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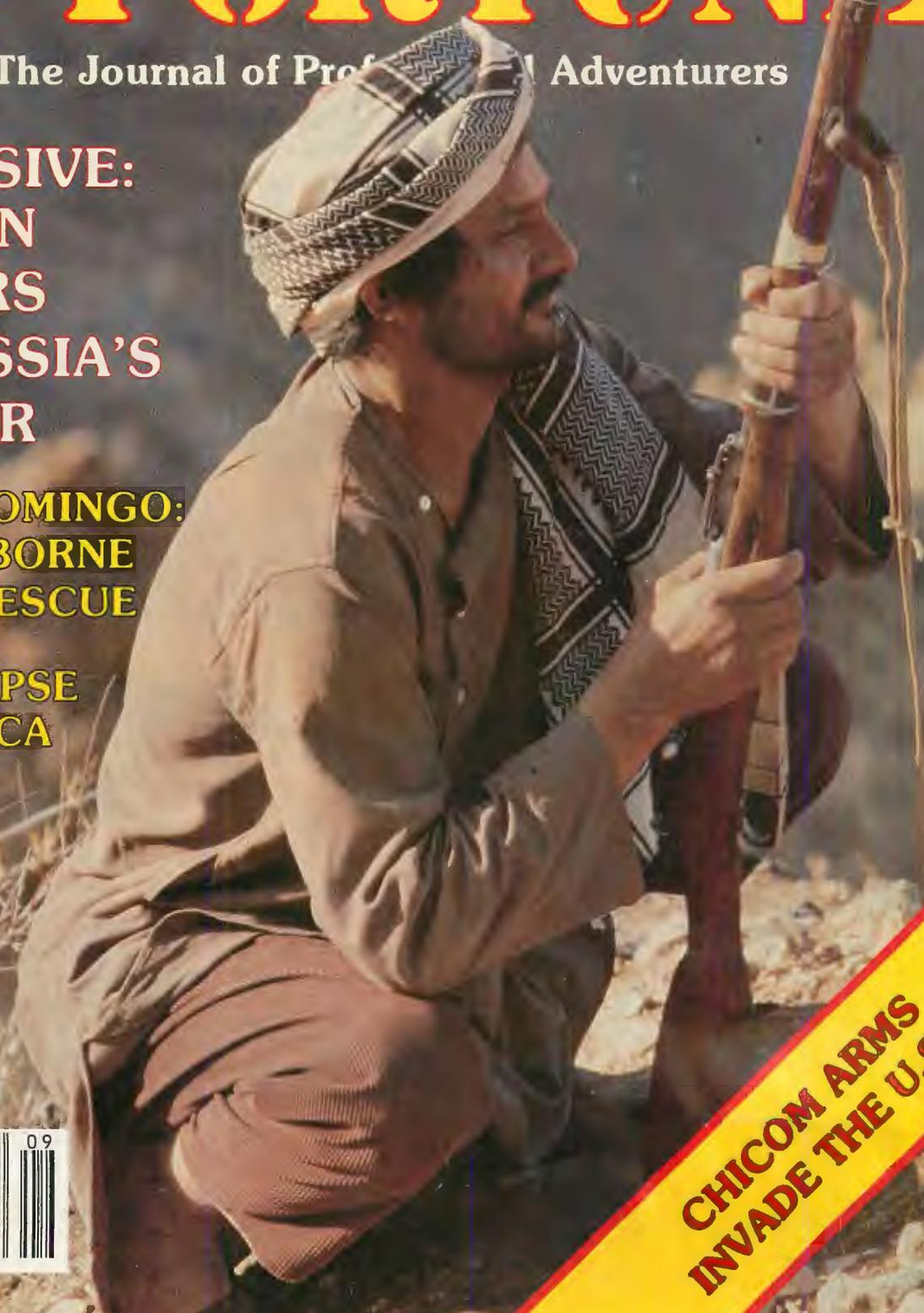
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COVER: Mujahid OP is a cliff above Marmoul Gorge in sight of Mazar-i-Sharif. SOFer Mike Winchester reports from northern Afghanistan, where freedom fighters battle perched on the border of the USSR. Photo: Mike Winchester

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EDITOR'S NOTE

AS this is being written, the ladies and gentlemen of the U.S. Congress are debating whether to continue aiding our friends in Central America. Decisions are being made that will determine whether or not this Republic will survive.

If Congress decides not to support our friends in Central America, the results will be disastrous. Most immediately, the gains that FDN and ARDE have made inside Nicaragua will be negated; they cannot continue operations without support. Many courageous men and women will have died for nothing. And without continued assistance, the government of El Salvador, with a popularly elected legislature and president, will fall. It doesn't take a genius to see that if Soviet aid continues to the Gs, while the government troops receive nothing, the war will be lost.

In Southeast Asia once the United States withdrew support, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos fell like dominoes. Similarly, Honduras, Guatemala and Costa Rica would follow El Salvador's demise if we allow it to fail. The Panama Canal, strategically important to U.S. national interests, would also be directly threatened. Mexico, strapped with double-digit inflation, a depressed economy, high unemployment and an historically corrupt political system, is ripe for insurgency.

So, within a matter of months, we could see all of the countries from Mexico to Colombia become Cuban-style Marxist states. If that happens, you can expect two things to follow closely:

1) A flood of refugees into the United States from the south. Last year, for the first time, over one million illegal aliens crossed our southern border. Since violence erupted in El Salvador in 1977, some 500,000 Salvadorans have fled to this country. The Border Patrol spent \$225 million last year trying to stem the tide. That sum doesn't include food, housing, legal fees or transportation, nor the \$4,500 per refugee the United States spends after they get here. According to the U.S. Coordinator of Refugee Affairs, some 7,500,000 people would likely flee Mexico in the event of a leftist insurgency, at an additional cost of \$30 billion per year to the U.S. agencies which deal with refugee matters.

2) Open insurgency would break out in the United States. Does anyone seriously doubt that Cuban and Soviet agents have infiltrated our southern borders, mingled with a million or so other illegals? The scenario goes something like this: Using the porous U.S.-Mexico border as a resupply, staging and safe area, infiltrators would hit civilian and military targets; political and corporate assassination would become epidemic. Meanwhile, our ever-faithful Left would sympathize with the "Hispanic Liberation Movement" and agitate for accommodation. Demonstrators on campus and in Washington would appear on cue (sound familiar?). The old leftist ha-ha about "U.S. Out of North America" would become a reality.

The picture may seem pretty far-fetched, as well as grim, but remember that the initial moves have already been made by Cuba and the USSR. They have forces in place and the Central American War has begun.

We have two options. We can buy Soviet and Cuban war bonds — or we can write, telephone, wire or visit our senators and representatives to insist that they support our Central American allies, including the Contras. And we can urge others to do so. From New York to Los Angeles — and especially to Washington — we can write letters to the editors of major newspapers and share our views. Remember, this is an election year. Put on the pressure; elected officials do respond when the outcry is loud enough.

Our allies, carrying the fight to the common enemy, must be provided with what they need to *win*, not just to sustain the current level of bloodshed. They deserve victory. And our children deserve to have this Republic, imperfect as it may be, passed to them intact. We must act now. There will be no second chance.

— John E. Padgett

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POINTED ARGUMENT...

Sirs:

I read with some interest in the June '84 issue of *Soldier of Fortune* (FLAK) the derogatory remarks about saw-tooth knives, and I'd like to point out a few things to the writer, Dennis Casey, and the readers.

1. If the teeth of the knife are properly made, they will cut themselves out with about the same ease as they enter.

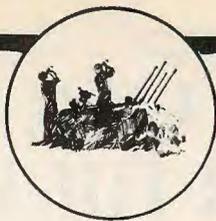
2. Usually, the knife is not extracted from its victim simply by pulling on it; the victim usually is kicked loose while the knife is held securely — thus the knife is freed easily.

3. This points to Casey's lack of knowledge about how to make a proper saw-tooth blade and about actual combat tactics. It must be pointed out that the knife I designed and made for the movie *First Blood* was intended to be a survival knife. Its teeth will cut through a two-by-four in less than 60 seconds simply because they are properly made. The *First Blood* knife and the Sly II knife have the same blade and will work equally well in survival conditions, which are a thousand times more likely to occur than combat situations.

I agree that improperly made teeth could be hazardous to the health of the user and suggest that Casey learn the difference. It's important to have a knife that can get you out of a downed aircraft, saw or chop small bushes and limbs, build an emergency shelter, cut firewood and that has a compass for direction. You may lash the knife to a pole, making a fish or frog gig for obtaining food and use the items stored in the handle to their best advantage, or any other uses that might occur for staying alive.

I don't think that all automobiles should be condemned because of one wreck, because in all probability one of the drivers was at fault or the wreck would not have occurred.

James B. Lile
Russellville, Arkansas



FLAK



WATER, WATER...

Sirs:

Galen Geer's comment in the June '84 SOF about MREs (meals, ready to eat) requiring two-thirds of a canteen of water to eat is well-taken. Water requirements have been slighted by military planners who assume troops will always be able to find a water source. This school of thought has been extended into the medical field, driven by the desire to create a package with less weight and a smaller cube.

Producing drinking water, not to mention sterile water, can be a significant problem in many parts of the world. Water must be boiled, filtered or chemically treated — sometimes all three — to get the desired product. Treatment will have to be carried out in a static facility, which will certainly come under enemy attack by conventional weapons or, worse, by toxic chemicals attenuated to work about 24 hours after introduction into the system.

I think combat rations for men under stress should be in the form of water-containing puddings with tear-top lids. The puddings contain some of their own water, they can be swallowed quickly because chewing is not needed and they are much easier to digest. From the medical point of view, they would be much more suitable for wounded patients. We should at least list on every ration container the amount of water required to digest the ration and not leave the body with a water deficit.

George Williams
Greenville, North Carolina

FOREIGN AID...

Sirs:

Allow me to express my appreciation for the fine work the SOF staff does to keep us informed about the happenings around the world, as well as collecting funds for the Afghan freedom fighters, Miskito Indians and the Salvadoran government. I realize my \$500 is a mere drop in the bucket compared with the \$8 million per day the Soviets spend to continue their massacres and chemical attacks, but I hope I'm helping.

I'm also collecting more money from friends and acquaintances. I hope to send a sizable amount soon.

Chris Hekimian
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Soviets may give more money, but yours is applied to the problem more directly. Cash donations to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund (P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306) go straight to the mujahideen, by SOF courier.

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Sirs:

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Just think — my favorite military writer, working for my favorite military magazine. You guys will be able to retire on my subscription alone.

Dye's selection reflects your high standards and good judgment of character. I suspect he and Pete Kokalis will become fast friends, since they both fire from the open bolt. Run between the raindrops, Dale, and enjoy yourself. We couldn't think of you in a more fitting position.

Frank Flath
Havelock, North Carolina

Continued on page 96

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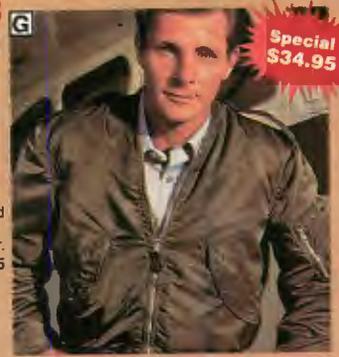


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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Ken Hackathorn

A Dim View of the M16A2

EXCUSE me if I don't join the parade for the newest military version of the AR-15. It's not that I don't appreciate how much better the M16A2 is than any other M16. I just have three serious questions.

How much lethality is lost with the more stable bullet? Why hasn't the elevation adjustment been soldier-proofed? And why aren't there low-light/night sights?

I've heard all the good news about the M16, but I never liked it for an all-out combat weapon. I don't expect any changes will ever make me happy with it. And yet, it had one good quality: The bullet's lethality was almost unbelievably high at close ranges without intervening cover.

I keep hearing that the SS109 is the most devastating thing since the .45/70. The bullet's increased penetrating power is caused by increased mass (7 gr. heavier than M193), a steel core and greater gyroscopic stability lent by a faster rifling twist.

First, I doubt the published results. I just can't figure how a .22-caliber projectile can outperform a .30-caliber projectile which has *twice* its muzzle energy. Then there's the question of lethality.

The one thing the plastic pop-gun ever had going for it was the instability of the bullet when it hit flesh. The experts say that tumbling is not greatly altered by the increased spin. I don't think that can be true. If the bullet can punch holes in steel plate at 500 meters, I just can't see how it's going to magically develop yaw in flesh. How does the bullet know the difference? I imagine it just makes icepick-diameter holes in flesh as it spins on through a body.

Elevation on the M16A2 rear sight is very much like that on the old AR-10. It's an easy-access, easy-to-adjust horizontal dial in the carrying handle just under the rear-sight aperture. This new manually adjustable sight may sound like a good idea.

Take it from me: It's not. A sight that is easily adjusted will be adjusted. That means it will be changed according to convenience rather than set at battle.



C. Edward Warner of Colt Industries presents M16A2 to BG Edwin H. Burba, Asst. Commandant, USAR Infantry School, Ft. Benning, Ga., 12 April 1984. Photo courtesy of Colt Industries

zero and left there. The soldier who changes his sight regularly will have no idea what his zero is when he immediately needs the weapon on target.

Some will argue that the adjustment makes the M16A2 a better long-distance weapon than the M16A1. That's a joke. As long as the United States continues to use the .223 cartridge, its service rifle will not be made into a long-range precision weapon. The easy-adjustment sight is just one more thing to go wrong.

Finally, if there was so much user input on the development of the M16A2, where are the night sights? The military utility of luminous sights is obvious. Raids and ambushes usually occur under cover of night. So there you are at zero-dark-30, and bullets start zipping around you. If you can't see your sights, what are you going to do?

Galil-type flip-up sights shouldn't be hard to add, and they would increase the night-time effectiveness of the individual soldier. They might help him stay alive.

I keep hearing that the M16A2 is the best service rifle the United States military can field at the moment. That may be true, but it's not the best service rifle I can think of. ❌

INTRODUCING TRACK, THE ONE MAN HELLBENT ON SAVING THE WORLD FROM NUCLEAR TERRORISTS.

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TRACK

SAIGON. By Anthony Grey. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc. 1982. 750 pp. Review by Capt. A. L. Jackson, USMC.

AT last, the experience of the Vietnamese and their relationship with all interlopers is available in an understandable, historical perspective. In **Saigon**, Anthony Grey gives us a novel with such a strong and historically well-researched background that the reader may get a little confused as to whether he or she is reading fact or fiction. But so poignant are the author's descriptions of the peoples, places and things of Vietnam that the reader becomes intimate with them. At the same time, the form of the novel allows the author to present a work which is readable for both the serious and casual student of Indochina.

Through 750 pages, Grey weaves each of the significant 20th-century experiences of the United States in its relationship to Vietnam. From the first fleeting contacts during the French Colonial period when Indochina was a distant part of the mysterious Orient and only a few adventurous Americans such as Theodore Roosevelt hunted there, to the pre-WWII days when the United States had little concern for Southeast Asia (except as a French colony temporarily standing in the path of the ambitions of Imperial Japan), to

our first tentative relationship with Ho Chi Minh through the OSS and through the notes Ho sent to Truman in the waning days of WWII, to the disastrous effects which the pressures of the cold and hot wars of the late 1940s and early 1950s had on our national leaders' maladroit policies toward that country, and finally to the cataclysmic divisiveness of our 1960s and 1970s involvement and the perhaps-inevitable communist victory.

Overall, the author portrays the Vietnamese as neither incompetent allies nor vicious enemies, but as a complex people whose character is rooted in their past and whose modern ideologies are formed in conflict with that past.

There is a danger in recommending a novel for its historical content: The layman and perhaps even the dubious expert may not be able to separate facts from the fiction. Even that should not discourage the historian from reading this work, for the author has done an historian's job of researching his facts and setting his characters against

an accurate background. His central character, Joseph Sherman, representative of the United States' experiences, is a heroic idealist. You might find such a character in an ancient Greek play, one whose actions you could sometimes admire and sometimes despise.

Sherman was the son of a powerful U.S. Senator, a WWII pilot, an OSS agent, a professor and scholar, a father of two sons and a daughter caught up in the war, an enigmatic anti-war activist, and always a tragic romanticist whose emotions kept him involved in Vietnam.

Comparable to Herman Wouk's *The Winds of War* and *War and Remembrance*, Grey's work gives the casual reader and student of the Vietnam War a new, clearer perspective of the United States' involvement. With this perspective and the author's dynamic, engrossing writing the reader will find both a satisfying novel and sound historical background of how our nation came to be so entangled in Southeast Asia. ✕

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NEW SOVIET OFFENSIVE...

Bombing strikes preceded a Soviet airborne attack on the key northern supply route to Afghanistan's Panjshir Valley and probably blocked the pass leading into the rebel stronghold, according to reports reaching Pakistan. A mujahideen spokesman said, "The Soviet objective appeared to be to wipe out resistance in the Panjshir Valley. This is the time for the American people to press Congress for more aid for our cause." He said the rebels do not have the heavy weapons needed to shift from the defensive to the offensive.

Meanwhile, Western intelligence sources said the Soviet tactics used in the new attacks showed a flexibility not before associated with the Soviet Army in Afghanistan since it entered the country in December 1979.

Claims conflict as of SOF's press deadline: According to some sources, Ahmad Shah Massoud, sometimes called the "Lion of the Panjshir," has left Afghanistan in disguise for Pakistan. Others state the Soviet campaign was frustrated by concerted guerrilla action.

One way you can help the brave Afghans is to send cash contributions to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Contributions are not tax-deductible.



COL Alex McColl sorts and boxes donations of materiel for transshipment to El Salvador, preparing for another SOF mission to El Salvador. Cleaning kits, foot powder, web gear, boots, uniforms and cash donations are still welcome: Nicaragua/El Salvador Defense Fund, c/o SOF, 5721 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80303.

UNION JUNKET...

SOF reaches an unusually wide audience, and we have no doubt many members of labor unions read and sympathize with our conservative, pro-America, pro-military politics. But if you would like to see part of what your dues support, contact the American Labor Education Center (ALEC), 1835 Kilbourne Place N.W., Washington DC 20010, (phone [202] 387-6780 or [202] 462-8925) for one of the most embarrassing pieces of disinformation you will ever read, entitled "Face to Face: An Inside View of Labor in Nicaragua."

It is the report of a November 1983 junket — apparently at union expense — which carried 11 union officials and union publication reporters to Nicaragua. There they were fed (and reported) the gospel according to the Sandinista junta. In the light of their guided tour, this assembly of self-appointed international affairs experts assures us the Nicaraguan economy is healthy, featuring high employment, freedom of association (within the Marxist government-controlled unions, a travesty of our own free labor movement) and high wages.

ALEC's extended diatribe against the Reagan policy toward Central America bears the name of the president of Bernard Demczuk, the national political representative of the American Federation of Government Employees, among other supposed representatives of American labor and government employees.

We encourage patriotic members of American labor unions to acquire "Face to Face," read it and inform their local representatives, national officers and these junketers — personally — of how they feel about their money financing the dissemination of Sandinista propaganda.

WANTED: PILOTS...

Word is out that somebody is looking for C-130 pilots. Only qualified Herc jocks should write LTC Shields, P.O. Box 2824, Jeddah 21461, Saudi Arabia.

JOY OF SNAKE-EATING...

Jim "Goot" Guttenberg's artwork has decorated *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine and the SOF Convention. Now his culinary talents are displayed in *The Green Beret Gourmet*. Aside from good humor and helpful field-cooking hints, Goot's cookbook features recipes such as LRRPs Alfredo, Baked Dog DiRocco, Fish Stew a la Atlacatl and our favorite, Jane Fondue (Meat with Red Sauce).

For your copy, send \$9.95 plus \$2 for handling and postage to The Guttenberg Press Publications, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 973, Rockledge, FL 32955.

CUBAN BUILDUP...

The USSR's propaganda offensive in the United States — coordinated with the Olympics and U.S. presidential campaign — is being backed up with arms. Intelligence sources indicate that a recent shipment of Mach 2.3, 600-mile combat radius MiG-23s (Flogger) has brought the Cuban Air Force's stock of the modern tactical fighters up to 35.

ETHIOPIAN DESERTIONS...

Shades of Afghanistan, unconfirmed reports from Africa suggest a single unit of over 500 Ethiopian soldiers deserted and surrendered themselves to Sudan. Allegedly, the Ethiopians brought their armor and artillery with them to their crossing point at Kassala, 250 miles east of Khartoum.



REFUGEE RELIEF INTERNATIONAL, INC....

Over 230,000 Salvadorans are homeless, thanks to Cuban-sponsored terrorists. Refugee Relief International, Inc., (RRII) has sent seven unsalaried volunteer medical teams and 20 tons of medical supplies (collected with the help of the Air Commando Association and World Medical Relief, Inc.) worth \$4 million.

Since these accomplishments have taxed its small staff and drained its financial assets, RRII will have to halt operations without cash donations. Donors who can afford at least \$10 may have their names printed in an honor roll of contributors in a future issue of SOF.

RRII has already shipped 1.5 tons of IV fluids, but the sick and wounded use these supplies rapidly. Ringer's Lactate is the best all-purpose fluid replacement, and Salvadoran refugees need fresh supplies desperately.

No longer able to accept freight-collect shipments, RRII welcomes tax-deductible materiel donations (tax number 74-2255573) addressed to Refugee Relief International, Inc., c/o *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, 5735 E. Arapahoe, Boulder, CO 80303. Contributions of money (also tax-deductible) should be sent to RRII, 6340 Nelson St., Arvada, CO 80004.



LIGHTWEIGHT BIG-BORE...

Plastic .50-cal. training rounds should be in issue to Army units by September. Developed by Picatinny Arsenal in Dover, N.J., and based on Dynamit Nobel's PT Training Ammunition, plastic ball (M858) and tracer (M860) fire from the M2HB HMG at approximately the same muzzle velocity as M2 ball (830 meters per second). The low-density projectile loses velocity rapidly, dropping training-range safety standards to 700 meters. The M2 HMG must be fitted with the XM3 recoil amplifier barrel assembly to function with the low-recoil ammo.

CBS VS. WESTMORELAND...

Tony Bliss has notified us to watch for *A Matter of Honor*, by Don Kowet, co-author of *TV Guide's* "Anatomy of a Smear." *A Matter of Honor* is a detailed treatment of CBS's much-publicized attack on GEN William Westmoreland. Meanwhile, Westmoreland's defense fund needs help to give the general the clout to fight the media giant.

Contact Veterans for Westmoreland, Box 264, Locust Valley, NY 11560, to find how you can help.

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 TRAINS REAGAN BN....

COL Jorge Adalberto Cruz has expanded and reorganized the Salvadoran Army battalions of Morazan Department. Three battalions (Morazan, Lenca and Cacahuatique) of just over 300 men have been increased to four battalions of nearly 500, and the Reagan Battalion — named for President Ronald Reagan — has been formed from new volunteers.

A six-man team led by SOF Special Projects director Alex McColl conducted small-arms marksmanship and mortar training in the battalion's Morazan base from 20 to 23 May 1984. SOFers Bill Atkins, Ben Jones, Frank Keefer, Ray Smith and Jim Whitlock paid their own way to El Salvador to help prepare the new antiterrorist battalion for combat.

BROWN LECTURES...

"Strategy '84" gathered 250 senior officials of world defense forces, industry and government for conferences and workshops on strategy. Sponsored by *Defense & Foreign Affairs* and the International Strategic Studies Association, 90 speakers addressed the prestigious gathering, including High Frontier-proponent LTG Daniel Graham, Iraq's senior diplomat Ismat Kittani and SOF editor/publisher Robert K. Brown.

Brown addressed the session on Central America and the Caribbean concerning SOF's work in training elements of the Salvadoran Army.

Continued on page 101

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I WAS THERE Stinging Fingers

by Dave Collins as told to M.L. Jones

Dave Collins served in Vietnam July 1969-70, first with D Co., 1/28th Infantry's 1st Division and then with the 10th Trans. Co. at Long Binh. It wasn't a time for humor, he tells us, but he does remember one comic episode:

DURING my last few months in Vietnam, I rode shotgun on a supply truck going from Long Binh to Tay Ninh. It was kind of a nine-to-five job, but I rode with an M60 just in case. Well, there was a village just outside the compound where the civilian workers who did all the undesirable jobs on the post came from. One of them we called Fingers because he stole everything that wasn't nailed down—radios, tape players, cameras, anything. We all knew who was stealing the stuff but nobody could catch him in the act.

Fingers also sold dope. And the guys who bought pot from him always had to pay in MPC (military payment certificates) rather than piasters. The Vietnamese preferred MPC.

Fingers was always asking when the MPC was going to be changed. The military changed the picture on the MPC and the color from time to time and anyone with the old issue was stuck with it after the new series came out. MPC looked a lot like play money—and this is why my scheme worked.

I got a friend of mine to write home to his kid sister, asking her for a Monopoly set. When she mailed him the game a few weeks later, we had about a million dollars in Monopoly money. Now we could set up our sting.

First, we brought Fingers into our confidence by telling him we would be going home soon and we'd like to buy as many items as he could get us so we could sell them back in the States. We also told him that since we were going home so soon, we had been paid in the new MPC, which wouldn't be circulated until the following month. We showed him several hundred of our "dollars" and told him we had several thousand more. In short, we wanted to do business with him.

Fingers fell for the line. Although he couldn't read English, we could translate the greed in his eyes when he saw the masses of money we were waving at him. You could almost hear him thinking out loud: There's a fortune to

be made here. And these two dumb GIs will give it to me for things that won't cost me anything.

Over the next week, Fingers brought us everything from cameras to tape decks. How he ever got the stuff on base is one of the war's best-kept secrets. I never found out. By the end of the week, we'd "bought" two footlockers full.

We paid him too, reminding him each time we handed over a wad of bills that the money would be no good until next month.

"No problem," he always assured us, "just keep the money coming." And we did. Twenty-six hundred dollars worth.

I made the last payment to Fingers on 15 July for a Minolta 35mm camera, telling him, "It's a real pleasure doing business with you." I promised to write to him when I got home. I even gave him an extra \$200 for being a nice guy.

Well, on 16th July I boarded a Saturn Airways jet bound for San Francisco. But before I left I told the first sergeant of our company the whole story and left him the rest of the money. He agreed to take charge of our merchandise and try to find the rightful owners.

I left Vietnam the next day. Although I certainly didn't want to stay in-country, I did think as I got on the plane, "I'd like to be here so I could see the look on Fingers' face when he tries to spend his new fortune." ✕

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.

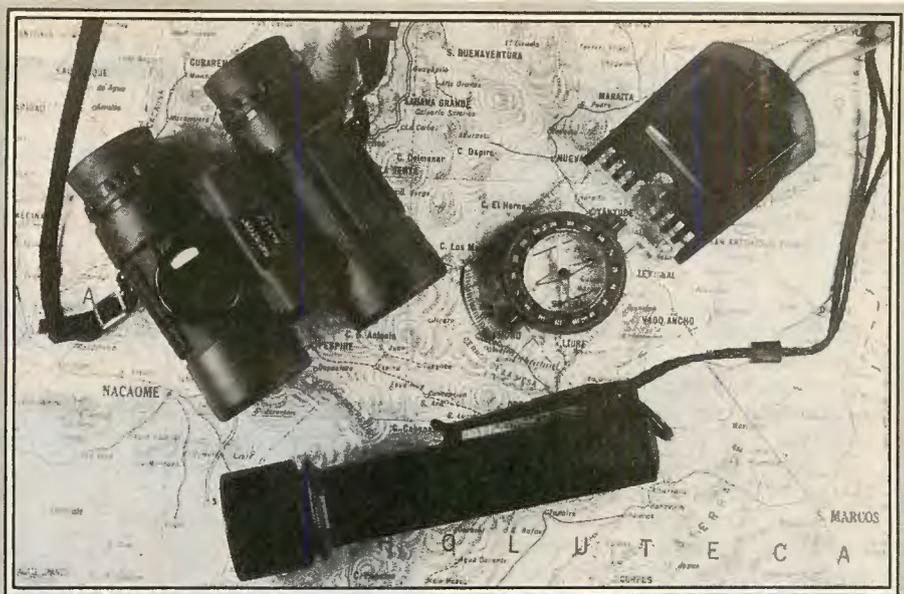
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But tracer ammunition is not, and never has been, easy to come by. Its importation for general use has been banned by the BATF's interpretation of the 1968 Gun Control Act, which stipulates that all imported ammunition, except that for governmental and law-enforcement use, must be for "sporting" purposes only. Why shooting at paper targets and clay pigeons is a sporting activity and organized machine-gun shoots are not, I do not know. But, as a consequence, most of us are faced with stalking small lots of older tracer at gun shows.

The squint-eyed hawkers who peddle tracer at gun shows are more than aware of the insatiable demand for an ever-dwindling supply and price it accordingly — usually far too high to justify shooting it through a rattle gun, except by the most fevered fanatics of rapid-fire devices, such as I.

Unfortunately, tracer ammunition has a much shorter shelf life than ball ammo. Twin Cities 5.56mm NATO tracer manufactured in 1968 will usually trace only 75 percent of the time now and it will turn sour asymptotically as time continues to pass. The cleanest looking WWII and Korean War vintage .30-06 tracer will trace only 10-20 percent of the time, even if it has been stored in vacuum-sealed "Spam" cans. Foreign tracer, such as FN .30 M1 Carbine from the 1960s, has a longer shelf life and a much greater percentage of it will still burn.

What to do? When offered a substantial lot of tracer at an exorbitant price, purchase only a test batch, and pay for the remainder according to the trace percentage. The rest is worth no more than surplus ball ammunition of the same caliber. The bottom line on the purchase of tracer ammunition is *caveat emptor*.

Reloading 7.62x39mm Berdan Cases: Large quantities of Berdan-primed, corrosive 7.62x39mm ammunition is now surfacing in the United States at reasonable prices. Those wishing to make use of the empty cases may reload them with just a little extra effort. In addition to a set of dies in this caliber, you will need an RCBS Lachmiller Berdan decapping tool. Du Pont's IMR 4198 would be an adequate propellant and jacketed 125-gr. .30-cal. bullets will suffice.

However, Berdan primers can be difficult to locate. The best source is



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Scattered Bursts



Happiness is tracer down the spout for machine gunners. Unfortunately, that which is available has mostly aged to ball, like wine to vinegar. Photo: Robert H. Hall

The Old Western Scrounger (Dept. SOF, 3509 Carlson Blvd., El Cerrito, CA 94530).

40-rd. Sterling Magazines: Sterling Armament Co. has recently introduced a 40-rd. magazine for the M16/AR15 and AR 18/180 rifles through its exclusive U.S. distributor, Lanchester U.S.A., Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 47322, Dallas, TX 75247). I have tested several over the last few months. Except for a plastic follower they are of all-steel construction and considerably more durable than the 20- and 30-round milspec M16 magazines. They are reliable and useful — more so with the adoption of the FN Minimi (M249) squad automatic weapon by the United States and other NATO countries. The M249 offers the option of belt or magazine feed and is without doubt the finest small arm ever placed into the U.S. military inventory. This large-capacity, 40-rd. Sterling magazine will increase its potential even further. The price is \$29.

Cleaning Fouled MG Barrels: Copper, lead, powder and carbon fouling are the bane of all machine-gun barrels, especially in gas-operated systems. The increasing use of ball powders has intensified this curse. I have labored seemingly forever to remove fouling from that portion of Bren Gun barrels just forward of the gas block with J.B. Bore Cleaning Compound only to stare down the tube at the same encrusted trash.

Developed by an avid benchrest shooter, Marksman's Choice No. 7 Bore Cleaner is a blend of high-grade oil, detergents, penetrants and solvents designed to wash your fouling problems right down the drain. Just wet two patches and push them through the bore to remove the loose residue. Then run a brass brush of the correct diameter, saturated with Marksman's Choice, through the bore several times. Run three more wet patches through the bore and allow to soak for 20 minutes. Then push two dry patches through the bore. It really works. And the amount of black filth it removes is startling. Stubborn crud in machine-gun barrels may require plugging the breech end and gas vent and pouring an entire bottle of this vile solution down the spout to soak overnight.

Magic potions don't come cheap these days. A four-ounce bottle of Marksman's Choice No. 7 costs \$7.50 postpaid. But if you place any value whatever on your time, it's well worth it. You can order MC-7 from Marksman's Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 598, Chesterland, OH 44026).

Buying Machine Guns: Finding a legitimate outlet for machine guns (unrestricted transfer weapons, not just dealers' samples) that offers a large selection at reasonable prices is no mean feat. Class 3 dealers who unload their entire inventory on one eight-foot table at local gun shows and ask \$900 for an RPB MAC 10 are not viable sources for serious collectors. I have already mentioned Dolf L. Goldsmith (ARPAC, Inc., Dept. SOF, 800 Isom Road, Suite 202, San Antonio, TX 78216) who specializes in the vintage classics. Another excellent source for Title II firearms from every era of history is Irv Kahn (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 290, Monroe, OH 45050). Irv usually stocks more than 100 machine guns at any given time (his stock changes constantly), in addition to parts and accessories. Send Irv an SASE for a copy of his current listing. Kahn's descriptions of condition are accurate, his inventory comprehensive and his prices competitive.



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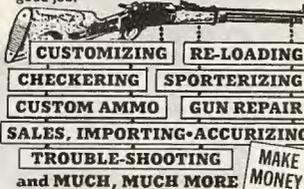
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Continued on page 104

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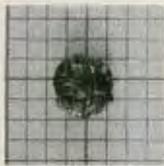
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Velocity: 1,001 FPS
No layers penetrated



Fed. 123 gr. 9mm Para. FMC
Velocity: 1,069 FPS
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W/W 40 gr. .22 Magnum JHP
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Two layers penetrated

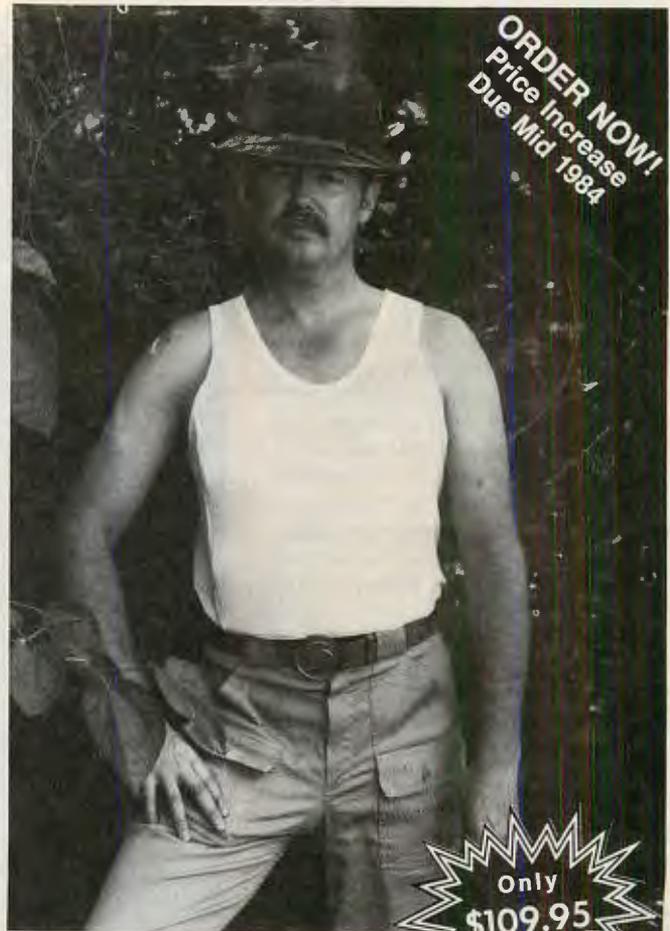


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HEROES come young in El Salvador. Jose Mario Viatoro was the 14-year-old aide-de-camp to the Salvadoran Army commander of Morazan Province, Lt. Col. Jorge Adalberto Cruz. A few days before Easter, Mario sacrificed his life defending his beloved colonel from communist guerrillas.

Mario hated the communists with a vengeance. A year earlier they press-ganged him in his home village of Cacaotera, along with many other young boys and took him to a terrorist school near the Honduran border. There Mario suffered four months of hunger and heavy-handed indoctrination until he was rescued by a government offensive that drove the guerrillas to the hills.

Col. Cruz was charmed by the cheerful child and made Mario his valet. But before long, Mario was more than an assistant to the humble colonel; he was like a son. Mario's peasant parents were poor, so Col. Cruz bought him shoes, clothes, books and sent him to a real school where kids do not learn Marxist-Leninist terrorism, but math, science, Spanish and good citizenship.

The SOF team met Mario last August and was immediately smitten too. The spunky kid became a big fan of the magazine, and we lavished all sorts of souvenirs on him: patches, stickers, knives, T-shirts, etc. But the item Mario treasured most was SOF's January '84 issue: A photo of him sporting an M16 appeared on page 70. The weapon was not just for show, however. Mario would accompany his colonel in the field whenever he could. And, indeed, he did during Easter vacation.

A couple of days before Good Friday, the guerrillas fiercely attacked Morazan's second-largest town, Jocoro. Col. Cruz astutely recognized it was a diversion in the guerrilla plans to attack the provincial capital, San Francisco Gotera, and he personally led a battalion, with Mario at his side, to engage the principal threat: an insurgent column of some 500 men. Cruz's convoy was ambushed. Everyone bailed out of the vehicles and bolted for cover. Everyone that is but Mario. He defiantly stood his ground in the middle of an intense crossfire and blazed magazine after magazine in full auto.

"Get down!" a soldier screamed. But Mario refused.

"It's better they kill me than you, my colonel," Mario shouted to Cruz.

Finally, a bullet crashed into the back of Mario's head and lodged in his jaw. The young soldier was dead. However, his bravery gave the soldiers enough time to beat back the ambushers. The guerrillas' designs on Gotera were frustrated.

Virtually all the residents of Cacaotera attended the funeral of their native son in the crumbling local church. It was a sad, but inspiring affair. Col. Cruz summed up the feelings of most there as the small coffin was lowered into the ground.

"Mario is an example for us all. Mario was very young, but despite his age he saw

MOURNING MARIO

The Good Die Young

by Steve Salisbury



ABOVE: SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Mario during August '83 SOF trip to Morazan. Photo: Ralph Edens
RIGHT: This photograph of Mario appeared in SOF's January '84 issue, which became Mario's most treasured possession. Photo: Ralph Edens



the evil of communism and had the courage to die fighting it," Cruz remarked.

If only the U.S. Congress had Mario's courage, maybe there would be peace in El Salvador now. ✘



EDITORIAL

ELECTION '84:

The Intelligence Outlook

by Karl Phaler

TWO months ago SOF looked at the prospects for the armed forces after the coming presidential election in light of the records of Carter and Reagan. (Ronald Reagan won't change, and Fritz Mondale has voiced no disagreement with these aspects of Carter's record.) The same historical record is useful to predict the likely future of intelligence programs in either a Democratic or Republican administration after 1984.

As with the armed forces, attitudes toward the intelligence community at the beginning of the Carter administration contrast strongly with the approach taken by Reagan. Nowhere is this better seen than in the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) chosen by each, and the impact of that choice on the Central Intelligence Agency.

1. Carter 1977: Sorenson, the Admiral, and HUMINT suicide.

A danger signal burst like a star shell in the early days of Carter's administration with his nomination of Ted Sorenson to head the CIA. Sorenson, who sat out the Korean War as a conscientious objector (one of Carter's favorite types — remember his first presidential act was to pardon the "resisters"), had later misused classified materials for private purposes after his stint with Kennedy. About the only positive thing to be said for Sorenson as a prospective DCI was his creation of Sen. Edward Kennedy's press release after Chappaquidick, considered by many to be a masterpiece of disinformation. Even the U. S. Senate, at the height of the post-Watergate folly, was unable to stomach such a completely inappropriate choice for DCI.

What we got, in the end, was probably much worse. After the Senate's rejection of Sorenson, Carter nominated Adm. Stansfield Turner for the DCI slot. Turner, an academy classmate of Carter's, had no special qualifications for the post other than his uniform. The inadequacy of Turner's previous training and Carter's policies quickly became clear.

As any intelligence administrator can tell you, about half of the product of any intelligence agency is derived from "open" sources such as newspapers, broadcasts and other information. The greater part of the rest is technical intelligence derived from satellite surveillance, communications monitoring and intercept, and other technical means of collection. Only about 10 percent of intelligence collection involves the classic sort of reliance on human agents, or HUMINT. The importance of HUMINT, however, is far greater than its proportion would indicate.

While technical means of collection can indicate what types and amounts of weapons are available in a given area, only HUMINT can offer insights as to what an opponent may be planning to do with the hardware we know he has. In a sense, HUMINT is the glue holding together the masses of unrelated data gathered by technical means of collection, and is often the only means of making sense of the information already in our possession.

HUMINT collection, covert action and similar intelligence capabilities, however, were contrary to the Carter-Mondale overseas agenda as executed by Cyrus Vance at the State Department. The overt part of the Carter-Mondale foreign policy was a strong emphasis on "human rights" (a program for kicking your friends while they are down) and "liberation from the obsessive fear of communism" (a program that assumes if we *hope* the Soviets will be nice, they will). The unspoken agenda clearly was de-

signed to preclude our doing anything useful in case the overt programs proved to be, as they did, national-security disasters.

In support of the Carter-Mondale program, Adm. Turner fired more than 600 of the most experienced field operatives in the Agency, in one fell swoop destroying almost all of our HUMINT and covert-action capability and; thereby, inflicting the most extensive damage possible on ourselves. While this astounded our friends, it must have occasioned great glee in the Kremlin.

The results were most clearly seen in Iran. After "human rights" (and stunning ineptitude) had brought down the Shah, and the Ayatollah had seized of our hostages, the United States of America possessed *not one single agent in place in Iran*. This absolute absence of intelligence was a major obstacle in efforts to free the hostages.

With intelligence agencies already crippled by overbroad Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) reporting requirements and excessive Congressional oversights, the Turner destruction of HUMINT/covert action capabilities finished the Carter-Mondale ruin of America's intelligence community.

2. Reagan 1981: Casey, CIA, and rebuilding HUMINT capability.

By the time Reagan took office, even Carter had at last come to see the Soviet Empire for what it is. The choice of William Casey to head the CIA, with his WWII OSS background, long-standing involvement in intelligence matters, and personal access to the president, underscored Reagan's appreciation for what had been done to the CIA. With the backing of private groups such as the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, efforts to limit Freedom-of-Information-Act access to intelligence files and reduce the number of "oversight" committees were begun in the Congress, while Casey undertook to reestablish community capabilities.

It has, of course, been a rocky, uphill path. Intelligence files are not adequately protected against disclosure, causing foreign sources to hesitate to share information with us. The Congressional oversight process continues to be abused for partisan political gain, to the advantage of the Soviets, and even recruitment of bright young people will not overcome the "experience gap" deliberately created by the last administration. Finally, successful efforts remain (as they should) unseen, while programs exposed to the press, such as the Nicaraguan "mining," die in a blare of global anti-American publicity orchestrated by the Mighty Red Wurlitzer in Moscow. (The mines were only a *real* threat to "fishing boats" loaded with El Salvador-bound munitions and explosives. This impediment to the export of subversion was the true reason for communist outrage.)

3. Prospects for the Intelligence Community after 1984.

Perhaps Walter Mondale has learned from Carter's disaster, and understands the vital necessity of an effective intelligence capability in all areas. He has not displayed such understanding, but any Democrat on the primary trail necessarily plays to the hard left of the party, with its inordinate influence in the nominating process. The true test will come after the conventions are over, when each candidate must reach for the center.

This fall Mondale will unveil his plans for maintenance of our national security. Along with a detailed *military* strategy (other than cancellation of most weapons programs), there will be a Democratic program for the intelligence community. The contents of this program, including the policies to be established and the persons who will be chosen to implement them, are matters of the gravest importance for every American. Every concerned voter must study the alternatives offered by each candidate this fall, and the determination as to which offers greater protection for our nation should play a large part in the electoral choice. We owe our country, and our continued freedom, nothing less. ✕

Apocalypse in America

SOF Looks at Milius' New Movie

by SOF Staff



BELOW: Mock-up of Soviet Mi-24 Hind lands during hunt for insurgents.



MMILITARY strategists have often discussed the repercussions of a communist takeover of Central America. One worst-case scenario has the Soviet Union training Cubans and Nicaraguans in the offensive use of advanced weapons such as the MiG 25 and the T-72 tank.

In *Red Dawn*, a new film written and produced by John Milius (author of *Apocalypse Now* — see “SOF Interviews John Milius,” September '80), the reality is worse than the nightmare. The Soviets, having made strategic gains in Central America, decide that the time is ripe to mount a conventional invasion of the United States. Through a lack of resolve on the part on the U.S. government, the Soviets have been allowed to strengthen the military machines of its clients to the point where they neutralize U.S. allies in the area and become a threat to the United States itself.

Having learned a lesson during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Soviets do not again risk raising the specter of nuclear war by building a large presence in Central America. Instead, they use their proxies as

the main invasion force. The theory is that a lightning attack on the U.S. mainland from Mexico and over the Bering Sea simultaneously would present the government with a *de facto* foothold on

U.S. soil. Preceding the attack is a Soviet surgical nuclear strike. The United States retaliates but the reposte is deflected by a Soviet ABM system that exists because of a weak-willed Democratic administration.



LEFT: Cuban airborne troops pile out of commandeered car during assault on Calumet. BELOW: Surprise! Soviet tankers steal picnic basket from "innocent" girl. It explodes inside T-72.





Cuban airborne commander angrily surveys soldiers killed during ambush.

According to the plan, well-trained Central American troops would make up the southern invasion force while regular Soviet shock troops cross the Bering Sea. Once a foothold has been established, 60 Soviet divisions would reinforce the Cubans and Nicaraguans. Such a conflict would stay conventional. Presumably, the United States would be reluctant to use tactical nuclear weapons on their own soil.

The story takes place at the foothills of the Rockies. The sleepy town of Calumet is selected by the invaders as the site of an airborne assault to secure a strategic pass. Startled townspeople encounter RPG and automatic-weapons fire. There is no escape. Many are slaughtered; the rest rounded up and placed in detention camps.

During the attack, a group of children reluctantly leave their parents and escape into the mountains. Jed Eckert (Pat Swayze), Matt Eckert (Charles Sheen) and Erica Mason (Lea Thompson) form a guerrilla group, known as the Wolverines after their high-school football team, and harass the Cuban garrison until a special anti-partisan unit commanded by COL Strelnikov (William Smith) is brought in to hunt and kill the children. Having learned their commando skills by trial and error, the kids gladly accept the assistance of an F-15 pilot (Powers Booth) shot down by the Soviets.

After being hunted down by troops and helicopters, the kids realize that they are outclassed by the Russian partisan hunter. They must destroy Strelnikov or die. They

succeed, but lose many of their numbers in doing so. In the end, the survivors cross into the U.S.-controlled Free Zone.

John Milius decided to make this film as realistic as possible, but given the subject matter, this was no easy task. Because Soviet weapons and equipment are difficult to obtain, MGM studios had to make copies. Necessarily, they are not exact replicas, but as a whole, they are good.

One rarely seen item is the Soviet camouflage airborne smock. Milius obtained one and made exact copies from it. No problem with them.

The Mi-24 Hind attack helicopter is a different story. Unobtainable outside of the Soviet bloc, Milius had no choice but to attempt a complete conversion. Clay Wright, creator of the helicopter in *Blue Thunder* (see "Blue Thunder," SOF, October '83), took three French Puma helicopters rented from a Louisiana oil company and fitted them with pylons and false hull sections to re-create the Hind. In the movie, the Hinds are used by the Russian counterinsurgency unit to track the children through the mountains. There are a few problems with the Hind replica, most notably four rotor blades instead of five. The air intakes are a bit flat and the rear wheels protrude too far to the side. But if one were shooting at you, you probably wouldn't notice the difference. Excitement is going to cover a lot of little irregularities.

The T-72 tank is a precise replica: so precise, in fact, that while it was being

carted around Los Angeles, two CIA agents followed it to the studio and wanted to know where it came from.

Taking an M48 chassis — not far-fetched considering the Soviets probably copied their MBT chassis from the U.S. M48 — studio shops built copies of the Russian tank. Designers moved the engine to allow room for the large fiberglass turret. The 125mm gun is steel and fiberglass, and closely resembles the new Soviet gun. Laser rangefinders and smoke tubes round out this fine mock-up of the T-72.

You might think that an RPG would be easy to get hold of. Not so — federal laws forbid their use, so working replicas are needed. The RPG-7s in the film are working models, and they look good. The optical sight is a bit bulky but the overall configuration of the weapon is close to the deadly original.

DShK-38 12.7mm machine guns are a different story. Impossible to get and expensive to fire, the Dashika in the film was converted by Stembridge Gun Rentals from an M60. The Soviet-style muzzle nut and the receiver mock-up successfully impersonate a machine gun, but not a K-38. The barrel is too thin and the skinny front post sight isn't close to the real thing. Firing rounds enclosed in an ammo box cleverly disguises the true caliber, but the feed mechanism is a dead giveaway.

Red Dawn seriously attempts realism. Milius spent \$17 million trying to give the American public a taste of what Soviet

UPON THIS ROCK

John Milius has never hesitated to go out on a limb with his movies. His latest project, *Red Dawn*, is no exception.

The screenwriter of *Apocalypse Now*, *Dirty Harry*, *Conan the Barbarian* and *Jeremiah Johnson* (among others) is somewhat of an anomaly in Hollywood. He is politically conservative and very outspoken about it. Although the Hollywood of the '80s (like the rest of the country) is more conservative than it was 10 years ago, Milius still gets panned by liberal reviewers, who consider him a dangerous man.

Red Dawn is intensely patriotic, and Milius realizes that it will probably be called militaristic and paranoid. After all, the movie shows World War III America—a world where typical American kids learn that the only way to survive is to kill their enemies. They become very proficient guerrillas, and go about the countryside, striking wherever they can at the Russian invaders (in some ways they are very much like the mujahideen in Afghanistan).

Milius has always celebrated the self-sufficiency of the American character. "From the time you're born, at least in my generation, you were always taught to go out on your own, to fend for yourself," he said in an SOF interview (see SOF, September '80). "You want the pleasure and pride of knowing that whatever you did, you did by yourself."

Most of Milius's characters are rugged individualists like *Dirty Harry*, *Conan* or *Jeremiah Johnson*. Milius believes that Americans have always admired the loner, who, like Daniel Boone, lives by his own word. Not surprisingly, Milius' favorite movie is *The Seven Samurai*, the classic Japanese film which explores the nature of duty, honor and personal courage.

In *Red Dawn*, Milius' characters, like *Samurai*, learn that their souls are only as good as the steel of their swords. They maintain a sense of loyalty to their beliefs and to their friends, and in the end some of them escape because of their own efforts. The epitaph, which is seen on the plaque at the end of the movie, "Guerrillas, mostly children, put the names of their dead upon this rock . . . they died here so that this nation shall not perish from the earth," reflects Milius' belief that in the end individual efforts will decide the fate of our civilization.

weaponry, tactics and occupation practices are all about.

Liberal critics will howl about Reagan's deleterious effect on the creative arts and scream that *Red Dawn* is unabashed saber-rattling propaganda. It sounds like our kind of movie.

Red Dawn opens across the country on 17 August. ✕



Suspecting trouble from deserted house, guerrillas fire RPG round through it.



Captured RPG is used effectively by young guerrillas. Here they wait to ambush Soviet column.

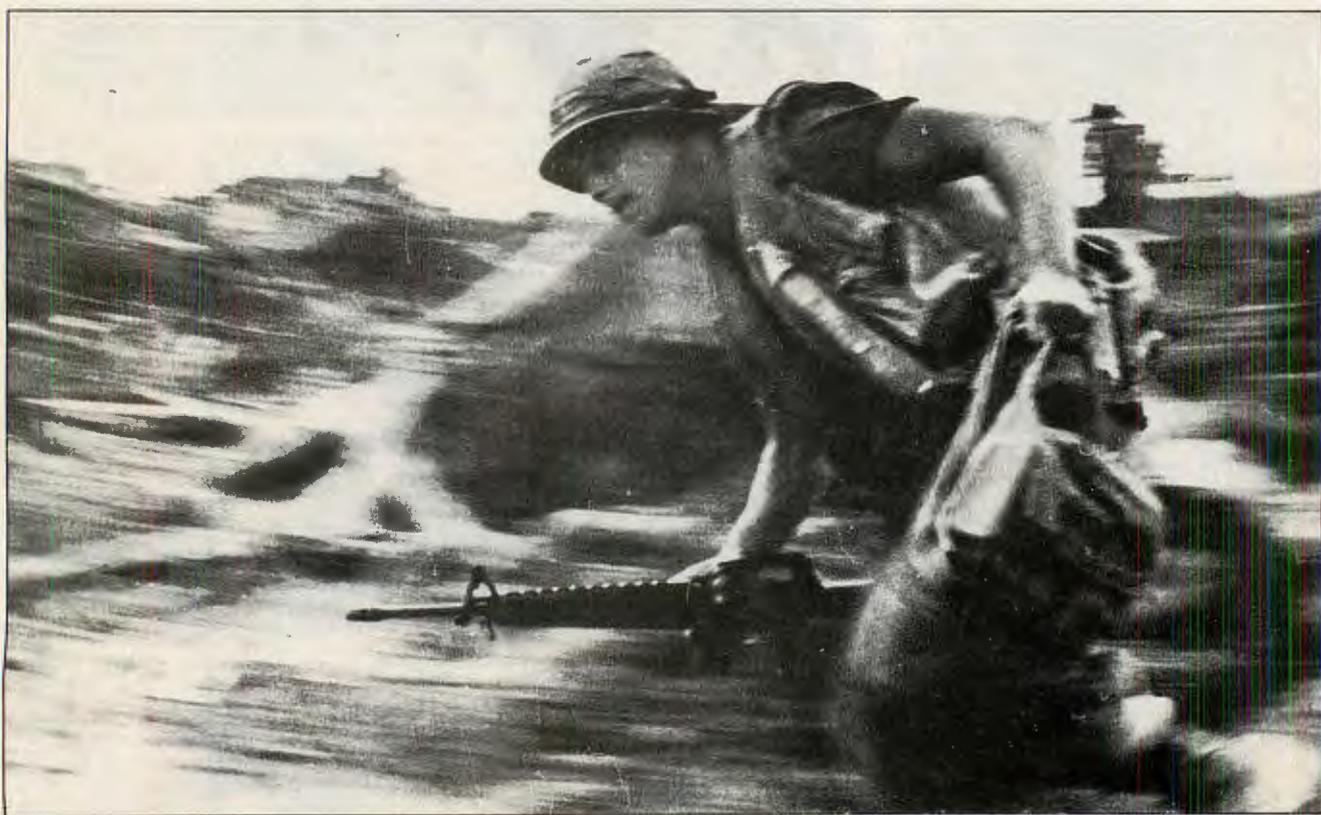


Turning the tables. Captured Dashika is used during commando raid on Cuban base.

PIPESTONE CANYON

Summertime in 'Nam and the Dyin' Was Easy

by Paul Blose
Photos courtesy of Department of Defense



IT was a hot, sticky, muggy day, the 20th of May, 1969. We rose before sunup and rechecked our gear for the last time, then saddled up and went to mess for what everyone was calling the Last Supper. Afterward, we stood in silence in the giant compound. The order came down to line up in single file. We had rehearsed three days earlier, even the sweep up to the first river. This was the Real McCoy: Operation Pipestone Canyon was on. I Corps was red hot.

We left the compound, locked and loaded, and followed the trail to the large open field. There we spread out in fire-team wedges to sweep the area. As we moved into the field, booby traps began to explode. Three days before there'd been none. Nick,

Moving out — Marine dashes to new position during enemy attack.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Blose served in 2nd Bat., 1st Marines as a corporal during Operaiton Pipestone Canyon. This was just one of many actions experienced by Golf Company during June and July of 1969.

Rochne, Santa Maria and I were a little edgy. But Nick was the best point man in the whole platoon, and we knew it. Midway across, off to our left, a Marine had tripped another frag. It was my friend Panoke from

Boston, on his way back to the world. He gave me a big smile, waved goodbye and told me not to worry.

We crossed the field to the tree-line. The trees were shaped like a teepee, crossing each other at the top. Nick went in first. He screamed, "Frag!"

Boom!

We yelled, "Corpsman Up." In a flash, Doc Taylor was there. We had to go in to pull Nick out from the tree and bushes he was tangled up in. Rochne had a piece of shrapnel in his arm but was all right otherwise. Santa Maria had caught pieces in his forehead that ripped his head open above the eye. We put Nick on a poncho and ran him back to the battalion first-aid center we'd

started from. For an op that was only an hour or so old, there were a lot of guys who'd been hit and were being treated.

On our return, we ran into a mortar attack and fire fight. We went through the tree-line, down the gully, across the stream and up an embankment, and found our guys holed up in front of us. After calling in artie and an air strike, we continued sweeping to the first river. We swept and counterswept for a few days, making sure we had gotten everything. I still don't know whether the enemy or the insects — leeches, centipedes and mosquitoes — were worse.

One morning when we saddled up we were told to wade out to sweep a couple of tiny islands. Walking through waist-high water with no cover in clear daylight was not my idea of a nice sunny stroll, but it had to be done. We'd swept half of one island when I started to scream. I writhed on the ground, then stood up and ripped my clothes off. Everyone thought I'd been sniped. I

pleaded with the guys, "Get it off! Get it off!"

Doc Freedman cut the huge centipede from me and gave me a shot. My whole back swelled up, my legs were puffy and I had a high fever within a minute. I remember saddling up in a daze and walking back through the water.

I was supposed to stay off the line that night. We were dug in along the river bank. On the other side was a forest from which we were being mortared. They kept firing RPG rounds into our positions, their heavy machine guns and small-arms fire ripping up and down our lines. As things got heavy and everyone else was on line, I felt like an idiot lying there. So I grabbed my rifle and flak jacket, and joined the fun. Positions all around me were getting direct hits; corpsmen were everywhere.

M60 gunner lays down cover fire in preparation for assault.

We stayed up all night and blew the place off the map. Although B-52s had pounded the forest for two weeks straight, we still had to call in artie. Afterward, Puff came in and ripped the place apart, then jets rocketed it. At sunup it looked like Verdun after the battle: desolate and leveled, crispy critters all around, real Indian Country.

I felt better. The fever had broken, and adrenalin was keeping me alert. We were *all* up for a fight: face-to-face. How would we show? "Kick ass and take names" was the order of the day. It was a free fire zone at its best.

Under heavy cover fire from Puff and several Cobra gun ships, we slipped into chest-deep water and waded across into no-man's-land. Our adrenalin was still flowing from last night's contact, and we were aching for a fight.

It was the hottest day of the year so far — 1 or 2 June 1969. The official report was 112 degrees in the shade, and that was no





exaggeration. Besides casualties from the enemy and booby traps, we were taking lots of them from heat.

As soon as we crossed, we assembled into a straight sweep line. It took half an hour before the entire multi-battalion maneuver was accomplished and we were ready to go. The command came loud and clear: "Move Out!"

We advanced into a hellish day I will always remember.

We walked into the forest. All the trees were torn to hell, and there were huge shell craters and black-powder burns as far as the eye could see — complete devastation. The stench of sulfur and burnt-up crispy critters was stifling.

It was smooth sailing for the first klick or so — until we broke into an open field about half a klick long. Midway in the field lay a small dirt dike, and directly in front of my position on line at the dike stood a small pagoda. About halfway to the dike, with our whole line exposed, it suddenly began to rain lead. The NVA opened up from the far tree-line: automatic weapons, small arms, mortars and RPGs. Dirt kicked up all around us. Thank God they were shooting low! We ran for the dike and took cover. Off to my left, I saw our jeep approaching. It took a direct hit from an RPG, the jeep and

Marine squad leader scans area for snipers while radioman awaits instructions.

its crew flying into pieces. I heard the familiar call, "Corpsman Up!", in several different places.

We were trapped, pinned down tight with nowhere to go. I finally realized that my buddy, Harold Nunley, and I were in bad trouble. We weren't protected by the embankment, but behind the pagoda. Only three small steps stood between us and all the fire coming our way.

The NVA sprayed the top of the dike randomly, not really aiming at anything unless men came into sight. They must have thought there were several people behind the pagoda because they concentrated their fire there. I could hear the lead whizz past my head with a cracking sound. I was dripping wet with sweat. The top step was chipping away, little pieces hitting my helmet and face. I thought I was going to buy the farm that day. I tried to lift myself up to return fire, but the cracking of the rounds scared hell out of me.

Nunley lay on the ground with his body up against the pagoda. His head, arms and weapon were off to the right in the form of an L. He was cranking rounds off, but the

ground was higher on my side, and even lying flat I was exposed. I decided to raise my rifle over the top step and pump some lead back at the tree-line. Enemy fire was still heavy.

Nunley turned toward me and said, "Come on, Blose, let's give it to them."

Immediately, we both rose to one knee and started placing well-aimed rounds. The NVA were well concealed. I really couldn't see much except trees. After spending a few magazines, I saw a gleam against a tree — maybe a belt buckle. I pumped three well-aimed shots, and it disappeared. We had been bogged down on this dike for nearly two hours.

Now, at about 1400 hours, artillery was pulled off the more heavily hit units to support us, and it hit that tree-line with everything we had. After the barrage lifted, the quiet lasted a long while.

The order came to advance. But as we got up, their fire resumed as heavily as before. I couldn't believe it. How had they lived through such an intense artillery barrage?

Skipper Adams had probably said to himself that enough was enough. He proceeded to get on the hook and call in an air strike. A few minutes later, the sky above us suddenly thundered. I looked up and saw two Phantoms at treetop level pass directly overhead.



I could have reached up and touched them. Two Cobra gunships came in behind and made several passes over the tree-line with their miniguns. The Phantoms swooped down, spitting rounds and dropping their payloads. It made *Apocalypse Now* look like a Mickey Mouse parade. The heat from the napalm was so intense and so close that I thought I'd pass out. We must have lain there for 40 minutes before we began our advance.

The blazing fire in the trees was almost out. As we entered the tree-line, I moved toward where I'd seen the gleam. A crispy critter lay there with his insides bubbling out. He had about seven holes in him, so I really don't know if I got him. In the middle of the tree-line, we found a series of connecting bunkers and tunnels, all destroyed. We had 15 confirmed kills and many blood trails leading away from us.

After our search, we continued down the slope of the opposite side of the tree-line. Directly in front of us a huge Vietnamese graveyard stretched out for about half a mile. When we reached the chest-high

Marine riflemen trade fire with NVA snipers.

grave mounds, LT Brooks cautioned us to watch out for booby traps and suicide squads.

When we walked in between the mounds, Padia was point to our left, I was point center, and Lomax was point to our right. About three or four graves in, I heard a snap as I caught my trouser leg on an outgrowth.

Padia screamed, "Look out, Blose!"

I thought I had tripped a booby trap. I fell flat on my face and asked Jesus to spare the others and just take me. I had seen too many traps go off; there isn't time to do anything to protect yourself. I waited a few seconds and nothing happened, so I rolled back toward my squad.

By now, Padia was firing directly into the grave. Roach came up and yelled, "Let me have a frag. Someone give me a frag!"

I tossed him one and drew back behind the grave. He pulled the pin, yelled "Fire in the hole!" and lobbed it. We all hit the deck.

Boom!

I got up and went around to take a look. There were two dead NVA, one with an RPG, the other with an AK-47. They both had dried blood on them. They had been hit before and either couldn't make their get-away or had been ordered to stay behind to hold us up. The man with the AK-47 had his finger on the depressed trigger of a fully loaded weapon: The noise I'd heard was the sound of his AK-47 jamming when he pulled the trigger to blow me away. Thank God for big blessings — AK-47s don't usually jam.

The frag had blown open one man's forehead, and I saw his brain slowly slip out, down his face and into his lap. After we finished going through their pockets and gear, we were ordered to bury them on the spot, before the stench of death accumulated.

We were only halfway through the day. I wondered what lay beyond the graves in front of us.

(To be continued.)

GETTING A HEAD

Innovative Field Exercise Requires Brains and Brawn

Text & Photos by Jake Jatras



“SOME guys will do anything to get a little head!” Don Clark of Alecto Group chuckled as he began the briefing for “Operation Headhunter.” The mission: Find and bring back seven six-pound bags (heads) filled with sand, using only ingenuity and natural objects. The heads were hidden along a four-mile course through rocky, wooded terrain.

It was a tough task for those aspiring to be awarded the special Alecto “Headhunter” patch. For the unique test of skill each individual was required to have the following gear: LC-1 harness, compass, knife, rappel gear, extra rope (150’), snap links, parachute cord and a pistol with ammunition.

Although no shooting was involved, the pistol was an important piece of equipment. Each man was on his own, and if injured (a real possibility in this type of exercise) would have to fire three rounds to signal for help. Many of the guys took no chances and

Alecto’s Shogun, Don Clark, set up “Headhunter,” thereby saving himself from having to run the grueling course. (That’s why he’s smiling!)

carried spare ammunition.

One could also carry any equipment he felt was useful. Many opted for a spare knife, tape, gloves and first-aid items.

At 0700 the operation began. Time was important, but one still had to find and bring in his heads first. It was estimated that it would take around one-and-a-half to two hours for each man to complete the hunt; therefore, entrants were spaced about a half hour apart.

Each man was led to a path cut in the woods. His time was recorded, and he started off. After about 15 minutes, he could spot the first set of heads hanging from a rope suspended over a 40-foot-deep ravine that was 60 feet wide.

He had to hook up and hand-over-hand out to the center, draw his knife and cut the head, then attach it to his gear. The catch was in getting off the rope. If he went all the way across the ravine, he couldn’t touch the ground: Getting unhooked was almost impossible. The solution was to go back to a tree, unhook, then climb down. No breaks on this course!

Once down to terra firma, he had to find a marker that gave a compass reading and the approximate distance to the next head. If he missed a marker, he could be in real trouble: Getting lost meant losing time. Once the marker (a paper plate staked to the ground) was found, the hunter could stand over it and take his reading.

The next head was just hanging around, about seven feet off the ground — straight up. More than one chap missed these hangers — here and later in the course — even though the designers considered them “easy.”

Off across a field toward an abandoned farm house lay the next marker. It took a dash through some thick woods and across a creek to find the next head — again in a tree.

The first tree head had been reachable after a short climb, but this one was about 12 feet — straight up. Solution: Strap a knife to a fallen branch, reach up and cut it down. Sure beats climbing! Individuals were encouraged to use their wits to bring ’em back throughout the course.

Bob Lanoha thought ahead (no pun intended) and toted two small packs to stash his heads in. He also carried a roll of tape, which came in handy. Instead of fumbling around, trying to tie his knife on a branch to get the high prize, he simply taped it to the branch and was off, trophy tucked in pack, in minutes.

Standing over one marker and taking a reading, the hunter faced a 175-foot cliff. If he squinted, he could make out a huddle of heads suspended halfway down the sheer sandstone from a high point of the cliff. No one said it would be easy.

After a 75-foot rappel, the hunter had to hang on, cut off the head, attach it to himself — somehow — and then proceed to the bottom. The next sandy cephalon rested out in the water, hanging from an iron bar. The short wade out was a welcome relief from the heat, since temps stayed around the century mark with humidity to match.

Gary Parks was happy he had a spare knife in his kit. After rappelling down the cliff and wading out to the next group of heads, he discovered that he had lost his blade somehow. (Maybe that tumble at the bottom of the cliff had helped.)

But once you have one problem solved, another soon creeps up. In this case, a paper plate attached to the stand in the water informed weary troops that they should now follow yellow markers. Yellow? That struck a familiar note. Most hunters had already spotted them back on top of the cliff. Now it was back up the hill with a pleasant rock climb thrown in. Nice touch!

Tracking the yellow markers eventually

led the hunter back to a small lake with a boat on the shore. From the boat he could see another yellow marker on a rock face on the far side — up the creek, but at least with the paddle!

After a quick row back to the bank, the weary hunter had only a short quarter-mile sprint to the finish line and a cool brew.

The winning time was turned in by John Popejoy: one hour and 47 minutes with a bag of all seven heads. More than one entrant missed one.

Headhunting requires the skills of a seasoned combat troop, plus the ability to think through the situations presented. Lightweights need not apply. If you think you're up to it, drop Alecto a line (Alecto, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 253, Elkhorn, NE 68022). Go for it! 🗡️



Gary Parks reaches to cut down his head on the first encounter in "Headhunter."



Headhunters had to wade for one of their trophies.



Winner John Popejoy tied his knife to a long branch and cut off the head hanging in this tree. Climbing after a two-mile hike through the woods in 100-degree temps proved to be slower than using your own head.



Ralph Serratore musters a small grin after completing his hunt. The heads could be carried in any way possible.



A rappel was necessary to get at the heads hung over this cliff.



The Alecto Group patch. Alecto was one of the Furies of Greek mythology: Group members earn their colors....

SNOOPIN' & POOPIN'

The Alecto Group is hardly your average gun club. They hold pistol, rifle and shotgun matches, each with a unique flavor and spirit.

The day before "Headhunter," a man-versus-man shotgun match was on the menu. Of course, propping a 2x4 behind one of the opponent's steel knockdowns was acceptable. In one contest the "start" signal was a poke in the ass with a Gerber knife. What's a little blood?

Night around the group's camp can also yield some fun. The area for the night exercise is located in an old quarry. It's near a resort lake that's surrounded by cabins, tourists and college kids out to drain kegs of beer.

At 2100 Alecto's "Snoopin' & Poopin'" exercise began. Just a creep through the woods looking for a party — or an innocent crowd in a cabin. See how close you can get and check out the action. No prisoners!

It was a slow night. Not much action partywise, but a nice herd of Armenian black-faced sheep (Falkland war brides). Pick the wool off your cammies, guys....

Ne Conjuge Nobiscum is Alecto's motto. You Latin scholars can translate that one! — Jake Jatras

AFGHAN SIT-REP

HARASSING THE BEAR

New Afghan Tactics Stall Soviet Victory

Text & Photos by David C. Isby



Captured Soviet pistols are a favorite with mujahideen. Shown here is 7.62mm Tokarev TT-33.

THERE is no marker at Peshawar Airport to commemorate that it was where, in May 1960, Francis Gary Powers took off in his CIA U-2 reconnaissance plane to fly into both the pages of history and the flight path of a Soviet surface-to-air missile. The U-2s no longer visit the Soviets. As our airliner touched down with a satisfying squeak of the tires, we saw the Pakistanis were ready in case the Soviets ever decide to come visiting in return.

Two-plane elements of bright, silver F-6 *Farmers* (Chinese-built MiG-19s) in the markings of the Number 23 Squadron, Pakistan Air Force, roar in and out on training missions or wait, fueled and armed, on the alert pad at the end of the runway. An orderly line of 1950s-vintage F-86 Sabre jet fighters stand silently next

to the runway, rather than in the F-6's concrete revetments. Their wing spars have cracked from old age and they no longer fly. Around the airport perimeter, the 100th Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment (Composite) waits for the day of the MiG, with only old Chinese Type 63 twin 37mm anti-aircraft guns in sandbagged pits. Their French-built *Crotale* surface-to-air missile launchers are camouflaged away from interested eyes.

Peshawar Airport is where the Afghanistan War begins. *Soldier of Fortune* had sent the Scarlet Major and myself to report on the fifth year of the Soviet Union's long-playing atrocity. The Scarlet Major is my friend Karen McKay, executive director of the Washington-based Committee for a Free Afghanistan, a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, and a professional in unconventional warfare where I am a devoted amateur. Only I am rude enough to call her the Scarlet Major.

If there is any country in the world that is between a rock and a hard place, it is Pakistan. If for any reason Pakistan could no longer shelter its three million Afghan refugees or cracked down on the activities of the Afghan groups headquartered in Peshawar, it could isolate the Afghans from effective outside support. Fortunately, at all levels of the Pakistani government, we encountered admiration and support for the Afghans — but support tempered by the realities of the modern world. The Soviets — who know blackmail the way the Saudis know oil — have shown the Pakistanis that they will be held responsible for whatever arms reach the Afghans. To underline this, just before we arrived, aircraft in Kabul Regime markings had bombed a Pakistani village, killing 40 and wounding over 100.





Pakistan's bad dream is Afghanistan's reality. The Soviets have not wavered in their aim to create a socialist Afghanistan over the bodies of its people. Nor have the Afghans abandoned their unequal struggle. They are starting to make some determined efforts to try to transform tribal warriors into modern soldiers, to create a fighting force that will be able to take on the Soviets in a protracted guerrilla war, to keep life going in the 85 percent of Afghanistan that is outside of Soviet control, and to encourage agriculture, education and civilian organization. If the Afghans manage to do all this, they could wage a guerrilla war that would make the continued Soviet occupation of Afghanistan very costly — not only in casualties, but, if the West will help, at an increasingly high diplomatic and economic price. If that comes about, the cost of occupying Afghanistan may become more than the cost of withdrawal. Even if the Afghans have only the current level of supplies and support, they can still fight on effectively for what I estimate to be a minimum of five years. After that, only Allah knows what will happen. Serious internal instability in Pakistan or outright invasion is probably the only way the Soviets could try to cut off the resistance from outside. The Afghans are not going to quit.

Our trip took us in the field to training camps and weapons caches, but also to villages, refugee camps and hospitals. We saw that it really is a war of national liberation. The mujahideen can count on the active or passive cooperation of practically the entire population that are not directly under communist guns. The Soviet puppet, dictator Babrak Karmal, is a dirty little man doing a dirty little job. His government's popularity and perceived legitimacy have stabilized roughly at zero. Yet despite this vacuum, there is still no unified central Afghan guerrilla command, no guerrilla overall strategy. The seven Peshawar-based groups are largely independent of each other. Not only has the attempt to bring all seven together in a single unity not succeeded, but even the two coalitions of groups that resulted have proved inadequate at generating unified military planning.

The Afghans who are actually doing the fighting told us repeatedly that they are tired of this. The fighting men are used to cooperating with the forces of different groups, even over wide areas of the country. The battlefield provides its own unity, reflected in the emergence of regional commanders who lead not because of their rank, or because the people in Peshawar say so, but because they are effective at getting the job done. With the exception of some of the forces of the Hezb-i-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, largely distrusted by other Afghans, the

Local mujahideen gather around Scarlet Major holding Soviet AKR.



Not all mujahideen are armed with modern Soviet weapons. Author displays Lee Enfield Mk-3.

field commanders will all fight together against the common enemy. Indeed, much of the time it appears that the rivalry between guerrilla groups is largely at the level of that existing between the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps. Karen and I would often be in the company of Afghans from one group when we encountered Afghans from a rival party — who they invariably embraced as long-lost friends. There just are not that many survivors of the educated people or the old Afghan Army around, and those that are still alive seem to truly welcome each other as brothers in *jihad*.

Our talks with both the fighting men and the leadership showed that tensions have emerged between the field commanders and the Peshawar-based leadership. Several field commanders of different parties told us that they were receiving insufficient support from Peshawar, or that the very weapons their fighting men needed are being sold by the leadership in the bazaars. We met Afghan field commanders as good as any in the history of guerrilla warfare. Now that the Afghans are being forced to seriously approach the problems of a protracted war, their failure to produce *effective*, unified, high-level leadership will become more significant. Long-range planning, efficient allocation and transfer of resources, and participation in international negotiations would be difficult in any case. The absence of a centralized guerrilla authority *makes* it well nigh impossible.

The traditional Afghan way of making decisions by a *jirga*, or council, is no way to run a war. Western armies abandoned councils of war as a decision-making process with the Industrial Revolution. The old Afghan way may be more democratic, but it is not suited to the hard realities of modern warfare. Many Afghans believe that if the ex-king returns from exile in Rome, it would provide the required lead-

ership figure, while many others believe that it would divide Afghans more than it would unite them. Meanwhile, the ex-king and his family remain where they are.

It is not just leadership that the Afghans need to improve. They demonstrated that simply putting weapons in untrained hands is pointless. "More weapons without more training simply means more martyrs," said Mohammed Amin Wardak, a chief's son and combat leader with 300 main-force fighting men and ten times that in part-time guerrillas under his command in his native Wardak Province. Amin Wardak is one of the many combat commanders who has learned from bitter experience that a few well-trained men, adequately trained and supplied, under leaders who know their business, can do a whole lot more damage to a convoy than a mob of underarmed, untrained, Afghan farmers under the local *mullah*.

We met Amin in Peshawar, a tall, bearded Pathan wearing Soviet officer's boots. His French was perfect, and we spoke in that language. He had come in from his area of operations to resupply and talk over upcoming operations with other field commanders, leaving his brother in charge. Like many guerrillas, his family remained as refugees in Pakistan while he returned home to fight. We drank sweet green tea and sat on the carpeted floor as Amin told us of his war. The Afghans do not believe in chairs and Karen, who had broken herself the year before after stepping out of a C-130 — 1,500 feet above this too solid earth — found sitting on floors more painful than climbing the border mountains.

We found out that Amin's responsibilities include not only fighting, but also civil organization. If the Afghans are going to stop the Soviets from draining away support for the guerrillas by forcing the people out of their homes and to the cities or Pakistan, they must make it possible for the Afghans to remain. This requires not only weapons — especially air defense — but also efforts in agriculture, education, even — Amin's special project — a postal system. He has become more a local *generalissimo* rather than exclusively a field commander.

Amin had passed the word that he needed a pair of GI binoculars, a request that *Soldier of Fortune's* Freedom Fighter's Fund was able to fill. He explained that his forces had been unable to capture any binoculars — one of his mujahideen had wept in frustration when, after sniping a Kabul Regime officer, he found his bullet had passed through his East German binoculars. In my bad French, I passed along the heirloom wisdom of my grandfather, *un soldat anglais pendant La Grande Guerre*: never wear binoculars around the neck, always keep them in a haversack. The war may change, but snipers remain the same.

The new generation of Afghan fighters

are being trained, not only in battle, as are Amin's, but in a series of training camps. At least three of the seven major Afghan parties have set up these camps near the border: the Hezb-i-Islami of Younis Khalis, the Jamiat-i-Islami of Dr. Burhanuddin Rabanni, and the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan — NIFA — of Pir Sayid Ahmad Gailani. These are by no means the only ones. Other local and regional commanders have set up their own facilities, often small and well-camouflaged.

Of all of these, the one we got the best look at was the NIFA camp. Overlooked by a rock-encrusted hill, the camp was put together to serve notice to both trainees and journalists that this was a real military establishment. As we came through the gate, a command in Pushtu brought a line of Afghans — in uniform olive-green combat jackets and flat Nuristani caps — to attention with more smartness than I thought possible. The major, as senior officer, took the salute and trooped the line. The training staff and students then demonstrated their course work in demolitions, weapons use and tactics, as well as a confidence course of mindboggling toughness.

If you work together, we will bomb you.

A 12.7mm DShK heavy machine gun — a "Dashika" to the mujahideen — overlooked the camp. It carried Soviet factory markings and a 1966 year of construction, although Chinese-built versions, recognized by their distinctive sights, are in action in Afghanistan. The tripod-mounted machine gun was obviously well-maintained — even Peter Kokalis would have approved. These 12.7mm machine guns are the mainstay of the Afghan air defense, supplemented by a smaller number of single and twin 14.5mm ZPU-1 "Ziqriats." Some of the people up north have Chinese-made 23mms at their base camps, but these are not the heaviest anti-aircraft artillery in use in Afghanistan. The Soviets still have a few surprises in store for the future.

As a believer in questioning everything — if an angel appeared to me out of the whirlwind, I would ask to see his ID — it seemed to me that the more theatrical elements of the camp and its confidence course are stagemanaged more for the benefit of Western journalists than for the trainees. But going past the public relations veneer, NIFA and the other Afghan groups are deadly serious about effective training. The camp's first graduates were in action during the 1983-84 battle of Urgun.

What makes this camp significant is that it is not an isolated facility. It is part of the leading edge of a trend that is slowly and painfully going to have to transform the way the Afghans fight their war. The well-known Jamiat-i-Islami regional commander of the Panjshir Valley, Ahmad Shah Massoud, has set up a series of training camps that are less elaborate than the rear-area camp we visited and dispersed against Soviet air reconnaissance. The Panjshir has trained its own fighting forces during its one-year respite from Soviet attacks that Massoud's controversial truce provided. Panjshir forces are now well-armed and organized into squads, platoons and companies, a rash levy no longer. Massoud has dispatched mobile training teams from the Panjshir to go to guerrilla groups throughout north Afghanistan. They set up a training program for the local Afghans and will go into action with them. Whenever the Soviets hear where one of the mobile training teams is, or even where one has been, they bring in airstrikes. The message: If you work together, we will bomb you.

Despite these efforts, Massoud Khalili, liaison officer between the Panjshir Valley and Jamiat-i-Islami's Peshawar headquarters, told us that he estimates that by 1984 "probably only five and at most 10 percent" of the Afghans' fighting strength will have had a significant amount of training and be deployed in units that can use this training efficiently. There is no guarantee that this training will be effectively used, or that it will not be wasted by incompetent commanders.

There is no such thing as a natural soldier. The average Afghan is not a hawk-eyed Pathan, born with Lee Enfield and Khyber knife in hand — the guys from the Kipling stories mainly inhabit just the high country around Paktia and Paktika provinces. Rather, he is a poor, illiterate farmer, who learned to use a gun as a boy but probably did not shoot regularly in the days of peace. The Afghans, coming from a largely premodern, preliterate, subsistence agrarian society, have never put as great a premium on efficiency, unity and overall competence as do industrialized societies.

The Afghans value honesty, bravery and a steady trigger finger. Because this war is being fought by the entire Afghan people and not just an army, analyzing the way it is being fought sometimes involves more anthropology than military science. They are fighting to preserve the Afghan way of life against a foreign invader. This is one of the reasons why the mujahideen have found it hard to adopt alien ways — including that of a disciplined, efficient guerrilla force — even to make their *jihad* more effective. Yet we saw efforts being made to adapt what is needed to what is possible.

The Afghans know that they need more training and that they need more trainers.



Climbing rope ladders is just one of many training courses used at NIFA training camp.



Live fire adds realism to combat-simulation course.



Mujahideen go over the wall at NIFA training camp.



Combat training includes death defying tight-rope act. Mujahid uses rope traverse to cross canyon.

They thirst for military knowledge, and anyone who can provide it is a welcome guest at any Afghan campfire. Karen's experience — gained, among other places, in the 197th Infantry Brigade, 11th Special Forces Group, and covering the Lebanon War as a journalist — gave her instant acceptance. Experts on Soviet weapons and tactics are also appreciated. They wanted anyone with knowledge that they need to come and train Afghans who could go deeper inside and teach more mujahideen. Without effective training and organization, the Afghan war effort will become like the Soviet economy — each year not as good as last year, but better than the next.

Even in the border country, *Soldier of Fortune* has become known. "Where are Robert Brown and Jim Coyne, who came here two years ago?" we were asked by Shir Mohammed Afghan, who spoke English and carried a well-used 7.62mm AKMS assault rifle.

"Jim Coyne is in Bangkok, and Robert Brown is in El Salvador, helping to fight communists there," I replied.

"*Il-S'allah Vator?* I do not know the place. Is it near Herat?"

"No, El Salvador. It's in Central America."

"Oh, near Panama. That must be the place Voice of America sometimes talks about. What sort of people live there?"

"Poor farmers mainly, who speak Spanish. Those who wish to rule the country are the puppets of Nicaraguans, the Cubans and the Soviets."

"Cubans, you say. I have heard there are Cuban troops in Afghanistan, up north near Mazar-i-Sharif. Some of them are black, like Africans, and they all wear dark-colored camouflaged uniforms not like the ones the *Suvash* wear. Tell me, the people in El Salvador, not many of them are Moslems, are they?"

"No, they're mainly Catholic."

"Well, if they fight the communists, they are still also mujahideen."

Our trip to the training camps showed that the reason resources for training are now available is because there are now more weapons available. In 1983 the Afghans fighting in the provinces along the Pakistani border had many opportunities to capture new weapons. Victories over Kabul Regime forces at Jadji and Khost in Paktia Province, and at Urgan in Paktika Province yielded a bumper crop of Kalashnikovs. Some weapons caches also showed us that more aid has arrived from outside — not only rifles, but RPG-7 antitank rocket launchers, antitank mines and even a few of the wished-for SA-7 man-carried heat-seeking surface-to-air missiles. We did not get to see any SA-7s — they are sent off immediately to where they can do the most good. We saw Egyptian- and Chinese-made Kalashnikovs, and 82mm mortar ammunition being used that had obviously come from "an



Preparing for action — Major McKay is briefed on operations by mujahid.

unidentified third country." But these are relatively scarce — the claim of many Afghans that they capture 80 percent of their modern weapons may not be too far removed from the truth.

You have to approach the subject of arms aid very carefully. Officially, there is none. No one will talk much about it on the record, and asking pointed questions in the wrong places could be hazardous to one's health. Yet it is obvious that aid is being provided, even if not officially. Since no one who knows about the real flow is going to talk about it, the whole area has been subjected to disinformation, misinformation spread by the KGB, NBC or even those who should know better.

The Soviets have loudly claimed that the agents of World Imperialism have been arming the enemies of Socialist Brotherhood since the start of the war, while U.S. and Pakistani government officials have both let it be known, off the record, that *something* is being done. Before his assassination, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt had even gone on record that his country was providing arms.

Despite these statements, the Afghans see relatively few arms arriving. They are puzzled and saddened that both the West and the Islamic countries appear to be doing so little. They are also concerned that the Pakistanis are skimming off arms for their own use — allegations that the Pakistanis have denied. The bottom line is that the arms aid provided has certainly not been as substantial as the figures the "prestige media" have published — \$125 million a year in one source, three planes full of weapons a week in another. The Afghans would rather get weapons in the field than in the six o'clock news.

Talking to the Afghan fighting men who actually use the arms, we did get the impression that the aid flow that was actually reaching the Afghans — whose sources, funding and routes are different for each group, and all remain highly classified — picked up in late 1982 and has stayed at a higher level than that previously received.

Continued on page 76

TIME was when the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China were fellow travelers on the Marxist road to world revolution. The jackals are at each other's throats now, backing opposing sides from Cambodia and Laos to Afghanistan. During more blissful days, when they sang in the same ideological choir, the PRC was the grateful beneficiary of no small amount of Soviet military technology.

Known as the Type 56 Carbine in the PRC, the Soviet SKS (*Ssamosarjadnyi Karabin Simonov* = Selfloading Carbine Simonov) was one of the first Russian weapon systems to be produced in mainland China. While now issued only to second-line militia units, the tooling and production capacity remains intact, and this robust little rifle, so well-known to all those who served in Vietnam, is presently being imported into the United States by Clayco Sports Ltd. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 272, Clay Center, KS 67432).

Designed by Sergei Gavrilovich Simonov, the SKS is a scaled-down version of his WWII PTRS 14.5mm antitank rifle. First rifle to be chambered for the 7.62x39mm (M43) cartridge, the SKS is semiautomatic-only, gas-operated and locked by a tilting block. There is no gas regulator. Its bolt system strongly resembles that of the world's first assault rifle, the German WWII MP44/StG45, which was used with great effect against the Russian hordes on the Eastern front.

Its rather conventional method of operation is as follows. Upon firing and after the bullet passes the gas port, located on the upper wall in the forward third of the barrel, a portion of the gases is diverted and directed against the head of the three-ring piston. The piston drives a short operating rod under the rear-sight base back against the bolt carrier. After the bolt carrier has moved rearward about one-fourth inch, a cam on its inner top contacts a projection on top of the bolt, lifting the rear of the bolt out of its seat in the box-shaped receiver. The bolt and its carrier now travel rearward as a unit. The extractor withdraws the empty case from the chamber and holds it to the bolt face until it strikes the fixed ejector and is expelled. All rearward movement ceases when the end of the bolt carrier strikes the inner wall of the receiver.

As the recoil spring drives the bolt and carrier forward, the bolt strips a round from the integral 10-rd. magazine. When the cartridge has been chambered, the extractor snaps in place over the cartridge groove and all forward movement of the bolt terminates. The bolt carrier continues to move forward a short distance, camming the rear of the bolt into its seat in the receiver. The bolt, as it seats, forces the safety sear down.

The SKS trigger mechanism, mounted as a unit on the trigger plate, is overly complex. It consists of a hammer and spring, trigger and trigger bar, recoil spring, disconnect and a safety sear which prevents firing before the action is completely locked.

SOF T&E

BAMBOO CURTAIN IMPORTS

Clayco Capitalizes on ChiCom Weapons

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



The safety is located conveniently behind the trigger on the right side. When rotated up to the safe position, the safety lever blocks all trigger movement.

The SKS has a 20.4-inch barrel. The broached rifling has four grooves that are about as wide as the lands. The chamber and bore are chrome-lined. Chrome-lining is a common attribute of ComBloc small arms, and eases maintenance chores; it's not very cost-effective in a semiautomatic rifle, where overheating is not a serious consideration. While sustained-fire weapons can achieve bore surface temperatures between 700 and 1,000 degrees C, and chrome-lining a machine-gun barrel can double its service life, no realistic scenario could ever project the SKS into such an environment.

TOP: Mikhail Kalashnikov's contribution to Chinese civilization: PRC AKS rifle, here fitted with rare 75-rd. RPK drum and bayonet. **ABOVE:** Strong, simple and still in use around the world, new SKSs are now easily available to U.S. civilians.

The SKS imported by Clayco Sports Ltd. was manufactured at the Shan Yi Ji Arsenal by the state-owned NORINCO (North China Industries Corp.). It comes without the distinctive ChiCom folding spike bayonet. The barrel bracket to which this bayonet is attached (and which also retains the cleaning rod) has been left unmilled. This is an obvious condescension to BATF interpretation of the 1968 Gun Control Act, which



Folding stock shows reliance on WWII German MP40.

prohibits importation of "military" small arms except to law-enforcement agencies. With an integral bayonet, the SKS could not qualify as a "sporting" arm. However, rifles with integral bayonet lugs (to which a bayonet may be attached) are not disqualified. If you can decipher that tortured bureaucratic logic, you belong in the same aviary as the BATF's Technical Services Branch. The weight, empty and without the bayonet, is eight pounds, two ounces.

Overall length of the SKS is approximately 40 inches. The stained, heavily lacquered wood stock and forearm look like a finely finished orange crate. A heavy, reinforcing cross bolt passes through the stock just ahead of the magazine, under the chamber. Two smaller cross pins reinforce the front end of the stock. A conventional sling swivel is attached to the underside of the buttstock. The fixed, front swivel is part of the gas block. No sling was provided with the test rifle.

The front sight is an adjustable post type, protected by a substantial hood. The U-notched, tangent-type rear sight is adjustable for elevation only, from 100 to 1,000 meters. There is a second 300-meter position (the first character "3" on the sight leaf) behind the 100-meter setting. This is the battle-sight position used in combat for all ranges out to 300 meters.

To disassemble the SKS, first clear the weapon. While pressing down on the receiver cover, rotate the receiver cover pin to the vertical position and withdraw as far as possible to the right. Remove the receiver cover and pull the unitized recoil spring and guide rod out of the rear of the bolt carrier. Drop the magazine by pushing the magazine catch release to the rear. Pull the retracting handle full to the rear and lift the bolt carrier and bolt out of the receiver. Rotate the gas-cylinder tube latch to the uppermost position and lift the rear of the handguard to remove the gas cylinder and piston. No further field-stripping is usually required. If necessary, the trigger group can be removed by depressing the catch located behind the trigger guard (with the safety on) and pulling the trigger down and out of the stock. Reassemble in the reverse manner.

The cleaning rod is retained under the barrel in the European manner. The stamped sheet-metal, unchecked buttplate contains a spring-loaded trap which

retains the usual SKS/Kalashnikov-type cleaning kit. The two-piece case houses a nylon-bristle bore brush, jag tip, drift punch (often mistakenly referred to as a spare firing pin) and sometimes a combination tool containing a drift, screwdriver and wrench (used to adjust the front-sight post). The case itself serves as a handle for the cleaning rod. When slipped on the rod and fitted to the muzzle, the case cap doubles as a cleaning-rod bore guide.

The standard PRC chest pouch is available as an optional accessory. Each of the 10 pockets holds two curved, 10-rd. stripper clips. The cost is only \$20.

The SKS is most conveniently loaded by retracting the cocking handle until the bolt is locked rearward by the magazine's hold-open device and placing a 10-rd. stripper clip into the charger guide machined into the top forward end of the bolt carrier. Push down with the thumb until all the cartridges are loaded into the magazine. After removing the stripper clip, pull back on the retracting handle and release it smartly. The bolt and carrier will fly forward, chambering the first round. Individual rounds can also be loaded. The magazine can be unloaded by pressing the magazine catch. The magazine housing and follower will pivot downward, scattering the cartridges in a two-foot arc on the ground in front of you.

Although not so light or compact by today's standards, the SKS can take a licking and keep on ticking. A most pleasant rifle to shoot, felt recoil is almost nonexistent. Stoppages can be induced only through outrageous neglect. The two-stage trigger breaks rather cleanly at 5.5 lbs. The accuracy potential is surprising, as the test specimen consistently shot to 3.5 MOA at 100 meters. What more can you ask from such an historic piece of Vietnam-era nostalgia, priced at only \$399? My only criticism was the unchecked butt plate, which slipped too easily off the shoulder during the firing sequences.

Of far greater interest, however, are the two models of semiautomatic Kalashnikovs imported by Clayco Sports Ltd. Both are variants of the AKM, which has a receiver body fabricated from a one-millimeter-thick U-section of stamped sheet-metal extensively supported by pins and rivets. The rails on which the bolt carrier reciprocates



Spike-bayonet-equipped ChiCom SKS captured in Vietnam (above), and SKS imported by Clayco Sports, Ltd., without bayonet.

are stamped and punch-welded to the inside of the receiver. The AKM series can be instantly identified by the prominent magazine-guide dimples on each side of the receiver.

Referred to by Clayco as the Model AKS (Standard Stock or Folding Stock), these rifles are chambered for the 7.62x39mm ComBloc cartridge and are available in semiautomatic only.

The AKS is gas-operated. There is no gas regulator. After ignition of the primer and propellant, gases are diverted into the gas cylinder on top of the barrel. The gas cylinder is perforated, like that of the AKS's predecessor, the Type 56, and its model, the AK-47. Although the piston fits the gas block snugly, as soon as combustion gases strike the piston face and begin to drive the bolt group backward, there is no reason for the cylinder to hold pressure. Gases are then allowed free passage around the piston by flutes in the gas cylinder. Some pass out by the bleed holes, but most gases vent into the receiver. The solid cylinder walls of the Soviet AKM show there is ample gas escape from the Kalashnikov system without the perforations. Bleed holes are — at best — superfluous, require one more manufacturing step, and may allow entry of foreign substances.

The piston is driven rearward and the bolt carrier, attached to the piston extension, goes through the necessary amount of free-play travel until the gas pressure drops to a safe level. A cam-slot milled into the bolt carrier engages the bolt's cam stud and rotates the bolt about 35 degrees to unlock it from the receiver body. As the Kalashnikov system offers no primary extraction during bolt rotation, a large extractor claw is required.

As the bolt travels back it rolls the hammer over and compresses the recoil spring. The bolt ceases its rearward travel by slamming into the rear end of the receiver. The recoil spring then drives the bolt forward, another round is stripped from the magazine and chambered, and the bolt then comes to rest. The bolt carrier continues onward for about 5.5mm after the two-lug rotary-bolt locking has been completed.

The pinned, sheet-metal receivers of the AKM series are much lighter than the forged receivers of the AK-47. They induce severe bounce characteristics on the bolt carrier. The danger of the weapon's firing out of battery, especially in the full-auto mode, is quite real. As a consequence, the Soviets installed a complex five-component device to the AKM's trigger mechanism — a final fail-safe which delays hammer drop until the complete cessation of all bolt-carrier bounce. This unit has incorrectly been referred to as a "rate reducer." The device was not incorporated into the PRC AKMs that I examined in Afghanistan (See "PRC's New Assault Rifle, SOF, p. 52, May '83) nor is it to be found on the Clayco AKS. As the AKS is semiautomatic only, the safety sear also is missing. All well and good, as long as the AKS is left unaltered.

But, there are dirt balls who will attempt to circumvent the spirit, if not the letter, of the law and convert the AKS to selective-fire. Without both the safety sear and the anti-bounce device and combined with the AKS's free-floating firing pin (*sans* spring) these unauthorized conversions will eventually destroy weapons as well as some shooters. Take heed.

The AKS folding stock is patterned directly after that of the MP-40 submachine gun. It's good looking, with the proper paramystique, and will probably sell better than the rigid-stocked model, but it makes for a flimsy firing platform. This deficiency has been addressed by the Soviets with the complete redesign of the AKS-74's folding buttstock. Overall length of the folding-stock version is 35.25 inches; with the stock folded it's only 25.75 inches. The weight with sling and empty magazine is 7.75 lbs.

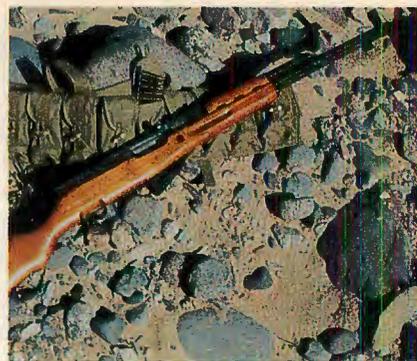
Overall length of the AKS with a standard stock is 35 inches. The weight is 8.25 lbs. with sling and empty magazine. The barrel length of each, including the muzzle device, is about 17.25 inches. The bore and chamber are chrome-lined.

The AKS rear sight is a sliding tangent type with an open U-shaped notch. It is adjustable for elevation only out to 800 meters. The 300-meter battle sight position to the rear of the 100-meter notch is marked "D." The hooded front sight is a threaded post type, adjustable for elevation zero with

the Kalashnikov combo tool (provided in substitution for the SKS drift punch in the buttstock cleaning kit — with the cleaning rod housed, as usual, under the barrel). Windage adjustment is accomplished by sliding the front sight in its dovetail.

Exterior finish of both AKS variants is salt-blued, not black-lacquered as are the Soviet AKMs. Blued finishes have more appeal to the U.S. consumer than painted surfaces. The rigid-stocked model is made at the Ling Hua Arsenal and its bolt carrier and bolt have been left polished, in-the-white. The folding-stock AKS was manufactured at the Min Shan Arsenal and its bolt carrier and bolt have been phosphate-finished (Parkerized) to a light gray color.

Both specimens differ considerably from those I fired in Afghanistan. A Soviet-type AKM muzzle compensator has been added to the AKS. The fiber-reinforced phenolic plastic upper and lower handguards have been impregnated with a black color — again more appealing to the U.S. buyer than bright reddish-brown. The pistol grip, shaped on the PRC military versions like the Colt Browning machine-gun pistol grip, and too small for Western hands, has been replaced with a black plastic pistol grip in the Russian AKM configuration. The buttstock of the standard model is also black plastic. Standard Kalashnikov disassembly and reassembly procedures apply to the AKS rifles.



SKS rifle with chest pouch and 10-rd. stripper clips.



Rigid- and folding-stock PRC AKS rifles with bayonet, cleaning equipment and ChiCom chest pouch. Soviet F1 grenade is not available as an accessory.

PRC/AFGHAN CONNECTION

While I was in Afghanistan during the fall of 1982, I was presented with a well-made military compass by the mujahideen group SOF was working with. The compass was marked only with a serial number and the code "H2." Its origin was thus a mystery, and the mujahideen professed no knowledge of its source.

However, the leather carrying-case was lined with corduroy of the type always found inside ChiCom Type 51/54 (Tokarev pattern) pistol holsters. But I put the matter aside until I examined an almost identical compass now being im-



Compass presented to SOF's military small-arms editor Kokalis by Afghan Freedom Fighters (left), and compass imported from PRC.

ported by Clayco Sports Ltd.

The compass housings are identical except for paint — the one from Afghanistan is the usual ComBloc mustard brown while the Clayco specimen is forest green. Both housings open to expose the compass and provide a metric straight-edge for map measurements. Each contains a chromed metal mirror for taking bearings at eye level. Each compass is mechanically dampened and has a simple clinometer for measuring slope and vertical elevations.

The magnetic needles have different configurations. The top of the compass housing of each can be rotated to adjust for declination or patrolling orientation. An audible click stop is provided on the face of the compass given to me in Afghanistan. There are no Chinese markings of any kind on this compass. The Clayco compass has Chinese markings on both the base plate and on that portion of the compass containing the cardinal points. It exhibits a conspicuous communist red star on the base plate.

Both compasses feature a wheeled mileage marker that can be used on maps of four different scales (1:25,000, 1:50,000, 1:75,000 and 1:100,000).

Both of these sturdy military-type compasses are without doubt products of the People's Republic of China. One model is being used to direct Afghan Freedom Fighters to Ivan Ivaňovich. The other can be yours for \$34.95 from Clayco Sports Ltd. — *Peter G. Kokalis*

The selector lever on the AKS is the usual stamped, sheet-metal bar on the right side of the receiver, which is manipulated by the thumb and criticized by all. Noisy, stiff and difficult to operate with gloves, it remains a most glaring defect in the Kalashnikov design package. The top position is safe (marked "S"), locking the trigger so the bolt cannot be retracted. The bottom position (marked "C") is semiauto. The selector lever is restricted from further downward movement by a bar riveted to the receiver body above the magazine-release catch housing. The sheet-metal receiver cover is not ribbed like that of the Soviet AKM, but remains that of the AK-47.

The AKS rifles come with a sling, green-plastic oil bottle, buttstock cleaning kit, take-down tool and one magazine blocked to accept only five rounds. The rigid-stocked model retails for \$499.95 and the folding-stock version sells for \$574.95. An optional accessory pack includes two 30-rd. magazines, a bayonet and scabbard with serial number matching to the rifle and one of Dick Swan's excellent MAG-PAC dual magazine holders — all for \$74.95.

The bayonet looks like a ComBloc AKM bayonet except the wire-cutting feature has been excluded and the belt retention system simplified.

The MAG-PAC dual magazine system, manufactured by A.R.M.S. (Dept. SOF, 230 West Center St., West Bridgewater, MA 02379), provides more firepower at your fingertips and great speed in magazine

changes. Based on four major military calibers (5.56mm NATO, 7.62mm NATO, 9mm Parabellum and 7.62x39mm ComBloc), all magazines of the same caliber fit snugly without slippage during full-auto firing sequences. They really work and cost only \$12.75 each (+ \$1.50 shipping charges).

The standard PRC military AK-47 chest pouch is also available for only \$20. It holds three 30-rd. magazines and four grenades.

Like the SKS chest pouch, the pouch flaps are fastened by the wooden buttons so peculiar to all PRC web gear.

The PRC AKS rifles handle and perform as one would expect from any Kalashnikov-series weapon. The rigid-stocked model is capable of consistent 4 MOA groups at 100 meters in the hands of an operator experienced in this system. Add one more MOA for the folding-stock version. This accuracy potential is more than acceptable by Com-

Bloc standards for battle rifles.

The trigger pulls were 4.25 lbs. for each specimen and quite typical of the Kalashnikov — one long scratchy creep with a sudden let-off at the end, that so startled IPSC shooters at the 1983 SOF Three-Gun International Match in Las Vegas. This is partly a function of the multiple-strand cable used for the Kalashnikov's hammer and trigger spring.

More than a thousand rounds were poured through these two rifles without any malfunctions. Kalashnikovs are unquestionably reliable and my imprimatur is certainly not required to confirm that. Magazines of all ComBloc origins proved, of course, to be completely compatible with the AKS rifles — including a rare RPK 75-rd. drum. I once fired 300 rounds through my North Korean AK-47 before I realized that the rear portion of a broken case was resting in the receiver's rear well, affecting the operating cycle not in the slightest. Kalashnikov weapons have no hold-open device.

All of this is very much to the good, but the popularity of these weapons in the past has always been restricted by the lack of reasonably priced 7.62x39mm ammunition. It's difficult for most of us to justify blowing 45 to 55 cents downrange every time we stroke the trigger on an SKS or semiauto AKM, whether the cases are boxer-primed and reloadable, or not.

To forestall this objection, Clayco is also importing original PRC military ammunition which sells for only 25 cents per round. The brown-lacquered steel cases carry factory code 71 and 83, indicating manufacture in 1983. The ammunition is high pressure and averages 60,000 cpu (copper pressure units). Berdan-primed, this ammunition is corrosive, as is the Yugoslav ammo now being imported. But, so what? When it's priced right, I'll use all the corrosive ammo I can stuff in magazines or link in belts. Just clean the bores with CLEANER-RIFLE bore (CR), Spec MIL-C-372 (no other lot will do!) or hot, soapy water (making sure the barrel is completely dry afterward). Both will remove the potassium chloride contained in the primers, which is responsible for the rusting of gun barrels.

Both PRC and Yugoslav ammunition were chronographed, along with a control lot of my own reloads in this caliber. The results, shown in Table 1, were illuminating. ComBloc small-arms ammunition is often criticized for lack of quality control and consistency of performance. Yet the PRC ammunition exhibited an extreme spread of only 46 fps and an amazing standard deviation of only 15 fps, easily surpassing the quality-control standards of not only the Yugoslav rounds, but my own carefully prepared reloads.

Clayco Sports Ltd. now offers the most comprehensive and reasonably priced spectrum of weapons and ammunition in caliber 7.62x39mm ever presented to the American public. The Kalashnikov excites the imagination. The price is right. The PRC SKS and AKS series will be popular indeed. ☒

TABLE I

7.62x39mm Ball Ammunition—Chronograph Results

Instrumentation: Oehler Model 33 Chronotach with Skyscreen II detectors

Temperature: 47 degrees F

Rifle: PRC SKS with 20.4-inch barrel

Test Data	Ammunition		Reloads* Berdan Non-corrosive
	PRC—1983 Berdan Corrosive	Yugoslav—1983 Berdan Corrosive	
(10 rds. per lot) fps (feet per second)			
lowest velocity	2341	2306	2159
highest velocity	2387	2402	2248
extreme spread	46	96	89
average velocity	2365	2368	2187
standard deviation	15	31	25

*Note: Reloads — PRC copperclad cases, RWS Berdan primers, 21.0 grains of Czech Vz52 propellant, and 132-gr. Vz52 projectiles (the 7.62x45 Vz52 bullet is almost 10 grains heavier than the 7.62x39mm bullet, which explains the lower velocities obtained when employed in the smaller 7.62x39mm case).

SKS/AKS SPECIFICATIONS

	SKS	AKS (Standard)	AKS (Folding)
Caliber	— 7.62x39mm ComBloc —		
Weight, empty	8 lbs., 2 oz.	8.25 lbs.	7.75 lbs.
Length			
butt extended	40 inches	35 inches	35.25 inches
butt folded	—	—	25.75 inches
Barrel (w/muzzle devices)	20.4 inches	— 17.25 inches —	
Sights	all barrels four-groove, right-hand twist		
front	All adjustable post type with protective hood		
rear	sliding tangent type adjustable for elevation, with 300-meter battle sight setting, open "U" notch		
Method of operation	100-1,000 meters	— 100-800 meters —	
Locking system	gas-operated; no regulator; fire from the closed-bolt position	— rotary, 2-lug bolt —	
Feed	tilting bolt	— bottom, 30-rd. staggered —	
Finish	bottom, integral	— bottom, 30-rd. staggered —	
Arsenal	10-rd. magazine	— box type magazines —	
Price	Shan Yi Ji \$399.00	Ling Hua \$499.95	Min Shan \$574.95

Accessories: chest pouches available for the SKS and AKS, respectively, at \$20 each. AKS accessory pack includes two 30-rd. magazines, matching serial-number bayonet and scabbard and one MAG PAC for \$74.95. AKS bayonet and scabbard, \$39.95; MAG PAC, \$12.95 and 30-rd. magazines, \$19.95 each; custom assault cases for either rifle at \$64.95 each.

Imported exclusively by Clayco Sports Ltd., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 272, Clay Center, KS 67432.

SWISS SHOCK TROOPS

Grenadier Paras Master Special Warfare

by Leroy Thompson



ABOVE: Unique cammo smock and helmet are characteristic of Grenadier Parachutist.

DESPITE a population of only about 6½ million, the Swiss Confederation can field one of the most effective military forces in the world. Like Israel, Switzerland relies on an extremely effective reserve system to field an army 600,000 strong in a national emergency. Of this number, however, only about 2,500 are professional soldiers. The 40,000-strong Air Force contains another 3,000 professionals.

No country has tested Switzerland's defenses for almost two centuries, but this is not because of the benevolence of potential aggressors. Until a law in the 19th century forbade Swiss mercenary service except in the Papal Swiss Guard, the Swiss were among the foremost professional soldiers of Europe. During the mid-19th century, in fact, the Swiss formed a large part of the French Foreign Legion. This martial heritage has established a strong military tradition in Switzerland wherein army service is viewed with pride and a sense of civic duty.

Swiss males between the ages of 20 and 50 undergo periodic military training, with those between 20 and 32 normally serving with the field corps. Senior officers, of course, are older and have undergone more training.

Marksmanship has always been stressed in the Swiss Army, and anyone driving through Switzerland on a Sunday afternoon is likely to hear the sound of SIG 510s as members of the reserves meet their yearly qualification schedule or just shoot for enjoyment. As many Americans know, the Swiss keep their assault rifles and ammuni-

tion at home so that they are ready to fight as guerrillas if they can't join their units. Anti-gunners cannot explain the lack of firearms crimes in Switzerland where automatic weapons in private homes abound. Additional ammunition for rifle or pistol competition is easily obtainable for those Swiss applying for it. Swiss IPSC shooters, for example, are willing to shoot "minor" to use their excellent SIG P210s and the government ammo.

The Swiss Army is basically organized into three field corps, each consisting of a mechanized division, a field division, a border division and a mountain corps, the latter consisting of three mountain divisions as well as fortress and other attached troops. Equipment is tailored for use in the rugged Swiss terrain, and troops are highly trained for combat in Switzerland. Their vow to blow all mountain passes leading into the country and to fight to the last man is not uttered lightly. The Swiss' confidence in their army and marksmanship can best be summarized by the story of the Swiss officer who, when asked by a German officer during World War II what the Swiss would do should Germany invade with an army four times the size of Switzerland's, supposedly replied, "Each Swiss soldier would fire four times."

Although the quality of all Swiss troops is very high, there are a few specially trained "elite" troops who are virtually unknown outside of Switzerland. Within their infantry regiments, for example, are grenadiers trained in demolitions, flame throwers and



ABOVE: Infantry grenadiers collar insignia.
BELOW: Combat swimmer insignia worn by Swiss SCUBA-trained personnel.





other special skills. Despite being landlocked, Switzerland also has combat swimmers who are trained in SCUBA and underwater demolitions techniques. There is also a small "Swiss Navy" consisting of light gunboats. Until 1980, a platoon of combat swimmers was assigned to each field corps for use in operations along Lakes Geneva and Constance and other bodies of water. These platoons have now been disbanded, but some combat swimmers, no doubt, remain available for special missions.

The Swiss special forces unit — in the sense of the SAS or U.S. Special Forces — is the Company of Parachute Grenadiers assigned to the Swiss Air Force. The first Swiss school for Grenadier Parachutists was run in 1970. While building the company up to full strength, schools were run in each of the next four years, but between 1974 and 1982 schools were run only every other year. Since 1982 schools have been run yearly again. In addition to static line and free-fall parachute techniques, Ranger/LRRP training is also part of the course. Pistol marksmanship is also stressed since the Grenadier Parachutist often jumps with just a pistol. Demolitions, survival, intelligence gathering and other skills normally associated with special ops are also taught.

Each year about 250 Swiss apply for grenadier para training, of which only the top 24 are accepted for the recruit school. Of these 24, about eight usually successfully complete the training and receive their wings. This rigorous selection and training program makes the Grenadier Parachutists one of the world's truly elite units. These newly qualified paratroopers replace those members of the company who, having turned 33, must revert to the *Landwehr*. Officers and NCOs can remain a few years longer, but only the company commander may be over 40.

The Grenadier Parachutists are normally identifiable by their fiber jump-helmets and their jump boots. They wear standard Swiss camouflage. The only insignia normally worn is the company shoulder-slide bearing the number 17. It is worn on all uniforms by NCOs and below. Parachutist's wings and collar insignia are worn on mess and service dress.

As previously mentioned, Grenadier Paras are often armed only with a pistol (and perhaps a knife and grenades), but if the mission calls for it they will also be armed with an assault rifle — probably the SIG 540 or 543. Because of their raiding missions, other special weapons, including those which are suppressed, are probably available to the *Fernspäh-Grenadiers* (LRRP-Grenadiers) or the *Fallschirm-Grenadiers* (Parachute Grenadiers). The Grenadier Paras have been known by both titles.

The number of Grenadier Parachutists remains small, and even their existence has remained unknown to most. Any invader of Switzerland, however, will soon know they exist; the death and destruction in his rear will make him well aware of the Grenadier Parachutists. ☒



ABOVE: Grenadier Parachutist's wings are cut out and worn on the left breast.
BELOW: Grenadier Parachutists check equipment before practice jump.



ABOVE: Shoulder slide of the Grenadier Parachutists Company. BELOW: Grenadier Parachutist's collar insignia, same as worn by other Air Force personnel.



LEBANON'S RED LINE

Israeli Paras Tackle PLO on Cross Border Op

Text & Photos by S.P. Goodhill

I was awakened by the sound of jump boots clicking on the tarmac. After three hours of fitful sleep, it took me a couple of seconds to remember where we were. I rolled over in my bag and squinted at the rows of coon-like forms spread out over the huge parking lot. A jeep engine turned over. The thick, sweet aroma of Turkish coffee titillated my nostrils.

"Oh, yeah," I thought, almost out loud. "We're going in today."

The battalion had bivouacked on a municipal lot not far from Kiriya Shmona, Israel's largest city near the northern border. Up until the Lebanese campaign in the summer of '82, Kiriya Shmona was most famous for being rocketed with Katyushas about every other week. It's really more of a large town than a city and, after a year of quiet, it was just starting to hum again. Tourists were finally booking rooms in the one high-rise luxury hotel, a building with a reputation for taking direct hits.

I laced my fingers behind my head, looked up at the sky and watched the stars fade away. I listened to the hum of a waking paratroop battalion: the rhythmic ripping of can openers, the tearing sound of Velcro pouch covers, the clicking of rounds as magazines were topped off and the clang of ammo boxes on truck beds.

A face obscured the royal blue of a Middle Eastern morning sky. It was my lieutenant, an officer I had been with since basic training almost seven years before. He cracked a grin.

"Come on, Goodhill. Let's saddle up this platoon before the PLO mines the damn road."

I sat up and looked around at all the men, the big troop carriers and the jeeps with their shiny, oiled MAGs and .30-caliber Brownings. With a sigh, I said to my lieutenant, "You know something, Ari, crossing the border just isn't what it used to be."

"On your life?" the lieutenant growled at me (the Israeli idiomatic expression really means, "No shit?"). He tossed me an extra M26 fragmentation grenade and walked away.

Back in the mid-'70s we were young Israeli paratroopers, doing our national service and volunteering for the most dangerous missions. When we penetrated enemy territory we did it secretly, under cover of darkness, moving by foot over great distances with the silence of honed warriors. On more than one occasion we forded the freezing waterways in mid-winter, scaled the walls of sheer cliffs, wiped out terrorist strongholds and

were gone before they knew what hit them.

So here we were, about to go in again as we had done many times in the past. But this time we were all "old" combat veterans, though still paratroopers and the elite reservists of the Israeli Defense Forces.

Ours is a famous Israeli paratroop outfit: the same unit that jumped into the Mitla Pass in 1956 and took 60-percent casualties on Ammunition Hill in Jerusalem during the Six Day War of 1967. And we are the same bunch that fought the Egyptian Sagger (Malyutka anti-tank rocket) teams at the murderous Chinese Farm in 1973.

Most of us have not yet reached 30, but many of our friends have been killed in action or have had to retire from the outfit because of disabling injuries, and more than a few of us are already partially deaf from years of gunfire exposure. But each man in the brigade can still haul 30 kilos (70 lbs.) of equipment on foot over extreme distances and fight like a devil when he gets there.

In other words, we're not kids anymore, and as I said to Ari on that bright, sunny morning this past August, crossing the border just isn't what it used to be.

Ever since the Lebanese campaign, the Lebanese border has been controlled totally by the Israelis, but that doesn't mean that Lebanon has become a picnic ground for our troops. Every day, we heard about ambushes and mines and sniper attacks.

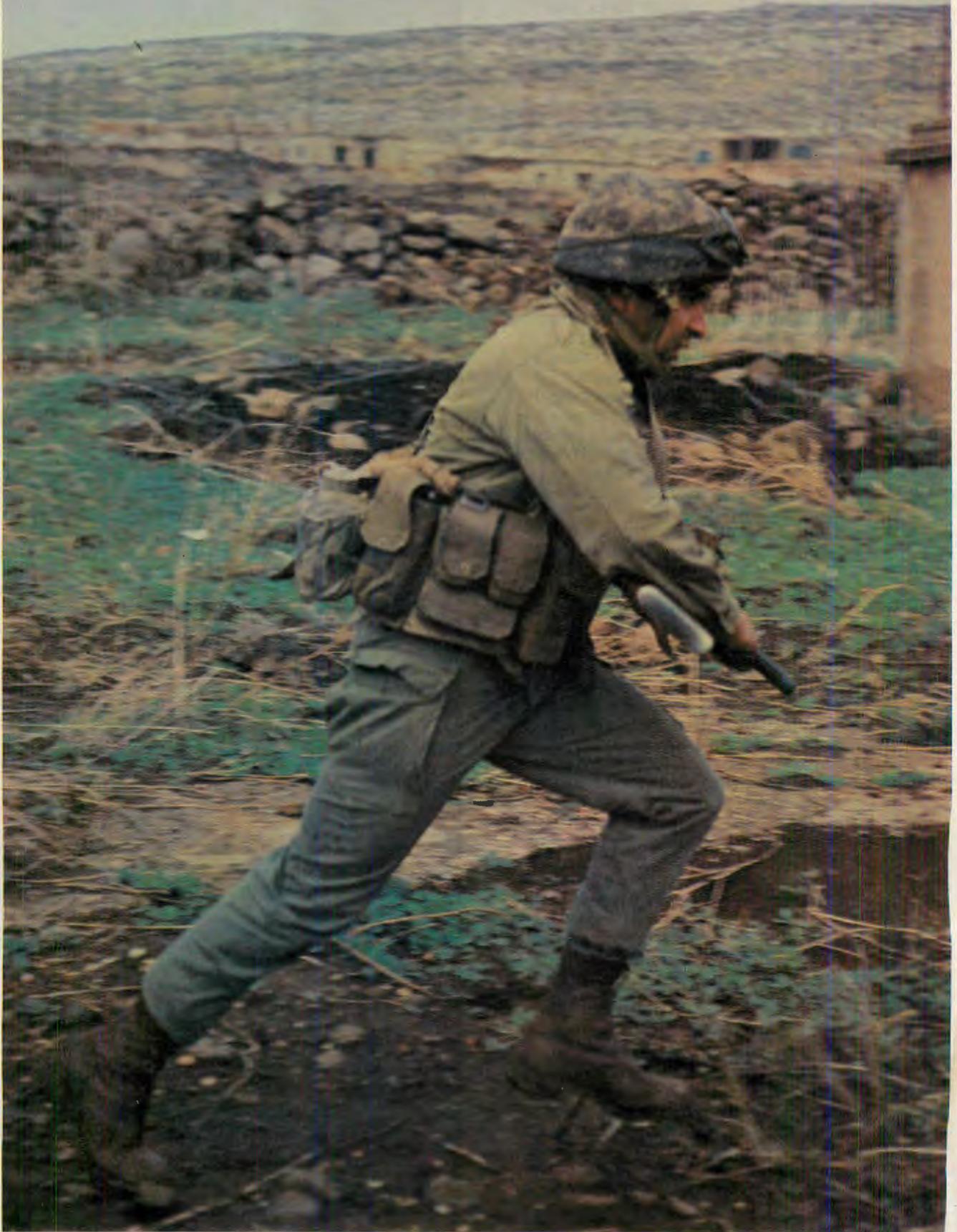
In the south the Lebanese Christians still loved us. They were mostly followers of a renegade Lebanese Army major, the late Saad Haddad, whose efforts to make southern Lebanon PLO-free had been supported by Israel for years. But once we ventured out of Haddad's enclave, Lebanese politics became much more factionalized.

Only a few days before, an Israeli officer had gone into a Lebanese grocery store for a pack of cigarettes. He was served in the most amicable manner — but on the way out of the store, he was shot in the back. And just one day before our entry into Lebanon, an IDF patrol had just completed its duties for the day when a remote-controlled charge was detonated at the assembly point, wounding four men. IDF forces in the area had quickly mounted a search-and-destroy mission, tracked the perpetrators and killed them.

The incident had occurred in the sector to which we were headed.

So we mounted up and got ready to roll, but this time

IDF paratrooper dashes toward cover during fire fight.



we were traveling in style. We sat back-to-back on long benches bolted to the beds of big modified troop carriers we had nicknamed "Safaris." Appropriately, our M16 and Galil barrels bristled from the open sides of the trucks, like the weapons of African hunters. We bitched when told we had to wear flak jackets and helmets — not exactly the gallant, informal combat dress we were accustomed to.

As the big Mercedes engines turned over and officers checked their map references, battalion clerks, who would remain behind, made out their death lists: forms filled out for each Safari, with the names, ranks and serial numbers of all occupants and a rundown of all the equipment on board . . . just in case vehicle and passengers were destroyed beyond recognition.

It was going to be a long, nerve-racking ride; we were going as far north into Lebanon as Israeli troops can go. A long excursion on winding mountain roads and none of it restful, despite the incredible scenery, wasn't something we looked forward to.

We rode for hours in convoy, a round in every chamber and thumbs poised over the safeties, waiting for the first burst of a "Klatch" or the whoosh-boom of an RPG. A buddy chewed nervously on sunflower seeds and spit the shells into the wind. He must have finished a kilo of them in three hours. At one point he apparently read my thoughts because he turned to me and said, "You know, give me a fire fight any day. But I hate being a rolling target . . . Getting in and out is the worst."

We made it without incident, however, to a string of Israeli outposts located in the northernmost Israeli-controlled Lebanese territory. Our positions — latticeworks of underground bunkers, sand bags and fire positions — dotted the mountaintops along a finger of Israeli-held territory that bulged into the Syrian lines and pointed accusingly at Damascus.

We were on the far side of the *Bah-kah*, the Bekaa Valley, on the crown of breathtaking mountains that were covered with small Arab villages and peppered with PLO. From previous experience, we knew that the days would probably be relatively quiet and the nights vicious.

We settled into the routine of self-disciplined veterans: informal equipment inspections, weapons maintenance, guard rotations, night ambushes and dawn patrols. My own platoon was assigned to an outpost on top of a mountain which towered above the countryside. The days were sunny and skin-peelingly dry; the nights were chilled with a bitter wind and, for a couple of days, it seemed we might experience something we had rarely felt in a combat zone: boredom.

The Syrians were the first to dispel that notion.

At a range of only 100 meters, you can pretty much look eyeball-to-eyeball at the guy who might decide to blow your head off — and vice versa. It is a strange sensation and we were feeling it every day. Each time I relieved a *buddy* at one of our many sandbagged guard positions, there *they* were — Syrian commandos. We were separated by a gully, a flimsy row of concertina, and a temporary agreement between our respective governments. We had orders not to fire unless provoked and I knew that our men would obey those orders. I was just sitting down in the mess bunker one evening, wondering how long it would be till the Arabs got itchy, when a lone Syrian sniper broke the spell.

He was dug in deep behind a formation of the local volcanic rock, with just the barrel of his AK-47 sticking out. For a number of days after, always around sundown, he harassed our guard post closest to him. No one could get a clean shot at him, and we had orders not to turn the obvious provocation into a nightly fire fight. Also, political considerations prevented us from

House-to-house combat takes teamwork: MAG-toting Israeli paratrooper backs up squad armed with Galils.





physically crossing the "Red Line," that nebulous half-way marker which, if overstepped, would mean all-out war.

So the battalion CO bought the local IDF tank commander a beer. Soon after, an M60 Patton paid us a visit and stayed overnight, hull down and out of sight.

The following evening our Syrian wise guy appeared at the usual time. A single, our armored boys put an end to that particularly dangerous annoyance.

For a while after that, things were quiet, but our days and nights were overshadowed by that "how-long-can-this-last?" feeling.

On 3 September the IDF began its pullback from the Shouf Mountains, where the Lebanese Christians and Druze were waiting for us to leave so they could get at each other. Backed by the Syrians, the Druze gunners opened up on Bahamdoun and the surrounding Christian enclaves. Our outfit was scheduled to hold its position, as our sector was not part of the withdrawal, and every day and night the entire countryside reverberated with the thunder of heavy artillery.

No one enjoys watching a bunch of fanatical tribal factions shelling civilian towns into oblivion, but to veteran soldiers an unending silence can be even more unnerving. The constant roar of artillery became something of a comfort, although pretty soon the beautiful Lebanese countryside was obscured by a pallor of smoke that drifted from the Mediterranean to the Syrian border. Each night the sky was lit up by the flashes of gunfire and the red glow of burning villages.

My buddies and I gathered late one night at the high-

PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS

The Israeli army's structure is unique among the world's fighting forces. Men and women serve compulsory periods, but that is only the beginning. Able-bodied males continue to serve in the reserves until the age of 55, and women holding key ranks and positions are also regularly called up.

Although her population is well under four million, Israel is able to field almost 500,000 troops in a matter of hours. This would be roughly equivalent to the United States having over 30 million combat-ready soldiers!

Reserve duty in Israel is not of the summer camp or "weekend warrior" type. An IDF reserve soldier, especially one who belongs to a key fighting unit, can expect to train hard, see a lot of action, and do much more than the regularly required biannual stint. As a matter of fact, Israeli citizens often joke that they are professional soldiers on leave for most of the year.

Paratroop reserves and other members of elite forces have to be ready to be called up at any time. Sometimes, like comic book heroes, they are summoned from their homes to participate in some near-impossible mission, and then just as suddenly they must return to civilian life and reacclimate as if it never happened at all.

Many Israelis are often outside the country on vacations or studying abroad. There is no Israeli law requiring citizens to return for their reserve stints, but in a land where "duty, honor, country" are concepts still held in high esteem, Israeli citizens from all over the world regularly appear to don their uniforms.

And much like the Americans who joined the RAF long before the United States was involved in World War II, there are a surprising number of who have taken Israeli citizenship to fight for a cause in which they believe. IDF reserve pay is negligible, but the spiritual rewards are great. In that sense, one could refer to all members of the Israel Defense Forces as Soldiers of Fortune.

— S.P. Goodhill

est point of our mountain nest. We watched the show — thousands of HE shells detonating in a seemingly unending crescendo — bursting across the mountainsides like flashbulbs at a rock concert. One of my mates began to sing, in English, an old Eagles tune — "Somebody's gonna hurt someone before the night is through."

Our light-machine-gunner, the "MAGist," echoed everyone's sentiments: "Look at those crazy Arabs slaughter each other," he said, slowly shaking his head at the Dante-esque spectacle. "And they want the world to believe that we're the warmongers."

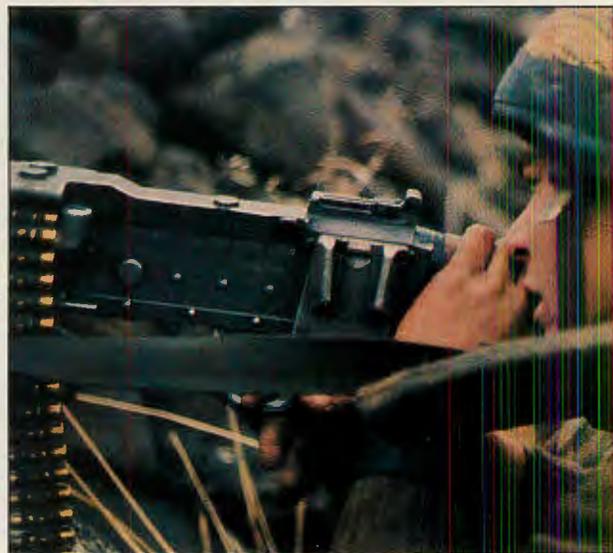
Dawn patrol. As anyone who has ever patrolled in unfriendly territory knows, waiting for a possible ambush is not a pleasant feeling. We knew that the terrorist teams were trying to infiltrate our area, and every bend in the road was suspect. We went out every day, moving on foot along the local mountain roads, backed up by our own men on APCs. And we waited for the first bullet, or the concussion of a booby trap. Every unfamiliar item lying on the shoulder might be "the one," and every rustle in the bushes made thumbs twitch over the safety. And, as each day went by without incident, every subsequent day worsened the odds.

One morning the lieutenant decided to give me a break. Instead of sending me out on point of the foot patrol, he let me ride shotgun on one of the backup APCs. I dropped a belt of 7.62s into the breach of a Belgian MAG, slammed the cover, cocked the weapon and locked the safety. I put my M16 with piggyback magazines on the steel deck next to me, and then I took out my cameras. So far I hadn't had much of a chance to take pictures.

Risky business, taking pictures in a hot combat zone, when you might need those first fractions of a second to fire your weapon instead of clicking a shutter. I had tried not to push my luck, and the guys sometimes ribbed me about being the resident tourist. But I had become sort of the unofficial platoon photographer.

I was focusing on the point of the foot patrol when the report of a sniper rifle rattled through the valley; my finger depressed the shutter. The lieutenant responded with the reflexes of a veteran, returning fire and taking the men off the road to outflank the suspected source of fire. Those of us who were mounted poured a steady stream of 7.62 and .50-caliber fire into a cavelike outcropping of volcanic rock off to the right flank. But when we stormed the position, nobody was home. The frustration of fighting phantoms hovered over the rest of the day.

IDF "MAGist" carefully aims short bursts characteristic of Israeli good fire discipline.



Platoon leader dismounts from M113 to begin patrol on foot.



But patience is the keenest weapon of the hunter. Every night, squads from our battalion moved out on foot in coordinated patterns to set up ambushes. We carefully covered all of the suspected infiltration points. And we waited, lying there motionless for hours, freezing even in our special winter gear.

Finally, we were rewarded.

One night, shortly after midnight, the CO's whisper crackled in the handset, which was covered by my ear. A patrol of three terrorists had been spotted by our observation posts, moving from Syrian lines toward our positions. The night was pitch-black, and we were instructed to hold our fire until visuals were established. In super-slow motion, we moved our weapons into firing positions.

One of the other ambushes spotted the trio first and opened up with a deafening blast of automatic fire. The rest of us watched the MAG tracers and then we opened up too, joining the tremendous roar of the

M16s, Galils and LMGs. It seemed as if the whole valley was shaking and the bright red tails of the tracers bounced off the rocky terrain and sailed crazily across the night sky.

At first the three PLOs returned a few feeble AK-47 bursts, but then they hunkered down behind some boulders while we saturated the area with light-arms fire and fragmentation grenades. Then we rushed them, moving in formation, line abreast and firing all the while.

Two of the terrorists lay behind the rocks, scared and lightly wounded. They had thrown down their Kalashnikovs, but they still wore the Russian combat webbing. Their commander was dead. Our medics treated the prisoners, as well as our own wounded. One of our own men had taken some Russian rounds in the legs and was medevacked out.

Ironically, substantial contact with the enemy released a great deal of tension among the men in the battalion, even though we expected infiltration attempts to increase considerably. But word must have filtered back to the PLO on the Syrian side that our unit was not to be toyed with, for from that night until the end of our tour, no more terrorists tried to infiltrate our lines.

Despite a job well done, the whole battalion heaved a collective sigh of relief when we crossed the border back into Israel.

A bunch of us sat down together at an outdoor cafe in Tel Aviv for one last drink before we went home. We watched the pretty girls go by and the tourists gawking at our dusty fatigues and SMGs. We talked about our own wives and kids at home. Finally, we tipped one to our own continuing good health, and as we parted ways, one of the men summarized the fate of the Israeli combat reservist . . .

"Until the next time, boys . . . Until the next time." ✕

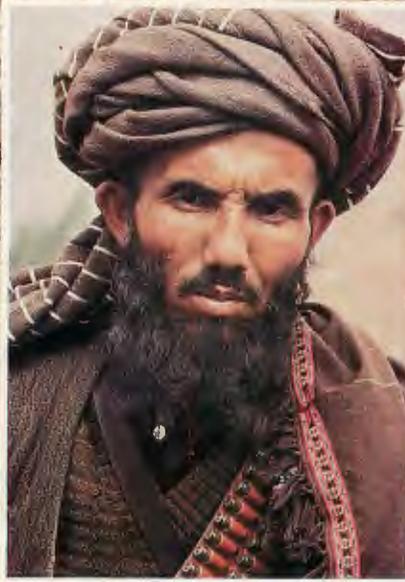
DUAL NATIONAL

S. P. Goodhill is a dual national, American-Israeli, a situation he considers to be the very best of two worlds. He was inducted into the IDF in 1977 and volunteered for and was accepted into the paratroops, where he continues to serve as a noncommissioned officer.

IDF security considerations are taken quite seriously by Israeli writers and journalists, and articles such as this one for SOF are voluntarily passed to an IDF censor before being submitted for publication.

Goodhill is currently completing a novel about an Israeli paratroop battalion.

Mujahid commander from Narid District.



NIGHT RAIDERS ON RUSSIA'S BORDER

Text & Photos

by Mike Winchester

ABDUL Ghani stopped and slid the selector on his AKM from safe down to full-auto, then he gently eased back the bolt and let it ride forward again. A series of hard metallic clicks followed as the men behind him did the same. Cigarettes were extinguished and for once no one spoke.

I glanced at my watch. Almost 1940. From the number of people around, it might have been after midnight.

We moved on again, hugging the shadows, bunching in the recesses of doorways, moving out past shop fronts in ones and twos. Most were already boarded up, but in the few still open to the street, bearded merchants sat behind guttering oil lamps. Some raised hands in greeting. But officially they had seen nothing, heard nothing.

In the street a couple of citizens hurried past with nervous glances at the file of mujahideen, then back over their shoulders to the intersection. It wasn't difficult to see what was on their minds — the middle of the road was not a healthy place to be.

About 100 meters from the T-intersection Ghani stopped again. The others melted into the darkness behind him. From a pool of light across the street where a fruit stall was still open, the Radio Kabul announcer's voice floated across to us, talking about the "victory of the April [1978] revolution." Hard to believe even Afghanistan's handful of communists believed in that any more.

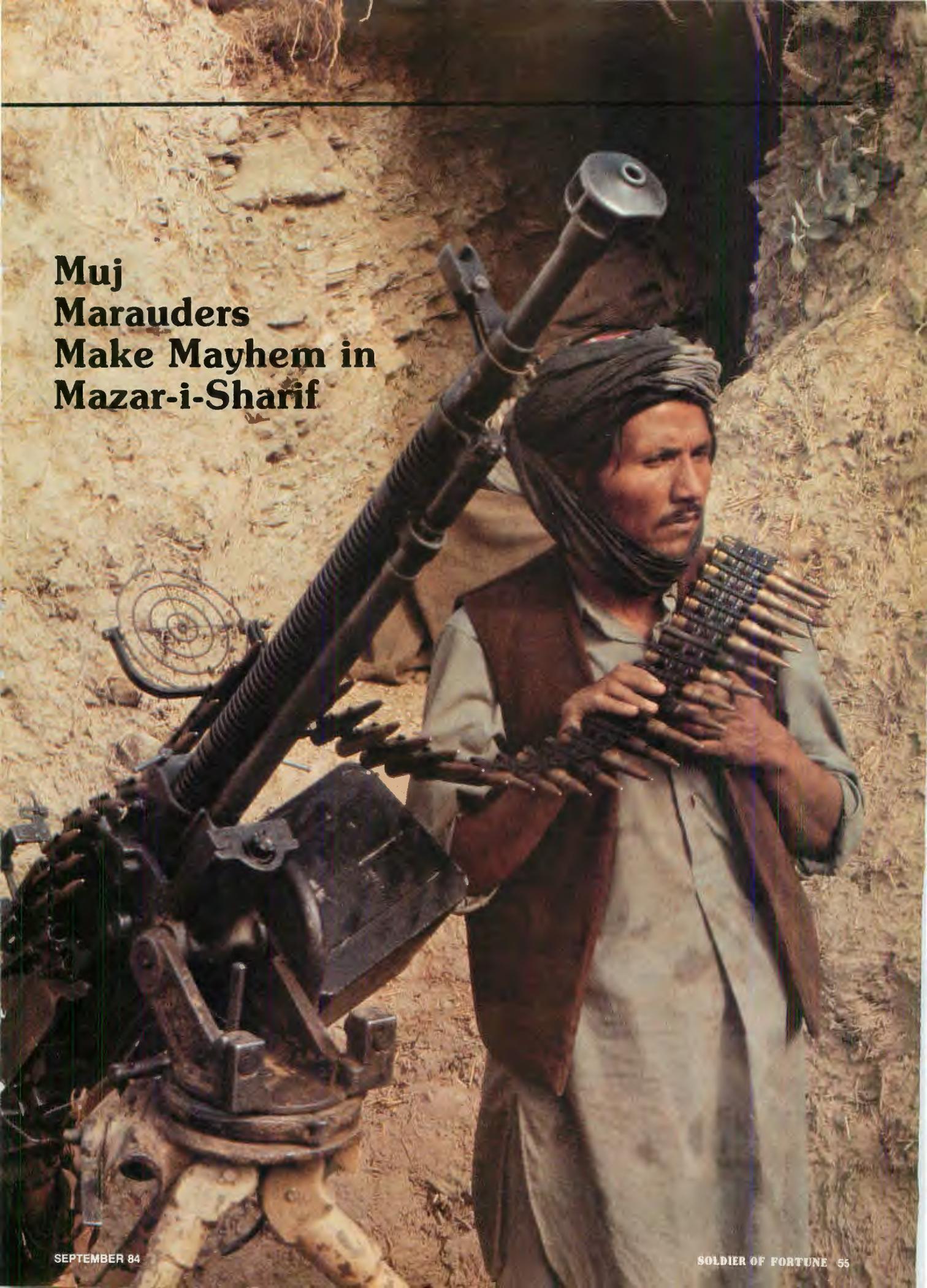
Ghani nudged me and pointed down the now-deserted street to the junction. "There it is." There was no street lighting but at the intersection a solitary traffic light blinked continuously. Beyond it the dome and minarets of the mosque rose into the darkness — the Rauzah, legendary resting place of the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, and geographic dead center of Afghanistan's northern capital, Mazar-i-Sharif.

My first sight of the mosque had been on an evening in the late summer of 1971, when its forecourt was crowded with worshippers. The return visit was partly nostalgia, partly an opportunity to see just how much ground the Soviets controlled in urban centers right on their own doorstep.

So far, apparently not much. But with the mosque, it looked like we'd reached a no-go area. Ghani grinned and pointed again — more emphatic, jabbing motions. Only then did I pick them out beneath the walls of the mosque, almost hidden in the darkness, the squat silhouettes of two tanks. He tapped his Kalashnikov and shook his head. He had a point.

Cliff-top DShK HMGs provide AA cover.



A photograph of a man in a turban and vest, holding a large machine gun and a stack of ammunition, standing in a trench. The man is looking to the right. The machine gun is mounted on a tripod and has a large cooling fin. The background is a dirt trench.

**Muj
Marauders
Make Mayhem in
Mazar-i-Sharif**



Jamiat commander Zabiullah's Marmoul Gorge base is within sight of Mazar-i-Sharif.

Somewhere behind us was the Teacher, a short, sharp-faced former instructor of divinity who had found his second vocation with the Type 69 grenade launcher, a Chinese version of the RPG-7, with bipod and an optical sight that could be lit internally for night use. A hell of a waste: At that range it would have been difficult to miss. But that was one rule no one argued with — no use of RPGs around the Rowzah for fear of hitting the building. They took the religion and the mosque in particular seriously, very seriously.

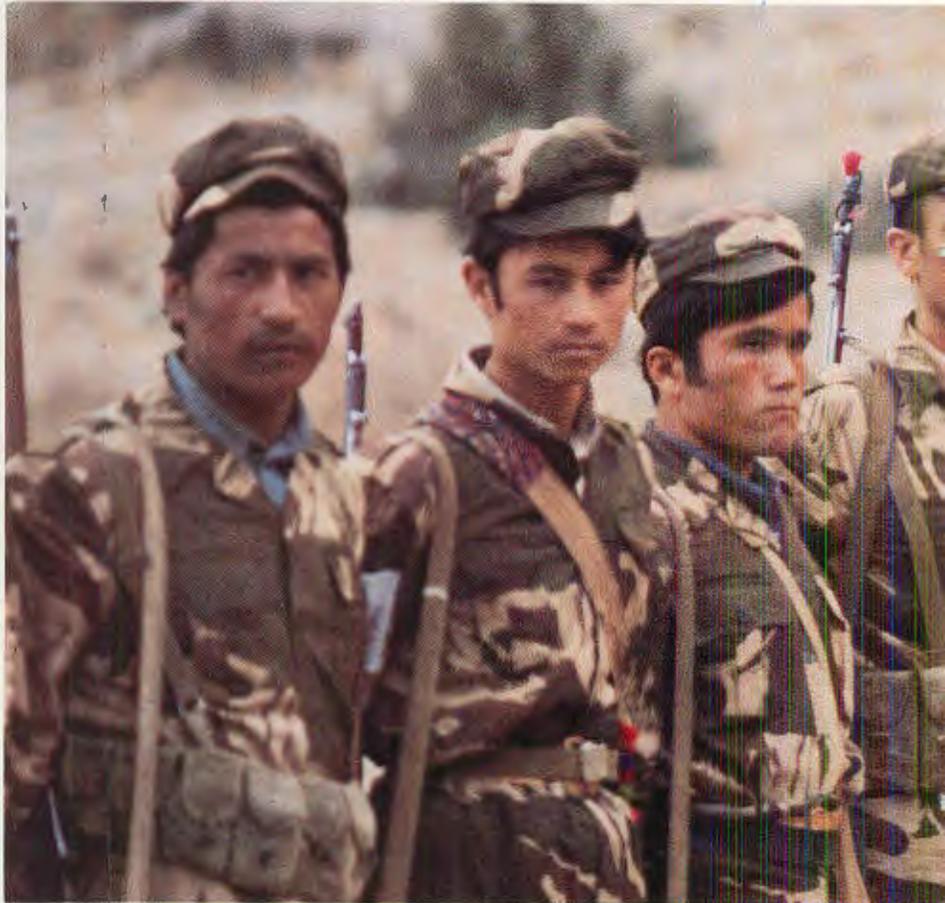
In the square and the apartment blocks that surrounded it there was still movement, the sound of a jeep engine, shouts. The "government" — mostly armed cadres of the People's Democratic party, militia and some army units — was settling down for what promised to be another long night.

Around their strongholds, of which the Rowzah square was perhaps the biggest, they set their own ambushes for the resistance groups that prowled the streets. Some even wore the turbans and loose-fitting jackets of the mujahideen; just as some mujahideen changed their clothes for captured army uniforms. Appearances counted for little.

It was a shadow war of rooftops, darkened upper windows and tortuous back alleys; a sniper's war occasionally punctuated by sustained bursts of automatic fire and the hammer of a heavy machine gun as a guerrilla attack went in against an army post.

All that was without the lunatic fringe elements. In Afghanistan they were well represented on both sides. What followed on that evening was unexpected, inexplicable and entirely Afghan.

We'd already started moving back the way we'd come when the truck caught us.



It was a small vehicle, as far as I could see a Soviet-built GAZ-69. But the driver had to have been a local. He swung into the street from the junction by the mosque. I'd already turned and was waiting for him to pull up by the traffic lights. Instead he kept on coming as if he owned the town. Then the beam of the headlights had us pinned against the shop fronts, a line of 20 or more armed men.

A moment of panic was frozen in the glare. One of the mujahideen bellowed, "Dresh! (halt!)." Then there was a general dive for whatever cover was around. Simultaneously came a shriek of brakes as the driver registered the file of guerrillas along the sidewalk and, deciding this was not the way he was headed after all, slued the GAZ into a frantic U-turn.

Only Big Qasim, an unflappable giant in his mid-20s armed with an AK-47, stood his ground and got off a quick, unaimed burst. He claimed subsequently he'd hit one of the guys in the back of the jeep. But if he did he was the only one to see it. The GAZ swerved wildly, mounted the sidewalk on the far side of the street, scattering a pile of boxes, the driver fighting for control. Then it careened back into the road and roared off into the gloom.

A brief stunned silence fell. Then came a string of obscenities from Qasim and the helpless laughter of some of the others as

they picked themselves up and dusted off their jackets.

Today's struggle for Afghanistan is a war that has its roots deep in the Afghan countryside. Historically, it has been the tradition-bound rural areas that have been least amenable to ideas of "progress" emanating from rulers in Kabul. The harsh Afghan terrain has also made the task of bringing independent-minded rural and tribal areas to heel difficult if not impossible. The dilemma of Kabul's Marxist regime today is not a new one.

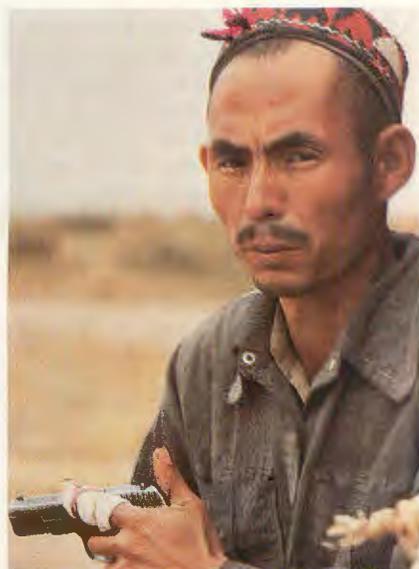
But since the Soviet invasion of December 1979 and the upsurge of nationalism and religious fervor it ignited, Afghanistan's rural-based mujahideen have found ready support within the country's major cities. The regime's repressive policies and in particular the ever-tightening squeeze to draft men into the army has also driven large numbers of young urbanites into resistance ranks.

How best to make use of their support in the cities has been another question though. Country-wide results have been mixed at best. In many cases urban actions have been near disasters.

Initial impulse fanned by almost universal popular support prompted many groups to infiltrate urban areas from surrounding villages and establish a semi-permanent presence. That occurred most



ABOVE: Western-style cammies serve as parade dress for Jamiat-i-Islami: They drew fire when worn on raid, since other mujahideen mistook them for Afghan Army. BELOW: The sharp end: Tokarev-wielding resistance commander faces Russians across their border, the Amu Darya River.



notably in the labyrinthine quarters of the "Old Cities" of Kandahar in the south and Herat in the far west. The weakness of the Afghan army and the initial reluctance of the Soviets to participate in high-profile urban sweeps encouraged this trend.

But the resistance made the mistake of trying to hold the streets militarily and deny communist forces a face-saving semblance of daytime control. After Budapest 1956 it shouldn't have surprised anyone, but the Afghans and the world were shocked by sustained artillery bombardment of residential quarters backed by helicopter and jet strikes from nearby airbases. Some of this made the destruction of Beirut look like child's play.

Kandahar's Old City first took the treatment in June 1981 in an attempt to flatten a quarter of the town the security forces could no longer hope to control. "It looked like a place destroyed by an earthquake," was how one eyewitness described it. Hundreds were reported killed.

Early the next year, Kandahar took more of the same. Then in May 1982 the sledgehammer hit Herat. At the end of a week-long air and artillery attack casualty estimates ran into four figures. The Herat slaughter still stands as Moscow's most destructive operation in the war to date.

At the end, the strikes were costly not only in human lives. They also cost the

resistance heavily in terms of popular support in ruined areas they could never have hoped to hold: which was exactly what Soviet commanders had intended. Thousands of surviving civilians fled to swell the refugee camps of Iran and Pakistan. Often, those who stayed appealed to the mujahideen to cease operations in urban areas.

In the north, the same pattern of events was played out in Khanabad, a medium-sized town some 25 kilometers east of Kunduz, not far from the Soviet border. I had first visited it in late 1981, when it was firmly in resistance hands. After a six-week cross-country trek from Pakistan, being back in a real town — with shops, restaurants, buses, even a still-functioning municipal Turkish bath house — was like coming home. Administration of the town had been divided between the three main resistance parties in the province to avoid friction. A system of rotating control had been established, each group running the show for a week, then handing it over to the next. Mujahideen patrols cruised the streets in captured jeeps, trucks and battered sedans.

Strictly for appearance, a small Afghan army garrison in a small fort on the outskirts maintained the fiction of a government presence. Provided the army and a handful of Soviet advisers stayed behind their walls, an unofficial cease-fire was observed. A regular supply of ammunition from the fort to the mujahideen, and a flow of food in the opposite direction, reinforced everyone's interest in ensuring this happy state of affairs continued undisturbed. It was slightly surreal — but entirely Afghan.

Soviet reality was reimposed in April 1982 when Red Army commanders in Kunduz decided enough was enough. Khanabad was to be saved for peace and progress. For openers they deployed a battery of 122mm BM-21 multiple rocket launchers against the town center. Troops — Soviet rather than Afghan — and armor moved in later to pick up the pieces. With over 200 civilian dead and wounded resistance was minimal. Hearts and minds, Soviet-style . . .

Mazar-i-Sharif was different. As in Kabul, the mujahideen had conceded the bottom-line reality of Soviet control by firepower. Resistance commanders understood that risking loss of popular support by bringing down retaliation on civilian heads was self-defeating. In Mazar-i-Sharif between dawn and mid-afternoon an approximation of government control existed. Only after 1500 hours did the rot set in. Emerging from safehouses, infiltrating from the countryside, picking off stray patrols, the resistance took over.

It was a multi-pronged threat. Ghani's group which belonged to the Peshawar-



Camels are still a big part of logistical chain. These carry supplies near Amu Darya River on Soviet border.

based *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society) was just one of a plethora of factions operating in and around the city. In Balkh Province, of which Mazar-i-Sharif is the capital, I counted nine major militarily active parties. Five were Sunni Muslims looking to Peshawar for support. The rest were Shi'ites: some conservative, others radicals receiving aid from their co-religionists across the border in Iran. When they were not fighting the Kabul regime and the Soviets, the Shi'ites had their private civil war going: conservatives vs. Khomeini-style radicals.

But in and around Mazar-i-Sharif itself, it was *Jamiat* that called the shots. Much of that was due to geography. Groups loyal to the overall *Jamiat* commander, Zabiullah, were operating across most of the province — including the banks of the Amu Darya River that marks the Soviet frontier. But the party's HQ was centrally placed, within sight of the city, where the plains of Turkestan meet the sharply rising massif of the Hindu Kush. The position where Zabiullah had established his base in the gorge of Marmoul was as impregnable as it was spectacular.

The mouth of the gorge was a narrow fissure — wide enough at its base for two trucks to pass — in a rock wall several hundred feet high at the head of a broad, rocky valley. Any assault had to be frontal, approaching the gorge mouth up the open valley: the sort of position a platoon could hold against battalions.

The gorge itself, about one kilometer long, formed a natural choke point between the plains and city to the north and the mountain village of Marmoul to the south. In its dimmer recesses, the "muj" had built a mosque, assembly hall, field kitchens and a metal foundry close against the rock walls. Along the narrow track that



twisted through the defile, captured jeeps and trucks were parked. Living accommodation was in a honeycomb of caves drilled deep into the sides of the gorge and invulnerable to bombs that might fall into the ravine — something that would in any case have taken some very fancy precision bombing. Electricity was provided by a central diesel-driven generator.

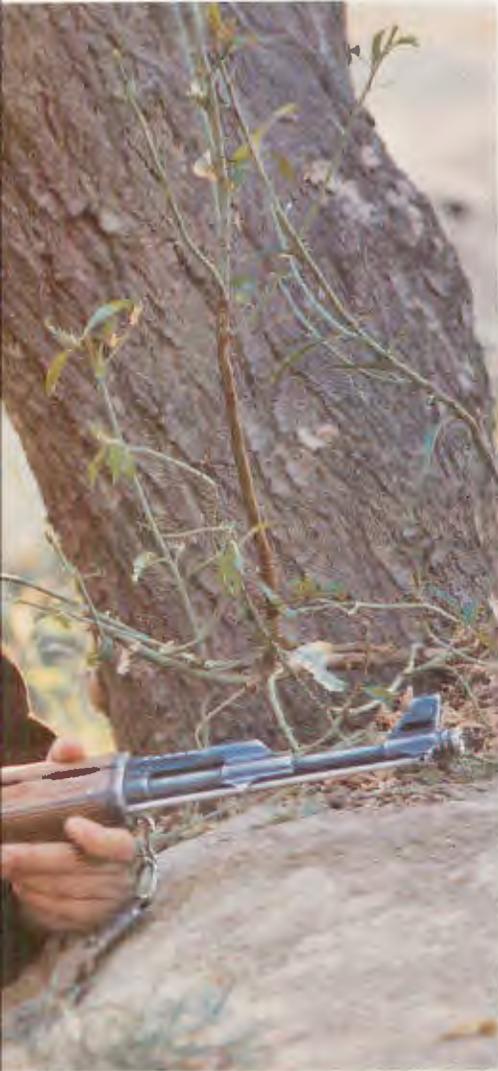
Antiaircraft capability for once meant antiaircraft capability — rather than, as so often in Afghanistan, its absence. The sharp end consisted of four Dashika (DShK 12.7mm) HMGs and a couple of 14.5mm ZPU-1s nicknamed "Zigouriacs." The machine guns (which made up the backbone of the limited anti-aircraft arsenal) were scattered around the heights above the gorge in emplacements that ensured interlocking fields of fire.

There was also a rudimentary but effective early-warning system. On the crags above the gorge mouth, round-the-clock lookouts were posted connected by telephone to Commander Zabiullah's "office" in a cave below. A dizzy, half-hour climb up the rock face from the gorge

floor, the lookouts provided a sweeping panorama across the folds of hills that sloped away to the city. Beyond that, plains stretched away unbroken as far as the eye could see.

But the closer view was more interesting. Clearly visible through binoculars on the eastern edge of the city was the airport and a neat line of Soviet choppers on the apron in front of the control tower. Occasionally a transport would swing in from the south, land and take off again. Warning of any airstrikes against the gorge that did not come from bases inside the USSR itself could be given before the aircraft were even off the ground.

At its southern end, the gorge widened out into a narrow, rugged valley that wound back into the mountains to Marmoul. A Tadjik settlement of over 3,000 homes and solidly pro-*Jamiat*, Marmoul was big by Afghan standards. But its most striking feature was the sheer rock wall that rose from behind the village to rolling upland pastures at least 2,000 feet above. Connecting the village to the high ground was a narrow track that zigzagged back



Type 56 rifles show Chinese help for northern resistance groups.

resistance groups being short on dynamic, educated, politically-motivated leadership, Commander Zabiullah stood out. Still young, at 29 he was a teacher of divinity in a Mazar-i-Sharif college before the Marxist take-over. His background embodies the Islamic movement that inspires the resistance.

With the 1978 coup he left home for Peshawar, a fast-growing center of exile activity. His military training was of the on-the-job variety in the Panjshir Valley which had been captured by the mujahideen before the Soviet invasion.

In 1980 he returned to Mazar-i-Sharif with a handful of followers and 12 rifles. By early 1983 he commanded an estimated 6,000 armed men across Balkh Province and cemented links with like-minded commanders in neighboring provinces of the north. Today, he is one of five or six resistance leaders whose names are household words across Afghanistan.

Jamiat units operating in Mazar-i-Sharif city were mostly based in Marmoul Gorge, from where they would make sorties of two or three days at a time and return. I joined one of these groups, and kept a diary:

Tuesday night, Mazar City. We moved into the city this evening, leaving the gorge around 1730 as dusk was settling in. It was overcast, with low clouds and gusting rain and the place looked like the end of the earth. There was only one jeep leaving but eight muj crammed into it. There was a good deal of waiting around while Zabiullah briefed a guy called Ibrahim who seemed to be in charge. Then the sentries at the checkpoint beyond the gorge checked weapons and ammunition and we rolled off. The idea was to join another, larger group that's already been operating in the city a couple of days.

The run into town took a little over an hour along a narrow, rutted track that twisted down through low hills onto the plain. By the time we came in sight of the city it was dark and the lights on the perimeter of the Soviet base at Shadian on the southern edge of town were clearly visible. As we came out of the hills the driver killed the headlights and slowed down. It was only at this point that I realized they were going to drive right into the city.

The track that led into the southern suburbs passed between some kind of fuel dump on the left and the Soviet officers' and advisers' residential compound on the right. Both were largish areas, wired off with watchtowers. The fuel dump had searchlights. The distance we had to cross between them must have been about 500 meters. At times the track was shielded by rising ground, at times exposed. It seemed like lunacy; they couldn't help but see us.

Amazingly, the security forces made no attempt either to patrol or mine the track at night. We rolled on in first gear, stopping when the searchlight swept overhead. At one point a couple of the muj jumped out and ran on ahead, Kalashnikovs at the ready, to check for any unpleasant surprises. By that time I was more than ready to get out myself. Five minutes later we were in the shelter of a walled street and pulled up outside a mosque.

Some waiting around while the muj stocked up on cigarettes, supplies up at the gorge not being everything they might. Then we were led through into a

Commanders ceremoniously distribute captured weapons to fiercest fighters. Zabiullah (bearded), commander of Jamiat-i-Islami forces in Balkh Province, is at extreme right.

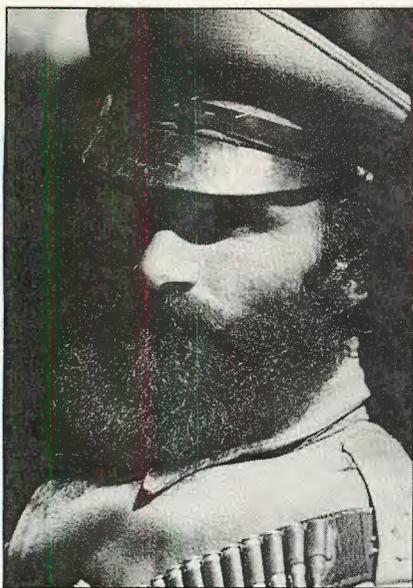
and forth across the rock face. From the approaches to the village it was a staggering spectacle.

Soviet attempts to break the resistance hold on Marmoul and the gorge had focused on the high ground. In 1981 and again the next year attempts had been made to land heli-borne assault units on the flat heights. On both occasions the landings had gone off smoothly and control of the uplands had enabled the Soviets to rain fire down on mujahideen positions near the village below.

Things came unstuck when Soviet troops attempted to fight their way down the track, the only route to the village and the gorge stronghold beyond it. Scores of men died on the path and on the landing zone. On both occasions, the force was lifted out before reaching the village.

In addition to the terrain, Jamiat had one other asset: Zabiullah himself. Rural





Mujahid in Badakhshan Province in extreme northeast of country, bordering China and USSR.

warren of mud-walled back-alleys to the house we are in now, a largish building in its own garden that appears to belong to the father of one of the men.

We spread out in the living room and listened to the news on the Farsi-language service of the Voice of America and BBC. This was almost an evening ritual. Later a meal was served — rice, chicken, salad and local fruit. Food here was to be a big improvement on the gorge.

During the meal a sizeable battle started up in the Shadian neighborhood. I stepped out into the garden to listen. Tracer was criss-crossing the sky and several Dashikas were being used. Occasionally, there was the sound of a shell exploding — but I couldn't work out whether it was outgoing tank fire or ongoing recoilless rifle.

Wednesday 0200 hours. Had just fallen asleep when the word came to move. Spent 15 minutes losing all sense of direction in the maze of alleys, and then we stepped in through a large wooden gate, up a steep flight of steps and into a dimly lit upper room. An old man and a kid were sitting waiting. They served us tea, provided bedding and left. Looked like we meet the others here.

Wednesday 1030 hours. The rest of the group arrived during the night and the room was getting damn cramped. In all there must have been about 25 men, all armed with either Soviet AKMSs or Chinese Type 56-1s. There were also a couple of guys with G3s. Conspicuous by its absence is the bottom end of the mujahideen arsenal — there were no old 1944 Soviet Mosin-Nagant carbines, no Papashas (PPSh41: Soviet submachine guns previously used by the Afghan Army and captured in large quantities by the mujahideen in the early months of the war), and no Type 56 Carbines (Chinese SKSs). These guys were clearly the aris-



Outdated arms for resistance include Czech ZB 26/30 LMG.

tocracy of the resistance — nothing but the best.

The G3s, either smuggled in from Pakistan or former Imperial Iranian Army versions (complete with Pahlavi crest stamped on them), are the prestige weapons around here. The snag is getting hold of the 7.62mm NATO ammo, all of which has to be humped in from Pakistan. The current rate on the Mazar-i-Sharif black market is around 100 Afghanis (U.S.\$1.60-\$2.00) per round compared to 10 Afghanis for a Kalashnikov round. In other words, the price is astronomic.

The other big favourite is the Type 56-1, since it can be easily hidden under a *pertug* (loose blanket worn over the shoulders by most Afghan men). This is particularly good news for the muj who operate alone or in pairs assassinating communist officials.

We also have a couple of Chinese Type 69 grenade launchers — one with a very fancy optical sight. These can be counted on to keep tanks and APCs at a respectable distance during street fighting or give them a very warm welcome if they get close enough. These narrow streets are suicide for armor.

There is one LMG in the group — what looks to be a Chinese version of the Czech ZB-26. While not as common as the Soviet RPD and RPK section weapons, there are quite a few of these ZB-26s around the north of Afghanistan. Some, with the old Afghan royal-crest stampings, appear to predate the present conflict. Others, like many of the Type-56 Carbines, look like Chinese militia cast-offs.

Public relations don't appear to be much of a problem here. If the house where we stopped last night is any yardstick the muj are well in with the populace. Most of the lads in this group say they are from the city anyway and had heard of Zabiullah before they joined the resistance. Several of them, including the Teacher — the RPG-man — worked in

the same theological college as Zabiullah before the war.

The average age is between 26 and 28 and most of them have a reasonable amount of schooling behind them. After some of the rural groups where the man who can read or write is an exception, this is quite a change.

We ate lunch out in the courtyard surrounded by high walls. Another pretty lavish spread followed by tea and distribution of ammunition for those who'd used some last night. The atmosphere was relaxed. Most of the men were sitting around cleaning weapons or killing time. The Teacher was busy on the RPGs with a pull-through.

Earlier some local grey-beards called in to pay their respects to the commander, a youngish guy called Ghani. He says he's 22 and originally from Marmoul village but studied in the city before the war. He's obviously made quite a name for himself and now ranks as overall Jamiat commander for urban operations.

According to Ghani, this whole quarter of Mazar was "cleaned up" in 1980 and is now solidly pro-resistance. Hence little concern that news of our whereabouts will reach the KHAD (*Khedmat-e-Etala'at-e-Daulat*: National Intelligence Service, the East German-trained Afghan secret police) office. The general feeling is that if government forces do move out of a base we'll get a report in plenty of time anyway.

That's probably just as well. The word is that when they do organize a sweep operation, the government makes a big job of it. For house-to-house searches in the city, Soviet troops are kept well out of the way and the Afghan Army stumbles into action. The pattern seems to be to seal off a whole quarter, using plenty of armor in the larger streets; then systematically

comb through it house to house with infantry.

Last week, according to talk among the muj, they nailed two Jamiat guys who were operating in a pair and made the mistake of spending the whole night in the same house. Their whereabouts were betrayed and they woke to find the place surrounded. They fought it out from 0600 through till 1300 hours when they were eventually killed. But they took eight soldiers with them.

Wednesday 1500 hours. The operation this afternoon will not be making any history books. The plan was to move across the southern part of Mazar to the main road that runs from the Rowzah to the army base at Shadia. There we were to pick off an armored patrol during the final hour of daylight when they reinforce positions up at the Rowzah. So much for the plan

Everything changed when we ran into an army unit patrolling the road on foot and a fire fight broke out. The army, about a platoon strong, took up a defensive position in the grounds of the sports stadium protected by a high wall. The muj scattered into the gardens and alleys on the other side of the streets.

The firing was heavy but often wild. In true Afghan style there was also plenty of verbal ammunition traded. Ghani was yelling at the army that they were Muslims too, and to come over and join us. Pir, one of the elder muj, big on noise but short on brainpower, promptly ruined the whole effect by blazing away with his Kalashnikov into the air and calling them sons-of-bitches who'd sold out the country to the Soviets. Either way there was no big rush to turn themselves in.

Firing continued for 30 minutes or so, then died down into desultory sniping. Then the soldiers, obviously bored by the whole business began to pull back through the stadium. Ghani eventually gave the order to cease fire — which had to be repeated about 10 times to quell the enthusiasm of the more aggressive members of the group.

None of this was particularly impressive militarily. But the popular back-up was striking. Cyclists and pedestrians who'd passed the stadium before the firing became intense provided Ghani with a full run-down on army numbers and deployment. There was also no shortage of householders prepared to lead us through their homes to better firing positions in gardens opposite the stadium. Several provided food and tea. The regime is clearly not well-loved around here.

Thursday 1100 hours. We reached last night's safe-house in a village on the edge of the city long after midnight. During the early evening we moved down towards the Rowzah and came close to bagging a

GAZ-69 jeep for the motor-pool. Big Qasim is still cursing himself for having missed the driver and the rest for groveling around on the ground when they should have been firing. Apart from Ghani and Qasim, the others regard the whole affair as a huge joke.

Ate last night in a house just a few hundred meters from the mosque. The owner was obviously fairly well-off and spoke some English. In the day he works for the government as a civil servant; after dark he makes his home available to Jamiat guerrillas and provides them with interesting information. These guys really need some nerve.

After the meal and tea ritual, there was work of another type to be done. Zabiullah has a growing intelligence network based at the gorge but with agents in town. Reports have been coming in of students working part time for KHAD. In exchange, presumably, they are exempted from being pressed into the army and packed off to fight. The gorge office had specific indications that one guy in particular had been informing. He was to be arrested and taken back to Marmoul for trial.

They grabbed him shortly before midnight. Most of the muj staked out the street — quite close to the apartments near the Rowzah and therefore militia-land. Ghani, Pir and Qasin disappeared into one of the apartment blocks. A very long half-hour passed. Then they emerged — five of them. It turned out our suspect had a friend staying who was also of interest.

They were both around 20, unshaven and looking dazed and apprehensive — for good reason. A search of the apartment had revealed a Soviet TT33 pistol, which was incriminating enough. On a lighter note, Pir had also found some "dirty pictures" of several scantily clad babes

**Afghan Information Agency:
Marmoul Gorge photo lab in cave
shows ingenuity and persistence of
freedom fighters.**



Mujahideen with B-10 recoilless gun attack government district office in Baghlan Province.

all a little on the overweight side. None of this was exactly *Hustler* material but it was obviously heavy stuff for Pir and the boys. The muj are not noted for their taste in pornography.

The two were led off under guard to be driven back to the gorge. (Both were executed by firing squad two weeks later after investigations and a trial by village elders and mullahs.)

We left last night's safe-house in the village after the standard breakfast of tea and fresh-baked bread. We are now camped in a garden amid a maze of orchards and market gardens on the eastern fringe of the city. Aside from the advantage of keeping on the move and one step ahead of possible reports, the thinking is that if the Army does catch us, we have plenty of room to maneuver and no civilians are likely to get caught in the cross-fire. After yesterday's brush at the stadium they have a good idea that Ghani's boys are back in town.

Some of the muj are asleep in a small house built for family picnics in happier times. Others are sitting around in the sun. Waiting. So much of this game is *waiting*. And it's the morning hours that are most dangerous. Once past noon there's little chance of a major sweep getting underway.

Above us the occasional chopper thumps past. Mostly Mi-8 Hips. None appears to be showing any special interest in this area.

Thursday 1515 hours. Baba Yadgar village. Left the garden after a midday meal provided by the guy who owns the place. Then an hour's march through gardens and cotton fields toward the Afghan Army Divisional garrison, situated some 10 klicks west of the city proper.

The village we are in now is on the road that runs out to the garrison. The group has split into two sections. The first, with Ghani and the Teacher, is up close, very

Continued on page 84

HUEY helicopters swoop down from treetop level, swirling loose brush and dirt in all directions. One flares and settles near the wind-swept ground. The jungle lurks 20 meters away. Inside the ship, taut, camouflaged faces appear. Thumbs rest along M16 selectors; fingers caress triggers. Eyes search the jungle wall as muscles tense in anticipation.

"Go," shouts the team leader. Six tiger-suited men leap from the skids of the hovering Huey, beginning a race to the wood line. When the last man is clear, the watching pilot pulls pitch and the Huey reels toward the sky while the doorgunner trains his M60 on the dwindling jungle.

This typical class-day exercise of the MACV (Military Assistance Command-Vietnam) Recondo School illustrates the training methods which created combat soldiers during the Vietnam-War era. The school combined the reality of combat with training to adapt to different tactical situations. At the Recondo School, the final exam, a real five-day combat operation, could mean life or death.

The school was the result of a young soldier's experiences on the Nazi-occupied Normandy coast during the waning summer months of 1944. Impressed by efforts of the 101st Airborne Division and the 1st Special Service Force, by 1958 that young soldier, William C. Westmoreland, would establish the first formal Army school strictly engaged in training for long-range reconnaissance and commando tactics.

As early as 1955, feasibility studies (called Operation Sagebrush) were performed at Ft. Bragg, N.C., to test troop insertion by helicopter. Rickety H-34 helicopters moved a few small patrols from the newly-formed SKY-CAV unit no farther than 50 miles. Patrols were inserted and extracted from battlefield areas unsuited to airborne operations. This pioneer airmobile test showed the worth of "Extend Ground Reconnaissance." The Army, however, did not yet recognize its need for airmobile operations.

Westmoreland, who believed strongly in the importance of unconventional small-unit tactics to perform special operations in a conventional war, enlisted the support of MAJ Lewis L. Millet, a Korean War Medal of Honor recipient, and the two men helped establish the Army's first formal recondo school. This two-week training course, held at Ft. Campbell, Ky., home of the 101st Airborne Division, gave the 101st trooper reconnaissance and patrolling experience. Graduates were authorized to wear a broad, black and white, downward-pointing arrowhead V symbolizing woodlore, or the trooper's ability to move against the enemy by air-drop transport, day or night. Graduates became known by the nickname "Recondo."

Although unconventional warfare was a way of life in Southeast Asia, initially in the Vietnam War line-unit recon troops were often sacrificed to the body-count syndrome when division commanders sent them into enemy sectors to engage infiltrators, turning



MACV RECONDO SCHOOL

The Final Exam Could Be a Fire Fight!

by Earl Bleacher

Photos courtesy of Earl Bleacher

what should have been intelligence-gathering reconnaissance missions into ambush and heavy-combat patrols. In addition, most line units, unlike the Special Forces, had no specialized recon training. As a result, LRRPs (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrols) had become ineffective.

The Special Forces soldier was the true reconnaissance and intelligence specialist in Vietnam. Special Forces grew like a tree hidden by jungle canopy; its roots spread throughout South Vietnam. Attached to the main trunk were the project detachments. They were initiated to train CIDGs (Civilian Irregular Defense Groups) in LRRP techniques. Their missions encompassed location of enemy units, air strike coordination and harassing and deception. Project Delta (Det. B-52) grew first, and then Projects Omega (Det. B-50) and Sigma (Det. B-56). These projects demanded soldiers trained in all aspects of long-range strategic reconnaissance, and Special Forces had organic specialized training geared to teach these tactics.

In September 1966, Project Delta developed a comprehensive training POI (Program of Instruction) in strategic recon for all incoming personnel at its Nha Trang base 20 miles north of Cam Ranh Bay on the South China Sea. Replacements were assigned to a recon team on stand-down. The training cycle familiarized them with techniques of patrolling, insertion and extraction, and intelligence gathering. They also got to know other team members. It also trained each team as an integral unit,

It's not as easy as it looks. ARVN trainees climb and descend rope ladders mounted on UH-1D to prepare for combat operations.

newcomers and veterans alike. In its final stages, the school staff determined which men should be eliminated from the team. Since cohesiveness was all-important, each man's strengths and weaknesses had to be discovered before committing the team to the field. Retraining cycles could occur as often as five times a month.

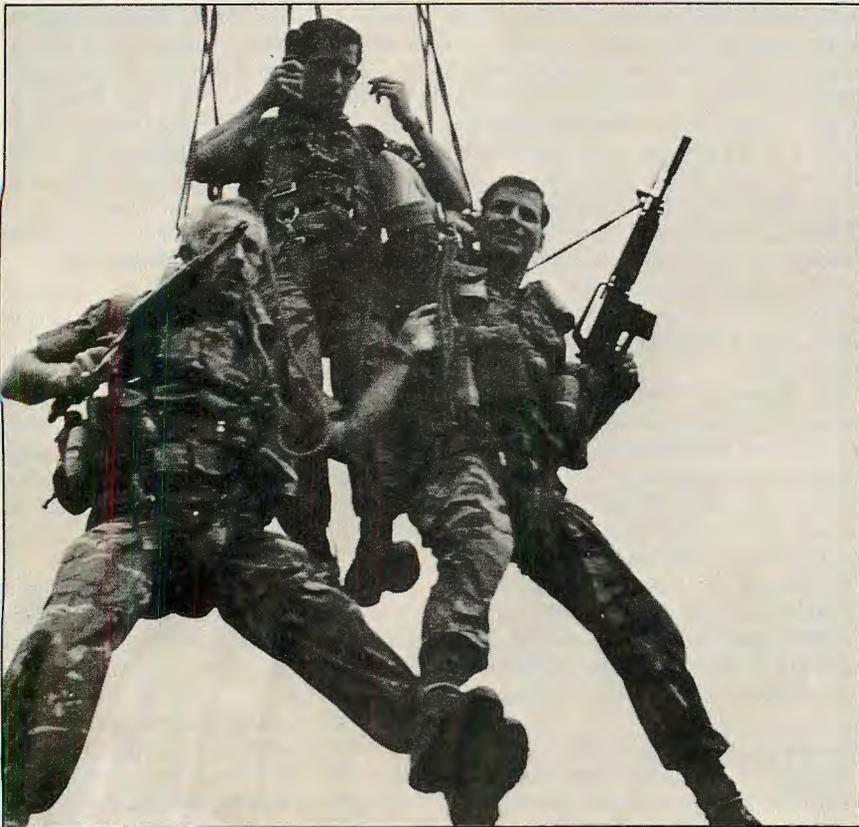
The MACV staff, who were already delving into the training dilemma, took note of the Delta program. GEN Westmoreland, now commander of MACV, recognized the need for a separate, unique, rigorous training dealing specifically with intelligence like those programs provided throughout Vietnam by Special Forces projects. Staff studies of training techniques led to the formation of a wartime school to train selected U.S. and Free World/Military Assistance Forces personnel in specialized reconnaissance techniques and skills.

A 150-by-200-meter Recondo compound was built next to Project Delta's training area. Although the two compounds shared a gate and their outer fences were part of the Nha Trang installation defense command perimeter, each remained a separate entity, involved in its own mission. The Recondo compound was spartan: rows of one-story cinder-block billets and offices that included an aid station, TOC (Tactical Operations Center) and supply buildings, all roofed with corrugated tin and with open window spaces covered by wooden shutters. To the east, outside the walls and fences, a rice paddy was made into a makeshift LZ.

Defensive walls, machine-gun parapets, barbed wire and mine fields lined the camp perimeter. An 81mm mortar pit was centrally positioned near the main classroom. Both



ABOVE: Extraction exercise gives recondo trainees practice at rescuing wounded from rugged terrain. **BELOW:** Extraction made easy. STABO rig assures greater safety for rider when plucked from the jungle. Photo: 5th Special Forces



a railroad-style timber water-tower and a 45-foot rappelling platform sported the school insignia, a variation of Westmoreland's first Recondo patch: The broad-faced arrow held a white V with the word "Recondo" emblazoned above.

The school used the existing staff of 5th Special Forces Group. Instructors were recruited from seasoned Group veterans. They had to be E-7s or above, have at least one prior Vietnam tour and a prior assignment to a Special Operations Project dealing mainly in reconnaissance. The 5th Group deputy commander of Special Operations was responsible for cadre selection, its HQ personnel carried out the school's finance and administration and its Logistical Center provided supplies and equipment. Since the 281st Assault Helicopter Company already provided Project Delta with two platoons of Slicks (UH-1s) and one platoon of gunships, a third platoon, known as the "Rat Pack," was added to support the Recondo School.

The school was established to serve all of MACV, and operational control came under the command of COL Francis J. Kelly, 5th Group commander. MAJ Art "Bo" Baker, past commander of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Rangers and assistant S-3 of Project Delta, became first the first Recondo School commandant.

Formal school operations began on 15 September 1966 with the arrival of the first class of 42 students. All were hand-picked volunteers of a combat arms MOS. Recondo candidates needed excellent physical condition, one month in-country and at least six more months to serve in Vietnam in a LRRP unit. Average student age was 20, and 75 percent of them had combat-patrol experience. Prospective Recondo students were chosen by parent unit, but because of operational objectives and critically high standards, the Recondo School staff made final choice.

The school had 48 enlisted men and six officers on its authorized cadre roster. Australian warrant officers assisted the AITV (Australian Training Team in Vietnam) and SAS in Recondo training, and occasionally led American teams on patrol. South Korean students were in best physical condition. ROK officers and NCOs of the Korean counterparts of Special Forces were well-versed in long-range recon and accompanied their men on field exercises and missions.

Student roster was 120 men, a new cycle of 60 starting every two weeks. The three-week training period was grueling, and each class' elimination rate exceeded 30 percent. Only students who were mentally and physically prepared could make it.

The first Recondo class of 42 students came from many units, including the 9th, 25th, and 4th Infantry Divisions, the 101st Airborne Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the 1st Air Cavalry, the 3rd Squadron SAS Regiment of the Australian Army, and, of course, Special Forces.

On arrival, a standard Airborne PT Test

determined each man's condition. The Go's were separated from the No-Go's. Remaining men were separated into teams, each with one instructor in command. Men from the same or related units were kept together.

A typical class member arrived at Nha Trang with his weapon and LBE (Load Bearing Equipment). Specialized equipment was issued from school supply: linen, STABO harness, signal mirror, strobe, tiger-stripe, boonie cap, smoke grenades, pen flare, VS-17 ground signal panel and the URC-10 emergency handheld radio.

He stepped out of supply into midmorning glare, carrying a 30-pound ruck (as he would do for the rest of his training). He was then led off on a tranquil, hour-long, seven-mile constitutional through the hills. At the rappelling tower a jovial instructor shoved rope into his hands. He ascended the 30 feet twice — once with his ruck and once without: He might have to climb a rope into a hovering chopper. In addition, Army Conditioning Drill #1, Exercise #1 — the pushup — was generously applied.

First week curriculum consisted of academic subjects: map reading, aerial photo analysis, emergency medical aid, PRC-25 familiarization, and principles of intelligence.

Proficient with weapons on arrival, students learned only nomenclature and specs of NVA/VC weapons, immediate action drills and sabotage.

The length of classes varied, depending on students. Classes were lengthened or shortened to fit aptitudes and difficulties: Originally map-reading tests were given on the first day, but the failure rate was so high 15 hours of class map work were added before examination.

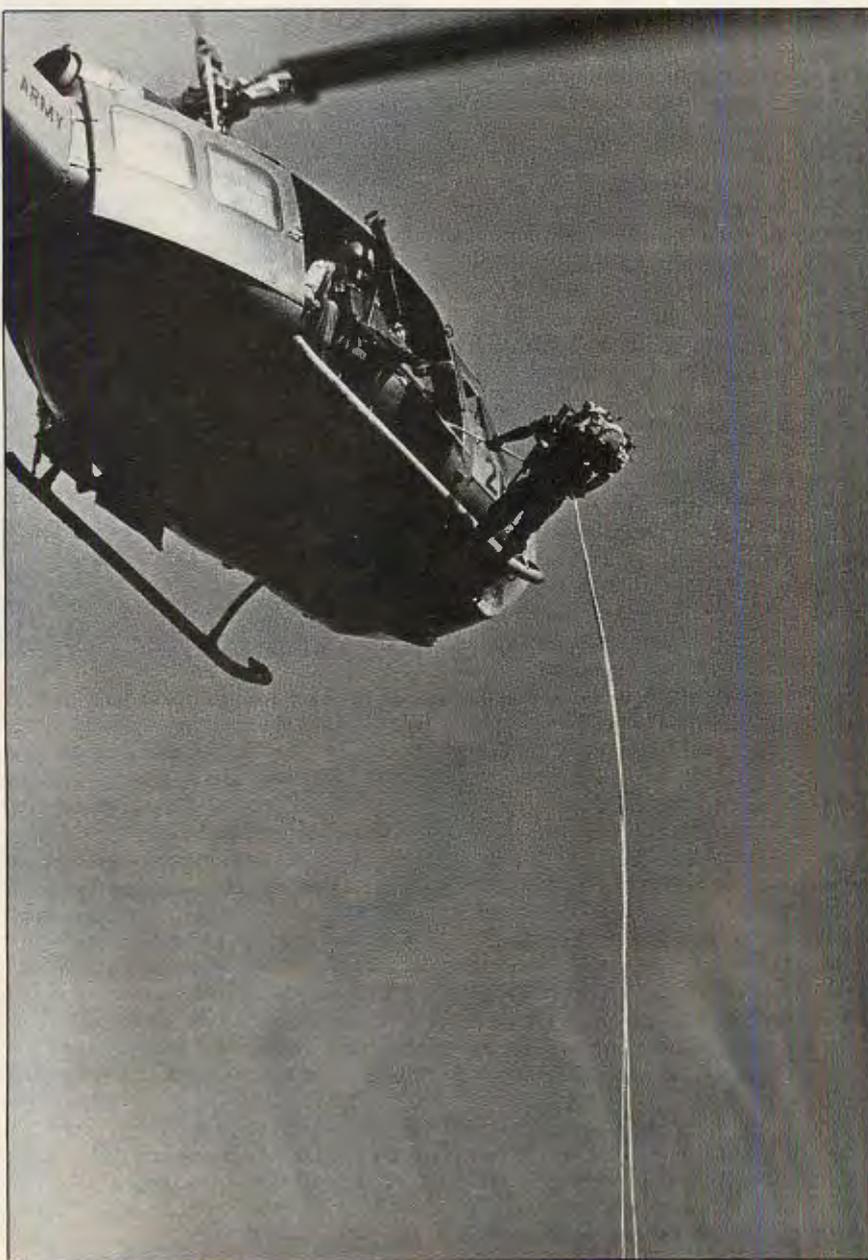
Medical instruction, including use of the albumin blood expander unit and intramuscular/intravenous injections, lasted six hours.

Patrolling occupied 23 hours of instruction. Students were already confident of their patrolling skill, since they'd been chosen to attend Recondo school and had been on patrols since their arrival in-country. But their idea of reconnaissance completely missed the mark, since intelligence gathering on a heavy combat patrol was strictly by chance.

Also, students had to learn the difference between LRRP and strategic recon. LRRP teams operated in a limited area forward of the FEBA (Forward Edge of the Battle Area), a distance usually equivalent to the largest piece of artillery in direct support. (In Vietnam this could mean anything from a 105mm howitzer to offshore eight-inches.) In contrast, the SF soldier excelled in strategic recon. He ranged the entire countryside, without support gunnery. SF support came by air. A flight of Navy A-4s from a carrier, unable to complete a mission and cruising aimlessly about, or Army AH-1 Cobras on search-and-destroy might be assigned to assist strategic recon. With air support they roamed South Vietnam, supplying intelligence to the highest level of



ABOVE: Recondo demo team await arrival of LTG Freund and party. **BELOW:** The easiest way to get into action is to jump. Recon trainee rappels from UH-1D.



command for dissemination down the chain. Company-sized recon units such as Project Omega and the Mike Force provided a constant flow of intelligence. MACV's Recondo School wanted these veterans of the Special Operations units as teachers because of their wealth of accumulated knowledge about sound, secure patrolling.

Methods of heliborne infiltration/exfiltration were important to the Recondo. Project Delta had already devised fundamental rigs from rope and webbing to extract men from the jungle. One of these was the McGuire Rig made of two rope slings connected together to hoist recon teams from dense jungle with no LZ. A large loop was slung for a seat and a smaller one attached farther up for a handhold. The McGuire Rig was useless for badly wounded or unconscious men.

In 1968 MAJ Robert L. Stevens, then commandant Recondo School, CPT John D.H. Knabb, his deputy, and SFC Clifford L. Roberts constructed a web harness that closely resembled a parachute's: the STABO harness (the acronym comes from the names of its inventors). D-rings were attached to the crest of the shoulder straps. Carabiners from ropes of hovering Hueys could be connected to the rings. The STABO enabled hook-up and extraction while delivering suppressive fire in a 360-degree radius. Team casualties, conscious or unconscious, could also be lifted out. The STABO became the Recondo's primary egress system and became part of the student's equipment-issue.

As the days passed, students learned the recon trade, developing confidence to face the final patrol. PT at 0430 was followed by progressively lengthened ruck marches.

Water training, on the Nha Trang coastline by Beach Road, began with capsized-boat drills and infiltration by small craft. After gruelling hours, students collapsed on the beach to dry in the warm sun.

Then a deuce-and-a-half pulled off the road. The tailgate dropped, revealing a bedload of cold beer. The ensuing melee of parched men put aside "recondolization" for their brew, but they knew that next week's training would be on the island waiting ten miles across the water.

Hon Tre Island is less than a mile long with a 40-meter "mountain" on its north-east side. Narrow beaches are strewn with jagged rock and sand. Where no beach exists, small cliffs rise out of the sea. Rock stretches just under the surface for a short distance before dropping deep into the sea. Covered by rolling green, broken by clusters of trees and brush, its only inhabitants are small herds of goats and cattle.

It was here that the fledgling Recondo first applied the information he'd heard from the platform.

At Hon Tre the cadre could see their people in action and show them the combative law of physics: "For every action there must be an immediate and ferocious reaction, or an expedient line of departure." Students learned the Dos and Don'ts of pa-



Recondo students climb into rubber raft for an exercise in amphibious operations.

trolling. They learned to use hand signals, select rendezvous sites and identify booby traps. They had to navigate a jungle lane where silhouette targets popped up from surrounding brush and dispatch them by the "Quick Fire" method. They zeroed their weapons at a compact firing range on the island. Other ranges acquainted them with the M14 and M16 series antipersonnel mines and the M18 Claymore mine.

Patrolling was still the primary lesson.

Students absorbed lessons on cover and concealment, noise and light security, personal and weapon camouflage, sound and smell recognition, and establishing OPs and LPs. They continuously reviewed the three Ds of counterintelligence: Deny, detect and deceive. The less the enemy knew about you, the easier he was to defeat. When he left Hon Tre, the Recondo could "snoop and poop" with the best.

When Recondo students returned to the

compound, they had a brief rest before the big week, the final test. Appropriately nicknamed "You Bet Your Life," this five-day reconnaissance mission separated MACV Recondo School from all others. To graduate the Recondo School student had to stand up against the real thing.

The Nha Trang area support command, 5th Special Forces Operational Base (SFOB), Nha Trang Air Base and the city itself formed a quadrangle which came under fire from the surrounding mountains. Recondo School's training missions provided intelligence for the defense of Nha Trang.

A warning order issued to each six-to-14-man team was followed by an operation



order. Students picked up equipment and checked it. Students, with guidance from instructors, planned and coordinated the tentative mission, rotating assignments so each played every part in the process. A student/cadre chain of command was established. The Launch Officer (LO) assumed overall responsibility for the operation from receipt of the warning order to the closing statement of the after-action report. During a recon flight over the area of operation, students and instructors selected primary and alternate infil/exfil sites.

At Hour Nine (H-9), troop helicopters of the 281st Assault Helicopter Company were rigged by the operations sergeant, and the LO informed TOC of the team composition. Three Hueys transported the teams while three UH-1B gunships provided support. Often, Air Force O-1E Bird Dog planes were requested as a FAC (Forward Air Control) for on-call air strikes.

At H-8, teams were moved to the launch sites and given final instructions.

At H-1, the team leader shouted, "Load up."

Huey transports departed southwest from Nha Trang to rendezvous and identify on a preselected frequency at altitude with support aircraft and the Command and Control ship, which carried the school commandant and S-3.

Students' sweat dried into a paste of body salt and camouflage stick in the cold blast of air through the Huey doors. The pilot and co-pilot placidly tuned radios and glanced at instrument dials. The doorunner leaned against his M60. A belt of 7.62 ran down into the ammo box. The last vestiges of sunlight gleamed from beyond the hills.

Ahead, a small blotch of brown appeared in the jungle canopy 500 feet below. A radial patchwork of toppled elephant grass spread toward the tree line. Abruptly, they

were upon it, and without changing speed, they zoomed over and past, the instructor intently studying the area. He leaned back into the cabin and adjusted his headset, lips moving.

The C and C ship transmitted: "Mission is a 'GO,' " and the Hueys rolled into a diamond formation, the first team bird moving to the tail slot. The dark choppers made their final run slowly, again approaching the LZ. The blades turned, deflecting more air, and the characteristic thumping deepened. The lead ship intentionally overshot the clearing, the second and third doggedly pursuing, and when the last ship followed suit, the floor dropped out from under the first team. The doorunner directed his M60 toward the surrounding wall of tangled vines and trees. The bird skimmed the LZ with everyone coiled to eject.

The team leader shouted, "GO," and the Huey's sides vomited green bodies, which hit the ground at a run. The team bird joined the lagging formation. The illusion was complete: a routine overflight. On the ground, the team moved in the direction of the departing birds, 100 yards into the woodland. The student team leader immediately took head count in the absolute silence. He listened for rustling foliage, metallic clicks or other minute sounds that could indicate the presence of enemy soldiers.

The instructor was confident of the landing-zone security. The team had to find a RON (remain overnight) site before dark, but first it made its first transmission on the PRC-25, notifying the school that all was well and the team was proceeding with the mission.

The team selected a good site with a point of limited visibility, adequate cover and concealment. The team was arranged so that by lying head to head, half could sleep while half remained awake. They rotated every few hours. Except for radio work, a strict code of silence was enforced, the men using hand and arm signals to communicate.

Common fear was the most deadly adversary, as another team discovered. On their combat exercise, they went into their RON site and set up security. One nervous soldier fell asleep, cradling a WP (white phosphorus) grenade in his hand, the pin pulled. During the night, he either heard a warning noise or change of guard, and dropped the grenade, the handle flying off. Searing phosphorous exploded and ignited the jungle.

The team members suffered third-degree burns as they packed their comrade in mud, trying to extinguish his burning body. The acid-like gel ate the flesh from his frame. A school staff member was medevacked to a waiting field hospital and placed on life-support equipment to counteract phosphorous poisoning.

Fear can wreak havoc upon one man or an entire team. In Recondo weak links are unacceptable.

Continued on page 88

THE BATTLE FOR SANTO DOMINGO

One Domino That Didn't Fall

by Charles W. Sasser

Photos courtesy of Charles W. Sasser



ARMED guards blocked the doors to the Ft. Bragg briefing room. The briefing inside was classified *Secret*. Officers and key NCOs of the 82nd Airborne Division were receiving orders to parachute one brigade and a supporting artillery battalion onto a tiny Caribbean island threatened by rampaging communist rebels. Soon, President Lyndon B. Johnson would publicly announce on television what the paratroopers were already learning: that the United States was intervening in the Dominican Republic to prevent another communist takeover of America's Latin neighbors. The United States did not want a "second Cuba."

"The American nations cannot, must not and will not," the president was to say, "permit the establishment of another communist government in the Western Hemisphere."

U.S. troops deliver food supplies to civilians during fighting for Santo Domingo.

The 82nd Division had been on full alert for several days, ever since the communist-inspired rebellion exploded in Santo Domingo on 24 April 1965. But until this briefing, no one actually believed LBJ would send troops to the Caribbean. That was CIA territory: covert operations, Bay of Pigs and all that. Paratroopers were overt; the world knew who they were and why they were there.

The soldiers filing from the briefing room were subdued, grimly contemplating what promised to shape up as the largest airborne combat operation since World War II. They were members of the DRF (Division Ready Force) and of the 2nd Battalion, 321st Artillery. DRF duty rotated on a monthly basis

among the 82nd Division's three brigades, during which time the DRF brigade was required to maintain constant readiness for deployment anywhere in the world. Deployment had suddenly become a reality.

"Jesus H. Christ," a GI muttered, "they're talking about war!"

"Nah," responded another. "We'll kick Red asses and be back by next Saturday."

One of the officers leaving the briefing was 1st Lt. David Humble, executive officer of A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 321st Artillery. He was already contemplating the tremendous organization and logistical support required to assemble the airborne GIs at Pope Air Force Base and transport them and their battle gear to a staging area in Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico, the troops would rig their big guns, vehicles and bundles for airdrop, and don their own parachutes. The drop zone was the San Isidro Air Base out-

side Santo Domingo, at last report, being held by armed communist rebels — a hot DZ. Once on the ground, the infantry would secure the air base and prepare to assault the city in order to reach the Ambassador Hotel where some 1,300 trapped American citizens and other foreigners were endangered by marauding urban guerrillas. The artillery would set up its cannon in support.

U.S. Marines were already in position on the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Boxer* off the Dominican coast. The carrier had quickly steamed toward the island two weeks ago when the CIA reported trouble brewing. The Marines were prepared to land 1,100 leathernecks in coordination with the Army airborne operation and launch a pincer movement toward the Ambassador Hotel. It would be the first landing of U.S. Marines in the Caribbean since 1926 when Marines landed in Nicaragua.

It was not going to be a picnic. Lt. Humble and others familiar with Latin American politics had no illusions. Third World nations had a way of getting nasty about their rebellions, especially when the commies were there to keep things stirred up.

After Castro's consolidation of communist power in Cuba, the Reds had grown bolder in Central and South America and in the Caribbean. Backed by Russia, Castro was exporting revolution to his neighbors. U.S. intelligence had learned that the Reds were targeting Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala for immediate revolution. Next were Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Haiti, the tiny country which shared the same island with the Dominican Republic. Presumably, an uprising in one country would sweep through Latin America, leaving communists in power from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego.

The Dominican Republic's deteriorating political and social conditions had apparently prompted the Reds to move it up on their target list. When world sugar prices plummeted, the sugar-based economy on the island all but collapsed. Communist agents began filtering into the tiny country of 3.2 million to speed up the revolution and guide it in the desired direction. As early as October 1964, mimeographed handbills told dissidents how to make Molotov cocktails, build street barricades, plant bombs and seize arms. Two weeks before the Dominican revolt, Venezuelan police arrested three Italian Reds and charged them with trying to smuggle in \$330,000, apparently for financing a revolution in the Caribbean. Investigation revealed the money came from Moscow.

President Donald Reid Cabral headed the sixth Dominican government since Trujillo's assassination four years before. Already unpopular because of his program of austerity to prevent total economic collapse, he became even more so when he fired several high-ranking military officers for allegedly plotting against him.

Juan Bosch proposed to replace Cabral as president, as he himself had been replaced



Rebels barricaded streets and used barricades as fighting positions. Rebel, loyalist and Dominican civilians suffered thousands of casualties in fierce fighting.

in a coup in September 1963. Since then Bosch had been in San Juan, using his exile to plot with known communist leaders to regain power. Although he was not known as a Red, he apparently would collaborate with them if it would restore him to the presidential mansion in Santo Domingo.

Two weeks before the fateful Saturday in April, 52 trained communist agents slipped onto the island either by using forged passports or by night-landing by boat on isolated shores; 32 of these ruthless agitators were trained in Cuba, the rest graduates of guerrilla-warfare schools in Russia, China and other Eastern Bloc nations. They were waiting for one thing: an incident to spark the powder keg.

They got their wish 24 April when three colonels dismissed by Cabral seized and disarmed the Army chief of staff in an apparent coup attempt. A half-hour later, other plotters obtained control of the government radio and TV station. For 35 minutes, garbed in full beards and berets in imitation of Castro's Cubans, they broadcast false reports of the fall of the regime, urging listeners to take to the streets to finish the overthrow.

Red guerrillas had been stockpiling weapons and ammunition for just such an opportunity. Munitions began appearing in civilian hands on Saturday night as people "spontaneously" took to the streets to celebrate. Many soldiers from the lower echelons of the Army followed the dissident colonels into the Red camp and into the streets alongside the now-armed urban guerrillas. In Puerto Rico, Juan Bosch packed his bags, expecting a triumphant return to Santo Domingo.

President Cabral came on the air to prove he was still in power, bluntly proclaiming that disloyal elements would be fired upon unless they surrendered by 0500 Sunday.

The Air Force, Navy, some Army elements and the capital's 10,000 armed police still supported Cabral. However, Gen. Elias Wessin y Wessin refused to carry out the order to fire because he was convinced he was witnessing a genuine popular uprising.

By Sunday night, an estimated 20,000 of the city's 400,000 people were armed and virtually running amuck. They ranged from communist agents to common looters. Green fatigue uniforms were popular, especially among bands of young terrorists who called themselves *Tigres* and carried burp guns and other automatic weapons, including heavy .50-caliber machine guns. Soon after nightfall, the rebels began to concentrate on Santo Domingo's police force.

After the rebels captured Radio Patrola, the network station by which the police directed themselves, the police were forced to fight in small, isolated groups. Pitched battles ensued. Hundreds of police died during the first three days of the rebellion, their bodies dumped hurriedly into mass graves or left to rot beneath the tropical sun.

The well-armed, well-led rebels also fought in small cells. The clatter of gunfire echoed above city streets as clashes continued between pro- and antigovernment forces. Buildings were torched, businesses looted. Terrorists began selecting targets for assassination. Anyone believed to oppose communism was dragged from his home.

"To the wall! To the wall!" the assassins chanted, mimicking scenes from Castro's own mass executions.

Red forces soon controlled most of the city and chased President Cabral into hiding at the Israeli embassy. Juan Bosch, arriving to assume power, was reportedly rebuffed by the communists, who clamored for a "free" election. This common communist ploy played on popular support for one candidate in order, at the last moment, to slip in one of their own: Col. Francisco Caamaño Deñó. On 4 May, Deñó was to be inaugurated by his followers as the Dominican Republic's "provisional president."

During a lull in the fighting on Tuesday,

27 April, after U.S. Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett visited the presidential mansion and found it deserted and strewn with wreckage, he wired the U.S. State Department that anarchy prevailed, endangering the lives of American citizens. His wire would soon bring American forces to the Caribbean.

The next day, 200 armed rebels added impetus to Bennett's wire by storming the Ambassador Hotel where 1,300 U.S. citizens and other foreigners had sought refuge. Terrorizing the refugees, rebels separated some of the men, marched them out of sight, and fired guns over their heads to make those left behind think the men were being executed. No one was actually killed. The terrorists soon tired of their sport and left. Ambassador Bennett asked for U.S. Marines.

Offshore, the U.S.S. *Boxer* waited with its contingent of Marines while 40 other U.S. warships plowed through the Caribbean to cordon off the island. In the United States, the DRF brigade had moved to Pope Air Force Base where scores of C-130 aircraft waited on the ramps to fly it, in full battle gear, to the Dominican Republic.

The eyes of the world shifted from Vietnam, still in its initial stages of conflict, to the Caribbean, now the hottest spot on the globe. Once again, the powers of the Free World were about to collide with the Iron Curtain, this time on our doorstep.

On Thursday, 29 April, the first clash occurred between U.S. forces and rampaging communist rebels in Santo Domingo. Rebel bands shot up the embassies of Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Ecuador, then attacked the American Embassy. U.S. Marines and Dominican police exchanged fire with them in a brief but fierce skirmish. When the rebels pulled back, they left two of their own dead in the street. U.S. Marines from the aircraft carrier landed without opposition and prepared to march through the city.

"All types of communists are in this *thing!*" exclaimed a fearful diplomat. "Peking communists, Moscow communists and Castro communists."

Paratroopers at Pope were issued weapons and live ammunition. At the same time, officers stressed that no one fire except in self-defense and that the Dominican rebels were not to be referred to as "enemy." One military spokesman even referred to the rebels as "folks who are anti-82nd Division."

"Any bastard shoots at me," Lt. David Humble privately vowed, "is an enemy."

The Air Force base was an anthill of activity all day on Thursday, 29 April. Humble and his battery CO's problems with the supervision of loading six 105mm howitzers and the trucks, ammunition and other support equipment needed for artillery about to go into battle kept them from being awed by the turmoil and energy of men in large numbers preparing for combat.

It was nearly dark when all the equipment was loaded, and the helmeted and armed GIs began filing onto the big revved-up airplanes. Humble and his battery took one



Monsoon season turned field occupied by 82nd's artillery-support battalion into a quagmire.

of the first, strapping themselves into the webbing forward of their big guns and heavy equipment. To prevent night blindness, the red lights were on, creating an eerie atmosphere for the rumors that began to flow once physical activity ceased and the waiting began.

The skirmish between Marines and rebels at the U.S. Embassy became a full-scale battle in the talk within the bellies of the planes. While some 1,000 people had, in fact, already died in the fighting, rumor increased that number by a factor of three. One young trooper pledged to have his rifle in his hands, firing the moment his parachute set him onto the San Isidro Air Base.

The heavy troop planes took off after dark in a long, continuous line. Fighter jets flew cover. An hour after takeoff, word came that the rebels had been expelled from San Isidro, if they had actually ever controlled it, and that loyalist troops were in command.

"Be informed we will be able to air-land in the Dominican Republic," crackled intercom voices on some 170 airplanes. "There will be no parachute drop."

The news was greeted by spontaneous cheers.

Instead of the largest airborne operation since WWII, the maneuver became the largest base-to-base airlift ever conducted. Humble had no concept of the armada's awesomeness until his plane landed in Santo Domingo and he looked up into the night sky. It stunned him.

Giant C-130s circled San Isidro and Santo Domingo at about 1,000 feet above the ground, their landing lights blazing. The planes flew bumper to bumper in a 10-mile-diameter circle. One by one they peeled off and came in fast and low, landing to disgorge their cargoes of war. Just as quickly, they took off again. Other planes dropped from aloft to replace them, so that the great circle was always ablaze. Fighter planes streaked back and forth on its edges, keeping watch.

The only mishap occurred when a C-130 came in a bit too hot, flared out, stalled, and fell out of the air. For a breathless second it looked as if it would crash. But the pilot applied power on the first bounce, banked, then landed and taxied in.

Aircraft landed and took off until nearly dawn. Revolutionary graffiti painted on walls attested to the recent rebel presence, and a loyalist machine-gun nest on a grassy strip in the center of the airport pointed to the continuing threat of attack. Infantrymen established a wide defensive perimeter around the airport. Inside it, other troopers prepared for the dawn march on Santo Domingo some dozen miles away. The artillery battalion would not enter the city. Its batteries would set up their guns in support halfway between the airfield and the city.

At dawn, after the American C-130s had left, a Dominican pilot with a carbine slung over his shoulder rode up on a moped and parked near a line containing a number of obsolete U.S. P-51s and several French fighters: the entire Dominican air force. Nearby, a few pieces of ancient WWI armor rusting in a shed marked the country's



er. The FOs were shocked by the sight of bloated bodies left on the streets. Humble's FO came under heavy fire almost immediately. Several paratroopers fell wounded, screaming in agony, while the rest of the column took cover on the outskirts of the town square. Machine-gun bullets from a concealed .50-caliber chewed up the square, stitching it from side to side.

"Fire mission! Fire mission!" the FO demanded by radio. He listed coordinates and requested HE to take care of the machine-gun nest.

Humble's FDC (Fire Direction Controller) processed the mission. Crews locked and loaded the battery's 105s. Humble radioed headquarters for permission to fire.

"Negative," came the reply. "Fire mission denied."

"They're pinned down and report casualties," Humble argued.

"Mission denied."

Frustrated, angry and helpless, the lieutenant relayed the denial to his FO. The FO keyed his mike. Humble heard the machine gun belching across the air.

"Son of a bitch!" the FO cried. "Listen! Don't those rear-echelon bastards understand what's happening here?"

American intervention was both welcomed and rejected.

"Sorry," Humble said regretfully. "Mission denied."

Humble later learned that a 106 recoilless maneuvered into position on the town square and rescued the trapped GIs by blowing up the concrete-block building in which the rebel machine-gunners hid. Three rebels lay dead amid the rubble. The column picked up, evacuated its wounded, and continued the advance.

Meanwhile, in another quadrant of the city, the Marines were having their own fight trying to reach the besieged Ambassador Hotel and the U.S. Embassy. Their armored columns were ambushed repeatedly. One Marine fell dead. Six others were wounded in vicious house-to-house fighting. Despite heavy resistance, however, the Marines and paratroopers continued to blaze their way toward the trapped Americans. President Johnson was determined that the world know that the United States would no longer withhold its power in crises involving the lives of its citizens.

The flight path from the San Isidro Air Base brought airplanes directly across the 82nd's entrenched artillery positions. Traffic remained heavy throughout the day. American C-130s flew in medical equipment to treat casualties estimated in the thousands. Anticommunist Latin pilots in their stub-winged P-51s screamed overhead

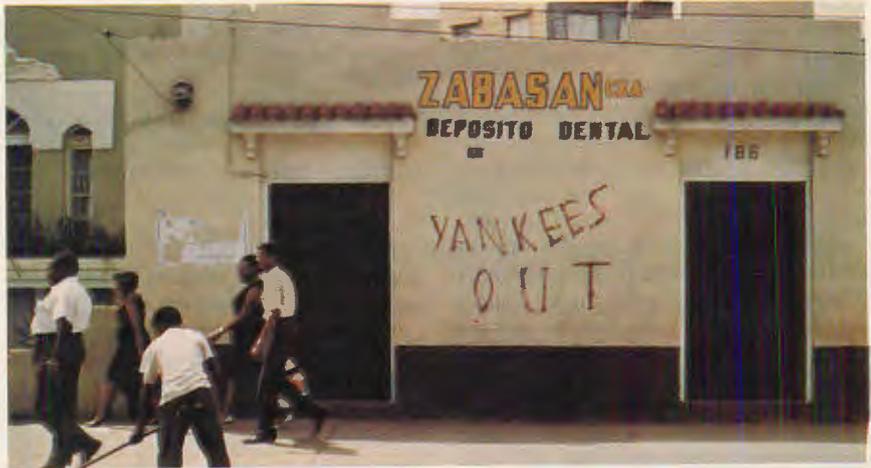
efforts to build an armored battalion.

The Dominican pilot cranked up one of the prop fighters and took off toward Santo Domingo. He returned from his strafing mission in less than an hour. He buzzed the airport, wagging his stubby wings, then shot into the sky and executed a perfect loop before landing. Then he climbed back on his moped and left.

Shortly after daybreak, the 82nd Division's DRF brigade moved on Santo Domingo with a three-mile-long convoy. The artillery dropped off at a hill about five clicks outside the city. Lt. Humble's A Battery set up its six howitzers in a rough cow pasture stubbled with scrubby brush. Although the city was out of sight over the hill, Humble could hear the angry stutter of small-arms fire as Red revolutionaries greeted U.S. paratroopers and Marines. As the day wore on, he also heard 106mm recoilless rounds exploding, and the measured heavy coughing of .50-caliber machine guns. Fighting was obviously fierce in the city.

C Battery formed up on A's left flank, with B on the right. The big cannons were soon sandbagged in, their muzzles elevated toward the fighting. Uncrated illumination rounds and HE (high explosives) were stacked in readiness. Gunners waited by their pieces. All fire mission requests, other than for illumination, had to be cleared through headquarters.

As executive officer, Lt. Humble was in charge of his battery's fire missions. Each battery had an FO (Forward Observer) and an RTO (Radio-Telephone Operator) who advanced with the infantry to call back coordinates in case the infantry needed firepow-





on their way to strafe rebel strongholds in the city.

The government radio station was a key target for the P-51s. Held by communists, it continued to exhort Red sympathizers and followers to arm themselves and take to the streets to repel the *Yanqui* invasion: "Kill the gringos with their aromatic cigarettes, their hard whiskey and their pockets full of dollars." The radio station was so important to the revolution that rebels took hostages and tied them out in the street around the station. Some of the hostages were families of the P-51 pilots.

Lt. Humble and the other artillerymen watched as the P-51s, alone and in pairs, worked on rebel positions with their cannon. The little fighters rose and swooped above the horizon, disappearing low beyond the hills on a strafing run, then reappearing to circle and come in again, engines revving and whining, guns crackling.

One of the planes took a hit. Its wings wobbled. It tried to climb, then seemed to flatten out in the air. A contrail of smoke and spilled fuel made a gray pencil-mark across the sky. The P-51 flew out over the ocean, losing altitude until it crashed into the sea.

Humble wondered if the downed pilot was the man of the moped and slung rifle.

Isolated from the fighting, the artillerymen heard extravagant rumors: On the one hand, American GIs were being driven back; on the other, the GIs had rescued the besieged U.S. nationals. The latter seemed to be more accurate. Toward nightfall, several military trucks and buses appeared on the dirt road to San Isidro, filled with

Dominican government's entire air force, obsolete U.S. P-51s, line up at San Isidro Air Base.

American men, women and children. The civilians cheered, waved and shouted heartily as they passed the artillery.

"God bless you all!"

"Give 'em hell!"

Night fell on the first U.S. action in Latin America in four decades. Continuous sounds of battle rose from the city. Since most electricity in Santo Domingo had been extinguished, GIs frequently called in artillery illumination fire to light up rebel positions. Parachute flares descended slowly from the skies, beaming like miniature

suns, casting eerie shadows down deserted streets and alleys. One soldier recalled an illumination round that did not deploy properly; the flare struck and ricocheted down the street, bouncing off buildings like a runaway meteor.

Gradually, the fighting died down for the night. Rumors persisted among the artillery

U.S. Marines and paratroopers sandbagged in along "corridor" linking Marines on one side of city with paratroopers from 82nd Airborne Division on other side. Americans suffered 123 casualties in month-long fighting to rescue trapped U.S. nationals and restore order following communist-led revolution.



batteries that they would be hit before morning. They dug defensive fighting perimeters and crawled in to wait. Inexperienced in combat, the young troopers remained edgy and unable to sleep. Intermittent gunshots rang out as nervous sentries fired at noises and shadows.

"C" Battery on Lt. Humble's flank heard furtive movement in the dark. An alert sentry picked it up first.

"Halt!"

More movement.

"Halt!" — a little higher-pitched.

Then all hell erupted in a pitched battle that lasted five minutes. When morning came, the troopers counted casualties: one cow! From then on, "C" Battery was known as "Cow" Battery.

Monsoon season was beginning, and tropical rains fell daily. The field occupied by the artillery became a quagmire. Mud sucked at boots. Clothing mildewed. Men soon stank of mold, mud and sweat. It reminded Humble of WWI trench warfare, without the fighting, since the artillerymen mostly endured forced inactivity.

To while away the tedium, the men began capturing tarantulas. They had tarantula races, betting on their favorites, and took tarantulas out to walk on a leash. Some of the spiders had names: Rover, Blackleg, Fred. It was a tarantula that gave the artillery battalion its only action during its first week in a combat zone. One of the big arachnids crawled up a pole in the first sergeant's tent. Caught between the tent wall and a Coleman lantern, the spider cast a three-foot-high image on the wall.

While the artillery cursed the mud, rain and boredom, the infantry and the Marines blasted a narrow, three-mile-long corridor through the heart of the city. Engineers lined the corridor with barbed wire, concertina and sandbagged gun emplacements. American sniper teams took to the roofs and engaged in sporadic fire fights with roving squads of hardcases in Castro uniform.

By week's end, some 10,000 armed rebels had been surrounded by 24,000 American Marines and paratroopers, while 11,000 sailors in 40 U.S. warships waited close offshore. For the most part, the revolutionaries and their communist advisers had been confined to two square miles in downtown Santo Domingo. After evacuating 4,000 foreign civilians, including 2,694 Americans, the Marines were holding an "International Refugee Zone" to the west of the rebels. Paratroopers held positions to the east of the rebels, linked by the corridor running through the heart of rebel territory.

Four Marines in a jeep were cut down by machine-gun fire when they made a wrong turn and ventured off the corridor. A paratrooper wandered into occupied territory. He was captured, but later released on foot. The rebels kept his jeep. An Army officer drove still another jeep into Indian country and vanished. His body was never found.

Boats carrying snipers and resupplies for the rebels made daring runs into the mouth of the Ozama River, trying to reach the entrenched revolutionaries. GIs with 106



Dominican armored battalion — a few pieces of ancient armor rusting underneath shelter.

recoilless rifles and antitank bazookas blasted the boats into kindling. One large vessel, presumably filled with ammunition on a resupply run from Cuba, erupted in a spectacular series of secondary explosions before it sank with all hands aboard.

The Reds fought on, fanatical and still dangerous. In spite of Army engineers' efforts to clean up the streets, hundreds of dead bodies still littered the city, adding to the stench of garbage, cordite and destruction. From 28 April to 6 May, U.S. casualties included 13 dead and more than 60 wounded. Although a negotiated ceasefire went into effect on 6 May, it was largely ignored. During the next two weeks, U.S. casualties increased by seven more dead and at least 40 more wounded. As of 20 May, official U.S. casualty statistics stood at 20 American KIA, 102 WIA, and one missing. Combined rebel, loyalist and civilian casualties numbered in the thousands.

The political situation remained confused, as it often is during a revolution. Juan Bosch had lost hope of returning to the presidential mansion and was again brooding in exile. His Red-picked successor, "Provisional President" Deño, had sent his wife and two children to asylum in the U.S.-held "International Refugee Zone" while he himself became a virtual prisoner of the communists, many of whom were already fleeing the country. President Cabral was reportedly all but ready to abdicate. The United States was attempting to present itself as neutral politically, although it had established a so-called "working relationship" with Gen. Wessin y Wessin, who was being mentioned as Cabral's successor.

"If you want the truth of it," said an American diplomat, "everything's all screwed up. No one really knows the outcome of all this."

The Reds were losing ground politically, philosophically and militarily. Loudspeakers

still blared propaganda in Independence Park, but few heeded it. On 13 May, the rebels lost their most valuable propaganda machine when P-51s finally knocked out the radio-TV station. By mid-May, most of the communist agitators had managed to sneak off the island with their tails between their legs, leaving an increasingly disillusioned rebel army behind. Soon, only the most hardened fought on.

U.S. patrols began spidering off the corridor to conduct house-to-house searches for rebels and weapons. Although fierce skirmishes between snipers and loyalist forces continued, the rebellion itself had been broken. All that remained was to mop up the holdouts and give the Dominican government time to reform.

Lt. Humble joined in the mop-up, volunteering to lead search patrols into the rebel-held zone. It was a relief for him to get away from the mud-impacted artillery positions. His first close look at the city reminded him of WWII street-combat scenes: Buses, trucks, furniture and parts of buildings barricaded many streets. Most of the buildings were masonry; their walls were pocked by bullets and explosions. Other buildings were fire-scorched hulls. Still others lay in rubble from 106 recoilless and bazooka fire. Most of the dead had been removed, but occasionally a patrol ran across a corpse covered by trash or rubble.

Humble was surprised and amused to find that the three-mile-long U.S. corridor included a large part of the city's gay quarters. Few of the gays had joined in the fighting. They stood back in doorways, and whistled and cat-called at passing troops. Soldiers sometimes referred to the corridor as "The Gay Way" or "Fag Drag."

After the fighting cooled down, U.S. trucks rumbled along the concertina-lined corridor, delivering rice, beans and powdered milk to starving civilians. Skinny, waif-like children fought each other over C-ration scraps. When a member of one of Humble's patrols flipped a half-eaten C into an empty oil drum, a half-dozen kids dived into the barrel to get it. The largest emerged

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victorious, running down the street digging out scrap food with his fingers while the others chased him.

Search patrols normally consisted of 10 or 12 GIs led by a lieutenant or captain. The patrols cautiously left the relative safety of the corridor and advanced in combat formation, searching each building of their assigned sector. They were often surprised by what they found. Humble's patrol kicked down one door to startle a man and woman in bed together. In another shack about the size of a large modern bathroom they found a stolen juke box bright with colored glass and flashing lights. The shack was not wired for electricity.

Sometimes they encountered snipers. An infantry lieutenant on a search patrol was presumed to be the last American soldier to die in the Dominican Republic. A slug from a hidden .50-caliber machine gun caught him mid-center and slammed him to the ground. He lay dead in the street while the rest of the patrol maneuvered to surround his killer. The sniper slipped away, leaving his machine gun behind.

Humble could have been the last soldier to die. He was directing the search of a house from which a previous patrol had received fire. Suddenly, two rifle shots rang out. The bullets passed so near Humble's head that he heard their distinctive *Zaat! Zaat!* He hit the ground and tumbled into a recessed doorway. Because the sounds of the gunshots echoed and re-echoed through the streets, it was impossible to determine their source.



Dominican civilians continue about their business while U.S. paratroopers in background hold formation in field near Santo Domingo.

Although thousands of weapons were used at the beginning of the revolution, including mortars, grenades and machine guns, the patrols recovered relatively few of them. U.S. intelligence speculated that most had been cached for another time or smuggled out of the country, to reappear in some other Latin American hot spot.

By the end of May, order had essentially returned to Santo Domingo, and American troops were preparing to withdraw. According to President Johnson, the communists had been successfully thwarted and Castro thrown back to his own island. Still, there were many in the U.S. intelligence community who saw the Dominican Republic as only a temporary victory against communism. The ugly head of Red-championed and



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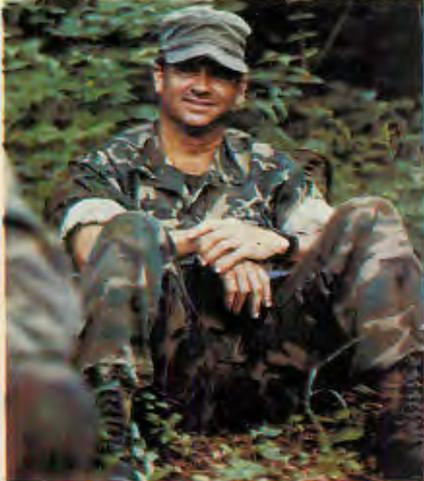
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Red-exported revolution would likely pop up again and again in countries from Mexico south. By intervening in the Dominican Republic, the United States reaffirmed its ability to deal with communist interference in the domestic politics of its neighbors.

For all U.S. good intentions, however, Latin America still perceived the United States as a rich godfather, as an incident that occurred on a lonely dirt road outside Santo Domingo a few days before the 82nd Airborne returned to Ft. Bragg shows.



Lt. David Humble, 82nd Airborne Division, was XO for artillery battery that "invaded" the Dominican Republic. U.S. armada made up largest base-to-base airlift ever conducted.

Lt. Humble's artillery battery was returning in a long truck convoy from a range where it had been expending surplus ammunition. A dilapidated jalopy filled with Dominicans attempted to pass the convoy. The rusty jalopy smoked badly, and its windows were cracked or broken out completely. In short, it was worth about \$20 back in North Carolina. In passing, the jalopy's half-drunk driver struck a deuce-and-a-half a glancing blow in the rear. There was no question that the Dominican was at fault.

Humble found himself filling out countless forms at a local constabulary. The scene was straight out of a Humphrey Bogart film. The official's pot belly protruded between his shirt and trousers. A big overhead fan stirred dust from the earthen floor, while poultry wandered in and out through open windows.

"There was no damage to the Army truck," Humble explained, "and one more dent on that old car won't even be noticed. Besides, it was the guy's own fault."

"No," replied the constable with inescapable logic. "The accident would not have occurred if you Americans had not been here. It was *your* fault."

In the end, among other "damage" payments to the Dominican Republic, the United States paid for a \$20 jalopy. The implications were clear: While Latin America might create its own problems by accident or design, it could always count on the United States — the rich *Yanquis* — to step in and pay the bill. ✖

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HARASSING THE BEAR

Continued from page 41

The reasons for this are uncertain. It may be the alleged "skimming" — which some Afghans claim was as high as 70 percent of the arms supplied, although none were able to supply any evidence to back up their claims — was reduced after changes at the source, the distribution system has been reformed, or that the Arabs — or the West — have come up with more money.

Even if the Afghans are correct and only 20 percent of their weapons have been supplied from outside, the number is still significant. In 1982, the Panjshir Valley had only 13 heavy machine guns for air defense. Two years later, it has over 200. The mujahideen around Urgun in the winter of 1983-84 had over 70 heavy machine guns. Many of these have been captured, but not all. The additional mines and RPG-7s, as well as more effective tactics, made the roads even more dangerous for the Soviets, pressing them to switch toward the emphasis on air operations first seen in 1983.

We found that ammunition remains in short supply. Of the Afghans we were in the field with, some had four magazines for their Kalashnikovs, most only one or two. It is unrealistic to plan to fight a protracted war if you lack the ammunition to sustain it. Captured Soviet ammunition frequently proves to be of low quality, as does the locally made version. Armorers

are also few and far between among the Afghans — one reason why the rugged, soldier-proof, Soviet-made infantry weapons are so widely used.

The Afghans could get around many of their problems — the need for training, effective tactics, the lack of unified command, if they had reliable supplies not only of ammunition and food, but of good clothing, boots, tents and radios. It is obvious that a few skilled fighters with full bandoliers will do more damage than an untrained group with five rounds a man, but they will also take less casualties, be easier to command in battle and be easier to supply with food (no small matter when the Soviets have been attacking Afghanistan's agricultural infrastructure for over four years).

Mobile main-force units of full-time fighting men often strike outside of their home area in cooperation with other guerrilla forces. In the Panjshir, Massoud has organized forces to operate outside the valley. Panjshir units, in 1983-84, have fought throughout north-central Afghanistan. In the Urgun fighting of 1983-84, other main-force units acted as a cadre while the Afghan ranks were swelled by the local people taking up arms.

The planning for Urgun was largely the work of Abdul Rahim Wardak. A relative of Amin, Rahim had been a colonel in the Afghan Army before the war. Today, he is senior military adviser to NIFA's leadership. This is one way the Afghans are trying to mesh the requirements of tradi-

tional leadership (Sayid Ahmad Gailani heads the group because of his authority as a religious leader) with modern military skills. A big, tall man with permanently uncombed gray hair, Rahim speaks excellent English, polished during his extensive professional military training in the United States: advanced officers courses in infantry and armor, Ranger School, and the Command and General Staff College. The expertise of the small cadre of men like Rahim is potentially a key factor in improving Afghan fighting power.

Most battlefield commanders would have never actually made it to the battlefield without good staff work and effective planning. Rahim is a student of military history and knows the value of planning. But history has taught him what Ft. Leavenworth left out — such as what to do when a large percentage of his forces pick up and go home, because otherwise their families will have no food, the same problem faced by commanders of the Middle Ages. Rahim knows how they did it, and applies the centuries-old lessons to today's battlefields.

We did not get to see any of Rahim or Amin's counterparts, the proud and skillful commanders wearing the Red Star. We did see much evidence of their work, however. If the Afghans are preparing for the long haul today, the Soviets started preparing soon after the bitter but instructive lessons of the 1980 fighting showed them that Afghanistan was not going to be an easy victory.

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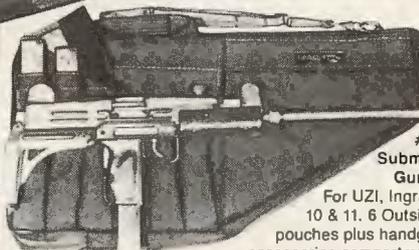
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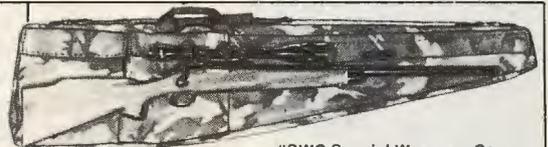
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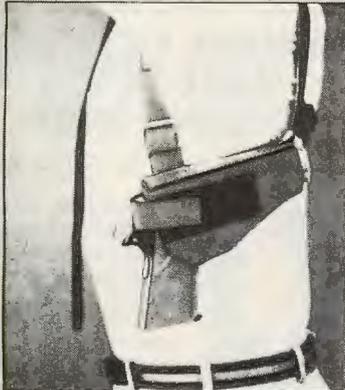
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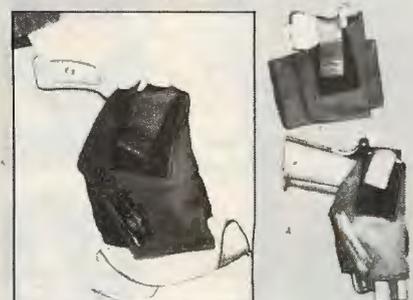
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In 1982, the Soviets finished expanding the air bases at Khandahar and at Shindand in southwestern Afghanistan, within striking range of the Persian Gulf. Afghans reported to us that in 1983, new fixed-wing airfields were operational at Ghurian, near Herat in western Afghanistan, and at Bozekhan in the area of the Wakhan Corridor where the Soviet Union meets with Afghanistan, Pakistan and China. The Soviets supply their forces in Afghanistan with a petroleum, oil, lubricant pipeline running from the Soviet Union. They have started to take Afghanistan's natural gas and to link the Afghan electrical power system to that of the Soviet Union.

The Soviets are not only looking to economic links with Afghanistan. Their aim is to "Soviet-ize" all levels of Afghan society. Indeed, this is another indication of the Soviet emphasis on a long-range approach. As many as 10-20,000 young Afghans have been hauled off to the Soviet Union for training and indoctrination. They are the future leaders of a Red Afghanistan, or so the Soviets wish.

In Peshawar, we met with Afghans who had spent years playing the dangerous role of double agents, serving the Kabul Regime while working for the guerrillas, until the danger became too great and they came over. In the military, the real authority is held not by the Afghan officers, but by the Soviet "advisers" at all levels of command from regiment upwards. The ministries of education and justice are under day-to-day Soviet control. The Soviets have emphasized strengthening the Kabul Regime's border troops, a force that has become significantly stronger in 1983, and the KhAD, the Kabul Regime's hated and feared secret police. These two forces are directly linked with their Soviet KGB counterparts.

The Soviets have established overlapping and complementary sets of ties to maintain their control over Afghanistan. In addition to the government-to-government ties, there are party-to-party, army-to-army and secret-police-to-secret-police. This extensive control system also points to a long-term Soviet commitment. They may well believe that while the war may drag on, they can succeed in reshaping the society to one consistent with a communist government, as was done in Soviet Central Asia and Mongolia. That took 20 years. The way the Soviets are digging in to Afghanistan, it appears likely that they are willing to fight that long again — unless the war becomes more costly to them than withdrawal would be. For this to happen requires not only better training and arms for the Afghans, but even more important, for the West to greatly increase the diplomatic and economic pressure exerted against the Soviets.

The Afghans reported to us that the Soviets have, starting in 1983, emphasized air operations, both independently and in conjunction with ground opera-



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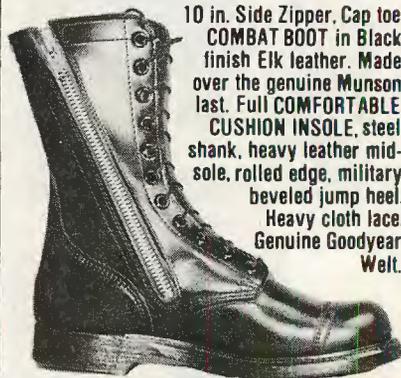
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tions, more than the large-scale operations that characterized their offensives in 1980 and 1982, or the smaller, commando-style actions of 1981. The Soviets have had a new way of fighting the war in Afghanistan each year since the invasion. They do learn from experience — the embarrassing setbacks of 1980 have not been repeated, and the series of six costly offensives into the strategic Panjshir Valley north of Kabul were discontinued during 1983, though they may resume later in 1984.

One way the Soviets have shown their new emphasis on air operations is by an increase in intensive conventional bombing. This was most marked in the heavy fighting in the spring of 1983 around Herat. In the words of one U.S. analyst, "The Soviets have discovered the Arc Light [Code for conventional B-52 strikes]." The tactic of using intense aerial bombardment was repeated throughout Afghanistan during 1983, most notably at Shomali, north of Kabul. The evidence of the Soviet presence is not troops and helicopters, but the bomb casings, the shattered houses and the well-stocked cemeteries seen throughout Afghanistan, especially along the main roads and in the provinces bordering on Pakistan.

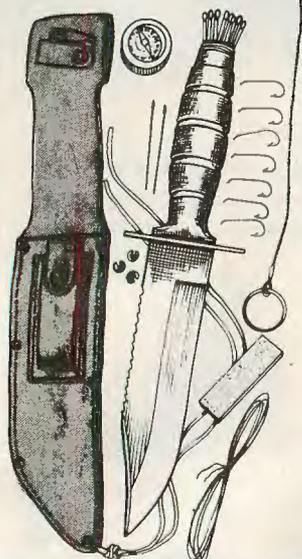
One reason for the emergence of an air-war strategy is that more effective Afghan weaponry and training have already taken their toll on Soviet convoys. Kabul Regime bases in the depopulated provinces that border on Pakistan, like Khost and Gardez, have had to be supplied by airlift. Smaller outposts in these provinces require parachute drops for resupply. Like any airdrop, these have risks. A little while before we arrived, Afghan heavy machine guns had planted two twin-engine transports on resupply missions. Supply drops often end up in the hands of the guerrillas rather than their intended recipients — we were presented with the parachute from one such gift package.

The Soviet Army has made sure that it is not going to repeat the showy defeats of 1980. It still, however, comes up with a ration of tactical misadventures and outright stupidity that gives the Afghans more chances to counter the advantages of the world's most powerful army. One Soviet patrol in APCs found an overturned poultry cart along the route, its owner distraught over the scattered, running chickens. Soviet Army food ranges from the dreadful to the disgusting, so hatches popped open and the troopers were so busy catching dinner that no one noticed the Afghan slipping down into an irrigation ditch. The mujahideen had a machine gun in ambush.

Another group of Afghans managed to construct a big home-made command-detonated mine. Not being particularly original lads, they were going to plant it in a crater in the main road where they had planted mines before and wait for a Soviet patrol. They had put the mine in the crater, running the detonating wires to cover,

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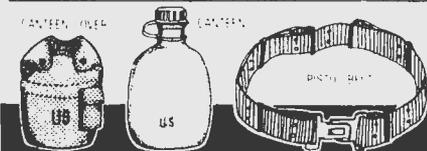
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- Desert Tan
- Desert Camouflage
- Black

We're America's Army & Navy Store!!

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- 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.

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Formally called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt headpiece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or heap abuses, pursue flammers or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wistful self be heard. Sizes: 6 7/8 to 7 5/8. \$19.75/each



- Genuine Leather Chin Strap \$2.00/each
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(Specify color: silver, gold, metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue).

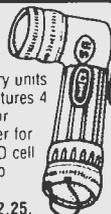
SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

- 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.

- Waterproof and Hurricane Matches - these matches will fit nicely into the GI matchbox and are a must for any survival kit. The waterproof matches will light even when wet and the hurricane matches will not only light even when wet but in addition cannot be blown out. There are 47 waterproof and 20 hurricane matches per box. Choose: Waterproof or Hurricane matches. 75¢/box; 2 boxes for \$1.25.

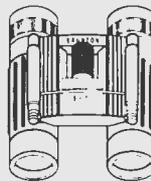
Angle Head Flashlite -

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.



Micro Precision 8x21 Binocular fits in the palm of your hand!!

It looks like a toy - but ours is the state of the art, micro binocular with sterling optical quality. Manufactured by Brunton, the firm that has supplied the precision M2 compass to the US military since the 1940's, our binocular weighs less than 9 ounces and measures a mere 2 3/4" x 4". Yet its 8 power magnification provides the clarity and detail found in much larger (and more expensive) binoculars. It's relatively narrow field allows the user to locate targets almost immediately.



Rubber coated armour makes the binocular water repellent and shockproof. Each binocular comes complete with a carrying case which can be worn on the belt and is warranted for 1 year by Brunton. Kaufman's is certain you'll be both pleased and amazed at the quality and effectiveness of this binocular. If you're not completely satisfied return it to us for a full refund plus a \$5.00 credit which may be applied towards any of our merchandise at any time.

- Choose: Camouflage rubber armoured or Black rubber armoured
- List price \$120.00/each
- Kaufman's price \$99.95/each.

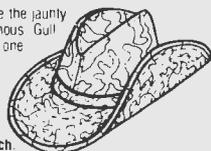
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The Basic Wardrobe Accessoryment for Every Well Dressed Merc. Donchathink?

GREAT GIFT IDEA! Two great things about our ties: First, they're made especially for us in the USA from genuine GI woodland camo material of 50% cotton / 50% nylon so they can be washed or dry cleaned. Second, they go equally well with anything in your wardrobe from your most formal blue pin stripe suit to your Hawaiian shirt with the funny looking lines on it. Choose from: Pointed end (traditional and conservative) or Straight End (dunk and iconoclastic) \$9.95/each; 2 for \$18.95.

Australian Bush Hat

These American made hats feature the jaunty dandy style the Aussies made famous. Gull brim that can be worn flat or with one side snapped up. All cotton.



- Please Select:
- Tiger Stripe Camouflage
- Woodland Camouflage
- Olive Drab (OD) Green

Sizes: S, M, L, XL \$10.50/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.

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.

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- No, we're not the cheapest. But you get what you pay for. If you order the cheapest you may wait a long time for delivery of something you may ultimately be unhappy with. If you order from Kaufman's you'll see why top quality merchandise and first rate service (with a Customer Service Department always available) will squeeze the most value out of every dollar you spend.

GI USMC Fatigue Hat - (Genuine GI)

Specify: Woodland Camo or Olive Drab (OD) Green. S, M, L, XL \$5.00/each



Camouflage T-Shirts

cotton/50% polyester. Choose from:

- Green Leaf Crew (Round Neck)
- Tiger Stripe Crew (Round Neck)
- Desert Pattern Crew (Round Neck)
- Green Leaf V-Neck

 Specify Size: S, M, L, XL \$7.00/each; or any 3 shirts for \$18.00.

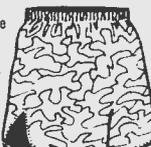


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Ours are stylish shorts made in the USA that feature a trim fit and fashionable good looks. Perfect whether worn for a hard workout or trend setting fashion.

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- Woodland Camouflage Pattern
- Desert Camouflage Pattern
- Olive Drab (OD) Green
- Khaki (Tan)

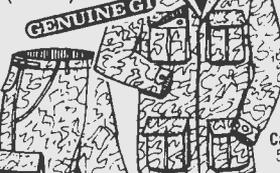


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25% Off - These are the Real McCoy's by Bausch & Lomb. Also Genuine USAF and NASA Pilot glasses. See Military Goods Catalog for details.



Battle Dress Uniform's (BDU's) -



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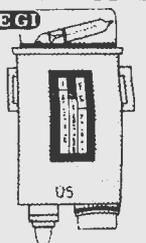
- Choose from:
 - Woodland Pattern Camouflage - 50% cotton, 50% nylon. Army's latest issue. The pants have a reinforced seat and knees; the jacket has reinforced elbows. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$30.00/each; \$57.50 set.
 - Day Desert Pattern Camouflage - 50% cotton 50% nylon. Latest issue to Airborne Troops of the Rapid Deployment Force. Brand New. Reinforced as Woodland Pattern above. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00 set.
 - Olive Drab (OD) Green - 100% cotton ripstop, as used in early Vietnam. Current GI manufacture. Brand New. Specify: Jacket or Pants \$30.00/each; \$57.50 set.

Tiger Stripe Pattern Camouflage - Commercial Manufacture - these are made by a US Government contractor to military specs. The tiger stripe pattern is true. They are reinforced as the Woodland Pattern Camouflage, above. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify Jacket or Pants \$34.00 each; \$65.00 set

Solid Black - a favorite of SWAT teams, these fatigues were manufactured in the US by a government contractor to military specs. 50% cotton 50% nylon. These are reinforced as the GI Woodland Pattern above. Regular lengths only (no longs). Specify Jacket or Pants \$34.00 each; \$65.00 set.

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 1/2" x 2 1/4"). It 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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and were about to cover everything over when a Soviet patrol showed up early, forcing the Afghans to take cover. The Soviets saw something was amiss and pulled up by the crater, opened the hatches, got out and looked down: "Hey, get a load of this, the Afghans have put a big command-detonated mine in this here crater." Whereupon the Afghans detonated the mine.

The Afghans have learned much in almost five years of war. They realize that the Soviets are not going to leave soon. They need training, effective leadership and modern weapons — every man, woman and child over the age of six we encountered asked us, first and foremost, for surface-to-air missiles. They are sad, but not bitter, that they have received so little help not only from the West, but from their Islamic brothers. They are fighting an enemy with virtually limitless resources. No one has ever won a war of attrition against Russia. The Afghans cannot promise that they are going to win. They do promise that they are not going to stop fighting with whatever they have, however they can, to defeat the invaders. We saw that this was one promise they are trying very hard to deliver.

Back in Peshawar, the roaring fighter planes and the bustling refugee camps reminded us where the Soviets' next step may be. We sat on the lawn of the splendidly decayed Dean's Hotel while our Afghan friends, when they tired of talking of battle, told us of the now-dead sweetness life had Before The War — one of the saddest phrases in any language. Then, the future offered hope. Their country was poor and backward, to be sure, but life was peaceful and, above all, improving. Literacy was increasing, life expectancy lengthening. Radios and irrigation were reaching even the tenant farmer.

The war shattered this future, this hope, beyond all redemption and all repair. They now all realize that, whether they win or lose, it will be a long and bloody war, one that most of them will probably not survive. The men we drank our tea with could look forward to life as an exile, or as compliant subject of an alien regime that rules by terror, or to fight on in a war that may never end against the world's most powerful nation. Karen and I went back to the airport. The Afghans shouldered their Kalashnikovs and started another day's march towards home.

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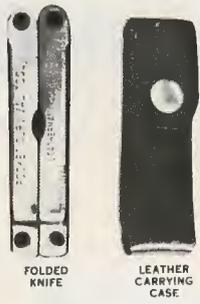
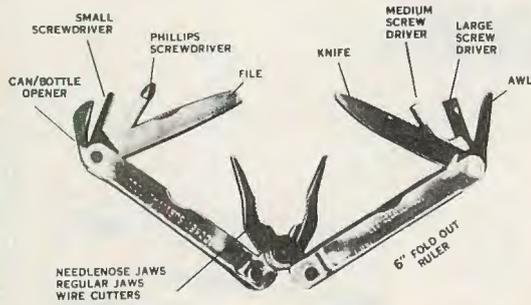
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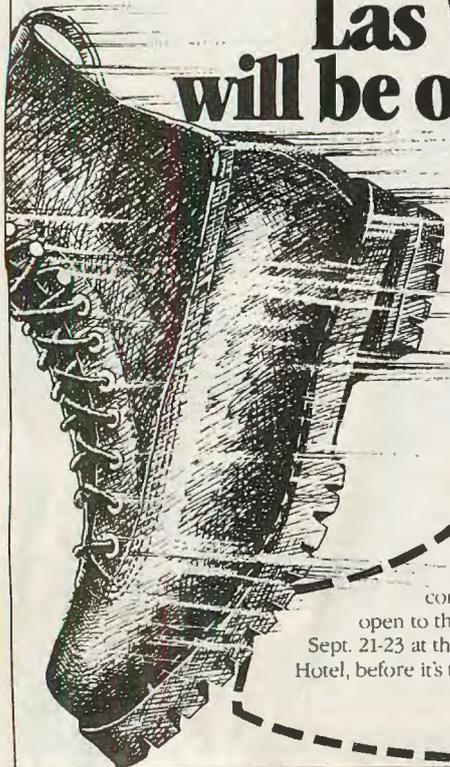
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RUSSIA'S BORDER

Continued from page 61

close. All that separates them from the road is a low mud wall and a ditch. The second section has taken up covering positions in a tree line about 70 meters back on the left flank. The plan is to hit the first lone armored vehicle or pair of vehicles that is unlucky enough to be passing.

At present there's not much traffic. A bus or car once every two to three minutes. We might be in for a wait.

The opposition must be as nervous as hell. According to one of the villagers, two APCs passed here yesterday evening after dark. The driver of the lead vehicle saw what he thought was a suspicious movement in the ditch. In fact it was just a dog but he slammed on all his brakes anyway. The second vehicle tried to swerve, caught the first a glancing blow and ended up in the field. (At that point firing broke out from the wall and I had to stop waiting.)

Thursday 1915 hours. This afternoon's business was murder, pure murder. And that, they say, is the definition of a successful ambush. They staged a successful ambush.

The agreement had been to hit the first armored vehicle. As it turned out the first suitable targets were a couple of trucks driving back to the garrison from the city full of troops. Ghani couldn't resist it.

It was all over within less than 60 seconds and the Teacher never got his moment of glory. It was a Kalashnikov and grenade job. Few of the troops could have known what hit them. The first truck veered straight off the road and disappeared into the field. The driver of the second had time to break before being hit in a hail of fire that Ghani and the rest were literally hosing onto the truck at almost point-blank range behind the wall.

Then they were running back toward us along a wall that ran at right angles to the road. The guys beside me opened up to give covering fire, but they could have saved their ammunition — no one in either army truck was in any state to return the fire.

The only other vehicle in sight was a Mercedes bus heading in the opposite

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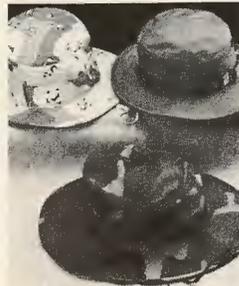
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direction. The driver's reaction was almost comic. First he pulled up about 100 meters from the stricken trucks. Then he started backing off, fast; stopped again; and then disappeared onto the floor.

Once Ghani's men were clear of the road, the guys with me started pulling back, still firing from between the trees. By this time an army post further back down the road but hidden by the wall had opened up in support of the trucks. But with the wall in between, we had little to worry about.

Then we were all jogging, back through the village, across a field and finally across a feeder road that might have been used to cut off our retreat.

We stopped to regroup and catch our breath outside a farm house. Some peasants emerged and there was a good deal of hand shaking and back-slapping. Ghani, businesslike, was counting up all the men and then began taking an inventory of who had expended what ammunition.

From the road came the staccato hammer of a tank-mounted Dashika, blazing away at everything and nothing. Over 10 minutes too late. From there back into the labyrinth of southern Mazar and another safe-house. We return to the gorge tonight... ☘

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MACV RECONDO

Continued from page 67

The team leader carried Air Force meteorological data giving the exact times of first light and sunset. He roused the team an hour before first light and they removed all traces of their presence.

Moving on a preselected route and remaining clear of trails, the mission began in earnest, its goal to confirm intelligence of suspected cache placements and infiltration routes into the valley. Recondo is the first rung in a ladder of intel efforts leading from the field to MACV command. The team scoured their assigned jungle sector for traces of enemy troop movement. They knew how to deduce element size, direction and intent from footprints and refuse. The enemy, however, wasn't being generous. It was also important for them to realize that their sandaled rivals might be exercising the same steps in tracking them.

Support aircraft flew over the target area twice daily, flying a straight course to prevent suspicion. The RTO monitored his radio during these flights, listening for coded messages. At the predesignated exfil sites, 281st gunships cruised aloft not more than 10 minutes from the launch point. The birds relayed messages while inspecting the security of all LZs. For prolonged radio contact, the LO moved to another location, making a "dummy" contact with an imaginary team. The school maintained a 24-hour watch of the CW and FM radios and guard frequencies for emergency calls from the field. This system of fail-safe procedures ensured that support would always be available without revealing the team's position.

The school TOC (Tactical Operations Center) uneasily waited for alert calls, noting the team's position. The student RTO carried a PRC on his back and each instructor carried a handset, so he could take command and call the shots. Often the Recondos have to lie motionless, sweating the minutes into hours, meshing with the vines and bushes surrounding them, while the enemy stares directly into their faces, before turning back down the trail.

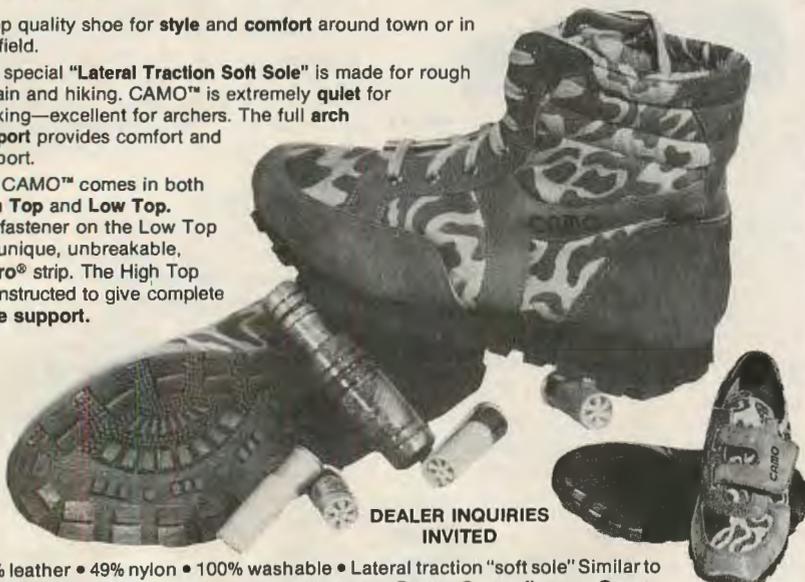
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combat-related deaths were small in number. Only two were reported between November 1966 and April 1968.

Instructors and students weren't the only individuals facing peril. During the summer of 1968, Recon teams did occasionally contact enemy patrols and incur casualties. Late in the year, one team inadvertently made contact with an enemy point man and opened fire, not knowing that a company-sized element lurked a few meters down the trail.

The team called for assistance, and the 550th CIDG (the Vietnamese Civilian Irregular Defense Group) responded for the second time that year. Jungle fighting prevented direct confirmation of the actual numbers involved. The team was under heavy fire from a large force, size unknown.

Grenades exploding at the perimeter wounded several team members. The firefight was at its peak when the thumping sounds of approaching Hueys mingled with the staccato clattering of machine guns.

Off-loading at a nearby clearing, the Viet mercenary force began to work around to the team's right flank, popping off rounds into the dense brush. In a matter of minutes the 550th was positioned to cover the team's departure.

Making their way quickly to the LZ, the team broke out into the clearing as a medevac was arriving. Rushing the wounded onboard a Huey at a four-foot hover was difficult so the school medic stepped out on the skid, tethered to the cabin floor by a cargo harness. As he bent over to reach a wounded man, a 12.7mm round struck him in the chest. His dead body hung from the side door, streams of blood spattering in the ship's ground effect, the only fatality of the fire fight. Shortly after, another Recon team in the sector moved in and kept the VC detachment under surveillance.

The returning soldiers were no longer students, but qualified Recondos, who had earned the title in the ultimate test environment. In formation outside Dewey Hall in the center of the school compound, each man was awarded the Arrowhead patch, to be worn on the right breast pocket of his fatigues. He was given a Recon number, entered into his records for the rest of his Army career: his license to instruct or perform LRRP missions in his home unit. The

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Lifetool — wallet-sized piece of surgical steel which has over 40 different uses, described in the accompanying booklet. Examples range from cutting through aircraft skins to open cans. Burning lens included. \$24.95 plus \$1.75 postage & handling.

WE BUY

QUALITY
We built this company on supplying quality repair parts that work and last. We back this with an unconditional money back guarantee. A business like ours survives on reorderers. Quality merchandise generates reorderers.

M16 / AR 15, UZI, FN-FAL

PARTS & ACCESSORIES

MOST PARTS NEW COLT-NOT REMAKES OR SURPLUS

All orders are shipped with breakdown & assembly schematics.

All parts are new manufactured to GI spec's.

NOT SALVAGED FROM DEMILITARIZED GUNS

Delivery
From receipt of order no part listed is more than 10 days away from any customer in the U.S.A.

WE TRADE

NEW PARTS ANY QUAN.



\$325.

Complete Upper & Bolt Carrier Assembly w/ 24", 20" Heavy Match or Std. Barrel

COMPLETE WEAPON KITS



\$350.

NEW PARTS ANY QUAN.

Complete Lower Assembly



\$160.

Weapon kits come subassembled with new manufacture G.I. parts, most Colt. Upper Receiver, Teardrop Forward Assist, Ejection Cover, Charging Handle, Site and Bolt Carrier (specify AR-15 or M16) assemblies all new Colt and assembled to barrel assembly of your choice. Barrels are made with 1" in 9" twist for use with standard 55 grain or new 63 grain ammo. Lower receivers made from 7075 T6 M16 Colt Forgings featuring new raised mag catch area and gray finish to match Colt Uppers. Lower receivers are assembled with AR-15 or M16 components (Please Specify). All kits are classified as semi-auto's - No class 3. A standard dealer's FF1 is required. These kits come complete less the safety and pistol grip assemblies which are not included. We are very flexible as to your specific needs in ordering. Should you wish to delete or add anything we will accommodate to customize the weapon as you desire.

AR15 (Heavy Match Barrel 24" w/Rd. Ass. Hdgs.) \$479.

AR15 (Std. Barrel 20" w/Rd. Ass. Hdgs.) \$459.

AR15 (Heavy Match Barrel 20" w/Rd. Ass. Hdgs.) \$469.

Complete XM15 Shorty Kit \$439.

Complete XM15 Shorty (Heavy Barrel) \$469.

Complete Lower Assembly



\$160.

M16/AR15 Upper Receiver Assembly

Upper Receiver - (orig new M16) 80.95
(Forward Assist Model) (Colt)



These uppers are Colt. Not the Govt. rejects bought at scrap prices and selling elsewhere for under \$50.

Forward Assist Assembly (Colt) 19.95
(orig new M16) (Teardrop)
Ejection Cover Assembly (orig new M16) (Colt) 11.95
Charging Handle Assembly (orig new M16) (Colt) 19.95
Rear Sight Assembly (Colt) 8.95

NEW!!! Exclusively from Quality Parts Manual Rear Site Widgee Knob. Convert your rear site to the new M16(AE) Configuration
Rear Sight Conversion Kit 9.95
Complete Rear Site Assembly 16.95

Bolt Carrier Assembly

Bolt Carrier M16A1 w/Forward Assist 66.95
Notches, Chrome lined New Colt (not reworks or remakes)



Bolt Carrier - Same as above w/key Ass. Installed 79.95
M16 Bolt Carrier Conversion Converts AR15 to M16 Bolt Carrier Extensively Tested 19.95

Bolt Carrier Key w/screws (Colt) 11.95
Bolt Carrier-Cot 27.95
Bolt Gas Rings (set of 3) 1.95
Bolt Cam Pin (Colt) 2.95
Ejector Assembly (Colt) 1.95
Extractor Assembly (Colt) 6.95
Extractor Pin 8.00
Extractor Spring 5.00
Firing Pin 3.95
Firing Pin Retaining Pin 5.00

Barrel Assemblies, Muzzle Brakes, Accessories

New!! M16/AR15 National MATCH Heavy Barrels Available in Crowned or Threaded Configurations Alternate Barrel Whip and Inaccuracy in Semi and Auto Fire Update Your Gun to New M16-A2 20" Length 89.95
24" Length 99.95
AR M16 Standard Weight 74.95
20" Length

Barrel Assemblies come complete with Sight Assembly installed, Barrel Nut and Handguard Cap, Precision Machined, 1 in 9 Twist, Sixland and Groove, Headspaced to GI Spec and Test Fired at factory. Parked. N&A rec. twist

Russian AK74 Combat Muzzle Brake - For M16/AR15 Reduces recoil 70%, Reduces muzzle climb 90%, Screws on Barrel Thread (as seen in Soldier of Fortune & American Rifleman.) (This is the first we've found that works!) Design taken from Russian Muzzle Brake (patented)

Flash Hider - bird cage (closed) Late Style 3.95
Flash Hider Lock Washer 4.00
Flash Suppressor - extended XM177 (Screws on for shorty look) adds weight to end of barrel, reduces muzzle climb Muzzle Cap (Keeps out dirt & moisture)

Shoot away type Buttstock (Trap Door) New Colt 15.95
Buffer Tube (Standard) 13.95
Site Adj. Tool 7.95
Side Sling Adapter 6.95
Front Sling Swivel 2.95
Scope Mount (Alum.) 14.95
Conversion Pin - A/F Lower to M16 Upper Front Site Taper Pin 3.95
Bipods Steel Construction 11.95
Breech Deflector 7.95

Assault Rifle Handguards (M16/AR15) Full Length w/heat shields, Handguard snaps on - No need to remove that difficult Front Site with this model. Cap & instructions. Like on new M16-A2 Also avail w/ round cap (Lonestar) Delta Ring Black Anodized Aluminum High Impact Plastr 5.95 2.95

Complete Spring Package Tighten up the action of your entire weapon. Every spring included over 20 springs! 9.95



M16/AR15 Combat Muzzle Brake

Handguard Snap Ring 1.50
Handguard Spring Weld 4.00
Beyond M7 w/Scabbard M&A1 Flat: AR15, M16, AR180, Gov't Issue (not West German) 24.95

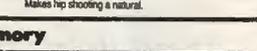
Front Site w/ Post Assembly installed 99.95
Front Site Post Assembly 2.95
Front Site (Post) 1.75
Front Site Detent 1.25
Front Site Detent Spring 9.00
Gas Tube (CAR) 8.00
Gas Tube (Standard) 13.00
Gas Tube Pin 4.00
Sling (New Padded Nylon) 5.95
Sling M16-Black Web Gov't Issue 2.00
Buffer (Standard) New Colt 14.95
Buffer Spring (Standard) 4.95

The Shorty

Shorty (CAR-15) Heavy Barrel Kit 104.95
Shorty (CAR-15) Barrel Kit 99.95

Complete and ready to install with Barrel, Front Site Installed with Past Assembly - Round Assault Handguards, Handspaced and Test Fired at factory. Parked. Ready to screw into Receiver. Gas Tube, Barrel Nut, CAR Suppressor, Aluminum Delta Ring, Front Handguard Cap included.

Shorty Barrel Kit (Stainless Steel-Grey) 119.95
Shorty Barrel Kit (Heavy) Stainless Steel 129.95
Shorty (CAR-15) Telescoping Stock Completely Assembled and Ready to Screw on, Look and Weigh Like the Colt. 49.95



NEW!!! Forward combal Grip Makes hip shooting a natural. 19.95

The Armory

Armorer's Kit - Total Assm. & Disassembly 69.95
Includes - Barrel Vice Jaws, 177 Gas Tube Pin, Drill Punch, Ordnance Tool, Assorted Springs, Pins and Screws, GI Technical Service Manual & Cleaning Kit Site Tool

Chamber Reamer 223 (rough or finish) 38.00
Headspaced gauges (with instructions) "No Go" - Dangerous condition (Extensive Headspace) 20.00
GI Ordnance Headspace Field - Ships w/ Chamber 20.00

New Dual Site Design will accept Heavy & Std Barrels
Armorer's Barrel Wrench 19.95



MISC.



Hand Grenade-MXII Fragmentation w/Pin & Spoon Inert 5.95

LSA Gun Oil 8oz. Tube 1.95

FN-FAL Butt Stock Disassembly Tool 29.95

UZI Magazine 25 round 9.95
Blank Firing Adapter - Gov't Issue new 4.95
M60 Sling - extra wide will fit M16 9.95
UZI Mag Loader 19.95
UZI Site Tool 22.95
UZI Mag Clip Holder 3.95
M16-A1 Nylon Clearing Kit Case - Vekro 2.95
Side Sling Adapter AR/M16 6.95
FN Armorer's Kit 138.95
Mini 14 Bay Lugs Blue 7.95
Stainless 10.95
45 Mags 5.95

FN Hancock Scope 4x 41.00
FN Scope Mount 247.00

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FN Armorer's Kit 138.95
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Stainless 10.95
45 Mags 5.95

Lower Receiver Assembly

Lower Receiver XM15 (FFL required) Gray 79.95
(no Offset Pin required) (Colt Forging)

Lower Receiver complete and assembled with AR15 or M16 parts (specify) (FFL) 115.95
UZI/M16 Lower Receiver Parts Kit w/Grip (Lower Receiver & Auto Saar not included) Specify for AR15 or M16 38.95

Buffer Detent 1.50
Buffer Detent Spring 4.95
Bolt Catch 5.00
Bolt Catch Spring 5.00
Bolt Catch Plunger 5.00
Bolt Catch Pin 5.00
Bolt Catch Assembly 4.95
Disconnector 2.45
Disconnector Spring 5.00

M16 Hammer Trigger, Safety Selector & Disconnector (1 of each part) (Colt) 21.95
Tighten the action with our Spring Package Hammer, Trigger, Ejector, Disconnector, Extractor & Magazine Catch Springs (1 of each Spring) 7.95

Hammer (specify AR15 or M16) (Colt) 6.95
w/ J Pin 5.00
Hammer Retaining Pin (J Pin) 9.95
Hammer, Trigger, or Saar Pin (each) 9.95
Hammer Spring 9.95

Magazine GI - 30 rd, Aluminum/new (these are OK Machine Magazine OK makes Colt Magazines) SUPER SPECIAL!!! 5.95
Magazine Catch Assembly 2.50
Magazine Catch 1.95
Magazine Catch Button 8.00
Magazine Catch Spring 9.45
NEW! Stowaway Pistol Grip (Lonestar) (as advertised) Store Repair Parts (includes Grip, Lugs, Accessories) 14.95
Field Repair Kit (High Breakage & Loss Items in Heavy Ziploc Bag, will fit in Stowaway Grip, Extractor & 2 Springs, Extractor, Pivot Pin, Firing Pin, Cam Pin 2 FP Ret. Spring Package) 1.00

Pistol Grip 3.95
Pistol Grip Screw & Washer .95
Pistol Pin (Front) 3.95
Safety Selector (M16/AR15 Specify) (Colt) 6.95
Safety Detent 8.00
Safety Detent Spring 3.95
Take Down Pin (Rear) 1.00
Take Down Pin or Pivot Pin Detent and Spring 1.95
Trigger Spring (M16/AR15 - Specify) (Colt) 9.95
Trigger Spring Trigger Guard Assembly 4.95

Flash Hider/Grenade Launcher (For Semi Auto) (1H) 65.95
Barrels (1A) 149.95
Tubular Bayonets 45.00
Change Lever Ass. (46-A.D.G.E.F.) (LAR) 45.00
Piston (12) (LAR) 34.95
Sear (39) (LAR) 24.95
Trigger (36) (LAR) 24.95
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Latest Style Lowers with Raised Mag Catch. Made from Colt M16 Forgings 7075 T6 Aircraft Quality Aluminum - Gray not Black Finish.

NEW COLT PARTS



Super Special \$39.95

M16 SELECTOR, GI COLT
M16 HAMMER, COMPLETE, GI COLT
M16 DISCONNECTOR, GI COLT
M16 TRIGGER, GI COLT

Stowaway Grip. 9.45

M16 KIT COLT Super Special \$21.95

20rd "Colt" Mags Used 3.95
Used 30rd Mags Good Condition 3.50

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Comprehensive, illustrated manuals providing the following data: disassembly and reassembly, maintenance and cleaning, operation, and description and technical data.

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FULL AUTOMATIC CONVERSION BOOKS

Practical methods to convert your semi-auto weapon to full auto or selective fire should the need arise.

Full Auto Volume 1 AR-15 \$3.95

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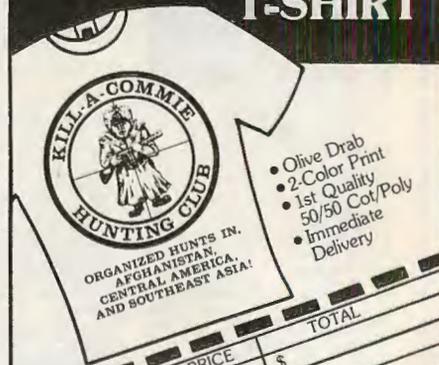
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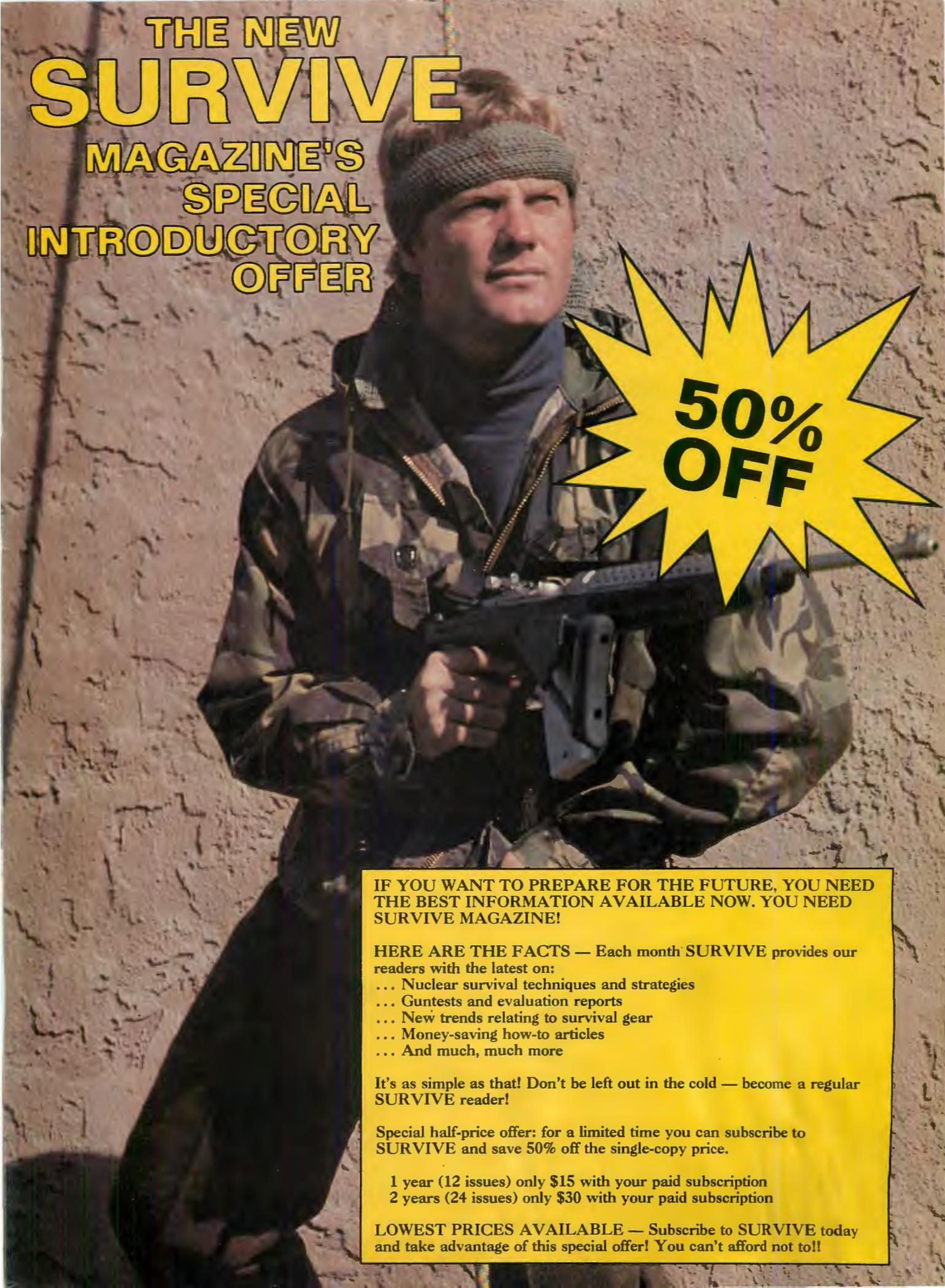
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SOF CONVENTION 1984



19-23 September



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

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

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

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

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

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

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

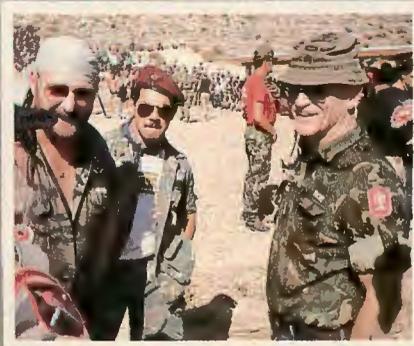
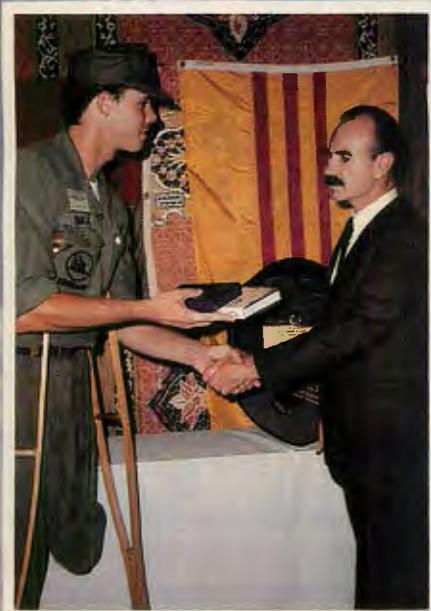
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Crawl the Walls at SOF's Convention Rappelling Seminar

SOF's professional wall-crawler, Fritz Borchardt, will be leaping and bounding through two exciting rappelling seminars during the convention. On Sept. 19 and 20 Fred will demonstrate standard and highly-innovated methods of descent and rough-terrain negotiation via rope rappel.

Due to high interest in this unique course of instruction, we must limit participation in each seminar to only 30 people. That means pre-registration which can be accomplished by writing now for information and to get your name on the list. If you're the kind of person who digs the bite of a tight Swiss-seat and the thrill of bounding your way down an incline at full-tilt, you need to attend the SOF Convention rappelling seminars.

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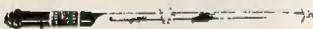
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2) In similar teakwood with curved handle and intricately etched stainless steel blade. "Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense" and animal figures, made to commemorate Lord Mountbatten \$117.50

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FLAK

Continued from page 8

**PAYING
DUES...**

Sirs:

The following is for your information and also an expression of thanks for the excellent journalistic work on the hierarchy of the Vietnam Veterans Association. Bliss' investigative piece (see SOF, May '84, "Bobby Muller's Vietnam Veterans of America") was a confirmation of suspicions long harbored.

There is no greater treachery than those who use the pain and suffering of others (and themselves) to promote and build a power base for themselves, without regard for the feelings of those they propose to represent.

Proud to have worked for you in the past — hope to do the same in the future.

John Park
Elkton, Tennessee

Mr. Park wrote "Package to Kon-tum," SOF July '82. Below is the letter Park sent to his local VVA chapter. —The Eds.

Chapter 74, VVA:

Sorry the enclosed dues payment is a little late — it slipped my mind (what's left of it) when I was recently up to my ass in alligators. Don't guess any of us will ever be in a position in which we're not expected to pay our dues.

With this small payment, I would like to make a request. First, please deduct the local dues from the amount for local 74. Secondly, please hold — at least temporarily — any payment to the national chapter. That portion I wish to be held in our treasury.

I fully intend to continue the work and efforts we began not so long ago — and the efforts I have been privately working on outside the chapter. But a hell of a lot of questions are going to have to be answered by Mr. Bobby Muller and the Washington squad.

(Reference: May '84 issue *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, "Bobby Muller's Vietnam Veterans of America" by Tony Bliss, Jr.)

Before I can in good conscience put one penny into VVA National, I not only ask, I demand, a personal explanation from Muller and his staff to allegations made in this article. Don't misunderstand my intentions — on the basis of this one article, I neither condemn nor condone anything. I just want answers on certain specific points.

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• Did Muller, in the name of VVA, donate funds from the Samuel Rubin Foundation grant and the Christopher Reynolds Foundation grant to Bach Mai Hospital, in communist Vietnam?

• Did Muller, in the name of VVA, accept a \$500 donation from Jane Fonda?

• Did VVA expenditures exceed an income of more than one million dollars (up to spring '82) and what have VVA members been shown in areas of service and accountability in the expenditure of these funds?

• Is the quotation from *The Wounded Generation* attributed to you correct: "The activists in the Vietnam veteran community who relate to veterans issues and forums and symposiums are, by and large, clearly left-wing, anti-draft, anti-military, angry guys."?

• In the *Village Voice*, did you say of the POWs, "Of course, they're dead. The MIA issue has been exploited for political propaganda purposes by this administration and by various advocacy groups"?

I have met persons through our local VVA chapter that will remain close friends forever — for that, I am thankful. But, Mr. Muller, if the answer to any of these allegations is in the affirmative, and if these statements of position are an indicator of the direction you intend to lead VVA as a whole, then in my opinion you have betrayed the veterans of Vietnam in a manner approaching atrocity. If you cannot provide a viable explanation to me and my fellow members — my brothers — I will personally do everything in my power as a writer and a journalist to see your betrayal is brought to light and receives proper judgement from those who served with pride and dignity. You see, Mr. Muller, for a lot of us, if we can't hang on to our pride and dignity during that period of war in our past, then what do we have to show for the pain and suffering?

John Park

PRESS COMPLAINT...

Sirs:

My wife and I recently returned from three years in Costa Rica, and from what we've seen, most of the U.S. press must get news releases from the KGB. They ignore the massive communist military buildup and subversion going on in Central America.

Congratulations for printing the free world's side — our side of the story.

Herbert Savage
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- **CUSTOM KNIVES:** 14 dealers and retailers, including

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- **INSIGNIA, MILITARIA and BOOKS:** 27 dealers and retailers, including SOF Exchange, Paladin Press, K&S, Eagle and International.
- **COMMUNICATIONS, SECURITY and NIGHT-VISION EQUIPMENT:** 8 dealers and retailers, including AN/COM, Critical, Laser, Northwest and Silence.

DON'T WAIT! The 1983 show was a sell-out, so make your 1984 room and space reservations early. Room rates at the Sahara are \$43.00 per double. Phone

1(800)634-6666 and identify yourself as a Soldier of Fortune Magazine Convention Exhibitor. The exhibition space reservation form is below.

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Mail to **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE ARMS SHOW — P.O. Box 693 — Boulder, CO 80306**

I wish to reserve _____ 8x10 ft. Booths at \$200.00 each. \$ _____ enclosed.

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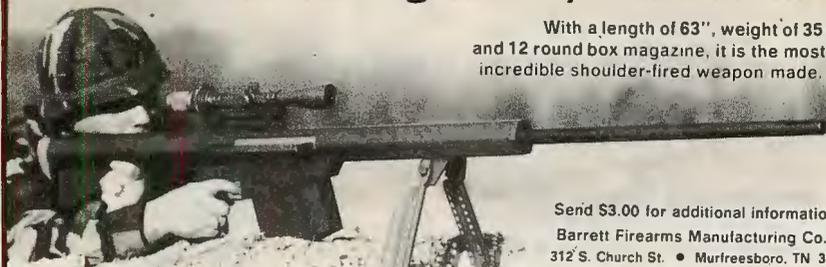
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THE SOLDIER'S FRIEND...

Sirs:

As a former Marine, and presently a member of the Army National Guard, I highly recommend your magazine as the best objective look at the conflicts and crises developing in the world today. I am especially pleased to see you portray the grunt in a positive light, rather than the way so many liberal papers do, as a "dopehead," or "psycho."

No one wants world peace more than I, but the best deterrents to war are well-trained, well-equipped and ready to fight Armed Forces. I hope to see the United States abandon the policy of appeasement and learn to stand on the principles that made our nation great, and serve as a symbol of freedom to the rest of the world.

Great coverage of the situations in Central America, keep it coming!

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MUGABE MESSES UP...

The promise of stability from Zimbabwe's Marxist ruler, Robert Mugabe, has done nothing to ease the fears of blacks and whites alike. They fear the possibility of a massacre — and Mugabe has given no indication that he can prevent one.

In late 1982 the 5th Brigade, made up of soldiers from the Shona tribe (Mugabe's supporters), was sent to Matebeleland to bring followers of opposition leader Joshua Nkomo under control. Charges of brutality and murder were leveled against the 5th Brigade, and reliable sources place the number of dead at around 700.

Increased acts of sabotage have forced the Zimbabwe government to declare another curfew. Unable to keep Matebeleland under his thumb, Mugabe has again sent in the 5th Brigade. In a press release, Mugabe stated that the 5th is now better trained and under tighter discipline. However, reports of massacres continue to filter out of Zimbabwe, and Mugabe has invited the foreign press into Matebeleland in an attempt to quell rumors of atrocities. They have reported that the army is indeed murderous and that the people do not support Mugabe.

The Zimbabwe Embassy in Washington states, "South African infiltrators in Zimbabwe Army uniforms are really responsible for the unrest and atrocities." The embassy also claims that Nkomo's "bandits" are forcing the people to "deny their allegiance to the government." Despite official claims to the contrary, it is clear that Mugabe is incapable of ensuring the safety of his own people.

TRACKING DESERTERS...

Claiming to be conducting an unbiased study of desertion and defection during the Vietnam War, J. Fred MacDonald would like to hear from people who had direct experience with defectors and deserters. SOF has no evidence of his good intentions, but Dr. MacDonald has promised to protect confidentiality. Those interested in the project, with the appropriate qualifications, may contact Dr. J. Fred MacDonald, History Department, Dept. SOF, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL 60625, (312) 583-4050.

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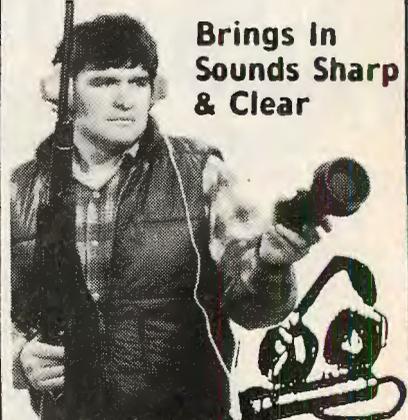
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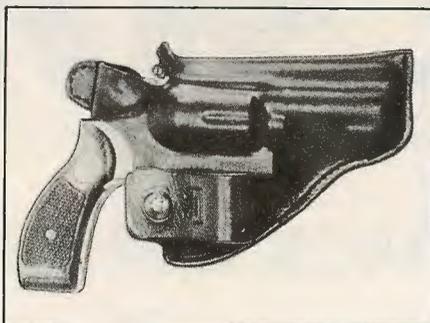
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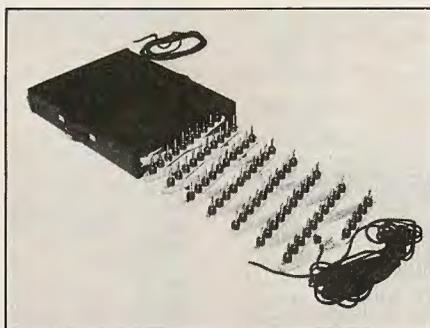
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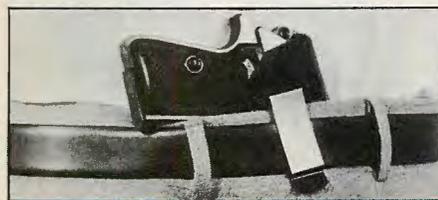
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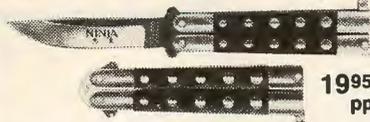
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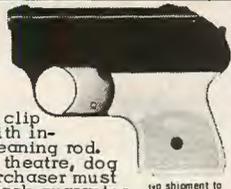
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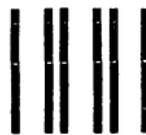
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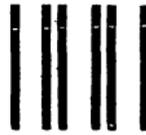
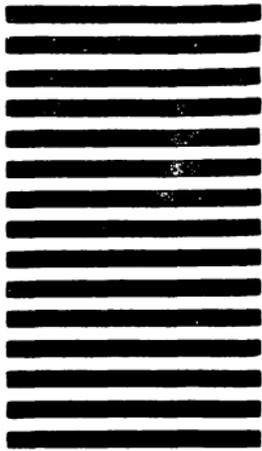


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