in a few minutes. He was on his way back.

Now came the fun part. I thought the sniper was still there. I had to do it again.

"Try not to think about it, Rich."

"Strobe on, arm up. Try not to shake."



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Surprisingly it was easy. I was kind of numb.

I could imagine the spotter with the sniper. "Ah, Ho. There strobe light. Drop three feet. Fire for effect."

Mother.

It was the same show again, four flares, eerie, shifting light as the flares floated down.

I still had no depth perception. A black dot grew into a miniature Huey which grew into a real one, but black.

"That's great. It still burns like hell. Over."

"Rog. Unass the area till the cloud passes, over."

Then the REMFs got on the radio.

"Swarthy Matron Six Six Yankee, this is Blackhorse Mike. Over." (Not the real call sign, of course. Blackhorse was the call sign of the First U.S. Cav, with suffixes to indicate the caller. As far as security went, the use of Blackhorse told the NVA exactly who was calling. Since there probably was a Blackhorse Mike, I apologize. I made up the Mike part.)

"Who the fuck is Blackhorse Mike?" I thought. I frantically paged through my SOI. I couldn't find it and didn't have time to keep looking. "Mike," I wondered. "Maneuvers? Operations? G-3? At 0300 it's probably some REMF assistant G-3, some light colonel or major with a hard-on for 'Action.' Deliver me from field-grade REMFs."

"Go ahead, Mike."

"Swarthy Matron Six Six Yankee, this is Blackhorse Mike. Be advised your radio procedure is incorrect, over."

"Shit," I said to myself. "I'm the son-of-a-bitch getting shot at. It's easy to have correct radio procedure when you're calmly sitting in a safe bunker." I keyed the mike. "Mike, this is Six Six Yankee. This is a combat push; if you merely want to criticize our etiquette, do it later. I have troops in contact. Out."

"Don't out me. Do you know who this is? Over."

"Frankly, no. You're not in my SOI, so you're not in my chain of command, though everybody in RVN must be in command of me. I don't care if you're CGUSARV. I've been overrun, and I can't waste radio time. Get off my push. Out."

"Swarthy Matron Six Six Yankee, this is Blackhorse Mike. You alerted my eight-inch over two hours ago, then stopped using them. I direct you to use them, over."

"Negative. I have half the TAC air and rotary wing in Vietnam over me. Trajectory interferes with firing passes of Alpha Charlies, over."

"Swarthy Matron Six Six Yankee, this is Blackhorse Mike. If you were at all competent, you could keep them out of my eight-inch trajectories. Over."

They taught you how to do that, but without six guys keeping track of everything and absolutely perfect timing, you were likely to shoot down one of your air cover. It was tough enough doing one thing at a time. "Roger. I'm not. Get off this push. I'm too



heavily engaged for this bullshit. Out.”

By the time I finished with the REMF, Spignardo had used up the rest of the air assets and things had calmed down to an occasional small-arms round and a mortar round every now and then. It was just harassment, but it was working. It had our full attention. I called in another flight of F-100s and another two heavy fire teams. We used them to try to stop that last elusive mortar team.

Tuy tugged my sleeve. “Dai-Uy. We have 14 wounded — bad — must get out.”

“I know, *Trung-Uy*. One’s Minh. Let me see if I can get some help.” I looked at my watch. It was 0400. I’d been fighting for three hours.

“*Trung-Uy*, are there any VC loose inside the wire now?”

“No, *Dai-Uy*. All dead. You get medevac copter now.”

“*Ya, fi*.” I talked into the handset. “Six Six Hotel, this is Yankee. Over.”

“Go ahead, Yankee.”

“Let’s crank up the medevac. I have 14 urgents. Eight are litter, over.”

“Roger. Pilot was right beside me waiting. He’s on his way out to the bird. Over.”

“Roger. Out.”

“Matron Six Six Yankee, this is Medevac One-Two. Over.”

“Go, One-two.”

“We’re en route to your location. I need max illum. Put up every flare you can, and shut off all artillery and all outgoing Sierra Alpha. I’ll need a strobe on the target. We’ll come in blackened out and out of the whis-

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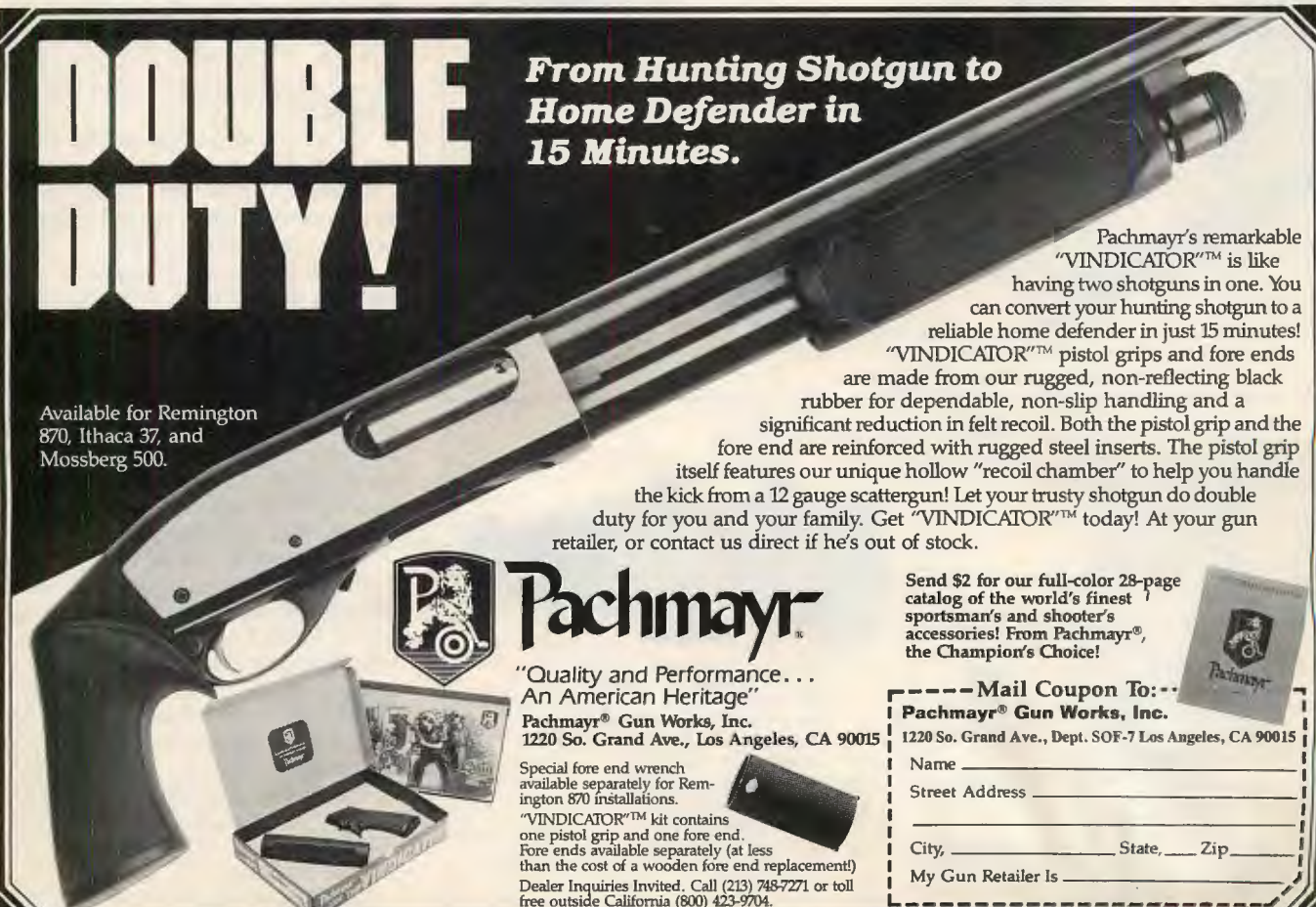


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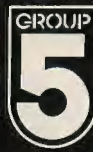
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key at tango tango lima. Got that? Over.”

Sure, out of the west at tree-top level.

“Roger. Moonshine, do you copy? Over.”

“Roger. Solid. I’ll put out four in the air at once. Over.”

“Describe the LZ, over,” said One-Two.

“Big red cross northwest center of LZ. I’ll be there with a strobe in my hand. I can give you a Cobra escort. Cobra Two is on my alternate push. I’ll get him onto this push, over.”

“Roger. LZ secure? Over.”

“Negative. We’re still taking Sierra Alpha fire. But some of these guys won’t last ’til dawn, over.”

“Roger. Give us the Cobras, and we’ll go in, over.”

“Wait out.” I switched down to alternate to get the Cobras back up to my primary frequency. They’d been under Spignardo’s control. I was back on primary in 30 seconds.

“Swarthy Matron Six Six Yankee, this is Blackhorse Mike. Negative on that medevac. Do not risk that bird to save your little people line twos. Wait ’til dawn. Over.”

“Blackhorse Mike, this is Yankee. It’s not up to you, it’s up to Medevac One-Two. My men are dying. Over.”

“Are you aware of what constitutes an urgent medevac? Over.”

This made me furious. “I’m not a virgin at this. Do you have anything constructive? Or do you just want to fuck up a combat push? Over.”

“This is a direct order. Under no circumstances are you to bring in that medevac without my permission. Over.”

Jesus, why can’t I just fight the NVA?, I thought. “Order refused. Initials Charlie Romeo. You are not in my chain of command. Out.”

“Don’t out me, you son-of-a-bitch. I out you. Out.”

“Mother,” I thought. “The son-of-a-bitch is worried about who says out and who says over, as if it matters.”

My CO came on the air and said, “If you feel it’s urgent, bring the medevac in. Over.”

“Roger. Thanks.”

Now all of a sudden I was calm, no longer the panicked kid in his first fire fight eight months ago, but as calm as a man discussing plumbing fixtures over drinks, as calm as the REMF in the underground bunker. I hadn’t gotten excited all night. Where was Mrs. Rich’s timid little boy?

Tuy and I moved to the medevac pad.

The wounded were brought up from the underground bunker. Medevac One-Two briefed Cobra Two. Spignardo would control them so I could concentrate on the medevac.

I told Tuy to get just the litters first, but I knew the ambulatory wounded would storm the chopper.

“*Trung-Uy*, if one ambulatory wounded gets on board, nobody leaves. Understand?”

“*Ya, fi*. Okay.”

“Right, we’ll see,” I thought.

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

### BOLIVIAN GOVERNMENT WELCOMES AND ENCOURAGES FOREIGN LANDOWNERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ONE FULL YEAR TO INSPECT YOUR PROPERTY

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

### WHEN YOU VISIT SANTA CRUZ

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

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

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

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

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

TELEX: 4405 BOLFOR BV TELEPHONE: 4-0146

Mail this coupon airmail for our immediate response.

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

Gentlemen:

- Please send me your no obligation information on the properties available at Santa Cruz. I would like to know more about how I can buy 160 acres for only \$5,900.
- Please reserve some of this rich virgin land for me. Hold 160 acres at \$5,900 for me and rush my Purchase Agreement to my address below. Enclosed is my refundable down payment of \$200 U.S.

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address \_\_\_\_\_

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state \_\_\_\_\_

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| (Master #4) (Senior #5) (Novice #6)    | U.S. Army Ranger (#26)            |
| Rhodesian - Security Force (#12)       | 1st Cav. - Airmobile (#42)        |
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| Deaths Head with Crossed Rifles (#151) | British - Royal Marines (#17)     |
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**NYLON TACTICAL WATCHBAND** (Camouflage, OD, Black) **ONLY 4.50** **WALLET** **ONLY 6.50**

Four flares went out. All the shooting stopped. It was quiet and very unreal under the flarelight.

I unsnapped the strobe from its case on my harness and flipped it on.

Thwap-thwap-thwap-thwap. I heard the chopper.

The strobe was going pop . . . pop . . . pop. I was holding it up in my right hand as high as I could.

I saw nothing. All was black outside the perimeter. The shadows climbed as the flares floated down.

Then a small, black helicopter silhouette appeared and grew as if by magic. All depth perception was gone because of the ever-changing flarelight.

The rotor blast hit me, and I put my rifle down to grab the whip antenna so it wouldn't get into the rotor.

I let the strobe light dangle. My right hand had my handset, the left the antenna.

Crash!

There was a stinging, ringing sensation in my right ear, and my right hand stung. I looked at it. My handset was shattered. "Oh shit! I've been shot at." I wanted to run and hide.

Thuck-thuck-thuck. Holes appeared in the chopper's side as I slid a stretcher in. The crew chief and I ran back for the other one. The ARVNs had disappeared again.

The pilots were sitting calmly as they took hits. I was impressed. I wasn't calm. But then maybe I looked calm.

Finally we got the other stretcher in, and

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## Steiner's Commander and 6 x 30 Combat

Steiner's 7x50 *Commander* is among the brightest and the best binoculars ever made. An integrated compass and rangefinder enables you to determine your own location, or the location of an object or target any time, day or night. Objects appear bright even though barely visible to the naked eye.

Steiner's 6x30 *Combat* is one of the world's most versatile binoculars. Designed for field use and jungle combat under dense tropical foliage. From rolling waves to the shaky and bumpy ride of an all-terrain vehicle. The 6x30 *Combat* provides the steadiest view no matter what situation.

Steiner's 6x30 and *Commander* feature:

- Rugged Rubber Armoring
- Lens caps and strap
- Multi coated optics
- Optional military modifications such as combat reticles
- 5-Year warranty

Other Steiner Military-Marine models: 8x30—compact & powerful. 7x35 Wide Angle, 7x50—the brightest, 10x50—high power, 15x80—highest powered hand-held binoculars, Rifle Scopes, Electronic Image Intensifiers, Laser binoculars, and Periscopes.



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it lifted off. Of course the ambulatory wounded had already climbed aboard.

It got away. I radioed thanks to the pilot. I wanted to laugh and cry simultaneously.

It got quite dark. Spignardo called in and adjusted artillery while I prepared a spot report.

"Dai-Uy. Prisoner," said Tuy. "Live VC in bunker. Wounded."

We went in the direction of the bunker. I heard a gunshot across the compound. Two ARVNs with .45s in their right hands had a slumped body between them.

"So sorry, *Dai-Uy*. He die of wounds."

"Yeah, sure he did. There's a .45 hole right between his eyes," I thought.

Aloud I said, "Damn. A prisoner would be very useful."

"Sorry, *Dai-Uy*. He die."

"Yeah. *Trung-Uy*, I need ammo resupply requests, and we need to talk."

"*Ya, fi*. Take little time. No first sergeant."

"Oh? What happened to him?"

"Come here. You see. Look."

By another bunker was the body of the first sergeant, rifle still in his hands. He was surrounded by four sprawled NVA bodies.

I lunched over and picked up his M16. ARVNs had early-model surplus M16s. We had late ones with forward assists and chrome chambers. Ours always went bang-bang instead of bang-oh shit. There was blood on the buttplate. A round had failed to eject. The bolt was halfway forward, stuck trying to chamber the next round. It was a class-two malfunction, requiring a cleaning

## For Sale: EXCLUSIVE EDITION EL SALVADORAN JUMP WINGS

Only 200 Matched and Numbered Sets

In April 1983, *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine was contracted by Col. Juan Rafael Bustillo, El Salvador Air Force Commander, to produce 2,000 jump-qualification insignias for the Salvadoran Airborne Battalion (Batallion Aerotransportado), which belongs to the Salvadoran Air Force. These "wings" are numbered 0001 through 1500 in silver color for enlisted personnel and 0001 through 0500 in gold for officers. *Soldier of Fortune* is authorized to retain and sell 200 MATCHED and NUMBERED sets. Each set consists of one silver- and one gold-colored heavy brass parachutist's insignias. These will be numbered 0001-0200. The remainder have been issued to the El Salvadoran Parachute Battalion. The price is \$79.00 per set which includes one new 1983 issue *Batallion Aerotransportado* shoulder-sleeve insignia and a letter of authorization from Col. Bustillo, on Salvadoran Air Force stationery, containing the matching



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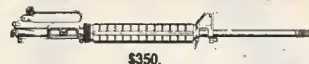
\$160.

Weapon kits come subassembled with new manufacture G.I. parts, most Colt. Upper Receiver, Teardrop Forward Assist, Ejection Cover, Charging Handle, Slide and Bolt Carrier (specify AR-15 or M16) assemblies all new Colt and assembled to barrel assembly of your choice. Barrels are made with 1" in 9" twist for use with standard 55 grain or new 63 grain ammo. Lower receivers made from 7075 T6 M16 Colt Forgings featuring new raised mag catch area and gray finish to match Colt Uppers. Lower receivers are assembled with AR-15 or M16 components (Please Specify). All kits are classified as semi-auto's - No class 3. A standard dealer's FF1 is required. These kits come complete less the safety and pistol grip assemblies which are not included. We are very flexible as to your specific needs in ordering. Should you wish to delete or add anything we will accommodate to customize the weapon as you desire.

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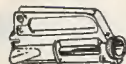
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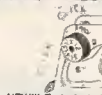
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These uppers are Colt. Not the Govt. rejects bought at scrap prices and selling elsewhere for under \$50.

Forward Assist Assembly (Colt) 19.95  
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NEW!!! Exclusively from Quality Parts. Manual Rear Site Windage Nob. Convert your rear site to the new M16A1EI Configuration. Rear Sight Conversion Kit 9.95  
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## Barrel Assemblies, Muzzle Brakes, Accessories

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Complete Spring Package Tighten up the action of your entire weapon. Every spring included - over 20 springs! 9.95



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Barrel Assemblies come complete with Sight Assembly installed, Barrel Nut and Handguard Cap Precision Machined, 1 in 9 Twist, Sixtand and Groove. Headspaced to GI Spec and Test Fired at factory. Parkerized. NRA rec. twist. Russian AK74 Combat Muzzle Brake - For M16/AR15. Reduces recoil 70%. Reduces muzzle climb 50%. Screws on Barrel Thread (as seen in Soldier of Fortune & American Rifleman.) (This is the first we've found that works!) Design taken from Russian Muzzle Brakes captured in Afghanistan. Flash Hider - Bird cage (closed) Late Style 3.95  
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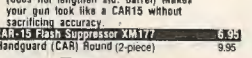
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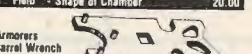


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Lower Receiver XM15 (FFL required) (Gray) 79.95  
Lower Receiver complete and assembled with AR15 or M16 parts (Specify) (FFL) 115.95

COMPLETE Lower Receiver Parts Kit w/Grip (Lower Receiver & Auto Seat not included) Specify for AR15 or M16 30.95

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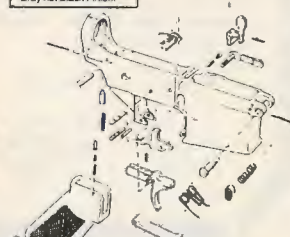
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rod to clear, sometimes with partial disassembly of the rifle. He killed three NVA, then his rifle jammed. He killed one with the butt of the rifle. The butt was cracked from the impact. It wasn't even a good club. Then four AK slugs stitched across his chest.

"I'm sorry, *Trung-Uy*. Very sorry. He was a good soldier."

"The best. Numbah one. Twenty-two years in the army."

I called in the spot report. The reply should have been predictable.

"Six Six Yankee, this is Six Six Hotel, have you personally counted the enemy bodies? Over."

"Negative. ARVN count, over."

"Not acceptable. Must have adviser count, over."

"Roger. As soon as I send the resupply request, I'll take a walk and count them. Over."

"Negative. We need a count now! Over."

"Well, you're not going to get it. I'm going to send the resupply request first, because I want an early resupply in case we get hit again. Over."

"Headquarters needs a count now, over."

"Fuck headquarters. We need resupply. Are you prepared to copy? Over."

"Roger, go," came the CO's voice, obviously fuming.

I gave him my numbers and signed off. "*Dai-Uy*. We do sweeps at dawn," said

Tuy.

"Roger. Sergeant, you want to go?" I asked Spignardo.

"Sure, sir."

"Good. I'll count bodies while you do the sweep."

He started to walk away. I thought of something. "Sergeant."

"Yes, sir."

"If you take any prisoners, I'd like them alive."

"Yes, sir."

I called for a hunter-killer team to work with Spignardo.

I started to walk out to the perimeter and count bodies. The sun was coming up. I'd survived the night. ✖

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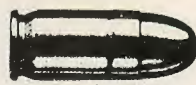
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# BLOODY BELFAST

Continued from page 47

For example, the switch might be in an attic somewhere, while the bomb itself might be two blocks away. The bomber watches a man on a corner in sight of the patrol. When a Brit passes the bomb, the man on the corner scratches his chin, which signals the sapper to close the switch. If he gets a few kids, well, the IRA figures they are expendable.

Perhaps the best protection against this is the checkpoints around the city that cordon one area from another. This keeps the terrorists from readily moving explosives any distance. It works pretty well, but not perfectly.

During our stay, various Brits made observations I found interesting. An officer told me that they find line outfits, such as the Royal Regiment of Wales, to be better than elite groups for duty in Northern Ireland. The elites are aggressive by training and character. When a Brit gets killed, he told me, "Their instinct is to go out and waste somebody." They are too disciplined as a rule to do it, but they are more likely than leg outfits to interpret things in favor of shooting. The last thing the Brits need is to kill an innocent and stir up the population.

And they say that the IRA is more professional than it used to be. There are fewer of them, and they make fewer attacks, but the ones they make are more organized and the technique more sophisticated.

The rain grew heavier. People still walked the sidewalks, leaning into the drizzle. It was not quite noon, but by the light it seemed more like late afternoon. A Brit said hello to a couple of small kids we passed. They didn't answer, either from shyness or hostility. In parts of Belfast people are friendly to the Brits at night, when the IRA can't see them. By day they keep their distance.

The cop walked onto a porch and rang the door bell to deliver a summons. A soldier crouched at the bottom of the steps and looked carefully down the street. Water dripped from his chin. My fingers were numb with cold. A crazy sight: the cop, utterly British-looking and civilian, with a counter-sniper rifleman behind him like something out of I Corps.

I walked off into the rain. Nothing much had happened. Nothing much usually does. For me, there would be one more patrol in the afternoon, and I'd be on the air shuttle to Heathrow. These guys had lots more patrols in front of them. Days and weeks and months of patrols, inevitable losses, and little to show for it. They're up to it. ✕

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Continued from page 65

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Along the way we gave lifts to civilians and Sandinista soldiers off for a little R&R. Much like the Israelis, the Sandinista troops have to hitchhike or take a bus when they get time off.

Far from being just a humanitarian thing to do, giving the soldiers lifts was also a good way to pick up local scuttlebut and assess their abilities.

Everyone was armed, and most carried three extra mags to go with the one in their AK. While the soldiers — mostly teenagers or in their early 20s — in many instances were unwashed, their weapons generally were spotless, and they seemed to take pride in them.

There is a ragtag but functional look about the Sandinistas, and the morale among the troops I saw was good.

Soldiers we picked up along the roads all had stories of clashes with the Contras, and warily eyed the banks along the roads we were driving. With the bush right down to the roadside, there were hundreds of spots along the isolated, lonely dirt roads where we could have been blown away.

Because of the danger of ambushes, Sandinista troops many times keep the back doors of their vehicles open, ready to dive out in case of an ambush.

But we didn't see any clashes in our three days.

The Sandinistas term fire fights with the Contras "harassments," and most didn't think the Contras would be able to overthrow the Nicaraguan forces, which are solidly entrenched in the region I visited. Throughout the area we traveled, the signs of Sandinista control were more than apparent, with detachments stationed in every town along the border to beef up the local militias, and roving patrols and checkpoints all over the place. At any checkpoint you could be stopped, questioned, required to show identification, allowed to pass or turned back.

Reaching San Juan de Rio Coco by early afternoon, we came upon a class of small children being taught such phrases as "Sandino lives" and "The struggle continues."

A dusty, sleepy Nicaraguan town, San Juan de Rio Coco was fairly typical of the villages we passed through. Everywhere posters extolled the virtues of the 1979 Sandinista victory, and pro-government slogans adorned hundreds of walls. Popular among the depictions were stenciled portraits of Che Guevara.

While debate continues in the United States over continued funding for the Honduran-based Contras, it was apparent that at least in this part of Nicaragua, the Sandinista forces will prove a tough and stubborn nut to crack.

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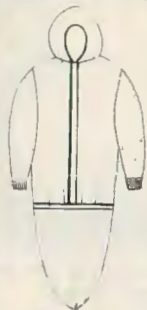




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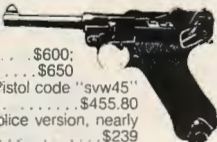


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# FLAK

Continued from page 8

## BRITISH HATCHET JOB...

Sirs:  
Last night the BBC evening TV newsprogram *60 Minutes* carried a report on the 1983 Convention in Las Vegas. When I saw Mr. Bob Wellings making his film at the convention I had some misgivings, knowing the political bent of the BBC, and when I saw the report my worst suspicions were confirmed.

The whole report was of about 10 minutes duration — out of four days! No mention of the the seminars was made. The sneering comment referred to none of the participants having seen any action, nor, Mr. Wellings felt, did they have the guts to see any.

Pete Kokalis was referred to as a "divorce lawyer strutting in front of a bunch of bank clerks, butchers and shopkeepers" and there was no mention of your staff's exploits in Afghanistan, Central America, etc., etc.

Such epithets as "fantasy warriors" were thrown about with gay (?) abandon. Should these individuals, or any BBC group attempt to film the 1984 Convention I suggest a few earthy comments would be in order.

I would urge any of your British (or American for that matter) readers write to Mr. Wellings, c/o *Sixty Minutes*, BBC KTVK Centre, Wood Lane, London, England WC12 8QT.

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Sirs:

Having long enjoyed articles by Dan Wisneski, what a pleasure it was to read "Walk on the Wild Side," his fine tribute to U.S. Marine Corps infantrymen in Vietnam, which appeared in the March issue of SOF.

The article was particularly appreciated by a number of Vietnam veterans in our reserve aviation squadron for its earthy, human treatment of Marines in combat; eschewing overblown patriotic rhetoric, it focused instead on the toughness and common courage of individual men who fought this thankless campaign, on their concern for one another and the gritty sense of humor that buoyed them up during the worst of the rigors and dangers.

For those of us who were not in Vietnam, too, the story showed that alongside the indescribable misery and hardship our troops faced, there were also priceless friendships and moments of laughter to carry the men through.

Dan Wisneski knows this as well as anyone. Although his article

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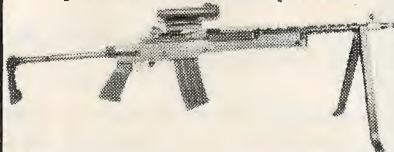
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modestly played down his own contribution to the combat effort, those who have had the honor of serving with him on active duty, both during and after the Vietnam conflict, can testify that he was never just a privileged sideline observer taking photographs and writing glory pieces. Throughout his career, "Top Ski" earned the respect of seniors and subordinates as a professional fighting man who actually took up arms and participated firsthand in every incident recorded in his pictures and articles.

Sgt. M.E. Dunn, USMCR  
Marine Attack Squadron 322  
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Massachusetts

## BIAS 101...

Sirs:

I am a freshman at Humboldt State University in Arcata, Calif. I recently attended a one-day seminar on the Central Intelligence Agency. Being that HSU is notorious for political liberalism I expected a slight left-wing tone to the presentation, but thought that it would be informative and at least partially balanced. However, the personnel in charge of this seminar shoved down our throats a very far-left view with not the slightest effort to keep a balanced tone. My academic squabble is that I took the class to learn about the CIA, not to be subjected to eight hours of leftist cock-and-bull innuendo based on CIA activities.

My political squabble is with what, precisely, they did shove down our throats. We were shown a three-hour movie entitled *On Company Business*, produced by Howard Dratch. This film, aside

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from its other insinuations, made out CIA defector Philip Agee to be a hero. Agee was made to look like an O.K. Joe with good moral intentions and therefore justifications for his treasonous actions.

I should mention, too, that when I openly questioned the objectivity of the seminar during a discussion period, I triggered an onslaught of unexpected conservative support for my statement and other criticism of the class, especially the movie. This is not the only time I have noticed conservatism on campus. If this can happen at HSU, why hell, it can happen anywhere. Perhaps there is some truth to what I've been hearing — maybe this generation is more conservative than the previous two. Lord knows it's about time.

Also, please find enclosed two checks: one for Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, the other for the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund.

T.P.W. III  
Arcata, California

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corrective litany from an observant reader who knows that accuracy is one of SOF's primary objectives.

In the March '84 issue on p. 49 you show a photo of a captured truck in Afghanistan with its identity emblem scratched off. You state that mujahideen scratch the hammer-and-sickle from Soviet equipment because they believe it is a religious symbol. This is incorrect.

The Arabic script scraped off the door was the word *Khalq*, short for *Jamiyat-i-Demokratiki-yi-Khalq-i-Afghanistan* (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, PDKA). Although the truck is Soviet, the emblem is not Soviet nor is it a hammer-and-sickle. Most Afghans don't consider either the *Khalq* or the hammer-and-sickle to be of a religious nature, quite the opposite.

Thanks for a fine article otherwise.  
J. Wickart  
Address Withheld

*Thanks for the correction on the truck's emblem. Still, we have several captured Soviet belt buckles presented to us which have marks of a hammer and sickle roughly scratched off with a rock. Hassan Gailani told us the symbol was erased by mujahideen for religious reasons. — The Eds.*

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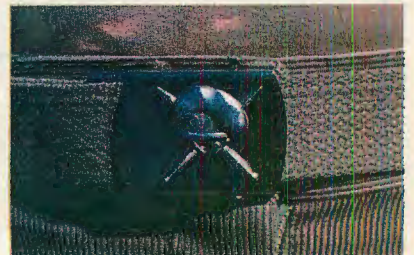
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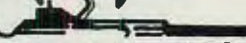


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Sirs:  
I have long awaited your coming out with the straight dope on Grenada, and your February '84 issue did not disappoint me in the least. Your set of articles contained more information than all other magazines put together. I'm sure it will greatly increase the journalistic community's respect for SOF.

I have, however, a question. On page 61 there is a picture of 82nd Airborne troopers displaying some captured weapons. The short man on the right wearing glasses and holding a Sten gun greatly resembles a fellow named Al Garza who was my patrol leader at a Boy Scout troop-leader training camp in June 1982. He has always been very gung-ho about the military — he wore a helmet and ALICE harness with his scout uniform — so I wouldn't be surprised to find him in the Caribbean's latest hotspot and on the pages of SOF.

Again, thank you for working hard to bring the public the truth about Grenada, and for producing a

consistently excellent magazine in general.

Harold Christy  
Chicago, Illinois

## YALE'S CONTRIBUTION...

Sirs:  
Enclosed is a check for the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund from the students of Yale University. It is our earnest hope that the money, which was collected from the student population by the Yale College Republicans, will be able to help the Afghans in some small way to win their continuing struggle for self-determination.

It is a horrible and poignant war that the mujahideen are fighting against the Soviet colossus, but it is a war in which justice must ultimately prevail and in which the force of the human spirit must ultimately prove invincible.

Though most of us at Yale have never had to take up arms to defend freedom, we are honored to be able to help out those who are doing so every day.

Bradford A. Berenson  
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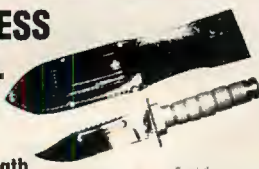
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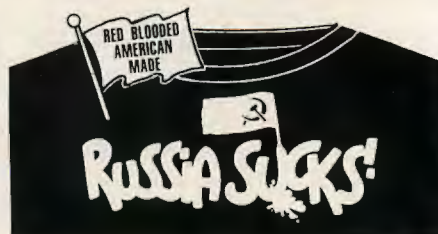
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# BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 19

## U.S. MILITARY GETS SMART...

The familiar identification card now carried by U.S. military personnel may soon be replaced with the Smart Card, a laminated card with a microcomputer chip that gives instant verification and permanent storage of relevant data. The French invention is being tested at four U.S. military bases to determine if it can significantly reduce the \$60 million lost annually through theft, loss or forgery of the traditional ID cards.

## BUYER BEWARE...

Enjoy Tours of Kaiserslautern, West Germany, is soliciting business by claiming to "serve the largest American community outside the CONUS." Low prices on sea tours is one of their hallmarks.

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**FULL-AUTO VIDEO...**

If you missed, just can't remember or want mementos of the Fourth Annual *Soldier of Fortune* Convention, you'll be interested in the video-tape of the proceedings from Lenny Magill Productions.

Robert K. Brown, Charlie Beckwith and G. Gordon Liddy are all there in color with a full narration of the events. To purchase your copy, send a check or money order for \$59.95 plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling (specify VHS or Beta to Lenny Magill Productions, Dept. SOF, 4550 Kearny Villa Road, No. 107, San Diego CA 92123.

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In mid-March 200 commandos of the Burmese Army 44th Light Infantry Division crossed the Moei River opposite Mapokay and overran a 60-man outpost of Thai Border Patrol Police (BPP), but were driven back across the border by Royal Thai Army (RTA) and BPP troops.

The Burmese killed two BPP officers and wounded 11 during the surprise incursion into Thai territory. The Thais claimed to have killed 17 Burmese and wounded many more in the counterattack. Read Sterling Seagrave's account of the continuing Karen resistance to Burmese attack, beginning on p. 26.

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## ALL IN THE FAMILY...

Japan is worried about Soviet aviation build-ups, but China is terrified.

The U.S.S.R. has multiplied air forces by three or four times in the Far Eastern military district in the last two years. While this seems a threat to the Japanese, parallel development of air strength in the Mongolian People's Republic points the build-up more toward China than Japan. The nearly secret, off-and-on shooting war between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China is an international embarrassment to both combatants. (Perhaps the U.S. press thinks that's a better reason to exclude reporters than life-saving battlefield security.)

Fighter-bombers and ground-attack craft make up the bulk of the increases, further evidencing Soviet fears of future hostilities with the PRC.

## BOGUS BLACKOUT...

Electrical power was limited to 12 hours a day over most of Czechoslovakia from the last months of 1983 to SOF's July '84 cover date copy deadline in March.

Internally, the excuse is fear of a U.S. attack, but educated guesses run more in the line of electrical conservation for industry. The Czechs are in the same kind of financial and industrial shape as the USSR. ☒

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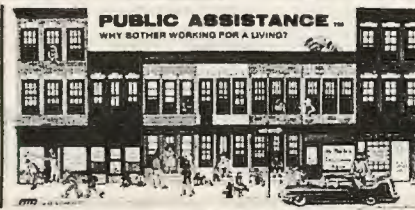
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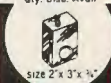
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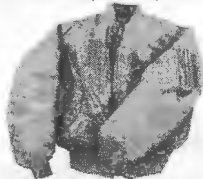
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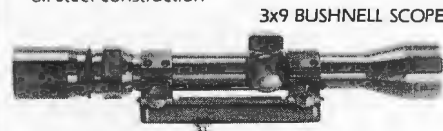
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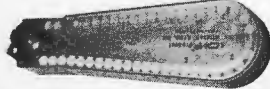
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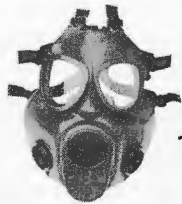
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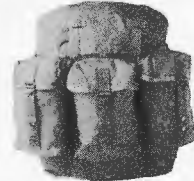
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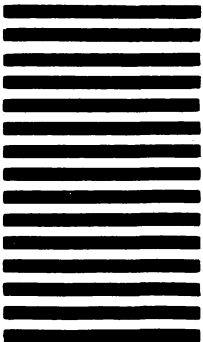
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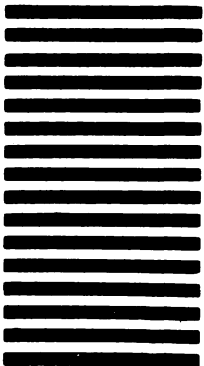
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- 15-shot detachable magazine standard with the carbine; 30-shot detachable magazine, an optional extra
- As with all HK rifles and carbines, scope mounts are available for the HK 94 Carbine

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