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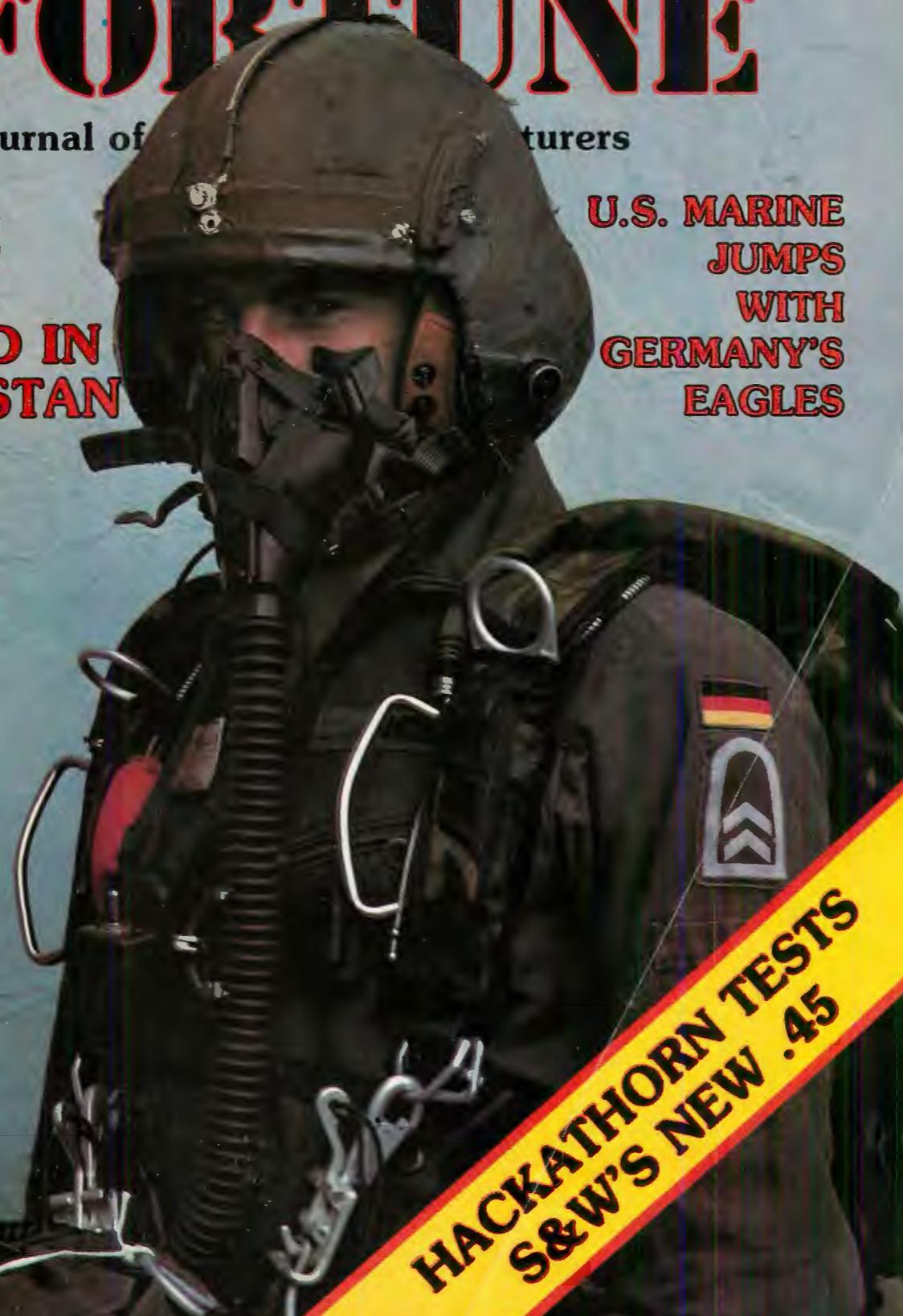
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COVER: HALO *Fallschirmjäger* ready to jump with oxygen, UZI and drop-pack. SOF reporter became one of few foreigners to earn German maroon beret. Photo: David Mills

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EDITOR'S NOTE

WHILE Nazi Germany prepared for war and spread its power across Europe, the United States and the civilized nations of Europe observed the letter of international law. This prompted Winston Churchill to comment: "It would not be right or rational that the aggressor powers should gain one set of advantages by tearing up all laws and another set by sheltering behind the innate respect for law of their opponents. Humanity, rather than legality, must be our guide."

Those who invoke legalism and moral abstractions against our modest efforts to thwart Cuban and Nicaraguan aggression in Central America have forgotten Churchill's wise words and some more recent catastrophes. We heard the same moral outrage that is directed against our efforts to subvert the Cuban and Nicaraguan campaign against El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala when it was suggested that we should defend the Shah of Iran against the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and again when there was a possibility of resisting Syrian designs in Lebanon.

The result in each case, from the 1930s to the 1980s, was a drastic increase in lawlessness and an increased risk to civilized nations. Those who clamor for an end to our efforts in Central America are part of that undistinguished tradition.

By what moral standard can it be right to give the Cuban and Nicaraguan communists a free hand in Central America, while withholding support from their democratic opponents? If we are serious about our support for the fledgling democratic revolution in Central America — a revolution that has removed military regimes in El Salvador and Honduras and replaced them with democratically elected governments — then we must help the democrats fight against their totalitarian enemies.

It is often said that we have no right to attempt to bring down the Nicaraguan government. But in some cases it is moral to attempt to destroy a sovereign state. This is not an abstract question, any more than it was in the 1930s and 1940s when Prussian officers proposed to bring down Hitler.

Do the Sandinistas and the Cubans have the right to arm, train and command a guerrilla army with which to invade El Salvador? Are they within their rights when they organize a vast drug- and arms-running network to finance their terrorists and guerrillas, flooding our country with narcotics?

Should we and our friends stand by in legalistic paralysis while Nicaragua builds an army that is larger than the combined forces of the rest of Central America?

I believe that, just as it is morally right for us to exert all possible leverage to eliminate the Salvadoran death squads and bring the murderers of U.S. citizens to justice, we are right to join in the fight against the Cubans and the Sandinistas. If the war against them is lost, democracy is doomed in Central America.

Just as it was morally right and strategically prudent to combat Hitler from the start, rather than wait for him to declare war on us, so it is morally and strategically sound to take our stand now, rather than wait for the Soviet proxies to arrive at our borders.

Michael A. Ledeen is senior fellow in international affairs at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University. "Copyright" © 1984 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted by permission.

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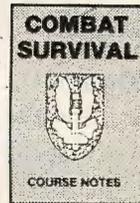


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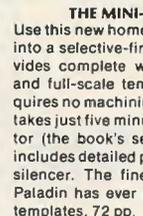
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9MM 13 RD. MAGAZINE, STAINLESS STEEL

- BROWNING HI-POWER **\$15.00 ea, \$25.00/2**
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Heavy duck canvas, O.D. green tool bag. Concealed H.D. zipper and web carrying handles. dimen. 20" L x 6" W x 10" H.
- U.S. ARMY LC-1 (ALICE PACK) **\$59.95**
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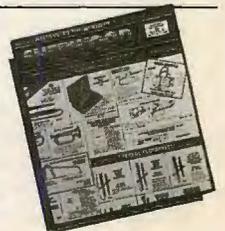


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- LC-2 STEEL & ALUMINUM **\$59.95**
PACK FRAMES 1982 issue, complete with padded shoulder straps & quick release attachments. Great for cargo transport.
- LC-1 NYLON COMBAT HARNESS **NOW \$26.96**
ASSEMBLY SAVE \$4.45
Outfit consists of O.D. green suspenders, pistol belt, canteen cover and plastic canteen. All original G.I. issue.
- COMPLETE LC-1 NYLON COMBAT HARNESS ASSEMBLY **\$42.80**
Save \$10.00, outfit includes: 1 pair adjustable LC-1 suspenders, 1 canteen with cover, 2 M16 pouches (hold 3-30 rd. mags. each), 1 pistol belt, 1 neoprene trenching tool carrier and 1 first aid dressing/compass case.
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CONTRIBUTIONS TO FREEDOM...

Sirs:

I would like to congratulate you on a fine job of keeping your readers informed on military and political situations in the hot spots around the world.

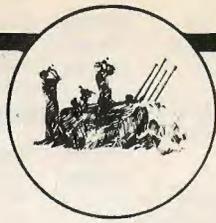
I especially look forward to reading the Afghan Update. I feel these articles are precise and straightforward. Sometimes so straightforward that it hurts, as in "Afghanistan: After Five Years What Next?" (March '84). It is difficult to express the remorse I felt for the Afghan who overheard our Great White Leader on the Voice of America saying help was on the way, but when he looked to the sky for the C-130s found only disappointment.

I can't speak for our nation as a whole, but as CO of the Texas Elite Force I can speak for our group. At each meeting donations are taken for the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund. For every 25 cents in the "kitty" I match with one dollar as does our First Officer. Also 20 percent of our dues from each member goes to the Fund. This money is being put into a savings account until enough is saved up to do some good, at which time it will be forwarded to you for Afghanistan. I just hope that some part of it finds its way between some commie's eyes.

I know there are other groups such as ours out there who read SOF. I strongly urge them to do the same and help these people. The Afghans love freedom as much as we do. So for the sake of freedom, let's help.

Inshallah! God is bountiful.

Richard M. Smith
Kingsland, Texas



FLAK



BURMA VACATION...

Sirs:

I represent a group of 'Nam vets who want very much to organize a vacation package in Kawthoolei. We would like your assistance in contacting the Karen government.

Three weeks, we pay our own expenses, including ordnance and munitions expended in their cause.

My group consists of Ft. Benning-trained vets, many active Guard NCOs, mostly married, church going, men with a positive itch to entertain a common enemy in combat.

Our vacation together as an assault/support force will be made all the more memorable if we can arrange logistics with Gen. Bo Mya and his people.

The basic decision to spend our vacation pay this particular way has already been made. We prefer to vacation with the Karens or Kachins, if you can assist us in making contact.

Paul Ready
Farmington, Arkansas

Bad news! The Burmese have mounted their largest offensive in 30 years and have the Karens on the run. According to Jim Coyne, SOF correspondent in Bangkok, confidential sources predict the Burmese will completely destroy the Karens.

The Burmese have committed 25 thousand troops. The Karens have lost all their base areas but one and only have 3,000 troops with no source of resupply. Thanks for your offer but it appears it's "too little, too late." Another tragedy ignored by the world. —The Eds.

AMERICAN AFGHAN ACTION...

Sirs:

"Afghan 101" by Gregory D'Elia and Charles Bork (SOF, January '84) vividly portrays the heroic miracle of the Afghan guerrillas in holding the Soviets to a standoff for four years. This miracle is more amazing considering the shortcomings in U.S. aid to the mujahideen which were pointed out in the article.

D'Elia and Bork report a leak in Washington that said the administration has stepped up assistance to the guerrillas. According to resistance sources, however, this "increase" in aid last April was the only significant arms delivery the Afghans received in 1983. Although government sources claim the U.S. taxpayer shells out \$7 million a year for the U.S. covert paramilitary operation to aid the mujahideen, field verification of covert deliveries over the past two years prove that a shockingly small fraction of the program's budget is translated into arms for the guerrillas.

The quality of arms received by the partisans through the U.S. covert paramilitary operation has been no better. Deliveries of highly inaccurate, Soviet-made mortars, faulty munitions, mines with their arming devices removed and Soviet-made surface-to-air missiles, have proven worthless on the battlefield, according to former Special Forces A-Team leader Andrew Eiva who has worked with the Afghan resistance inside Afghanistan and in the United States for several years.

A growing interest in Congress over the ineffective aid to the Afghan guerrillas prompted six Congressmen to check on these reports in the Pakistani/Afghan border area with resistance leaders in August 1983. Several weeks later, a number of Congressmen requested a briefing by Under Secretary of State Eagleburger to explain the U.S. government's apparent lack of success with their covert assistance to the Afghans.

In the ensuing weeks, Senator Paul Tsongas (D-Mass) and Representative Don Ritter (R-Pa) led 100 Democrat and 83 Republican Congressmen in a resolution advising the President that "it would be indefensible to provide the freedom fighters with only enough aid to fight and die but not enough

Continued on page 97

Quality Knives from Ballard Cutlery

Here is our selection of folding and fixed-blade knives. All of the knives shown here have blades made of rust-resistant surgical steel, better known as 440-C steel—the finest steel available on the knife market. This steel takes a razor-sharp edge and will hold it for a long time. (Rockwell hardness in C-scale rated at 57-59). We have, without a doubt, the best quality knives for the money in the United States today. Furthermore, our prices are 20-40% lower than the manufacturer's prices. Shop by mail... it saves you time and money.

(A) Manila Folder.® Originated in the Philippine Islands and has been the traditional style of that country for decades. This one was improved with surgical steel blade and a new blade style (half front has double edge). Hold one of the handle parts and move the wrist in a circular motion and the parts will fly open and form themselves into an open knife. 5" closed. Solid brass handles.

(Mfrs. List 40.00).....**\$28.00**

(B) Wrist Flicker. Same mechanism as Manila Folder® but with chrome plated cast handle, in two sizes: **Special offer!** Get both at **\$30.00**

5" closed (Mfrs. List 21.95).....**\$16.85**

4" closed (Mfrs. List 19.95).....**\$14.85**

(C) Cho, 5" closed, another style in the same concept, blackened cast metal handle and teflon-coated surgical steel blade.....**\$19.85**

(D) The least expensive model in this style, with durable polypropylene handle (red, blue, or yellow), stainless steel blade.....**\$5.00**

(E) Survival Knife with camouflage pattern handle and leather scabbard. Patterned, gunblued surgical steel blade. Steel handle has a storage space for survival necessities. The steel screw-cap is water tight and can be used as a hammer. Overall length 9½". (Matches not included.) (Mfrs. List 38.00).....**\$30.00**

(F) Kangaroo Knife, 6¼" overall length, double-edged blade. Has an all stainless steel multi-purpose 4¼" knife hidden in the wooden handle. Complete with clip sheath for belt or boot. Both blades are 440C surgical steel.

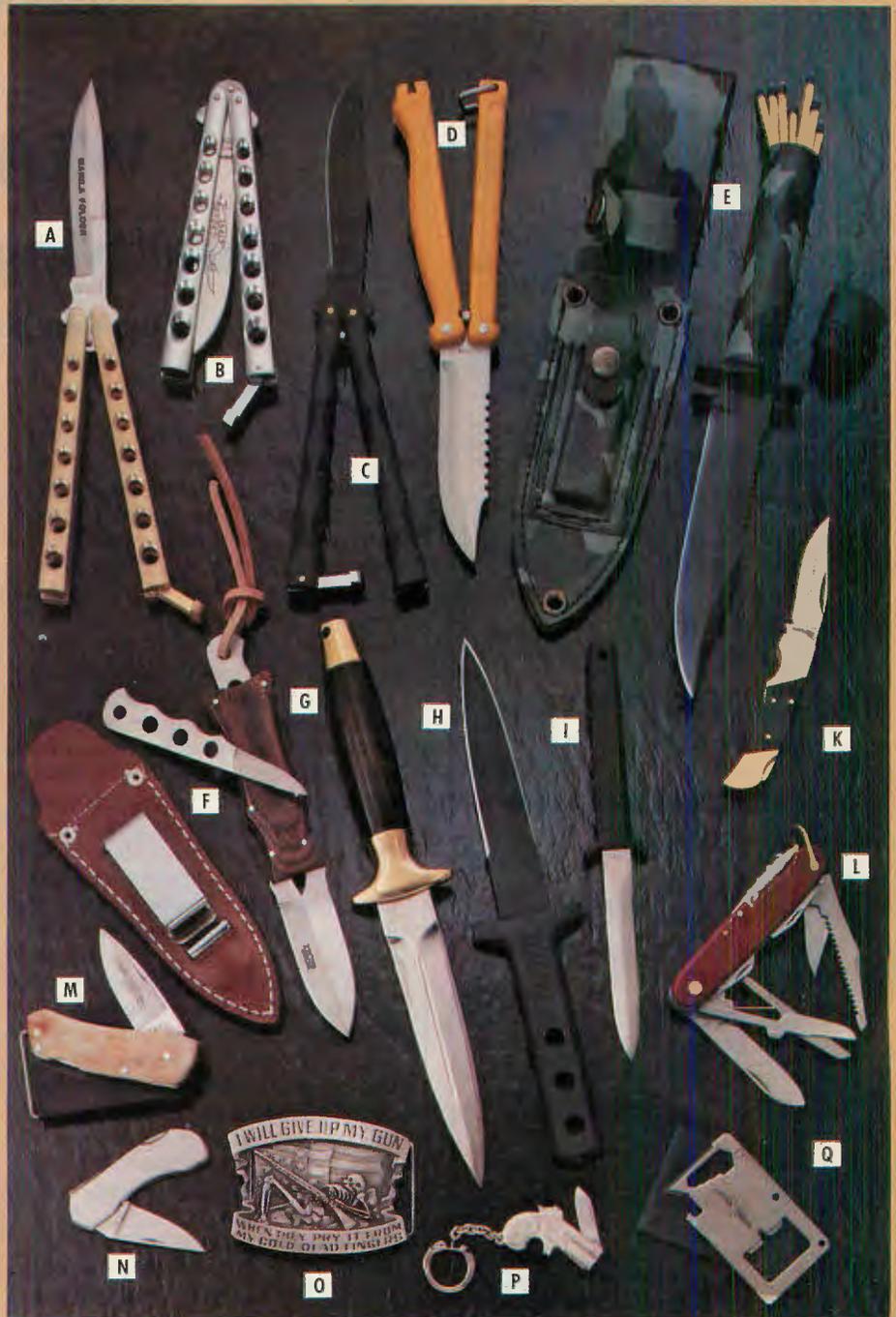
(Mfrs. List 30.00).....**\$25.00**

(G) Boot Knife. 10¼" overall, 5" blade, an extra thick and strong spine for good leverage. Dark ebonywood handle with solid brass bolster and butt. Complete with leather sheath with metal clip for boot or belt.....**\$15.00**

(H) New! Ultra Lite® Boot Knife. A teflon-coated surgical steel blade, with a non-slip surface handle made of oxidized cast aluminum. 9" overall. Complete with leather belt/boot sheath with metal clip. Introductory price! **\$15.00** (Mfrs. List 19.95) Also in stock (not shown) with bright finished blade at **\$13.50**.

(I) Smoky Mountain Slim. New addition to Smoky Mountain Knife series. 6¾" doubled-edged blade. The handle is made from non-slip cast aluminum. Complete with sheath. This style of knife is called a ladie's garter dirk or sleeve knife. (Mfrs. List 15.98).....**\$12.00**

(K) Pony Knife, 3" closed, with back-lock and ebony wood handle.....**\$6.85**
Also available (not shown) **Pony II** with amber handle **\$7.85**; **Pony III** simulated pearl handle **\$7.85**.



(L) Famous Wonder Knife, 11-impliment, stainless steel, 3½" closed..\$5.00 or 3 for **\$10.00**

(M) Combination Buckle and Lock-Back Knife, 3-1/8" closed, with smoothbone on one side. Knife has a clip on the back that locks it securely into the buckle. Patent Pending. (Mfrs. List 21.95).....**\$16.00**

(N) 100% Surgical Steel Knife, with back-lock device, 2½" closed. Light, durable, just right size to carry in your pocket.....**\$5.85**

(O) My Gun (with skeleton). Express yourself with a buckle, made of pewter.....**\$5.00** or 4 for **\$15.00**.

(P) Little Derringer Knife with key chain and ring, 1¾" closed. (Our catalog price \$3.85.) Special price from this ad only.....**\$2.50**

(Q) Survival Tool, credit card sized with vinyl case. Complete survival system. Give the outdoorsman 40 ways to stay alive! With instructions.....**\$8.00** or 2 for **\$12.00**

Leather belt sheaths for folding knives are \$3.50 each for models A, B, C, D, L; \$2.50 each for models K, N; and Leather pocket pouches are \$1.00 each for models K, N, P.

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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Qualifying Expertise

by Ken Hackathorn

"GUN expert." That was what he called me: a gun expert.

Maybe I'm too sensitive, but it didn't seem appropriate. There are too many men out there who have earned their daily bread with guns for too many years for me to think of myself that way. I'm a good enough shot, and I know enough about guns. But I prefer to think of myself as a serious student.

Don't get me wrong: I think I can hold my own in the gun press. It's just this seemingly sudden increase in the number of "gun experts." There are all these people in the pages of popular gun magazines telling me how much I — and you — don't know about guns.

Gunsmiths must know a lot about guns. Maybe that's what we should look for first. As important as it is to keep guns working or to be able to repair them in the field, it's easy to get so you work on guns more than you shoot them. Even cops and competitors, and especially soldiers, spend more time maintaining weapons than they do firing them. You may acquire special knowledge of the insides of guns by working on them, but that gives no necessary edge when it comes time to use a gun.

The complexities of weapons development are real and great. Ideas get bought, borrowed and stolen. Weapons systems of one warring nation are taken over by the victors as part of the spoils of war. Then there are the very few honest-to-god innovations.

Following all this can either consume your life or — if you're normal — just give you a headache. Since most designs get borrowed (usually from several sources), tracing descent can get strange. Besides, what real difference does it make that the FAL bolt system is almost directly copied from the Tokarev?

Maybe I'm making too much of it: Maybe it is important to some. Technologists are necessary, or we wouldn't have guns. But do you have to know that stuff to shoot?

Obviously not.

Well, then, is the real gun expert the best "shootist?" There's a good argu-

ment to be made there. Especially for popular consumption, it is probably easier for the man with the highest combat competition scores to make the claim that he is the one who knows the most about guns. Unfortunately, what most people believe has no necessary relation to the truth. As realistic as competition shooting can be made, it won't ever be real.

Maybe the man we're looking for is the experienced combat gunman. Is the man with the greatest number of survived fire fights or the greatest number of jumped-bail arrests the expert you want to advise you? Ask anybody who's been there. He will probably tell you that survival has more to do with luck than we like to think. And you don't have to think about it much to figure that survival often has more to do with cover or avoiding trouble than it does with shooting.

Besides, I think it was the legendary Bill Jordan who said no one had ever lived through enough gunfights to become an expert that way. The school's too rough.

I've listed most of the categories of men whom people will think are "gun experts," and disqualified them all in one way or another. Since I don't seem to be happy with others' ideas, you must wonder what I think.

Without being too trite or uncommitted, I think some of each kind of expertise is required to make a really knowledgeable gunman. He needs to know how guns work, why they work, when to use them and when *not* to use them. He also needs some experience and a lot of practice.

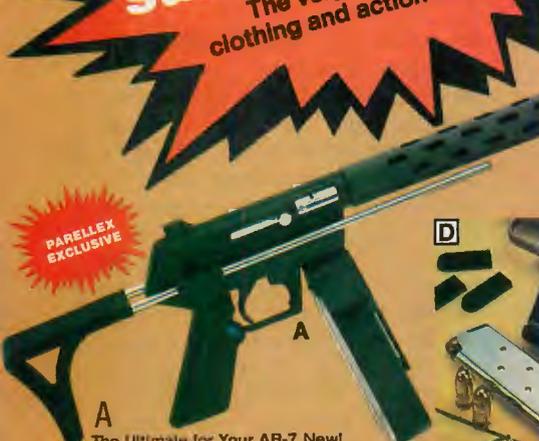
Add that up and see how many people fill the bill. They're out there . . . very few of them. Although I'm trying hard, I'm not one, yet. That's why I'm proud to call myself a serious student.

A few months ago I was with some IPSC shooters who were discussing pistol modifications. Everyone had a fervently expressed opinion he seemed to believe was the one right answer . . . everyone but an old friend and myself. Smiling, he whispered, "So many experts." 

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E **Six Pocket Bush Short.** A popular style for campers and hikers. Made of the tough, durable material you find in regular fatigues with triple needle side and yoke seams. In front there's two flapped, patch pockets and 2 slash pockets. In back there are 2 patch pockets with flaps. Sizes: 24-46. Order No. 3404G0 **O.D. Green \$15.95**
Order No. 3404K0 Khaki \$15.95
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F **Little Black Box.** WARNING: this device is not to be used for surveillance! Automatically starts recorder when telephone is picked up. Records entire conversation on both sides. Automatically stops recorder when phone is hung up! It can be attached anywhere along the line. Plugs into ANY recorder. Causes absolutely no interference or noise on the phone. **MINIATURE!** 2" x 2" x 3/4"
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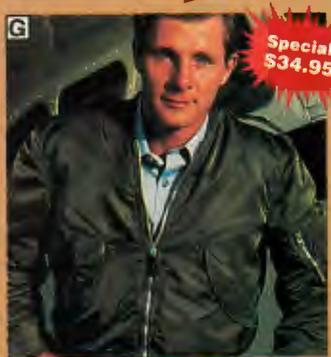


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G **U.S.A.F. L-2B Flight Jacket.** Official Air Force Lightzone (Lightweight issue). Sage Green with International Orange lining 100% polyester with knit collar, cuffs and waistband. Two inner and two outer pockets plus zipper cigarette pocket on left sleeve. Sizes: S, M, L, XL. Order No. O12900 **\$49.95 Sale \$34.95**



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L **Folding Trench Knife.** The 3 1/2" stainless steel blade folds conveniently into the unique knuckle handle for protection and safety. The 5" steel handle has a decorative inset. Length open—8 1/2". Order No. 172010 **\$19.95 Sale \$9.95**

M **Lifeknife Commando.** The best survival knife there is at any price. Razor-sharp 6" blade constructed from 440C stainless steel heat treated to RH57-58. Aircraft aluminum hollow handle is waterproof. Contains N.A.T.O. wire saw, lifeboat matches, survival fish hooks, assorted split shot, 20 ft. of 10 lb. test line, 6 ft. snare utility wire; sutures; water purification tablets. Black leather belt sheath, thongs and sharpening stone. Jeweled compass built into the cap. 12" overall. Order No. 172250 **\$49.95 Sale \$44.95**

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H "Pineapple" Hand Grenade.

This grenade is completely inert and harmless, but looks like the real thing. Comes with detachable firing lever. Order No. 1721G0 **\$6.95**

I **8-Shot Tear Gas Revolver.** Fires 8-.22 caliber tear gas or blanks in seconds. No. 260110 Blue **\$ 9.95 Sale \$8.95**
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J **.22 Caliber Tear Gas Automatic.** Fires 6-.22 caliber tear gas or blanks as fast as you can pull the trigger. No. 260510 Blue **\$10.95 Sale \$ 9.95**
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.22 Cal. Extra-Loud Blanks (100) Order No. 260204 **\$3.99 Sale \$2.95**

K **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 scuffling 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. Order No. 310300 **\$69.95**

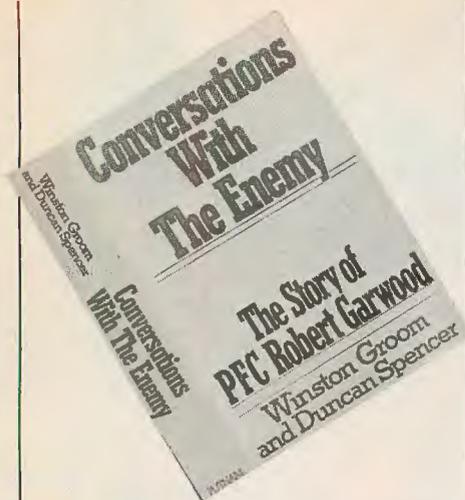


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IN REVIEW



CONVERSATIONS WITH THE ENEMY — The Story of PFC Robert Garwood. By Winston Groom and Duncan Spencer. G.P. Putnam's Sons, Dept. SOF, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. 1983. 475 pp. \$16.95. Review by Bill Brooks.

THE first America saw of Bobby Garwood was in 1979 when he appeared on magazine covers, in the newspapers and on TV. PFC Robert

Russell Garwood, USMC, captured by the Viet Cong on 28 September 1965, was possibly the last living American POW of the Vietnam War, possibly a deserter, possibly a "White Cong."

The Marine Corps held Bobby before the nation as a traitor, despite the fact that he was accused of far lesser crimes than many of the POWs already returned. The author believes if Bobby had been returned with the other POWs in 1973 there would not have been a trial. Garwood's trial was Marine Corps politics, pure and simple.

Conversations with the Enemy is a thought-provoking, disturbing, controversial book. It not only tells us who Bobby was, what he did, what he endured and why he did it, but raises grave questions concerning the Military Code of Conduct.

It is also a true-life adventure story filled with suspense, courage, danger and weakness. It recounts the capture,

the endless marches and exhibitions of the captive "imperialist," the diseases, the death, and the hell in which Bobby Garwood spent half his life. Shot, tortured, starved by the enemy, crushed by U.S. bombs, this is Bobby's side of the coin. His early captive life was spent with fellow POW Capt. "Ike" Eisenbraun, who forced Bobby to listen, to learn the language, to learn the jungle: "That is the only way we are ever going to survive." After Ike died Bobby was made an interpreter, which was unfortunate. As the war escalated, the number of POWs increased, and the new prisoners looked upon Garwood's position as that of an informant. Garwood was not perfect. At times he wavered; at times he was scared and devious — but he resisted, and he prevailed.

Conversations with the Enemy exposes a seldom-explored side of the Vietnam War and asks, "What would you have done?" ✕

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Matching jungle pattern on handle and scabbard blends perfectly with most camouflage clothing.

nothing. And with either edge, can cut its way out just about anything. Built to give and take the worst, the Guardian II is one survival knife that lives up to its name. And mine."

Pete Gerber, Chairman, Gerber Legendary Blades



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Jungle Hats - US Military Issue -

These "Boonie Hats" are the real thing!! Brand new, complete with brass screened eyelets, cartridge holder hat band (except the Desert Camo) and chin strap. Choose between:

- Leaf pattern camouflage, GI ripstop; 100% cotton as used in Vietnam. Genuine GI \$14.00/each.
- Woodland Pattern camo, army's latest issue; 50% cotton/50% nylon Genuine GI \$12.25/each.
- Desert camouflage; just issued to the U.S. Rapid Deployment Forces. 50% cotton/50% nylon; Genuine GI \$12.25/each.
- Olive Drab (OD) Green; 100% cotton GI ripstop as used in early Vietnam. Genuine GI \$14.00/each.

The following jungle hats are our finest quality commercially made copies at \$7.00/each. Select:

- Leaf Camouflage Pattern
- Tiger Stripe Camouflage Pattern
- Olive Drab Green (OD)
- Desert Tan
- Desert Camouflage
- Black

Specify size: S(7); M(7 1/4); L(7 1/2); XL(7 3/4).

Combat Emergency Bandage - GENUINE GI

Perfected through the years of military service, this Traumatic™ bandage is the one issued to every combat soldier and is carried by him in the LC1 first aid/compass pouch. Comes only 2" x 4" x 5/8" and light weight, this emergency wound dressing comes double wrapped in a sterile, waterproof plastic outer. When opened it consists of a 4" x 7" sterile cotton pad with olive drab (OD) green tails, 48" in length and 3" wide.

The Traumatic™ dressing is used to stop severe bleeding. By using the non-stick gauze tails the bandage can double as a sling, stabilizer for dislocations and immobilizer for fractures.

Traumatic Emergency Bandage... an absolutely essential item for every first aid kit \$3.25/each; 4 for \$12.00.

Black Commando Dog Tag Set - (A Kaufman's Exclusive): 2 GI stainless steel tags specially treated to be non-glare flat black plus 2 black (4" and 24") ball chains \$5.00/set

Regulation GI Dog Tags - GENUINE GI
Set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") \$3.00/each
Want us to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANYTHING up to 6 lines and 15 spaces per line.
 Printing only \$1.00 per tag (\$2.00 per set)

PLEASE, NO DOG TAG IMPRINTING ORDERS BY TELEPHONE.

Dog Tag Silencers - black, non-glare rubber bumpers for tags \$1.00/pair

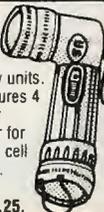


Military Goods Catalog - 32 pages of genuine military clothing, gear and equipment with an emphasis on camouflage. See details on these and many more related items. \$1.00/each. Free with order.

Space Age Blanket - warmth without weight - these are US made by Thermos. Constructed of space age materials and technology, they reflect 80% of a person's body heat. Manufacturers test show them to be 10 times warmer than wool. Choose between:

- Rescue Blanket - Designed for emergency use, this blanket takes up about the space of a pack of cigarettes yet unfolds to a full 56" x 84". Perfect for emergency, first aid, or survival kits... \$4.75/each.
- Sportsman's Blanket - The folded size of this blanket is larger than the rescue blanket. It was designed for ordinary camping use and reuse. It unfolds to 56" x 84" and has grommets in the perimeter of the blanket for convenience in lashing... \$14.00/each.
- Sportsman's Blanket without grommets - This blanket has all the features described above, but without the grommets... \$10.50/each.

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



Dental Emergency Preparation?? Thanks, but I'd rather not think about it.

Let's face it, there are very few things we would like to think about less than dental emergencies. But there are few things more painful or discomforting than oral distress. And pain is a debilitating factor which can greatly reduce your chances of simple survival.

Consider this scenario. If you and your family or friends go camping, boating, fishing or hunting miles from any civilization and days or weeks from your family dentist, how would you cope with an unexpected dental urgency??

Emergency Dental Kit (EDK)™

Kaufman's offers a kit prepared by a dentist which offers first aid and temporary relief for lost fillings, broken teeth, loose crowns or bridges, broken dentures, minor toothaches, and other dental emergencies.

Our Emergency Dental Kit (EDK)™ has all the emergency items you need to help yourself or a loved one until professional dental care can be obtained. The EDK is packed in a crushproof, lightweight plastic case. Its compact size (approximately 7" x 5" x 1 1/2") and light weight makes it easily portable. The kit contains easy, step by step, color coded instructions with diagrams. Every necessary component from built-in mirror to tweezers, cement and toothache drops are included, all pre-mixed and ready to use. Enough material is included in this kit for repeated applications.



EDK. No survival or first aid gear is complete without one. A must for campers, boaters, hikers, hunters, birdwatchers, accountants and survivalists... \$19.75/each.

Mini Emergency Dental Kit, also available!!

Our Mini Emergency Dental Kit contains the same materials and instructional booklet as its big brother. However it has no mirror, and a little less material (although there is still plenty of dental preparation for repeated applications). The Mini Dental Kit comes packed in a crush proof, water proof, plastic cylinder that weighs only three ounces.

If space or weight is a consideration, choose our mini EDK... \$10.95/each.



Military Pocket Knife - GENUINE GI

Genuine GI, current issue, this stainless steel folding knife is of indestructible construction of heavy gauge stainless steel. It measures 3 3/4" closed, and features a large blade, bottle opener, can opener, hole punch and ring for affixing to the belt. Specify whether US or USMC imprint is desired... \$13.75/each.



Nylon Knife Sheath - Ours are government spec polypropylene webbing constructed with attention to detail. They will fit on any width belt and feature velcro closure. Specify olive drab (OD) green, black, or camouflage... \$5.00/each.

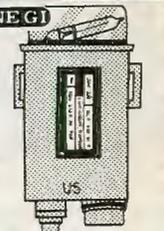
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Waterproof Match Box - GENUINE GI
This non-reflective, olive drab (OD) green matchbox was first made for the military in WWII. Constructed in high impact plastic, it seems indestructible. The rubber gasket is in mint condition and it comes complete with striking flint on the bottom... \$1.75/each; 3 for \$4.00.

Ray-Ban Sunglasses 25% Off - These are the Real McCoy's by Bausch & Lomb. Also Genuine USAF and NASA Pilot glasses. See Military Goods Catalog for details.



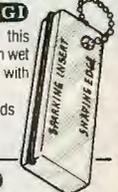
Distress Marker - GENUINE GI
Rescue Strobe Light - This is a high intensity strobe beacon which penetrates rain and fog and is visible for distances up to 15 miles. Standard pilot survival gear, this light is about the size of a pack of cigarettes (1" x 2" x 4 1/2") yet it puts out a dazzling white flash (250,000 lumens) 50 times per minute for up to 9 hours. The unit is waterproof and shockproof... \$39.50/each.



Replacement Batteries for Strobe Light \$5.00/each; 3 for \$12.00

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Fire Starting Tool - GENUINE GI
Newly approved for Military Survival Kits, this Magnesium Fire Starter works every time, even with wet tinder or in windy conditions. Tool comes complete with sparking flint. Completely safe & can be used & reused hundreds of times. A must on all camping trips & in every survival kit... \$6.00/each; 2 for \$10.75.



Rain Poncho - GENUINE GI
These versatile genuine US military ponchos can double as ground cloths, tent flys, and sleeping bags. These feature snap closures and grommets and covers. Their large size is meant to accommodate backpacks. Select from:
 Camouflage; Leaf/Woodland Pattern. Nylon ripstop. Brand new \$33.75/each.
 Olive Drab (OD) Green - Nylon ripstop. Brand new \$23.00/each.
 Olive Drab (OD) Green Heavyweight Rubberized Canvas. Brand new \$27.00/each.

Poncho Liner - Camouflage - GENUINE GI
The poncho liner is an extremely lightweight quilt of polyester fiberfill. It is a waterproof blanket, camouflage on both sides, that traps and maintains the body's heat. Provides warmth and protection under the harshest, most frigid conditions. Brand new \$33.75/each.

Ray-Ban Sunglasses 25% Off - These are the Real McCoy's by Bausch & Lomb. Also Genuine USAF and NASA Pilot glasses. See Military Goods Catalog for details.



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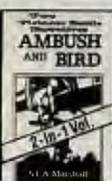
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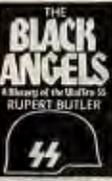
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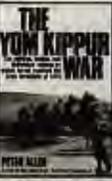
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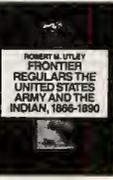
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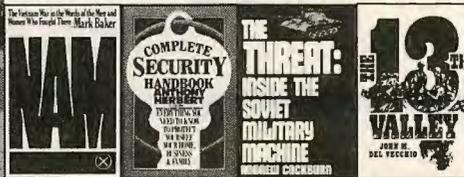
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RED STAR CONDEMNS SOF...

Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star, 25 March 1984, page 3) printed a story from the Soviet state news agency, TASS. Karen McKay, Executive Director of the Committee for a Free Afghanistan, sent us a copy, and a translation of the two paragraphs concerning SOF:

Robert Brown, well-known in the U.S.A. as a recruiter of mercenaries for the implementation of "special operations," has received a new task from his masters in Washington: to assist American special services in the expansion of the "undeclared war" against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).

Not long ago, he and a group of other American "experts" in the organization of subversive operations secretly entered the territory of the DRA and met with the leaders of counter-revolutionary bands. These meetings involved discussion of questions of stimulating recruitment of mercenaries in the West and their transportation into Afghanistan for the accomplishment of terrorist and diversionary acts, as well as expansion of arms deliveries from NATO nations to the rebels. The journal Soldier of Fortune, published by Brown, tells of these bandit forays into the sovereign territory of Afghanistan.

McKay has cautioned us to watch ourselves: The third page of *Red Star* is usually reserved for messages and warnings. We are flattered.

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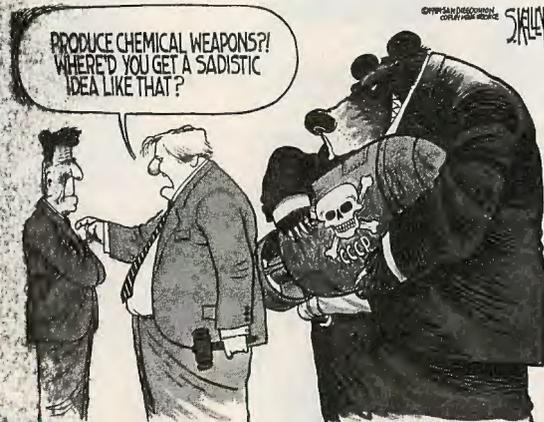


SALVO MEDEVAC...

This won't be news to the cognoscenti by the time this hits the newsstands, but SOF wants to compliment the United States government for giving the army of El Salvador two Hueys for medical evacuations.

Before this, there were no medevac-dedicated helicopters in El Salvador. Since a fraction of their choppers were battle-ready at any time, wounded took a back seat to reinforcement and resupply.

These are humanitarian gifts the Salvadorans will not soon forget.



WAGES OF SOCIALISM...

According to a French SOF reader, the corps of cadets of *l'Ecole Speciale Militaire de St. Cyr* (the French military academy) has not been paid for three months, as of our April copy deadline for the August issue.

Hilaire du Berrier is fond of reminding us that Napoleon waged war throughout his reign, spent more money on education than on the army and his books always balanced.

STAR WARS POLL...

Gen. Daniel Graham has announced that 75 percent of polled voters approved "the development of a satellite system to defend the United States against nuclear attack."

Conducted by Arthur J. Finkelstein and Associates, the poll of 1,000 California voters found 70 percent of Democrats, and 82 percent of Republicans approved the statement.

U.S. VOLUNTEERS FOR KAREN BATTLE...

Conventional stateside news organs reflect their judgement that the Karen fight for survival is a private matter between the Burmese government and a handful of smugglers by ignoring the fight on the Thai border. SOF readers seem to disagree.

In spite of the lateness of the hour, we're still getting written and phoned offers from readers who want to go to the Ma Po Kay redoubt, at their own expense, to help the Karens battle Burmese tyranny. If the American government were as interested as Americans are, the Karens wouldn't be in this trouble.

HOPE FOR ZIMBABWE?...

Confounding unrealistic Western liberal hopes for a multiracial, pluralist democracy in Zimbabwe, Prime Minister Robert G. Mugabe is using a "state of emergency" to forge a single-party authoritarian state, according to the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, a leader of one of the old Zimbabwean black-nationalist groups. The terrorist war to rid Rhodesia of an effective white government has spawned a *de facto* dictatorship where opposition is denied access to the media, and opposition leaders disappear regularly.

Those who objected to the presence of foreign nationals in the Rhodesia Army should consider the presence of nearly 10,000 North Korean and Chinese troops backing Mugabe's Zimbabwe.



Golden Knights in free-fall formation. Red smoke allows spectators to follow jumpers' paths.



Golden Knight Prepares to land. Photos by Gary R. Winkler

GOLDEN KNIGHTS SILVER ANNIVERSARY...

This year the Golden Knights, officially known as the U.S. Army Parachute Team, celebrate their 25th anniversary as the Army's aerial demonstration unit. Formed in 1959 and still going strong, the elite parachutists have jumped in every state in the nation and in 32 foreign countries.

The members of the team are selected in a six-week tryout period and must demonstrate expert skill in the art of free-falling. Judged for their soldiering ability as well, many experienced paratroopers come from the ranks of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Posted at Ft. Bragg, N.C. — right outside Fayetteville — the Golden Knights will celebrate their silver anniversary by jumping at the nation's sport festivals and air shows. Information on their upcoming schedule can be obtained by writing to: U.S. Army Parachute Team, Box 126, Ft. Bragg, NC 28307

SOF EXPOSED...

SOF grabbed the cover and the center spread of the communist *World Magazine* of 17 March. Don't bother to buy the rag: You have better things to read.

But we are glad to have provided more excitement for *World Magazine's* audience than they usually get. After the shocking charge that SOF is anti-communist, the next most exciting coverage was of senile Communist Party U.S.A.'s general secretary Gus Hall's tour of an old Moscow light-bulb factory that has spent 50 years tooling up to make television tubes.

HO CHI MINH TRAIL TOUR...

Unbelievable as it may seem, the Vietnamese want to offer a uniform-provided hike of the Ho Chi Minh Trail as a tourist attraction. According to *Reuters*, visitors will pretend they are involved in an assault on U.S. and ARVN forces.

Let's hope Jane Fonda can get a job as a guide.

DCM GARANDS...

Good news and bad news for civilians who want to purchase Director of Civilian Marksmanship M1s: Minimum recorded round requirements will be dropped from 120 to 50, but the price of the Garands will be raised to \$165. If that inflation bothers you, compare the DCM M1 with the FN FAL. Contact the Director of Civilian Marksmanship, Dept. SOF, 20 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Rm. 1205, Pulaski Bldg., Washington, D.C., 20314.

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.



SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown confers with FDN military commander Col. Enrique Bermudez on shipping Nicaragua/El Salvador Defense Fund medical supplies and equipment to Contras. Photo by Mary Scrimgeour Jenkins

SECOND AMENDMENT FOR WOMEN...

The Second Amendment Foundation publishes a monograph series which is invaluable to the firearms-owners' rights activist and useful to the armed citizen. For most of us — the already-committed — perhaps the most useful book in this series is *Women's Views on Guns and Self Defense*.

Women's Views is a collection of essays for women, by women on the women's use of deadly force. SOF recommends you buy this book for any woman you know who needs help understanding there are times when only she can protect herself.

It is available for \$5.50 for one copy, or \$13.50 for three copies

Continued on page 106

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War in the Falklands . . .



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This Special Edition High Power Pistol was chosen for the Falklands Project because of its origin. Produced in Argentina, under license from FN/Browning; these military pistols are extremely limited in the U.S., and are no longer available from the importer. Since the P-35 was used by both sides during the Falklands conflict, it is a natural choice.

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(Due to limited supplies publisher reserves right to substitute Bonus Issues)

Kregg P.J. Jorgenson spent seven years in the Army, three in the infantry and four as a journalist. He served with Co. H, Rangers-LRRPs and the 1st of the 9th Recon Platoon, 1st Cavalry Division, between 1969 and 1970. But first he was a newbie:

WHEN I stepped off the plane that morning in Bien Hoa, it wasn't the sudden rush of heat that immediately caught my attention. It was the applause.

Off to the left of the terminal were 300 or so GIs wildly applauding our arrival. That is, they were applauding the arrival of our plane which, when refueled and prepped, would take them home.

While we located our duffle bags and made our way to the terminal we ran a gauntlet of cat-calls from the soldiers who'd soon be shuttling out of Vietnam.

"Fucking new guys!" they yelled. "Cherries!"

"Hey! New meat! Lookie them bullet-stoppers!"

And finally one ringing editorial from some unseen grunt in the background: "Good luck, assholes! You gonna need it!"

Luck? Yeah, sure. Why not? Hadn't the drill sergeants and TAC NCOs at Polk and Benning told us we'd need it over "in the 'Nam"? And that all the training in the world wouldn't be worth doodly squat unless Lady Luck was on our side? God, too, for that matter! Then, didn't they smile and laugh, saying that there wasn't any such thing as luck and God didn't want to get involved in this mess anyway?

Following the others to the terminal under the ushering of a young-looking second lieutenant and a bored senior NCO, I felt relieved to finally be in-country. The long flight over had been tiring and uneventful, nothing like I'd expected. No John Wayne hit-the-beach landings or Sgt. Rocks chewing cigars and swearing.

Instead we were led to a holding area and told to wait for the buses that would ferry us to the repple-depple. Buses? Ah well, we'd find the war soon enough. For now, though, we'd get our first good look at the 'Nam through new-guy eyes.

The Bien Hoa terminal wasn't much different from the one at McCord Air Force Base we'd left the previous day. It too reflected the clean, reasonably comfortable attitude of the Air Force. Designed to serve a specific purpose, it was spartan as terminals go, but still practical and well-suited to meet its needs.

Airmen dressed in starched jungle fatigues, pressed khakis and civilian garb wandered to and fro, while tired grunts, looking like Bedouins, slept awkwardly on packs as a loudspeaker droned out manifest numbers to strange-sounding destinations: Nha Trang, Tay Ninh, Phuoc Vinh.



I WAS THERE

Bush Bibles for Green Grunts

by Kregg P.J. Jorgenson as told to M.L. Jones

There were also salesmen in makeshift booths vying for the attention of the servicemen in the terminal.

"The Good Book!" a civilian salesman yelled from a small table he'd set up facing the new-arrival holding area. "Are you prepared to meet the Almighty with a clear conscience and the knowledge of His Word?"

Dressed in light cotton slacks and a Hawaiian print shirt, he was hawking large, white-vinyl-covered family Bibles the way a carnival barker might sell three shots for a quarter. He was also getting a few takers.

"How much are they?" a new arrival asked, studying the books with interest.

"Seventy-five dollars apiece, but this isn't just any book. It's THE Book! The Holy Bible, and just look at it, too! Each book is divided with a gold-bordered trim, each a shade deeper than the previous. It also contains several three-dimensional plates that are placed throughout to make you feel closer to Him! Look!" he said, thumbing through the pages until he found what he was looking for.

"There you go! Christ at the Last Supper!" he said to the new arrival, who was staring into the photograph, the brown eyes of the Lord following his as he studied the page from side to side.

"I dunno," the soldier said, hesitating. "\$75 is more than I have . . ."

"For the Bible?" The salesman's tone was damning.

"I won't have any money 'til the end of the month."

"You don't need any money!" the salesman said, reaching beneath the table and pulling out a long, white form.

"All you have to do is fill out this allotment form, and the \$75 will automatically be taken out of your pay at the end of the month. You won't even miss it!"

"I dunno." The soldier was hedging, so the salesman decided to go in for the close.

"What's your M.O.S.?" he asked, already knowing the answer. The kid's face was too nervous to be anything but infantry.

"Eleven Bravo," the soldier answered.

The salesman smiled and shook his head, a practiced, calculated maneuver.

"Infantry, huh? That means you're going out in the bush, in the jungle. There's a war going on out there," he said, swinging his right arm toward the terminal wall, "and you're going to be right in the middle of it! If you think you don't need to be closer to God, closer to the Almighty when you're this close to Hell, then that's your decision. If you don't need God, then you won't need His Word!"

"No! I didn't say that . . ." The new arrival was coming around.

"Look! You won't have to pay. It'll come out of your next pay check!"

"I won't have to pay?"

The salesman nodded. "Do yourself a favor; sign the form and take the Book."

Doing what he was told, the soldier quickly glanced over the form so as to look judicious and signed it where the salesman had placed an X next to the signature block.

"Thank you," the new arrival said, taking the book back to his seat.

The salesman smiled and nodded again. Then he went back to his pitch. After all, the carnival was still open for business, and he still had commissions to make.



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

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

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

STILL likely to be encountered almost anywhere in Southeast Asia, the Japanese Type 99 light machine gun is one of the few excellent small-arms designs to come out of WWII Japan. A refinement of the 6.5mm Type 96 machine gun, the Type 99 is chambered for the more potent 7.7x58mm cartridge.

During their forays against China in the early 1930s, the Japanese military concluded that their awkward hopper-fed Type 11 light machine gun was no match for the Czech ZB machine guns used by the Chinese. Gen. Kijiro Nambu, whose influence upon Japan's military small arms was not always for the best, set about designing a new light machine gun.

The result, called the Type 96, was an ingenious blend of the Hotchkiss gas system with features of the Czech ZB series and the British Bren gun. Extraction problems persisted throughout its history, however: An integral oiler was still necessary, but it was incorporated into the magazines rather than the gun's mechanism. The ammunition was reduced in power, also. While semi-rimmed 6.5mm rifle ammunition can be safely fired in the Type 96, stoppages are frequent. Thus, two different cartridges were forced into the logistic pipeline.

Top-fed, the Type 96 uses a 30-rd. staggered box magazine and fires from the open-bolt position. After cocking, with the nonreciprocating retracting handle, pressure on the trigger releases the operating rod/piston and bolt group, driving them forward as a round is stripped from the magazine. As the bolt seats home, the operating rod, which passes through the center of a frame-shaped locking block in the receiver, continues forward a short distance and cams the top of the locking block upward into a recess in the bottom of the bolt. After ignition of the cartridge by the firing pin, gas passes through the barrel's vent into the cylinder, forcing the piston rearward. At the end of a short amount of free travel, which allows pressures to drop to a safe level, the lock's cam surfaces drop away from the bolt, initiating primary extraction and the bolt's backward movement. An efficient recoil buffer stops all rearward travel.

The adjustable gas regulator has five positions. Full-auto is the only firing mode, and the cyclic rate is 550 rpm. The sights are offset, due to the magazine placement, and the rear sight is a drum type, like that of the Czech ZB 26 and Bren. A 2.5X optical sight was also available. The quick-change barrel has radial cooling fins throughout its entire length — a common characteristic of almost all WWII Japanese machine guns and an expensive means to solve the problem of heat dispersion. The



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Jap 99: Still Deadly After All These Years



Japanese Type 99 LMG equipped with 2.5X scope — sturdy, reliable and still in use after 40 years (author's collection). Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

gas regulator and carrying handle are permanently attached to the barrel. A bayonet stud — a useless appendage on an LMG — is fitted in back of the bipod, which is located in a sensible position about seven inches to the rear of the muzzle, under the gas regulator. The magazine well and ejection port have spring-loaded dust covers. The overall weight is 20.3 lbs., empty.

Although a considerable improvement over the Type 11 machine gun, the Type 96's weak 6.5mm cartridge left much to be desired. Seeking to compete with the .30-06, 7.92mm and .303 cartridges that reigned during this era, the Japanese adopted a 7.7mm rimless cartridge in 1939 that was ballistically comparable to its competition and dimensionally similar to the .303 British round, except for the absence of a rim. A modification of the Type 96 LMG, called the Type 99, was adopted in the same year, but was not fielded in quantity until 1943.

The Type 99 offered further improvements. An integral lubrication system was no longer necessary. The locking nut for the quick-change barrel also served to adjust headspace. The cyclic rate was increased to 800 rpm. Early models were equipped with a buttstock monopod, which was soon dropped. Most Type 99s have flash hiders, but a few were issued with the small hinged muzzle cap of the Type

96. The weight remained at 20 lbs. A paratroop version with a folding steel pistol-grip, removable buttstock and quick-change piston was issued in very limited quantities.

The Type 99 was fielded too late to significantly assist the cause of Japanese imperialism, and fewer than 100,000 were manufactured by the war's end in 1945. The year and month of manufacture of all Japanese WWII small arms is marked on the receiver below the serial number. The numbers represent the year of the Showa era, which began in 1925. To obtain the Western world date, simply add the number before the decimal point to the year 1925: e.g., 19.2 indicates manufacture in February 1944.

Very few Type 99 machine guns were brought to the United States after the war. However, large quantities of Type 99 rifles in caliber 7.7x58mm were, and both can still be fired without too much trouble. Norma imports both boxer-primed cases and loaded ammunition in this caliber (contact Outdoor Sports Headquarters, Inc., Dept. SOF, 967 Watertown Lane, Dayton, OH 45449), and cases can also be made by trimming and fire-forming .30-06 brass. The .331-inch bullet used in .303 British ammunition should be selected.

Used subsequently by the People's Republic of China, North Korea and even now lugged through the bush in Cambodia and Laos, the Japanese 99 continues to perform with the same deadly precision and reliability as it did long ago on the beaches of Tarawa. ☒

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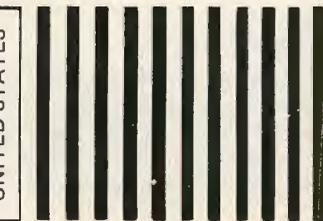
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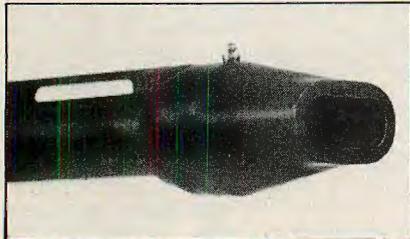
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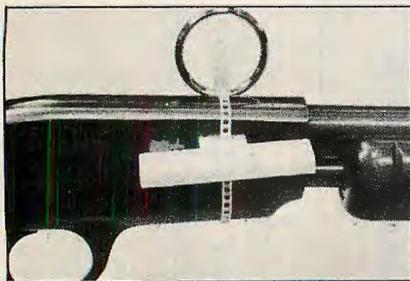
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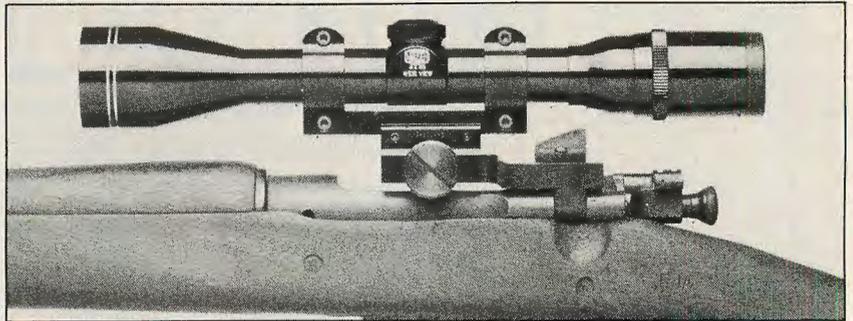
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SAFE AT HOME

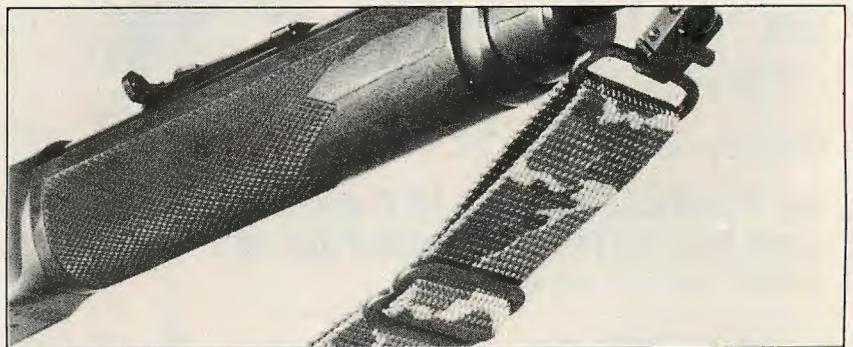
The Agape Gun Lock system consists of a 60-pound break-strength cable-tie, a plastic bolt-block, and a metal ring to break the cable-tie in case of need. The manufacturer claims small children cannot break the seal, and that the weapon cannot be fired with the device in place. With prices starting at \$1.98, including 10 cable ties, anyone can afford firearms safety. Agape Gun Lock, Inc., Dept. SOF, Box 11, Belmont, MI 49306.

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FRAGGING FONDA

Vets Sight in on Hanoi Jane

by John Lofton

POOOR Jane Fonda. She's being inconvenienced and harassed. In some cities where she was to have appeared to promote her latest line of exercise clothing, some stores have received threatening anti-Fonda phone calls. So, some stores canceled her appearance.

But Fonda's problem is small potatoes when compared to some of the inconvenience and harassment she caused to be inflicted on some of our former prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

For example, here's what ex-American POW Navy Lt. Cmdr. David Hoffman said happened to him when he refused to meet with Fonda when she visited North Vietnam in the early 1970s:

"I happened to be in a body cast, from the waist up with my arm out in front of me. I was placed on a table and then on a chair, which was on top of the table. And there was a hook in the ceiling.

"I think the height of the ceiling was probably 20 feet or so. The rope was strung around my arm, up around the armpit. Then I was placed upon the chair on top of the table. And the table was kicked out from under me. I dropped the length of this rope, so that I would come to a couple of inches off the floor.

"They would put the table and chair back under me and stick me up there again and drop me again, until I eventually came very close to passing out."

When stories began to appear detailing this kind of torture of our POWs, Fonda attacked *not* the communists, but their torture victims.

Calling the Vietnamese "a gentle people," she was quoted by one wire service as saying there was no reason to believe U.S. Air Force officers because they were "professional killers."

Taking issue with this report, Fonda complained in a letter to *The Washington Post* that what she actually said was that it was not a North Vietnamese "policy" to torture American POWs. There, now. That should certainly make all our tortured POWs feel better, right?

In an interview earlier this month on the *CBS Morning News*, Fonda took issue with those who "choose continually to dredge up the past," those who criticize her "politics." But she is far too modest. What she has engaged in over the past decade and a half is much more than merely "politics."

In November of 1970, the *Detroit Free Press* quoted Fonda as telling a Michigan State University audience, "I would think that, if you understood what communism was, you would hope, you would pray on your knees that we would someday be communist."

For many Americans, Fonda's most memorable starring role was not in a movie but in a piece of news film from North Vietnam in mid-1972. What this film clip showed was an obviously elated Fonda, laughing and wearing a helmet while seated in the gunner's seat of a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun.

It was on this same trip that she made numerous speeches carried by Radio Hanoi in which she called American soldiers "war criminals"; she called those communists killing our fathers, sons and brothers "heroic sons" fighting for "freedom" and she urged South Vietnamese troops to stop being used as "cannon fodder for U.S. imperialism."



EDITORIAL



Hanoi Jane Fonda sights through the scope of anti-aircraft weapon in famous photo taken during trip to North Vietnam in July 1972. Photo: UPI

In one broadcast to American GIs in South Vietnam — broadcast in English to Europe, Africa and the Mideast — Fonda even seemed to encourage dissident U.S. troops to murder their officers. Commenting on "fragging" — the throwing of a fragmentation grenade into the tent of a "gung-ho officer" determined to send his troops against those who are not really the enemy — she said that in America, however, "We do not condone the killing of American officers," the killing "of anyone." But, she said, "We do support the soldiers who are beginning to think for themselves." Get it?

And on a 1975 trip to, of all places, the Soviet Union, Fonda observed, "It's understood throughout the world that the major police states in the world are created by the United States."

Jane Fonda is one of the few people who have the perverse knack of being able to lie while complaining that the truth is not being told.

In a 7 September 1972 appearance on the *Dick Cavett Show* — while lamenting that "we're not being told the truth" about the Vietnam War — she declared that during the Nixon administration 40 million South Vietnamese were "killed, injured or made homeless."

This figure at the time was more than twice the entire population of South Vietnam. On the CBS program this month, Fonda stated that "hundreds of thousands" of American lives were "lost" in the Vietnam War. The correct number is approximately 55,000.

In her CBS interview, Fonda — who once characterized herself as "a revolutionary woman ready to support all struggles that are radical" — said that she planned to continue her tour promoting her exercise clothing because she's not used to "backing down to a few extremists."

Terrific. And there are obviously not a few "extremists" who are refusing to forget or forgive the *unrepentant* extremism of Jane Fonda.

And I say: God bless 'em each and every one!

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ELECTION '84

Keeping Arms Control Under Control

by Robert J. Caldwell

Last month *SOF* began its Election '84 series of editorials with Karl Phaler's analysis of the candidates' positions regarding the military. This month Robert Caldwell evaluates the candidates' stance toward arms control.

IN 1980, presidential candidate Ronald Reagan carried 44 states partly by charging — correctly — that the Carter administration had been too accommodating in arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. This year, Democrats will try to recoup by arguing that President Reagan has not been accommodating enough.

This notion should prove difficult to sell to the American people, not least because the facts so clearly indict Russians, not Reaganites, for sabotaging arms control. It was, after all, the Soviets who broke off all East-West arms negotiations last fall. Among the casualties of the Soviet walkouts: the strategic arms reduction talks (START), the Euro-missile negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear weapons, and the NATO-Warsaw Pact talks on reducing conventional forces in Europe. And it was the Soviets who, throughout the winter and spring, rejected every entreaty from Washington, Bonn, London, and Rome to reopen these negotiations.

The Reagan administration and NATO Europe have stood ready to resume talks unconditionally. By contrast, the Soviets demand that the Americans first remove the new Cruise and Pershing II missiles sent to Europe to counter the growing numbers of Russian SS-20 rockets. Inasmuch as the SS-20s and the new American missiles are the very subjects of the Euro-missile negotiations, the Soviet precondition has been properly judged unacceptable by the Reagan administration and the NATO allies.

The failure of these and previous arms control negotiations, plus the vivid fear-mongering of the disarmament/appeasement lobby, have fueled considerable public support for a "nuclear freeze." In theory, the freeze would permit both superpowers to keep the nuclear weapons they already possess while prohibiting the building of any new ones. Mondale, Hart, Jackson, and many other Democrats endorse the freeze, Reagan opposes it, and for good reason.

The nuclear freeze got its first big endorsement not from some muddled-headed pacifist but from the late Leonid Brezhnev, who publicly proposed a freeze in November 1979. Brezhnev advocated a freeze not because he craved peace and disarmament but because a freeze would stop U.S. rearmament and render the current Soviet nuclear advantages permanent.

And then there is the little matter of verification. Yellow rain, antiballistic missile radars in Siberia, and — by the Heritage Foundation's careful count — 39 other Soviet violations of existing arms control agreements tell us all we need to know about the Kremlin's willingness to cheat, even when the scale of that cheating must eventually result in discovery. A stack of SS-20s would fit nicely into a garage. A cruise missile would go under a desk with room to spare. How would U.S. intelligence verify Soviet compliance with a freeze? Answer: It could not.

But the freeze debate and arguments over the proper negotiating approach mask a more profound question about arms control, one that should be put center stage in this presidential election year. The decade and a half since arms control negotiations became a seemingly permanent feature of Soviet-American relations has witnessed an ominous, and hardly coincidental, shift in the East-West military balance. As recently as the late 1970s the United



States led the Soviet Union in almost every measure of strategic nuclear weaponry. Today, the Soviets lead in three-fourths of all the standard measurements of nuclear strength.

The Soviet Union has more and larger intercontinental ballistic missiles, more submarine-launched ballistic missiles, newer long-range bombers, and vastly larger strategic defense forces. Most ominous of all, only the Soviet Union possesses the kinds and numbers of nuclear weapons necessary for a first strike against hardened missile silos. Even the traditional American advantages in missile accuracy and total numbers of nuclear warheads are rapidly disappearing. The Reagan rearmament program is intended to halt and then reverse this relative erosion in American strategic strength, and the declining defense budgets that characterized the 1970s.

It cannot be denied that the arms control "process" contributed to this shift in strategic power in favor of the Soviet Union. Successive arms control agreements lulled Congress and the American people into a false sense of security. And that, in turn, diminished political support for spending the necessary sums for defense. As for the agreements themselves, most merely ratified the Soviet Union's growing strength and the relative decline of the United States.

It is precisely this dangerous and potentially disastrous process that candidate Reagan condemned and President Reagan has sought to terminate. In effect, Reagan is trying to rebuild America's strategic nuclear deterrent (as well as the nation's long-neglected conventional forces) so that negotiations with the Soviets can be conducted from a position of strength. Mondale and the liberal/left of the Democratic Party profess to find this approach somehow dangerously provocative. They will have trouble explaining how.

The Mondale-Hart-Jackson Democrats also lack a convincing answer for the biggest arms control question of all: What happens if Soviet actions demonstrate conclusively that the Kremlin views arms control only as a stratagem to deceive and weaken the West? If, as seems likely, that proves to be the case, Reagan's doctrine of peace through unquestioned strength will at least have provided a vital margin of safety. But where would the country be after a Democratic administration had unilaterally cancelled the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, and disowned any thought of building defenses against a Soviet missile attack?

COMMON sense and the Constitution make national security the federal government's paramount responsibility. The Reagan administration's policies on arms control are far more likely to safeguard that security than what the Democrats are offering. ❧

SOF HISTORY

BETRAYAL IN BURMA

War-Wearied Kachins Continue Uphill Battle

by Sterling Seagrave

Photos courtesy of AP/Wide World



Column of Kachins, armed with standard-issue Enfields and one Thompson submachine gun, move stealthily through Burma's jungles. The Kachins, veteran jungle fighters, were much feared by the Japanese for their stealth and ferocity.

This is the last in a three-part series on the struggles of the Karen, Shan and Kachin tribesmen to gain self-government from Burma's repressive regime in the years since World War II. "Karen Rebels in Burma" (SOF, April '84) described the Karens' embattled kingdom of Kawthoolei, which stretches across the southern tail of Burma from Moulmein south to the Thai border. In our June and July issues we interrupted the series to bring you Jim Coyne ("The Last Battle?") and Seagrave's ("Burma: The Battle Continues") bulletins on this winter's assault by the Burmese on Kawthoolei.

"Burma's Golden Triangle" (SOF, May '84) addressed the confusion of the Shan rebels with the armies of opium warlords: Burma's eastern plateau, the Golden Triangle, is the richest opium-producing region in the world.

THE trickle of international travelers in Thailand who make their way as far north as Mae Sai are greeted with an unusual spectacle. This small town on the Burmese border has enough well-stocked stores and shops to provide for the needs of a whole country. That is exactly what it does. This is where the people of Burma come for goods they cannot get at home under "the Burmese Way to Socialism."

Since 1962, when Burmese strongman Gen. Ne Win seized power and nationalized every business down to fruit stalls, the Burmese economy has been in a state of near-collapse. The population of some 32 million subsists on a black market worth a conservatively estimated \$300 million a year to its neighbors. Both China and Thailand do a whopping business supplying it. Every jungle village now has its tiny transistor radio made in the People's Republic, able to pick up heartwarming broadcasts from the PRC, and the lucky child can discard his dried opium-pod rattle for a Chinese rubber ducky modeled crudely after Disney's Donald. The lion's share of Burma's illicit trade is with Thailand, mostly through Mae Sai.

A cornucopia of consumer goods pours through here, everything from blue jeans and baby formula to bicycles and diesel engines. In return, the people of Burma flood Mae Sai with cattle, rice, magnificent antiques at preposterous prices, and the world's finest rubies, sapphires and jade.

Jade is next to opium as Burma's most valued export. The remote rebel country of North Burma is the world's center for jade, particularly along the Uru River, whose gorge cuts through veins of the green mineral. The region's rebel army is the primary exporter. They bring it down in pack trains, 80 pounds per mule, a trip that takes three months each way, and swim it across the Salween River to the Thai and Chinese buyers at Mae Sai. Every shop has some, even the Bata shoe store — big chunks, little chunks, some as big as your head.

The common "jade" used for most Oriental carving is just ordinary nephrite,



Setting up in a position which controlled one of the possible escape trails in Burman jungle, Kachin Rangers clear .30-cal. Browning LMG in preparation for action.

which can be found everywhere on earth. But the superior jade prized by gem dealers and collectors is jadeite and comes exclusively from Burma. Most of it reaches the world through Hong Kong because Chinese merchants come to Mae Sai to buy it from the rebels. The rarest and finest pieces are called "Peking Jade," because only this delicate green stuff was of sufficient quality to meet the expectations of the Imperial court and Mandarinate. It has been supplied exclusively from Burma for many centuries, primarily through mountain passes across the fabled Hump, to decorate the Empress Dowagers of the Middle Kingdom.

The rebel soldiers who bring this rich hoard down to Mae Sai and trade it for M16s, Kalashnikovs and M79 grenade launchers are no less remarkable. They are the people who provided America with its first guerrilla army behind enemy lines, the first secret U.S.-officered commando, espionage and sabotage force since George Washington's Rangers: the Kachins of OSS Detachment 101.

They are tough, sinewy mountain people who strongly resemble the famous Gurkhas of Nepal. The word Kachin is only the corruption of a nickname given to them by the lowlanders: "wild men." Ethnically, they are the Jinghpaw people who migrated here from Mongolia over the centuries from 200 B.C. to 800 A.D., moving through the passes from Szechuan Province. They are easily distinguished from the soft, languid lowlanders of the Mekong basin both by their high mongol features and their bearing.

These are men from the high cloud-country, an unexplored region along the eastern shoulders of the Himalayas, where the great rivers run east and south in foaming cataracts through deep gorges before reaching the broad plains of Southeast Asia. It is an area which few outsiders have ever seen. The several British scientists who went there before World War II, among them ornithologists and the botanist Kingdon-Ward, found a strange, lost world ringed by snowy mountains and filled with peculiar birds, butterflies, and beasts like the takin, which looks like it was patched together from five other creatures.

The OSS "discovered" the Kachins be-

cause of a handful of missionaries. An Irish Catholic priest and a few American Baptist missionaries had made their way deep into Kachin country during the early decades of this century, and were teaching school and ministering to souls when the Japanese Army swarmed over from Thailand in the early months of 1942.

As the British Army retreated into Assam, and Gen. Stilwell made his famous escape on foot through the impossible mountains, the Kachins rescued the stragglers and took them to the missionaries. Father James Stuart of St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society and his Kachins rescued scores of refugees, including British Tommies and American airmen. When the grateful British government called the 30-year-old Stuart out of the cloud-forest long enough to give him the Order of the British Empire, he came to the attention of Col. Carl Eifler of the OSS.



Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill (center) and two of his aides, Lt. Elbert Viron Higgins and Albert Bryon Higgins, of Adamsville, Texas. Merrill commanded and gave his name to the legendary Merrill's Marauders, who hacked their way through hundreds of miles of leech-infested malarial jungle in Burma.

In the spring of 1942, the OSS was just getting organized under William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan. One of Donovan's first jobs was to stop the Japanese advance before the Imperial Army overflowed into British India. He was also to do everything possible to pave the way for Stilwell and the British Army to fight their way back into Burma. The idea was for America's first intelligence agency to set up America's first guerrilla operation, and drop the first Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol agents (LRRPs) behind enemy lines. Britain was planning its own parallel operation slightly to the south under the strange military genius Orde Wingate.

Stilwell and Donovan chose Eifler as the man to head the LRRP force. He was a solid, beefy man with a voice like a wounded bull, a professional boxer and jujitsu master who had made a name for himself in the Border Patrol and as Deputy Director of Customs in Honolulu. With Eifler came Army Capt. John Coughlin and Ray Peers. Their unit was designated Detachment 101. Vinegar Joe Stilwell's instructions to Eifler were simple: "The next thing I want to hear out of you are some loud booms from behind the Jap lines."

Operating out of a cobra-infested tea plantation at Nazira in Assam, Eifler and Peers enlisted Father Stuart, and with his help trained the Kachin Rangers and dropped them with American officers hundreds of miles inside Japanese-held Burma. These sapper teams, run by young Americans like Vince Curl and Jim Tilly, played havoc with the 18th Division of Lt. Gen. Shinichi Tanaka and the 31st Division of Lt. Gen. Kotoku Sato, who were the determined field commanders of Gen. Renya Mutaguchi's formidable 15th Army.

It was the Kachin Rangers who introduced the Yanks to Punji sticks, the sharpened bamboo stakes smeared with shit and planted on both sides of jungle trails. When the Kachins then set up ambushes, the Japanese dove for cover and were impaled and poisoned. Many of the dirty tricks of jungle warfare that became well known in Vietnam were perfected 30 years earlier in the jungles of Burma.

By the time the first regular American military force reached the Asian mainland to join the fight against the Japanese, the irregulars of Detachment 101 and the Kachin Rangers had things ready for them. This U.S. Army unit, code-named Galahad, soon came to be called Merrill's Marauders after its commander, Brig. Gen. Frank Merrill.

The 5307th Composite Unit was its official designation, and it was composed of hazardous-duty volunteers and misfits dragged from guard houses throughout the Pacific Theater. There were 3,000 of them, and their single job was to hack their way into Burma and cut a hole in Tanaka's division. They were the only fighting men Stilwell had — the rest of Vinegar Joe's command consisted of Chinese armies that were clearly under orders from the Generalissimo in Chungking to minimize losses of men and



materiel by avoiding contact with the Japanese.

The objective of the Marauders was to fight their way south and capture the strategic airbase at Myitkyina ("Mitch" to the Americans). Once the Japanese were pushed out of Kachin country and this strategic airbase was in Allied hands, it would be possible for Stilwell's engineers to cut a road from Ledo in Assam to join the Burma Road, reopening the overland lifeline of Lend-Lease war supplies to China, which had been cut the year before with the fall of Burma.

The objective of OSS Detachment 101's Kachin Rangers was even tougher. They had to clear the way for the Marauders. They were the cutting edge of the spearhead.

The Kachins were unmatched as jungle fighters. They had a sixth sense that detected the Japanese long before their American officers could. They picked their way along faint tracks through otherwise impenetrable bamboo thickets and fields of elephant grass, moved light-footed up and down sheer cliffs and across ravines, and were undaunted by monsoon rains of 30 inches a day. They used crossbows and trip-lines to cut down enemy scouts, and taught the OSS agents to survive by eating termites, bees, monkey brains and the delicate lilies that grew on the carpeted jungle floor.

Hundreds of miles of leech-infested malarial jungle lay ahead of the Marauders, and in places it took them two weeks to cover as little as 30 miles. Their pack mules died and the men fell ill to fevers, snakebite and jungle ulcers that ate into their leg

A column of Merrill's Marauders marches along a trail in northern Burma, heading for action against Japanese. The Marauders' objective was to fight their way south and capture strategic airbase at Myitkyina, which would allow Stilwell to reopen the Burma Road so overland supplies could reach China again.

bones. Elephant leeches the size of black-jacks dropped onto them, while smaller ones wiggled through their clothes and gorged in their joints.

All the while, the Kachins provided flank security, scouted far ahead and gave early warning of enemy ambushes. When the bedraggled Marauders finally reached the airfield at Myitkyina, the Japanese were caught completely by surprise and the base fell immediately. The town of Myitkyina took a bit longer. It was one of the most famous battles of WWII. The heroic misery and near-mutiny of the Marauders became one of the legends of the war. OSS Detachment 101 became godfather of the CIA and all its field operations over subsequent decades. But what of the Kachin Rangers?

Ten thousand Kachins in all served with the OSS as Rangers, Scouts or in other capacities with the U.S. Army during WWII. Their adventures fill the books later written by the Americans who served with them, from the historical narrative of Ray Peers (*Behind the Burma Road*) to the novels of Tom Chamales (*Never So Few*). But when the war ended, the Kachins seemed to vanish into the jungle, never to be heard from again.

It is an old and tragic story. How many

times during the war, after being rescued from a Japanese ambush or pulled from the wreckage of downed aircraft, did Americans say a heartfelt thanks and swear to their rescuers that one day, when this was all over, they would come back and see the sons of these bighearted Kachin Rangers through American colleges, so they could take the blessings of technical civilization back to the cloud-forests of Kachinland?

Indeed, after the war, to fulfill this deeply felt obligation, the OSS veterans of the 101 Association collected a large sum of money for the Kachin people. This was to provide a technical school in Kachin territory and also to begin providing college education in America for a long string of young Kachins, who would then go home to develop the health services and natural resources of Burma's Kachin State, to introduce new crops or otherwise improve living standards.

But the first installment of this fund sent to Burma was confiscated by the Burmese government in Rangoon. The 101 Association prudently withheld the rest. During the decades that followed, years of upheaval and years in which American foreign policy in Southeast Asia was not deftly executed, Burma closed itself to foreigners. Burma's most promising leaders were assassinated, and in the chaos that followed, multiple rebellions broke out that fragmented the countryside.

Unlike other countries, it was never a clearcut battle between communist and non-communist forces. Burma had a confusing welter of Stalinists and Trotskyites as well as Maoists battling the inept central government. More important, there was a parallel

ethnic civil war being waged between Rangoon and all the hill-tribe groups that had little or nothing to do with communism. At issue instead was how the administration of the country should be shared between the lowland Burmans and the many minorities in the hill country.

When the British colonial government withdrew in 1947, the lowland Burmans had agreed to share power with the minorities. But they broke their agreement immediately, plunging the countryside into rebellion. The Burmans adhere stubbornly to this policy even now, 37 years later. As a result, the nation remains fragmented and miserable. Two-thirds of Burma is more or less under the control of its non-communist ethnic rebels. The Shans, Karens and Kachins control most of it, and the Mons, Chins and Arakanese smaller portions. Burma is a nation in name only.

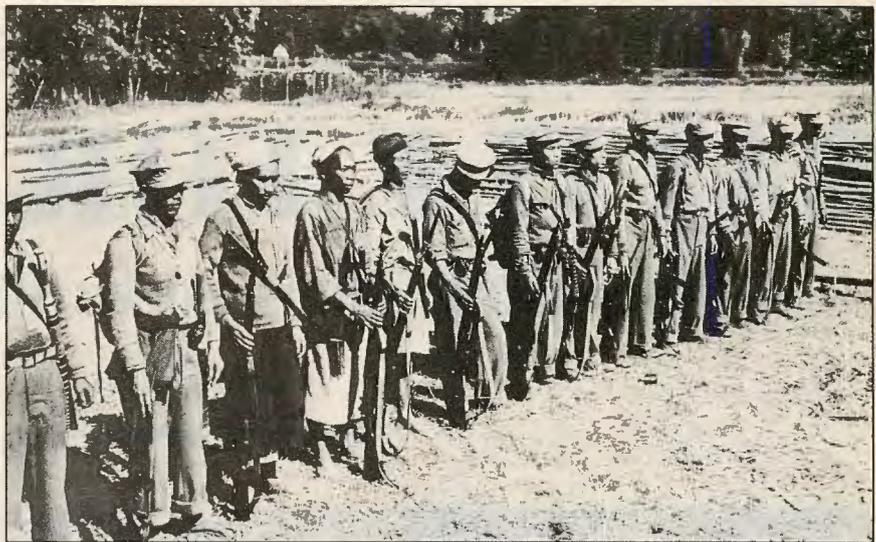
Nearly one-fourth of Burma — the whole northern panhandle — is essentially under the control of the Kachin Independence Army. Historically, this area was never controlled by the lowland Burman kings. The Kachins have never been humbled. During British colonial rule, the British wisely garrisoned only the big cities and towns, and left the countryside to the Kachins to administer. It is like that even today, for outside of those same heavily garrisoned cities, Burmese Army control is a hollow pretense. A total of 200,000 Burma Army soldiers are required to maintain that pretense in the Kachin area alone. But because the Burmans control the capital city of Rangoon, they have the political and diplomatic advantage and can pretend to control the whole country.

Maintaining this pretense costs the Burmans dearly. It is largely because of their refusal to make peace with the other ethnic groups that the economy is in a shambles and all social, economic or political progress is illusory or impossible.

The Kachins cannot make any progress either, because they are sealed off in Upper Burma, badgered by the Burma Army, and unable to strike any useful bargains with the outside world. On their western frontier is India, which cannot cope with its own problems in Assam. On the east is China, which demands a high price for its help.

Peking from time to time has offered to provide the Kachins with money, weapons and training, in return for backing the establishment of a "semi-autonomous" Kachin State. But the Kachins are wise enough to realize that there is no such thing as being half-eaten by a tiger.

Until 1966, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) held its own against the Burma Army. In that year the Burmans launched a brutal scorched-earth policy. Kachin villages and towns were attacked from the air with napalm, and troops slaughtered all livestock and burned the great majority of paddy fields. Sixty percent of all Kachin villages were destroyed. Tens of thousands of Kachin men, women and children were forced to escape into the remotest jungles where they were stricken by famine and



A squad of Kachin Rangers — *dahs* (bush knives) slung at their sides, grenades tied to their belts, and armed with a motley assortment of weapons — is augmented by trio of new recruits, who will exchange native dress for G.I. equipment after the drill.



Unmatched as jungle fighters, a column of Kachin rangers could cross little-known jungle trails over rugged mountains and slip to the rear of Japanese positions, providing flank security, scouting information, and giving early warning of enemy ambushes to Merrill's Marauders.

thousands died.

Those who stayed behind were the target of atrocities, including rape, mutilation and disemboweling. The central government cynically blocked all shipments of iodized salt to the region, where goiter is endemic. Foreign embassies in Rangoon received grisly reports but were fearful of arousing the anger of the Burmese strongman, so failed to draw world attention to the pogrom. Still, the Kachins refused to heel.

Eventually the Burma Army withdrew to its garrisons again, and the people came down from the hills. The KIA fought on as the years passed, carrying jade to Thailand in exchange for weapons, and sometimes opium as well. Under the military leadership of three brothers, Zau Seng, Zau Tan and Zau Htoo, and the political leadership of Brang Seng, the Kachins kept up guerrilla pressure on the Burmans into the 1970s,

when Zau Seng was murdered in Thailand by a hired Burmese assassin. The murder was a severe blow, but the Kachins had weathered much worse. Today, the struggle continues: The KIA leadership still maintains a safe house in Chiangmai and a heavy trade in weapons with Thailand.

The Kachins have never succeeded in getting any help from the United States, officially or unofficially, although numerous OSS alumni have risen to high positions in the State Department, the White House staff and the CIA, including Roger Hilsman, who served in Burma and became Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs. This has probably been a blessing for the Kachins, considering how badly America's other jungle guerrilla allies have fared over the years — the Hmong of Laos, for example.

Unfortunately, even private American citizens have not helped, although they could easily have done so through Chiangmai at any time. The Morse family of American Baptist missionaries remained stoutly with the Kachins through the bloodshed and the famine, and finally came out through Assam in the 1970s. Today they continue working in Chiangmai with the hill people, maintaining their contact with the Kachins through Mae Sai. But they are the only ones.

Along these same channels it would be possible to send *in medical supplies* and vitamins, or to bring out Kachin youths for school and college, and send them back the same way. But nobody has taken such an initiative. The former commandos of the OSS no longer do anything clandestine. At its annual meetings the IOI Association regularly talks about going back to visit someday, "when Burma opens up," but that day has been long in coming.

Meanwhile, a stalemate exists between the ethnic rebels and the Burma Army. The fate of the central government in Rangoon now turns on who will succeed strongman Ne Win when the malignant old man — now in his doddering 80s, and in a state of semi-retirement — finally goes to his karma. Maybe then, a lot of debts will be paid.



BATTLE FOR AMPIL

Khmers and Thais Force Viet About-face

by Jim Graves

Photos courtesy of *Bangkok Post*



REMEMBER the incident in *Patton* in which Patton (George C. Scott) asked a chaplain to write a prayer intended to end the snowstorms and foggy weather and allow the Air Force to support his assault on Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge?

The prayer worked: At least, the weather cleared. The Air Force bombed hell out of the Germans; Patton relieved Bastogne and the chaplain got a medal. When asked why he was giving him the medal, Patton replied, "Because that man's in good with God."

The same can be said for Son Sann, the leader of the Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF).

KPNLF soldier fires 60mm Type-31 (Chinese) mortar at Vietnamese troops near Ampil, Cambodia. Soldier in center awaits his turn with RPG-7.

In a late and surprising dry-season offensive, Vietnam launched a two-regiment attack against Ampil, the KPNLF's major camp, close to the Thai border, on 15 April.

Vietnam's sudden, massive assault sent over 30,000 civilians racing for the safety of the border and drove the camp's defensive lines back three kilometers in the first few hours. Thereafter, the battle settled down into a bloody stalemate, much to the surprise of everyone, including the KPNLF.

When the fighting started, Son Sann was in Europe, on a long-arranged tour aimed at obtaining support for his poorly backed organization. Son Sann accepted as true the initial press reports that Ampil had fallen. These reports, based on communist radio broadcasts from Phnom Penh and on rumors along the border, turned out to be wildly inaccurate.

Actually, the KPNLF was holding its own at Ampil, bringing in reinforcements from nearby camps and preparing to launch a counterattack. Son Sann rushed from Paris to Bangkok on 21 April and met that same day with his military commanders to boost morale and also with some Ampil refugees

at a camp just inside Thailand. He said, "I pray for you; I pray for rain, a lot of rain, because then you will be able to go back to Ampil."

Early the next morning, the sky was dark, threatening the type of rain that hadn't been seen for months in Cambodia, as three KPNLF battalions (the 221st, 216th and 217th) launched a counterattack from Ampil southeast toward Boeung Ampil (Lake Ampil), the outpost which the Vietnamese had overrun on 15 April. As heavy rain pounded down late that afternoon, the KPNLF punched through the Vietnamese lines to the shore of the lake, dealing Hanoi a serious propaganda and military defeat.

It would appear that Son Sann is in good with his god, too.

The attack against Ampil — a KPNLF headquarters and showplace, which had hospitals, schools, permanent housing, a cultural center, even an orchestra and ballet troupe — was part of a two-division general assault on Khmer resistance camps all along the 449-mile Thai-Cambodian border which started on 25 March.

Since 1978, the year the Vietnamese overthrew Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge government and installed a puppet government headed by Heng Samrin, the Vietnamese have been fighting on the Thai border. Immediately after the Khmer Rouge were forced out of Phnom Penh, they retreated to the heavily jungled hills of western Cambodia, and Pol Pot — an acknowledged madman who killed several million of his own people between 1975 and 1978, but also a military genius — began planning the guerilla war to throw the Vietnamese out.

The anti-Vietnamese resistance originally consisted of about 20,000 Khmer Rouge fighters, but they were soon joined by the pro-Western KPNLF and later a third faction, the *Armee Nationale Sihanoukiste* (ANS), loyal to former Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk, who took the field against the Vietnamese. From the beginning the Khmer resistance has kept highly visible camps for its civilian supporters on the Thai-Cambodian border.

Each year from 1979 through 1983, the Vietnamese launched operations against these camps in attempts to destroy the resistance's civilian base of support. The bases also serve as ports-of-entry for most of the resistance arms, which come from a number of diverse sources, but primarily from China. The Vietnamese attacks are always launched in the dry season (December to May) since, once the spring monsoon arrives, Cambodia's lack of good roads makes it difficult for the Vietnamese to operate the armor and trucks they now depend on.

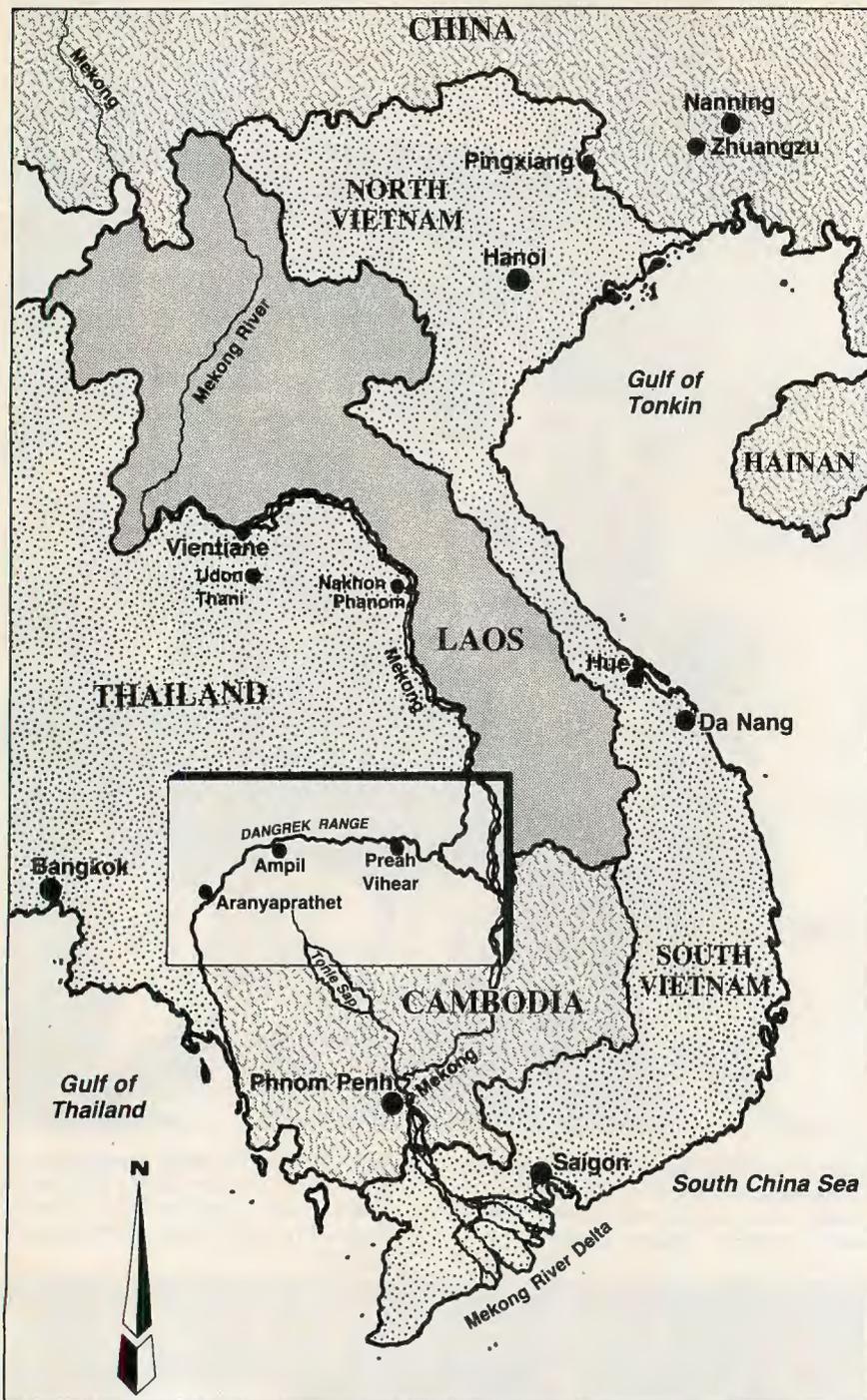
It appeared that 1984 would be different in that there would not even be a dry-season offensive against the border camps. Cambodia-watchers made that assumption after a series of daring raids were conducted by the resistance forces against Vietnamese supply lines, destroying a confirmed 10 million liters of petroleum oil lubricants (PLO) inside Cambodia. Although the Vietnamese



ABOVE: KPNLF fighter rescued dog from Vietnamese who had overrun outposts at Ampil camp. Soldier is armed with RPG-2 and is carrying a Chinese canteen.

BELOW: KPNLF officer directs team of RPG men to positions during defense of Ampil. Soldier at left has RPG-2, second from left has RPG-2 and fourth from left has RPG-7.





denied some of the attacks took place and disputed the success of the ones they admitted, other sources (including satellite photographs) indicated that, while the spectacular successes the Khmer resistance claimed were exaggerated, they had done enough damage to the Vietnamese logistics to make an offensive in 1984 unlikely.

But at least two Vietnamese divisions (the 302nd and 75th, along with some Heng Samrin puppet troops) went on the offensive in late March at widely scattered points along the Thai border.

The first major attack was directed at the Khmer Rouge camp atop hill 547 in Cambodia's Preah Vihear Province, which is opposite Thailand's Si Sa Ket Province and near the point where the borders of Thailand, Cambodia and Laos meet.

The Khmer Rouge camp on hill 547 sits tight against the Thai border, and to assault it successfully the regimental-size Vietnamese attacking force (supported by 10 T-54 tanks and artillery) had to send out a flanking force of some 500 men and two T-54 tanks.

The flanking maneuver brought the Vietnamese and Thais to odds over the ends of their gun barrels since the flanking maneuver took the Vietnamese into Thailand. The Vietnamese objective was the occupation of hills 642 and 581, from which they could support the assault on hill 547 and cut off the Khmer Rouge line of withdrawal.

Hill 581 is disputed terrain on the ill-defined Thai-Cambodian border — Thai maps as recent as 1982 show it as being in Cambodia, but the all-important current Thai Army maps show it in Thailand. Hill 642 and the Para Phali Pass, which the Vietnamese came through, are in Thailand on everybody's maps.

When the Thais discovered Vietnamese sitting atop their hills 642 and 581 on 25 March, artillery men from the 6th Thai division fired warning shots from 105s and 155s. When the Vietnamese failed to move back, the Thais went in with A-37 jet airstrikes and a ground force of four infantry battalions, supported by one artillery battalion, one battalion of M48-A5 tanks and some small units from the Border Patrol Police and Special Forces.

Thai artillery knocked out the two T-54 tanks, but the Vietnamese booby-trapped them and the surrounding area to prevent the Thais from retrieving them and thus proving to the world the Vietnamese had actually invaded Thailand. Eventually, the T-54s were dragged off by the Vietnamese.

The 500-man Vietnamese force, which had come through the Para Phali Pass (only a few meters wide in some places), penetrated as deep as four to five kilometers into Thailand, and Vietnamese 122mm and 130mm guns shelled Thai villages as far as eight kilometers inside Thailand.

The commanding officer of the Thai Second Army Region, Maj. Gen. Issarapong Noonpakdi (a Thai hero from the Vietnam War), attributed the overwhelming

Thai victory to the quality of his troops, the poor morale of the Vietnamese and the damage done to Vietnamese supply lines by Khmer Rouge fighters deeper in Cambodia before and during the battle. Thais claim to have killed 200 Vietnamese while losing 10 Thai KIA and 30 WIA. Khmer Rouge casualties and the losses the Khmer inflicted upon the main Vietnamese assault troops on hill 547 — which were taken by the Vietnamese — are unknown.

Thai military authorities admitted that some of their claimed 40 Vietnamese prisoners (only 17 were seen by the press) were handed over to them by the Khmer Rouge, but other Vietnamese became prisoners when they just walked across the border and gave themselves up. The Vietnamese units in Cambodia doing most of the fighting are composed of South Vietnamese draftees.

While the Thais were winning the battle of Para Phali Pass, the Khmer Rouge received some loud and significant support from its Chinese backers in the north.

In 1979, when the Vietnamese tossed the Khmer Rouge out of Cambodia, China responded by invading Vietnam with a force estimated at around 500,000 men in what China referred to at the time as a "lesson." Much to the surprise of the Chinese, the Vietnamese first gave ground and then held their own in the month-long battle.

Since then there have been periodic reports of cross-border shelling which may or may not have occurred. One Hong Kong-based journalist with good contacts inside China told SOF the reports were nonsense, in most cases a matter of "Oriental face-saving."

"One side accuses the other of having fired across the border," he said, "and because of 'face' the one who is accused responds with 'Yes, we shelled them, but only because they shelled us.' It's generally nonsense."

On 2 April it quit being a game of face as Chinese artillery men, firing 122mm guns, opened up all along the 1,200-kilometer China-Vietnam border. Between 2 April and 9 April, some 20,000 rounds were fired against the half-million Vietnamese troops dug in along the border. The Vietnamese fired back with their artillery, and on 7 April both sides claimed the other had resorted to ground attacks at Pingxiang and Lang Son Province, northeast of Hanoi and quite close to Friendship Pass, the point at which many of the arms that supported the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War came through. The Vietnamese accused the Chinese of sending soldiers "to nibble at Vietnamese territory" while the Chinese claimed they caught a small party of Vietnamese on their side of the border trying to lay mines.

Nonetheless, the events of 2-9 April indicate that the Chinese are going to continue to apply military pressure against the Vietnamese anytime the Vietnamese move against the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia — and that makes it quite costly for the Vietnamese, who must keep most of their best divisions tied up defending North Vietnam



from the possibility of another "Chinese lesson."

The following week the Vietnamese in Cambodia moved against Khmer Rouge, KPNLF and ANS camps further to the west of the first battle. A small battle broke out on 12-13 April between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese troops from the 59th division at Phnom Malai, just east of Aranyaprathet, Thailand. The fight was over a water source located in Cambodia. The Vietnamese had captured the water source on 6 April against light resistance, but on 12-13 April a 700-man Khmer Rouge force assaulted the Viets, knocking out one T-54 and killing 105 while losing 39 KIA.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk's ANS has its major camp at a location known as Green Mountain, near Tatum and some 50 kilometers west from the Para Phali Pass. Some 25,000 civilians and 4,000 soldiers were in the Green Mountain camp around 12 April when the Vietnamese moved at least three battalions and some tanks close to the camp. The civilians were evacuated and, since a successful attack against Green Mountain would require the Vietnamese to cross over into Thai territory, no attack was launched.

But the Vietnamese hammer came down hard on 15 April as soldiers from the 751st and 752nd regiments of the 75 Vietnamese division assaulted Ampil, the KPNLF headquarters camp.

The Vietnamese assault came the day after the Khmer New Year's celebration — shades of Tet '68. On the Khmer New Year (which is also celebrated in Thailand under the name Song Kran) the Khmers roam around dousing each other with water — the celebration is related to the return of the monsoon — and, of course, getting a little bombed.

One version of what happened was that Heng Samrin puppet troops were able to infiltrate the less-than-alert KPNLF positions around the outpost at Boeung Ampil around 0400 on 15 April.

Whatever happened, when the fighting started at four, the KPNLF troops at the outpost found communist troops behind and

in front of them. The KPNLF defenders managed to get back to the main camp by moving around the attacking communist forces which had stalled in front of Ampil's defensive lines.

At least 30,000 civilians abandoned the camp in a rush to the Thai border, made most desperate by heavy Vietnamese shelling which started just after daylight on the 15th. The Vietnamese pounded the camps with 130s, 105s, 155s and mortars for two days, then launched another infantry assault on the morning of the 17th, which drove the KPNLF back several hundred yards toward the main camp. The KPNLF counterattacked on the 19th and came close to retaking their former positions, but they were driven back by artillery.

On the 20th, Heng Samrin troops launched what KPNLF fighters described as



Thai soldiers from 6th Division taking break after battle of Para Phali Pass.



ABOVE: KPNLF soldier moves toward Ampil with RPG-7. BELOW: Thai turret-mounted dragoon 300 (APC) with MG3 on top supports troops engaged at Para Phali Pass.



a desperate human-wave attack which failed to crack the KPNLF defenses.

Son Sann arrived at the front on 21 April; the three-battalion counterattack came the next day and reached the outpost late in the afternoon as the rain started. Friendly radio intercepts revealed that Vietnamese forces were "very low, almost out of Class III [artillery] and Class I [small arms and food] supplies." Resupply would have taken days because of damage to supply routes.

Although the Vietnamese may continue attacks against Khmer resistance forces, it was clear that once Ampil held and the rain started, the dry-season offensive was essentially over for 1984.

The Vietnamese lost hundreds of men — although the KPNLF claim that they pulled 13 truckloads of dead Vietnamese out of Ampil should be taken with some salt — had two and possibly three T-54 tanks destroyed, were trounced soundly by the Thais at Para Phali Pass, were battered by Chinese guns in the north and, most embarrassing, were not able to overrun Ampil. The only clear victory for the Vietnamese came

against the Khmer Rouge camp on hill 547, near the Para Phali Pass. That in itself is hardly a significant victory since the Khmer Rouge will either just move their operations to another hill or reoccupy the camp when the rain drives the Vietnamese out.

The Vietnamese did force almost 80,000 Khmer civilians to cross over the Thai border. That will put a serious strain on refugee programs in Thailand, but eventually the Khmers will cross back over into their camps in Cambodia, just as Son Sann said.

Thai first army division commander, Maj. Gen. Phichit Kullavanijaya (Gen. Pete to his friends), said the Vietnamese failed to capture Ampil because the Vietnamese troops were harassed constantly behind the lines by the resistance; the KPNLF and KR had done so much damage to the Vietnamese line of logistics that the Vietnamese couldn't get enough ammunition or reinforcements through to press home their attack; and the rain came earlier than it has in recent years.

Maj. Gen. Phichit also credited the KPNLF fighters' courage, morale and willingness to fight and hold their ground as

factors behind the Vietnamese failure at Ampil.

It is hardly likely that the KPNLF and Khmer Rouge, which carried out most of the preemptive strikes against the Vietnamese early in the dry season, will overlook the effect that had on the Vietnamese, either.

The 75th Vietnamese division was scheduled to attack Ampil in February, but the attack was cancelled when the 75th was rushed to the Tonle Sap (a lake in central Cambodia) area to fight KPNLF and Khmer Rouge guerrillas operating against Siem Reap and Sisophon, key cities on the Vietnamese logistic line. Fighting in that area was so heavy that the Vietnamese resorted to air strikes — using Mi-8 helicopters and modified Antonov-26 airplanes — for the first time in the battle against the resistance forces. Some sources in the ANS (Sihanouk's troops) have reported that the Vietnamese were using toxic gasses against resistance troops deeper inside Cambodia, and there have been some reports from the Tonle Sap area that the Vietnamese are even spraying defoliants.

It seems certain that the resistance force attacks against fuel dumps, ammunition dumps and troop concentrations in the interior played a big role in both delaying and limiting the effectiveness of the Vietnamese border offensive.

It is unlikely that the Vietnamese will stop their yearly dry-season offensives against the Khmer resistance since the troops are South Vietnamese draftees and the money comes from the Soviet Union. But the results of the 1984 offensive don't indicate any bright future for them.

In 1980 the Vietnamese overran the KPNLF camp at Kralor at a time when the KPNLF could put only 2,000 fighters in the field. In 1984 the KPNLF can put 14,000 troops in the field, and Son Sann claims to have another 7,000 men who are trained but for whom he cannot afford rifles. The Khmer Rouge has grown from perhaps 20,000 fighters in 1979 to close to 45,000 fighters today, while the ANS has about 7,000 troops. But the really significant point of 1984 was that 3,000 to 4,000 KPNLF held off the same number of Vietnamese at Ampil, even though the Vietnamese with their 130mm and 105mm guns had a significant weaponry advantage over the artilleryless Khmers.

The Viets will probably be back in 1985 since there is no diplomatic solution on the horizon, but by 1985 the Khmer resistance will be bigger and better than ever and, if they stick to the same game plan, they will be launching preemptive strikes ever deeper into Cambodia to take the sting out of the Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese appear to have only one asset that could change the equation — air power — and for a lot of reasons it is unlikely that the considerable air assets of Vietnam will be directed against the Khmer resistance camps.

As Thai Maj. Gen. Phichit explained,

there are no pilots among the Heng Samrin puppet troops; the Vietnamese don't trust their own pilots not to defect when they get near a non-communist border and, finally, they know the Thais would blast them out of the sky if they violated so much as an inch of Thai airspace.

Diplomatically, Hanoi was busy in the months before the 1984 offensive, trying to drive a wedge between the various elements of the Khmer faction and their prime supporters, China and the ASEAN nations (Association of South East Asian Nations: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) over the Pol Pot issue. The Vietnamese approached several governments in Southeast Asia with the idea that they might be more receptive to a diplomatic settlement if the Khmer resistance groups would first get rid of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot. There is little love for Pol Pot — even the Chinese have made some hints that Pol Pot running things in Cambodia is not the optimum solution — but all the Khmer leaders and governments supporting the resistance movement realize that any attempt to oust the powerful Pol Pot would be impossible and only result in the break-up of the resistance coalition.

Cambodia watchers are now saying that when the diplomatic overture failed so badly, Vietnam opted for a late, almost desperate offensive. It would appear that the Vietnamese miscalculated how much damage had been done — and would be done — to its supply lines, and badly underestimated the fighting ability of the KPNLF.

Son Sann, just before he returned to Paris on 28 April, appealed to the United States to "actively participate in opposing expansionist aggression" and, while it is highly unlikely that President Reagan would involve the United States in any active way in the resistance, the United States has already moved to prop up Thailand's defenses in the wake of the latest Vietnamese assault. Reagan has approved, among other things, the sale of F-16 fighters to the Thais, which would give them control of the skies in any head-to-head confrontation with the Vietnamese.

But while the United States is unlikely to become openly involved in supporting the resistance, it is virtually certain that other Southeast Asian governments will increase support of the Khmer resistance based on the fact that it is showing some true capability to damage the Vietnamese.

Three days after the KPNLF drove the Vietnamese out of Ampil, I was in Udon Thani, in northeastern Thailand, visiting with Jimmy the Belgian, a merc who started in the Congo and wound up in Southeast Asia, and Tony Poe, who started fighting at Iwo Jima and finished as a legend and then some in the CIA's secret war in Cambodia. We were sitting around under Jimmy's tin-roofed porch, sipping some cognac I had brought, talking about old times in Cambodia. Tony was griping at Jimmy for not having any Mekong whisky, thereby forcing us to drink cognac, and analyzing, in his



ABOVE: Vietnamese soldier in pen probably was captured by Khmer Rouge in battles around Para Phali Pass. His AKMS hangs on fence. BELOW: KPNLF soldier fighting for Son Sann watches over wife and child at refugee camp first-aid station.



own way, our loss in Indochina. Politicians, journalists, bad generals and weak civilians all got their fair share of abuse, and then Tony said reflectively, "We're anachronisms, you know. The fighters who lost, who have no place to fight and are too old, anyway."

Seconds after he said it, the rain started beating furiously but pleasantly on the tin roof.

As Tony continued, I took another sip of

cognac, leaned back in my chair, listened to the rain and thought about old Charlie. I realized that somewhere out there in the dark in Cambodia, Charlie was sitting in some goddamned trench, munching on sticky rice from a bamboo tube and shivering his ass off in the rain.

Charlie won a couple of big ones, but then — possibly because he didn't know what else to do — he invaded Cambodia and just may have taken on one too many tigers. ✕

MADE IN TAIWAN

T65: Copycat Technology at Its Worst

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

ANOTHER entry is now poised at a run for the roses in the already overcrowded 5.56mm assault rifle sweepstakes. Unfortunately, the T65 rifle, manufactured by the relatively unknown Combined Service Forces at the Hsing-Ho Arsenal in Kao-hsiung, Taiwan, leaves the starting gate from a decidedly outside track position.

Looking only vaguely like the M16 in external appearance, the faint resemblance is not just skin deep. Presently in service with the Republic of China's Marine Corps, military police and Airborne/Special Forces (in replacement of the M14 rifle), a single specimen of the T65 was recently imported by ARMEX International (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 252, Broderick, CA 95605) and transferred to me for test and evaluation.

The T65's upper receiver is a T-6 aluminum forging which has been crudely machine-finished. Gone is the M16's distinctive carrying handle. The rear sight is of the double-aperture flip type, protected by two sturdy ears milled into the upper receiver forging. The apertures are not marked for range. Windage adjustment is by means of a large knurled knob on the right side. More convenient to manipulate than the M16's, it is, therefore, far more likely to be tampered with incorrectly by troops in the field. The cocking system is identical to the M16. The spring-loaded dust cover over the ejection port is a Colt-manufactured M16 part. There is no forward bolt assist (a feature of dubious value).

The lower receiver is an alloy casting identical to the M16 in all regards — even to inclusion of the winter trigger guard. Both upper and lower receivers have been finished with baked, semi-gloss black enamel. The two components are held together by two removable pins in the same manner as the M16. The trigger mechanism,





T65 fed just as well (or badly) from Colt-type 30-rd. aluminum issue magazine.

bolt catch, pistol grip, selector switch and magazine retention system are that of the M16 also.

The hole cut into the right side of the lower receiver to accommodate the magazine catch-release button was milled .025 inch oversize on the sample I received. This permitted the magazine catch to wobble sideways when jarred during the firing sequences, invariably freeing the magazine which moved upward to block forward travel of the bolt carrier. Mildly irritating during the test and evaluation, this defect would acquire catastrophic proportions in combat. An indication of abysmal quality-control standards, the problem could be remedied by fabrication of a larger release button.

The T65 accepts all M16-type magazines. In addition to the 30-rd. Colt-type, aluminum magazine supplied

Flawed, distinctive T65 rifle equipped with transparent plastic DME 30-rd. magazine.

with the rifle, two others were tested. The excellent Sterling 40-rd. magazine, distributed by Lanchester U.S.A., Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 47332, Dallas, TX 75247), fed like butter and will deservedly find great favor with those military forces that have adopted the M249 (FN MINIMI) SAW. A 30-rd. transparent plastic magazine manufactured by Defense Moulding Enterprises, Inc. (Carson, Calif.) was also employed without stoppages that could not be attributed to the rifle's faulty magazine catch system. Some of these DME transparent magazines were recently combat tested in Angola by certain units of the South African Army. They functioned flawlessly and were well-received by the SA troops, since it is at least comforting, if nothing else, to see how many cartridges remain. Recently popularized by the transparent magazines of Steyr's AUG series, the concept dates back more than 80 years to the "Cartridge Counter" versions of the Model 1902 Swiss-type Luger pistol.

The T65's buttstock, fabricated from high-impact plastic with a black wrinkled finish, is the same length as the M16's. A sweeping hump at the bottom rear distinguishes it from the M16. A storage compartment for cleaning equipment is reached through a trap-door in the buttplate, exactly as on the M16A1 rifle. The stock also houses and retains the recoil spring and buffer, in M16 fashion. The recoil spring is shorter than the M16's.

The buffer, identical in length and configuration to the M16A1, appears to be made of unhardened aluminum alloy. It was chipped and battered severely by the bolt carrier after only 500 rounds.

The front and rear sling swivels are of the Colt type,



**"Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present work of present man —
A wild and dream-like trade of blood
and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a
smile."**

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Ode to Tranquillity**



SOF's Military Small Arms Editor Peter G. Kokalis tests Taiwanese T65 assault rifle.

but have been attached to permit sideways rotation. As a consequence, they clatter incessantly and seriously compromise position disclosure. Such noise is potentially fatal on patrol, and the sling swivels should be removed. British SAS units remove sling swivels from their SLRs (Self Loading Rifle: FAL).

The barrel and "bird cage" muzzle device are Colt-manufactured. The 20-inch, Colt-marked barrel has the standard six grooves with a right-hand twist of 1:12 for M193 ammunition.

The gas block housing has been sweated on and pinned to the barrel. Its dimensions and shape differ considerably from that of the M16. The front sling swivel is attached to the bottom aft portion of the gas block.

The integral bayonet lug is at the bottom forward end of the gas block and will not accept the U.S. M7 bayonet. The Type 65 bayonet is 1.5 inches longer than the M7 bayonet. The bottom edge is fully sharpened. Only 4.75 inches of the upper edge is sharpened. The handle is scored for a more secure grip when used as a utility knife — the bayonet's most-frequent use these days.

The front sight is an adjustable post M16-type, sans the "UP" and arrow markings. Heavy protective ears shield the front sight post from damage.

The T65 is also equipped with tritium (betalight) night sights. Also unmarked, they appear to be zeroed for 100 meters. In use, at dusk or night, the front betalight is folded up to expose a thick vertical bar, which is aligned between the two luminous dots of the rear betalight. When the rear tritium sight is flipped up for use it clears the rear peep sight completely. This is a mild improvement over the Galil which requires placement of the rear sights in an offset position midway between the two apertures. Night sights such as these are sometimes useful for fighting under conditions of adverse light and should have been included on the new PIP (Product Improved Program) M16A2 rifle.

The racy looking, ribbed, black plastic handguards also serve to distinguish the T65 from its M16 antecedent. The bottom handguard is more or less permanently attached to the retaining brackets and should be left undisturbed, except by an armorer. The top handguard

is held in place by a single bolt threaded to the rear retaining bracket. While easier to remove than the infamous M16 handguards, the bolt all-too-often vibrates loose during firing sequences. Alas, all that glitters is not aluminum. What appear to be aluminum heat shields when peeking through the handguards' vent holes are nothing more than painted undersurfaces. As a result of this foolish attempt to cut some corners, T65 forearms most frequently become too hot to handle during full-auto fire. The six vent holes each on the top and bottom handguards merely direct hot exhaust gases onto the shooter's support hand.

The T65's gas operation has been patterned directly from the ArmaLite AR-18. The gas block's vent is located 6.75 inches from the muzzle and 12.75 inches from the chamber face. The 2-inch-long stainless steel cylinder is mounted .31 inches above the barrel and has three gas rings. A 2.75-inch-long female piston with four vents fits over the cylinder. After the female piston has moved rearward .63 inches, gas is evacuated through the four vents. The actuating rod is in two parts to ease disassembly. A short 1.75-inch head fits into the 11.25-inch main rod around which is housed the actuating rod's return spring. The gas system is quite similar to the WWII German G43 rifle.

As the actuating rod moves backward it imparts a short, impulsive blow to a protrusion on top of the bolt carrier. The T65 bolt carrier resembles that of the M16 except that this solid protrusion has replaced the M16's gas key. The M16 of course uses no piston whatever, but a tube through which the gases travel into the gas key to then impinge directly on the interior of the bolt carrier. While gas systems like that used on the AR-18 and T65 are marginally cleaner, the M16 is no less effective when properly maintained.

The T65 bolt has seven locking lugs and an ejector, extractor and retaining pin of the M16/AR-18 type. The three gas valves required in the M16 are naturally absent. The firing pin is also from the M16 and held in place by the same kind of pin.

At 7.6 lbs., empty, the T65 is well balanced and offers excellent handling characteristics. The overall length is 38.75 inches. The trigger pull is a crisp 6.25 lbs. Although the cyclic rate hovers around 750 rpm, consistent two-shot bursts with high hit probability are mastered with ease in the full-auto mode. Both the speed of target acquisition and accuracy potential approximate that of the M16. Case ejection is to the right and rear, and all the empty brass is deposited in a small, neat pile — six feet from the firing point.

All stoppages incurred during the 1,000-round firing test were a consequence of the previously described, improperly fitted, magazine catch system.

The T65 is unlikely to ever be seen in significant numbers outside of Taiwan (unless it is used in an invasion of mainland China). A small country's attempt to provide an indigenous solution to its military small arms requirements, the T65, while interesting, fails in almost all regards to meet the standards set by current state-of-the-art weaponry, such as the new M16A2.

It appears, in fact, that the T65 is already being replaced by the T68 assault rifle, a blatant and unauthorized copy of Steyr's AUG based on specimens smuggled out of Saudi Arabia. These intrigues from the international arms bazaar often remind me of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge who said,

"Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present work of present man —
A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile."

Ode to Tranquillity





T65 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: 5.56mm NATO, M193 ammunition

Weight, empty: 7.6 lbs.

Length, overall: 38.75 inches

Barrel length: 20 inches — six groove, right-hand twist, pitch of 1 turn in 12 inches

Sights, front: adjustable post type with protective ears

rear: double aperture flip type, adjustable for windage

night: folding, with tritium dots and bar

Cyclic rate: 750 rpm

Method of operation: gas-operated with actuating rod, seven-lug rotary bolt, fire from closed bolt position, bottom fed magazines of the M16 type

Manufacturer: Combined Service Forces, Hsing-Ho Arsenal, Kao-hsiung, Taiwan

Status: Currently in service with the Taiwanese Marine Corps, military police and Army Airborne/Special Forces



1, T65 rifle: international ancestry, but strictly local market. 2, T65 receiver section: Lower receiver is an exact duplicate of the M16's alloy casting and components. 3, Distinctive T65 gas block assembly which also holds the front post and (folded down) night sights, bayonet lug and front sling swivel. 4, Wrinkle finish and bottom swell distinguish T65. 5, Tritium night sight is shown in the up position. 6, Easily manipulated windage knob mounted on the right side of the rear sight will result in incorrect settings in the field. 7, Flipped-up luminous bar blocks front post. 8, T65 barrel and "bird cage" muzzle device are of Colt manufacture.



SOF EXCLUSIVE

SUPER GUN II

Hackathorn Tests S&W's Long-Awaited .45

Text & Photos by Ken Hackathorn

FOR the past two decades rumors of a Smith & Wesson-manufactured .45 ACP caliber pistol have circulated in the shooting world. The one big gap in the S&W catalog has been the listing of a .45 auto-pistol. Word is out: Smith & Wesson will introduce in 1984 a Model 645 pistol chambered for the .45 auto round. First production runs of the M645 will probably be in late 1985.

SOF has tested a production prototype Model 645 pistol. This new S&W autoloader looks like a real winner. Smith & Wesson has made its name famous in the production of fine revolvers. In the past 10 years it has also made a strong attempt to get a big chunk of the auto-pistol market by expanding the design concept of its original Model 39 9mm double-action service pistol. From the M39 came the 15-shot Model 59 auto. Later we saw stainless-steel versions of both. One of the hottest-selling auto-pistols in America today is the excellent, small compact version of the S&W Model 649. Currently, the M459 pistol is one of the top contenders in the U.S. Military XM9 pistol trials. It was thought that the 9mm Parabelum pistol would replace the .45 ACP caliber weapons in the police and military market. For U.S. police use, the .45 auto has remained ever popular, and the S&W marketing people have made a wise decision to market the M645 auto pistol in .45 ACP.

Smith & Wesson built experimental .45 auto prototypes in the early 1960s. This design was basically a modified Model 52 target pistol set up to use .45 185 gr. wad-cutter match ammo. By mid-1981 Tom Campbell of S&W Research and Development had made a prototype .45 auto pistol dubbed "Supergun II."

Campbell tested his .45 S&W prototype in IPSC competition, and as one of the world's best practical pistol shooters, the S&W .45 auto was given a real workout. Some questions remained as to whether Smith & Wesson would actually produce the .45. Now in the spring of 1984, Smith & Wesson has made the decision to market the M645 in a slightly modified form from the pistol that Campbell has used for the past two years so successfully.

The S&W Model 645 is a stainless-steel, double-action, .45 caliber pistol. Overall length is 8.5 inch, barrel length is five inches, and the weight empty is 39 ounces. The M645 is 7.69 inches in height, and has a grip width of 1.14 inches. The M645 nearly equals the Colt .45 Government Model in overall size and weight. The grip frame area is slightly longer than that of a 1911. Anyone accustomed to packing a 1911 pistol will have no problems with the S&W M645.

Smith & Wesson started the stainless-steel handgun craze back in the early 1960s when it introduced the M-60 Stainless Chiefs Special. The demand for stainless-steel handguns has become a key point in modern firearms manufacture. The M645 pistol is made of quality stainless steel. Unique to Smith & Wesson is the use of an investment-cast frame. These castings provide a precision part, reduced machine time, and, most important, help keep manufacturing costs low. Finish of the M645 is the traditional satin stainless standard on all current S&W handguns.

The M645 is an enlarged Model 39 pistol, the operation is identical, and the manual of arms the same. Each M645 comes with two eight-round magazines; thus, with one round in the chamber, the M645 is a nine-shot pistol. Standard items include good,



ABOVE: Smith & Wesson's M645 enters the .45 auto race. **RIGHT:** Author found perceived recoil lower, muzzle flip more pronounced than Colt auto. **BELOW:** Hackathorn displays 25-meter 2.5-second single shot group fired from Weaver stance.





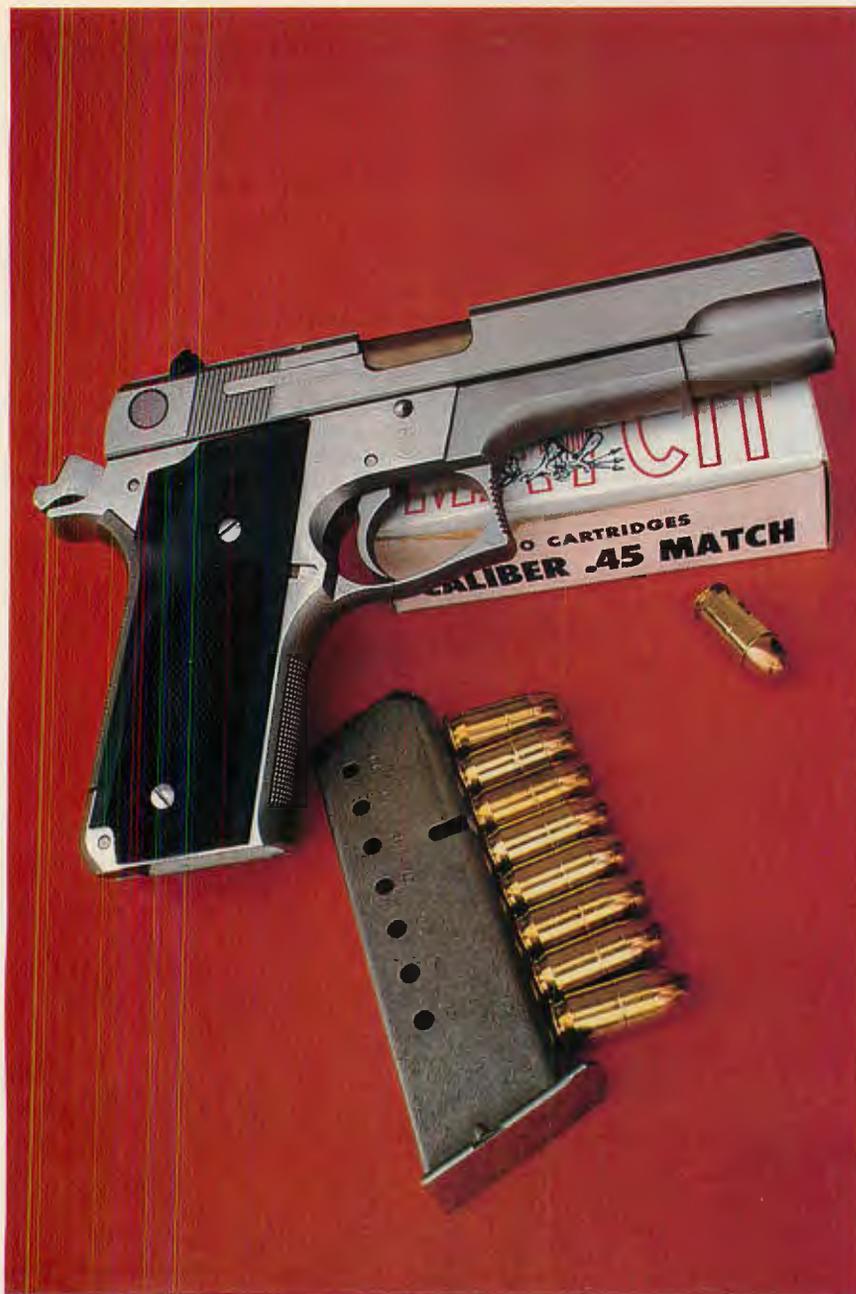
high-profile fixed sights, squared and checkered trigger guard, beveled magazine well, and checkered-frame front strap and back strap. The back strap is made of aluminum alloy, hard-anodized for wear and matching finish. The slide-mounted hammer drop safety is identical to other S&W autos. Each M645 pistol also sports the firing-pin safety now standard on all current-make S&W autos that prevents the firing pin from moving unless the trigger is pulled.

The M645 is fitted with checkered black nylon-stock panels, push-button magazine release like the M-39/59 series of S&W pistols, and has a serrated hammer spur and slide release. The new M645 has a very impressive lock, in keeping with S&W quality. M645s are big, rugged pistols, very reminiscent of the large N-frame S&W Magnum revolvers. Many a police officer, soldier, sportsman and back-country traveler has put his trust in one of these S&W large-frame revolvers, and the M645 now joins this exclusive club of prestigious sidearms.

Close examination of the M645 showed a number of interesting features. The magazine is well made, has an excellent cartridge feed angle, and has indicator holes numbered for ease of counting the remaining rounds in the magazine. Most critical is the fact that the M645 has been designed with one of the best feed angles of any .45 pistol now produced. The loaded cartridge is fed into the chamber of the barrel with little bind. The result is one of the most reliable pistols made. Combined with a positive extractor, the M645 feeds a variety of .45 auto ammo.

The muzzle of the M645 barrel is made with a small alignment ring that mates to a solid front slide. The M645 does not use a barrel bushing like the 1911 pistol. This M645 barrel fit system allows for reliable, uniform lock-up from shot to shot. Test firing proved this beyond a doubt.

Of the nearly 400 rounds of ammo tested, the M645 never missed a lick. First rounds tested were factory 185 gr. match wadcutters. These short, stubby rounds rarely function in anything but custom-tuned match pistols. The M645 never failed. A variety of both hardball and lead bullet rounds were fired in the M645. My IPSC 200 H&G 68 loads worked well and proved to be very accurate. Best accuracy was with the 185 WC Rem. ammo. Match 230 gr. hard ball did not shoot accurately in the test pistol. The 230 hardball was acceptable for duty use, but the M645 did not like it for tight groups. The test M645 was well centered and zeroed for a six o'clock hold at 25 meters. Firing deliberate, single double-action shots from 25 meters, the M645 proved comfortable. DA stroke was a smooth 11-pound pull. Single-action trigger pull was about 5.25 pounds with excessive overtravel. Firing from a Weaver stance at 25 meters, I easily placed a full magazine of 185 match WC in the black of an NRA 25-yard pistol target. Even with the overtravel, the SA pull was clean breaking.



While the stock feel and grip dimensions are comfortable for me, those with smaller hands will find the M645 difficult for getting a positive first DA shot-finger index. While the M645 grip area is narrow, the reach from front to rear is quite long. The checkered frame front and rear strap areas aid in providing a non-slip gripping surface. I found that even with my large hands, I did far better not using the squared trigger guard on the M645.

Shooters with smaller hands will have to adjust by gripping the M645 slightly to the side, and the use of the checkered and squared trigger guard may be best forgotten. Balance of the M645 is excellent with just the proper amount of slight muzzle-heavy feel. All shooters test firing the M645 commented about the pleasant recoil and good recovery. I personally find the M645 to be less of a slap to the web of the hand than the 1911, although muzzle flip is greater. Smith & Wesson reduced much of the weight of the M645 to keep the overall gun similar in trim to the Colt Government Model. I would have preferred slightly more weight in the front of the frame and slide to reduce the muzzle flip during firing.

Production pistols will have red-insert front sights and black, fixed rear blades. Some time later an adjustable sight model will be available. Smith & Wesson is gearing this to the police auto-pistol market, for those who want more punch than the 9mm. There can be no denial that the DA auto-pistol is more favored in police work, as it is far safer for general issue to moderately trained personnel.

For T&E purposes, a series of practical pistol drills were fired with the M645. Feel of the M645 when grabbed in the holster is positive, and a firm firing grip is easy to obtain. Magazines ejected and seated freely. The magazine well bevel is well done, and with the good position of the magazine catch, speed-loading is simple. On the pilot production pistol, mold marks were very noticeable on the edges of the frame. I hope production pistols are polished and smoothed in these areas to reflect the excellent surface finish for which S&W handguns are famous.

Much has been written concerning the problem of shooting skills, and the DA-to-SA transition. To place two fast shots on target at combat ranges, a certain amount of skill is needed. The design and mechanical action of the trigger cocking system of the individual pistol has a great deal to do with the overall success. Some pistol designs permit excellent DA-to-SA transition. Of these, the SIG Sauer P226 is my favorite.

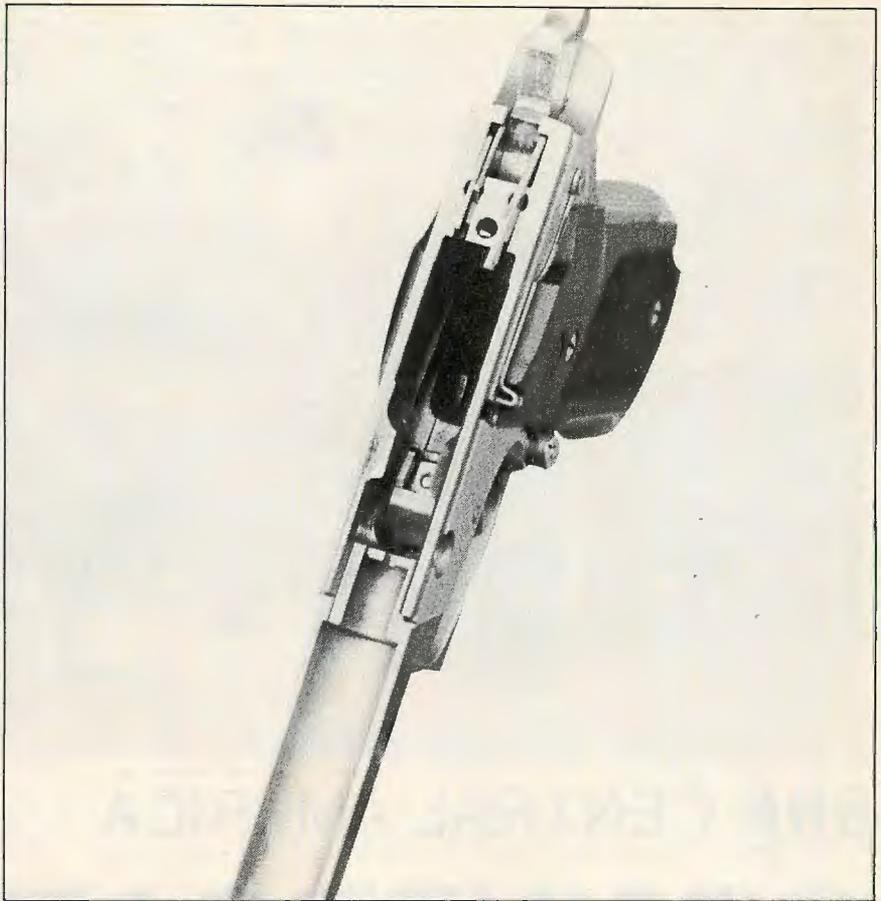
Range testing of the M645 proved that it may not be the best. Firing from 10 meters, I tried to place both shots on target as quickly as possible. I did manage to keep both hits on the silhouette, but the overall results

ABOVE: S&W M645 was worth the wait. BELOW: M645 and Colt autos are similar in size and empty weight.

were pretty poor. The extra long reach to the DA trigger pull, then the much shorter SA sear release, caused widely dispersed shots. This could be improved with more training, but I tend to believe that the M645 will not be one of the better guns in this aspect of combat shooting.

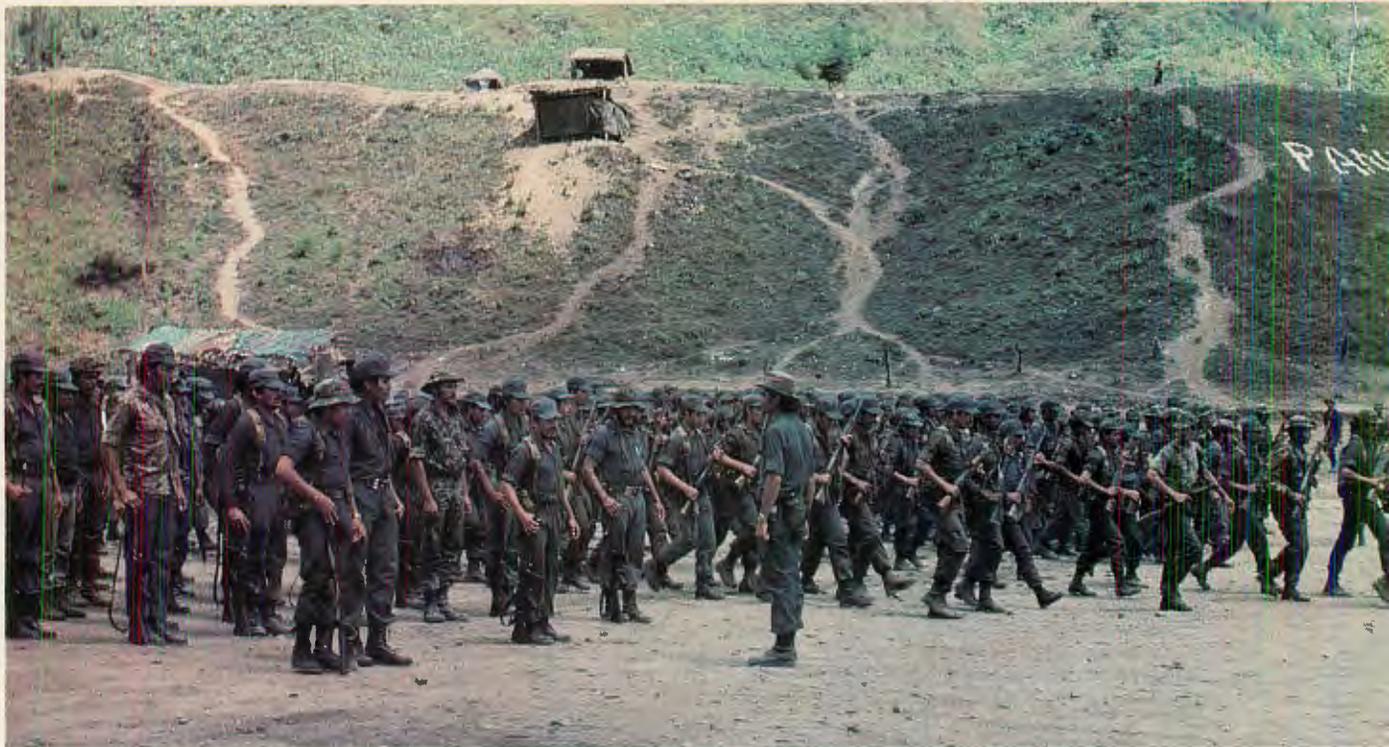
The Model 645 S&W auto is a good sidearm, with only minor faults. The demand for DA service pistols is a fact of life, and the police community will accept the M645 with open arms. There are now four other DA .45 auto-pistols sold in the U.S. Two are German- and two are Spanish-made. The German SIG Sauer P220 and Heckler & Koch P9S are well known. The Spanish Astra A-80 and Llama Omni are less well-known. The American-made S&W M645 will definitely have a jump on the rest. I would recommend only two of these pistols for use: the SIG Sauer P220 and the S&W M645. If you want a .45 caliber DA pistol that will provide rugged service and top performance, then get in line — the S&W M645 is worth waiting for.

Suggested retail price has not been announced as of this date (April 1984), but S&W marketing people state that the M645 will be competitive with the Colt .45 Government Model. First delivery of the M645 is scheduled for mid- to late- 1985. Smith & Wesson should make all efforts to get this pistol into production. If the long-awaited Bren Ten pistol gets into production prior to the M645, it could steal some of the M645's thunder. Either way, the future looks good for fans of big-bore auto-pistols. ✂



ABOVE: Investment-cast frame of S&W M645. BELOW LEFT: Field-stripped S&W M645. BELOW RIGHT: Good feed angle assures reliable feed.





SOF CENTRAL AMERICA

As hundreds of dispossessed, disenfranchised Nicaraguans flock to FDN standard, Contras have a chance with more support.

CONVERSATION WITH A CONTRA

U.S. Policy Undermines FDN Goals

by Jim Graves

Photos by Francisco Carberry

ALTHOUGH whispers of a new, better-equipped, more professional anti-Sandinista force began circulating in Miami in late 1981, the first large troop movements across the Honduran border into Nicaragua in 1982 surprised most Central America watchers.

The first anti-Sandinista counter-revolutionary troops had been ragtag, poorly armed and ill-prepared, but not so the new *Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense* (Nicaraguan Democratic Force) Contras. When they went on the offensive in April 1982, they were equipped with machine guns, grenade launchers, mortars, radios, new uniforms and bundles of *cordobas* to buy provisions from the peasants in the mountains.

Within a short time, it became widely known that the new FDN, which was formed in late 1981, was receiving

"covert" financing from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. It was also apparent at least some of the initial soldiers in the FDN came from the ranks of the Nicaraguan *Guardia Nacional* units that had retreated across the Honduran border when Dictator Anastasio Somoza was overthrown in 1979.

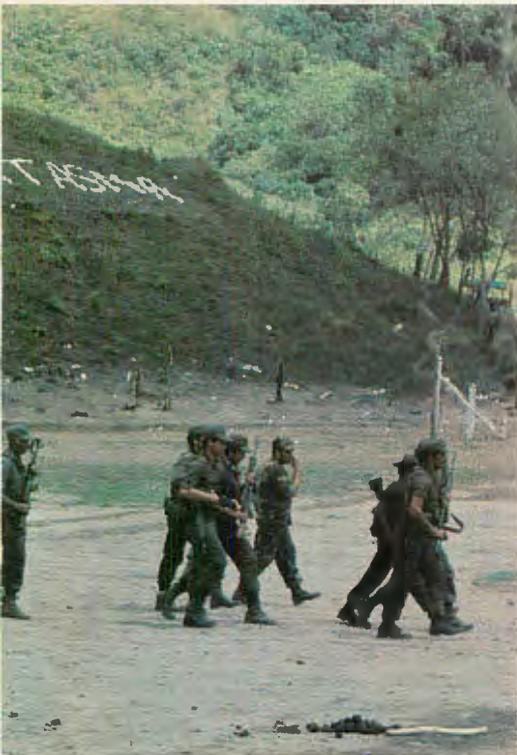
The Sandinistas, named after the *Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional* (the Nicaraguan Sandinista Liberation Front), labeled the new Contras as "Somozistas" and much of the American media dismissed the FDN simply as a creature of the CIA.

Things are seldom that simple and the FDN certainly is not.

Even in early 1982 there were signs that the FDN was a lot more broad-based than the Sandinistas would admit. The seven-person FDN directorate consisted of Lucia Cardenal Vda. de Salazar, widow of a Nicaraguan businessman assassinated by the Sandinistas in 1980 because of his popularity with businessmen and small farmers; Edgar Chamorro Coronel, a former Jesuit priest and educator at the University of Miami from 1979 to 1981; Adolfo Calero

Portocarrero, businessman and anti-Somoza leader of the Conservative Democratic Party, who was imprisoned by Somoza for about 30 days; Marco A. Zeledon, businessman; Alfonso Callejas Deshon, cabinet minister under Somoza, who resigned in protest in 1972; Enrique Bermudez Varela, military officer under Somo-





za, and Indalecio Rodriguez Alaniz, one of the founders of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front), who was twice imprisoned by Somoza.

When CIA aid to the FDN became a hot topic in early 1983, U.S. government spokesmen explained that the government hoped the FDN could apply enough pressure to force the Sandinistas to reform internally (end press censorship and suppression of the church and rival political parties) . . . and to quit exporting their revolution to their Central American neighbors.

But as 1983 progressed, it became obvious that the FDN was more than just a band of "Somozistas" and a lot more than a tool of the CIA. Reports coming out of Honduras indicated the FDN, equipped with a number of planes and helicopters, was launching bigger and more effective attacks, hitting targets as deep as 200 kilometers inside Nicaragua, and receiving support from the people in the Nicaraguan countryside. They had the Sandinistas squirming.

While covering the U.S. Big Pine II operations in Honduras last fall, I decided to check in with the Contras to see just where they stood in late 1983. With the right telephone number, it was easy to meet with Edgar Chamorro Coronel, who acts as Public Relations Director for the FDN.

SOF: Three events took place in late 1983 which would seem to affect the FDN's situation — the U.S. liberation of Grenada, open Congressional appropriation of U.S. \$24 million to the FDN and the conciliatory moves made by the Sandinistas, including an offer of amnesty.

CHAMORRO: I think the most influential of the three is the Grenada operation because it illustrated that the United States is willing and able to do a surgical strike, quickly and with overwhelming force, and

then get out — solving the problem instead of just taking insults or humiliation and letting the USSR and Castro have the upper hand.

It also broke the pattern, the idea that the communists are invincible. For the first time, people are hearing that Castro lost a battle; that he was defeated, humiliated and his men were kicked out of Grenada. That was very important because it's a turning point, a historical turning point.

I know in America there's a lot of pressure [not to get involved in the fighting in Central America] because of the liberals and because many people do not understand how to fight communism. But the fact that America did it [liberated Grenada] showed it has the power to do it. But it is not enough just to have power, you have to use it once in a while. That is a healthy thing, very effective. That helped our morale very much — as did the money from Congress.

SOF: The amnesty offer?

CHAMORRO: [Chuckle].

SOF: I saw ABC's *Nightline* the night you appeared with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick and Nicaragua's Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto. Kirkpatrick stated that CIA support of the FDN was designed to force the Sandinista government to moderate its repressive regime, but the FDN appeared intent on overthrowing the government. Are the FDN and the CIA working at cross purposes there?

CHAMORRO: It is a conflict of people setting goals. It's typical in a group to have some people who want to go further than others.

Let's say it [the cooperation between the United States and the FDN] is a marriage of wills.

Some people in the United States are willing to provide help to anti-Sandinista groups for the purposes of moderation. Well, it is better to receive that [than no support at all] and we receive it gladly, but we don't fight just to put on pressure. Our men go to fight, to win. Our men would shoot you if you told them that [their mission was not designed to win]. We are a rebel democratic force that wants to have a free Nicaragua.

Back to the Grenada example, I realize for us alone to liberate Nicaragua will take a long, long time. With the help of the United States, we could do it quickly and effectively with less suffering and less damage to the infrastructure.

SOF: But is that politically possible at this time? You are talking about substantial numbers of casualties in an election year.

CHAMORRO: It seems to me if all goes well and you do it right, you don't take so many casualties.

SOF: How is the fighting going for the FDN?

CHAMORRO: We did well from January to early April '83. We developed enough momentum militarily that everybody thought we would overthrow the Sandinistas, but our success was our main problem.



Many young men and women join FDN Contras to fight Sandinista communists.

We had too much success, too soon. The force was not designed to be that successful that quickly.

So, the politicians tried to slow us down a bit so the political momentum could catch up with the military momentum. They slowed us down so that other important factors — diplomacy, international world opinion, U.S. public opinion and the opinion of Congress — could be worked on.

That [the slowdown] occurred about the same time as the Pope visited Nicaragua in March 1983 . . . The way the Sandinistas treated the Pope was greatly disrespectful, a shameful act. That did us a lot of good in Europe because they realized the Sandinistas were just a bunch of thugs. But in the United States, people started having doubts just when we were winning the war in the mountains.

Things picked up again in September-October '83 and we launched a new offensive this winter.

Today I saw a force of close to 1,100 men — strong, healthy, motivated men with good weapons. And these men are willing to die for Nicaragua, to liberate it from the Sandinistas.

They are peasants. This is not the *Guardia Nacional*, the Somoza guard that repressed the people. No, all of our forces are simple people. Some of them fight for personal reasons: because their property was confiscated; or a friend or relative has been killed, wounded or jailed; or because they don't want the Sandinistas to change their religious way of life. Some fight within our framework of liberation: They don't accept the Marxist-Leninist cooperative or controlled economy.

SOF: You say most of your troops come from the rural areas. Do you get any from the cities?

CHAMORRO: A few are coming now. They are young men from the university and the high schools. One of the reasons they are joining us is the Sandinista-approved draft law. Now they can't get employment, a passport or even an education unless they have been in the army. Well, they say if they have to fight, they're going to fight with the FDN.

But our force is basically peasants. That

Continued on page 76

SOF CENTRAL AMERICA

REFUGEE RELIEF INTERNATIONAL, INC.: R_x FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

Teamwork Spells Relief for Needy

by SOF Staff

REFUGEE Relief International, Incorporated, a non-profit tax-exempt organization dedicated to providing medical and other assistance to refugees and displaced persons throughout the world, received a tremendous shot in the arm this January when an agreement was reached with the Air Commando Association to cooperate in providing medical training and supplies to El Salvador.

The two groups have been able to combine their experience, expertise and contacts in the United States and El Salvador to bring a staggering \$2½ million of medicine and equipment to the needy of that war-torn country, and they have the potential to do even more. Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt, president of the Air Commando Association, states, "There is no question in my mind that the American pharmaceutical industry turns out and destroys enough medicine to supply the world's needy. If we had the wherewithal to deliver the supplies and to provide overseers for this program, we could help all the people of El Salvador."

The Air Commando Association, founded in Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., almost 16 years ago, is made up of U.S. Air Force personnel and any military personnel who have served in a special warfare capacity. There are more than 1,500 members nationally. ACA's primary projects over the years have been scholarships and medical relief. In the last 15 years, in conjunction with an organization called World Medical Relief, they have provided over \$100 million of drugs and equipment to Southeast Asia, South America and Central America.

Today, they have again teamed up with World Medical Relief, a truly inspiring organization headed by 87-year-old Irene Auberlin, and run out of a warehouse in a Detroit ghetto. WMR is a nonpolitical organization which draws on the manpower of volunteers, including many senior citizens,

to contact doctors, clinics and hospitals about donating samples of medicine and equipment to their organization. World Medical Relief has contributed an incredible one-half-billion dollars' worth of aid to the needy of the world since its founding in 1962. Mrs. Auberlin was honored by President Reagan on 7 May for her humanitarian service.

The Air Commando Association worked with World Medical Relief years ago in Laos, and their joint action in El Salvador is the result of many years of familiarity and mutual trust between the two groups. Once ACA learned that WMR would provide medical relief for El Salvador, they began to consider how best to get the supplies to El Salvador and distribute them efficiently and honestly.

Refugee Relief International, Inc. came to mind immediately. RRII had been doing work with refugees in Central America for the last year, and they had many valuable contacts and a great deal of experience in El Salvador.

So ACA contacted RRII for help in getting the medicine and supplies to the people who needed them, and a team was formed. ACA would provide retired Air Force personnel on a long-term basis to administer and distribute the material. RRII would provide the funds to transport the supplies to New Orleans (from whence they would be flown to El Salvador), pay administrative expenses in El Salvador, provide contacts with people who would get the supplies to the Salvadorans who really need them rather than into the hands of some crook who would sell them on the black market and continue to dispatch medical teams to civilians in hotly-contested rural areas.

The growth of RRII has been steady and rapid. From a modest first trip in June 1983 when the RRII team distributed approximately \$4,000 of medical supplies and con-

ducted medical surveys which concluded that medical supplies and equipment were in drastically low supply, on their most recent mission their agreement with ACA has put them in the position to deliver 7,500 pounds of WMR-provided supplies worth approximately \$1.8 million. The supplies included one ton of medication, dressings, surgical supplies and equipment, and a blood analyzer which was desperately needed. In the last year they have distributed medical supplies and donated many man-hours to training Salvadorans in first aid, use of medical equipment and medical techniques, and treated thousands of people in medical civilian-assistance programs (MEDCAPs) held all over the country. And perhaps most important, they have shown the people of El Salvador that they care enough to return again and again and to act on the findings that they made during their first visit to El Salvador.

During RRII's February mission the medical team performed initial and refresher first-aid training for 18 helicopter doorgunners and presented them with 15 medical kits for use aboard their aircraft.

The doorgunners were trained in basic emergency techniques: stopping bleeding, applying tourniquets, keeping airways open, making stretchers, immobilizing patients with back and neck injuries. The Salvadorans have had no training in this; there are no trained medics for chopper duty, and there have been many unnecessary casualties on the way to the hospital. Dr. John ("Doc") Peters, a member of the RRII team who has trained Emergency Medical Technicians and taught survival medicine all over the United States since 1972, says, "These guys are terrifically motivated, and they are very quick learners. They pay strict attention, ask intelligent questions and are determined to learn techniques properly — probably because they know that they could be injured tomorrow and this training could very well save their lives."

RRII members Peters, Kraft, Huber and Reisinger were invited to participate in three helicopter medevacs. The first was in Cabanas Department at the village of Dolores, which had been attacked by 500 to 600 guerrillas the night before. The guerrillas had been held off by 30 to 40 members of the civilian police force until Salvadoran airborne troops arrived by helicopter, but the village had been chewed up during the battle. Four men were killed, and seven were medevacked out.

RRII set up a MEDCAP in the school building and spent a day treating villagers who lined up for treatment and medical supplies.

An interesting note is that while RRII was in Dolores, a Salvadoran government medical team showed up trailed by ABC and NBC camera crews, and the two groups worked together with the people of the village. The ABC and NBC journalists questioned RRII about the people's feelings about the government, and RRII said that they had never heard any expression of antagonism — in fact, the people had welcomed

the soldiers as protectors only hours before.

One NBC cameraman, who incidentally did not approve of the politics of RRII (he had just returned from a sympathetic visit with the Sandinistas in Nicaragua), told Doc Peters that RRII seemed to have had the greatest impact on and rapport with the Salvadorans of any of the many groups he had seen because of their numerous trips and their willingness to go into dangerous situations to help people who needed them.

The remaining days of RRII's February mission were spent organizing medical supplies, loading them aboard a C-47 and delivering them to San Francisco Gotera in Morazan Province. RRII along with a representative from ACA conducted MEDCAPs in two large refugee camps, examining, treating and teaching refugees first aid and sanitation. Although they treated nearly 1,400 people, they have barely scratched the surface. The medical situation in the camps is horrible. From 60-80 percent of the children have scabies or worms, and many of them are ill from secondary infections. These illnesses are easy to treat, but the medicines are very expensive. Luckily, the World Medical Relief supplies included a number of these medicines, but the problem is so widespread that the medicine was quickly exhausted.

Each RRII mission to El Salvador has been more successful than the last. They have developed bonds of trust with people in the country, and their continuing interest and work have convinced people that they are sincere in their mission to Central America. For the first time, in February they were accompanied by a Salvadoran military doctor, and they worked with Salvadoran medics in Dolores. One Salvadoran Air Force colonel told Doc Peters, "Because you come down here and we see you again and again getting dirty and bloody with us, we trust you."

Meanwhile, the U.S. government has made some half-hearted efforts in the right direction. In June 1983 President Reagan sent a team of 25 nurses, corpsmen and lab technicians to El Salvador. Although their initial assignment was for six months, it has apparently been extended. However, the teams are restricted to the cities of San Salvador, San Miguel and Santa Ana in brigade headquarters. This is the same problem faced by the Milgroup in El Salvador. They are not allowed to officially speak with RRII people, but privately some have told RRII that their problem is that they are not allowed to go out in the field and are therefore unable to develop mutual trust with the people. And once again, it is Congress that is responsible for this problem, as U.S. military personnel are not allowed to go into the field.

There is no question that Refugee Relief International, Inc. is making an impact in Central America, and they still need your help. There are some supplies that World Medical Relief does not have in large quantities: malaria medicine, Ringers Lactate IV, foot powder, vitamins and individual battle dressings. Any assistance in procure-



ABOVE: Drs. Fred Kraft (left) and John Peters (center) join RRII President Tom Reisinger for presentation of medical kits to Salvadoran Air Force helicopter crews following intensive first-aid training course. Photo: Ralph Edens

BELOW: Refugee Relief International, Inc. and Air Commando Association conduct medical civilian-assistance program in village of Cacaopera, El Salvador. Photo: Rick Venable



ment of these items would be deeply appreciated. But the most important thing you can contribute is cash — cash for getting the supplies to El Salvador and for organizing their distribution once they arrive. For the price of a case of beer you can help save a life and get a blow in at communism at the same time. The people of Central America need your help. Please forward any donations to Refugee Relief International, Inc., 6340 Nelson St., Arvada, CO 80004.

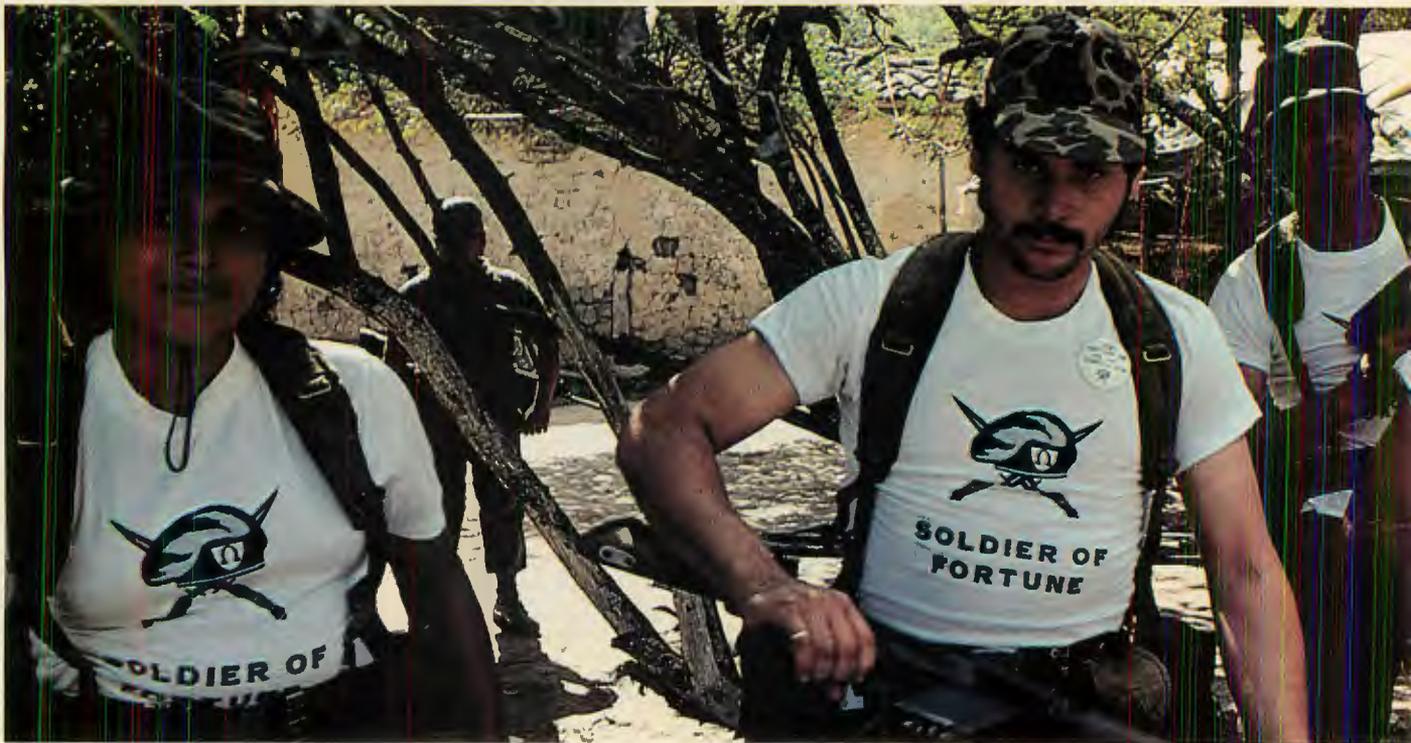
We can all benefit from the example of Refugee Relief International, Inc., the Air Commando Association and World Medical Relief. Individuals *can* make a difference, regardless of what their government chooses to do. WMR and some determined

senior citizens, the ACA and RRII have all proved that. They have helped thousands of people, and have the potential of doing much more.

Doctors and medics have volunteered their services; private individuals have volunteered their time; former military people have volunteered their expertise; private physicians, pharmacists and hospitals have donated medicines and equipment; and cash donations have been received from every state in the union.

Brig. Gen. Heine Aderholt says, "We want everyone to get their feet wet. Maybe we in the private sector can take over and win down there."





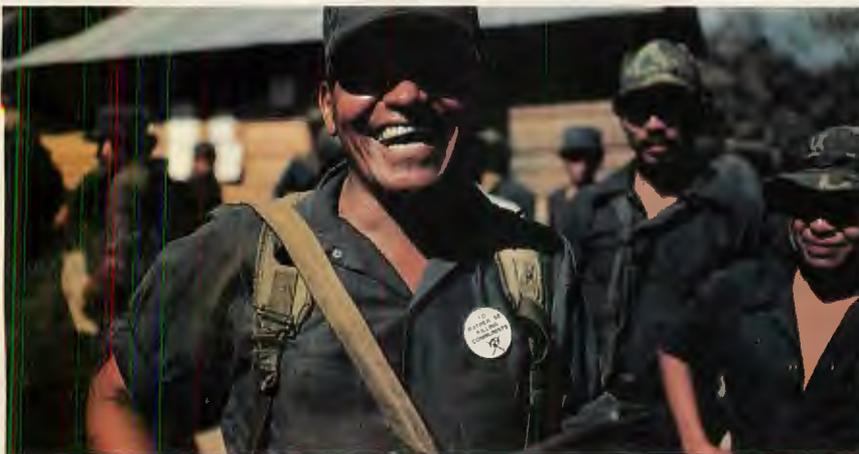
SOF CENTRAL AMERICA

CONTRAdicting THE PRESS

SOF Uncovers the Real FDN

Text & Photos by Francisco Carberry

Contra sports FN FAL and "I'd Rather Be Killing Communist" button.



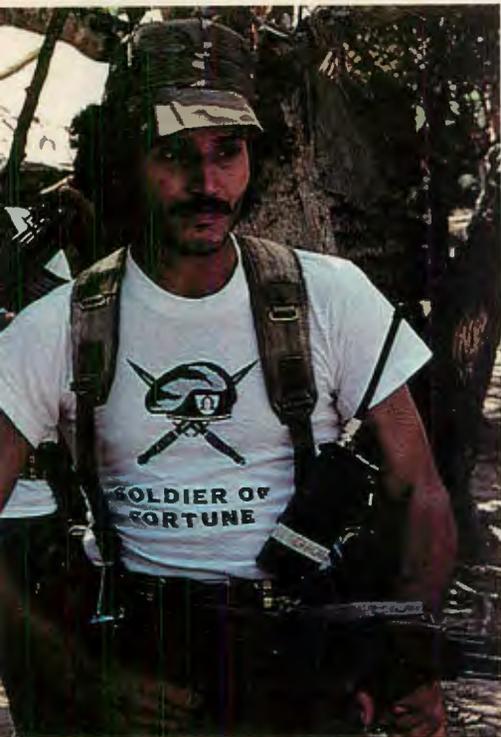
A few months after SOF interviewed Edgar Chamorro of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN: see p. 46), Steven Salisbury and I visited an FDN Contra camp in Nicaragua. What we saw reinforced Chamorro's claims that the FDN is not merely an organization of former Somoza national guardsmen intent on restoring *Somozismo* to Nicaragua.

A long, dusty, bumpy trip in jeeps through southern Honduras and a perilous river crossing brought us and our bodyguards into Contra country in northern Nicaragua. As we passed the last Honduran outpost, our bodyguards broke out their concealed weapons, which consisted of AKs, FALs, UZIs and a few LAWs.

In the past, both Contra and Sandinista units had been ambushed on this road, so small talk ceased and all eyes were glued to the front, sides and rear. Every 200 to 300 meters three-man Contra outposts were stationed to prevent the *piricoacos* (a derisive term used for the Sandinistas meaning "yelping street dogs") from infiltrating the makeshift road.

The Contra outposts and walking patrols were alert, suspicious and well-armed with AKs: They were ready to battle the Sandinistas. The few Nicaraguan campesinos who still inhabit the area appeared to welcome the presence of the Contras. We twice stopped and talked to campesinos who said they were thankful for the protection the Contras provided them from the dreaded *piricoacos*.

We knew that we were nearing the base camp when we spotted more and more sandbagged outposts and walking patrols. My first glimpse of the "Somozista Cutthroat Guerrilla Army" provided quite a shock. The FDN troops, at least in that camp, were, in fact, a large irregular force composed of tough, in some cases toothless, illiterate



SOF T-shirts are part of FDN's irregular uniform. Contra on right carries Rumanian AK-47; center weapon is FN FAL.

campesinos — some of whom had fought against Somoza and all of whom were proud to be FDN members.

Both Steven and I speak Spanish and could converse with the campesinos directly, so it wasn't difficult to get them to talk about why they had joined the Contras. They told us their hopes for throwing the communists out of their country so they could return to their small farms.

These men and women were just days away from a projected long penetration deep into the interior of Nicaragua, but never have I seen an army with higher morale. In this army, men and women fight together, and leadership is based not on who you know, but on the process of natural selection. Former Col. Enrique Bermudez, the only former member of the Nicaraguan National Guard on the FDN Directorate, explains, "In the past, when we were starting our struggle, we arbitrarily picked as leaders those we thought could do the job. But, you know when the bullets start to fly and get closer and closer, that appointed leader is sometimes hiding in a hole; and that, my friend, is when the real leaders emerge."

Of course, the Contras' TO&E cannot be compared to that of the U.S. Army because so many items are in short supply. "It is basically a question of priorities," says Comandante Ganso. "With our limited funds, we sometimes have to forego things that a civilian would laugh at, but you have no idea how important a simple can of foot powder is. Bore cleaner, rifle oil, good boot socks have to be struck off the buy list so we can upgrade our communication or increase our ammo supplies. We tried to save some

money by buying Korean jungle boots. That almost cost us a 600-man task force: The boots fell apart in less than three weeks and we had to pull those people out, reoutfit them and treat the numerous foot problems."

Nicaragua's northern terrain is, to say the least, horrendous. It contains high peaks, followed by steep inclines into the valleys and more high peaks. When you stand in a valley and look up at the next peak, the back of your head is resting on your shoulders. U.S.-made jungle boots last, at best, three months. That is one reason why the Contras are always running out.

For security reasons, the manner in which the Contras resupply has been omitted from our report. The basic arm of the Contra troops is the AK, in its various models. There are also a number of FALs.

The Contras operate in task forces from 400 to 600 men and women, and are probably some of the finest light-infantry troops operating today. Issue weapons are AKs or FALs, RPG-7s, 60mm Commando Mortars, LAWs and M60 MGs. Heavier weapons such as 81mm or 82mm mortars, and M2 .50-cal. HMGs are available, but because of the terrain, these weapons are sent in by mule train to internal bases situated high on mountain tops. The Contras must move quickly, and light weapons have proven more valuable since the Contras avoid holding villages.

A year ago they tried, with little success, to take and hold small towns, but the Sandinistas brought up the heavy guns and blasted away. The Contras — realizing that they were not ready to fight a regular, much-heavier-armed force — reverted to classical guerrilla warfare. The Sandinistas, who rely on tanks, heavy mortars and artillery, now are being run ragged by the incredibly fit campesinos, who never would have been their enemy if they had been left alone. An 11-year old boy, who at his tender age is a two-year combat veteran, summed it up concisely, "The *piris* forced us off our farm, killed my father and accused me of aiding the Contras. They made me a Contra."

Upon our arrival, the three task forces in the forward camp were assembled and gave



Nicaraguan Contras greet SOFers Steven Salisbury and Francisco Carberry at FDN camp in northern Nicaragua.

an impressive demonstration of close-order drill, albeit guerrilla style: They marched in squad, halted, then executed right-shoulder arms and port arms, and fell to attention. Steven and I were surprised: We never expected such a show from the tough, but raggedly uniformed guerrillas.

Up until 1984, the Contras were forbidden by the CIA from attacking oil-storage dumps or mining Nicaragua's ports, but the CIA and the Contras became wary in early '84 that the Contra funds, which must be appropriated by Congress, would be cut off, and decided to try for a few spectacular successes to show their effectiveness against the Sandinistas. Col. Bermudez told them to take off the gloves: "If you smell gas, burn it! If you see power transmission lines, drop them. Don't pick a fight with an enemy battalion unless you can suck the bastards into making a mistake. Instead, go after the fuel dumps and trucks that supply that battalion.

"I know most of you would not be here if you had not been made Contras by the abuses of the *piris*, but let's go and make more Contras. Our people are waiting for us," Col. Bermudez concludes.

Steve and I were saddened to have to leave these rugged men and women who are roaming the steep mountains of Nicaragua, deeper and deeper, to rid their beloved land of Russians, Bulgarians, East Germans and the much-hated Cubans. *Adios, muchachos*, we will be with you again soon.

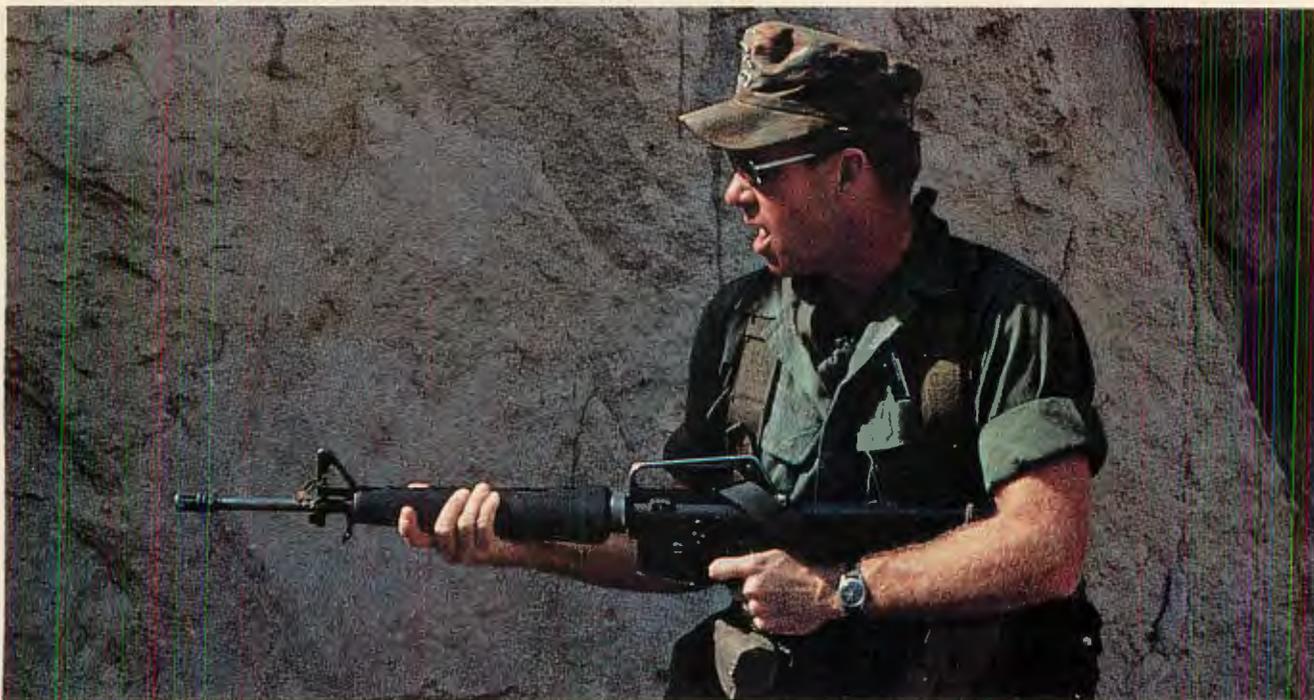
Editor's note: SOF continues to collect and forward vitally needed items for the FDN and Miskito Indians who are fighting to rid Nicaragua of Cuban and Soviet puppets — and to remove the base from which terrorism is shipped to El Salvador and other Central American countries.

The El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund needs boot socks, foot powder, weapons-cleaning materials, boots in medium and small sizes, T-shirts, field jackets (it gets cold in the Nicaraguan mountains) and especially money to transport these items to places they can do some good. The IRS has not defined freedom-fighting as a charitable act, so your donations are not tax-deductible.

Refugee Relief International, Inc. (RRII: see p. 48) has delivered over \$2½ million worth of medical supplies to Central America, but this is just a drop in the bucket. We desperately need funds to continue the effort. Donated supplies must be delivered and airline tickets must be bought to send SOF representatives to escort shipments so they are delivered to the people who need them (and don't get into the black market). Donations to Refugee Relief International are tax-deductible.

Mailing address for equipment or supplies to El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund is 5721 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80303. Cash contributions should be sent to El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. RRII's address is Refugee Relief International, Inc., 6340 Nelson, St., Arvada, CO 80004.





SOF CENTRAL AMERICA

Former legionnaire and SOF convention director Bill Brooks led Salvadoran troops in urban-warfare training.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

SOF Trains Salvadorans in Urban Warfare

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

SAN Miguel, Usulután, Tenancingo, Berlín, El Paraíso, Perquín. These Salvadoran cities and towns have one thing in common: All have been the scene of vicious street fighting between government troops and leftist guerrillas.

Urban combat has become a way of life—or death—in El Salvador. The guerrillas mass hundreds of men around a town and overrun it; the army then dispatches reinforcements and drives them out. It's a grisly business and casualties are almost always high. So when *Soldier of Fortune* offered instruction in urban warfare, the Salvadoran army jumped at it. The Airborne Battalion, given its role as a national-level airborne/air mobile strike force, was a logical choice for training.

On 21 February, SOF team members Bill Brooks (SOF Convention director), Ben Jones and I walked into Airborne headquarters at the sprawling Ilopango air base five kilometers east of San Salvador and met the battalion's ebullient commander, Maj. Luis Turcios. After *abrazos* and pleasantries, the major introduced us to his husky, mustachioed S1, Lt. Guillén, the man in charge of facilitating our mission. The lieutenant led us into the situation room and, over Cokes, we outlined a three-day training program for 75 men.

That done, we searched for training sites. With nine soldiers as companions, we packed into a military truck and drove to the outskirts of San Salvador to look over several apartment complexes under construction.

None was suitable so we decided to devise a grenade course and assault-rifle course in the famous Poligono, Ilopango's Death Valley, a bleached-sand gulley rancid from trash dumps and mess-hall-grease run-offs—and accessible only by a dusty quarter-kilometer road over Drag Ass hill.

The next morning we hauled a dozen troops over to dig holes, line up barrels and erect wooden windows. Suddenly, all hell broke loose. Intense gunfire blasted a couple of hundred meters off and several tight-faced soldiers from a different Airborne Battalion unit came charging down old Drag Ass, diving for the nearest cover. Bullets cracked overhead, one kicking up dirt about 30 feet from Jones' head. It sounded as if the base were under attack, but our troopies, seemingly oblivious to the gunfire, continued to work enthusiastically. They knew it was only zealous soldiers in exercise. "They want to scare us," said a sergeant, grinning. We finished the preparations that afternoon a little more peacefully.

On 23 February, explosives and small-arms expert Dennis Daly joined our team and we began the training. We marched 78 paratroopers, including two lieutenants and several NCOs, over to a shady tree behind their barracks. We put up a blackboard and sat them in a half-circle around it. I served as translator for the group. Brooks, an 82nd Airborne veteran of the Dominican Republic operation and Vietnam, and a French Foreign legionnaire from 1972 to '77, kicked things off with a lecture on the general strategy of attacking and clearing towns. Using a hypothetical town on the blackboard, Brooks diagrammed how to attack and clear a town correctly, using the three-phase approach of current U.S. military doctrine:

1) **Isolation** — seize dominant terrain features and approaches to town.

2) **Foothold** — establish foothold, usually in a weak point in the enemy's defenses, and use for Command and Control and operations springboard. Quickly proceed to the next phase.

3) **Advance and clear** — advance evenly through zones, block by block, landmark to landmark. Clear every building. Establish points where units come into physical contact.

The Airborne troops took copious notes; they knew this was information that could save their lives.

After Brooks had explained the general strategy of clearing towns, Jones, a former Marine in Vietnam, went into the nuts and bolts of house-to-house fighting, including what to do if you're the one stuck inside the house and the guerrillas are trying to clear it. Jones chose not to lecture but to lead a group discussion with the troops, many of whom had considerable combat experience themselves.

"How many floors do buildings usually have here?" he asked.

"One, right," he acknowledged the group's answer. "Most of the buildings here are adobes." He drew an overhead view of a house without a roof. "Now from where do you shoot at the Gs trying to get inside?"

"The door... the window," the troops eagerly ventured.

"Avoid shooting from the door," the muscular Jones replied, waving his finger for emphasis. "It's too obvious; the guerrillas expect you there. And barricade the door from the inside. Anybody know why?"

The troops mumbled among themselves, but no one volunteered an answer.

"Well, number one, it's the easiest access for the enemy. And, number two, what would you think if you saw sand bags, concrete, bricks, barbed-wire, and all that other shit in front of a house? You'd think the guerrillas were inside. We don't want to be detected that easily.

"Windows are pretty obvious, too, but they're better than doors. If you shoot through windows, fire from the lower corners and don't stick out your gun barrel, they'll spot it.

"The best thing is to knock small wedge-shaped holes in the wall, with the external hole only large enough for the gun barrel to fit. This gives you a better angle of fire and more concealment and protection."

Jones concluded the morning's training by showing the soldiers how to use obstacles to channel the enemy into fields of fire.

"However, be sure to use obstacles your fire can penetrate, such as empty barrels or wooden carts, so the guerrillas can't find cover behind them."

After lunch, we gathered the troops in front of Maj. Turcios' office at 1400 and marched to the grenade course in the Polígono. Brooks began the basics by using a practice grenade.

"Grip the grenade with your thumb on the spoon," he instructed. "Observe your



Dr. Demo, John Donovan, teaches San Miguel airstrip security troops the use of Garrett electromagnetic metal detectors — donated by SOF and Rene Le Neve of Rene's International Metal Detector Sales and Security Devices, Dept. SOF, 214 E. Front St., Bloomington, IL 61707 — to find mines.

target. Pull the pin hard — and not with your teeth, that's only in the movies. Then release the spoon and throw." The former legionnaire followed through like Steve Carlton, simultaneously pointing his other arm for a sight.

"Burn off a second or two if your target is close," drawled the North Carolinian. "Otherwise the guerrillas may throw the damned thing back. But be real careful not to take too long or it'll blow up in your hand."

The secret of grenade throwing, like anything else in war, is to hit your target without exposing yourself more than necessary, Brooks explained. Thus, soldiers need to learn how to throw in different modes and situations. Our course offered plenty of that.

At the first six stations, the troops threw practice grenades overhand, underhand and sidearm into holes and through windows,

while lying in trenches or kneeling behind rusty barrels. Station seven had them following a bend to the right in the gully's wall and shooting six M16 rounds left-handed at three targets. They then climbed a 10-foot precipice with a rope and followed another green rope through parched vegetation downhill to resume tossing grenades through windows and at silhouettes from standing, kneeling and prone positions (and one over-the-shoulder toss while lying flat on their backs) behind tall grass, the rocks and finally in the open. They finished the training course by racing on a short, thick wall, up the lower third of Drag Ass, across the road and into a pit where, in groups of four, they would boost and/or haul each other up a 10-foot stone butte.

Daly began the second day's training with a demonstration of plastic explosives. Most of the troops were unfamiliar with the procedure so he threw them a few chunks of the rubbery mass. They giggled and curiously kneaded it before passing it on to their anxious buddies.

"Chewing gum," joked the genial Daly, affectionately dubbed El Gordo by his new listeners. "But don't bite it. Just this much can blow a barrel 50 feet in the air," El Gordo indicated about three inches with his thumb and index finger.

Daly went into the mechanics of detonation, occasionally throwing in raunchy one-liners for laughs. He lit a fuse, showing how it burns inside, and popped a blasting cap. He then put a blasting cap onto a wire and inserted it into a marble-sized ball of plastic. He detonated it with a crank and the power of the burst astonished the troops. Devilishly twirling his handlebar mustache, Daly asked if they would like him to blow a huge wad. The troops shouted their approval like pyromaniacs, and the 44-year-old grinned and walked off to set up a demo.

While waiting for Daly to set up, Brooks and Jones showed how two-man teams should enter houses in which the enemy may be holed up. They positioned a couple barrels to simulate the sides of a doorway and crouched behind them. Each man has a role: There's the first man and the support man. One of them (and it can be either) throws a grenade into the room, both brace for the blast, and then the first man bursts in low, spraying the room with full-auto and tucking himself around the wall on his side. The support man follows doing the same. Closets, beds and other possible hiding spots are peppered.

"Shoot first. Don't look first to see see if he's there because, if he is, he'll kill you," warned Jones.

Daly was still fiddling. The troops were anxious.

"Are you ready, El Gordo?" we all shouted in unison.

"Kiss my ass," he answered jocularly in broken Spanish, dismissing us with a wave. Finally, he was ready. But the demo literally fizzled out. The fuse was bad. So much for the Big Bang.

For the rest of the day and the following morning, we ran the troops through the preliminaries of a competition to see who had learned the most. We heightened enthusiasm by promising undisclosed prizes for the winners. They threw two practice grenades at each station (except number seven) and their hits were tallied. The 10 highest scorers advanced to the finals that afternoon.

CBS-TV had been filming SOF's activities in El Salvador for the new series *American Parade* (see "SOF on Parade," p. 64) and, by fortunate coincidence, was in the Polígono for the finals. As the finalists hustled from station to station, the exhausted cameramen, huffing and puffing, raced to keep up with them.

Amazingly, six troops tied for first. Sudden Death! We then awarded two points for rifle hits at station seven. Diegoberto Trinidad, a fearless fighter who had already made a name for himself by taunting the guerrillas in a fire fight, won with 19 of 30 possible points. His prizes: an SOF logo pin, lighter and camouflage billfold, presented with handshakes by Brooks and SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown. The runnerup's prize was an SOF pocket knife, and all the finalists received SOF patches. Jones ended everything with a bang by demonstrating M60-machine-gun assault firing, letting the Salvadoran machine-gunners



SOF team member Sam Allen during February trip to El Salvador.

AFTER-ACTION REPORT

In February 1984, SOF asked Sam Allen to make an evaluation of the state of M60 machine guns and other weapons of the 3rd Brigade elements at San Miguel, the Lenca Battalion at San Francisco Gotera and the FAS helicopter doorgunners at Ilopango. Although Allen's military career was cut short because of an injury during USMC training, his practical experience makes him well-qualified to evaluate machine guns. He is a Class Three machine-gun dealer in North Carolina and serves on the county sheriff's auxiliary and Special Tactical and Rappelling (STAR) teams. SOF conventioners may remember him as Peter Kokalis' helper from the machine-gun demonstrations at the 1982 and '83 conventions. Below are his findings.

General Observations: The Salvadoran troops are enthusiastic, but lack basic weapons-maintenance knowledge. The blame for this falls on the U.S. Congress for not providing sufficient trainers. If they did, SOF would not be here.

We found the weapons in the worst conditions at San Miguel. Four out of 14 of the M60s inspected were totally inoperative. Weapons-cleaning to the troops meant field-stripping, passing under a faucet and reassembling while still wet. However, some troops did attempt to wipe dry the internal cavities. Troops from the school that used oil, did; those that weren't, didn't.

Two of the four inoperable M60s required the use of the 12-ounce gas piston removal tool. One was missing the extractor, explaining the fired casing in the chamber. During preliminary disassembly, the sear fell out. Furthermore, there was neither a sear pin nor trigger pin. These weapons had just returned from the field.

M60s bearing the serial numbers 46,

415, 52262 and 120393 had two rebuild dates stamped on them: 1975 and 1977. Remaining weapons had serial numbers in the 193XXX through 199XXX series. Preventive maintenance is not in this unit's dictionary.

Lenca Battalion at San Francisco Gotera: 15 M60s in the serial-number range 192XXX.

These weapons were in much better condition as far as maintenance is concerned. Only one weapon which came in from the field was inoperative, and that was because of a reversed gas piston. The basic problem with these weapons was too much oil. Internal inspection of some weapons revealed a substance with the consistency of soft wax. It turns out that the lubricants used were a mixture of L.S.A. and L.A.W. It appears that L.A.W. in the tropics combined with dust creates the soft wax-like substance. The use of L.A.W. should be discontinued. The unit has some good armorers and, with sufficient training and parts, maintenance could be excellent.

Ilopango: M60 D — more than 25 of these weapons were worked on. Four of the weapons had loose rivets allowing the receiver rails to move in the trunion SNs on these units. 5XXXR, 86XX12 and 98XXR had rebuild dates of 1974 or 1976. SNs ranged up to 192XXX. Bolts, op rods and barrel extensions show excessive wear due to sustained firing. These weapons are cleaned in vats of varsol creating carbon problems in the system. At least one soldier solved this problem by scrubbing the carbon away.

Problems Observed: One reversed gas piston; five firing-pin sleeves and spring reversed; all burned and gouged camming surface on op rod; cracked, chipped and worn op rod rollers; 80 percent of the bolts should be replaced because they were cracked, chipped and in some cases non-existent. Bolt-camming surface: one loose barrel extension; one cracked feed arm; five missing leaf springs on pistol grips.



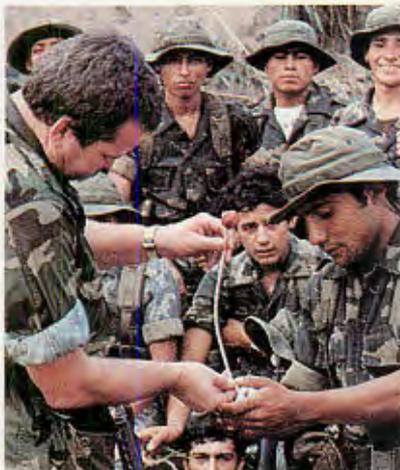
Brooks taught and directed exercises in surmounting obstacles.



Machine-gunners were not exempt from moving course of fire.



Wall-scaling practice helps urban combat teams move faster, with better cover, and appear where they aren't suspected.



SOF training-team member Dennis Daly teaches basic demo at Ilopango Airbase.

have a try at it too.

All too soon, the three days were over. We had enjoyed teaching the basics of urban warfare to this group. They had listened attentively and learned quickly. We would like to have given the program a few more times, but Jones had to go to the States and Brooks, Daly and I were scheduled to teach the basics of the M60 in San Francisco Gotera, Morazan.

We arrived at Gotera at a bad time. Virtually every soldier was either rehearsing for the Oath to the Nation parades or pulling

extra patrol duty because of a guerrilla anniversary. We managed to get 50 men and five machine guns, but we only had a day-and-a-half to work with — just enough time to let each man zero the M60 at 25 paces and fire 25 rounds in short bursts at targets 150 meters away.

Tracers from the rounds set the dry bush afire, and while the troops were beating out the blaze with branches, a rabbit hopped into view. You would have thought it was a communist. The troops immediately forgot about the fire and started shooting at the damn hare. That was fine until it bounded between the obsessed soldiers and *us*. A couple of bullets kicked up the dirt close by and Brooks and I hit the deck. They finally killed the scrawny rabbit, but there was hardly anything left of it.

We should receive combat pay for this, I thought as I picked myself up from the dirt. But I would see combat soon enough.

At 1715 that afternoon, 1 March, I boarded a six-truck convoy with approximately 180 troops headed for the town of Sociedad, 12 clicks to the east. Guerrillas had been coming down periodically from their surrounding mountain redoubts, harassing the townspeople, stealing their livestock, imposing "war taxes," painting slogans on their homes and press-ganging their young men. The army had tried to surprise them two weeks before, but the elusive terrorists vanished by the time it arrived. This time we succeeded.

We left the trucks six clicks from town and waited until nightfall before advancing on foot in three prongs. I was with Capt. Turcios (no relation to Maj. Turcios of the Airborne Battalion) and troops of the Morazan Battalion in the center prong. We walked five meters apart in two Indian files on each side of a dusty road. The bearded captain talked to campesinos along the way to get information. We rested at a mom-and-pop store for a few minutes. The visit was profitable for the owners. The troops bought snacks and sodas, a big difference from the guerrillas who rarely paid. We stopped for the night, spreading out and camping in the hills two clicks west of Sociedad. I followed Turcios and about 12 of his men to the top of the biggest, steepest hill. The climb alone made me ready for bed, but it was unusually cold and I, wrapped in a plastic poncho, shivered wide-eyed most of the night.

We resumed our march at 0515. A half-hour later we heard intense fire to the northeast. Capt. Turcios got on the radio and learned that troops of the First Battalion had surprised the guerrillas on the edge of town. We eagerly pressed on.

Pock! pock! pock! . . . Guerrillas unleashed a furious volley at us from a hill a hundred meters ahead. We flung ourselves to the ground and pressed against the banks of the road. Bullets landed everywhere. Puffs of dust rose like mini smoke signals.

The government troops responded with bursts of M16 fire and slithered like salamanders into a position to advance. Turcios

Continued on page 104



D AY 1

The Munich airport looks like any other modern terminal: standardized and impersonal. But the drive from Munich to Altenstadt is right out of a travelogue. The city is clean and green, and in a short time I am out of the suburbs heading south through picture-postcard-perfect Bavarian countryside. We drive through gently rolling country past meadows, forests and scenic villages, and the Alps on the horizon get larger with each kilometer. After two hours we pass Schongau, a walled town originally settled by the Romans, and I know we are getting close. We drive through narrow, winding streets through an old village — this must be Altenstadt, which means "old town" — and suddenly the main gate of the German Airborne School looms 200 meters ahead. High up on the guardhouse I see the traditional German paratroop (*Fallschirmjäger*) insignia of a large diving eagle within a wreath.

Airborne trooper gets checked out before loading for drop.

Diving out the door, and looking at the world between your feet unite the international jumping fraternity.



An aerial photograph of a snowy landscape, likely a training area for paratroopers. In the foreground, the legs and feet of a person in dark winter gear are visible, suggesting they are looking down from a high altitude. The background shows a snow-covered field with some buildings and trees in the distance.

SOF FEATURE

Fallschirmjäger

U.S. Marine Jumps with Legendary Diving Eagles

by Maj. Lindsey Kiang
Photos by David Mills

AIRBORNE MARINE

Lindsey Kiang, a major in the Marine Corps Reserve, was invited by the West German Army in the summer of 1979 to participate in their airborne course. This is the story of how he earned the jump wings and maroon beret of the *Fallschirmjäger*.

In civilian life Kiang, a lawyer, lives in New Haven, Conn., and is General Counsel for Yale University. This is his first article for SOF.

We drive through the gate and are met by the officer of the day. I have my first look at a German paratrooper, wearing a maroon beret with the silver diving-eagle insignia, close-fitting olive-drab fatigue uniform, a P38 pistol and lace-up jump boots. Behind him, up on the hill, I can see the flag of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is still difficult to believe, but I am actually in Germany about to go through the airborne course of the West German Army.



Day 3

I am billeted on the second floor of a two-story classroom building, the ground floor of which is used by the Luftwaffe Survival School and the Paratroop NCO School. Pan Am has lost my baggage, so I arrive with nothing but my carry-on bag. But the German Army fatigues I am temporarily issued are so comfortable and durable that I wear them throughout training.

It is a short walk to the company area, and I muster with the other trainees. We march to the mess hall, where the first sergeant greets us and leads us by the numbers in filling out the many admin forms. I find out very quickly that they speak German much faster than I am used to hearing. I begin to worry.

We march back to the company area, where our cycle is formed into two train-



Benning doesn't have a monopoly on the Nutcracker.

Candidates for Bundeswehr's maroon beret line up for tower jumps.

"Like a ballet dancer!" Stylized spring and legs-out posture are demanded by German jumpmasters.

ing platoons, each with approximately 40 men and a cadre of five NCO instructors. In my platoon the only other officer is a German lieutenant; the rest are 18- and 19-year-old German soldiers sent here by their battalions in the 1st Airborne Division. The other training platoon is made up completely of young soldiers, except for about a dozen Royal Netherlands Marines. I later learn that the entire Dutch Marine Corps is gradually qualifying in the airborne role. I see other platoons composed entirely of NCOs and officers from a mixed bag of non-airborne units, and consider myself very fortunate to be in a normal platoon having only paratroopers from the division. I am assigned the le... position in my platoon, which is difficult because everyone guides on me and yet I am unfamiliar with the German Army's close-order drill. We double-time to the training area where we spend the rest of the day doing parachute landing falls (PLFs).

Day 4

We muster in the company area and double-time up to central supply to draw parachutes and harnesses. The day is spent practicing PLFs and putting on the 'chutes. Learning the long German words for the different parts of the American-style T-10 parachute and reserve is difficult — I am concentrating so hard that I have a headache at the end of each day. But soon we will be up in a Luftwaffe aircraft, and I had better be able to understand fully by then!

Every hour or so we are allowed a short break. On the command, "*Achtung!*", we spring to attention and scramble back to formation, where we are led through physical exercises. The philosophy here is different from that at Ft. Benning; the German Army assumes that every trainee is physically fit and has passed the test given by his airborne battalion before being sent here.

Once out the door, German soldiers fall like everybody else.

Therefore, physical exercise is designed to keep soldiers fit and flexible, not to weed them out. All of the exercises are military-related and resemble athletic contests. We have relay races of various kinds over and under obstacles, we pair off and carry each other on our backs, and we do many other agility exercises, often with one half of the platoon competing against the other, such as smokers against non-smokers.



Day 5
A Marine observing our morning formation would find it difficult to reconcile what he sees with his previous notions of the German Army. The maroon beret is exactly the same as that worn by paratroopers all over the world, and the olive-drab fatigue uniform is French in style. The indifferent manner of marching reflects a modern army in which the training emphasis is not on close-order drill but rather on the accomplishment of the tactical mission. The grooming standards are rather liberal, and military courtesy is relaxed: The soldiers are required to salute only officers who are their direct superiors. Despite all this, I will soon learn that the German Army is fully capable and completely professional.

Parachutists find common experiences wherever they meet: packing chutes, tightening harness and going out the door.

Maroon beret and Diving Eagle badge mark Fallschirmjäger.

We double-time across the school to the headquarters building to see some films. The school was built in 1937 and served throughout World War II as a FLAK-gunners' school. The *kasernes* (in military usage: barracks), school buildings and training area are virtually unchanged, as is the modernistic headquarters building on a hill overlooking the rest of the school. After the rebirth of the *Fallschirmjäger* in 1956, the Airborne School was established here. Since then it has trained all parachutists for the German Army as well as those for the Luftwaffe and Navy. In addition, it has trained parachutists for many other countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium and Norway. Also, qualified parachutists from NATO allies regularly visit the school and in assembly-line fashion make the required five jumps in two days in order to win the German airborne wings.

PT at Germany's version of Ft. Benning has more stretches than push-ups.

In the afternoon we draw 'chutes and harnesses and run back to the training area where we are introduced to the suspended harness. Most of the training apparatus and training methods are basically American and would be familiar to any graduate of the Airborne School at Ft. Benning. While hanging from the suspended harness, we practice slipping, water and tree landings, and reserve deployment. The day seems to end very quickly.



Day 8
The training this morning consists of an introduction to the pendulum. We are hooked up to a harness and swing back and forth about 12 feet off the ground. At the farthest point of one of these oscillations, the instructor releases the apparatus so that the trainee falls to the ground with a swinging motion. A properly executed PLF enables a trainee to roll and spring back on his feet in one continuous move; most of the trainees land with a crash. The pendulum is practiced over and over again, swinging fore and aft as well as sideways.

I take my meals in the officers' mess. The noon meal consists of heavy soup, bread and a hearty main dish of potatoes, meats and vegetables. The schedule is difficult for Americans, who prefer to eat a light lunch during the training day and have the main meal in the evening. Here, the heavy meal is served mid-day, and the evening meal is pitiful: cold cuts and bread. I am unable to get enough to eat at night and find myself having to order food from the short-order cook in the officers' club. His specialty: grilled ham with a fried egg on top.

In the afternoon, we change routine and go back to the suspended harness. I am beginning to see the pattern. They are introducing us to new skills each day, but also taking us back to previous stages of instruction for constant review and refinement of technique. Our cadre of five NCOs serves as our exclusive instructors for each stage of training. They begin to know us individually and see which students are doing well and which ones are constantly having trouble. Their attitude toward the students is always professional: firm, fair and motivated. This is both the result of their philosophy of military education, which assumes that the students have the necessary motivation and aptitude to learn military skills, and a result of the German Army's policy to avoid training methods which degrade the individual.

Day 9

Today we are introduced to the wooden mock-up of the aircraft in which we practice unbuckling, standing up, hooking up, checking equipment, and shuffling to the door. Most of all, we practice jumping out of the aircraft. The instructors insist on a stylish leap up and out of the door: feet and legs together and extended straight out parallel to the ground, upper body bent forward at the waist, and hands at each end of the reserve with elbows in.

"Like a gymnast," the instructor shouts at me repeatedly. We do this over and over, wearing both main and reserve 'chutes, forming one large circle of troops shuffling through the aircraft, jumping out of the door, running to the aft ramp, shuffling through and jumping again.

The day is hot and humid, the steel helmet is like an oven, and the 'chutes seem to get heavier. Our jumps get weaker, but the instructors insist all the more on perfect leaps out of the door. The going is grim, and today I realize I am not 19 years old.

Day 10

Before the morning formation I speak to the company commander and tell him that since I do not fully understand the German commands and close-order drill, someone else should replace me in the lead position so that the platoon can perform better. The company commander listens and replies simply that since I am a Marine captain I belong in the lead position. I do not object any longer. In fact, although it may be my imagination, I begin to feel that I am starting to stamp my boots and move just as smartly as any of the young German soldiers.

We are introduced to the 12-meter tower today. We move in sticks of four and, with a series of chants, slowly make our way to the top where we are hooked in. Then we shuffle to the door and leap out to fall about three meters before the risers pull taut with a bone-wrenching jerk; we then slide down the cables toward the ground about 100 meters away. The senior instructor stands below, carefully noting all discrepancies and critiquing each trainee as he stands at attention in front of him after double-timing back.

We jump again and again until the instructor is satisfied. My friend, the lieutenant, has difficulty and must jump over and over; he begins to look very exasperated. It is here that the first separations from the program occur. Two young soldiers refuse to jump. Upon freezing at the door the first time, each is told to come down, compose himself and go back up. After giving them three chances, the company commander unhesitatingly orders that they be dropped and sent back to their units. By the next day the two are gone as if by magic, and the training goes on.

Day 11

The training schedule follows a predictable pattern: the pendulum and the 12-meter tower alternating in the morning and afternoon. We also learn to get out of the 'chute while being dragged and are introduced to the assault pack designed to clip onto the reserve and be released while a few meters off the ground.

I meet a number of officers on the school staff. There is the Bavarian captain who looks like a boxer and is the leader of the Army parachute team; I will always remember his habit of wearing a loaded P38 pistol in the club. Then there is the young paratroop officer who is a Ranger instructor and does not want it known that his father is a general, be-



Airborne exercises include armed runs through obstacle course.

Crawling through the snow feels the same in any country.



cause he wants to succeed on his own. There are also the senior lieutenant, who is fiercely anti-communist because of his memories as a refugee child in 1945, and the woman captain, who is the staff doctor at the school and who wears the German jump wings in gold, the highest grade. My training company commander is a former CO of an airborne long-range reconnaissance company. He loves to parachute and is an outstanding leader; as a weekend guest at his home I enjoy the hospitality of his lovely family. These and all the other officers are professional but friendly, and the evenings in the club see much good camaraderie.

Collapsible-stock G3 is standard issue for German Airborne.

German airborne school presumes conditioning, but some exercise is preserved to keep students loose, prevent injuries.



German officers seem to hold their ranks and be stationed at one base far longer than their American counterparts. This is because of the small size of the German Army (about one-third larger than the U.S. Marine Corps), the limited number of duty stations, and the fact that officers serve longer — for instance, colonels serve until the age of 60. Some of the officers have been stationed at the school for close to 10 years, and one of the senior NCOs on the staff, who just made his 5,000th jump, has been at the school for nearly 20 years. Almost all the senior field-grade officers and generals I see have had combat experience, as indicated by their decorations — Iron Crosses and Infantry Assault Badges abound. The younger



paratroop officers impress me with their knowledge, leadership qualities and professionalism. In particular, the instructors from the German Ranger School, with their crew-cuts, tanned faces and hard manner, project the kind of image especially familiar to American Marines.



Airborne school includes cold-weather ops, if cycle is in winter.



U.S. soldier being cross-trained carries M203-equipped M16 on winter exercises.

Exhaustive training minimizes chance of malfunction, and perfect canopies float to the snow-covered ground.



Day 12

The weather has been quite cold and rainy for summer. During the morning session at the pendulum, an NCO runs up and speaks excitedly to the instructor. Suddenly, orders are barked out for all cycles to terminate training and return to quarters immediately. We sense a crisis, and soon find out that the school is being mobilized to send troops for flood-relief work. The worst summer rains in Bavaria since 1945 have caused major rivers to overflow, and troops are urgently needed to shore up the banks with sandbags to prevent flooding in certain populated areas. We muster in front of the *kaserne*. The lieutenant and I are told we need not go, but of course we choose to do so. Our platoon spends the rest of the day in the cold, driving rain, filling and carrying sandbags next to a raging river which is close to washing away the railroad bridge and flooding nearby farms. We are served hot chow in the field: a couple of hard rolls and a sausage. Toward the end of the day, the cold becomes severe, and our hands feel frozen. At last we are relieved and huddle in some farm buildings, waiting for transportation. A local farmer invites a few of us in to warm up, and his wife spreads bread and cold cuts on the kitchen table and offers us schnapps. I learn that schnapps does wonders for the cold.

Day 15

Today there is some free time, and I take the opportunity to visit the headquarters building and inspect the display on the history of the *Fallschirmjäger*. It is a complete, well-documented display tracing the development from 1936 to 1945 and covering the milestones in German airborne history so well-known to military historians: Eben Emael, Corinth Canal, Crete, North Africa, the East Front, Cassino, Normandy and all the rest. There is more than I can digest in the short time I have. I am impressed to meet the deputy commander of the school, who put together the display. Looking at the many ribbons on his chest, I see that this man jumped in the airborne assault on Crete in 1941.

Day 16

The commanding officer of the school invites me to accompany him on a visit to the 1st Airborne Division, which is conducting a division exercise about three hours away in lower Bavaria. The colonel, who at the age of 59 is the senior active parachutist in the German Army, once served in Rommel's Afrika Korps. He is a forceful leader; his way of qualifying in free-fall jumping was to order an instructor to give him a one-day crash course instead of taking the usual four-week course. I ride with the colonel and his driver in an Army Volkswagen jeep to division headquarters, which is spread

out in a small village, each headquarters unit in some building with the camouflaged vehicles nestled among side streets. I am taken aback by this use of a built-up area, but I later learn that this is common practice in the German Army.

Such a division exercise can occur only in peacetime; in war, each of the division's three airborne brigades would be attached separately to one of the three Corps commands for special use. We drive some distance to the headquarters of the 26th Airborne Brigade which, again, is located in a small farm village, with the headquarters in the village *Gasthaus* and various sub-units in other buildings and farmhouses. It actually looks like a scene from a WWII movie. I am told that the typical German

countryside is dotted every few kilometers with village complexes and that in a defensive war these built-up areas will provide the centers of resistance for the infantry. We receive a briefing by the battalion commander on a helicopter assault later that afternoon, and then we eat a very simple lunch in the battalion headquarters.

After further driving we join a staff group with the II Corps commander on a hill overlooking terrain covered with large forests and clearings. A paratroop battalion of the 26th Airborne Brigade will soon make an airmobile assault which will demonstrate convincingly why mass parachute jumps have been

Continued on page 88



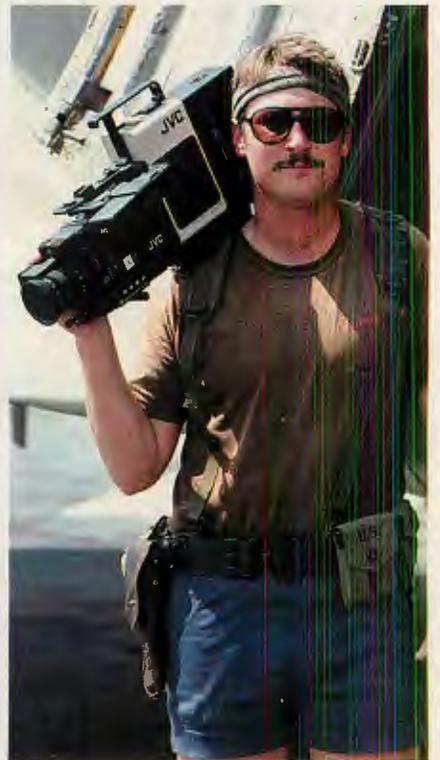


ABOVE: CBS film crew shoots footage of SOF training Salvadoran soldiers. Photo: Steve Salisbury



LEFT AND BELOW LEFT: SOF meets the press in San Salvador hotel room. Photos: John Metzger

BELOW: SOF editor John Metzger on location in El Salvador, where SOF shot some film of its own. Photo: Fred Reed



SOF ON PARADE

CBS Crew Tracks Brown's A-Team

by Fred Reed

TELEVISION people at work are, well, amazing. I came here [San Salvador] to see what was afoot militarily. At the airport I ran into a group from *Soldier of Fortune* magazine, here to do free-lance medical and military training. A CBS crew was also here to do a story on the magazine.

Soldier of Fortune has many reputations, most of them inaccurate, but its principal notoriety is that of being a journal for military adventurers. The staff regularly go to Afghanistan, Africa and other war zones and write about them. The magazine breathes an atmosphere of clandestine operations and death in the bushes that makes the staff sound incorrectly — I know them well — like a motorcycle gang.

I tagged along with them, knowing they would have close contacts in the Salvadoran army. We shortly set out for the guerrilla country to the north, with me watching CBS watching *Soldier of Fortune*.

The CBS crew were nice guys, old pros who had been to countless wars and countries. I'd guess without evidence that they were liberal, but not rabidly so. They did not strike me as the evil eastern press out to do a hatchet job.

On the other hand, with the possible exception of the director, they seemed much like so many correspondents overseas: intelligent but not thoughtful, authorities on things they had seen but not on much else, given to quick judgments.

Superficially the SOFers were a dozen men in their 30s

and 40s, dressed in camouflage fatigues and carrying pistols strapped to their waists. One had a MAC-10 submachine gun and a grenade. One was a competent armorer, two were doctors, several were trained paramedical technicians — former medics from Special Forces and such like. All of them were good at things the Salvadorans needed. They also looked silly at times, as civilians in military gear always do.

Really knowing them not at all, CBS didn't like them. The SOFers, most of whom knew exactly nothing of the press, reciprocated. I knew immediately how the TV guys would size them up. Their actual phrase, as I later heard it through someone else, was "over-the-hill clowns trying to relive the glory days of Vietnam."

On hearing this I thought, well, yes, sort of and well, no, sort of. Something about the phrase bothered me. Then it occurred to me that the group had been reduced to a one-sentence cliché, which is what television does to everything. CBS was getting the form, but not the substance.

The crowd around SOF are in fact picaresque, maverick, intriguing, bright, looney and complicated — real lulus. One spent five years in the French Foreign Legion; this is the stuff of books. Bob Brown, the publisher, started the magazine on \$10,000 and parlayed it into 200,000 circulation and millions of

dollars; anyone in New York can tell you this is impossible. Another was *summa cum laude* from Harvard Law, a polymath, sometimes described as the best 13th-century mind in America. One is a professional dynamiter who looks like Daddy Warbucks. Like them or not, they are fabulous copy.

CBS utterly missed this. They saw shapes in cammies, and didn't notice that there were people inside.

Mutual hostility came about partly, I think, because both groups in many respects were the same type of people: gutsy, big-egoed, and drawn to war zones. Each certainly regarded the other as wimps. But over-age warriors trying to live it all again? They were probably no older on average than the CBS guys, who were also driving through guerrilla country because it's fun: They aren't in Central America because they couldn't get on with Burger Chef.

Human motivations are rarely so simple as the clichés of television. The desire to relive the good times of one's youth is probably universal, but most of these guys weren't doing it. Some of the SOFers were there for political reasons, some to help the peasants from genuine charity, some because they are professional adventurers, some from boredom, most from combinations of motives. Not coincidentally, stomping around in cammies sells magazines. Mr. Brown sells a lot of magazines.

None of the flavor of the group will make it onto the air, however, because CBS made no attempt to get to know most of those in it. For

example, they always stayed at another hotel and showed up for rather distant and formal taping during the day. I understand this: It is wearing always to be forced into intimate contact with strangers, especially if you don't like them. This explains in part why reporters always congregate in one hotel when abroad. Being with people like themselves becomes spiritually necessary for people constantly on the road. I usually do it myself, for the same reasons.

But it doesn't make for real knowledge of the people being covered. And so the SOFers will probably come across as cardboard cutouts, Cliche 37-A as amended: armed bikers in green fatigues.

I will watch it and probably think, yeah, that's what they look like, but not what they are like. Maybe a lot of what looks like bias in television is something else — an inability to get anything complicated, as for example people, across.

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Editor's note: At press time, the episode of American Parade featuring the SOF A Team had not been shown and CBS had announced it had cancelled the new program, which featured Charles Kuralt. So we may never know how CBS viewed SOF.



MERC stories are usually wild. But this is a war story with a moral. I hope you'll enjoy the tale for the story, and take the advice for its own sake.

I am a 44-year-old Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, and taught statistics at a state university in Florida for five years. I also served with the 82nd Airborne Division, 18th Airborne Corps and the 4th Infantry Division. I've soldiered from the Brown Boot Army at Ft. Bragg to Southeast Asia.

I went to Nicaragua last year to see what was going on. In 24 hours I was locked up by the Sandinistas for taking pictures. My photos included barracks of Cuban troops and some of General Somoza's former holdings that had been taken over by the Sandinistas.

They were indeed the bad guys, so I went in search of the good guys in San Jose, Costa Rica. I hooked up with the Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) and by August 1983, I was back inside Nicaragua.

I was in charge of reconnaissance and military intelligence gathering for Pastora. During this period, I helped plan the battle of El Castillo (see "Assault on Nicaragua's El Castillo," SOF, April '84). My specific responsibility for the El Castillo operation was recon and diversionary patrols before the attack, and harassment operations to delay pursuit. Pastora postponed the battle a half-dozen times, so I got bored.

Transferred to a line camp known as Luna Roja — "Red Moon," due south of the Sandinista battalion post of La Noca — I shared command of two missions and led two more. These were relatively small actions: never more than 80 of us and God-only-knows how many of them. This series of ambushes along the San Juan River inflicted personnel and materiel losses. The point was to disrupt river traffic. Our missions were successful: We accomplished our objectives, and took no casualties on the ops I led. Two missions don't prove anything, but I'm proud of not losing anyone.

I got sick with malaria in November. Pastora says his was the only army in the world with no wounded, only dead. That's because his people don't do medevacs.

I shot my way out of Nicaragua with a 104-degree fever. After a day of running fire fights in Nicaragua, and two days on horseback in the Costa Rican jungle, we reached a road. A jeep picked me up and carried me back for treatment.

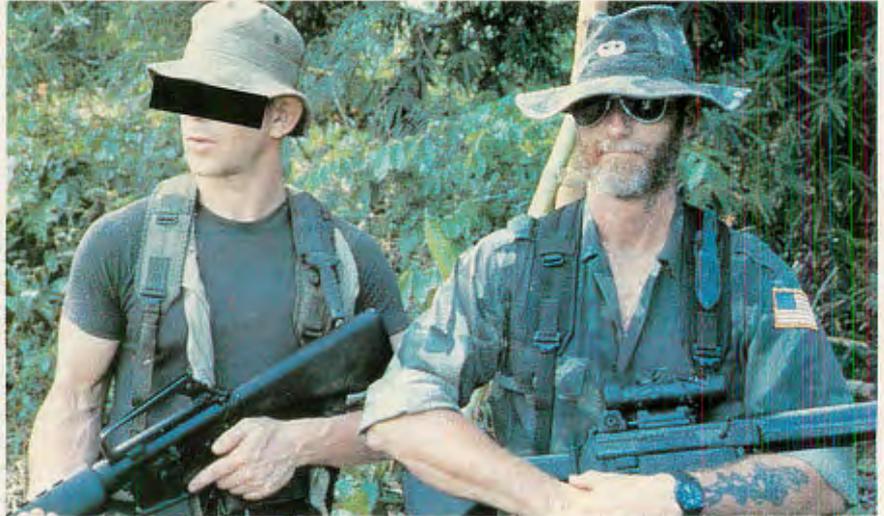
While I was convalescing, Pastora and Alfonso Robello, head of the political section, publicly fell out. People deserted, resigned and formed splinter groups trying to bridge the gap between Pastora's Democratic Alliance and the more conservative FDN (*Fuerza Democratica Nicaraguense*). A fellow suggested I investigate one of the splinter groups. M3 was headed by Alvaro Taboada, a former Sandinista ambassador. (Many of the Sandinistas' worst enemies are disappointed former accomplices.) Composed of disaffected ARDE fighters, M3 claims to have control of 400 men. That number cannot be substantiated, and they

SOF MERC UPDATE

MERC RIP-OFF IN SURINAM

Americans Caught Up in a War That Almost Was

by Dr. John Photos by Ken Kelsch



Our heroes: Boss (left, with Frankford Arsenal XM16) and Dr. John (right, with AR-180).

can arm only 35 men at a time.

Through a former associate of Pastora, Alejandro Gringo, I made preliminary contact and was supposed to join them for "special operations."

When I went home to get my strength back, a friend told me a Surinamese who had formerly worked in their Washington embassy wanted mercenaries. I told my friend to investigate, but returned to Costa Rica for the special operations planned with M3.

After a week it was apparent that alleged friends in Virginia were not going to finance any sustained operations for M3, and Pastora had been intercepted on a radio broadcast discussing the possibility of killing everyone in M3. Pastora wants it very clear that *he* is the leader of the southern Contras. M3 isn't much of a threat, but they exist. That's enough to anger Pastora.

War doesn't bother me, but fratricidal gang-fights I neither understand nor control aren't my idea of amusement or safety, so I returned to America in December '83.

I was contacted on my arrival, and my friend and I met Ed, a Hindustani-Surinamese who allegedly had been chief of security at the Surinamese embassy in Washington before Bouterse's takeover in 1980. I was shown a video tape purportedly produced by our friends at Langley. It was a

slick presentation documenting Bouterse's seizure of power, the purges he had conducted, and a few of the coup attempts. The tape also described the Council for the Liberation of Surinam, led by Dr. Henck Chin A Sen, former prime minister and president of Surinam.

I suspected Chin A Sen's patriotic stance when I learned that one of his terms as president was during Bouterse's reign, after the original revolution. He had been head of state both before and after a Marxist-dominated revolution, had fallen out with the dictator and then fled to Holland.

E. Wijngaarde is listed as a member of the Council. He is supposedly wealthy: an entrepreneur and businessman. I was told later that he never attended meetings and never put one dollar into it. Evidently, he let them use his name.

There was also a journalist named Fret Marte. I have it from several good sources that he once recruited some other American mercenaries and arranged to meet them somewhere — Florida, I believe — at their own expense. He stranded them. I understand he has resigned from the Council.

Mohammed Nasrullah, an electrical engineer who was an executive with the Surinam telephone company, and Glenn Tjong A Kiet were also Council members. They were the two with whom I had quite a bit of face-to-face contact.

My first meeting was with Ed. He showed me the tape and his maps, and brought out all his plans for a crossbow

attack on some roadblock.

Ed was a typical fairyland mercenary. You know the type: never heard a shot fired in anger. Ed probably buys *all* the stuff advertised in SOF. *El Guerrillero Grande*.

He asked me to prepare logistical and operational plans, with price tags, that he could present to the Council, after which a meeting would be arranged with the members.

So, in early January '84, I met with Mohammed Nasrullah and Glenn Tjong A Kiet at Ed's house in the Washington suburbs. Also present were my friend who had contacted me and Ed's neighbor, a Marine Vietnam veteran who had put Ed onto my friend. Unbeknownst to me at the time, Ed promised his neighbor and my Marine friend \$5,000 each, plus \$100 for every man I furnished for this operation. These are excessive sums, and a hell of a lot more than I was going to make out of the operation — \$2,000 a month and \$100 apiece for each fighter I recruited.

This bounty offer was the first of the many lies these people told Americans during the organization of their comic-opera operation.

Originally, I had been told that a force of 400 was desired for my Plan A: the all-out assault on the capital, Paramaribo, which would get the whole thing over with. Of this 400, I was to recruit 150.

My end of the deal was to provide Nicaraguan soldiers. They would not be mercenaries, since they would not be paid. M3 was going to receive a cash contribution per man. The equipment — all equipment, from web gear to mortars — would become the property of M3 and be transported, free, by private aircraft to Central America to be used against the Sandinistas.

This would make everyone happy, except Bouterse and the Sandinistas. We were going to give Surinam back to the Surinamese, and we were going to make M3 a viable operation without any help from Langley.

By the time the first meeting with Glenn and Mohammed rolled around, I was told I would have to recruit the whole 400. All

they could come up with were a dozen or so Surinamese guides and interpreters.

Well, this was fine since M3 leadership had informed me that they would happily provide 300-400 men. The original plan had a price tag of roughly \$1 million: a 200-man strike force and a 50-man reserve, and an airborne assault on Paramaribo.

Simultaneous strikes against all of the strategic points in and around the capital city would isolate Ft. Zelandia, where the dictator lives. We would besiege Ft. Zelandia later, since Bouterse couldn't hurt our operation from inside the fort. Actually, it seemed like a nice place to trap him — then lie back with the 81s and turn the place into rubble.

Fucking *beautiful!* We could film it and sell it to MGM. I can't tell you the details, since somebody may pull this off, someday.

Glenn and Mohammed took this plan to the Council in Holland. They called me. Things were great, but there were questions. I was to wait.

So on 18 January, Glenn met me in New York. Things looked bad. They could not raise that much money. Could we make plans with lower price tags?

The original plan was rock-bottom. Cheaper operations would not win the country.

Still, I developed two more plans, imaginatively named Plan B and Plan C. Plan B called for a 100-man invasion of Nickerie, the western coastal province of Surinam, and a protracted guerrilla war. Plan C called for a platoon-sized force composed of Nicaraguans, American Vietnam-veteran mercenaries and a half-dozen Surinamese with Belgian Army commando training. We would take Nieuw Nickerie, inflict maximum damage, hope for maximum publicity and wait for contributions. If no help came, we would extract by sea, or by means of the Corantijn River, which forms the border with Guyana.

The cast: (left to right) Boss, Joey, Soerind, Pedro, Dino, Roy, Romeo (political representative), Oort, Steve, Giap and Dr. John.



Glenn was delighted. He went back to Holland to report, and phoned with questions which required a trip to Central America. I ascertained that: Yes, the men were there; yes, there was a camp; and, yes, equipment could be obtained from friends in Panama.

While I was working this out with M3 I stopped at an American bar, where a fellow slid up next to me and told me that he and I needed to talk. Since San Jose is known as the city of gays and whores, I wondered what we had to talk about.

He said he understood that I needed an airplane. He proceeded to tell me a good bit about myself, and what I was doing, and for whom I was doing it, and stated that he could help with all of this. He introduced me to another individual who stated that not only would the plane be furnished, but it would be furnished *gratis*, and that radios would be furnished as well. They asked for a shopping list of arms, and 24 hours later I was told that these too would be furnished.

By this time I was thinking that I had no doubt made some important friends. And since one of the fellows I was talking to was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, it did not require my Ph.D. to figure out who these friends might be and what outfit they might be from.

The only catch — if there was a catch — was that the Surinamese had to buy some of the equipment. It seemed a modest contribution, since it was their country we were going to rescue for them.

Feeling optimistic, I went back to the States and contacted the people in Holland. By this time I had been paid, month-by-month, for arranging details and coming up with plans for these folks. I was then told to come to Europe, where a ticket and hotel reservation were waiting — I would be contacted. So on 31 January 1984 I arrived at Luchthaven Airport in Brussels, went to my hotel and waited.

The next day Glenn, Mohammed, a Surinamese expatriate businessman (known hereafter as Fat Man), and a physician friend of his showed up. Plans were analyzed and evaluated, and Fat Man told me how he had been ripped off for \$300,000 by a Belgian mercenary who was going to train Surinamese as soldiers and get them to recapture Surinam. Everyone was very angry.

Later I learned the real story: The sum was not \$300,000, but 300,000 Dutch guilders: about \$90,000. The Belgian had indeed trained quite a few Surinamese, and not just basic training. He taught them how to jump out of airplanes. He probably earned his \$90,000, saw these hamsters weren't going to do anything and bowed out.

This was another untruth they presented to me. Anyhow, the four of them left. I was to wait in Belgium.

The next night I got a phone call. Fat Man did not trust Americans and therefore was not going to put up anything. This made my new-found friends very angry. After I made my report, I never heard from them again. Nor did they wish to hear from me again. When I returned to New York at the end of

my Surinamese misadventures, I tried to reestablish contact with my former friends. They wouldn't even listen to my debrief.

So I returned to America with about a week to go on the time I'd been paid for. I told them I wouldn't give up, and that I would see if there was something else that might be done within their budget, even if it appeared to be \$1.98.

It was 2130 hours on a Saturday night, and my contract was going to run out at midnight. I got a call from Glenn. He was in Miami, and asked me how soon I could get there. I took a cab to Newark Airport and arrived in Miami about 0200 Sunday morning. There I met with Glenn and a fellow named Roy Bottse. Roy had been a first lieutenant in the Surinamese and Dutch armies.

(I later learned that he had been an intelligence officer for about 12 years. The Dutch, by the way, don't want Bouterse overthrown. I had already been told by our State Department that the Dutch Secret Service was actively protecting Bouterse. They may well have had a hand at putting him in — before they knew of Bouterse's deal with the Cubans — they don't want the boat rocked any more, and the whole mess may end up being the Dutch version of Watergate.)

Roy and Glenn informed me that two dozen Surinamese, most with prior military service, were at a camp in French Guiana. They wanted to hire me to train them and ultimately lead them into battle in Surinam, according to my Plan C. At this point I had been advised by friends in Washington and other veterans to drop these people.

But I decided to take the job for the worst reason in the world: I needed the money.

So I agreed to continue my \$2,000 a month and go to French Guiana to train these people. If they could arm them and a few little things like that, I would take them into battle . . . if they hired one other American.

After a few debacles in Nicaragua, where I was led into unnecessary danger by inexperienced officers, I had promised my wife I would never again go into combat without at least another American. Also, I wanted to make sure that when I gave the order to fire, there would be at least two rifles fired.

They agreed to that, and I returned to New York. I waited and waited — the hamsters could never deliver on time — and finally, a week later, they got together a plane ticket from New York to Martinique, laying over one night, and connecting from Martinique to French Guiana. I was to meet Glenn in Martinique, and we were to proceed together to French Guiana, where we would meet Bottse and two dozen recruits.

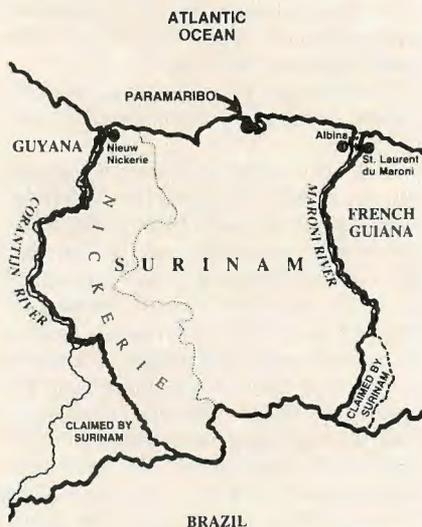
Well, when I got to Martinique — where I was supposed to be met with my week-overdue month's pay in U.S. dollars — I was given half a month's pay in Dutch guilders.

When I went to the bank to change the guilders to dollars, I was arrested because the guilders had been stolen.

This did not make me happy, because

French jails are unpleasant places. So I promptly told them where I got the guilders. They arrested Glenn. We were held for a few hours — long enough for us to miss our plane — and released. (We were either being warned by the French, or they really couldn't find any incriminating connection between us and the alleged robbery.) This delay required a few more days of laying-over.

In Martinique I began to inquire into the make-up of this Council and the general nature of the Surinamese population, both in the country and in exile in Holland. I found that there are 150,000 Surinamese living in Holland, most of whom went to live there before the communist revolution. They were economic refugees, like the Haitians here. Most of them took Dutch citizenship, which they were able to do as former colonial residents, and most of them were on welfare, which is quite high in Holland.



A great concern of these Council members was not to jeopardize their welfare.

The Council was tolerated in Holland as long as it didn't do anything. Members had been told that they would lose their welfare benefits and possibly be kicked out of Holland if anything happened. Well, this didn't sound like the kind of motivation that I was used to in Nicaragua, especially with the Miskito Indian refugees. (Before I left Pastora's organization, I was due for transfer to the staff of Hugo Spadafora, leader of the southern Miskito Contras, and I have spent much time in the Miskito camps.)

But Surinam is not Nicaragua. Nicaragua has a history of violence and passion, and Surinam is kind of an artificial country. Most of the indigenous people were killed, of course, and successive waves of slaves and laborers have contributed to the present-day population: a combination of Negro, Hindustani, Javanese, Sumatran, Chinese, Korean and Dutch.

Finally we got to Cayenne, French Guiana, where we were met by a couple of Surinamese, a former policeman and

another fellow who describes himself as a hustler. He elaborated that he sold heroin and pimped out of a bar that he owned in Amsterdam. Of course, the idea of someone giving up a lucrative career like pushing and pimping and tending bar to come fight for his country impressed me greatly. What moral character!

After arriving in Cayenne, I learned that there were no longer 24 Surinamese. There were now 10 Surinamese. The others got tired of waiting for anything to happen, and went back to Amsterdam and welfare. So there was no camp.

The weapons I was promised proved to be two single-shot shotguns (a 16- and a 12-gauge) and two .22s (a pistol and a sawed-off rifle).

Of this stuff successful revolutions and counter-revolutions are not made.

They packed up one of the Surinamese expatriates and gave us his farm as training camp. They just threw everyone — the owner and the workers — out of their houses. The first night was spent listening to grown men giggle and telling stories all night, like 17-year-old recruits at Ft. Jackson.

At 0600, I fell out in full fatigues and web gear. Reveille was played by my old 1911A1. That was just to let these people know that they were no longer pimps, drug dealers and welfare chiselers, and that if they wanted to take their country back they were going to act like soldiers.

Bottse showed up a few days later, and together we arranged a training environment. Because of the fruit trees everywhere, we christened HQ "Ft. Mango." The recruits were enthusiastic. Only eight of them lasted out the first few days, but all were enthusiastic. They wanted their country back.

Unfortunately, their enthusiasm was not equaled by logistical support from the Council. Money was always late, short and in the wrong currency, so more money would be lost at the exchange. By the time the other American got down (weeks after he had been promised) I did have his money waiting for him, in American dollars: a major coup.

Supplies of any kind simply did not exist. We hunted, foraged, scrounged and even raided a few gardens. Hunting trips added such exotic critters to our diet as anteater, boa constrictor, anaconda, flamingo and iguana. Surinamese can cook. Their cooking would make a Mexican beg for mercy. There must be a stronger word than "hot" for whatever Surinamese food is.

The other American's code name was Boss. He was a 'Nam vet, 101st Airborne LRRP trooper, and just about as crazy as you would expect an LRRP to be. One of the best moves that I ever made was having this fellow come along.

I can't describe supply channels, but — finally — some weapons appeared: uniforms, web gear, packs, bayonets, compasses, boots and hats. I had a nice Armalite 180, scoped, and an XM16 for Boss. Maybe we were going to war after all. After three

weeks of intensive night and day training, four of the eight were as close to combat-ready as they were ever going to get, given that they were all over 30. Meanwhile, I had made a reconnaissance into Surinam.

There I was: dugout canoe, piranha-infested river, broiling sun over the malarial jungle, stinging plants and biting insects, armed, dangerous and alone. I scouted the town of Albina, right on the border across the Maroni River from St. Laurent du Maroni. I felt like I could have taken the town with my .45.

It was Sunday afternoon: four military police at the port of entry, and 50 off-duty soldiers. I shot two rolls of film — landing sites and targets — and made my way back. Shortly after that, a couple of our spies were caught. Security was tightened, but not to any degree that would have hampered an operation in Albina. I had three plans for attacks from Ft. Mango. All three were canceled at the last minute by the Council for the flimsiest of reasons.

By then we had help — very secret help — from some French. I must not divulge their collective or individual identities, but they were impressive. Langley might take a page from these folks' book. Unfortunately, their government is Leftist, now, but these fine civil servants assured me *they* were Right no matter which way the government went.

One of the things that these Frenchmen did was arrange a meeting between Dr. Chin A Sen and a minister of the French government. Later I was told that Chin A Sen had not handled himself well. He presented a list of demands rather than establishing rapport. Also, they said that the communist members of the French cabinet found out about our presence in French Guiana and demanded our expulsion.

Now, let me recap. We had eight troops, two Americans and one politician at Ft. Mango. We had put them through a training cycle that involved physical training, obstacle courses, radio procedure, marksmanship, and care and cleaning of small arms (which is all we ever had, no mortars, no machine guns, no grenades, no plastic, nothing). We had done a lot of ambush/counter-ambush practice, night field problems, long hikes through jungle and swamp, crossing rivers and crossing major highways during the day.

We had finally decided to take the four best men inside, raid and either retreat into French Guiana or coordinate with reinforcements in an attack on Albina. At the last minute Fat Man financed a half-dozen more warm bodies. They were all either veterans or had been trained by the Belgian I mentioned earlier. I had little time to train them, but they knew what they were doing. They responded well.

We were going to leave the new fellows with Bottse to finish their training while Boss, the four "commandos" and I went in. We would either meet them at Albina and coordinate an attack there or infiltrate back into French Guiana.

This was also postponed by Council

order.

Boss and I were wondering if these people really wanted a war. We knew some spies had been captured. We suspected Bottse of working for the French (he was actually working for the Dutch). We wondered about the Council's concern with keeping their welfare checks.

To draw the line — and to vent our frustration — we offered to go in alone. The fucking two of us would start their god-damned war for them. This gesture was also refused.

Our offer wasn't *quite* mad. Based on my intelligence estimate, and some good leaks from American journalists, I figured the Surinamese Army could be taken by an "A" team.



Roy, Dr. John and Chuck Di Caro (right) of CNN inspect obstacle course.

But the Council didn't want the Surinamese Army taken by any means: They were interested in publicity, and the money drawn by publicity. The Council tried to pick my media contacts, because they wanted the word out that they were fighting to liberate their country, even if it weren't true. Naturally, I wasn't very happy with this. I was hardly prepared to wire *Paris Match* our plans for an invasion of Surinam from French territory. Still, they tried to persuade me to arrange publicity for them.

Press might have done us some good if we could have gotten some coverage inside Surinam. That way support might have rallied, and the bad guys might have been frightened. But the dictator Bouterse controls the press completely. If he chose to ignore us, we could actually invade Surinam, and most of the Surinamese would never know the difference. I decided to compromise.

At the insistence of the Council I dusted off my Cable News Network (CNN) contacts. I had met some of their boys in Nicaragua when I was fighting for Pastora. Chuck Di Caro, a 20th Special Forces Group reservist, and Ken Kelsch, a Special Forces Vietnam veteran, had tried to do an interview and voiced an interest in newsworthy anti-communist activities. I sent them a message

saying they would find news if they came my way. If they didn't, NBC would be glad to do so.

CNN came right down.

First they went to Surinam to interview the dictator. That didn't pan out, but they got good footage showing the repressive nature of the regime. They filmed in our camp for a couple of days. Ken had been an officer in Vietnam, and even he was impressed with our troops. The soldiers wanted to learn, and we had done our job.

Those of you who saw the CNN film saw some French officials. Actually, they had no idea they were being filmed, and I'm sure they are embarrassed about it now. Kelsch left the camera running when he set it down on the hood of the car, generally pointed toward them. When I was detained later in Martinique, the French Secret Service was insistent that I convey their concern over this footage to CNN. I did, but CNN just howled. They were spoiling for a First Amendment Rights fight with the French government in a U.S. court.

Release of the film report was supposed to coincide with our attack. Actually, CNN wanted to come in and film the assault, but I refused permission. It was going to be bad enough crawling, running and shooting in the green hell without video equipment. I couldn't guarantee their safe return, so I sent them on their way.

They went back to the States to await our invasion of Surinam. However, on a Thursday night we learned from our friends that the French gendarmes were going to raid us, close the camp, kick everyone out of the country and possibly press weapons-trafficking charges. We were also told that if the gendarmerie was afraid to go after us, the Foreign Legion — 20 clicks away — was not.

That cinched it. French politics may vacillate, and French bureaucrats may give you a break here, or break you there, but if the Legion gets into it, your days of uncertainty are over. I had no desire to fight the Foreign Legion at all, nor did I have any desire to go to French jail again.

I demanded expense money for Boss and myself, and told the hamsters that we would check into a hotel and wait to hear from them. They could wait until this blew over, or until things got patched up in Europe, or until Hell froze over. We would wait until Monday.

On Monday a couple of our French friends showed up and told me that Saturday, 24 March 1984, the camp had been raided. Everyone had been deported to Curacao (the Dutch dependency), since most of them had Dutch passports. They were going to be sent back to Holland.

These fine Frenchmen protected us and on Monday, 26 March, shipped us out of the country. Boss was to fly from Cayenne to Martinique to Paris to Amsterdam, then back to America. My ticket took me to Martinique, connecting a few days later to New York. We left on the same plane: He

Continued on page 105

Spetznatz Suppressor Captured in Afghanistan

Text & Photos by David C. Isby

THEY arrived in Afghanistan at the end of 1980, after the first year of the war had shown the Soviets that their mechanized, combined-arms divisions were out of their element in the unforgiving mountains and deserts. The Afghans reported that they were lean, athletic soldiers, who fought not with tanks and armored personnel carriers, but from helicopters or on foot, often far from their bases.

The *Spetznatz* had come to Afghanistan to give the Soviet 40th Army a greater capability for fast, hard-hitting, commando-type operations than its airborne and motorized rifle divisions could provide. *Spetznatz* — the Soviet term means Special Operations Forces — cover their tracks well. Usually the only indications of their operations have been dead Afghans, ambushed guerrilla supply convoys, or artillery striking liberated villages. But *Soldier of Fortune* has found interesting evidence of one time when the battle did not go in their favor.

This evidence is something that apparently has never been seen before in the West: a silenced version of the AKM 7.62mm assault rifle. Karen McKay, executive director of the Committee for a Free Afghanistan, and I had been sent by *Soldier of Fortune* to the Area of Operations to look, among other things, for interesting hardware. Our shopping list was rather interesting in itself — body armor, the AKR assault rifle, bits of T-72 tanks (although the magazine would pay for shipping a whole one home if we could find it).

The silencer was a find we had not been expecting. I have spent many years studying the Soviet military, and the first I knew of this silencer was when, as we sat cross-legged on the floor after eating dinner with some mujahideen, it was literally dropped into Karen's lap by a senior official of the

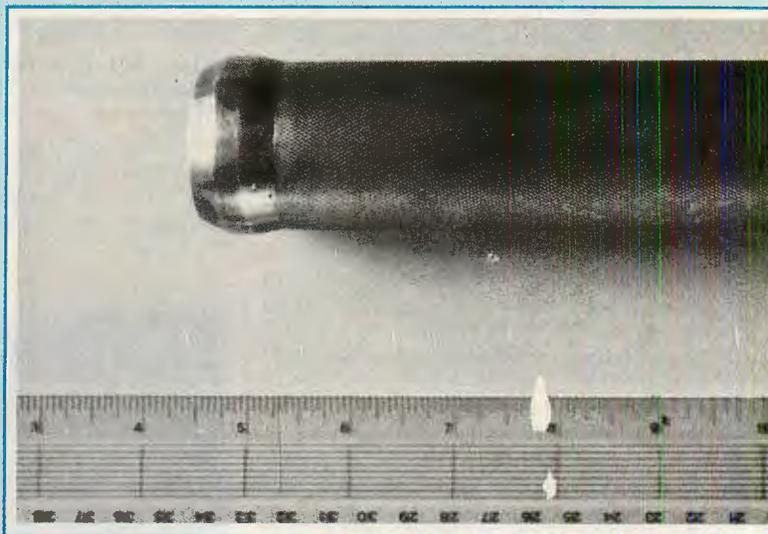
National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), one of the Peshawar-based groups fighting inside the country. We listened intently as the Afghans described how they had acquired this weapon and how it had been used.

The Soviets cannot do everything right, but they manage to do a good job on what is important to them: That is why they can produce the most accurate intercontinental ballistic missiles in the world but cannot make a decent toaster. We are pleased to be able to report that silencers apparently are considered, in the Soviet system of priorities, closer to toasters than missiles.

Analysis of the silencer has shown it to be the inefficient application of outdated technology. Silent killing with bullets — as opposed to poison gas — appears not to have been a priority of Soviet weapons research and development. There is no evidence, however, that this level of interest will continue in the future.

Rather, it may be that as this silencer shows its limitations in combat in Afghanistan, and if the Soviets continue to increase their use of special operations forces there and elsewhere, they will develop and use a new type of silencer. Usually, in any area where the Soviets have found themselves falling behind the West, they will use "borrowed" Western technology to close the gap. A Soviet version of a more modern Western silencer may now be something to look for in Afghanistan.

The silencer came off a 7.62mm AKM assault rifle which apparently had a slightly lengthened barrel and a screw thread at the muzzle to receive the silencer. When captured, the rifle had a night sight mounted, but the Afghans had detached it and put it on a PKM general-purpose machine gun, which they thought was a better use for it.



Assembled suppressor shows compact size, inappropriate to gas production of normal rifle round.



Cyrillic lettering in serial/model number and source show Russian origin.

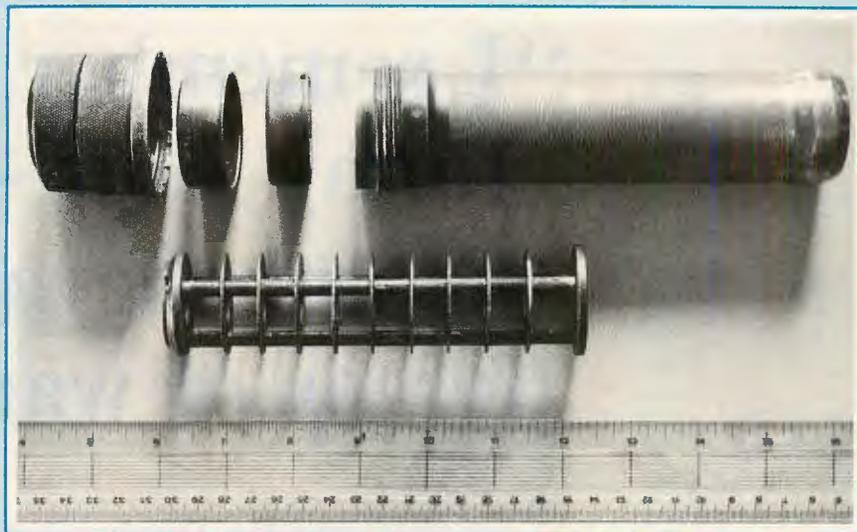
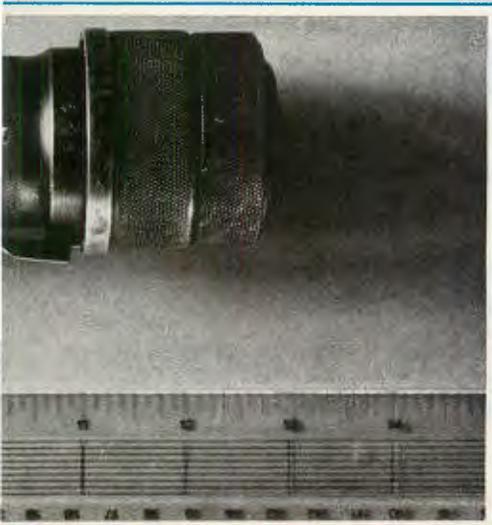


Business end of issue Soviet suppressor.



Inside view of silencer's rear nut shows elastomer wipe which limits gas escape, but ruins accuracy.

NCER SCOOP



From the description of the sight we received from the Afghans, it could be either the standard Soviet NSP infrared device or an improved active version.

Our source at the Interrand Corporation, one of the leading consultants on the use of silenced weapons, the first Western technical expert to examine *Soldier of Fortune's* prize Afghanistan find, said, "This is one of the worst silencers I've ever seen." He considers it inferior not only to contemporary Western silencers, but to obsolescent ones. It is not even as effective as the wide variety of silencers for pistols and submachine guns used by the Chinese and North Koreans, or that used with the Czech-built *Skorpion* submachine gun. This device may be a WWII-vintage system, possibly intended for different weapons which used subsonic 7.62x25mm pistol or 7.62x54mm rifle ammunition.

The use of standard 7.62x39mm ball ammunition with this silencer is probably out of the question. The Afghans did not have any of the ammunition that was captured with the silencer-equipped AKM — they had returned it all to its Soviet owners through the muzzle — but from their descriptions, it is probable that it normally fires a round with subsonic loads marked with a green band. This Afghan rumor is bolstered by intelligence-community reports that low-velocity black-green-coded ammunition has been found. Subsonic loads are used with many silencer-equipped weapons, and have their muzzle velocity reduced to avoid the normal bullet's miniature sonic boom, so reducing weapon noise signature. With such a reduced-power round, the gas-operated Kalashnikov automatic would not be able to cycle. Therefore, all firing would have to be semiautomatic.

Simple and rugged, like most Soviet equipment, but it hardly works.



Heads of tie rods which hold baffles.



Slotted round nuts lock baffle assembly to rods.

All this leads to low lethality. The AKM in its standard form is not an accurate weapon, with normal dispersion of six to seven minutes of angle. Even if the rifle on which the silencer is mounted is improved and accurized and a scope is mounted, it is unlikely that even this figure of accuracy will be achieved, because as the round exits the muzzle and goes through the noise-

suppressing rubber wipe adjacent to it, its trajectory will be disturbed. The round will leave the silencer wobbling. Maximum effective range is probably no greater than 50 meters. In effectiveness and lethality, it is probably less effective than a pistol firing 9mm Parabellum rounds and equipped with state-of-the-art Western silencers.

The noise level on this weapon is likely to be considerable — again, louder than a silenced Western 9mm Parabellum weapon. Interrand estimates that the noise level of a standard AKM firing ball ammunition is 160-165 decibels. Even with a brand-new silencer and subsonic ammunition, the noise level will probably be 155-160 decibels or, at a maximum, a noise reduction of 15-20 decibels over the standard AKM firing ball. Once the rubber wipe by the muzzle is shot away over the first 10 subsonic rounds, the reduction level will not exceed 10 decibels over the standard weapon. If ball ammunition is used by the silencer, a reduction of 5-10 decibels is the maximum one could hope for, and that would be reduced to less than a five-decibel reduction with five or less rounds.

The Mark IIS "Silent Sten" submachine gun is still in widespread service with U.S. and NATO forces. This silenced version of the unsophisticated British-designed 9mm submachine gun dates back to WWII, but there are still probably more Mark IISs in the U.S. special-operations arsenal than any other silenced weapon. This silencer uses ball ammunition fired at a reduced velocity through a ported barrel. It is not the best silencer available, nor is it state of the art — but it is still, in Interrand's opinion, an order of magnitude better than the Soviet silencer. A Silent Sten has a noise signature of 125-

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DOORGUNNER

“I remember the
funny stuff —
the unbelievable
humor of war.”

by Jim Coyne

THE life of a doorgunner on a helicopter gunship in Vietnam was like that of a fireman at a forest fire: It was either “stand by” or “scramble.” When contact was made and fighting flared up, we would hose it down.

Immediately after jump school, in March 1966, I was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, RVN. In retrospect, I suppose I had illusions about what I would be doing once I got to Vietnam. I had a light-weapons infantry-airborne MOS (11B2P), and an expert’s qualification with the M60 machine gun — I was sure I’d be humping up and down hills carrying it. My illusions were to be shattered in Vietnam.

When I arrived at Tan Son Nhut, in May 1966, and stepped from the dark, cool, air-conditioned interior of the chartered Pan American Boeing 707 into the bright, humid air of Vietnam, my glasses fogged up — and I knew things were going to be different from what I’d expected.

At Camp Alpha, in Saigon, as I was being routinely processed forward, the clerk hesitated and asked me if I wanted to volunteer as a doorgunner on a helicopter gunship.

I said, “Sure.”

He said, “Great,” and began filling in forms. “Doorgunners only seem to last for three months.”

“What the hell,” I said. “At least I won’t be walking.”

I was assigned to the 174th Helicopter Assault Company, 52nd Aviation Battalion, MACV. (This was before the formation of the 1st Aviation Brigade; the 174th would later become part of the 14th Avn. Bn./1st Ave. Bde.) For the next 18 months I would be in combat air operations almost daily with “shark flight,” the gunship platoon.

I had never been in a helicopter before. No one cared. I had the mandatory airborne-infantry MOS, and the desire to see combat; they would take care of the rest. They did.

Two grinning warrant officers told me to buckle myself into the open right door of a brand-new “C” model gunship — the newest, fastest helicopter the Army had: We were going for a ride. The crew chief, not at all happy, told me dispassionately to piss now, because he wasn’t going to clean it up later. I looked at him as if he were from Mars.

Well, we did high-G banks, gun-run dives, tight 360-degree turns, auto-rotations, low-altitude flare-outs and nap-of-the-earth approaches; everything but loop-the-loops. I loved it. Contour flying was like riding in an aerial motorcycle, wind whipping through the doors, leaning out into the slipstream. I was hooked. They saw me grinning and gave me “thumbs up.” Below us, Vietnam rushed by in a green blur.

I was assigned to a “ship,” and issued an M60 machine gun to hang in the door. I learned quickly. It was no longer feasible to fire only a two- or three-round burst, as I had been taught; bursts were now 100 rounds, all tracer. Aiming was done *behind* the target and, due to optical illusion, bursts seemed to “curve.”



Traditionally, the newest member of the platoon drew the Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) ship and, with it, the responsibility of maintaining the beast's 48 2.75-inch rockets, slung 24 to a side. We called it the "hog." It was an apt, but not affectionate, name. Primarily, it was the hog's chore to prep an LZ prior to the arrival of the troop-carrying slicks, while the other seven gunships of the platoon — armed with 7.62 flex-guns (later mini-guns), 40mm grenade launchers and 14 rockets each — covered us with "daisychains" on each side. One run, 48 rockets: whoosh, gone.

We learned quickly to hate the hog. On one Combat Assault (CA) we would expend over half the combined rockets of the entire platoon! Then we would return, rearm and refuel, and do it again. It soon became apparent, to even the dullest among us, that we were going to spend half our time being shot at, and the other half sweating and breaking down rockets. After a few hot LZs we would be up most of the night "feeding the hog."

We replaced the hog. I helped influence that decision by stitching two or three rounds into the cumbersome rocket tubes on a particularly exciting exchange of fire with the ground.

We were issued one of the first 7.62 General Electric mini-gun systems and two rocket pods of seven rockets each. We thought this was a better idea and a step in the right direction. But now, instead of breaking down rockets, we found ourselves breaking down 7.62 ammo. The combined rate of fire of both mini-guns was 8,000 rounds per minute! The 5,000-round feed trays emptied faster than anyone thought possible.

DOORGUNNER

Think about it: 40 ammo crates per minute! It didn't even sound like a machine gun; it sounded like a banshee chainsaw.

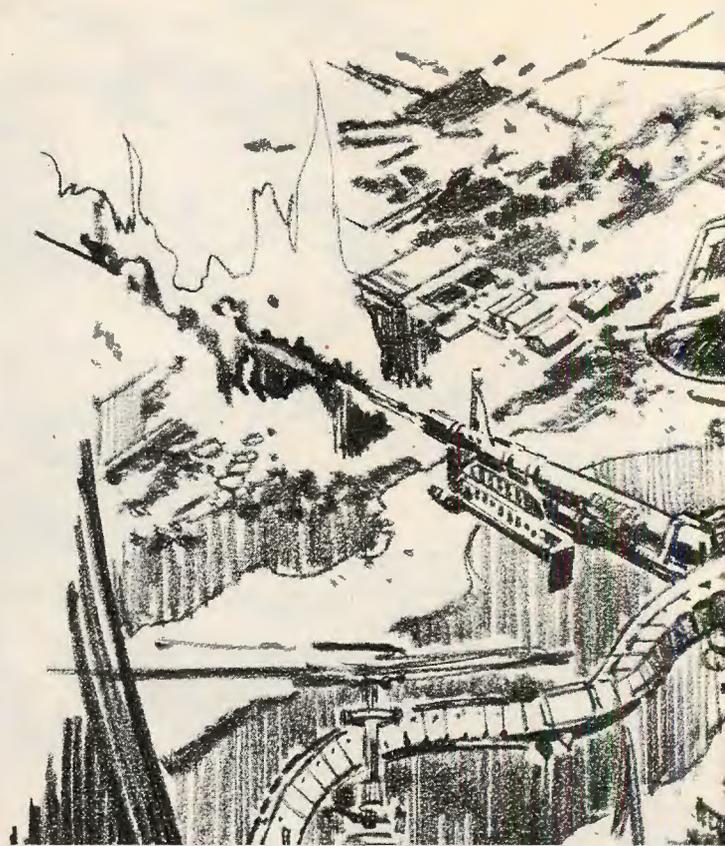
On a 140-knot gun run, a ball of flame two feet in diameter leaped from the barrels. No one had ever seen anything like it. The effect on the target was awesome; a three-second burst covered every square foot of a swath 100 meters long. We spent a lot of time breaking down and linking up ammo. We also spent a lot of time using it.

We returned from an exceptionally vicious fire fight west of Khann Dong, 20-minute fuel-warning light on, skimming fast and low over the lush coastal rice fields toward the air strip at Nha Trang. No one said much. The memories were fresh: the shattered ARVN convoy skewed every which way in the chaos of the ambush; the splintered windshields and bullet-pocked vehicles; the deuce-and-a-half full of corpses; the greasy black smoke boiling up from the road; the twisted wreckage of the Air Force FAC shot down earlier in the day, hanging in the trees.

We knew we had been hit; we just didn't know where. We had drawn automatic-weapons fire on every gun run; on the last run we picked up a 1:1 vibration, broke contact and streaked toward home.

"I think it's in the main rotor," the crew chief said over the intercom. We had taken hits there before, no big deal — a little vibration, then a two-day rest while the maintenance company replaced and "tracked" the blade. Still, no one said much.

We could still hear the fire fight over the company radio net, crackling like a bad dream in the distance:



"OK, OK, I see you. Dust off; pop smoke, pop smoke." The searing sound of men screaming.

Ahead, Nha Trang glinted peacefully, a jewel set in the azure crescent of the South China Sea, warmed by the hot tropical afternoon sun; five clicks and coming up fast.

A helicopter doesn't need a tail rotor above a certain speed. In a "charlie model," as I recall, it was 10 knots. Below that speed, there isn't sufficient air flow to keep the fuselage parallel to the line of flight, and the pedals controlling tail rotor pitch are required. Without the tail rotor, below 70 knots, the tail tries to catch up with the torque of the main rotor.

As we approached the perimeter of the airfield at Nha Trang, flat-out on-the-deck, nose down and cooking, the pilot began to rein it in, flaring just short of the 5th Special Forces Compound.

Then, two things happened: We ran out of altitude and luck simultaneously. The tail of the helicopter slipped out from under us, spinning us to the right, out of control. We knew instantly what was happening: We had no tail rotor — we were going in, hard. Just as quickly, the main rotor struck the ground, flipped the helicopter over and slammed us into the moist, damp earth of a drained rice paddy.

The sequence of events seems, in memory, to have lasted all day, but was, in reality, compressed into a few seconds. One moment we were flying; then, as if there'd been an explosion, we were inverted, motionless on the ground, hanging upside down from our seatbelts, looking at each other.

We had almost no fuel remaining when we hit — there was no fire. Nevertheless, after I determined I was alive, after everything stopped moving and after the last echo of the crash reverberated through my brain, fire was all I could think of.

The copilot, dangling upside down from his



A 175mm "Long Tom" artillery battery came by sea, disembarking from LSTs on the beach, followed closely by a 155 battery for close work. Soon there was a runway, another battalion of infantry, our complete helicopter company (25 helicopters), an OH-13 company, a control tower, Tactical Air Control Center (TACC), a field hospital, graves registration, elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry and the 196th Infantry Brigade. That's when Uncle Charlie made his debut. I guess he had had enough.

We stood in the noon chow line, waiting to eat, while the bustle of the camp droned around us. *CRACK!* The cook said, "Shit." A neat hole, the size of an AK round, appeared in the side of the large stainless-steel vat used for dispensing ice-cold Kool-Aid[®]. A large puddle formed around the prone figures of those who were quick enough to get down. We stared up at the hill.

Gunships scrambled into the air, orbiting menacingly around the slope. A half hour went by, and everyone went back to work. There were no more shots that day, and that became the pattern: One shot a day, usually during the afternoon, never hitting anyone. There were a few half-hearted efforts at sweeping the hill again, but no one found anything; besides, if we found him, they might replace Uncle Charlie with someone who could shoot (my own feeling was that he was an excellent shot).

Uncle Charlie became routine — a way to mark time. There were days when the foolish and the brave sat on top of the bunkers, watching the hill and the camp, betting where he would place the next shot.

WHAP! The double rear tires of a 6x6 deflated with a hiss. Everybody cheered — everyone except the humorless truck driver, who struggled and cursed for the next four hours; jacked up the truck, removed the tires, patched the holes, replaced the tires, jacked down the truck, opened a well-deserved beer and watched, in sweating disbelief, as Uncle Charlie deviated, just that once, from his normal pattern, and ripped another round through the tires. Uncle Charlie had a sense of humor. ✕

harness, yelled, "Is everybody OK?"

A weak chorus: "I'm OK," from the pilot, crew chief and myself followed, all of us still trying to orient ourselves.

"Let's get the fuck out of here!" the pilot yelled. Then he released his seatbelt, fell, and knocked himself unconscious. As we dragged him from the wreckage, we were all laughing. Men ran toward us from the Special Forces Compound and stared at us as if we were survivors of some drunken insanity. We were alive.

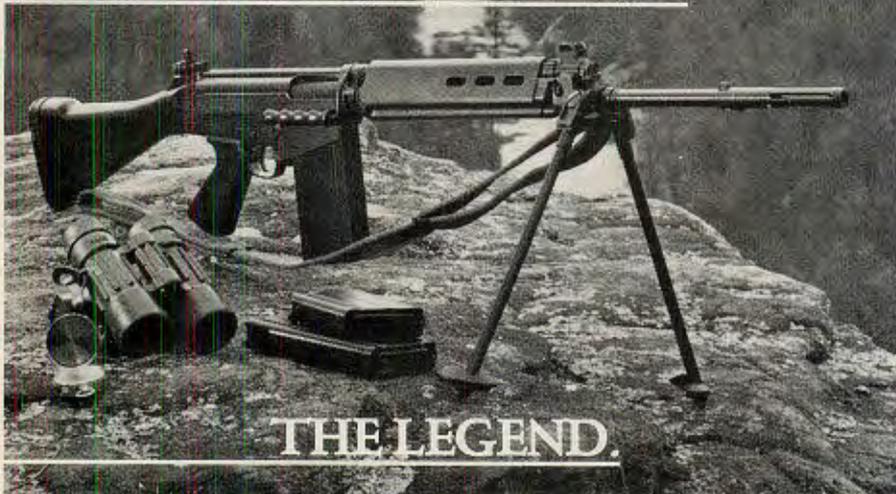
I remember the funny stuff — the unbelievable humor of war. I suppose, to the uninitiated, it sounds macabre. I could never explain it — those who were there, in the thick of it, know; others may think what they like. There were days it seemed like a comedy.

We followed the war like migrant laborers, north to I Corps, to a desolate coastal wasteland near the small village of Duc Pho. A battalion of the 101st was holding the base of a modest hill nearby, waiting. The plan was to occupy the hill, establish a base camp, secure the coastal area and the trails leading up into the highlands and, from there, mount sustained operations in support of Special Forces efforts at Gia Vuc.

The hill was no problem. An all-day sweep found little evidence that anyone occupied it, or ever had — only a few old holes. An observation post with a clear view of the surrounding area and a 106mm recoilless rifle were placed on top. Then everybody came down and began building a perforated-steel-planking (PSP) runway, capable of receiving C-130s for the reinforcements soon due to arrive.



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CONVERSATION WITH A CONTRA

Continued from page 47

is why the press has not understood our fight.

The Sandinistas were urban guerrillas. They were trained in the mountains but they succeeded in 1978 and 1979 when they moved to the cities and used urban-guerrilla tactics. The Sandinista tactics were based on taking hostages, robbing banks, hiding in safe houses and attacking at night. They infiltrated families that had doubts about how they lived and took the children of those families and penetrated the middle class and upper middle class.

Urban guerrillas are trained to be ruthless, cruel and suicidal.

The first act of the Sandinistas was to take the house of an important person in Nicaragua and hold 25 hostages. They exchanged the hostages for money, a plane, and newspaper, radio and TV coverage of their socialist manifesto for three days.

They did the same when Pastora [Eden Pastora, *Comandante Zero*, the famous Sandinista hero-turned-Contra-leader of the Costa Rican-based Democratic Revolutionary Alliance (ARDE) guerrillas] stormed the national palace. The Sandinistas exchanged the hostages he captured for Tomas Borge and others, a million dollars, a plane to go to Panama and Cuba, and the means to get their manifesto before the people.

I like this analogy because that is what they have been doing, going from a small house to a bigger house.

Then they took a town. When the communists take a town, it's not that the people join them: They force the people to join them. The people become the hostages of the communists. I remember people [Sandinistas] telling me in 1978 when they went into a town they gave the people shotguns and the communists stood behind them. They always put the people in front. When the *Guardia Nacional* came, the Sandinistas disappeared.

The point that I'm making is that the Sandinista model (the one the press understands) is different from ours. We are not terrorists. We don't rob banks, we don't kidnap, we don't kill hostages and we don't assassinate.

We are a rural *campesino* revolution and, in that sense, I am proud of the FDN.

The Sandinistas were urban guerrillas who filled the power vacuum created when the United States and the Organization of American States (OAS) made Somoza leave. The FSLN was the only organized force, so they took power.

Our revolution is the opposite. It's a true revolution of fighters who have to get rid of these Sandinista Marxist-Leninist imitators of Castro.

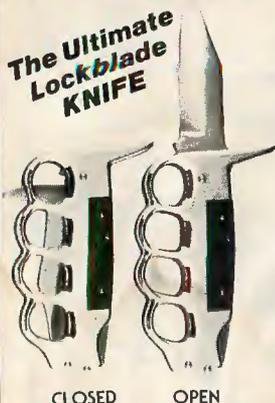
And our revolution will come about from the mountains to the cities.

SOF: There have been several attempts in 1983 to bring together the various anti-Sandinista factions — the FDN in Honduras, the MISURA (Miskito, Suma and Rama Indians) in Honduras, UDN-FARN (led by Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro) in Honduras, the Miskitos in Costa Rica and ARDE in Costa Rica. How is it going?

CHAMORRO: Our differences are not ideological, especially with MISURA and UDN-FARN, and even with the others, I do not see a major ideological difference. It's more of a personality difference. Some are reluctant to join with people who were associated with the Sandinistas and Castro, and some are reluctant to join with people who were supposed to have been associated with the *Guardia Nacional*.

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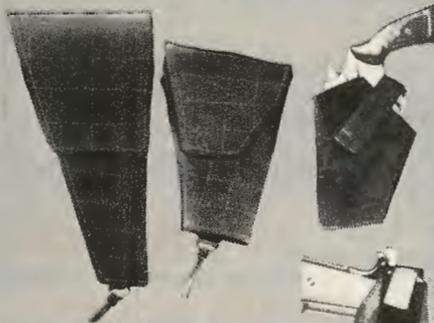
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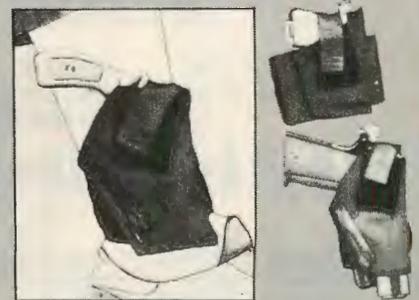
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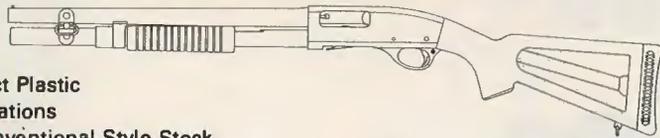


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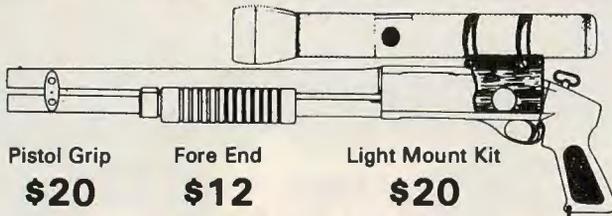
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SOF: But you have good relations with Mis-
kitos?

CHAMORRO: Yes, and with Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro, who has a small force. They are the only other groups that are really fighting. Recently, the Mis-
kitos have been doing some good fighting in northeast Nicaragua. They are also politically important and they have good press. They have an ear in Europe and many sympathizers.

SOF: One of our writers visited "El Negro" Chamorro in Costa Rica in late 1982 [see "SOF Visits Contra Camp in Central America," August '83, p. 50].

CHAMORRO: Then Chamorro moved his operation here to Honduras after some sort of falling out with Pastora. He has a small force but he has more political power because of what he represents, what he symbolizes. ["El Negro" Chamorro is directly related to Nicaragua's powerful Chamorro publishing family; Edgar Chamorro is not.]

But the only group that has 8,000 fighting men is the FDN. [Editor's note: At press time, estimates of FDN strength ranged from 12,000 to 18,000.]

The press keeps asking me, "Why haven't you accomplished more with those 8,000 men?" They have trouble understanding that we are fighting a force that is 10 times larger than ours. They use massive units against us. Where we have forces of 50 to 60 men, sometimes 150, they will send three battalions.

They mobilize men very well. They have helicopters, good roads and trucks. We have destroyed hundreds of their trucks.

We estimate conservatively that we have killed around 1,000 Sandinistas and wounded over 4,000. I believe they have been hurt militarily.

SOF: Have you taken any Sandinista prisoners and, if so, what do you do with them?

CHAMORRO: We release them.

When our soldiers talk with the prisoners there is a great face-to-face sincerity, an impressive, honest exchange. The POWs say, "You really want to kill me and I want to kill you? Why? You are Nicaraguan; you are also a peasant and you are not the beast the Sandinistas told us you were."

And we have had experiences of communication from trench-to-trench, hill-to-hill shouting. On occasion, they have let us go by without shooting. But they have told us that behind them or near us there was an elite group that were not like them so we shouldn't make noise.

SOF: Have you had any POWs ask to join the FDN?

CHAMORRO: Always. Almost all of them join after a few hours when they realize we are *campesinos*, just like them, not *Somozistas* or CIA lackeys like the Sandinistas have told them.

SOF: What are the Sandinistas doing with Contra prisoners?

CHAMORRO: We are told they have been killed. The Sandinistas say they escaped, have been wounded and died. I don't believe that because we have gotten men from the mountains and brought them to the clinics 20 days later where they have been saved. We have been training paramedics and now we have them in the field.

SOF: How is the morale of the FDN soldiers?
CHAMORRO: The paramedics have been good for the morale of the men and it has improved since we have been dropping supplies by C-47. Many *campesinos* think that means we have friends, powerful friends, and that we have the power to bring good things.

If you compare — and the *campesinos* do — our boots, our uniforms, our backpacks, our equipment, the way our men dress with the Sandinistas, we impress the people. They prefer the

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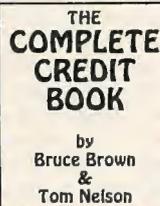
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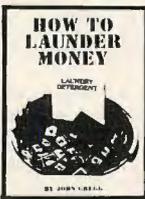
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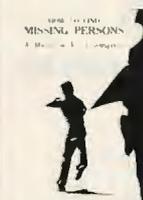
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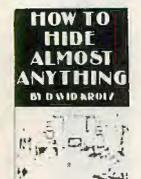
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SOF: The better-looking soldier.

CHAMORRO: Yes. It conveys discipline, order and . . . something else.

We have equipment that we recovered from the Sandinistas, like their AK-47s, most of which are in bad shape. They do not have backpacks at all, only small bags. And the quality of their clothing is bad.

They carry plenty of ammunition and they have mobility. Those [factors] are against us — and the number of men.

But you should also know that our men know the terrain and have the support of the people — with the exception of cities like Managua, Leon or Granada, which the Sandinistas control. Perhaps we have partial support there. They might admire us, but they can't show it. But in other areas, we do have great support. They give us food, information and their houses. We can send men from place to place via a chain. Somebody takes you three miles or five miles, and then another takes over, and another . . .

SOF: Are the Sandinistas using planes against your troops?

CHAMORRO: They have not used many planes. On one occasion they used four planes against us, and when we downed two planes near Jinotega [in northwest Nicaragua], they sent 11 planes out against us.

SOF: I am surprised the Sandinistas are not using more aircraft. Is it because of the terrain and cover?

CHAMORRO: They don't have enough pilots. We believe that some of their pilots are foreigners. We haven't been able to prove that, but we are almost certain the helicopter pilots are not Nicaraguan.

SOF: Cubans?

CHAMORRO: Cubans — or they could be from any communist country. That is important because we have never fought with foreigners. Our men are only Nicaraguan.

We have trainers, but they are Nicaraguan trainers. We have never had American trainers. We have many Nicaraguans who were trained in military schools, or have taken courses with the Special Forces, or have been to Ft. Benning, Ft. Knox or Ft. Bragg, and speak fluent English. I tell the press, which sometimes believes we have American trainers, that we don't. We do receive American aid. That reporting is correct. But that is not the same as saying that we have Americans fighting for us or giving us training.

SOF: In your first raids into Nicaragua the best known of your column or battalion commanders was Comandante Suicide. What has happened to him? [Comandante Suicide was a former Guardia Nacional NCO who was reported to be in disgrace and confined in late 1983 by the FDN.]

CHAMORRO: After the Sandinistas killed his wife in a road ambush at *La Negra* [on the Honduran-Nicaraguan border], he became a different person. She was very important to him. She served as his entire staff: She handled logistics, public relations, training, everything.

He started acting in a way we would call very independent, from planning to tactics. I would describe him as a truly courageous person, but he did not want to work in a group, following instructions. He did not want to fight an unconventional war; he wanted a conventional war. And many men followed him — he was so brave. Later he had some discipline problems and finally he was restricted. He still is restricted.

SOF: But is he still here in Honduras?

CHAMORRO: I don't know where he is. His name have been incorporated into other forces.

SOF: Eden Pastora launched a number of

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rather spectacular aerial attacks against the Sandinistas in late 1983, using planes which were subsequently traced to the CIA. Yet Pastora has always claimed one of the reasons he would not join with the FDN was because it was receiving aid from the CIA.

CHAMORRO: You should read again the first story about Pastora (*Newsweek*, 8 November 1982) in which he spoke against the FSLN. He is quoted as saying exactly what you just said and he has said that all along.

My theory is quite the opposite: Pastora is the favorite [of the CIA] for political reasons. So he is the cover of the cover, no? Eden Pastora is well-protected, well-financed and he has a license to kill.

He has attacked the hand that feeds him? That gives him credibility.

SOF: Do you think he's actually doing the fighting he claims to be doing in southern Nicaragua?

CHAMORRO: No, but I hear he has done some good political work and it is important to denounce the Sandinista regime. He can do that. He has credibility. [Pastora was the most widely known of the Sandinista *comandantes* and is still immensely popular in Nicaragua.]

He has also been effective in emphasizing the presence of foreign communists in Nicaragua — soldiers from Cuba, Brazil and other places. That is one of the main contentions he made when he left. He also pointed out the corruption of the Sandinista regime.

[*Editor's note: This interview took place before Pastora scored his first major military victory by taking, temporarily, the Sandinista-garrisoned town of San Juan del Norte in April '84. After a few days the Sandinistas counterattacked with hundreds of men, planes and helicopters. By the time they had recaptured the town, however, Pastora's men had retreated safely back into the jungle.*]

What I don't like about him is he wants to be everybody's man. For instance, if he's talking to Nixon, he will say something good [about Nixon].

So he's like a person without an ideology. That makes me a bit uneasy and that's why we have not worked with him.

We tried, when he left Nicaragua in April 1982. We were very glad and invited him to join us. It was a good idea. He had charisma, popularity, youth, sex appeal and he was known internationally.

We would like him to do well — and we wish him well — but he has been troubling with his *Somozista* accusation. It's not correct. Somoza was not an ideology. He was just an individual who was very greedy and wanted everything. The men fighting with us, they hate Somoza. If they had seen Somoza, they would have killed him. They [the FDN's former *Guardia Nacional* troops] were loyal to the president and government of Nicaragua. But they were not for Somoza as a person.

SOF: I find it curious that no one has really taken credit for assassinating Somoza on 17 September '81 in Asuncion, Paraguay.

CHAMORRO: Well, the Sandinistas say they know the people who did it, Paraguayan communists led by "Captain Santiago," supposedly a communist internationalist. The communists work through a network of international terrorists. In Managua, they have the ETA Basques from Spain, the PLO and guerrillas from all of Central and South America. [But there is no firm evidence as to who actually killed Somoza or who "Captain Santiago" is — if he exists.]

SOF: Journalists who have traveled in Nicaragua have reported that internal dissent, primarily from the Catholic church and the mid-

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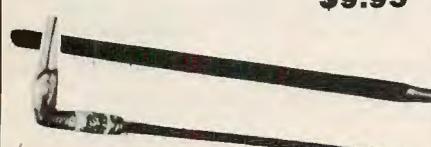


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dle class, is growing. Do you have any contacts with these groups inside Nicaragua?

CHAMORRO: We have very good contact with them. But we don't want to appear to be using the church as a tool. But we were glad to hear that the church criticized the military draft and recommended that Nicaraguans use the conscientious-objector argument against the Sandinistas.

SOF: Going back to Pastora, or actually to the image he presents, I've wondered why the FDN has not tried to build up the image of its commanders more?

CHAMORRO: We've started to do that with one called "Mike Lima," who is well-known in Nicaragua, and with "Pontegria" and "Max." Their names are legends in the north, in the mountains. And they have many followers.

I have invited the press to meet these men, but the main problem with the American press is they're interested only in finding out what's wrong or where is the CIA's hand or who is behind us and how they can prove it. They are not interested in why we are fighting or what good we are doing. They come to write to a special audience or to prove a point to their editor.

SOF: As if they had their minds made up?

CHANORRO: Yes, they just come to look for the evidence. Where the tax dollars are going and how much money is spent. To give an argument for some senator to strike, to embarrass somebody in the administration or to ruin the career of somebody. The information they want is more for infighting than for analyzing what is going on in this part of the world.

They are not really interested in this new phenomenon of anti-Marxist guerrillas in Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua fighting communist imperialism. They [the USSR and Cuba] have become imperialistic: They have soldiers spread all over the world and are taking the human and material resources from countries like Nicaragua.

I guess that's a typical American thing, to be anti-establishment. The press come from America but they are only interested in criticizing America. They are very un-American.

SOF: Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and I witnessed some of that attitude in Grenada while we were covering the liberation. [See "The Grenada Papers," SOF, February '84.] Some of the journalists there, including some Americans, appeared almost annoyed when they discovered the Grenadians were overwhelmingly in favor of the operation and viewed it is a liberation, not an invasion.

CHAMORRO: The communists and Sandinistas have been skillful in making some American intellectuals and church people, whom they have invited to Nicaragua, believe the Nicaraguan people hate America. That is nonsense. The American people were never hated in Nicaragua.

Hate America because of Somoza? No. Somoza became very strong in great part due to the circumstances of World War II. If you analyze all the Central American dictators — Somoza, Batista in Cuba, Jimenez and later Trujillo in the Dominican Republic — they were in great part consequences of WWII. The United States needed stable countries during and after WWII, and many of the dictators became rich as a result of the war, such as Somoza who became rich by confiscating Germans' property. That was the beginning of his financial empire.

So the dictators are, in a sense, not the policy of the United States but the consequences of that war. After the war, these dictators abused their power and tried to steal everything, but it was difficult for the United States to turn on them because of what they had done during the war.

But the Nicaraguan people never hated America for that. [President John F.] Kennedy was well-liked just 20 years ago — and that is not such

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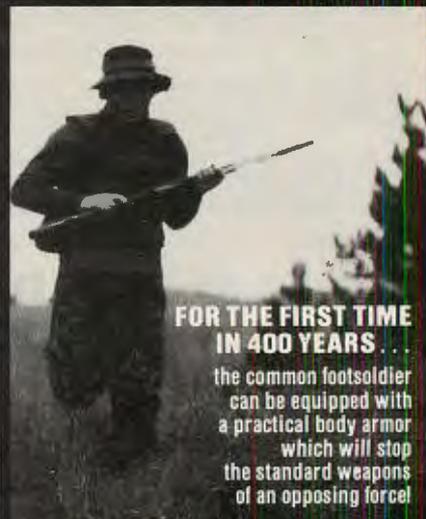
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All of the rewriting of history the Marxists have done in Nicaragua is completely false; it is not historically true. For instance, they claim Nicaragua has been a country invaded and occupied by the Marines 16 times. I don't know how they count that. We have never been occupied by Marines 16 times. You could count three or four occasions and then the Marines came as peacekeeping forces because Nicaragua had permanent police troubles and bandits in the mountains. And the first two times, just before World War I, they came to protect us from the British and Germans, who had fleets off Nicaragua's coast.

America is not an imperial empire as the Sandinistas claim.

SOF: You said earlier that your columns operate as deeply as 200 kilometers inside Nicaragua?

CHAMORRO: We are trying to go much further. We have mules now and that has helped our men.

I heard in Grenada your men went in with 150 rounds of ammunition. Our men go with 500, sometimes 800 or 1,000. It's almost impossible to walk with that much ammunition; I've tried, but these men are strong and they do it.

When they cross over, we try to get them to take books — FDN documents on the organization and its purpose, a guide book for the soldiers outlining the ideological basis of the FDN and the FDN newspaper — to give to the people, but the men say they weigh too much: "It's bullets that count, not psychological preparation."

Logistics is our main weakness.

SOF: But you have some helicopters and planes now?

CHAMORRO: A few. In one recent attack, our men had to march for 25 hours, with just a few

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breaks, to attack a town. They were discovered just before they were ready to launch the attack and were fired on. But they were so tired, they couldn't fight back effectively. It [the Contras' basic combat load] is too heavy. We need to drop more supplies by C-47 or insert the men by helicopters.

Our men are not afraid to fight the Sandinistas — especially after we hit the oil system, reducing their mobility and numbers advantage. After that, our men had much better morale.

SOF: What about the morale of the Sandinistas?

CHAMORRO: We have better morale than they do, but they do have among their young people many fanatics. Sadly, they have been able to brainwash many young men — some 16-, 15-, 14-, even 13- or 12-year-olds — to go into battle with little training and no facts. And many of them die with great heroics. They die like people looking to be martyrs.

They have been brainwashed very effectively. Maybe you have noticed in Managua or read about all the posters of the dead, all the heroes of the Sandinistas. They're famous, these dead heroes of the revolution, and cities are named after them. The Sandinistas have created a cult — a subculture. For the young, to die for the country is great. They become poems to martyrdom. That is the world of young people in Nicaragua.

For our *comandantes*, it is sad to see these young, untrained people who are just there to die.

But the Sandinistas don't care. They prepare a furor for the other young people of the towns. When they bring the bodies back, they have a funeral and everybody cries. This is a propaganda event. The funeral is an important ceremony, like the funeral of old Indians. The heroes are buried with their weapons, like the old Indians, and with the flag, and then these dead join the dead that never died: the *muerto que nunca muerte*. I am not an anthropologist, but I see many signs that the Sandinistas are using and abusing the primitive cultures of the people.

SOF: How are your men received around the countryside?

CHAMORRO: The common people tell me the Sandinistas are like rats: dirty people who go looking for what they can take from the poor people. Our men buy [provisions from the people] and they are welcomed. Also the Sandinistas bring people from one area of the country to another, where they have no friends. But our men go to the areas from which they come.

Let's say there's a town named Concordia. The men of Concordia know Mr. Juan Perez because Juan Perez has family there and he's their leader. We recruit Juan Perez and tell him to fight there with his men. So he knows the area well and the Sandinistas don't know.

The way I see it, in the rural areas, we are greatly superior. But the logistics war worries us: We have no trucks so we walk and carry so much ammunition — and those hills. Have you seen those hills over there? They are very, very steep. And we have to fight after crossing them.

SOF: It is common for soldiers to carry more ammunition than they will ever expend in a fire fight. Have you tried to get them to lighten their loads?

CHAMORRO: Yeah, I've been telling them. But they feel when they go in, they are going to stay forever so they need the ammunition. Our men take ammunition like you Americans take credit cards.

SOF: Overall, how is the battle going, politically and militarily?

CHAMORRO: Well, the military part depends substantially on the amount of weapons we get. We have many more men willing to take weapons and use them than we have money for weapons.

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Politically? It depends on a lot of things, such as this CONTADORA group [Mexico, Panama, Columbia and Venezuela have joined together to try to achieve a political solution to a number of guerrilla problems in Central and South America].

The way I see it, everybody [other nations friendly to FDN objectives] wants to use outside force against Nicaragua only as a last resort. We'll keep putting on pressure, but outside or multinational forces will be used as a last resort only. Sometimes I think it [a multinational force] could be tomorrow, or next week or in two weeks because it is the way to do this. But our friends want to exhaust all possible chances to achieve a political solution.

SOF: Do you really believe a political solution is possible with the Sandinistas?

CHAMORRO: I don't believe it. I think the Sandinistas are just trying to gain time. They are going to be conciliatory, agree to diplomatic approaches, when they are losing or they are worried about something. They are acting smart. They don't want to lose power and they know that if they want to stay in power, sometimes that has a price. They seem to be willing to pay the price. They are going to make concessions, some because they have to, some because the concession does not hurt them, some because they will not keep their word.

This diplomatic process is giving them an extension on their power. They use the excuse that they are a young revolution and so they have made some mistakes. They are going to offer some reforms to get an extension until this election and then after the election, they will say they are going to behave better. Then they will put the screws down again.

There is a lot of lobbying going on. I have talked to many people in the press, foreign ministers and so on. I have found that almost all of them agree with me in private, but they don't want to come forward — with the exception of [those from] Honduras and El Salvador.

But, in private, these leaders come up to me and say, "We know that the communists are sons of bitches. We know they don't respect human rights." Most of them agree the Sandinistas have betrayed all the principles of the anti-Somoza revolution, failed the Nicaraguan people and brought all kinds of terrorists and guerrillas to Nicaragua. And these leaders know that there won't be peace and stability in this area until we have a democratic solution, or a constitutional solution the people will trust.

You [other countries] can send money here [Central America] but it will accomplish nothing unless you get rid of the Sandinista government. They are a plague of rats and this plague is going to spread. You have to kill the rats. I sincerely believe in this.

SOF: How do you assess the situation in Central America?

CHAMORRO: Honduras is in good shape because of America's military presence and the American money coming into their economy. But the same things happened in El Salvador, and it's going bad there, according to all the reports I get. And the reason is the Sandinistas are sending a lot of men and money to El Salvador now. They know they have to win in El Salvador to stay in power. And Castro knows that if Nicaragua is lost, he's next.

It's like a triangle, the Bermuda Triangle: Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada. It has been broken; one angle is gone. Next is Nicaragua. They have been counting on Castro, or the Soviets, to send MiGs or helicopters. And Castro admitted during the Grenada operation, "I have not the option to give you more assistance."

The problem for you to think about — and it

worries me a bit lately — is that some leaders in America, even some in the administration, want to improve relations with Castro. These people believe for poor Third-World countries in Central America, a moderate socialist solution might be good. Not just for Central America, but for other Latin American countries, too. And that is troubling.

Editor's note: U.S. support for the Contras became overt in 1983 when Congress knowingly approved a \$24 million appropriation to support Contra efforts against the Nicaraguan government. But even at the time this money was given, it was known that \$24 million would not last the entire year. The Reagan administration went back to Congress for an additional \$21 million later in the year, but met resistance from Congressional liberals, and it is unlikely that the legislation will be passed now in light of the struggle underway between the administration and the legislature over policy in Central America.

The administration's efforts suffered a severe setback when it became known that the CIA had used "unilaterally controlled latinos," Latin American commandos recruited and trained by the CIA and dispatched from a CIA mother ship, to mine the Nicaraguan ports of Puerto Sandino and Corinto, without adequately informing its oversight committee, the Senate Intelligence Committee. Democrats and Republicans alike vehemently accused the CIA of breaking international law and intentionally keeping Congress in the dark about its "covert" Contra acts. Although both points can certainly be argued, the actions did not score any points with Congress, which now holds the future of the Contras in its hands.

It has often been said that the United States gives its allies only enough money to lose. The Contras might agree. ☒

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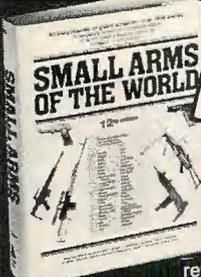


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DIVING EAGLES

Continued from page 63

so long obsolete. A faint sound in the distance grows louder — obviously helicopters, but we cannot see them because they are flying only a few meters above the trees. Suddenly we see a scout helicopter followed by eight CH-53s coming in low from the right. This group lands in a clearing about a kilometer away. Men and light vehicles come pouring from the rear of each helicopter. Almost simultaneously two similar groups of helicopters land in other clearings a kilometer or two apart and quickly unload their troops and cargo. An entire paratroop battalion has landed in a concentrated area, disembarked and disappeared into the forests in perfect tactical formation in fewer than eight minutes.

As the staff group breaks up, we get a hop on a Huey and are treated to a spectacular, late-afternoon view of the Bavarian countryside. But all I can think about is the impressive show of combat readiness and professionalism I have seen today.

Day 17 My senior instructor does not share my enthusiasm for the 1st Airborne Division. He comments dryly that I have missed a whole day of training and need to make up the practical tests which the other students passed yesterday. While my platoon is on a break, I have to do in double-time all of yesterday's various tests. I jump from the tower, immediately run back up it to jump again, and repeat the process jumping with the assault pack. I am hooked up to a cable and hauled by an electric winch about 30 meters up in the air, then released to fall at the speed of a parachute descent while oscillating considerably. I missed the instruction on this apparatus yesterday, but with luck I land well and pass on my first try.

Day 18 We near jump week with mounting anticipation. Each time an aircraft flies over the DZ to drop its load of paratroopers, the young soldiers crane their necks for a view. We have orientation visits to the airfield, about an hour away, and to the DZ, a rolling, grassy pastureland immediately adjacent to the school. My German has improved enough over the past weeks so that I can now understand without a mighty effort. I am also becoming very attached to the German Army jump helmet and jump boots. The helmet is very well-padded and is identical to the WWII model except for its American-style outward shape. The boots give excellent ankle support and are the only completely waterproof ones I have ever seen. Boots and helmet fit like a glove and are completely comfortable. In fact, I am impressed by all the German equipment; it is well-designed, well-made and expensive.

This afternoon, during some free time, I visit the Airborne Demonstration and Test Company, which develops and tests new equipment and doctrine for the German airborne. They show me the fascinating blend of equipment in their armory: TOW and MILAN missiles, 20mm cannon mounted on special carriers resembling the old Mechanical Mule, UZI submachine guns, G3 assault rifles, and the trusty P38 pistols and MG42 (of WWII fame) and MG3 machine guns. The major commanding the company is a student of military history with whom I've already had many interesting talks at the club. I am overwhelmed when he gives me a memento: his own jump helmet originally used in the early 1960s and identical to the famous WWII type.

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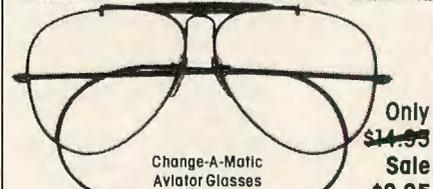
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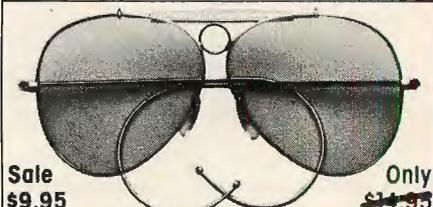
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Day 22 The big day has finally come. We jump today, weather permitting. We muster early in the morning, are issued "jump rations" consisting of hard bread, salami and a fruit, and board the vehicles for the drive to the airfield outside the historic town of Landsberg. The airfield is a former WWII fighter base, now the home of a Luftwaffe transport squadron flying the Transall, similar to the C-130. We draw our parachutes and assist each other in putting on the gear. The sun shines on us as we march in formation down the long flight line to the aircraft and move in four files up the tail ramp. I will jump first, so I board the aircraft last. Our instructors, who have been with us throughout the course, will serve as jumpmasters, and the senior instructor will jump with us.

The aircraft moves down the runway with a surge of power and takes to the air in what seems like a few seconds. Only the engine noise reminds me that it's more than just another dry run. As we near the DZ the jumpmasters open both side doors, and the noise is suddenly overwhelming. The faces of the young soldiers become solemn. We get in sequence to the now-familiar commands: "Fertigmachen, aufstehen, einhaken, ueberpruefen, und vorruecken," and we unbuckle, stand up, hook up, check equipment and shuffle forward. The jumpmasters lead us in some chants, then I get the signal to move to the open door. I can see the German countryside glide by 400 meters below me. Then all at once, I hear the horn sound and the jumpmaster shout into my ear.

Automatically I spring out the door like a gymnast. I can feel the airstream turn my body around and can see the blur of the ground below me. As I reach the count of "vier-tausend" I feel a soft tug at my shoulders and look up to see the green parachute canopy open like a mushroom cap. I turn quickly and see jumpers still coming out of the aircraft as it flies on. The sky behind me is full of parachutes. The aircraft has gone, and it is suddenly completely quiet except for the sound of the wind blowing through my chute. It is a spectacularly beautiful summer day, and as I float down I can see the Alps on the horizon and the green Bavarian farm country spread out below.

I land like a feather, gather up the parachute and move to the assembly area where I find 40 young soldiers all grinning broadly. We rapidly assemble and drive to the airfield to conduct the second jump of the day.

Day 23 Since the weather gods are still looking upon us favorably, we plan for three jumps today. The morning jump goes well, as does the afternoon jump with the assault pack. We get better in exiting the aircraft quickly, so that the chutes open closer together, and we must slip the old T-10 in various directions to avoid midair collisions. Then comes the climax: the night jump.

The red blackout lights create an eerie atmosphere in the darkened Luftwaffe aircraft. As we fly to the DZ my mind wanders as I try to imagine how the German paratroopers must have felt nearly 40 years ago as they flew out on that historic assault on Crete.

I am quickly brought back to reality when the jumpmaster gives us the commands and leads us in the chant of "Glueck ab!", the traditional greeting of the German paratroopers. This time I am not the first out of the aircraft. The company commander himself is jumping with us, and I follow right behind him into the darkness. I land smoothly, and as I gather up my chute I can hear above me a few isolated whoops and shouts of excite-

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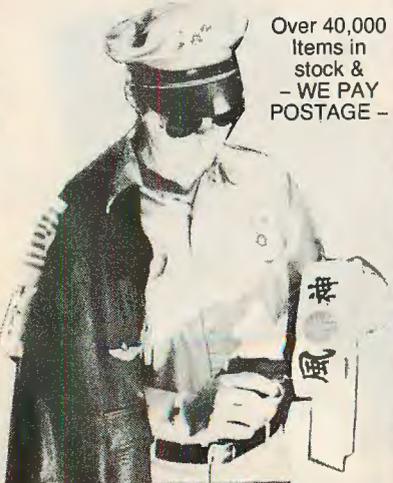
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ment. Our company commander has given us strict orders to maintain complete silence during a night jump; someone next to me comments disgustedly that these shouts must come from the Dutch Marines.

I gather my 'chute and move back to the assembly area. The aircraft flies back to pick up a second load of jumpers, who have no doubt been impatiently awaiting their turn. But for us who have completed the last jump, our exhilaration and exuberance cannot be contained.

Day 24 This is a day for administrative tasks and cleaning up. The lieutenant and I get a VW jeep and drive to the municipal hospital to visit the only member of our platoon to suffer an injury, a young soldier who broke his leg on the night jump. He had had constant difficulty during the training, so it is no surprise to see him lying in the hospital bed. However, having made his five jumps, he is happy even under the circumstances. We give him an unofficial set of jump wings, since he will miss the ceremony tomorrow.

In the evening the platoon and instructors get together for dinner at a *Gasthaus* just outside the main gate. In the tradition of the German paratroops, officers, NCOs and young soldiers all share an evening of camaraderie. There are speeches, and we thank our instructors for their leadership. Our training platoon has performed well and has become a close-knit unit. But we know that after tomorrow we will all go our separate ways.

Later that evening I take a solitary walk through the school, past the *kasernes* and buildings which have seen so much history. I note some of the street names, including General-Student-Strasse, the main street, named after the founder of the German airborne of WWII; Heidrich-Strasse, named for the commander of the 1st Parachute Division at Monte Cassino; Graf-Bluecher-Strasse, named in honor of three members of the same family who were all killed in action on Crete; and Arent-Strasse, named after a 1st sergeant who won the Knight's Cross posthumously in Tunisia. The summer night is cool and invigorating, and as I walk past the now-familiar buildings I feel almost as though I am about to leave home. I pass the enlisted club where festivities are in high pitch. The singing of marching songs fills the night air. I leave the *kaserne* area regretfully and head up the hill to my quarters.

Day 25 It is a cold, drizzly morning. We stand in formation on the school parade field. The troops and the honor guard are drawn up near the large memorial to German paratroopers who fell in action. Beyond the trees stand the *kasernes*, forming a square around the parade field.

The school commander's vehicle arrives punctually, and the ceremony begins. The colonel stands 30 meters to the front and addresses all of the troops without the aid of microphone; his voice carries loud and clear over the entire parade field. What an impressive display of command presence! The colonel speaks to the young German soldiers about their proud history and tells them that they have a duty to carry on their traditions in the defense of democracy, NATO and the Fatherland. He stresses the virtues of courage, determination and comradeship which the soldiers have demonstrated in winning their jump wings, and tells them always to act accordingly.

As I stand in formation with them in this

historic place, I feel the strength of a tradition as it is being handed down from one generation to the other. As a Marine, I understand exactly the message which the colonel delivers to the young soldiers, and I feel a kinship to them. The colonel then personally presents jump wings to all graduates; we are now *Fallschirmjäger*. A bugler plays the traditional Song of the Paratroopers to conclude the ceremony.

Later that afternoon, I am invited to the colonel's office for goodbyes. Much to my surprise, he presents me the maroon beret with the silver diving-eagle insignia. The Airborne School has a strict rule against the beret being worn by foreign troops. However, since I have gone through the entire course as would an ordinary German paratrooper, I too am awarded the right to wear the *Fallschirmjäger* beret.

After I pack for the next day's return to the United States, I go see my comrades at the school. I say "Auf Wiedersehen" with a great deal of sadness, for it has been a privilege to work with these professionals. Though I had never worked with German soldiers, nor they with a U.S. Marine, we formed a bond.

The German *Fallschirmjäger*, like the U.S. Marines, are a small, elite force. They too have a proud history and realize the importance of maintaining their traditions. I learned during my stay here that for the German paratroopers there is a special significance in calling someone "Kamerad." To them, a comrade is one who belongs, as we Marines would say, to the "Band of Brothers." I was fortunate in having the chance to spend so much time with the comrades of the German *Fallschirmjäger*.

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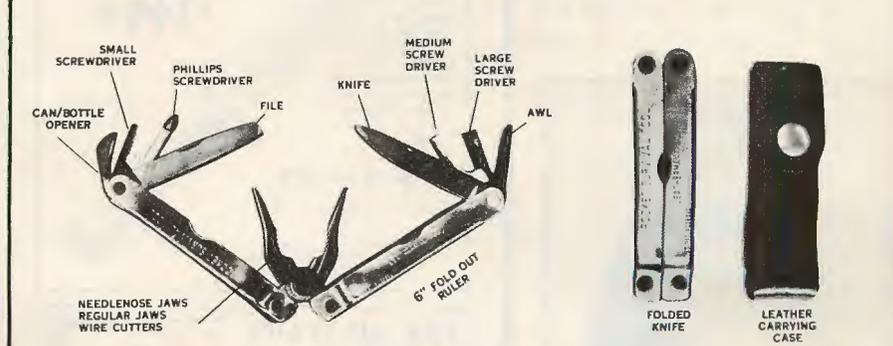
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SOF SILENCER SCOOP

Continued from page 71

130 decibels, compared to 155-160 decibels for a standard Sten gun.

That is a lot quieter than it would seem, since sound increases logarithmically with decibel measure. A 10-decibel decrease is a 50-percent reduction in noise. Therefore, the Sten's silencer is twice as effective as the Soviet design.

The Russians first learned about silencers back in WWI, when they were on the receiving end of silencer-equipped German snipers. They used captured silencers then and, in the interwar years, developed their own silencers — based on the German designs — which saw limited use during WWII. The silencer used in Afghanistan does not seem to be much of an improvement over these systems.

Open-source literature has been limited in its treatment of Soviet special-operations weapons. It is known that when GRU Diversionary Troops seized key points at Prague Airport just before the Soviet paratroopers arrived in 1968, they had been carrying concealed Czech-made *Skorpion* submachine guns, a weapon that has a silenced version. In WWII, the main users of silencers were snipers engaging close-range targets, such as in urban fighting, or when watching an enemy trench.

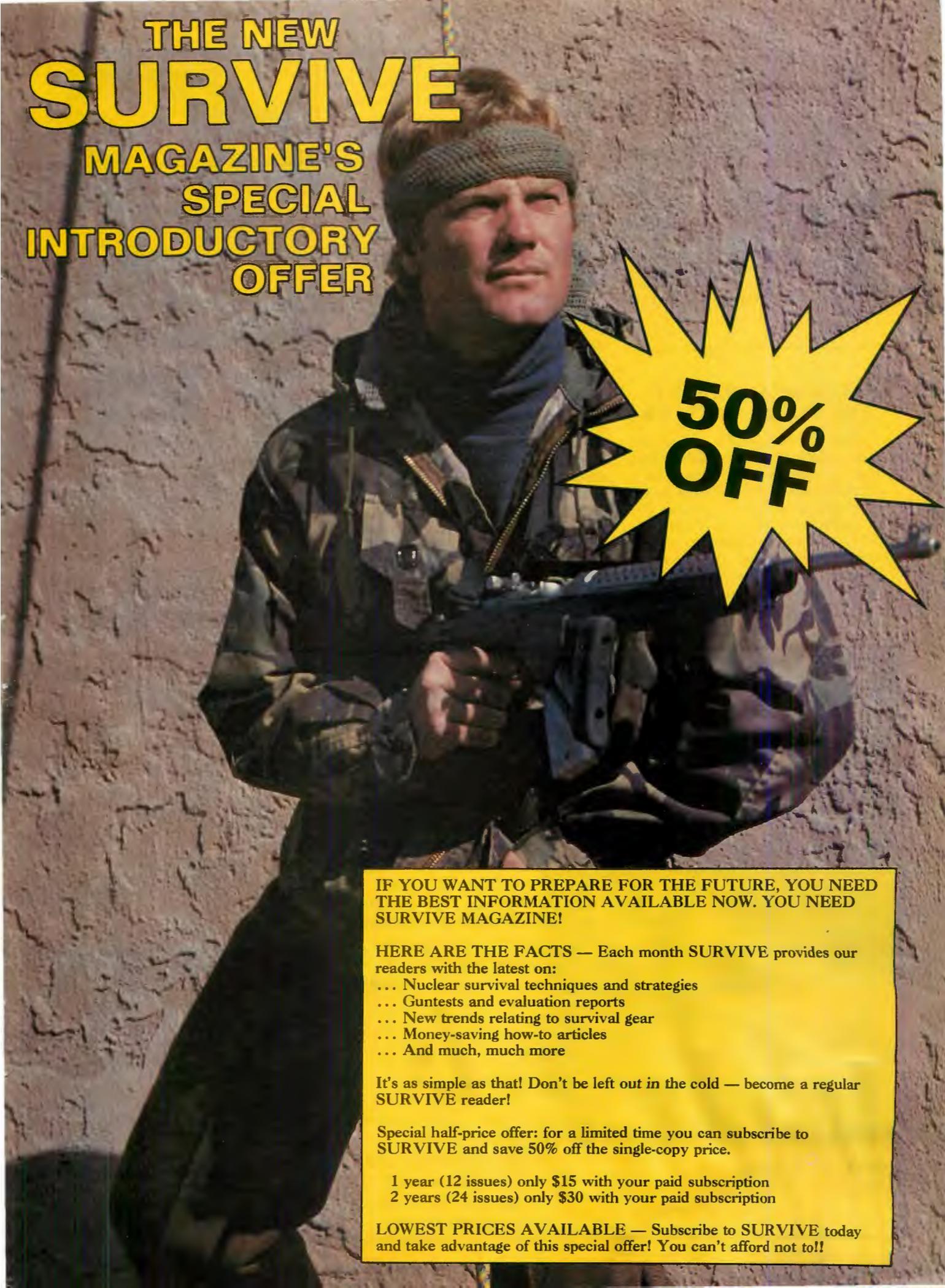
Our silencer had been picked up near Kandahar in the summer or fall of 1983. Abdul Rahim Wardak, a former colonel in the Royal Afghan Army and now senior military adviser to NIFA, reports that Kandahar, like Herat, is a center of *Spetsnaz* activity. He believes that a *brigada* of such troops is headquartered in Kandahar. In 1983, according to Col. Wardak, the *Spetsnaz* became more active. They patrolled in Kabul-regime army uniforms or even dressed as mujahideen. They blacked their faces for night operations, leading Afghans to call them "the black soldiers." They have been undertaking more long-range patrols, moving out from their base or being inserted by helicopter in mujahideen-controlled territory (about 85 percent of Afghanistan). These patrols will normally stay out for three or four nights before being picked up by helicopters or returning to base. They will watch for mujahideen activity and call airstrikes and artillery fire against villages where they believe guerrillas are deployed or are being supported. They have also, within the last year, taken to setting up ambushes along the main Afghan supply routes to the interior, catching supply convoys that travel at night to avoid Soviet aircraft.

In 1983, large amounts of needed weapons, food and equipment fell into Soviet hands through such ambushes. Such an ambush also accounted for a person the Kabul regime claimed was a British spy, and who was apparently carrying sophisticated communications equipment. The Afghans say that "the black soldiers" are tougher than any other enemy troops, and can go up and down mountains as fast as they can. While most Soviet units are roadbound, the Afghans report that these troops can surprise you almost anywhere.

But sometimes, the Afghans strike back successfully. The action which led to the capture of the silencer near Kandahar was an ambush that turned sour for the Soviets. Forty *Spetsnaz* were reported killed and much equipment captured. The performance of this silencer could not have done much to help keep them alive.

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Karen and I did not have to go through any drama or excitement to recover the Soviet silencer, but this does not make it any less significant. Discreet inquiries among informed sources in Washington and elsewhere have shown that apparently this is the first Soviet silencer to come West in many years, and almost certainly the first to come out of Afghanistan. Despite its crudity and inferiority to Western systems, the silencer is by no means useless. The Afghans agreed to part with this one only after they had fired off all their subsonic ammunition in action and worn out the device. The Soviets also have a disturbing habit of being able to replace older systems with improved ones — often based on stolen Western technology — quicker than we have been able to field new ones. *Soldier of Fortune's* Soviet silencer may be a harbinger of bad things to come.

TECHNICAL REPORT: THE SOVIET SILENCER

Silencers are as complex in their own way as are electronic countermeasures: Both pieces of weaponry have had to come to grips with the laws of physics to work. For all its ineffectiveness, the Soviet silencer is not a crude device. Our source at the Inter-rand Corporation has applied his years of silencer expertise to this device and has reported on how it is put together.

Of all-steel construction, the silencer is

about eight inches long. Diameter of the outer tube of what appears to be 16-gauge (.064-inch) seamless steel varies from two inches at the rear cap to 1.6-1.8 inches along the tube. The outer surface is knurled over most of its length, and the finish appears to be a worn, thin, black oxide. Weight is two pounds.

The rear cap assembly is attached to the AKM muzzle by a thread — meaning the AKM must have a modified muzzle with a thread on it, like the AKS-74. The rear cap assembly is attached to the outer tube by another screw thread and a spring ratchet retainer.

Telescoped by the rear cap assembly and positioned just in front of the rifle muzzle is a .75-inch-thick elastomer wipe in a stamped metal cup. This plastic wipe, fitting like a gasket at the end of the rear cap, is intended to start the noise reduction as the bullet leaves the muzzle. In contrast, most Western silencers have the wipe at the end of the silencer away from the weapon's muzzle, to reduce wear on the wipe.

The size and shape of the hole in the plastic wipe through which the bullet must travel is unknown, because the silencer obtained by *Soldier of Fortune* had a rough hole, about .65-inch in diameter, cut by repeated firing. Soviet WWII silencers used a circular hole in the wipe for the bullet, while U.S. practice, as in the Mark 22 Mod 0 silencer, is to have an X-slit.



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The wipe has a limited life span, because repeated use will enlarge the hole and make it ineffective. One wipe is good for only five to 10 rounds of subsonic, or one to five rounds of ball ammunition. Each soldier equipped with such an AKM obviously has to carry several wipes. The rear cap assembly is easily detachable for quick replacement of wipes.

Forward of the wipe assembly is the heart of the silencer, a baffle stack. Mounted around a passage through which the bullet will travel, the baffle stack is intended to absorb and deaden its noise. Arrayed on three tie rods, it consists of front and rear caps mated to the tie rods, nine thin baffles, and 30 tubular spacers on the tie rods, all yielding 10 baffles about one-half inch apart. The baffle assembly slips into the outer tube of the silencer, butting up against the rear wipe assembly. At the front of the silencer, the baffle stack is retained by a reinforced folded lip. This is not a secure join, and it appears possible that automatic fire with ball ammunition would force the baffle stack out the front of the silencer.

One of the most distinctive features about the silencer is the large (.48-inch) diameter of the passage up the baffle stack through which the bullet must travel. The passage in Western silencers using NATO 7.62mm ammunition is usually about .34-.40 inch in diameter.

This large passage reduces the effectiveness of the silencer even when firing subsonic ammunition, for increasing the size of the opening means that more of the sound will escape. Yet there is a reason for the opening being that wide. As soon as a bullet leaves the muzzle of the AKM, it hits the opening in the wipe. It will then start to yaw as a result of having its trajectory altered by contact with the wipe. Because the bullets going up the passage will be yawing, the passage has to be substantially wider than the bullets. This yawing will continue as the bullet leaves the muzzle of the silencer, further reducing the accuracy of the silenced AKM.

Soldier of Fortune's silencer seems to be a production version, being stamped with myriad markings, including its Soviet serial number: 0E513. This is not a one-off failed attempt to produce a silencer. This is Soviet government issue. — David C. Isby

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FLAK

Continued from page 8

to advance their cause of freedom." Since WWII, the United States has covertly supported 12 legitimate liberation movements. All have failed. Congress is telling the President that Afghanistan better not be number 13.

The heroic miracle of the Afghan resistance is a challenge to those of us who have not yet come to their aid.

Matthew D. Erulkar
Legislative Director
American Afghan Action
Suite 602
236 Mass. Ave., N.E.
Washington DC 20002

A FEW GOOD MEN DOING SOMETHING ...

Sirs:

Events in the U.S. Congress in the last few days which arise out of our backing the mining of Nicaragua's harbors in an effort to help the interdiction of arms flow from Cuba to Central America, and to tame the bellicose Sandinistas-turned-Marxists, have me livid with rage and ashamed of that invertebrate assembly of fools playing election year politics as if we were in a "time-out" during nothing more harmful than a football game.

In short, I'm pissed! Attached are three separate checks for \$100 each: one for the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, one for the Nicaraguan Defense Fund and another for the El Salvador Defense Fund.

I do wish to have these contributions mentioned; perhaps it will prompt others who have not yet contributed money or supplies to get with it! I'm not a philanthropist. I just recognize that we've got to do something now, or in a few years, at most, this \$300 will be worthless.

"All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." — Sir Edmund Burke

Muerte a tiranos!
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Sirs:

In answer to Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Eugene M. Lynch's "Why Doesn't



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the American Infantryman Have a Weapon That Can Kill a Tank at a Reasonable Range?" (see "The Chink in our Antitank Armory," SOF April '84): The good general presents a great case for WWII and Korean War vets who actually faced enemy armor with inadequate antitank weapons. He steps on my personal toes, however, when he says the Vietnam vet has no experience against enemy armor, and won't be able to stop Ivan's tanks.

As section leader of jeep-mounted M220 Guided Missile (TOW) units with the National Guard, I sincerely believe we can fire up any tank, from any angle and turn it to flaming scrap. The best Russian tank gun has a maximum range of 1,800 meters; the TOW has a (new) maximum range of 3,650 meters, giving us first-strike capabilities.

The general argued against this heavy crew-served weapon, wringing his combat-weary hands over the fate of the individual infantryman, on the line, under fire and facing the best armored force in the world.

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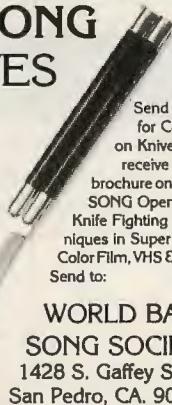
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Attached is a copy of RCA's reply. I urge every SOF reader to send RCA a 13-cent postcard to tell them we don't need Jane Fonda or anything she endorses.

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promoting Fonda's commercial ventures represented any "commentary" on Fonda's politics. (And people call SOF mercenary.) If Collins' statement does not represent complicity, the least it shows is narrow-minded venality. Money may be the only argument RCA understands, so SOF readers should show them what share of the video market RCA could be missing. Notice of your displeasure with RCA's perhaps unwitting contribution to Ms. Fonda's political aspirations should be addressed to Mr. W.T. Collins, Division Vice President, Consumer Affairs, Consumer Electronics Division, 600 North Sherman Drive, P.O.B. 1976, Indianapolis, IN 46206. —The Eds

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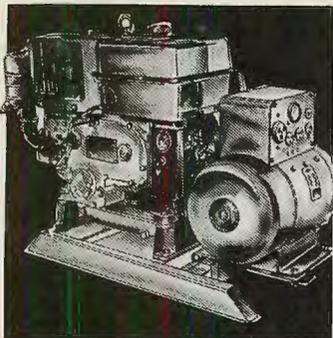
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in his fight for survival against Ivan when we sell out our own technology to the Soviets?

Have any of the staff at SOF ever faced this contradiction in U.S. policy before? Don't fall off your chair laughing if you have. It should be no surprise to us that David Rockefeller advertised the first branch of the C.M. Bank in Moscow and Peking on the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*.

It's a damned shame that the Brave Soldiers of the free world have to fight and die trying to preserve what's left of freedom, only to have these efforts undermined by home-spun diplomats and political-peace-at-any-price pushers.

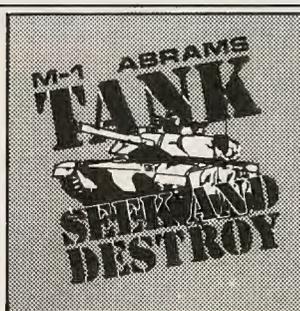
I hope the Soviets do us the distinct honor of boycotting us at the Olympics this year and stay home. We don't need any more criminals in L.A. Especially after the murder of KAL 007 over the Sea of Japan last August.

God help us if we forget the memory of men like Larry McDonald and others who lost their lives in the war against the very tyrants the West has so foolishly assisted.

M. Pizzuti
Fresno, Calif.



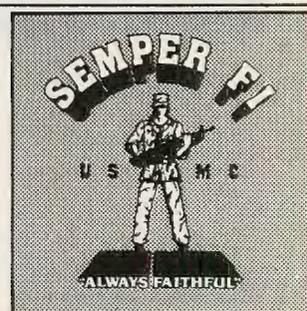
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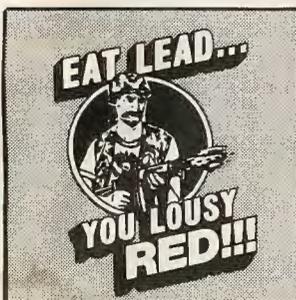
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MERC RIP-OFF

Continued from page 69

stayed on the plane for Paris, and I got off in Martinique.

I was met by gendarmes with metal detectors. My bag set off some alarms. When the gendarmes gleefully began adding up charges, a couple of our French friends dismissed them with a wave of the hand and told me not to worry. My weapons would be checked while I was in Martinique, and returned when I left.

They also said Mitterand did not wish any embarrassment for France but, personally, they were pleased with what I had done. I just couldn't do it in French territory.

All former parachutists, these French were helpful, polite and anti-communist. I cannot speak too highly of them. They visited while I waited for my connecting flight. Our logistics were interesting to them. Since the operation was blown, I shared information, and received great appreciation. After business was done, they wanted to go out for brews. The jumpers' fraternity is truly international.

When I finally returned to New York, the hamsters, as I came to call *anybody* connected with the Council, contacted me. They said Boss was still in Europe. I was not to worry; he would be returning with written instructions for me since the KGB monitors transatlantic calls. We were going to carry on with the fight.

That was good, because it was almost payday. But a week went by, and there was still no Boss. I was ready to get on a plane, go to Amsterdam and turn some hamsters upside down. Then Boss turned up. The hamsters had given him a counterfeit ticket. Our top-secret written instructions were that the Council was so busy trying to keep welfare and Dutch residency that they had no plans for further military action.

That ends my story. But the Council for the Liberation of Surinam's story is not yet done. They are still in business.

They claimed to have been set up with Langley's money through a foundation. It is probably your tax dollars that have been wasted. The Council told me that out of \$500,000 (one year's budget) they spent \$400,000 in airline travel attending meetings. No wonder Bouterse and 11 other sergeants took the country without firing a shot!

Bouterse should be overthrown: His administration is that bad. But when Bouterse falls, the Council for the Liberation of Surinam should have no part in a new government. The Surinamese people deserve better.

Our Surinamese recruits were good men. They lack the toughness of the Nicaraguans and the Vietnamese, but they made up for it in heart.

I would like to take Surinam. It can be done. It *should* be done . . . but not for the Council for the Liberation of Surinam. ✘

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Continued from page 17

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MARINE MANHUNT...

Four Marine posthumous recipients of the Medal of Honor are to be honored by having ships named for them, but the USMC cannot find relatives to participate in the ceremonies.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of relatives of: PFC Eugene A. Obregon (whose parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter R. Obregon of 624 Evergreen Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif., were presented with his medal after he was killed in Korea in 1950, saving the life of a wounded comrade), PFC James Anderson, Jr. (who attended Centennial Sr. High School in Compton, Calif., and Los Angeles Harbor Community College, enlisted 17 Feb. 1966 and died saving the lives of other Marines by covering a grenade with his body in Vietnam in 1967), 1LT Baldomero Lopez (from Tampa, Fla., who died shielding other U.S. servicemen from a grenade with his own body on 15 Sept. 1950 and was survived by his brother, Jose P. Lopez) or SGT Wm. R. Button (who died chasing outlaws in Haiti in 1921, and was survived by his father, Dr. William P. Button of 4323 Manchester Ave., and his mother, Sarah M. Harris of 2907 Easton Ave., both from St. Louis, Mo.) should contact MAJ Paul Wisniewski in Washington, D.C., at (202) 694-2589, 654-2812 or 654-5375.

TERRORIST COURAGE...

Just after 0730 on 4 April of this year, a bomb left in a small Japanese car was detonated across the street from the South African Department of Internal Affairs Durban's Victoria Embankment. Damage to property was limited to broken windows and cosmetic damage to buildings, but three passersby died in the blast: a white woman, an Indian woman and a black man.

The African National Congress is blamed for the atrocity.

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9mm Carbine



Design patent pending.
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