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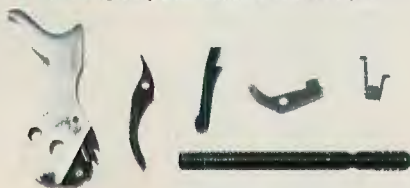


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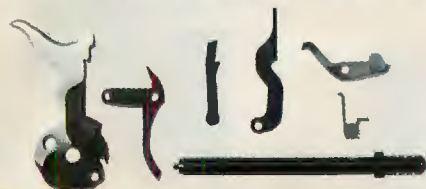
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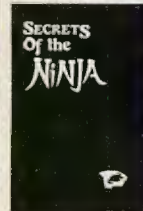


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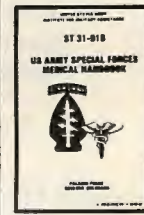
Jungles of glass and steel, cities are the most dangerous of all terrains to fight a war—and the most likely. Here, in FM 90-10-1, is the info that prepares police and military units to meet—and beat—the threat of urban combat. This book is loaded with self-explaining illustrations showing the best tactical moves, accompanied by clear, concise directions. Topics include offensive operations, combat support, how to attack and clear buildings, demolitions, urban combat skills and much more. 8½ x 11, softcover, illus., 260 pp. **\$14.95**



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COVER: Will the merc of the future be a machine? Actor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the crew at Orion Productions in Hollywood believe they can convince you of that if you'll spring for admission to their latest movie *The Terminator* which is due for nationwide release 26 Oct. SOF examines the technical aspects of the new action-adventure thriller and talks to the star who has an interesting military background. Page 68. Photo: Orion Productions

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DE-BRIEF

by Dale A. Dye, Executive Editor

IT'S a genuine tragedy that Dana Parker and James Powell were killed on 1 September while doing what they thought was right in support of the continuing fight against communist expansionism in Central America. In the searing aftermath of the helicopter crash that cost them their lives, it's even more tragic to note that the American press continues struggling to somehow connect them and their four compatriots with the CIA while tacitly ignoring the real message their sacrifice delivers to Congress and the American people.

The blame for Parker and Powell's demise needs to be placed squarely where it belongs: in the lap of the naive majority in Congress that dictates funding for foreign policy while blissed-out on saccharine images of a brave new world in which nations share and play nicely with each other. If those people would wake up, take off the rose-colored glasses, ignore political self-interest for a moment and take a quick look at the *Communist Manifesto*, they'd likely realize it was their hands — much more than communist bullets — that carved the epitaph for the two unpaid American volunteers who died in Nicaragua. In fact, there would have been no need for Parker, Powell and their teammates from the Civilian Military Assistance organization to be in Central America at all if the U.S. government were doing its part to help freedom-loving people in nations such as El Salvador and Nicaragua effectively fight communist-inspired insurrection.

But the sad irony of that consideration is swept away in the rush to label these men "mercenaries" — the word fairly drips from the mouths of TV newscasters like blood from the fangs of an attack dog. It's a label, a stereotype that conjures titillating images of rock-ribbed killers out for an adrenalin rush and a bushel bas-

ket full of big bucks. The term is also one of the grossest misnomers in the English language and certainly cannot be stretched to fit the men of Civilian Military Assistance who went to Honduras to help the *Contras* resist Sandinista-style totalitarianism.

Virtually no one in the minuscule shadow-world of genuine professional soldiers-for-hire has ever gotten rich. There just isn't any big money in the business. Most of the nations or groups that need outside military aid are flat broke, running a shoestring resistance to tyranny, and certainly can't afford to pay exotic salaries to those who would volunteer their hard-earned military skills. That's just as well since most who



would become involved in military operations as foreign volunteers aren't after money.

Most of the men who become embroiled in such campaigns outside the service of their own nation are either genuine idealists who are willing to lay their lives on the line in support of a cause or "adventure junkies" who would rather face a genuine life-or-death challenge for their daily bread than punch a time-clock and struggle to meet the mortgage payment. I see nothing inherently evil — or potentially disastrous for American foreign relations — in either sort. Neither do the communists who funded, supplied and encouraged the foreign Marxists who formed the *Brigada Internacional* or the *Brigada de Simon Bolivar* and went to Nicaragua in 1979 to help blast the Sandinista regime into power. These South American, Central American and European communist "mercenaries" formed nearly 50 per cent of the combat forces which overthrew the Somoza government.

Those of us who understand from

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WILD GEESE II...

SOF staffer Tom Reisinger recently returned from Berlin where he was the guest of Contributing Editor Jim Monaghan, technical advisor for the upcoming adventure film "Wild Geese II." The production, currently slated for a March premiere, was to have starred Richard Burton who died earlier this year. Reisinger reports his replacement is distinguished British actor Edward Fox, who joins Scott Glenn, Barbara Carrera and Sir Laurence Olivier in the film's cast.

Monaghan, who plays a significant character role in "Wild Geese II," is preparing a story for SOF dealing with the technical aspects of making the film, particularly concentrating on weapons work.

FERRARO ON FIREARMS...

Walter Mondale's running mate, Rep. Geraldine Ferraro (D-N.Y.), has an almost perfect firearms voting record: wrong every time.

According to the NRA tally, she voted to deny sportsmen's access to 125.4 million acres of Alaskan wilderness, and voted against cutting \$5 million from the BATF budget. Ferraro also co-sponsored the Kennedy-Rodino handgun control bill, and the Bingham bill to ban handguns. Important Ferraro campaign contributors included Handgun Control, Inc.

BULLETIN BOARD



SOF training team member Gerry Lynn stands with Salvadoran sniper whose work will be improved by donation of a Swan G-3 Universal Scope Base, Beeman Scope Mounts, and a Beeman Rhinohide Telescope, by L.L. Baston Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1995, 2101 N. College St., El Dorado, AR 71730.

ADOPT A FREEDOM FIGHTER...

Trust SOF to find new things to do with beer money, like helping throw the Vietnamese out of Kampuchea (Cambodia). The Khmer Peoples National Liberation Front (KPNLF) advertises that Americans can equip a new guerrilla volunteer for \$40. In case this is too much money in one chunk, the KPNLF suggests you break it up into four monthly installments. Primarily, the money will be used to purchase inexpensive, sturdy personal gear for the fighters: Imagine DOD trying to equip a grunt for \$40.

This is, of course, just the sort of thing SOF loves to get involved with and we have already put our money where our magazine is. An SOF check for enough to equip a full KPNLF rifle squad is on the way to Bangkok along with some SOF t-shirts for our squaddies. We hope to have pictures of the SOF grunts soon. Send donations to KPNLF General Staff, c/o KOK SAR, Attention Mr. Surikyat, P.O. Box 22-25, Ramintra Post Office, Bangkok 10220, Thailand.

PERU'S SENDERISTAS...

Peru's mystic Maoist revolutionaries, the *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) guerrillas, seem to have cut down on dynamite and stepped up killing, but they're getting some of the same treatment from the Peruvian Army.

In the first week of August, the Peruvian government credited the Senderistas with 53 killings. Fortunately, the military is beginning to take over many patrols and garrisons that had previously been police responsibility. Combat-trained troopers turned the tables on Senderistas on 7 August when an army unit was ambushed at night in a remote Andean town 200 kilometers from Ayacucho. Soldiers regrouped to drive off the rebels, who left 17 dead.

MERC CLEARING HOUSE?...

SOF has been getting a number of calls on a classified ad in September '84 SOF regarding the Armed Peacekeeping Force's search for "1505 officers, 2214 NCOs, 6500 Team Members."

The ad claims to have high-paying jobs for contract soldiers, with preference given to those with "Commissions, Warrants (sic), NCO or Soldier Certifications" issued by Alpha Corps. Calls from respondents to the ad indicate they were asked to pay for these documents, but that no one had offered them jobs or money. Neither Alpha Corps, nor their agent, J.R. Brown, answers any of their phone numbers. Also, all mailing addresses have proved to be mail drops.

SOF checks its classifieds much more closely than your local newspaper investigates used car ads, but we specifically disclaim any responsibility for the intent of the advertisers, or the readers' willingness to pay good money for bad merchandise, or to engage in illegal activities. We've got enough trouble watching out for ourselves.

Caveat emptor: Let the buyer beware.

COPTER CRASHES WITH U.S. CONTRAS...

Dana H. Parker, Jr., of Huntsville, Ala., and James Powell of Memphis died 1 Sept. in a helicopter crash in Nicaragua. They were voluntarily assisting the Contras in their fight against Sandinista tyranny. Despite attempts to link them to CIA operations in Central America or the right-wing fringe in this country, the CMA volunteers were simply patriotic Americans doing their bit — for no salary — to help in the fight against communist expansionism on America's back doorstep.

Their deaths and the subsequent publicity attending survivors of the CMA mission to Nicaragua highlighted the variety of help U.S. civilian volunteers are giving the Contras. It also jammed our phones for days as reporters tried to obtain comments, opinions and insights on "mercenary soldiers" from *Soldier of Fortune*, which is the presumed source for any and all information concerning such activities. We weren't able to give them much regarding the specific mission performed by CMA in Nicaragua, but we did indicate we — and most of our readers — were with the volunteers in spirit.

But our pursuit of this exciting story didn't stop there. We are studying the situation and interviewing the CMA survivors. Look for in-depth coverage of this incident in next month's SOF.

NRA ELECTIONS...

SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown came within 2,000 votes of being elected to the Board of Directors of the National Rifle Association.

"I wish to thank all the individuals who supported me," Brown said. "I'll be running again next year, with a little more effort and organization. Thanks again, SOFers."



AIM AIMS AT PBS...

You weren't the only one irked by the Public Broadcasting Service's (PBS) slanted characterization of the war for Indochina in "Vietnam, A Television History." Accuracy In Media (AIM) sponsored a conference to begin debunking the biased documentary in Washington, D.C., 27-28 June 1984.

AIM produced sufficient proof to make PBS revise its erroneous claim that the Indochinese Communist Party marshalled the 1930 Yen Bay rebellion, actually organized by the Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang, a non-communist Vietnamese nationalist party. AIM hopes to air a corrective history of Vietnam on PBS, but there are obvious doubts about their capacity to place it with them. Anyone who can contribute to the project should write Accuracy in Media, Inc., Dept. SOF, 1275 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Those wishing to see AIM's Vietnam documentary should write Bruce Christensen, President, Public Broadcasting Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

RRII AUTO SALE...

Title is finally transferred, so SOFers interested in buying a collector's 1972 Citroen SM — donated to Refugee Relief International, Inc. (RRII), by Scott Lowry — should phone RRII president Tom Reisinger at (303) 449-3750 for more information on the \$6,500 bargain.

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.

PRIVATE SECTOR...

Corporations and private citizens alike have been contributing to SOF's fight against communist tyranny around the world. This month there are special commendations for:

Harry E. Bird, 629 Allen St., Ridgecrest, CA 93555, for \$25 to Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund (AFFF).

Sandi L. Zabinski, 5225 Louisiana Ave. N., Crystal, MN 55428, for \$15 to AFFF.

Jay Lerer, P.O. Box 715, Woodacre, CA 84873, for \$100 to AFFF.

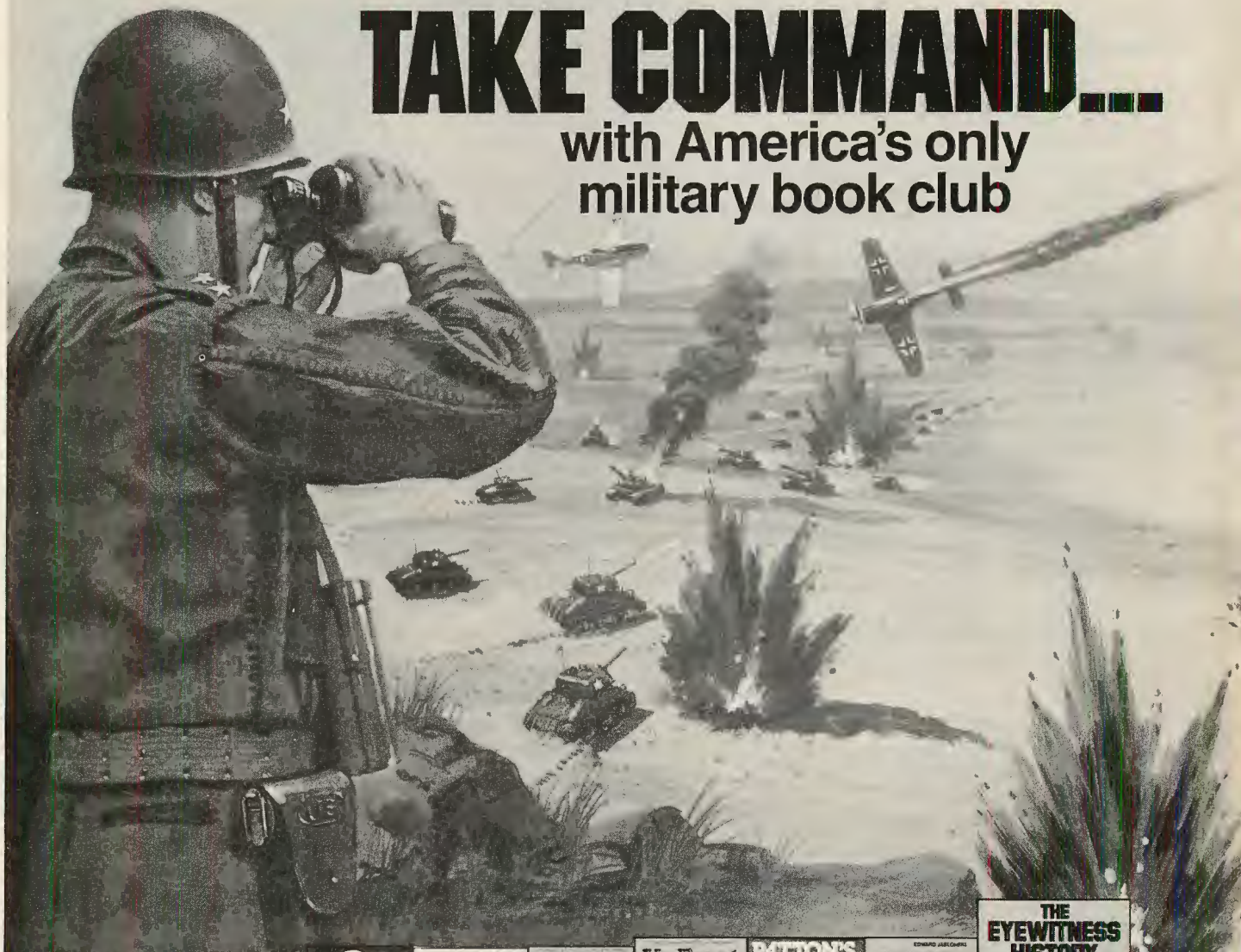
L.L. Baston Co., P.O. Box 1995, 2101 N. College St., El Dorado, AR 71730, for scope, mounts, and scope base donated to the Salvadoran Army.



SOFers Alex McColl (under pallet) and Giang La Bang load sorted and boxed contributions to El Salvador/Nicaragua Freedom Fighters Fund, c/o SOF, 5721 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80303. ✕

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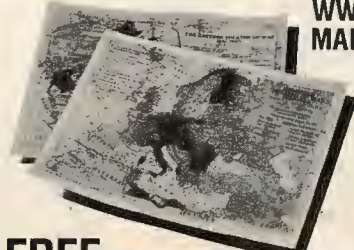
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ANGERED OVER AK...

Sirs:

During my wonderful time in 'Nam in 1969, I happened to be on the receiving end of quite a few rounds of chicom small arms fire. Fortunately, they were never known for accuracy, and I was lucky to get through unscathed.

Anyway, I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the inside page of the August issue. An advertisement for a communist made weapon! Have you gentlemen sold out your principles for a few lousy bucks? Unbelievable!

From my O.P. on the border of the "neutral countries" surrounding 'Nam I could plainly see Chinese advisers instructing the NVA on how to use chicom small arms, mines, and booby traps against American men. And I'll give you three guesses where.

Communist China isn't my friend or ally despite what the State Department says. I hope the ghosts of all my comrades who stopped a chicom bullet haunt you.

My buddies have tried to tell me how SOF is only in it for the bucks. Depending on your rebuttal to this letter, I am seriously thinking about cancelling my subscription.

J. Carter
Carlsbad, California

If SOF was "only in it for the bucks," we can think of a number of things we would — and would not — do, like accepting discriminatory advertising or not spending the money to send our correspondents around the world to bring you first-hand accounts from various battlefields. While we agree with your generic dislike for communists of all forms, we still consider it a welcome service to let our readers know how they can obtain one of the best combat weapons in the world today. Our ad is an endorsement of the weapon, not the manufacturers. — Eds.



FLAK



SANDINISTA INSIGHTS...

Sirs:

I lived in Costa Rica from May 1980 to February 1983. I learned interesting pieces of information about Sandinista treatment of their black citizens and the Anglican priests in Bluefield.

La Prensa Libre, published in Costa Rica, and sometimes in Nicaragua, printed stories about the riots in Bluefield when the Castro Cubans came in and took over schools, medicine, and destroyed the Anglican church.

The blacks are of Jamaican ancestry and enjoy their Episcopal religious heritage. The communists did not care for this, and the Anglican priests were either expelled or interred in one of the Nicaraguan prisons for being "counter-revolutionary" when the Cubans took over. The last word I had before leaving Costa Rica was that Anglican priests are still in Sandinista jails.

The U.S. press has mentioned the "Moskito" Indian problem of Nicaragua, but never the Bluefield black's treatment at the hands of the "peoples' revolution."

But I wish to point out a recent visit to Nicaragua by United States presidential candidate Jesse Jackson. Jackson, in a June 28 speech to his communist brothers in Managua *cheered the communist revolution and said the United States would be defeated.* (Ref. Wall Street Journal, June 29, 1984)

Apparently Jackson does not really have concern for his black brothers in Nicaragua, or the asshole does not even know what is going on.

Herbert C. Savage
El Paso, Texas

In our opinion, it's a little of both. Thank God Jackson doesn't stand a chance of reaching national office. Thanks for sharing your insights. — Eds.

SALUTE FOR SOF...

Sirs:

I have been reading SOF for the past year with rather mixed feelings. While sometimes stunned by the 'blood and guts' outlook of some of your advertisers (such as the 'do it yourself' books on explosives, poison gas and firearms), I must congratulate your editorial teams on their fine investigative journalism during the last year.

The articles on the continuing wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Afghanistan and Burma are highly informative, hide no unpleasant facts to avoid upsetting 'friendly' as well as hostile states, and have the most important factor of all — they are all written by people actually on the spot in some very obscure places around the globe.

Keep up the good work!

Alan Horner
Cheshire, England

Thanks for the kind words. We aim to keep the information coming in 1985. — Eds.



GRENADA JIMA?...

Sirs:

I just came across a couple of these in an old stamp collection. I couldn't think of anyone who would better appreciate what was, at the time of printing, prophetic and now so hilariously ironical.

There was just no way I couldn't share this with you and — if you'd care to print it — the readers of SOF.

Capt. James L. Warren,
GGHG (ret.)
Willowdale, Ontario

Executive Editor Captain Dale Dye USMC (Ret.) proudly complies with your request for publication. Thanks for sharing the philatelic irony with all of us. — Eds.

Continued on page 141

A Proud Tribute To The UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Announcing THE SEMPER FIDELIS KA-BAR COLLECTION



Glass-top display case: 15" x 7" x 3"

A Limited Edition —
Only 1775 of each will be made, in honor of
the founding year of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Tempered steel, 24-karat gold and polished leather proudly immortalize the battle honors of our U.S. Marines, through World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Semper Fidelis. Always Faithful. That is the motto — and the way of life — of all U.S. Marines. Marines are always faithful to Corps and Country — always willing to face death for their fellow Marines and the American cause.

And when the situation is desperate, the ammo is spent and the fighting is eyeball-to-eyeball, that's when the Marines' fighting skills really pay off. Since 1943, Marines have fought America's enemies in close quarters with the rugged, keen-edged combat knife they call their "Ka-Bar."

Now, The American Historical Foundation is proud to honor our U.S. Marines who, with devotion to Country and Corps, have carried this knife into combat in defense of America's freedom.

Each is a genuine Ka-Bar — what old-Corps Marines call a "real" Ka-Bar. Each is specially made by Ka-Bar Knives — who helped the Marine Corps design the knife in late 1942 and who made the originals.

A Lasting, Personal Symbol

Each is a lasting, personal symbol of your patriotic pride — and possibly your service — in the United States Marine Corps. You will be proud to display it and to pass it along to future generations of your family.

A beautiful Commemorative Ka-Bar has been created to honor each of the six Marine Divisions. The tribute announced here honors the First Marine Division.

This is a battleworthy Marine Corps fighting knife, with all the heft and strength of the ones first issued to our Leathernecks on Guadalcanal. But you will particularly enjoy owning and displaying this Ka-Bar because of its special features, created for this commemorative edition:

- The Division's battle honors, the Division's motto, the laurel wreath of victory and the Marine Corps symbol are emblazoned on the blade in 24-karat gold.
- The blade is mirror polished and gun blue to a high-gloss black finish. The blade shoulder is deeply struck "USMC" on one side and "Ka-Bar, Olean, N.Y." on the other — proof that each is a real Ka-Bar.
- The heavy butt is turned from thick, solid brass to a special ribbed pattern — unique to the Collection.

- The guard is also extra thick — and formed straight, rather than the usual curved pattern (straight-guard Ka-Bars are rarer and more desirable to collectors).
- Both the butt and guard are mirror polished and richly plated with 24-karat gold.
- The rugged grip is compressed leather, custom finished, polished and waxed to a high gloss.
- In the center of the grip is inset the Division's insignia, enamelled in full color cloisonne and gold plated.

First Option, With No Obligation

As an added advantage, you may register now, without obligation, for other Ka-Bars in this Collection (a Commemorative Ka-Bar has been created for each of the six Marine Divisions). These knives can be delivered to you one at a time in the months ahead.

Limited Edition of 1775

Only 1775 of each will be made, in remembrance of the founding year of the U.S. Marine Corps. Serial



No. 1 of each will be presented to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Each is individually serially numbered on the blade and on the Certificate of Authenticity which accompanies it.

This is presented by The American Historical Foundation and Ka-Bar Knives, in conjunction with participating U.S. Marine Corps Division Associations.

Glass-top Display Case Available

A furniture finished hardwood case is also available so you can display each Ka-Bar on a desk, shelf or wall. With a glass lid, it makes each Ka-Bar a visible symbol of your pride in the U.S. Marine Corps — and protects the knife from dust and non-authorized handling.

How to Reserve; Satisfaction Guaranteed

You may easily place your reservation with a small deposit, and credit cards are accepted. You

may call (a toll free number is available), use the reservation on this page or personally visit our headquarters. Satisfaction is guaranteed, and there are no shipping charges. For an additional \$15, we will personalize your Ka-Bar by engraving your name, rank and serial number on the blade reverse.

When you place your reservation, you will also be made a Member of The American Historical Foundation, joining men such as yourself in 29 countries around the world who share an interest in — and who helped make — America's great military history. You will also receive special information concerning the care and collecting of military arms and advance notice of all Foundation military projects.

The only other commemorative Ka-Bars were issued nine years ago. They were quickly sold out, and today they bring more than five times their original price. So prompt action is suggested to avoid disappointment.

The few men, museums and organizations who act in time will own a lasting, tangible symbol of one of the greatest fighting organizations in the world — the United States Marine Corps.

RESERVATION

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Return in 30 Days for Full Refund
To: The American Historical Foundation
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Yes, I wish to reserve each of the following 24-karat gold-plated limited edition Commemorative Ka-Bars:

— Entire Series
— 1st Mar. Div. — 3rd Mar. Div. — 5th Mar. Div.
— 2nd Mar. Div. — 4th Mar. Div. — 6th Mar. Div.

Please also send the glass-top display case, at \$29 each, for each Ka-Bar reserved.

Please enroll me in a monthly payment plan. (Each knife reserved will be shipped when the full balance is received.)
 charge or invoice \$97.50 monthly.
 charge or invoice full balance.

My payment in full is enclosed (\$195 per knife; display case, add \$29).

Name

Address

For Visa, MasterCard or American Express, please send account number, expiration date and signature. Virginia residents add tax.

1 Mitchell AR-50 Accessory Package

Black space age nylon pistol grip and nickel-plated steel telescoping buttstock. Locks open and closed. Compact—26" overall when closed. Regular size open. Unique design grip will house original 10-round magazine. Ventilated forend covers 50% of barrel and allows continuous shooting even with hot barrel. This amazing accessory also reduces the overall weight by approximately one-half pound.

#242000 \$69.95

1

AR-7 50-rd. Mitchell Drum Mag.

Designed for easy loading, reliable functioning and durability. Full 50 round capacity. Markings on the back keep you informed of remaining rounds.

#193300 \$29.95

Mitchell 50rd Mag. for 10/22 Rifle

#193000 \$29.95

2 Military Mag-Lite

The world-famous Mag-Lite in olive drab green. Anodized aluminum case is acid and corrosion resistant. Light adjusts from strong spot to flood beam. Some rugged features as regular Mag-Lites except comes with a military style ring for attaching lanyard. Uses D-cell batteries.

#3201G1 2-cell \$19.95
#3201G2 3-cell \$21.95
#3201G3 4-cell \$22.95



EXCITING NEW ITEM!

2



SAVE \$10

6

6 GI M-65 Field Jacket

The very latest US Army issue field jacket made of 50/50 nylon-cotton with gov't. Quarpel water repellency. Features a zip-in hood, heavy-duty front zipper plus snap closures, drawstrings at both the waist and bottom of the jacket—plus extra room in the shoulders for complete freedom of movement. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

#0107G0 O.D. Green \$49.95 \$39.95
#0107W0 Woodland Camo. \$49.95 \$39.95

GI M-65 Jacket Liner

Cold weather liner that turns the M-65 into an all weather jacket. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

#0107A0 \$19.95



ULTIMATE For Your AR-7

Set your sights on the PARELLEX difference!



1



KIDS SPECIALS

3

3 Boy's Jungle Fatigue Suit

Fantastic for rugged outdoor wear-and-tear or for hunting with Dad. Pants have 2 front pockets, 2 back pockets with flaps, and 2 cargo pockets. Jacket has 2 breast pockets with flaps. Made of U.S. Military type twill. Sizes: 8, 10, 12, 14, 16. Jacket available in Tigerstripe (T), and Black (S). Specify.

#0157()0 Jacket \$14.95
#0156()0 Pants \$16.95

4 "Pineapple" Hand Grenade

Completely inert and harmless, but it looks like the real thing. Detachable firing lever.

#1721G0 \$6.95



4



SAVE \$10

8

8 Folding Trench Knife

The 3 1/2" stainless steel blade folds conveniently into the unique 5" steel "knuckle buster" handle for protection and safety. Length open—8 1/2".

#172010 \$19.95 Sale \$9.95

9 Parellex Fanny Pack

For the hunter or military man. Roomy main cargo pocket with zipper flap. Approximately 340 cu. in. of storage space. Plus, it has three large outside pockets designed to hold a AR-15/M-16 or Mini-14, 30 round clip. 1 1/2" wide waist belt features Fastex™ buckle. Made of polyurethane coated Cordura. Size: 7 1/2" x 3" x 15".

#2922W0 Woodland Camo. \$19.95
#2922S0 Black \$19.95

10 The Guardfather™ Discreet, Effective Protection.

Powerful spring-loaded hardened 4 1/2" steel shaft snaps open in 1/250th sec., locks open. Knurled grip prevents slipping. Blued finish. 10 1/2" open, 5 1/2" closed.

#173200 \$29.95

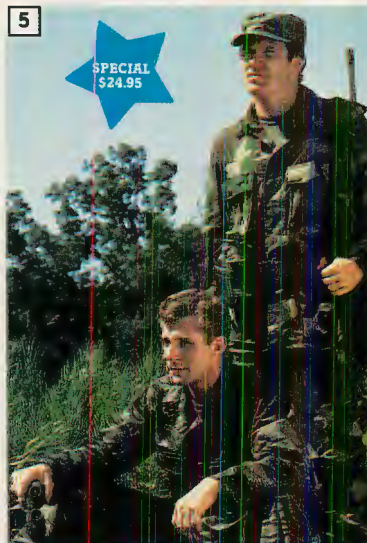


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#0141()0 Jacket \$29.95 Sale \$24.95
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5

SPECIAL \$24.95



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12

11 Genuine Viet Nam Jungle Hat

Proven in the jungles of Viet Nam, extra-wide brim hat with a banelero band protects you from the hot sun. 50/50 nylon-cotton is water repellent, cool. Perfect for hunting or boating. Specify: S (7); M (7 1/2); L (7 1/2); XL (7 3/4).

#0127W0 Woodland Camo \$11.95
#0127G0 OD Green \$11.95

12 8-Shot Tear Gas Revolver

Fires 8 .22 caliber tear gas or blanks in seconds.

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#260120 Chrome \$10.95

13 .22 Caliber Tear Gas Automatic

Fires 6-.22 caliber tear gas or blanks as fast as you can pull the trigger.

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#260202 Cartridges (10) \$2.95
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9

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15 WW I Trench Knife

An exact reproduction of the famous World War I trench knife. It has the "Knuckle Buster" grip, a double edged 6" polished blade and a solid brass handle. This is truly a collectors item. Overall length 11".

#471910

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16 Individual Equipment

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17 Camouflage Ranger Vest

This new vest has a pocket for everything. Back pockets, front pockets, side pockets, bellows pockets, hidden pockets, a total of eight. Woodland Camouflage cotton blend with shirt-tail sides, and hide-away hood in collar. A rugged action vest that is also good looking and functional. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

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19 British Commando Knife

This is the famed Sykes-Fairbairn knife made in Sheffield, England. Originally designed for the British Commandos in WW II. 6" double edge razor sharp blade delivers instant death. Complete with black leather sheath.

#170300

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22 USAF N-2B Flyer's Short Parka

Current issue Air Force issue cold weather jacket. Adjustable fur-trimmed hood, knitted wristlets and waistband. Storm flap secured by zipper and buttons. 2 outer and 2 inner slash pockets with snaps plus zipper cigarette pocket on left sleeve. 100% nylon outershell with extra warm 100% polyester fiber fill. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

#012100

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22



23 USAF L-2B Flight Jacket

Official Air Force Lightzone (Lightweight issue). Sage Green with International Orange lining 100% polyester with knit collar, cuffs and waistband. 2 inner and 2 outer pockets plus zipper cigarette pocket on left sleeve. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

#012900

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USAF MA-1 Flyer's Jacket

Same as L-2B but with 100% polyester batting lining for warmth in all but coldest weather. No epaulets. Sage Green-Orange lining. Sizes: S, M, L, XL.

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14



17



18



20 Steiner 8 x 30 Combat Binoculars

Designed for field use and jungle combat. From rolling waves to the bumpy ride of an all-terrain vehicle. Rugged rubber armor-ing lens cap and strap. Multi-coated optics. Magnification: 8x. Field of view: 426 ft./1000 yds. Weighs only 17 ozs. 2.2" x 4.6" x 6.8".

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21 Mini-14 Pistol Grip Stock

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18 Lifeknive Commando

The best survival knife there is. Razor-sharp 6" blade constructed from 440C stainless steel heat treated to RH57-58. Aircraft aluminum hollow handle is waterproof and contains wire saw, matches, survival fish hooks, assorted split shot, 20 ft. of 10 lb. test line, 6 ft. snare utility wire; needles; sutures. Black leather belt sheath, thongs and sharpening stone. A jeweled compass built into the cap. 12" overall.

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I was 12 years old when I saw one for the first time. It was, I was told, a fighting knife. I believed it because our neighbor W.A. Waters said so. W.A. ought to know, because he had been in the war and had been shot in the leg by a Japanese sniper. I had seen the scar on the calf of his leg.

W.A. told me to look at the blood groove along the blade. All fighting knives have one, he said. It's put there so that the enemy would bleed, and the suction of the body would not be able to hold the blade so tight that the knife could not be pulled out. I remember telling my mother this. And I remember the look on her face as I recounted what W.A. had told me. W.A. later told me the knife was called a "KA-BAR" and it was standard issue among the Marines who fought with him in the Pacific.

This knife, whether it was in fact a U.S. Navy Mark II of World War II vintage made by Camillus Cutlery, or the Marine Corps version made largely by the Union Cutlery Co. and marked with their KA-BAR trademark, caught the imagination and fancy of civilian and fighting man alike. It was used at Gaudalcanal and it was a FIGHTING KNIFE. The blood groove said so.

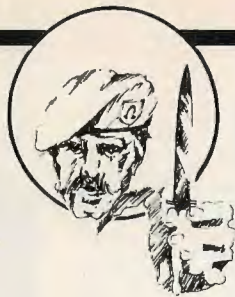
The KA-BAR really is the best fighting knife ever issued to our troops in modern times. It opened cans, and killed the enemy from WWII through the Vietnam War. That's the good news. The bad news is that this honored artifact is a dismal excuse for a good fighting knife. Here's why.

Someone once said that a camel was a horse that was designed by a committee. The KA-BAR was designed the same way by a group of well-meaning people who thought that a small Bowie knife with a spiffy touch like a blood groove would be just the blade for our fighting men. Unfortunately, these people had no experience with what makes a Bowie knife so deadly.

A proper fighting knife is a fine blend of balance, leverage, and cutting capability. These qualities combined will yield a weapon that will give a fighter advantages in reach, strength of blade, speed of stroke, and an enhanced ability to slash, tear, and penetrate, all in one blade.

Let's look at the KA-BAR in this perspective.

The balance is pathetic. The knife is handle heavy, so it has no swing weight to speak of, and one of its pre-eminent design features, the "blood groove" aggravates this condition. The so called blood groove is a carryover from the days of medieval Europe when two-handed swords with blades approaching four feet in length were in vogue, and some means had to be



BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

Can the KA-BAR Cut It?



Although the KA-BAR is touted as being a formidable fighting knife, it has many drawbacks.

found to lighten them so that men could swing the things. Forging a groove in the blade lightened it. This groove was and is correctly called a fuller, named after the blacksmithing tool used to fashion the groove. This means of making an already poorly balanced blade even more so in the KA-BAR was bad judgment, for an already thin and marginally strong blade is not strengthened by the addition of a fuller added to the cost of the knife in production, and hurt performance: a classic example of increasing the taxpayers' burden while detracting from the performance of the contracted item.

A properly balanced knife has both speed and power: enough power to cut a free-hanging one-inch manila rope in two with one stroke. The original KA-BAR in my possession, shav-

ing sharp, failed to do this in five attempts. A properly made and balanced knife with the same 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch blade length will make this cut. Every time.

This part of the American Bladesmith's test may seem like grandstanding, but there is a parallel in combat. Take your KA-BAR and your Gerber Mark I, and swing at the end of a two-by-four. The heavier, longer blade of the KA-BAR will make a deeper cut than the Mark I — but a nine-inch-blade Bowie will cut *through* the bone. Part of that action is weight, and part is leverage. Leverage in a knife is important in cutting, ignored in most knife designs, and here again the KA-BAR is no exception. Two things affect leverage as it applies to a knife: blade length and the angular relationship between the blade and the handle. The KA-BAR comes up short on both points. The 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch blade should be at least 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and nine or 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches would be even better. The blade is stamped from a skimpy $\frac{5}{32}$ -inch thick stock which, while it is cheap, doesn't aid strength or balance. Leverage would be improved by the addition of a couple of inches to the length of the blade *and* by altering the angle of the handle and blade.

The handle of the KA-BAR is pretty good as far as combat handles go. Shape, length, and texture are all well done and combine to work well. True, there's not a "skull-crusher" pommel, but by the time you need that, a baseball bat would work better. The comfortable design and solid materials of the KA-BAR are much more important.

Leverage would be improved if the

Leverage would be improved if the

Continued on page 136

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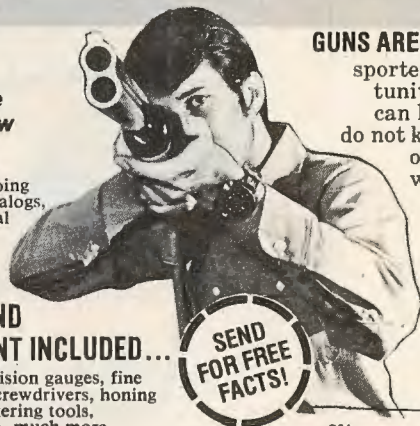
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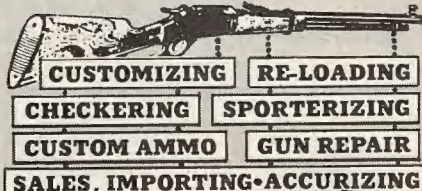
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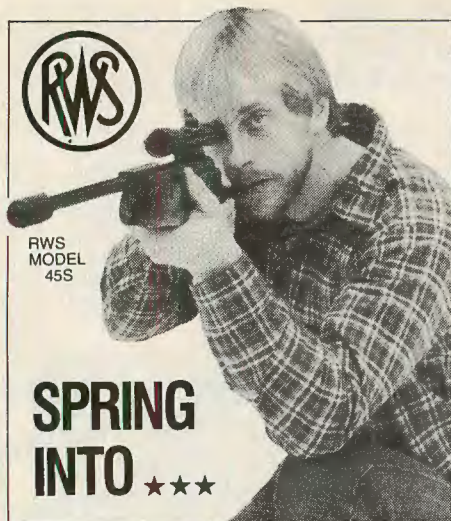
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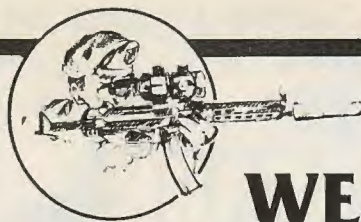
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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Ken Hackathorn

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NEARLY every shooting discipline requires the practice of firing shots at a target within a certain time frame. In the course of training and practicing for combat pistol shooting, the need for accurate and reliable timing devices remains part of the routine. I have been testing one of the finest timing devices currently available. The "Pro-Shot Timer" is perfect for both competition and practice.

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Accurate timing in training — facilitated by the Pro-Shot Timer — is essential to good scores.

The Pro-Shot times your shot within an accuracy of 1/100 of a second. For IPSC events, the Pro-Shot Timer is an extremely helpful item.

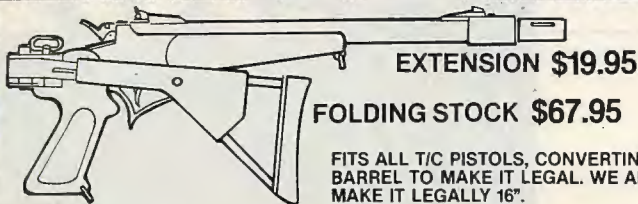
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Continued on page 111

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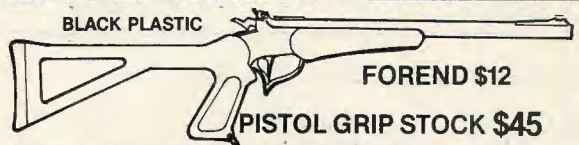
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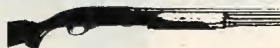
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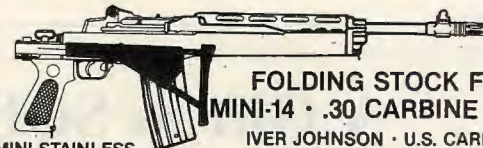
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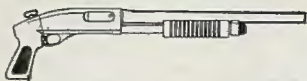
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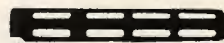
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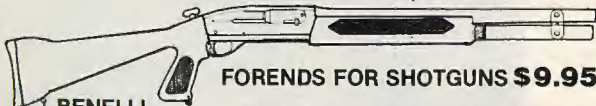


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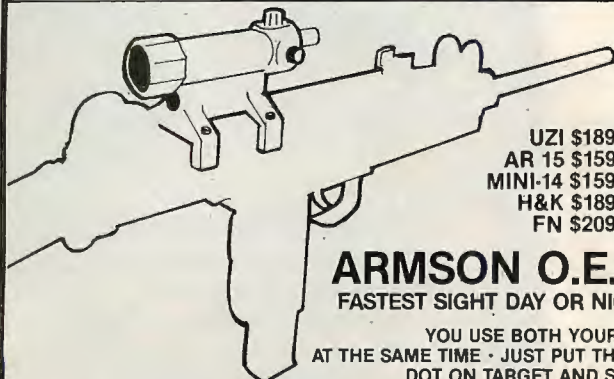
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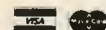
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IN REVIEW



BATTLE FOR HUE — TET 1968.
By Keith William Nolan. Presidio Press, Dept. SOF, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato CA 94947. 190 pp. \$14.95. Review by Dale Andrade.

HOUSE-to-house combat is slow and terrifying. Few wars in U.S. history have forced American soldiers to know the dread of urban combat. Vietnam, with its jungles and rice paddies was the last place one would expect such fighting to occur.

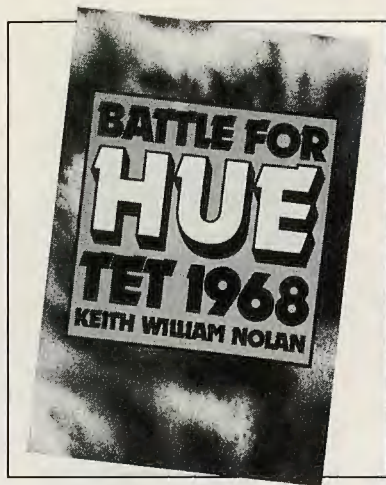
In early 1968, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong simultaneously attacked the major cities in South Vietnam. They were repulsed with heavy losses everywhere but in the city of Hue, the ancient imperial capital of Vietnam for 21 centuries.

On 30 January, 6,000 battle-hardened NVA regulars from the 4th, 5th and 6th Regiments marched four abreast in parade formation across the canal bridges on the city's southern outskirts. Entrenching themselves within the city, the communists blunted all counterattacks by the South Vietnamese army. The U.S. Marines were asked to retake Hue. Fighting from house to house, they paid dearly for every yard. The human toll was tremendous. U.S. officials reported 142 Marines killed along with 384 ARVN troops. North Vietnamese losses were estimated at 8,000 dead.

In his book, **Battle for Hue**, Nolan captures the heroism and determination of the Marines in their battle to wrest the city from the tenacious grasp of the communists. Nolan interviewed 36 veterans of Hue, weaving the narrative into a fast-paced, lucid account of that bitter battle.

One of the veterans interviewed was Sergeant Dale Dye. Before he became SOF's executive editor, Dye made his way to Vietnam where he was caught up in the battle to recapture Hue. During the fighting, Dye was seriously wounded but recovered to fight another day.

After the city had been recaptured, irrefutable evidence of communist atrocities was unearthed. Thousands of bodies were found in mass graves —



all executed as "enemies of the people." Many believed this to be a fabrication devised to cover up civilian deaths resulting from the "hysterical" use of American firepower. Nolan gives the lie to this ridiculous charge with contrary evidence throughout his book.

Books abound about the Vietnam War, many of them personal accounts which shed little light on the conflict, but few deal specifically with the battle for Hue. Nolan's work is not an empirical study of the battle and its place in the war as a whole and like other such works, **Battle for Hue** relies on the memories of men who were caught up in the heat of battle, their recollections tainted by the excitement of the day.

We need more detailed works on major engagements of the war in order to begin to revise and balance America's lopsided view of our involvement in Southeast Asia. **Battle for Hue** is a step in the right direction. To his credit, Nolan keeps the individual accounts within the context of the overall battle, making this a good reference book for those wanting to use **Battle for Hue** as a source for further research.

This is one of the best interview accounts I have read about the Vietnam War. Nolan has followed the example of the handful of authors who have begun a serious examination of the Vietnam War unencumbered by emotionalism. Pick this one up and add it to your library. ✕

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It looks like a toy — but ours is a 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. Its 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.



THE CAMOUFLAGE TIE

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

GREAT GIFT IDEA

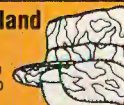
Two great things about our ties:

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 fishes on it.

Choose from: Pointed and (traditional and conservative) or Straight End (punk and iconoclastic) \$9.95/each; 2 for \$18.95.

Ranger Combat Cap—Woodland Camouflage—latest Army issue.

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



GENUINE GI

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)

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

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KAUFMAN'S WEST INC.

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Call Us TOLL FREE 1-800-545-0933
(505) 293-2300

NEW ADDRESS!

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



Commando Sweater— This is the famous British Commando Sweater (Woolly Pulley) adopted by the US Military. The natural 100% wool fiber content makes the sweater super warm, the long cut and tight knit ribbed design makes it wind proof. Sleeve and shoulder patches provide protection at abrasion points. **Specify size:** 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48 \$39.75/each
Choose from:
 Olive Drab (OD) Green Crewneck (USMC Approved)
 Black V Neck with epaulets and name plate area on breast (US Army Approved)
 Black Crewneck (no epaulets or name plate area)
 Camouflage

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

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Special Forces Green Beret - Jaunty and daring and classy — like the professional's who wear them. These are official regulation berets of 100% vat dyed wool and meeting all military specs. Made expressly for use by the prime government contractor. Also available: Official headgear for:
 Airborne Quailford (Maroon)
 Ranger Commandos (Black)
 Artillery & Guardian Angels (Red)
 Commando Dress (Camouflage)
Sizes—6 7/8 to 7 3/4
(Not sure of head size? Tell us how many inches around your head where you wear your hat. We'll send the right one.) \$13.75/each



Military Goods Catalog—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.

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.

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

Drill Instructor/Smokey the Bear Hat—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 7-3/4. \$19.75/each.
 Genuine Leather Chin Strap \$2.00/each.
 Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) \$6.00/each. (Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue).

Distress Marker Rescue Strobe Light— This is a high intensity strobe beacon which penetrates rain and fog and is visible for distances up to 15 miles. Standard pilot survival gear, this light is about the size of a pack of cigarettes (1" x 2" x 4 1/2") yet it puts out a dazzling white flash (250,000 lumens) 50 times per minute for up to 8 hours. The unit is waterproof and shockproof. Sold complete with case and 1 battery. \$39.50/each.
 Replacement Batteries for Strobe Light \$5.00/each; 3 for \$12.00

Kaufman's West Presents BIG DEAL Savings (Thru Jan. 15, 1985)

Well—We're still not trying to be the cheapest; customer service costs money and Kaufman's is still the friendliest and easiest to deal with. But, this year we bought extra big on selected items so that we could save money in our volume purchase. We're passing that savings onto our customers thru Jan. 15th, 1985.

Wherever you see the **BIG DEAL** indication on the items in this ad you can save **BIG**. But hurry, we cannot guarantee supplies if the holiday rush is much greater than anticipated.

M-65 Field Jackets— This is the basic issue combat jacket. Designed for complete utility, these water-repellent and windproof jackets feature: 4 super large utility pockets; gusseted back for complete mobility and freedom of movement; epaulets; adjustable cuffs and collar; drawstring waistband; hidden hood in collar. Brand new, of course. Sizes are XS, S, M, L, XL. Long lengths are available in Olive Drab (OD) Green and Camouflage. Woodland pattern only. If you're unsure of your size, tell us your chest measurement when ordering. XS-L \$55.00/each; XL & all long lengths \$60.50/each; XL/long \$65.00/each.
Choose from: Olive Drab (OD) Green
 Camouflage, Woodland Pattern (latest GI issue to Army)
 Desert Tan - (NATO issue), Camouflage, Tiger Stripe - (Commercially made in a US mill to military specs).



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

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



Watch Cap, 100% Wool— This is the genuine GI, tightly knit, and all-wool watch cap. Used by commandos and troops alike, this tightly knit cap fits snug on any size head for maximum warmth on extended cold weather operations. Sides can roll down to protect ears. Choose between dark blue/black (Navy Seal or Marine Recon teams) or OD (olive drab; army). \$6.00/each.

We're Not The Cheapest!! But Then, We're Not Trying To Be.

For over 65 years the Kaufman name has been respected for offering the finest in genuine military goods and insignia. Our commitment to first rate service is legendary. Our service policy means:
• All in stock items are shipped no later than the next business day regardless of whether you pay by check, money order, credit card or C.O.D. (There is a C.O.D. fee of \$4.00 in addition to the regular shipping)
• Toll free telephone lines direct to our Customer Service Department. We'll not only be glad to take your orders (every firm with an 800 number will do that!) but we'll also be happy to answer your questions: Whether you're calling to ask about our merchandise or the status of an order you placed, we guarantee friendly, courteous service.
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.



USAF Flight Jacket— These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for Intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20° to 55° F). Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible; outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features: two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sewn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend.
Specify: Sage Green or Blue Shell - Regular Length Only.
Sizes: XS, S, M, L \$46.75/each; XL \$51.50/each

Brand New!! Flight Jackets in Black and Woodland Camouflage— Exact in every detail to the genuine GI MA1 jackets above, manufactured by the same government contractor, to military specs, with reversible orange linings. The Black nylon shelled jackets feature a gold zipper and the Woodland Camo jackets are made from genuine GI cloth of 50% cotton/50% nylon. Sizes: XS, S, M, L \$48.75/each; XL \$53.50/each

USAF Heavyweight Flight Jacket - Type N2B— This is the warmest flight jacket that the military issues. It features full pile hood which drapes over the shoulders when not needed. This is the cold weather version of the Intermediate Weight Flight Jacket - Type MA1 featured elsewhere in this ad. This jacket is designed for subfreezing temperatures. Waterproof and Windproof. S, M, L \$87.75/each; XL \$95.75



IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT

Guaranteed Delivery by Christmas if Your Order is Received by December 18, 1985 on all in stock items—

That's right, if we receive (by telephone or in the mail) your order by December 18th we'll guarantee you receive your order by Christmas. If we fail to deliver on that promise we'll credit you every penny you spent in your order (excluding shipping) toward your next purchase. That means you keep the merchandise for free if you don't receive your order by Christmas.

- To qualify for this guarantee, you must:
- 1—mark on your envelope or tell the customer service representative that the "ORDER NEEDED BY CHRISTMAS"
 - 2—have the order shipped to any location in the continental U.S. (Sorry, Alaska and Hawaii and possessions require an addition 8 business days).
 - 3—order an item that is in stock. If we have sold out on an item because of unanticipated demand, we will issue a raincheck at the sale price (or if not on sale, at a special discount). We suggest you call our customer service department tollfree if you are ordering near the deadline, to determine availability. Or, send us your telephone number so that we can inform you of any problems.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

SHIPPING COSTS

Please include appropriate shipping costs from chart below with each order. Amounts shown include costs of postage, packaging, insurance and handling.

Orders up to \$10.00	\$3.00
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Orders from \$20.01 to 35.00	4.50
Orders from \$35.01 to 50.00	5.25
Orders from \$50.01 to 70.00	6.25
Orders from \$70.01 to 90.00	7.25
Orders over \$90.00	8.00

Canadian Orders—Send Double Amount Indicated.

ORDER TOLL FREE 1-800-545-0933: CALL MON-SAT 8:45-7, SUN 12-5 (Mountain Time)

THE Bergmann MP 34/I and Steyr-Solothurn MP34 submachine guns share little in common with each other except for their designations, which indicate the year (1934) of introduction and adoption, respectively. Bergmann's submachine gun, unlike the more conventional Steyr-Solothurn and most others introduced during the period between 1918 and 1936 — probably best described as the stodgy era of submachine gun development — was surely the strangest fish to ever swim the calm, stagnant Sargasso Sea epoch of the SMG development.

Designed by Theodor Emil Bergmann at his factory in Germany, with application for patent filed on 6 July 1932, early prototypes were made by the end of the year at the Schultz and Larsen facilities in Otterup, Denmark. In 1934 Bergmann's son and Dietrich Stahl founded the Theodor Bergmann Co. GmbH. in Berlin to produce his late father's submachine gun. However, actual production was subcontracted to Carl Walther of Zella-Mehlis, somewhat like Colt's manufacturing the original 15,000 Model 1921 Thompson submachine guns for Auto Ordnance. By the middle of 1935, 2,000 units had been produced and sold, principally to Bolivia and the German police.

Modifications introduced in 1935 resulted in a designation change to MP35/I. Both long (12.6 inches) and short (7.8 inches) barreled versions of this model were produced and used during the Spanish Civil War. It was also sold to Ethiopia and marked with the Sun Lion crest. It was adopted by Sweden as the M/39 in 1939.

As WWII began, a German government contract for the short-barreled version (33 inches in overall length) was obtained with manufacturing license given to Junker und Ruh, A.-G. (secret manufacturers' code: "ajf"), in Karlsruhe, Germany. During the entire five-year period of the war no more than 40,000 MP35/I submachine guns were produced. It's easy to see why. The MP35/I bolt group is a machinist's nightmare and the quality of external and internal fit and finish was maintained at the very highest pre-war levels until the last day of its limited production run in 1945.

It is commonly believed that the entire WWII production run of the MP35/I was for the Waffen SS. This is, of course, the touch of Midas on any Nazi period collectible. Several authors have gone so far as to state that most of these MP35/Is are marked on the receiver body with the double runes of the SS. I have examined close to a dozen MP35/I submachine guns in the United States, Austria and Germany — no mean feat, as specimens in any condition are few and far between.



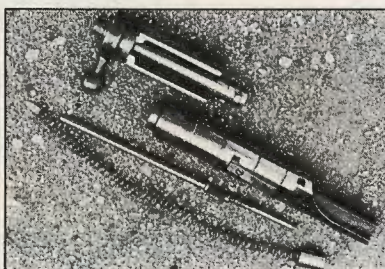
FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Southpaw Subgun?



The MP35/I submachine gun was designed by Theodor Bergmann and manufactured by Junkers. Contrary to popular belief, this unusual and innovative weapon was never used by the Waffen SS.



None of them carried SS markings of any kind. All, like mine, were marked with the eagle "L" police-acceptance stamp on the receiver body above the magazine well.

In 1936 the nationalization of the German police system was completed under the supervision of Heinrich Himmler. Since he also controlled the Waffen SS, it takes but a small stretch of the fevered imagination of the average collector of Nazi memorabilia to garble whatever meager information is available on this subject. Furthermore, I have seen but two firearms (both 98k rifles), in all these many years, with SS runes on the buttstock — and they remain highly suspect to me. Weapons procured for the Waffen SS were marked with the same *Waffenamt stempel* (military acceptance stamp) used on material accepted for use by the *Heer*, *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine* (Army, Air Force and Navy).

I have never seen even one photograph of Waffen SS troops in a combat environment armed with the MP35/I. As the fighting elite of the German military, the Waffen SS was always armed with the very best weaponry and equipment. They got what they wanted in every regard; i.e., they most

often chose the Browning HiPower with its larger magazine capacity over the P38 pistol. Now, who in his right mind would choose an unwieldy 10.5-pound (loaded) clunker like the MP35/I over the MP38/40 series submachine gun? No doubt about it — the MP35/I was issued only to German police units and other internal security organizations responsible to the Minister of the Interior.

Be that as it may, the Bergmann submachine gun presents us with some fascinating and unique features. With the exception that it is blowback-operated and fires from the open bolt at a cyclic rate of 650 rpm, there is little that is mundane about the MP35/I. The Bergmann's retracting system is both peculiar and complex. The retracting handle is located at the rear of the receiver body. It does not move during the firing cycle. It is attached to the receiver's end cap assembly and a single lugged tube which recesses into the bolt body. Retraction of the bolt is performed in the same manner as the cocking of a bolt-action rifle, i.e., the bolt handle is rotated 90 degrees upward, retracted rearward three inches, shoved forward and rotated back to the horizontal position. While there is little chance for debris to enter the system, the trade-off is an unacceptable increase in mechanical complexity.

The bolt body contains a spring-loaded, floating firing pin which is 8.5 inches in length! The recoil spring is attached to a steel collar, both of which ride over the rear portion of the firing pin. By means of a rotating cam located at the bottom of the bolt, the firing pin is allowed to protrude through the bolt face only after the bolt has gone into battery. The firing pin can be driven forward only after the cam strikes against the end of a long, shallow groove milled into the bottom of the receiver tube. As the cam is rotated rearward, its top section pivots against a recess cut into the firing pin and thrusts it forward to ignite the primer. A similar system is found on the Italian Beretta Model 1938A submachine gun.

There is no selector switch on the Bergmann. There are instead two triggers. Pulling the forward trigger halfway to the rear results in semiauto-

Continued on page 139

Tropical Armor



by
SILENT PARTNER

... for the Man in the Trenches

If you want to know what a piece of equipment is really worth, ask the Man in the Trenches. He knows exactly, because he pays for it in real terms—in personal commitment and energy.

By his measure most body armor is worthless. The cost it exacts in weight and discomfort exceeds what he is willing to invest. So, eventually, he discards it.

But now there is Silent Partner Tropical Armor, and the Man in the Trenches finally has something he can cost-justify in his own terms. A single wide Level 1+ unit weighs just a pound and a half. And the mesh carrier is so much cooler and more comfortable than ordinary strap-on carriers that it must be experienced to be believed.

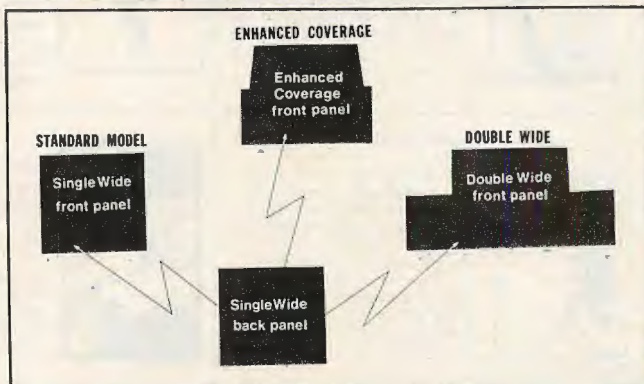
The protection Silent Partner Tropical Armor offers is also something he considers worth having. At every rating level Silent Partner Armor is stronger than federal standards require.

And, most importantly, Silent Partner Armor is modular—a design concept we invented. That means you can start with the lightest and least expensive Silent Partner unit and scale it up into anything the situation requires—even hard armor capable of stopping assault rifle fire—just by adding components.

The Man in the Trenches will no longer face the absurd problem of deciding whether he is sufficiently at risk to be miserable in inflexible old-fashioned armor. With Silent Partner he can simply decide what level of armor the situation calls for.

And all this innovation and excellence actually costs less than the armor the Man in the Trenches has rejected. You can afford to provide him the protection he needs in the form he will accept whether you are equipping the most budget-strapped three-man police department or outfitting an airborne division.

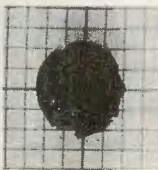
Order today, or send \$2.00 for our fully illustrated catalog of the entire Silent Partner line. You owe it to yourself. Especially if the Man in the Trenches is you.



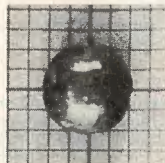
Rem. 230 gr. .45 ACP FMC
Velocity: 836 FPS
No armor layers penetrated



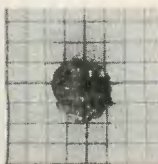
S&W 125 gr. .38 Spl. Nyclad
Velocity: 1,001 FPS
No layers penetrated



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



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



Here's a rogue's gallery of rounds recovered from a standard nine-layer SILENT PARTNER insert under NILEC1 conditions. (A more detailed report, covering the full range of rounds tested, comes with your armor.)

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ENHANCED COVERAGE	SINGLE WIDE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						\$159.85 ea.	\$
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		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						Shipping & Handling	\$5.00
EXTRA ENHANCED/DOUBLE WIDE CARRIER	DOUBLE WIDE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						\$ 34.95 ea.	\$
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		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>							
										TOTAL	\$

**PALADIN
PRESS**



A SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFER

Check the "Special Holiday Offer" box on the order form and **deduct 20% from any order over \$50!** It is our way of saying, "Have a good holiday!" **ORDER NOW** as this offer expires on January 1, 1985. No Holiday Discount on wholesale orders.

1985 MILITARY HISTORY CALENDAR

by Raymond Lyman

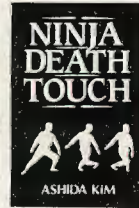
War veterans, history buffs, world citizens: this unique, attractive calendar was written for you! Each and every day features a military event in modern history covering every major war, decade and area of the globe. And 57 photos, rare and famous, show battles, weaponry and notorious fighters. Which great event in history happened the day you were born? Here are more interesting facts than you've ever before seen assembled. Learn something new each day. 12 x 13, B&W. **\$8.95**



CHINA'S NINJA CONNECTION

by Li Hsing

At last, the forerunners of the Japanese Ninja and Korean Hwa Rang warriors have come out of the shadows. The clan of the Lin Kuei (Forest Demons) has endured since its birth in the forests of long-ago China. Masters of Survival, the Kuei incorporate animal behavior in their deadly, no-nonsense fighting techniques known only to them—until now. 5½ x 8½, hardcover, photos, 160 pp. **\$16.95**



NINJA DEATH TOUCH

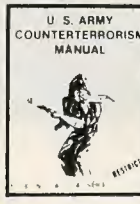
by Ashida Kim

Here are the secrets of the unholy hands that kills with a wave of a hand! Certain Ninja practiced the Death Touch, a type of black medicine that destroys through manipulation of the body's nervous, circulatory and Chi systems. Learn Dim Hsueh, Dim Ching and the infamous Dim Mak techniques. Illustrated with step-by-step photos. 5½ x 8½, softcover, illus., 104 pp. **\$10.00**



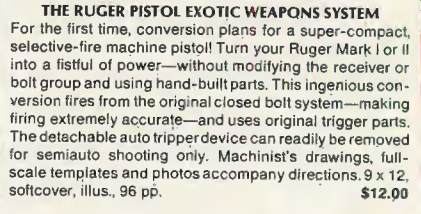
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Advanced revenge techniques and original dirty tricks from the author of *Get Even*. Here are the meanest, nastiest pranks for snakelike salesmen, nagging relatives, nosy neighbors, and all those people you love to hate. Read *Up Yours!* and start getting even today! 5½ x 8½, hardcover, 220 pp. **\$12.95**



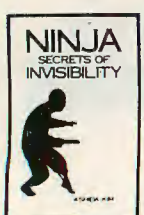
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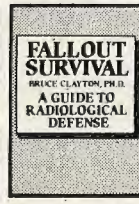
by Ashida Kim

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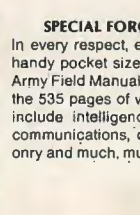
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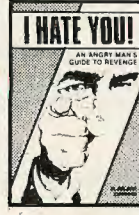
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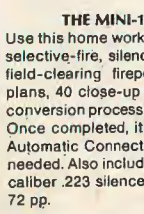
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I WAS THERE

by Lee Parsons

as told to M.L. Jones

The Damn 'Nam Dust

Lee Parsons was a SP4 on his first Vietnam tour. On January 1970, he was assigned to the Ban Me Thout Signal Detachment, 459th Signal Corps. Then came the day when someone forgot to close the door:

THE Grand Bungalow compound where my unit had been stationed burned to the ground before Christmas. We were operating out of aluminum commo shelters we had sandbagged-in on the airstrip near downtown Ban Me Thout. Right next to us was a trio of CH-47 Chinook helicopters. They played hell with our electronics every time they cranked up and idled, filling the air and our equipment with the deep red dust of the central highlands.

To keep the dust out of the vans, we "procured" a trailer-mounted air-conditioning unit in order to create a positive air pressure inside (certainly not to keep us cool — that would be against Army policy!). The system worked fairly well, if we kept the door shut. So we had to get in or out in a hurry, or watch the dust start filtering into the van.

I was working day shift, sending and receiving teletype messages from the COMCEN van to Dalat and Nha Trang. Since I was hot (we had been told to stay in full uniform), as well as young and impatient, I reacted as soon as the door opened and stayed open.

I was hand-typing a long message to Dalat when the door opened. When it didn't close, I said, "Close the door, please!" and kept on typing.

It stayed open. "Close the door, please!" I repeated as a thin film of dust started to gather on the paper in front of me.

In my right peripheral vision I could still see the open door and two or three

people just standing there. I reached my too-low boil point, and as I turned I shouted: "CLOSE THE GODDAMNED DOOR!"

When I looked at the person next to me, all I could see were stars. General's stars. My stomach felt like it was in an elevator headed down too fast, and I thought my throat had been cut since all that came out was a dry gurgling as I saw the "mosquito" on my SP4 patch floating out the open door.

GEN Rienzi, commander of the 1st Signal Brigade, Vietnam, turned to the captain behind him and said firmly (it sounded like the booming voice of God to me): "CAPTAIN, CLOSE THE GODDAMNED DOOR!!"

My legs grew rubbery. I tried to stammer an apology — I already had visions of my cell in Long Binh Jail — but the general smiled and said, "Don't worry about it, soldier, we should have known better. My apologies."

Amazed, I gave an impromptu briefing for the general on our operation of the teletype circuits that provided communications for the province senior adviser to other headquarters and units. As GEN Rienzi left, he thanked me for the information, and for tolerating people who were obviously born in a barn.

GEN Rienzi went on to become Commander, U.S. Army Strategic Communications Command (USAS-TRATCOM) at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz. I went on pounding a teletype for a month or so, until I was transferred to an Air Cav unit when they needed radiomen. Perhaps that was CPT Zacagnni's (my company commander) way of payback; if so, it was like swatting a fly with a Buick.

But from then on, it was always, "CLOSE THE GODDAMNED DOOR, SIR!" ✖

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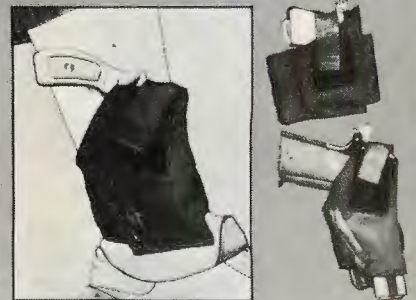
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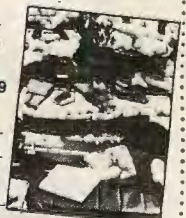
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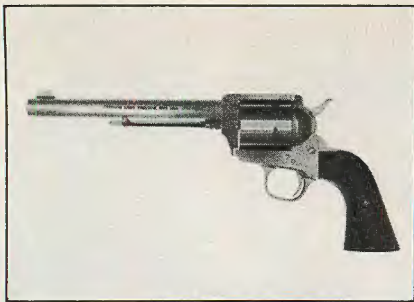
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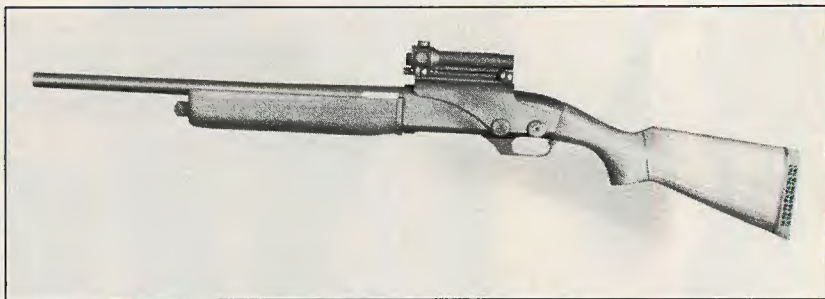
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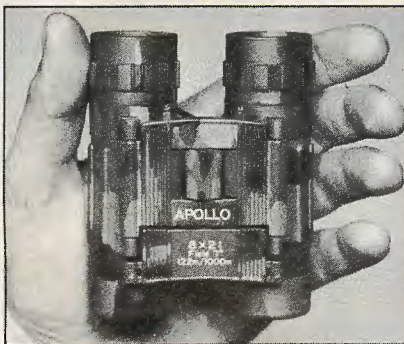
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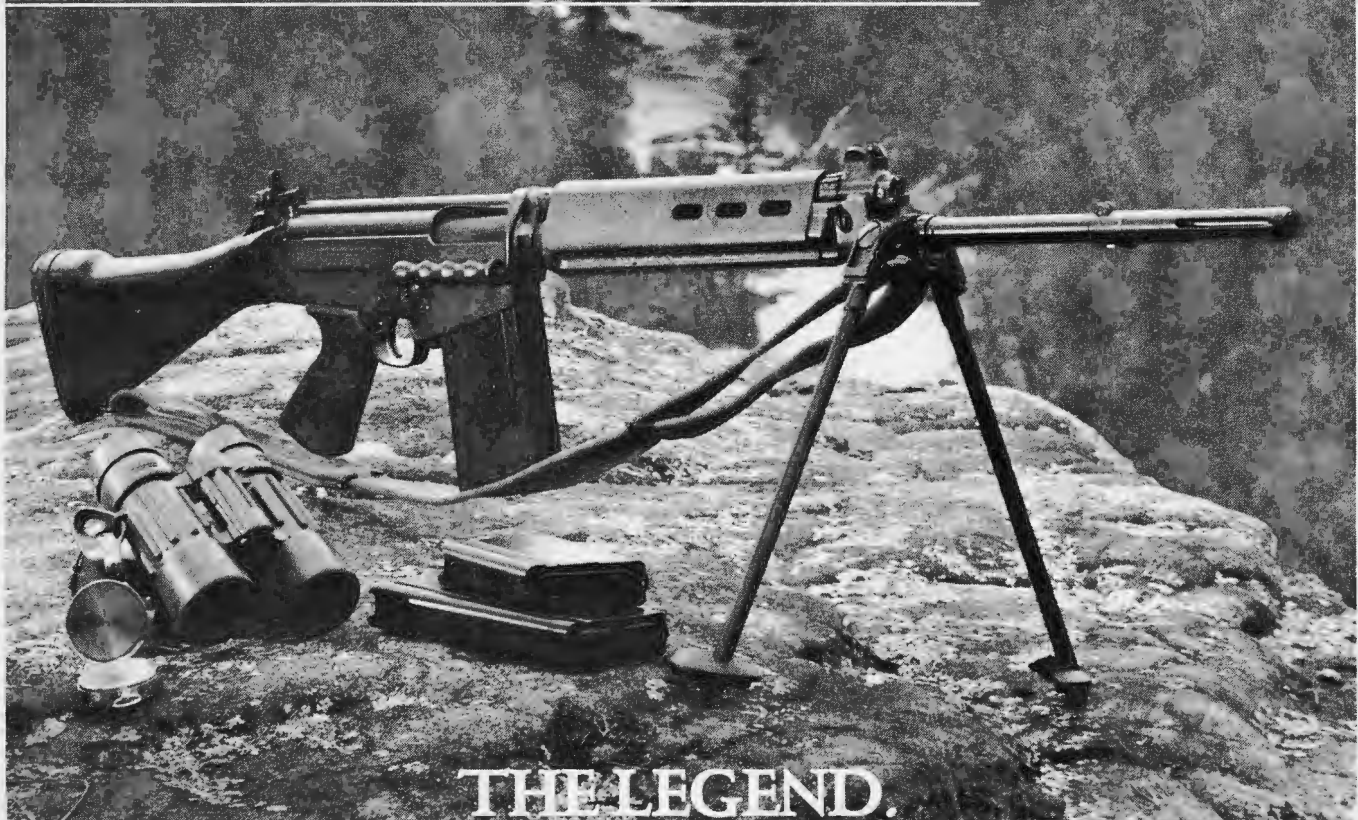
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EDITORIAL

by Robert J. Caldwell

ELECTION '84: The NATO Enigma

When you get this month's SOF on the newsstand the presidential election will still be two weeks away. Robert J. Caldwell's editorial concludes our Election '84 series. Be sure to vote on 6 November.

THE North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the United States' most important political and military alliance. Without it, the Soviet Union would almost certainly extend its dominion over Western Europe, leaving America isolated and without a formal ally anywhere on the Eurasian landmass. To avoid this calamity, both of the major American political parties have supported the broad concept of an Atlantic alliance and, more specifically, of NATO ever since the organization was founded in 1949. NATO is so obviously vital that continued American participation and support for the alliance is certain whatever the outcome of this year's presidential election.

But this is not to say that NATO's fortunes, and hence the United States' geo-political position in the world, will not be affected for good or ill by what happens in November. Quite the contrary. There is ample cause to believe that NATO will be far stronger if American foreign policy is conducted for the next four years by a Reagan administration rather than a Mondale one.

Start with the fact that Mr. Reagan is a committed Atlanticist leading a political party more resistant than the Democrats in recent years to the appeals of isolationism. Mr. Mondale is variously described in the media as a centrist or a moderate, but in fact his record during a quarter century in public office is unmistakably liberal. And it is within the liberal/left wing of the Democratic party that isolationist sentiments are currently in the ascendancy. Does this mean that a President Mondale would consider disengaging from NATO and letting the Western Europeans fend for themselves? No. But the distinct Democratic drift toward a neo-isolationism, plus Mr. Mondale's own less-than-fervent support for

containing the Soviets, suggests less emphasis on NATO as the indispensable shield for Western Europe.

Next there is the more quantifiable matter of defense spending. Here, the distinctions are more clearly drawn. President Reagan wants defense spending increased by seven percent per year after adjusting for inflation. Mr. Mondale says he favors four percent increases, and even this figure seems etched in wet sand. Mr. Mondale also says he would spend less for strategic and nuclear weapons — cancelling the MX missile and B-1B bomber, for example — and more on the conventional forces that are the first line of defense in places such as NATO's Central Front.

That might sound sensible enough on the campaign stump, but has Mr. Mondale forgotten that Soviet nuclear superiority at either theater or strategic levels could trump NATO's defenses without a shot being fired, nuclear or otherwise? The Reagan policy is to try covering these yawning gaps in the West's defenses with cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe and MXs, B-1Bs and more cruise missiles here at home. NATO needs a stronger nuclear deterrent than Mr. Mondale and the Democrats seem willing to provide.

Then too, there is a broader consideration in determining the prudent level of defense spending. The United States is the indisputable leader of the Free World and, as such, must seek to lead by example. The Carter and Reagan administrations both pressured the Western Europeans to spend more for their own defense — at least three percent more each year if possible. Will that essential pressure be easier to sustain, and more likely to produce the desired results, if America begins to cut back on its own rearmament program? The answer is obvious, and bodes ill for NATO's defenses if Mr. Mondale is elected.

Similarly, who would be more effective in reminding the sometimes myopic Western Europeans that Soviet military power really does threaten their freedom and even their survival? Would it be President Reagan, who obviously believes that the Soviet threat is real, or would it be Mr. Mondale whose record suggests that he has never been especially alarmed about the Soviets? Once again, the answer is obvious.

NATO is enduring something of a crisis of the spirit. Many Europeans are increasingly nervous about nuclear weapons but seemingly reluctant, if not unwilling, to bear the greater expense of providing adequate conventional forces as a substitute. Many Europeans resent the vast power and influence of the United States, but are not sure what, if anything, should be done about it. And

Continued on page 141

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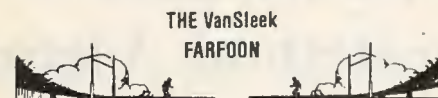
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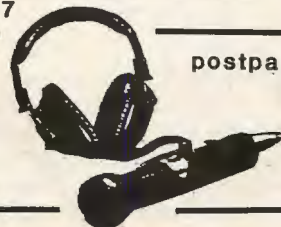
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A CHANGE OF HEART?

Two Decades to Rethink Vietnam

by William Keith Nolan

FOR the first time in most major media — outside *Soldier of Fortune*, — the Vietnam War veteran is being seen in a positive light. Given the November 1982 dedication of the still-controversial Vietnam War Memorial and considering the emotion-charged ceremonies surrounding the recent return of America's Unknown Soldier from Southeast Asia, we are very likely witnessing a major, collective change of heart concerning a topic that was more divisive than any other in American history since the Civil War. Even the most virulently liberal citizens and politicians are publicly admitting that Vietnam Veterans were simply soldiers doing their duty.

All that is both refreshing and encouraging after so many years of neglect and condemnation, but the record should be carefully examined before society demands absolute and we all start referring to the 1980s as the decade of the Vietnam veteran.

When America gave the hostages taken in Iran a hero's welcome in 1981, Vietnam Veterans hushed the hoopla in many circles by simply asking how society could do such a thing for people who were in captivity for only a year after totally neglecting to even recognize that many Vietnam Veterans had been home from a much more dangerous situation for at least seven years. One of those veterans was Richard W. Carter who walked off a jetliner in the United States in late 1968 as a young Marine Lance Corporal. He was returning from more than a year of fighting in the jungles and paddies of Vietnam with the 5th Marine Regiment, one of the oldest and most decorated in the Corps. On Carter's chest rested the Bronze Star, awarded for valor and heroism in the brutal street fighting during the battle for Hue City, a terrible chapter in the regiment's long history of battles from Belleau

Wood through Guadalcanal and Korea. He also wore two Purple Hearts and carried shrapnel in his spine and leg.

While Carter waited in the airport terminal, a bearded youth noticed his uniform and approached him. The man slurred, "Baby killer!" Carter ignored him. The man spat on the Marine. Carter sprang, his foot landed on the hippie's temple, knocking him unconscious. His welcoming committee was a police unit.

The hostility to the Vietnam War and its warriors that soured Carter's and other vets' homecomings in the 1960s, and fueled the anti-war demonstrations of that era, were beginning to fade by the late '70s. Books began to appear which put the war in clearer perspective for everyone. They include Peter Baestrop's *Big Story*, which condemned the press for irresponsible reporting during the 1968 Tet offensive, Gunther Lewy's *America in Vietnam* and a number of other works which generally took the previously unpopular viewpoint that with a few exceptions, the American military had operated responsibly and effectively during its years in Southeast Asia and that if blame was to be allocated, it should be focused on the politi-

YOUTH SPEAKS OUT

Keith William Nolan has just published his first book, *Battle for Hue* (see our review on p. 14), on the Marines in the '68 battle for Hue. Although he's only 20 years old, Nolan has already published several magazine articles, and is now working on a second book about Operation LAM SON 719, the invasion of Laos in 1971. This is his first appearance in SOF.



cians who couldn't understand the nature of the conflict. Al Santoli's *Everything We Had* and Mark Baker's *Nam* told the serviceman's story with emotion-charged narrative driving home the point that war is hell but American soldiers were able to face it heroically.

While the best-seller lists were hardly riddled with Vietnam epics, and the most popular items still portrayed the Vietnam era trooper as a rabid, dope-smoking fiend, focus on the veterans was clearly shifting. It became obvious in popular culture which made camouflage and military gear *chic* and allowed the current crop of Vietnam Veteran heroes onto TV. Tom Selleck of *Magnam, P.I.* and the entire *A Team*, are classic examples, as is the success of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine and its annual conventions which exemplify renewed public interest in and respect for the Vietnam Vet.

The most important event separating the past from the future came when the Vietnam War Memorial was dedicated on 13 November 1982. During that widely televised event, veterans were finally shown as positive figures by the national media (see "Finally, Our Day," SOF, March '83). The dedication marked an important development for all Vietnam veterans. As



Mike Deverix, a veteran who travelled from Lowell, Mass. to see the event, put it, "It's the parade we never had."

Vietnam veterans are finding they can now openly discuss the war and find a receptive audience. The familiar, oversimplified and vastly over-stated stereotypes that depict sobbing apologists or long-haired, drug-addled losers are being steadily debunked.

The first American soldier died in Vietnam some 20 years ago; the last, nine years ago. From that first U.S. Army adviser, lost in a 1961 roadside ambush, to the last Marine killed during America's retreat from Saigon in 1975, nearly three million American troops served in Vietnam. More than 57,000 were killed and 300,000 wounded. The war stretched over 14 years and, after it was finally over, America spent nearly as long ignoring her Vietnam Veterans. Many people viewed them as cold-blooded killers of women and children, a myth supported by the infamous, widely-reported massacre of Vietnamese civilians at My Lai. Because of narcotics abuse by some Vietnam Vets, virtually all were portrayed as addicts. The most popular view, promoted by motion-picture and television dramas, generalized the Vietnam Vet as a draftee who went

Lack of courage was rarely a problem in Vietnam; Marine M60 gunners pour fire into NVA positions near the DMZ. Photo: U.S. Marine Corps

unwillingly to war, shirked his duty for political reasons and crammed his system with dope to forget the horror of his situation, killed his incompetent leaders and then returned home, angry and resentful toward his nation, sensitive and guilt-ridden about his Vietnam service.

Real Vietnam Vets have always known better. As a former lieutenant who spent 1969-70 leading his platoon of the 1st Marine Regiment through the bush around Da Nang said, "For too long, the malcontents and critics of American society have had unchallenged opportunity to display Vietnam Veterans as war criminals, drug addicts and 'suckers.' The overwhelming majority of Vietnam Vets fit none of these categories."

In the haste to bury the Vietnam experience deep in the societal subconscious, the veterans were forgotten. They were lost in the vacuum of time and neatly filed as losers for future reference. That's unfair and unworthy of their sacrifices. Obviously, different post-war circumstances produced different reactions among each of them, but the

record reveals a few generalizations can be made.

Americans who served in the 1954-64 advisory period were career officers and noncoms. Most were veterans of WWII and Korea. They took their combat experience with them to train the fledgling Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). In 1965 — as the military situation rapidly deteriorated — Marines landed at Da Nang and the era of the adviser ended.

The men who fought from 1965-69 were among the finest, best-trained troops in American military history. They had a gut-level belief in their nation and the cause. With the music of the Beatles, the Doors and Hendrix in their ears they went out to sweep through the villages and patrol the hills. In addition to the weight of their helmets, flak jackets and M16s, many troops carried the burden of knowing that their sacrifices were either being ignored by unconcerned countrymen or soundly condemned by people who had never had to fight for anything more important than a parking space.

Such thoughts fortunately had little effect on morale. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong (VC) soldiers were excellent fighters, but young American



grunts prevailed in every major engagement. Ia Drang, Van Truong, Dak To, Con Thien, Hue City, Quang Tri, An Thi and Khe Sanh marked their military expertise.

Images of draft-card burnings and peace demonstrations flashed on American television screens and led many Americans to believe all the fighting men in Vietnam were reluctant draftees who weren't smart — or quick — enough to get to Canada. Records show that two-thirds of those who served in Vietnam were volunteers (compared with a two-third draftee ratio during World War II).

Grunts in Vietnam bitched daily about their plight just like combat vets of all wars. Some drew peace symbols on their helmet covers or scrawled "Fuck The Army" or "The Corps Sucks" on the back of a flak jacket. But morale was consistently high and the combat proficiency of field units, judged by friend and foe alike, was outstanding.

"The most impressive thing I saw was the action of the American youngster. The same long-haired kid that loves rock-and-roll music — and sometimes appears to the public as a weak generation — comes through with flying colors when the chips are down," said one company commander of his men after a tough fight with an entrenched NVA force in 1967.

"At one point [during the fire fight] I ran across a couple of men badly shot up. It was obvious to me — and to them — that they were dying. Yet there was no screaming or crying or moaning. They only gave good information to newly arriving troops on the locations of enemy targets," he continued.

Sergeant Major Frank A. Thomas — winner of the Bronze Star and Navy Commendation Medals for valor as a company gunnery sergeant with the 5th Marine Regiment during a 1967-68 tour — spoke poignantly of the grunts he fought alongside. "Concerning Vietnam, I have very strong sentimental memories of young men who were all heroes in my book. Their spirit of comradeship and *esprit* and sacrifice will never be forgotten by me. They were all truly magnificent and lived up to the real meaning of the word Marine. I'm proud to say they were all my buddies.

"It's sad," Thomas added, "that the courage of those 18- and 19-year-old kids seems to have gone unappreciated."

Retired Staff Sgt. Josef Burghardt put his views about the men in Vietnam more simply: "We were the best in the world." Burghardt speaks from experience. He served as a squad leader with the 9th Marine Regiment from 1966-67, earning the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He volunteered for another Vietnam tour and acted as a platoon sergeant with the 1st Marine Regiment, earning a second Bronze Star and two more

Out of the battle: A wounded NVA soldier found in a hospital complex near An Hoa is aided by a corpsman. Despite their portrayal as brutes by the press, American soldiers usually adhered to the traditional rules of engagement regarding prisoners. Photo: Dept. of Defense



Purple Hearts. His last wound paralyzed him from the chest down and confined him to a wheelchair.

A friend of Burghardt's — on the battlefield and later in civilian life — is Marine Reserve Sgt. Edward Neas. Of the grunts, Neas said: "Morale was excellent; we pulled for everybody." Neas won three Purple Hearts during his 1967-68 tour with the Marines at Con Thien, Hue and Khe Sanh.

"I have the utmost respect for the Marines I served with," he emphasized, "and I was deeply saddened when I learned of Marines who were killed or seriously wounded. For as long as I live, I will never forget any one of them."

"I would have to say that for all the hardships and grief, the morale of the troops in Vietnam was pretty good. But it was one nasty S.O.B. of a war," said police detective Roger LaRue, who served 1969-70 as a corporal with the Marines' 1st Reconnaissance Battalion.

LTG John J. Tolson, U.S. Army, Ret., holder of the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star and Purple Heart, commanded the 1st Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam

Children bring out gentleness in everyone, even a soldier on a search and destroy mission. This American Marine trades some C-rations for a fresh pineapple. Photo: Dept. of Defense

STAMPING OUT STEREOTYPES: WILL THE REAL VIETNAM VETERANS PLEASE STAND

Vietnam was an American nightmare that hasn't yet ended for veterans of the war. In the rush to forget the debacle that became our longest war, America found it necessary to conjure up a scapegoat and transferred the heavy burden of blame onto the shoulders of the Vietnam Veteran. It's been a crushing weight for them to carry. Rejected by the nation that sent them off to war, the veterans have been plagued with guilt and resentment which has created an identity crisis unknown to veterans of previous wars. But none of that is as bad as being stereotyped.

Delayed Stress Syndrome has become the disease of the decade and many Americans now view all Vietnam Veterans as ticking time-bombs set to explode at the slightest pressure. It's all so cut and dried and full of media hype. The horrible massacre at a McDonald's Restaurant in San Diego this summer evoked the inevitable inquiry about the killer from the press: "Did he fight in Vietnam?"

But there is an even worse stereotype. Our Vietnam Veterans must struggle out from under the "loser" label. They must prove that they are not misfits who cannot adapt in society because of damage



The media has consistently focused on the myth that the Vietnam vet is unable to function in society. The image of a long-haired, partially uniformed, unemployed and potentially violent veteran is not the reality. Most are normal, respectable and productive citizens. Photo: AP/Wide World

done to their minds by a guerrilla war fought in a far-off jungle many years ago.

A cursory glance at the statistics quickly dispels most notions of unworthiness and instability among the average Vietnam Veteran who faded into normalcy in the aftermath of the war. They got jobs, raised families and went into debt like all good Americans. A survey of Veteran Administration figures on employment reveals 70 percent of all Vietnam vets have been gainfully employed since their return Stateside and 80 percent have no arrest records. This hardly supports the anguished "psychovet" image.

Throughout the country, people are forming organizations to rectify the ignorance and neglect which has victimized Vietnam Vets. The Tennessee Vietnam Veterans Leadership Program (TVVLP) is one of these. It finds jobs for those vets in the Memphis area that have been out of work for 15 weeks or longer. The program has proved effective. According to John Beering of TVVLP's job placement office, 1984 has been a good year for vets. Most are employed. In fact, the demand on the TVVLP's pool of vets has been greater than the supply.

We can never repay the Vietnam veterans for their sacrifices. We can at least let them know that we appreciate them.

— Dale Andrade



Take five: Marines take a well deserved break during a routine patrol west of Khe Sanh. Photo: U.S. Marine Corps

from 1967-68. "From 1973-77, I served as the Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in North Carolina. My number one crusade soon became trying to awaken the citizens to the debt owed by this country to those terrific young Vietnam Veterans. At every opportunity in speaking to groups, I emphasized that the young soldiers I fought with in my 1st Cav Division in Vietnam were just as brave and courageous as any that I fought with in WWII."

"As for morale, I believe that the vast majority of us were reasonably content with our respective roles, accepting the policy decisions of our national democratic system which sent us where we were to do what we were doing," said retired COL William D. Hauser, commander of an artillery battalion in the Mekong Delta from 1968-69 and author of a book on the state of the U.S. Army.

"Not being saints," he continued, "we also felt a degree of resentful suspicion that our countrymen might have sent us and then changed their minds. I think, however, that most of us pushed this sort of thinking to the back of our minds in order to cope with the demands of each day. Note that I speak of 1968-69; from my research, I am led to believe that feelings had much changed by 1971-72."

COL Hauser is correct. By 1970, morale and discipline of the troops in Vietnam began to break down. With more and more draftees of low quality filling the ranks, with American units being pulled out of Vietnam as the responsibility for fighting was given to the ARVN, and with the belief that they had been forgotten, many young soldiers were unwilling to continue fighting. Said one Army infantryman to a reporter in 1970, with a mix of cynicism and grunt bravado, "We're the unwilling doing the unwanted for the ungrateful."

In rear areas where there was no threat of combat to induce military order, the situation turned dismal. Race relations were strained; the most subtle sign was voluntary segregation in barracks, the most violent was the outbreak of riots. Contact between the career "Lifers" and the draftees became

tense and, in extreme cases, unpopular officers and noncoms were "fragged" — killed or wounded by their own men.

Discipline was far better on the battlefield, but in some combat units there were instances of troops balking at moves into combat, of orders being regarded as topics for discussion and of shirking duties. The Army in Vietnam became one of long-haired draftees. Peace symbols hung with dog tags, acid rock blared from firebase bunkers and the smell of marijuana smoke hung over the entire country. Cynical grunts lackadaisically went through the motions of fighting what was clearly an unwinnable war. It wasn't that the troops were cowards, but after years of seeing the war drag endlessly on and with no national will for victory to back them up, few soldiers saw any reason for making major sacrifices.

The combat troops, given motivated, competent leaders, continued to fight well. "The fact that they wear love beads and peace medallions doesn't mean they can't fight," wrote one Army photographer after seeing a company of the 1st Cav capture an NVA basecamp near the Cambodian border in 1970. "The kids quickly learn that the best way to stay alive is to kill the guy trying to kill you. And in combat they're ferocious." At least 30 Medals of Honor were awarded for heroism between 1970 and 1972.

Marine field units and elite Army outfits — Special Forces, recon, aviation — continued to perform with the same professionalism displayed before 1970. That was clearly demonstrated by the great courage of Army helicopter squadrons during the Laotian campaign in 1971 and by the valorous teams of Marine advisers and forward observers during the NVA's 1972 Easter invasion.

One aspect of the breakdown in morale at the end of the war that left a black mark on all Vietnam Vets was the use of drugs. The

drug culture being celebrated in the States found adherents in Vietnam and, by 1971, at least 10 percent of the troops were reported to be hooked on hard drugs. Although most of the addicts were young enlisted men with boring, rear-area support jobs, some combat troops also turned to narcotics.

Unfortunately, the extensive media coverage given the addicts linked all Vietnam Vets with drug problems. James Webb — a retired captain and author of *Fields of Fire*, winner of the Navy Cross, Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts as a platoon and company commander with the 5th Marine Regiment in 1969 — wrote in a newspaper article that he was frequently asked if "I had ever used heroin, as if we all walked around with a needle hanging out of our arms . . . I can honestly say that drug usage was much more prevalent at Georgetown Law School when I studied there than it ever had been while I was in the Marine Corps" (see SOF's reprint of this article, "What the Vietnam Vet Needs," May '80).

The soft drug marijuana, however, was prevalent throughout the war and could be purchased readily at low prices. It was available and some combat troops did smoke to relax when in the rear. Marijuana was rarely used in combat where Americans could be killed or wounded as a result of drug intoxication.

Another result of media coverage of isolated incidents was portrayal of Vietnam GIs as war criminals. The charge that American soldiers committed war crimes was prominent in the news after it was revealed that a platoon of the Americal Division killed unarmed peasants and VC at My Lai in March of 1968. There is no doubt that in some cases American soldiers did kill civilians, such as occurred in the situation at My Lai, and commit other atrocities. But such things were neither common nor condoned. The truth — however abhorrent — is that all wars produce atrocities. In addition, the mass attention given My Lai overshadowed the fact that it was an unusual event — a freak of sorts — and that the enemy commonly committed much worse crimes as a matter of course.

CPT Hugh Mills, a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, took the question of atrocities head-on in an interview with a military historian. "We didn't shoot women and children. We didn't shoot people unless they were clearly identified as enemy soldiers, armed and capable of doing a job on us. That was a policy, not my own, but a policy of mutual consent between all the pilots in my troops, and as far as I know, that was the policy of the great majority of pilots in Vietnam. I never saw anyone violate that." Mills earned three Silver Stars and six Purple Hearts flying scout and gunships in 1969 with the 1st Infantry Division and in 1971-72 with the 1st Aviation Brigade.

One positive factor prevalent throughout the war was the comradeship that held combat units together. Said a 1st Marine Regi-

TOM CLAY, ACTOR AND VIETNAM VETERAN

Thomas Clay went from the jungles outside Phu Loi to the Hollywood jungle via one shattering burst from a Viet Cong machine gun. When he joined the Army at 18 immediately after high school graduation he certainly had no visions of ever being listed in Actor's Equity. The only list Tom had any interest in was the roster of airborne infantrymen headed for Vietnam. He was, in his own words, a potential Lifer.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1966 he arrived in Vietnam and joined Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, the "Blue Spaders" of the famed 1st U.S. Infantry Division operating out of Phuoc Vinh. His battalion commander was a rising army luminary named Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Haig. Tom Clay was home. He immediately volunteered to walk point for his platoon just because "I wanted to be first all the time; to set the pace."

He sweated through a slew of miserable jungle patrols and saw his first KIA when his unit walked into the middle of a VC base camp near Lai Khe. Tom performed admirably in that fight despite the violence of the ambush. He pulled back and returned fire just as he had been taught. It was the role he had always planned and he was playing the lead.

After 10 months of riding into combat aboard helicopters, Tom decided he wanted to be part of Army aviation. He extended his tour in Vietnam, went home for leave, and returned to Southeast Asia to join the Aviation Battalion of The Big Red One in September of 1967. The curtain was beginning to rise on the communist Tet Offensive of 1968.

"I was happy as a clam," he recalls. "They assigned me to Alpha Company, the gunships, as an M-60 door-gunner on B model Hueys. I wanted to get the door-gunner experience, finish my tour in Nam, and come home with the rank and background for aviation school. I had my sights set."



So did the VC. On 19 February 1968, Tom was gunning for his Huey on a mission to provide cover for an infantry unit pinned down by gooks in a plantation house about 20 miles north of Phu Loi.

"We were a light fireteam going over at about 150 feet," he remembers of the day that changed his life. "We took a pot-full of ground fire from .50 cal in the plantation house and my pilot decided to go in lower and cut loose with his whole rocket load to blow down the walls. That's when it happened. I remember it looked like someone was throwing bowling balls at us and rounds blew out the windscreen and tore through the transmission. We started losing power."

And Tom Clay nearly lost his life. "I know this sounds weird," he comments, "but I actually saw the gun that got me. It was a U.S. .30 cal. I was hanging outside the bird burning rounds at the ground to cover us as we flew over. I had one foot outside on the rocket pod so I could aim straight down and something stung me in the left leg. I shouted that I was hit and the crew chief hauled me inside the bird."

His helicopter was staggering toward a crash landing as the crew chief applied a tourniquet to Clay's shattered thigh. He had taken a round there, another in his hand and one through his flight helmet. Three others had left deep gouges in the "chicken plate" armor that Huey crews wore.

"They managed to get the bird down in a rice paddy and radio our location," Tom remembers. "I knew I was hurt fairly badly, but I managed to get my gun out of the bird and help set up a perimeter around the wreck."

It was, for all intents, SP4 Tom Clay's last act as a soldier. For the next year and a half he was rolled in and out of hospitals in Vietnam, Japan and the U.S. When they finally medically retired him after 10 serious operations, he had to wear a special lift on his shoe to compensate for his left leg which was several inches shorter than the right. It was a traumatic time for a 20-year-old who wanted nothing more than a military career despite growing American

opposition to the war he fought in Vietnam.

"I remember watching the Democratic Convention on TV while I was in the hospital," he recalls, "and it really got to me that they didn't even know what was going on over there. I realized it was going to be a Mexican stand-off. I knew we'd lose if we didn't commit fully, but I never felt like what I went through wasn't worth it. We did a hell of a job in Vietnam. The Army didn't lose that war. The politicians just wouldn't let us fight it."

But Tom Clay was never one to concentrate on the past. He convinced himself that he had a bright future despite his disability. He drifted in and out of retail businesses and went to an aeronautical trade school with thoughts of continuing his career in aviation. He was proud of his service and never hesitated to truthfully explain where and how he got his disability. In 1976, during a successful career in the fast-food business, Tom Clay got interested in a regional theater group in Philadelphia.

"I found out I really enjoyed the theater," he says. "There was something really appealing about that acting business." In 1976, after insuring his younger sister and his mother were well provided for, Tom split for Hollywood with absolutely nothing more than an intense desire to be an actor. He quickly discovered that there was yet another war going on right there in Tinsel Town and he'd have to be as determined and dedicated a soldier as he ever was if he was to survive. In the Hollywood jungle, where beauty and glamor are everything, Tom Clay, disabled Vietnam Veteran, seemed to be fighting a losing battle.

But he stuck to his guns — just as he had that day in Vietnam when the VC blew his helicopter apart — and the breaks finally began to come. He got roles in movies such as "Prime Risk" and "State of Mind," always as a character actor. He did a slew of commercials and TV parts including a role as a wounded veteran on "After MASH." And he's still out there hustling for parts every day. He doesn't limp. He won't let himself do that. And he doesn't quit. Tom Clay won't let himself do that either — not after what he's been through.

What does he think of the nationwide Vietnam Veteran *chic*? "I feel really good about it. We're finally being recognized. People are finally realizing that we were American soldiers doing our duty. It's about time."

Press on, Tom Clay, and all the other Vietnam Veterans like you. Ignore the cammie-clad piss-and-moan artists who turn out every Memorial Day to cry for the TV cameras. You're the real Vietnam Veteran.

— Dale Dye



A Marine rifleman finds that things do go better with Coke as he takes time-out on a dusty road west of Da Nang. Photo: U.S. Marine Corps

ment platoon leader, "The troops in the field — the grunts — were tight. They slogged through rice paddies together, hacked through jungles together, slept in holes in the mud together, shared whatever they had and depended on one another in tense, stressful situations. Sharing common danger and depending on your peers for your survival forges a uniquely strong bond."

The grunts were drawn together into a close-knit family whose members had all experienced the heart-pounding intensity and peril of combat. Unlike their racially divided homeland and without the segregation of rear areas, combat soldiers had no color line; whites died for black friends, blacks died for white friends. As the cliché goes, the only color in a combat unit was green. The grunts in line units would — and often did — share their last cigarette, their last canteen of water, and give their lives for their friends. For many, the brotherhood of the line grunt was the only redeeming aspect of their service in Vietnam.

LaRue, the Recon Marine, spoke of "being able to leave \$1,000 in cash lying on your rack when you went to take a shower and knowing it would be there when you got back 'cause the guys were your bros and they would look out for you; knowing if you were down and out 'cause your girl in the States didn't want to wait for you no more, that your bros would know what you were hurting about and they'd share your hurt; knowing that if you got your guts blown out in the bush, they weren't going to leave you, that they'd die coming to get your ass even when you didn't want them to take the

chance. It makes for a very special alliance and somehow makes it all worthwhile to have served."

David L. Summers — a former staff sergeant who earned the Bronze Star for valor with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment in 1968 — said, "The grunts were, for all practical purposes, a family of sorts. You really care about these folks. You are depending upon them for your life. One guy is depending as much on this guy as this guy is depending on him. The bond that comes out of that is much stronger than anything else."

From the concern, comradeship, fear and bravery of the battlefield, the Vietnam Vets came home to the shabbiest treatment ever given American warriors. The vets got a quick hug and kiss from family members and then went out on the streets to face the hostile stares of hippies and the bored apathy of a country eager to put the war behind it. Unlike the veterans of WWII and Korea, who earned the admiration and parades of a proud nation, the Vietnam Vets were left with the ironic stigma of being condemned for having served their nation.

For many, it was a shock to be treated as villains simply because theirs was an unpopular war while fathers and uncles recalled the victory celebrations of World War II and Korea. It caused further resentment to read liberal newspaper editorials, which called draft dodgers heroes and applauded

actress Jane Fonda for going to Hanoi, where she posed with enemy antiaircraft gunners.

Despite the brutality and dismal homecomings, most Vietnam Veterans managed to survive with no major mental scars as did their relatives who fought earlier wars. A Veterans' Administration poll of 2,500 vets revealed that the majority have no regrets about having gone to Vietnam. LaRue characterized popular feeling among Vietnam Veterans. "I wouldn't trade having been in Vietnam for anything. It was a situation, a group of experiences that there is no way to really adequately describe. I'm not saying I would like to do that all over again. The bad times drift away. The good times you remember. Some of the bad times become fond memories, so to speak. But that doesn't mean you don't wake up screaming sometimes."

Jim J. Soukup, a former recoilless-rifle-squad leader who earned the Purple Heart during a 1967-68 tour with the 1st Marine Regiment, is another who served proudly: "Like the inscription on my Zippo lighter says, 'To really live . . . you must nearly die.' Even today, the flag and national anthem awaken a sense of deep pride for having served with those who gave their all for honor and the privileges we enjoy. I am one of the lucky ones. I survived."

Most vets are not bitter about having served; if they are bitter about anything, it is the political chicanery and lack of national will that made their fight futile. Many are not convinced the causes of the war were justified but most feel that once troops were committed and American lives lost, the war should have been pushed to total victory. In the view of many, bombing halts didn't encourage peace negotiations; they got grunts killed.

LaRue put it simply: "The politicians lost the war. The grunts won it time and time again."

Many vets also blame the loss of the war on the peace protesters — students who never saw Vietnam due to college deferments — and are hostile about the blanket pardon given to draft dodgers.

Said LaRue, who sweated out 22 recon patrols, was wounded several times, and earned the Navy Commendation Medal for valor, "Knowing that nobody was going to blow their guts out or blind them, the protesters just raised their merry hell and then lounged around, smoked their pot, drank their wine, made love and dodged the draft. To top that off, after we bled our guts out, they gave an amnesty and let all those cowardly bastards back."

The bottom line is that most Vietnam vets do not fit into the stereotype that has developed around them. Most are proud to have answered the call of their nation. Most of all, they want — and deserve — the recognition for their courage and sacrifice. They do not want to be remembered for the atrocity at My Lai or the drug problems of the later years, but for the bravery at places like Hue, Khe Sanh — and all the nameless, countless actions that made up the war. ✕

TRADE TALK

Spook Speak, Asian Argot and Service Slang

by Bob Burton

SPEAKING SOLDIERESE

A Dictionary of Soldier Talk. By COL John R. Elting, USA Ret., SGM Dan Cragg, USA Ret., and SFC Ernest L. Deal, USA Ret. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1984. 383 pages. \$35.00. Review by Alexander McColl.

This is more than just a catalog or glossary of more-or-less-current military slang, semi-slang and official buzzwords that would otherwise baffle the non-military reader. It also contains a lot of military history and is evidently the result of a vast amount of loving research and inquiry into the history of American soldiering at the working level. For this reason, in addition to being an invaluable reference, it is an enjoyable book to read, bringing back more than once the thought of the "good old days, when we really had an Army." The reviewer's military experience only goes back to 1953 (late brownshoe Army), but even then the shadows of older and better days were there. Each of the entries includes a notation as to which period of the Army's history the entry relates to. One could wish for a bit more separation between informal slang and official terminology, and between specifically West-Point slang and the slang of ordinary soldiers, but this is picking small nits off an otherwise useful, entertaining and valuable book.

The Dictionary includes a separate appendix of Navy and Marine Corps terminology. This is a subject that could be, and probably is, the subject of a large, complete treatise. The short summary here is very good, and like the Army section, carries with it a lot of working-level history and lore from the Old Navy and the Old Corps. (The word

list below by Bob Larson, an old China Navy hand, is in effect, an appendix to this appendix.)

Since the Air Force started out as the Army Air Corps, I guess, the Air Force terminology and slang are included in the Army section, and it does not seem out of place, notwithstanding the fact that the fly-boys have worn blue suits for the last 35 years.

For the serious researcher or writer interested in verbal authenticity, this is an indispensable reference. For the general military reader it's interesting and highly informative reading.

Acey-deucey. A China sailor's game, relatively less complex than backgammon. In acey-deucey, the markers or pieces are not positioned on the board before the game starts, but are placed, as the game progresses, by the toss of the dice. Acey-deucey boards are rectangular in shape and finding the long end of the board is what drives Marines crazy.

Air bedding. To drape one's bedding on the life lines of a ship. Usually done when the ship is not underway. In China, bedding was aired on Wednesdays in port and great care had to be exercised to keep sampans from coming alongside and ripping off a blanket or two. As a slang term, it meant to get the hell outta there. Sample: "Boy! Did I air bedding when her husband came in!"

Bad joss. Bad luck. A joss-stick was incense on a sliver of bamboo. It was burned to keep evil spirits at bay. If they screwed you over, it was a bad joss. If you caught the clap, it was bad joss. Good joss was when you used Monopoly money in a non-treaty port far up-river where they'd never seen Americans.

Bend on. As an ex-signalman, I ought to know this one. A person bends on (con-

nects) signal flags before the command, "Prepare to hoist," is given. One also "bends on" two lines. In China Navy slang, it was a term used to express sexual desire, i.e., "I sure would like to bend her on."

Boot. Old Navy or Marine term. Before WWII, recruits at training stations such as Great Lakes (Navy) or Parris Island (Marine), wore khaki leggings called "boots." On the rare occasions when they were authorized liberty, they were not supposed to hang their trousers outside their leggings as did more senior men. Naturally they did anyway to avoid being taken for a "boot."

Brown-shoe Navy. The old aviation branch of the Navy as opposed to the more traditional, i.e., "black shoe," or battleship Navy.

Cheela! Shanghai dialect for "get the hell away from me!"

Chop-chop. A term that was never used by Old China Hands. Strictly Charlie Chan, Hollywood crap.

Collision mats. Large, thick, mattress-like pads, placed over areas in the hull that have been "holed" as a temporary repair. In slang, the term referred to pancakes served on the messdecks.

Cow. Condensed milk. Also known as "moo-juice." In the China Navy it was also known as "nip-dip."

Dit happy. Slang for radiomen who were also known as Sparks, Sparkey or Speed Key.

Eee-yao-mah. Mandarin dialect. "What's happenin'?" or "How are you?"

A Flathat. A blue, wool, winter hat, with a ribbon in front that bore the name of the wearer's ship or station. In wartime it simply said, "U.S. Navy." The flathat was a warm, practical cover, so,

Soldier, sailor or spy talk is a professional argot or slang that mixes street and battlefield lingo with acronyms and, more recently, scientific jargon. We've already explored two of these dialects: the mercenary's ("How to Talk Merc," SOF, May '83) and slang of the Vietnam War ("G.I. Jargon," SOF, October '83).

This month, Bob Burton tackles the lingo of the Intelligence Community (IC). As he tells us, "The IC is composed of those agencies in our government that collect, analyze and disseminate information turned into hard intelligence. Those agencies include but are not limited to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Security Agency (NSA) and a host of others. Spy talk is half science and half street jargon. It grew out of WWII and reached maturity during the late '60s and early '70s, at which time bureaucrats started to create some of their own.

"With the advent of high technology," Burton continues, "space-age terminology

has moved in alongside such ancient standbys as invisible ink and dead drop, giving us spy-in-the-sky and electronic cryptosystem."

Humor is an essential ingredient of spy talk. It's also evident in military slang, as Alex McColl's review of Soldier Talk and Bob Larson's listing of Old China sailor slang indicate (see below).

Finally, there's pidgin English, that universal Asian dialect. Jim Morris's account of his Thai encounter with pidgin (see p. 44) completes our roundup of specialized English. — The Eds.

EYES ONLY: MKGREGORIO. Re: MKAZTEC. No go. To avoid flap, E&E. MKRABBI.

Spy talk is deliberately cryptic. But with a little practice and some handy definitions, you can decipher its secret language. Take the above message, for instance. It could signal the end of a *false flag* operation in which a *Company* or CIA officer had been recruiting agents while posing as a KGB or

other foreign secret-service representative. The ultimate purpose of such operations is to bring discredit to the falsely assumed allegiance.

Such an operative is *HUMINT*, *human intelligence*, the most important link in the intelligence cycle. He operates from a *safe house*, an unregistered home or apartment in which to shelter in relative safety while in the *operational area* and to which the Agency can send *go-no-go* messages concerning the operational status of his project.

If this spy received the above message, he would *escape and evade* to avoid exposure — the *flap* — that could hit the papers. Because he had produced *hard returns*, expected measurable results on his projects, including *hard targets* (high-priority and high-security targets), he had left his *handwriting*, as the British call it, all over his area of operations. Such a *brand* or style is a mark of an officer's operational ability.

By the way, you should never call a CIA spy an *agent*: Agents are usually outside employees hired for various one-time projects or long-lasting operations. A CIA case

naturally, it was discontinued by the Navy.

Flying Baker. When a ship is unloading or offloading ammunition, it flies a red flag called "Baker." The term was also China Navy slang for any woman who was having her menstrual period. Sample: "My pig was flyin' baker, so I hit the house of a thousand assholes, the one on the corner of Bubbling Well and Carter Road."

Geedunk. Navy or Marine slang for liquid sweets derived from the sound a scoop of ice cream made when it was dropped into a container. Any solid sweet was called pogy-bait.

Gob. An old Navy term for a sailor which originated from the "gobs" of tobacco seamen chewed when not allowed to smoke.

Hooligan Navy. The Coast Guard which comes under operational control of the Navy in wartime. The Coasties were very much respected by the Navy and I never heard anyone say negative things about the "Happy Hooligans."

Kvass. A China Navy term for non-fermented fruit juice — usually cherry — which the Russians on China Station used to dilute their Spud, or vodka. Very nice. A quart of spud, incidentally, cost 80 cents Mex or less than a nickel.

Mex. Old Mexican money, bought by China when Mexico stabilized its currency, and used by China for many years. American money was called "green" or "gold." Chinese paper money, which varied from province to province, was called, "LC" for "local currency." A good, stout wench, certified a virgin, could be had for 100 Mex, or five dollars green, and you got papers too.

Motorpan. A shallow-draft, flat-

keeled, small boat, carried by river gunboats.

Officer of the Deck. The man on duty who represents the commanding officer of a vessel during a given 24-hour period. The OOD can always be distinguished by the gray, suede gloves he wears and by the telescope he carries under his arm. The scope is never referred to as a telescope, or spy glass, however. It is *always* called a "long glass," or, more simply, a "glass." Only chaplains, yeomen and civilians call it a telescope. At sea, the officer of the deck is on the bridge where the "glass" is replaced by "glasses," or binoculars.

Pig. China Navy Slang for girl friend and/or shack-job. If you saw one eat, you'd know why they were called pigs.

Plahaba. Shantung dialect for the question, "Do you understand?"

Qwaydi-Qwaydi. Shanghai dialect for get a move on, move your ass or hurry up.

Red lead. An anti-rust compound applied to all weather surfaces of a ship before painting. In Navy slang, the term referred to catsup.

Rice-bowl Sailor. Yangtze River gunboats carried Chinese laborers, who were actually members of the crew but not officially recognized by the captain as being aboard. They performed all the actual labor, but could not work the helm, or handle weapons. If you got a haircut on the beach, instead of having your Chinese ship's barber do it, he lost face, which usually prompted him to quit the ship and spend the rest of his life sniping at your vessel from the banks of the Yangtze because you "broke his rice-bowl"

River Rat. China Navy slang for a river

gunboat sailor.

Russian Relief. Navy or Marine slang used on China Station for shacking with a Russian female refugee named Luba. I can use the specific name without fear of contradiction because all Russian women in Shanghai were named Luba. And none of them shaved their legs or underarms.

Shahiza. Shanghai dialect for young person or child. The term was generally only used by men who had sailed on China Station.

Smoogee. Navy and Marine slang for a kiss and probably the basis for the more popular term "smooch."

Tao boy (towel boy), a 75-year-old man who delivers towels to rooms in a Chinese whorehouse. You'd normally hear it from hookers who asked you to "please givee tao boy cumshaw [a tip]." The guy usually owned two or three Rolls Royces, a couple of coastal freighters and a big piece of the rock.

Swoon Juice. Sloe gin, preferably orange-flavored, which was normally slipped into the punch bowl when a China Station Christian missionary held one of his infrequent lawn parties for the sailors. It was even more fun to feed Swoon Juice to the missionary's daughter who would get tanked up on the stuff and allow you to take her topside where you could screw the socks off her.

Upstairs girl. A whore who specialized in blow-jobs.

Downstairs girl. A whore who would not give blow-jobs.

Backside girl. Self-explanatory.

Upstairs, downstairs, backside, front-side girl. A missionary's wife.

officer takes reports from his agents. Although not official employees of the CIA, agents occupy a very important place in the intelligence-gathering process. There are *principal* and *secondary* or *sub-agents*, ac-

tion agents, *support agents* and *agents of influence*. All play a role in the process of *penetrating* the intelligence apparatus of a *target country*.

An *asset* is a source of information within

a target's structure. An asset may be a *contract agent* or an employee within the target structure, such as a secretary sympathetic to Western ideals who just happens to work for the Iranian Embassy in Mexico City. Of course, all agents and their case officers have *cover*. Usually this cover is *backstopped* or at least has a *flash cover* or *flash backstopping*. If the agent or officer is *deep backstopped* that means the *Cover Division* at CIA (or another agency) will verify employment for the "Acme Trucking Co." should a suspicious counter-espionage officer of the target country call Langley, Va., for a verification of employment.

The Cover Division has banks of telephones which list individual operatives who are assigned to each number and their *legend* or cover. The legend details the background of the agent or officer to cover a period of years. Flash cover or backstopping is usually only cover ID or some other document to get by with in the field. It won't stand too much scrutiny.

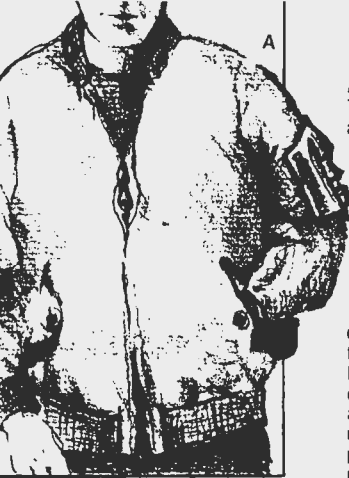
Sometimes the CIA will use a *dangle operation* with a *national agent*. Such an operation tries to draw off the host country's counterintelligence agents into a *deception operation* by dangling false leads and non-existent or national agents in front of them. The case officer who heads up the dangle operation has a *Bigot List* to enable him to find those foreign nationals under contract to the Agency. Sometimes, the dangle operation may have to be *aborted* if a policy change from Langley comes through in the *book message* over the electronic communications network maintained by the Agency.

Book messages are sent to all field installations so changes can be made immediately on receipt. If the agent is in a *sensitive* position, information may have to be gotten to him in a *brush pass* — what a casual observer would believe was only two strangers bumping into each other in a crowded bar or on the street. If there is *blow-back* over the aborted mission, some agents will have to be *terminated* or simply fired with Langley notified on the *back-channels*, the secret frequencies used by commo men.

Usually, the genius who developed the dangle operation will have had a *black mind*, a compliment in the counterintelligence profession since it indicates someone capable of seeing beyond the obvious or even the not-so-obvious. These creative, imaginative individuals usually move into *black work* or deception operations. They usually work in *counterintelligence* (CI) where they are told to find careers looking for the enemy's *moles* or *penetrations*. These penetrations by enemy intelligence experts would *compromise* or reveal this nation's more important secrets.

CI is that area of operations that takes action to prevent damage done by enemy intelligence services. This action ranges from *compromising* enemy agents by *blowing* their cover to planting false information in their paths to divert their attention. It often uses *double agents* or *turns* — cap-





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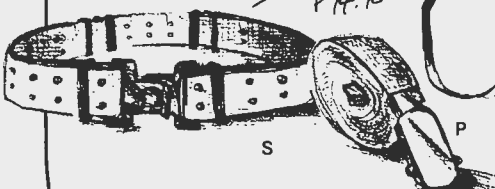
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H. Coat sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL.

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2 or more pieces @ ~~\$25.00~~ each.

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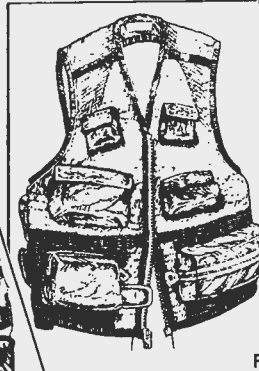
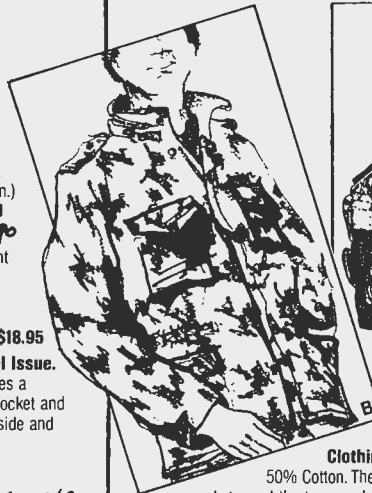
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tured enemy spies sent back against their old masters. Sometimes, such agents are deliberately given false or misleading information in order to deceive a potential interrogator. This is called *sending an empty vessel*.

Naturally, all operational areas are given *cryptonyms*. Usually, the first two letters of a code name will be a *digraph*, which indicates the area of operations or country. For instance, if El Salvador is digraphed MK and we have an operation there called AZTEC, headed by an officer coded RABBI, its cryptonyms indicating operation and officer would read: MKAZTEC headed by MKRABBI. All countries are assigned a digraph; these digraphs are changed periodically.

If a *double agent* finds himself in trouble he might send a *dummy message* or leave *danger signals*. The dummy message is a totally false or partially fabricated communication to be intercepted by the foe, in order to throw them off completely or at least slow them up. If the agent cannot communicate, he will leave danger signals, usually prearranged chalk or other markings, on walls or posts to indicate compromise. Sometimes a message will be left in a certain predesignated place, such as behind a radiator or in a tree hollow: This is called a *dead drop*.

If the agent or officer is caught by a foe he particularly fears and he is afraid he may disclose vital information under interrogation, he may resort to taking an *L pill*, a lethal pill, usually gray. These are supplied for high-risk or torture-expected-if-captured operations.

Should the agent be in danger, he often checks his *pocket litter* and his *dead babies* to see how much *fresh* he has. The pocket litter looks like the innocent clutter one finds in any pants pocket — keys, movie tickets, coins, matchbooks. But it is all designed to prove the carrier was someplace at a certain time. Dead babies are false IDs based on birth certificates of babies that died in infancy or childhood. The agent can use them to flash his way out of a routine traffic accident or road block.

If a good HUMINT operative, working under deep cover for MKAZTEC, discovered a target country's *high-grade cryptosystem*, he would also find the *key list*. Such a cryptosystem is designed to provide lasting security and to resist solution for a comparatively long period. The key list is the publication that contains the key for a cryptosystem in a given *cryptoperiod*. He would then transfer this entire system into a *microdot* — dots the size of the one over this "i" — and place it on a postcard to be easily mailed out of the country for image enhancement at Langley.

The microdot would be enhanced and a *briefing book* sent to the *operational desk* of the country coded MK. This could show that the code was a relatively simple *one-time cryptosystem* in which a cipher alphabet was used only once. Now that the system was decoded, the operations officer would develop an *OIR* or *other intelligence*

requirements for transmittal back to the officer or agent in MK to be transmitted by the *back channels* to the *COS* (chief of station) at the American Embassy in MK. The COS is head of all CIA activity in a given country.

On receipt of this data, it could be decided to develop a *black psyops* project, one which would have no sponsor if blown or compromised, since the sponsoring government is totally hidden under black cover. It could also be decided to develop a *PM* or paramilitary force under cover of false flag to see if enemy guerrillas could be lured out to join, thinking they were enlisting in another anti-government force.

If this scenario were developed, our man in MK would experience that unique physical event called *pucker factor*. Pucker factor relates directly to the amount of ground fire you receive, the number of pale guys in civilian white shirts standing in the back of the briefing room and the number of night jumps where you follow the enemy's tracers down.

It has been said *the perfect spy* is one who has trouble getting a headwaiter's attention. Our man in MK is a hard-eyed, high-cheekboned ethnic type who thinks *Red*,

White and Blue, which indicates his pro-Western feelings. He had run several false flag or *run-it-up-a-flagpole-and-see-if-anybody-salutes-it* operations, all successful. He had often worked as a *stringer*, a freelance spy for hire to all of the same ideology, for the French, British and United States. He was also good as a *street man* — an agent who specializes in meeting or recruiting agents — as well as *back-alley operations*, street surveillance or tailing. In his youth he had been placed as a *sleepers*, that special breed that lies low in a country for years before being activated.

Eventually he had been turned into a *singleton*, an agent or officer who works alone without a chain of intermediaries. He had been *slugged* MKGREGORIO, which means he was coded. He had been *sheepdipped* — placed within an organization or force where he could gain credibility for future work — before he became a career officer of the Agency.

The book message reads, "EYES ONLY: MKGREGORIO. Re: MKAZTEC. No go. To avoid flap, E&E. MKRABBI."

The pucker factor will remain high while our man checks his flash cover and plans his escape. ☒

MAKE PIDGIN TALK

In the Far East most people who speak English speak pidgin, in which English words are shoved into an Asian sentence structure. In pidgin there is only one tense, the present. Past is indicated by the adverb "before," future by "maybe." Singular is the only number; the plural is indicated by an adjective such as "many."

Thus the sentence, "He has driven lots of cars," would be rendered, "This man before, he drive many car."

In the bars the girls have two standard opening gambits, "How long you stay Bangkok?" and "You work Saudi?"

Jim Coyne and I spoke to so many people that way for so long that eventually we began to speak that way to each other, much to the annoyance of those Thais who did speak good English and thought we were putting them on. As in:

"You write lousy story."

"Stuff it, Bozo."

Please note that "Stuff it, Bozo," is rendered the same in both pidgin and standard English.

It frequently happens that one meets a highly intelligent Thai who wants to convey a complicated message. To do so that person must make a limited vocabulary do things for which it is not intended. When the message is also emotionally charged the results can do all the things that poetry is supposed to.

When Coyne and I went to Surat Thani we met Maj. Vinai Rodving who told us this story of how it happened that he was to be presented a medal by the King of Thailand (see "Thailand's 20th Cen-

tury Dragoons," SOF, April '83):

On the five of next

I go to the house of the King
To get the King's coin
Because I am the courage man.

Oh my English is so bad.
Seven man get the King's coin,
I am the third.
Many are the general,
I am the only major.

In six month
I lead nineteen operation
Against the communist
I lose no man.

I go first man
With no weapon.
I no carry.

Other officer,
They talk, am I . . . mad?

But no
My troops they are scare
They come here from many other
place

To make new unit.

They are very scare
Of the communist.

I say
If you think the communist are bad
Watch this.
And I go first
With no weapon.

So now I go to the house of the King
For the King's coin.

Maybe I will stay in the King's house
And make the paper,
Because I am tired now
Very, very tired. — Jim Morris

LITTLE BIG MAN

Saluting Sgt. Hue

by Kregg P.J. Jorgenson

ALTHOUGH he was only about five-foot-five-inches and maybe 115 pounds, Nguyen Hue was the closest thing to Daniel Boone we'd ever get to see. We were Alpha Troop, the 1st of the 9th Cav. "Blues," a 21-man recon platoon with the 1st Cav. Division working out of Tay Ninh Province in the summer-like spring of 1970.

Sergeant Hue was on the roster as an Army of the Republic of Vietnam interpreter but he also doubled as a scout because the "Kit Carsons" we had were just excess baggage. The Kit Carsons were a great PR stunt dreamed up by some REMF who more than likely never had to work with or rely on them. To someone somewhere I suppose they made good sense and press: "Bad Guys Change Their Ways For Good Old U.S.," but they had us grunts wondering whether they'd really changed or if they'd change back again when it proved convenient.

From time to time Division dumped several Kit Carsons on us to test their better-than-red theory; however, they seldom rose above our suspicion or scorn. One in particular, a former VC recycled from I Corps, was so despised he was singled out as a soon-to-be-hero should things ever get to the wall in a fire fight. Before he could change sides again he'd buy the farm and several members of the platoon would help him make the down payment.

Hue was another matter entirely. At first several of us Shake 'n' Bakes, ex-LRRPs or older vets, were skeptical about his abilities. After all, he was an ARVN and besides what could a "gook" teach us anyway? For those who cared to listen and learn, Hue was a patient teacher.

Already in his fourth year of the war as a grunt, he was well-seasoned in all aspects of field operations, but his specialty was walking point, reading situations and trails. To

TO THE POINT

"I was a shake 'n' bake buck sergeant from Ft. Benning," Kregg P.J. Jorgenson tells us, "who CBS called 'the sergeant who likes to walk point,' in a piece they ran on the Vietnam War."

"I've always laughed about that," he continues. "I didn't 'like' to walk point, but with people like Nguyen Hue showing me the ropes, it wasn't that bad. He taught me a lot about the bush and survival."

Jorgenson spent seven years in the U.S. Army, three in the infantry and four as a journalist. He served in Vietnam from September 1969 to September '70 with Hotel Co. (Rangers-LRRPs), 75th Infantry, and Recon Platoon, 1st of the 9th, 1st Cav. Division. Hue was a scout for the 1st of the 9th "Blues."

Jorgenson's awards include a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, three Purple Hearts, a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and a CIB.

"One of the Bronze Stars," Jorgenson tells us, "was supposedly for saving Hue's life, when in reality I just reacted to a scared-shitless moment. Hue, on the other hand, was an honest-to-god hero, and my article is a tribute to him and those like him."

Since leaving the service Jorgenson has supported his free-lance writing career by 9-to-5 jobs that have included scriptwriting for an audio-visual production company in Bellevue, Wash., and selling parts for a trucking company in Kirkland, Wash. His first SOF contribution, an "I Was There" column about his introduction to Vietnam, appeared in our August '84 issue.



Author stands with his M16 next to a downed helicopter. The primary task of his unit was to swoop down on the division's crashed choppers, set up a perimeter and rescue the survivors.

him it was an art form and maybe a science, though he never said so. Whenever we came across a jungle trail, Hue went to work. Doing a quick study he'd take in everything: the size and shape of the trail, the sounds in the bush, the footprints down to each ridge and groove, the dampness of the soil.

He taught us to keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army weren't just ghosts, appearing and disappearing at will. "They leave signs like anyone else," he used to say. "You just have to look for them."

He'd also stop us abruptly when he noticed a bunker we'd overlooked, trying to keep us from killing ourselves. He was someone you could rely on.

Take the time in the Dog's Head on 19 March that same year. Division intelligence told us the area — referred to as the Dog's

Head because of its canine appearance on the map — was empty. Some time back the area just a few miles from the Cambodian border may have had a few NVA units passing through but from all aerial recon it looked deserted. They just wanted us to stick our noses in and take a look around and report back what we did or didn't find. "A piece of cake" they said.

Of course, we knew cakes could also be half-baked so Sergeant First Class Aldo Andreu, the platoon sergeant, had us prepare to do some cooking. That evening he had us check over our ammunition and equipment because, as he said, "You never know who'll be doing the serving."

The next morning we took three lifts into a high-grass LZ and quickly spread into the wood line on touchdown. SOP was to sit, watch and listen, so after a cautious first few minutes LT John Hugel, or "Blue" as he was better known, gave us the order to move out slowly.

Ten yards into the bush we came across a well-used trail and a series of bunkers. The area was littered with bunkers and fighting positions that, if occupied, could house a battalion or two. Judging by some of the signs, the area had been used recently. Only after an hour of carefully working the area, clearing bunkers and paralleling trails, we drew a blank. There were just too many to clear and we were running out of time. There would be one last area to search before we were to be extracted, so we went about our job bunker by bunker.

After the first few, Hue suddenly waved us down: An open hand warning the point squad to "Whoa" while he checked out something that didn't quite look right. Flipping the safety off his M16, he cautiously eased his way over to a nearby spider hole. Several feet short of the fighting position he took quick aim and fired a short burst into its opening while a volley of AK rounds marked with green tracers came answering back. Another burst from his rifle silenced the NVA position.

The silence was only momentary. In seconds the area was alive with NVA soldiers, yelling and climbing out of their hiding places while their shouting officers tried to formulate a hasty assault. Initially they tried to overrun us — only we had the advantage. We had carefully and quietly worked our way inside their perimeter so if they were to overrun anything they'd first have to climb out of their bunkers and spider holes and get their bearings, and that was something we weren't about to let them do.

We were 21 men spread out along a jungle trail surrounded by what appeared to be a company-size element. The dense overhead canopy ruled out any gunship support and the nearest LZ was a quarter mile away, so for the time being we were on our own. "Blue" was on the radio, coordinating artillery, and we knew help would be on the way, but for now the piece-of-cake mission was something we'd have to cut up piece by piece.

They came at us in small groups, struggling with the wait-a-minute vines and the



First Lieutenant John "Blue" Hugel (center) with the author (right) aboard a Huey headed out on a mission.

thick branches. Their concealment and cover were now working against them. SP4 Duane Bloor, one of the platoon's two M60 gunners, dropped four NVA only a few yards from the point squad's left flank but not before a bullet caught one squad member in the thigh and the assistant squad leader with a grazing head wound. That squad leader, SGT Ed Beal, ignoring the constant flow of blood and the immediate pain, went on to clear out several nearby bunkers and shore up the holes the NVA tried to open in the first few minutes.

Meanwhile Hue and I had our hands full when two NVA climbed out of a bunker directly in front of our position. The first was struggling to pull out an RPG while the second threw out a bag carrying extra rockets. I shot the first while Hue yanked the RPG out and flung it backwards away from the bunker. While he covered me I dropped a concussion grenade in the opening that the second man had retreated into and fired into the bunker's other opening. Seconds later the explosion sent dirt and debris rumbling out.

Hue dropped in the bunker and came up with an AK when another NVA leaped from a spider hole and came straight at him. Before the NVA could turn and fire I dropped him. He fell only a few feet away, his bayonet the only thing I really focused on. The bastard had wanted to stick him. If he had fired Hue would've been dead and maybe me and a few others. He wouldn't get another opportunity. Much the same kind of action was happening with the rest of the platoon though we couldn't see it. The immediate picture wiped out the overall view.

An hour or so later we had 24 confirmed kills, all in sight, some still clutching their weapons. A link-up with the reaction force and some smart maneuvering by "Blue" soured the NVA's enthusiasm. Their attacks came less frequently and the scattered fire fights were burning out with sporadic gunfire. The NVA were in retreat.

For our efforts many of us would receive medals, while Hue would get a pat on the back and be lucky if his monthly paycheck

made it to him on time, a paycheck that at best amounted to slightly over \$40.

Less than two weeks later, I was shot through both thighs while walking point. Again, along the border on another piece-of-cake mission. This time, though, I had cleared a bend in a dense jungle trail and walked into an NVA ambush minutes before it was ready to go. After that awkward moment when I realized what was happening I opened up on the man nearest to me.

My cover man had not yet turned the corner in the trail so I was going to have to John Wayne it awhile. Only seconds after firing I was knocked off my feet. The right front thigh muscle pushed through my fatigue trousers while my left leg grew numb. The sun-bleached fatigue trousers were growing dark and wet. Sitting in a pool of blood fumbling for another magazine while the NVA kept firing, I wondered if this was how it would end.

Movement to my left caught my attention and I saw Hue running around the bend. Jumping between me and the ambush, he laid down suppressive fire, giving me the time I needed to crawl behind the nearest tree. Seconds later he came sprinting back and dropped beside me, the canteen on his web belt spilling water where an AK round had ripped a hole.

"You OK now?" he asked.

OK wasn't the word for it, nor are there words for the gut feeling I had when the war ended as it did in 1975. Watching the evening news clips with the Vietnamese fighting to get aboard the already-overloaded helicopters on the Embassy roof in Saigon, I felt uneasy, frustrated and guilty.

Thieu and his generals were already gone, as were those with the money or the clout. For Nguyen Hue and the others who put their faith and trust in us there'd be little more than a *Xin Loi* (sorry about that) and a wave goodbye.

They deserved better but then Vietnam wasn't that kind of war. Maybe all that's left are war stories and tributes and somehow after all these years it still doesn't seem to be enough. ☘



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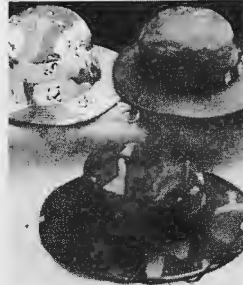
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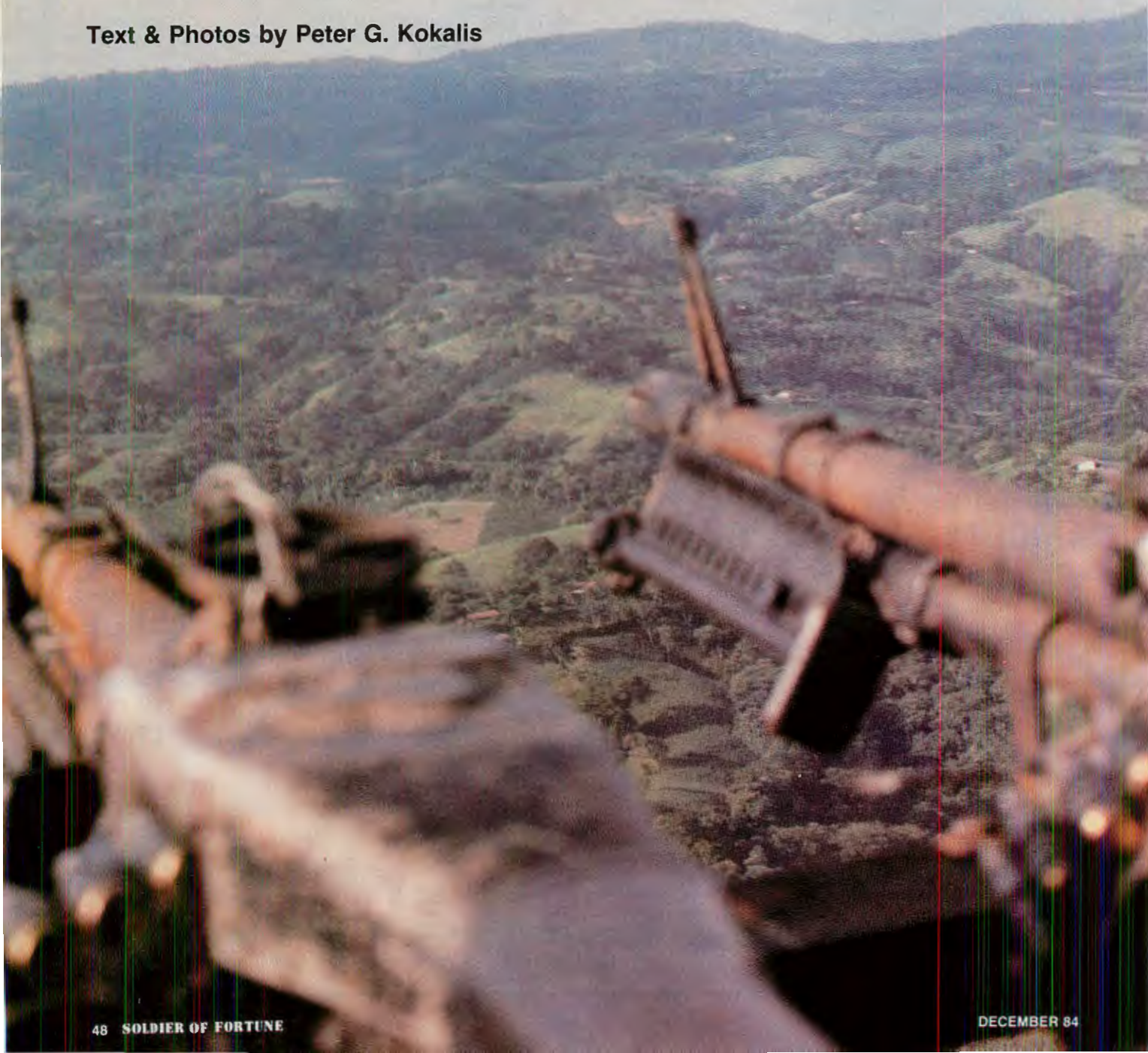


SOF CENTRAL AMERICA

GUNNING FOR Gs

**Experiments, Expedients and Collectibles
in El Salvador's Armory**

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



THE cornfield is black and wet. No moon, thank God. Corn stalks slap against me as we glide through the field, painting my face, hands and the M16A1 carbine with rain drops.

It's a recon patrol with a platoon of El Salvador's famed Atlacatl Battalion and I'm not really sure why I wanted to come along on this evil night. For the past two weeks I

had been doing weapons research and repair with the battalion at their cuartel outside San Salvador. Perhaps I was just trying to lend a little first-hand credence to a long-planned and frequently-delayed report on the *pot-pourri* of military weapons in this troubled country. If we did not make contact with the G's this night, I'd have plenty of time to formulate that report.

I glance rearward once more to confirm my rough back-azimuth on the red lights atop the antenna towers adjacent to the Atlacatl Battalion cuartel. They are now about five clicks to the northwest. We have been ordered to withdraw if the shit hits the fan.

Several hours before, the Estado Mayor had called the Atlacatl OD informing him they had monitored radio traffic. Apparently the G's were moving around our cuartel and those of the cavalry regiment and artillery brigade located nearby. We are wisely

staying within range of our available artillery support, a brace of Yugoslav 120mm UBM.52 mortars.

We have one M60 GPMG and one M79. The majority of the platoon is armed with M16A1 rifles. I'm carrying an M16A1 carbine topped by the slick little Colt 3x20mm combat scope. While on an operation with the Atlacatl Battalion in Usulután (See "Atlacatl Assault," SOF, June '84, page 54), I vowed never again to carry a 7.62mm NATO clunker into battle. My carbine is equipped with a Redi-Mag fast-action speed loader (J.F.S., Inc., Dept. SOF, 515 Gordon, P.O. Box 1892, Klamath Falls, OR 97601) holding one spare 30-round magazine on the left side of the receiver. I have eight other 30-round magazines stashed in the magazine pouches of my Israeli Army combat vest for a total of 300 rounds. Half the magazines are loaded with 100 percent



tracer (Austrian Hirtenberger), which I prefer for night operations, the rest with M193 ball of Yugoslav origin (carrying a phony AAC 83 headstamp).

As we slip silently through the corn rows toward pueblos at the foot of a looming volcano, I review what I learned earlier in the day about the situation with individual weapons in the Salvadoran Army. I have the gut-feeling that we will not make contact this night. My instincts have never let me down in the field before. There will be time to think about weapons without having to fire one.

By now the M16 and its numerous variants are ubiquitous throughout the Salvadoran Army. It has replaced the G3 in all units except the National Guard. The Artillery Brigade received brand new M16A1 rifles (all serial numbered in the nine million range with Colt commercial markings and no U.S. Property stamps) in July of 1984. This was an improper disbursement of a very proper rifle, in my opinion. Rarely involved in infantry scenarios, the Artillery Brigade should have retained their G3s and the M16A1s should have been issued to Immediate Reaction battalions. A total of 4,000 new rifles were purchased directly from Colt with Foreign Military Sales Funds (FMSF). All of them were equipped with the new M16A2 pistol grip.

The Cavalry Regiment received about 500 of these Colt rifles in the form of the M16A1 Commando which features a sliding buttstock and an 11.5-inch barrel. All well and good if you are constantly popping in and out of a Panhard AML 245 Armored car, but the troops of the Cavalry Regiment are most often used as conventional infantry. They move about in the same type of open, stake-bed trucks used by the rest of the Salvadoran Army. I fired one of these

Atlatcatl grenadier armed with the M79 "bloopers" and M67 hand grenades about to leave for a combat operation in San Vicente.



MORE GRENADES

San Miguel is a very bad place. In the three days I spent training 3rd Brigade machine gun crews we lost 23 WIA and one KIA in two claymore ambushes sprung on Army convoys. Weapons of all sorts abound in the area and combat is the ultimate test bed for them all. And sometimes (despite what demo expert John Donovan says) dynamite really does come in small packages.

The Dutch firm of NWM de Kruijthoorn NV at Hertogenbosch manufactures the world's smallest hand grenade. The V40 mini-grenade is spherical with a diameter of only 1½ inches. It weighs only 4.2 ounces, which is only 40 percent of the weight of a conventional grenade.

The body is made of steel with a pre-notched interior to insure optimum fragment size — no large segments to zap the thrower and very little non-lethal dust. Upon detonation about 380 small, but incapacitating, pieces are impelled radially outwards at a velocity of 6,000 fps. As a consequence of their small mass, they lose a significant proportion of their velocity by the time they have travelled five meters. When pitched from 20-25 meters, the likelihood of danger to the thrower is too small to be significant — except for the fuse assembly. At three meters from the point of detonation the casualty rate is 100 percent.

In operation, the V40 is quite conventional. The safety pin, which passes through the spoon to hold it against the spring, has a generous-sized pull ring — larger in diameter than the grenade body itself. A U-shaped addition also fits over the top of the spoon to prevent accidental



The world's smallest hand grenade: The V40 is a nasty weapon in a small package.

withdrawal. To use the grenade the pin must be rotated to free the U-shaped safety arm. In practice, the safety arms of the V40s I carried rotated off the top of the spoon of their own accord while juggling about in my Israeli combat vest. Not really dangerous, as you must still pull rather aggressively to bend one leg of this safety arm when withdrawing the pin. The grenade will, of course, remain safe until the spoon is released. With some difficulty, the pin can be replaced if the tactical situation changes.

When the spoon is released the spring forces the striker around in an arc to crush the detonator cap. There is a four-second time delay before the booster sets off the main charge. The V40 grenades are packed in plastic bandoliers each holding five. A bandolier weighs only 23 ounces.

The V40 grenade is one nasty punk in a small package. It's designed to give someone a very bad headache. I like it.

LEFT, clockwise from top: Salvadoran trooper fires Solothurn MG-30 during Kokalis' T&E. MG-30 recoil spring, barrel and bolt carrier with locking rollers, bolt and firing pin assembly — all built like a Swiss watch. Trigger mechanism of Solothurn MG-30. Upper position, "E," is for semiauto fire; lower position, "R," is for full-auto mode.

M16A1 Commandos. The muzzle blast is horrendous and the accuracy potential is diminished considerably by the 11.5-inch tube.

A far better choice would have been the M16A1 carbine which has a sliding buttstock and 14.5-inch barrel (5.5 inches shorter than the M16A1 rifle's barrel). This compromise offers compactness with very little degradation of the system's accuracy potential. I prefer this configuration over all others.

Armorsers at the Maestranza (central ordnance depot) have created their own version of the Colt M16A1 Commando with a distinctive Salvadoran flavor. Starting with an M16A1 rifle, the barrel is cut back to approximately 11 inches and fitted with a Muzzle Miser to reduce climb and enhance controllability during full-auto fire. But, as I expected, the muzzle blast is still fearsome. A simple, efficient, collapsible tubular buttstock was designed and fabricated at the Maestranza. The handguards and pistol grip are made of an exotic tropical wood and hand checkered. This weapon is issued only to battalion level commanders.

The communist guerrillas make use of the M16 also — as supplied to them by North Vietnam via Cuba and Nicaragua and not as often from the Salvadoran Army as the press corps would lead you to believe.

I even fired the new M16A2 rifle (fitted with an experimental muzzle brake) when visiting Lt. Col. Roberto Mauricio Staben, commander of the Arce Immediate Reaction Battalion in San Miguel. But, that's another story entirely.

The Maestranza, located in San Salvador, operates five mobile small arms repair trucks. It was originally intended that each Salvadoran Army unit would be visited twice a year. However, some units need more help than others and a few, like the Atlacatl (through the efforts of their commander, Major Azmitia, and SOF) have fairly sophisticated *armerías*. As a result, the mobile armories now move as directed by the Estado Mayor.



The Maestranza itself, currently undergoing extensive expansion, houses much that would fascinate any military weapons buff. Using a few lathes, mills, drill presses and that most important of all gunsmithing tools — a heavy vise — their armorers (trained in Panama, the U.S. and El Salvador) repair and alter everything from pistols to howitzers. During my inspection the modification section was busy converting the Madsen-Saetter GPMG (see SOF, September '83, page 69) from caliber .30-06 and the MG34/42 type non-disintegrating belt to 7.62mm NATO and

the U.S. M13 disintegrating link — a heroic effort on an undeserving patient. The Maestranza's design section has recently developed a cost-effective sub-caliber training device for the 90mm recoilless rifle.

Prowling through rack after rack of G3s, M60s, M16s, HK21s, Madsen-Saetters, Madsen M50 and Hk MP5 submachine guns, M1D Garands, M2 carbines and M2 HB .50-caliber MGs, I remembered stumbling upon a collector's dream. Wiping the dust away with my sweating, trembling hands I beheld the only military small arm ever designed and fabricated in El Salvador



ABOVE: Second Lieutenant Elio Fuentes fires one of the new Colt M16A1 Commandos recently issued to the Salvadoran Cavalry Regiment. RIGHT: Receiver markings on HB-1 submachine gun. BELOW: The Baron HB-1 9mm SMG; designed and built in El Salvador. BELOW LEFT: MM-1 12-round 40mm grenade launcher used by Salvadoran army PRAL units.



— the little known HB-1 submachine gun. Designed in 1958 by Colonel Herman Baron, who at that time was commanding the Maestranza, the HB-1 exists in prototype form only, as it never went into production.

At first glance, the HB-1 appears similar to the Italian Beretta Model 1938A submachine gun, with its wood buttstock and ventilated barrel jacket. The similarity is no more than superficial. Using Madsen M50 (the submachine gun of issue in El Salvador during this time frame) single-position feed 32-round magazines, the HB-1 weighs 8.25 pounds with a loaded magazine and 7 pounds empty. The barrel length is 10 inches and the overall length is 34 inches. The barrel is threaded into the receiver and thus not readily removable. It has six grooves and a right hand twist of one turn in 9.84 inches. Cuts at the muzzle end form an integral compensator. A lug is attached to the barrel jacket which accepts the Mauser rifle bayonet.

Blowback operated, the HB-1 fires from the open-bolt position. Because a single-position feed magazine is used, the bolt body has a reduced diameter. A cross-bolt type selector button is located in the rear of the stock just above the trigger housing assembly. A safety of similar design is located in the forearm portion of the stock.

The end cap which slides in a slot milled into the rear of the receiver tube also serves as the fixed rear sight blade — an open “U” notch set for 100 meters has been cut into its upper surface. With this small exception, the HB-1 is conventional in all respects. Tested at Aberdeen Proving Ground in 1959, the HB-1 performed well under the most adverse conditions. I can fault only its cyclic rate which I feel is a bit too high at 750 rpm. Although only an obscure footnote in the history of the submachine gun, Baron’s design was a credible effort from an unexpected source.

Continued browsing through the Maes-

SOF’s Peter Kokalis in the bush with the M203 grenade launcher.



ABOVE: One of the FN MAGs converted by Kokalis to feed U.S. M13 disintegrating-link ammo.

RIGHT: M16A1 shorty — chopped and customized at the Maestranza.

BELOW RIGHT: Armorers at work at the Maestranza.



tranza’s gun racks turned up another item of interest which I recalled hoping we would not need it on our night recon mission. The MM-1 12-round 40mm grenade launcher rode into recent public prominence as a consequence of its use as a rather funky prop in the movie “Dogs of War.” The MM-1, manufactured by Hawk Engineering, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 550 Frontage Road, Northfield, IL 60093), is a direct progeny of the Manville series of rotary-chamber tear gas guns.

The first weapon in this series was designed in 1934 by Charles J. Manville. It was a 12 gauge, 24-round, spring-driven, revolving chamber, cam-and-lever operated weapon capable of semiautomatic fire only. It was a dual-purpose — firing both tear-gas ammunition and standard shot shells — and intended for law enforcement use only. By 1936 an 18-shot prototype had been completed in caliber 25mm. During WWII a 37mm version was developed, but it required an unwieldy four-legged mount. Weighing about 40 pounds altogether, this version had little police application and was of no interest to the military. In 1943, for reasons known only to himself, Manville destroyed all records, weapons, components and tooling.

Manville’s concept, probably ahead of its time, has been resurrected and modified for the present by Hawk Engineering. The MM-1 will accept all U.S. and most foreign 40mm grenades up to five inches in length, including smoke, illumination, gas, multiple projectile and HE rounds. With this nas-



ty looking device, one man can launch a volley of 12 40mm grenades at one or more targets within five seconds. The maximum effective rate of fire is 24 to 26 rounds per minute.

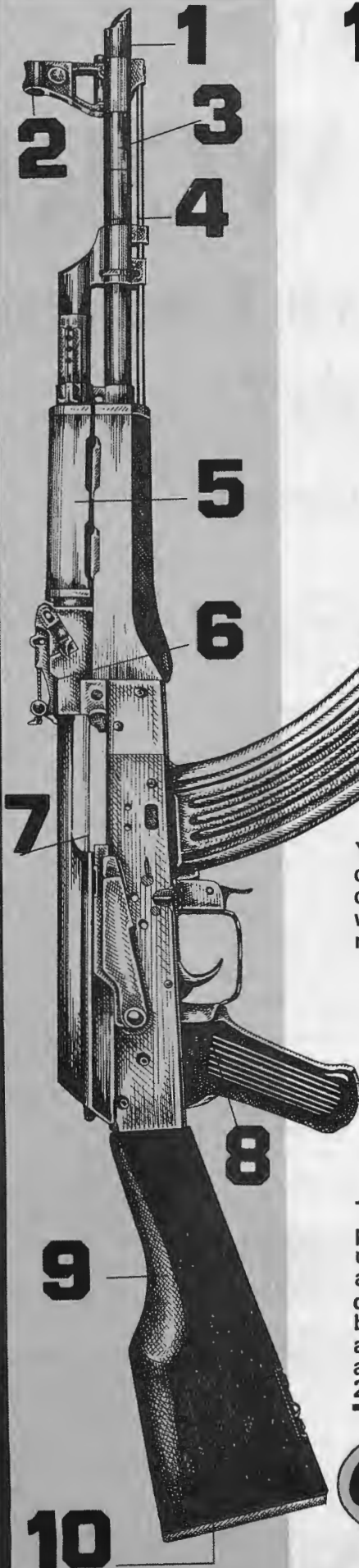
Constructed of aluminum and steel, the MM-1 weighs only 16 pounds. The overall length is but 23 inches. Hand held and fired from the hip, the maximum effective range is approximately 350 meters. Reliable and easily maintained, the MM-1 requires no more attention than a service revolver. It has been used with great effect in El Salvador by the PRAL units (Salvadoran Army equivalent of the U.S. LRRPs).

The Salvadoran Army is currently armed with the M79 40mm Grenade launcher

Continued on page 119

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MERC WORK

Does the Geneva Convention Apply?

by Dana K. Drenkowski

IMAGINE you're one of the Western mercs standing in the prisoners' dock in Luanda, Angola. In a public exhibition without legal parallel, you and your comrades have been interrogated under torture, and will be convicted by previous arrangements of the crime of "mercenaryism" under a law that does not exist, by a tribunal not authorized under Angolan law, without any provision for review of its capital sentences.

Since the mockery of the Luanda show trials in the late 1970s, an international law, recognized by many countries, has been enacted to legally define "mercenary," and provide minimum standards of treatment for prisoners taken while employed as soldiers of fortune. Before you put yourself in a position to be captured — as soldier or civilian — in a foreign war, you should understand what a mercenary is under law and what *could happen* if you meet that definition according to your captors.

The International Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict — better known in the Western world as the Geneva Convention of 1949 — has been vastly modified with the addition of scores of new articles. One of these, Article 47 of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Convention of 1949, addresses "mercenaries" for the first time. While this article was signed by many nations in 1979, the United States has yet to officially recognize it. Most students of international law believe American ratification — with certain reservations — is probable in the near future. The important point here is that U.S. failure to recognize the Geneva Convention additions does not let American mercenaries off any hook.

The Convention already has the force of law in the nations which have signed it, and the United States is expected to comply with its provisions as much as possible, pending ratification. This is what Article 47 says:

1. *A mercenary shall not have the right to be a combatant or a prisoner of war.*

2. *A mercenary is a person who:*
(a) *is specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict;*
(b) *does, in fact, take a direct part in the hostilities;*
(c) *is motivated to take part in the hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and, in fact, is promised, by or on behalf of a Party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar ranks and functions in the armed forces of that party;*
(d) *is neither a national of a Party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a Party to the conflict;*
(e) *is not a member of the armed forces of a Party to the conflict; and*
(f) *has not been sent by a State which is not a Party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its armed forces.*

Note that the new Article does not make being a mercenary a crime. It simply denies the protections and privileges guaranteed all other soldiers upon capture. A person who fits the legal definition of a mercenary and falls into enemy hands is not in the best of positions, but he does have some protection under another article of the Geneva Convention.

Article 75 — Fundamental Guarantees

1. *Insofar as they are affected by a situation referred to in Article 1 of this protocol [Article 1 defines and describes the application of the Convention in any armed conflict of an international scale and in conflicts against "colonial" rule and wars for self-determination], persons who are in the power of a Party to the conflict and who do not benefit from more favorable treatment under the Conventions or under this Protocol shall be treated humanely in all circumstances and shall enjoy, as a minimum, the protection provided by this Article without any adverse distinction based upon race, color, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national or social*

origin, wealth, birth or other status, or on any other similar criteria. Each Party shall respect the person, honor, convictions and religious practices of all such persons.

2. *The following acts are and shall remain prohibited at any time and in any place whatsoever, whether committed by civilian or by military agents:*

(a) *Violence to the life, health, or physical or mental well-being of persons, in particular:*

- (i) *murder;*
- (ii) *torture of all kinds, whether physical or mental;*
- (iii) *corporal punishment; and*
- (iv) *mutilation;*

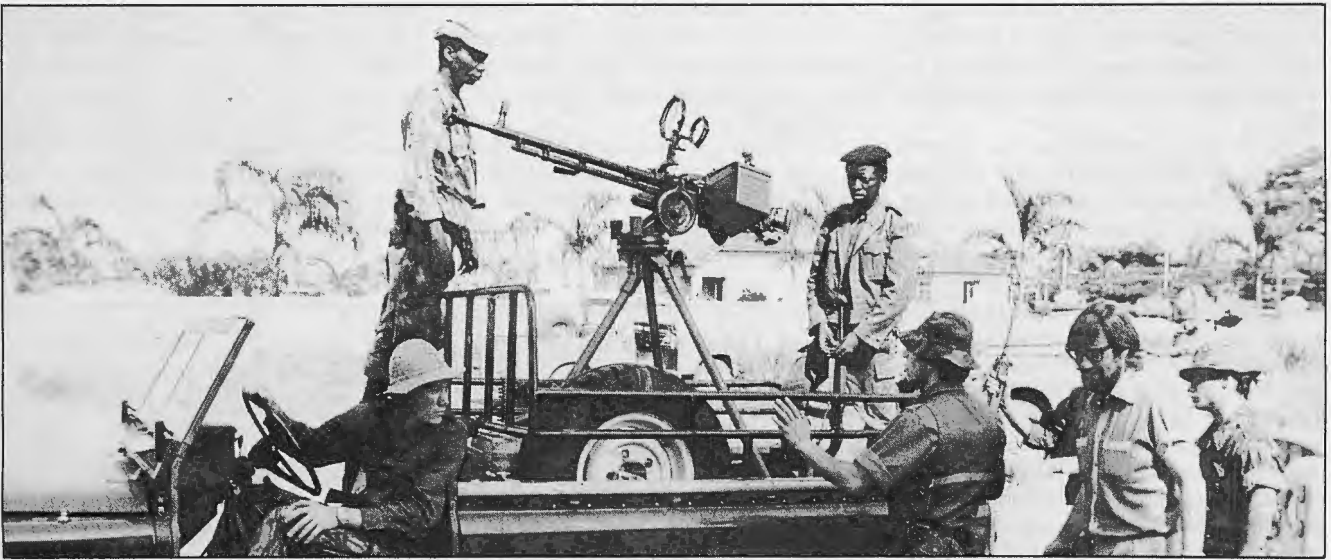
(b) *outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment, enforced prostitution and any form of indecent assault;*

(c) *collective punishments; and*
(e) *threats to commit any of the foregoing acts.*

4. *No sentence may be passed and no penalty may be executed on a person found guilty of a penal offense related to the armed conflict except pursuant to a conviction pronounced by an impartial and regularly constituted court respecting the generally recognized principles of regular judicial procedure, which include the following:*

[Items (a) through (j) establish the basic legal rights of each captive mercenary and are primarily drawn from Western ethics. They include a presumption of innocence until guilt is proven, the right to examine witnesses, the right not to be compelled to testify against yourself or to confess guilt, a prohibition against trying a person for violation of laws which don't exist and so forth.

6. *Persons who are arrested, detained or interned for reasons related to the armed conflict shall enjoy the protection provided by this Article until their final release, repa-*



triation or re-establishment, even after the end of the armed conflict.

7. In order to avoid any doubt concerning the prosecution and trial of persons accused of war crimes against humanity, the following principles shall apply:

(a) persons who are accused of such crimes should be submitted for the purpose of prosecution and trial in accordance with the applicable rules of international law; and

(b) any such persons who do not benefit from more favorable treatment under the Conventions or this Protocol shall be accorded the treatment provided by this Article, whether or not the crimes of which they are accused constitute grave breaches of the Conventions or of this Protocol.

Given all that flowery legalese, it appears mercs do stand some chance of surviving capture — if the host country decides to abide by the Geneva Convention rather than simply eliminating a problem by blowing them away out of hand. What's critical here is that Article 47 declares that mercenaries are not considered combatants or prisoners of war which marks the first time in the history of international law that such declaration has been made. But the definition of the term is so narrow that those who would normally be thought of as mercenaries often do not meet the strict international legal definitions found in the Geneva Conventions.

The commonly accepted public definition of a mercenary is a person who fights under a foreign flag for pay. Since nearly all soldiers get paid, the "for pay" clause was usually taken to mean high pay (higher than what the locals were getting), or to define money as the main motivation for fighting. "soldiers of fortune," on the other hand, are usually understood to be those who are not members of a foreign army but engage in hostilities for a short period of time to achieve a single goal such as the characters in popular films and books such as *The Dogs of War* or *The Wild Geese*.

As usual, it's the little things that count

Africa is well-known for mercenary activity. Costas Georgious, alias George Callan, fought with the FNLA in Angola. A British citizen of Greek origin, Callan was condemned to death. Photo: Sigma

— especially if you're trying to pick legal nits while staring at the business end of an enemy rifle. Remember, the definition of "mercenary" under Article 47 of the Geneva Convention centers on the wording in Paragraph 2(a)-(f). Those six clauses are connected by the conjunctive "and:" ("... is not a member of the armed forces of a Party to the conflict; and (f) has not been..."). That's crucial.

In law, when a list of definitions is used to describe or define a key term, the word connecting each item of the list becomes critical. If the conjunction is "or," then matching any part of the list is sufficient to make the definition complete. By way of example, Part 2 of Article 47 defines "mercenary" to include "... any person who: . . . (b) does in fact take a direct part in the hostilities . . ." If the list from (a) to (f) were connected by "or," then merely taking part in hostilities, whether you were a foreigner or a native of one of the country's involved, would be enough to brand you as a genuine mercenary. That would mean any captured soldier could be called a mercenary and that's not what the people who drafted the addition to the Convention intended. To insure everyone sang from the same sheet of music, they used "and" to connect the crucial elements of the definition of mercenary.

No matter how obvious, the point must be made strongly. If it isn't, there will be some nations that claim only part of the definition is sufficient to deprive a captive of his rights under law. Here's what it boils down to: a warrior must meet each and every definitive phrase in Part 2 before his captors can declare him a mercenary. *If they fail to prove even one term, the captors are required by international treaty, which has the force of law, to provide the captive full POW status and provide all benefits normally accorded*

captured soldiers under the Geneva Convention.

Virtually all legal systems recognize the use of "and" and "or" as definitive connectors. Even if a nation considers itself "beyond" traditional legal systems — as many revolutionary governments claim — semantics may prohibit them from misinterpretation. Meanwhile, word-games aren't very likely to save your ass if you fall into the sack while working as a merc.

All the argument really means is that there are no international legal grounds to deny you protection as a soldier. If the bad guys want to bust a foreigner's ass for becoming involved in their fight, they will probably do just that. But they'll have to ignore the definitions provided by the Convention and would stand to lose public sympathy for their cause. If they feel strongly enough about dealing harshly with a foreign soldier, they will fold, spindle and mutilate in order to make him fit the mercenary definitions.

It's not all that hard to understand why. War involves intense emotions but most civilized human beings would want no part of it if they couldn't make themselves believe that the other guys are pagans, heretics, fascists, war criminals, child-molesters, rapists — or cold-blooded mercenaries. Given that, national leaders make every effort to portray their opponents in those derogatory terms. It makes it easier to kill them.

The delegates to the diplomatic conference on the Geneva Convention understood that warring parties dehumanize each other. Denying soldier status — and protection — to a class of humans was dangerous if there were any chance for the definition to be extended to legitimate combatants. Cooler heads demanded that the term be narrowly defined.

Interpretation will necessarily vary from country to country and war to war, but these examples should provide an idea of how the new code might affect foreigners taken prisoner while employed in a mercenary role.

1. Individuals hired by countries, corporations, or guerrilla/resistance groups to

invade another country for a few hours, days or weeks for the purpose of destroying property, destabilizing a government, or to rescue someone, as in the plot of *The Wild Geese*.

These are mercenaries in the strictest sense of the Article 47 definition. They are usually (a) recruited abroad *specifically* for the purpose of fighting in an armed conflict or for creating an armed conflict where none existed before; (b) they *do* take part in the hostilities; (c) they are motivated primarily by private gain, almost always *significantly* in excess of that paid local forces of a similar nature and skill level; (d) they are not residents of the territory they invade; (e) they are not members of the armed forces of any country actually at war in the country whose targets they attack; (f) nor are they present as members of the regular military of a nation not yet at war with the country invaded.

2. Individuals or groups hired for the purpose of overthrowing the government in a quick coup, as in the movie, *The Dogs of War*.

Using the checklist in the first example, we can quickly see that troops involved in a *Dogs of War* scenario are also mercenaries. Unless they can show their motive was not material gain, they will be classified as mercs. Those who engage in such activities out of ideological motivation might escape the legal mercenary label, but this would be a tough charge to beat.

3. Persons working in a military capacity in guerrilla groups in foreign countries, like Che Guevara in Bolivia.

Generally, they would be considered mercenaries, although the real question would be whether or not the guerrilla group is recognized as a formal military operation whose members are entitled to the status of prisoner-of-war or soldier. The new Convention articles were designed to address this problem, but the waters are still quite muddy. Obviously, most governments will not recognize their insurgent opponents as legitimate soldiers. They are generally branded "terrorists" since recognition of as legitimate armed opposition forces would be tantamount to denying the government's own legitimacy. Don't expect a receptive audience if you try to claim of POW status in this case whether you're a foreigner or a native. The International Red Cross may recognize a guerrilla organization, particularly if the members are smart enough to call themselves an anti-colonial or anti-imperialist movement, but the host country has their finger on the trigger and not the Red Cross. Afghanistan's *mujahideen* rebels are a good example of an anti-imperialist. The Red Cross says they are legit; the Russians simply execute them at will.

If a guerrilla movement meets the criteria of a legitimate national insurgency, its forces are recognized as legitimate soldiers. That means foreigners working for UNITA in Angola, SWAPO in South West Africa, or the guerrillas in Afghanistan should — and would likely be — considered members

of regular armed forces ... at least by everyone but their captors. Foreigners accompanying them as regular members of those armed forces cannot be considered mercenaries.

Insurgencies not involving valid claims of fights against foreign or colonial rule are less likely to be considered legitimate, unless the insurgents happen to win. Foreigners fighting with the rebels in El Salva-

dor cannot use this argument to claim they are not mercenaries (assuming all the other categories in (a)-(f) are also present). And foreign rebels fighting the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, unless they can prove at future date that Russian and Cuban presence in the country justifies an anticolonial or anti-imperialist stance, would also be branded as mercenaries.

4. People working for a foreign govern-

ALL IS NOT FAIR ...

During the Battle of Solferino in 1859, a Swiss businessman was trapped in that small town by opposing armies and forced to view inhuman suffering borne by wounded and dying French, Italian and Austrian troops. The businessman, Jean Henri Dunant, was shocked into action by the horrors he saw, and he wrote and spoke to awaken Europe to the needs of the wounded. The International Red Cross was founded and grew to alleviate suffering of victims of war.

Meanwhile, the American Civil War was being fought. Public attention was drawn to the needless suffering of the wounded and captured, particularly after the bloody battle at Antietam in 1862. President Abraham Lincoln signed a codification of rules for the U.S. Army designed to direct fair and humane treatment of wounded and captured soldiers. Called the Leber Code after its draftsman, the Code was the first body of rules with the force of law dealing specifically with humanitarian treatment of enemy soldiers. The Leber Code became the model for similar codes in other armies and for international treaties soon to follow.

The Geneva Convention of 1864 for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick of Armies in the Field was attended by representatives from 16 nations, and the document was signed by 12 of the nations. Numerous conventions followed, including the Hague Convention of 1907 which expanded the rules to apply to those persons involved in warfare at sea (formerly unprotected or unaddressed), and which banned weapons bound to cause unnecessary suffering.

The most recent convention signed and adopted by this country came into being in 1949 and is the one most people refer to when they speak of the "Geneva Convention." The average U.S. citizen learned about the third Convention, and its provisions for POWs following disclosures of torture and execution of U.S. soldiers and airmen captured by North Koreans and North Vietnamese.

(Apparently, the communist governments ordered maltreatment of captive Americans, although the North Vietnamese government had signed the Geneva Convention and promised to

abide by its rules. That should give the working mere an idea of the justice he can expect from communist-bloc signatories of *any* convention.)

The number of nations in the world doubled in the two decades after the 1949 Convention. New nations were usually former colonies freed by violence or grant, and argued, with cause, that the 1949 Convention was created for and by the industrial and colonial nations. The Convention omitted to protect members of irregular forces: the kind of soldier who brought the new nation-states their independence. From 1974 to 1978 a series of meetings in Geneva addressed that problem.

Show trials in Luanda prompted rancorous debate, in which the definition of "mercenary" was the centerpiece. Nigeria led off with a simple definition: a foreigner not a member of the armed forces of a party to a conflict who is motivated by monetary gain is a mercenary. Nigeria's delegate failed to note the irony: His country employed South African and Egyptian pilots during the Biafran War in the late 1960s to shoot down Red Cross planes bringing supplies to the Biafrans. One unpublished memoir of a Red Cross pilot recalled that the personal call signs in English of two of Nigeria's South African MiG pilots were "Genocide" and "Murder."

Antagonistic blocs and nations wanted to outlaw each other's hired help, while less concerned nations simply wanted to outlaw *all* outsiders, defining a mercenary as any foreigner who is paid while fighting in another country's army. Every soldier receives pay, so every foreigner in any army would be a mercenary, regardless of residence or reason for enlistment. (The irony of this popular communist position was that certain heroes of those regimes, such as Che Guevara or Cubans in Angola, would be mercenaries under the definition proposed.)

Fortunately, wiser and perhaps more moral representatives prevailed. The resulting Article 47 was carefully defined to make it difficult for any country to arbitrarily label anyone a mercenary. Adoption of Article 75 also provided for the basic standards of care of *anyone* captured who was not considered a soldier, whether mercenary, civilian, spy or bystander.

— Dana K. Drenkowski



UZI-carrying merc leaps into action during fighting in Rhodesia. Photo: Sigma

ment's military, but who are not actually members of the regular military forces, such as SOF editor Mike Echanis in Nicaragua in the late 1970s (SOF, February '79, p. 46).

If the foreigners involved were recruited abroad specifically for the purpose of fighting in the conflict, but they are not regular officers or enlisted men in the forces involved, they would probably be categorized as mercs. The situation becomes less clear when the individuals are hired as training cadre. If, as training cadre, they come under fire and they engage in hostilities, they might be able to beat the legal definition of mercenary providing the capturing nation can't prove the captives' *primary* duty was to engage in combat. If, as in the case of Echanis, they are hired to both train and participate, they would be mercenaries in the eyes of international law. Once again, to meet the definition, the capturing power would have to show that their pay was in excess of that paid others with similar skill or experience.

5. Advisers from one country's military working with another government's armed forces or working with guerrilla groups opposed to a foreign government, such as Russian advisers presently in Syria, U.S. advisers in El Salvador or South African advisers working with UNITA's guerrilla groups.

They are not mercenaries. They fall specifically under the exclusionary language. Full-time membership in the armed forces of any country gives complete exclusion from consideration as a merc.

6. Foreigners enlisted or commissioned in regular but separate forces for the duration of a war, such as Mike Hoare's Commandos in the Congo in the 1960s.

If these forces, even though separate, fall under the military control of the country involved and are considered a part of its military forces, with rank and appropriate chains of command, then individuals operating in them are not mercenaries. Members of Hoare's Commandos, or Hessian units employed by the British in the American Revolution are entitled to the *full protection and status provided all other soldiers*. That may surprise Mike Hoare, but such are the vagaries of international law.

7. Foreigners enlisted or commissioned in regular forces for a standard enlistment, as were the Americans and British soldiers in Rhodesian forces during the 1970s.

There is no problem here in defining these men as full-fledged soldiers, not mercenaries. The rationale is the same. Obvious supportive example would include Yanks who joined the RAF in World Wars I and II prior to U.S. entry and foreigners who served in the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. All would be entitled to treatment as soldiers, not mercenaries.

8. Members of "foreign legions," such as the French Foreign Legion, Spanish Legion, and Libya's Arab Legion, and other forces of foreigners enlisted, not for a war, but for a regular peacetime duties.

They're safe also. Full-time status in the regular forces of any country provides full protection to individuals from that unit captured by opposing forces. The fact that they are from a unit composed entirely of foreigners makes no difference.

9. Ostensibly "civilian" technicians

maintaining equipment, such as specialists handling radar, guided missiles and sophisticated aircraft in virtually every Third World country.

Again, the definitions are critical. Unless the technicians were hired to fight with the equipment instead of just maintain it or train locals to use it, they cannot be labeled mercenaries. That doesn't help much. Their status in captivity is the same as it is for mercenaries or indigenous civilians. It's all a matter of semantics. Foreign technicians do not get the privileged status of soldiers when captured. On the other hand, they are not genuine mercenaries. Article 75 provides the same minimum treatment for both groups in captivity. Above those minimums, captured civilians may be accorded better treatment than those labeled mercenaries because the 1949 Geneva Convention, Part IV, provides guidelines for protection of civilians.

10. Members of entire military units "on loan" or hired from their country to fight in another, frequently for higher pay, such as the 20,000 Cubans present in Angola today, or Hessian units employed by the British in the American Revolution.

These individuals have full status as soldiers, not mercenaries, in spite of the fact their country is not officially at war with or maintaining an official presence in the country involved, and in spite of the fact they receive higher pay for being in an expeditionary force.

11. Specially trained combatants of foreign origin, within the chain of command, paid many times what the private soldier makes in that force, such as Western pilots in African military service, or Soviet pilots who supplement their income by flying Libyan fighters.

They are not mercenaries. Even though their employment might seem to violate the terms of Article 47 given higher pay scales for what they do, legally they are protected by a lack of comparable skills in native forces. When no native troopers have similar skills, there are no grounds for salary comparison. A pilot or other highly-skilled technician might make any multiple of a native private's pay without violating international law. He is as innocent — or guilty — of excessive pay as any native general. He is additionally protected by having joined as a regular-service member of that force.

Returning to the Angola situation, what force of law is there in the Geneva Convention? And how do the articles apply to Angola's rush to judgment of captives accused of "being mercenaries" and their subsequent execution by order of a tribunal not recognized by most legal scholars?

The "crime" of "being a mercenary" carries no punishment. It is simply a charge that allows the capturing nation to hold the accused mercenary under the same conditions as civilians captured or interned by its forces — without the special treatment soldiers are normally accorded under terms of

Continued on page 137

RED TIDE AT CANCUN

Back to the Halls of Montezuma?

by Patrick J. Ryan

Photos: AP/Wide World

MORE than a century ago U.S. Marines followed the route of Cortes in a march from Veracruz through Puebla to the Mexican capital city under the vanguard of Gen. Winfield Scott's army. The Marines attacked the city in September 1847, facing a brave and tenacious Mexican army. Although Mexico City fell and few Mexicans have either forgiven or forgotten the bloody conquest of the Halls of Montezuma, ironically, U.S. Marines may return to the country on our southern flank at the request of the Mexican government.

Political and revolutionary events in Central America make the long term residual bitterness of Mexicans regarding that chapter in American foreign policy fade into the parched sands of self-interest. Unless some outside force intervenes to alter the logical progression of events in the area, U.S. Marines will find themselves the guests of the Mexican government within this decade.

Three factors, each already firmly in place, determine Mexico's fate. The first key factor is Soviet interest in Central America. The Kremlin is striving to take advantage of economic, political, and social unrest by manipulating the population into revolt. Yesterday's target was Nicaragua, today's is El Salvador and tomorrow's could be either Honduras or Guatemala, but ultimately, it's Mexico.

Mexico is the key to the brass ring because it has approximately 1,800 miles of common border with the United States and because it has extensive oil resources which the United States draws upon for much of its imported oil. The Soviets logically surmise that with a hostile communist neighbor, the United States will be less concerned with its NATO commitments, giving the Soviets more room to maneuver in Western Europe. Further, if communist regimes directly control or strongly influence the Caribbean and Central America, they can interrupt the flow of strategically vital resources from Africa

and South America to the United States.

George F. Kennan, in his famous 1947 Mr. "X" article, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, described the typical Soviet strategy as follows:

"The Kremlin has no compunction about retreating in the face of superior force. And being under the compulsion of no time table, it does not get panicky under the necessity for such a retreat. The main thing is that there should always be pressure towards the goal."

No master time schedule exists in the Kremlin for the accomplishment of Soviet Central American goals but they have effectively dealt themselves into our hemispheric poker game. As a consequence, the stakes have risen dramatically for the United States. History supports Kennan's analysis that when met with superior force the Soviets will retreat. To date, the Soviets

Mexican armor troops pass by the reviewing stand of President Miguel de la Madrid.



BURSTING THE BUBBLE

On a recent six-week legal seminar in Mexico City, Patrick Ryan, 53, spoke with various high-ranking officials in the Mexican government. His analysis: "It's amazing how unaware they are of the impending danger. Yet speak to a relatively uneducated cab driver and he can tell you in great detail that the bubble is about to burst."

Ryan can claim near expert status on Central and South America. Currently a full-time law student, he was recently awarded a Master's degree in International Relations, concentrating on South America, from the University of San Diego. In 1978, Ryan accepted the title of Honorary Consul, Republic of Chile, a position he still holds.

Ryan's education also includes a

Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from Holy Cross College, where he attended on a football scholarship; Armed Forces Staff College; Marine Corps Basic School; USN SCUBA School; USA Airborne School; USA Jungle Warfare School; and USN Mixed Gas Deep Diving School.

Twenty four years of United States Marine Corps service for Ryan consisted of assignments as commanding officer of Marine Infantry units through battalion level; the elite First Force Reconnaissance Company; Marine Guard USS *Bon Homme Richard*; Navy Military Group, Republic of Chile; and two years experience supervising training of 50,000 Marine recruits per year. In 1977 Ryan retired as lieutenant colonel.

Look for Ryan's analyses of political and military events in future issues of SOF.

have not been presented with such a force in Central America so they continue pushing out the limits of their own game. Thus we see that the first key factor — Soviet intent — is already in place.

The second important factor relates directly to Gen. Douglas MacArthur's prophetic warning in World War II. Washington, D.C.'s sluggish, inadequate response to his repeated requests for reinforcements to meet the growing Japanese threat in the Philippines forced MacArthur to bluntly caution his superiors:

"The history of failure in war can be summed up in two words: Too Late. Too late in comprehending the deadly purpose of a potential enemy; too late in preparedness; too late in uniting all possible forces for resistance; too late in standing with one's friends."

Despite repeated presidential warnings of the obvious Soviet threat, the American public and Congress appear incapable of comprehending or reacting to that threat to the Americas. Many congressmen continue to view Soviet opportunism in Central America with their backs turned, commonly wishing to attain "peace in our time" through economic aid alone, as if powdered milk can overcome acts of terrorism.

A graphic example of Congress's inability to comprehend the stark reality in Central America is its repeated insistence that President Reagan swear on a stack of Bibles that he will never under any circumstances order U.S. combat forces into the area. Proponents of this demand, such as Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, D-Mass., and his cohorts have been described by the Kremlin as "useful idiots." Perhaps Speaker

Mexican troops pass in review during the inauguration of President Miguel de la Madrid.



To the Halls of Montezuma: On 13 September, 1847, the Marine battalion, preceded by General Quitman, enters Mexico City after having stormed Chapultepec Castle.

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

The question of Texas' admission into the American Union eventually sent U.S. Marines into bloody battle with the Mexican army on the orders of President Polk. Texas had applied for admission in 1836 but its annexation was delayed because of fear that the acquisition of another pro-slavery state would upset the pre-Civil War balance. Ultimately, however, the U.S. fear of British and French influence in the area overcame this barrier and Texas was formally admitted in 1845. Mexico promptly broke off diplomatic relations and marched across the Rio Grande River.

On the evening of 9 May, President Polk received word from the War Department of Mexico's invasion north of the river and immediately drafted a message declaring that a state of war existed between the United States and Mexico.

The President went into the war with one clear objective — to seize all of Mexico north of the Rio Grande and Gila Rivers and westward to the Pacific. A three-pronged attack emerged: an advance westward from Matamoros on the Gulf to the city of Monterey, a move from San Antonio to the remote village of Chihuahua in the west, then southward to Saltillo near Monterey, and finally a march from Ft. Leavenworth to San Diego on the coast of California.

It was several months later that Polk and his Secretary of War began to consider an advance on Mexico City by landing a force of Marines, under Gen. Scott, on the Gulf near Vera Cruz. Initially, Scott was not enthusiastic about the invasion idea, being concerned about the problems of supply, transportation, communications and mobilization involved in a country like Mexico with a rural population of seven million and an army of about 30,000, many well-trained from years of intermittent revolution.

From a rendezvous at Lobos Island almost 50 miles south of Tampico, Gen. Scott's force of 13,666 men set sail on 2

March 1847 for the landing near Vera Cruz. Scott chose for the landing a spot nearly three miles south of the city — out of range of the Mexican guns. In four hours more than 10,000 men were put ashore; then, in a coordinated attack with Commodore David Conner's Gulf Squadron, brought Veracruz under siege. The battle for the city lasted almost three weeks until a strenuous bombardment of the town and breaching of its walls brought Veracruz to capitulation on 29 March 1847.

After leaving the city on 8 April, Scott faced a series of successful battles on his 300-mile, all-uphill march to the Mexican capital. Scott paused at Puebla to bring up supplies and reinforcements and the Marine Battalion joined him on 6 August.

The key to the city was Chapultepec Castle, set on a crag commanding the swamp causeways into the city. In the assault on Chapultepec, Marines were divided into storming parties against its southern face. Against a hail of Mexican projectiles from above, Scott's determined troops rapidly gained the summit, and though they were delayed at the moat while waiting for scaling ladders, they overran the city by mid-morning.

The Americans pressed on into Mexico City by two routes and by nightfall they held the two gates into the city. Exhausted, depleted by the 800 casualties that day, they still faced fierce house-to-house fighting with the Mexicans. But by dawn the next day, 14 September 1847, the city surrendered. The citizens of Washington gave the Marine Corps Commandant a new set of colors emblazoned with a new motto: "From Tripoli to the Halls of Montezuma."

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War on 2 February 1848. Under the treaty, the United States agreed to pay Mexico \$15 million and to assume the unpaid claims by Americans against Mexico. In return, Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as the boundary of Texas and ceded New Mexico, which included the present-day states of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and California as well as a small corner of Wyoming and the southwestern portions of Colorado, to the United States.

O'Neill should be reminded that: "Always and never are two words you should always remember never to say."

"We are convinced that the Central American conflict is a result of economic deficiencies, political backwardness and social injustices that have affected the countries of the area," explained Mexico's President Miguel De La Madrid in a recent address to the U.S. Congress. That those serious problems — and many others — exist is certainly beyond dispute. But, can Mexico's president, like England's Neville Chamberlain, be so mesmerized by the pursuit of peace that he does not think the Soviets will try and turn those hemispheric problems to their revolutionary advantage?

Like his predecessor Jose Lopez Portillo, De La Madrid appears to trust Russia's pawn Fidel Castro so much that he refuses to contemplate the possibility of the communist bell ever ringing across fertile Mexican land.

Mexico has the same problems as the rest of Central America and is ripe for communism. It also has the additional burden of a leadership oblivious to the Soviet military threat. If Guatemala falls, Mexico will have an aggressive communist neighbor on its southern border, one hungry for cool northern lands. Thus gives us the third primary factor — Mexico's apparent unawareness that it is the meat in the Soviet Central American sandwich.

History confirms that people flee communism. Those who have voted with their feet comprise a shattering list: innumerable East Europeans since WWII, the North Vietnamese in 1956, the South Vietnamese boat people in 1975 and approximately one third of a million Cubans since 1959, to name but a few. The Berlin Wall stands in mute testimony of the fact that only communist countries erect barbed-wire barriers, guard towers and even minefields to keep their citizens in!

Refugees from the conflict in Central America are already trickling into the United States via Mexico. Various responsible U.S. government agencies estimate that the trickle could become an overnight torrent of 20 million-plus Mexicans when communist military activity, similar to what is occurring in El Salvador today, erupts in Mexico.

It is unlikely that Soviet intrusion in Central America will be permitted to progress unimpeded to the point where the legitimate Mexican government is about to fall victim to communist insurgency and the United States is being inundated by 20 million war refugees. Perhaps if Guatemala were to fall, the Mexican government would, after exhausting all possible diplomatic means, reluctantly request U.S. military assistance as its only viable alternative to Soviet-supported insurrection. No doubt the U.S. Congress would then rouse from its slumber in a frenzy to grasp at Mexico's belated request. Congressmen would trip over each other, clamoring for the president to order U.S. Marines into Mexico to once again storm the Halls of Montezuma. Hopefully, we would not be too late. ✕

MEXICO'S MISGUIDED MILITARY

The present political problems in Central America conjure up images of military dictatorships ruling poverty-stricken countries with an iron hand. Mexico's military is different. Its role and present status are unlike the armies of almost all of those of the major Latin American states. During the years following independence in 1821 and the establishment of the modern Mexican governmental system in 1920-40, the army was a dominant force in government. That has changed, and for the past 50 years the army has not been an important influence on Mexican political life.

Although they took no actual part in the fighting, the outbreak of WWII provided the stimulus to concentrate on purely military matters — training to defend the homeland against foreign invasion. By the end of the war, the army had put its political past firmly behind it and was set on a course to become the least politically potent military in Latin America.

Has the redefinition of the Mexican military's mission made it an effective fighting force? Let's look at the statistics.

The proportion of the national budget spent on defense is one of the lowest in Latin America. In 1973 it stood at 3.4 percent, of which the army took the lion's share. Rising at less than one percent per year, defense is still a minor expenditure. The defense budget for 1980 was \$560 million; not enough to allow for much rebuilding. Since 1977, there has been little inclination to invest in new equipment so it stands to reason that expenditures will remain low.

With a population of around 69 million, Mexico's armed force of 109,000 regulars places little pressure on the economy. An army of 83,000 makes up the backbone of the military and the navy floats 20,000 sailors (including 2,000 Marines) on about 90 vessels. The air force with 6,000 men and 105 combat aircraft plus 150,000 or so police and paramilitary rural militiamen round things out.

Mexico's highly presidential system of government concentrates most of the executive power in the hands of the Head of State. He appoints not only ministers and state governors, but all military officers of the rank of colonel and above. The president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces but day-to-day control is exercised by the Minister of Defense, to whom army and air force generals answer directly (the navy answers to the Minister of Marine).

Though by every test a democratic

country, Mexico is effectively a one-party state. The army no longer has a political role in the country but it does maintain order during elections. Its mission has become much more static. Because Mexico has a friendly neighbor to the north and effective control of both its Caribbean and Pacific coasts, the army has no external role. Its principle mission is to suppress rural and urban subversion, violence and disorder.

The changing political situation in Central America may well leave Mexico unprepared or unable to handle challenges of a turbulent future. Nicaragua's new-found military might (courtesy of the Soviet Union) has definitely changed the situation. The Mexican army quite simply is unable to handle any significant threat from any potential beligerent.

Mexico's last foreign war was with the U.S. in 1846 — they have no experience in the changing nature of modern warfare. Numerous internal skirmishes have kept the military busy, but none of them has exceeded the scale of a low-level police action.

In the last 75 years it has become clear that industrial might and superior armaments win wars. Mexico lags sadly behind most other nations in these areas also. A tiny small-arms industry in the country manufactures a few infantry weapons and the Fabrica Nacional de Municiones puts out ammunition, but most of the army's obsolete equipment was purchased years ago as U.S. surplus. It is sufficient for a police action role but is inferior to that in general use in Latin America. FN FALs and H&K G3s can be found but the supply of such adequate arms is not enough to equip the entire army. M-1 Garands and a few LMGs make up the basic infantry weapon compliment while the M-101 105mm howitzer and the obsolete M-7 105mm self-propelled howitzer provides artillery support. A small Tank Corps putters around in decrepit M-3 and M-5 Stuart light tanks.

An unwarrented complacency has pervaded the Mexican military for 40 years. Civilian and military leaders have felt safe within their geographic fortress and have consistently perceived any threat to stability as coming from within their own borders. Signs of an impending crisis are no clearer now than they have been for the past three decades. Since 1978, Mexico's newly-discovered oil reserves have overcome the economic crisis of the late 60s. That's been a boon to the Mexican people but it has created some new security problems. Mexico is now an obvious target for destabilization by the Cuban-Nicaraguan tag-team. The military must change its outlook — the threat comes from beyond its borders.



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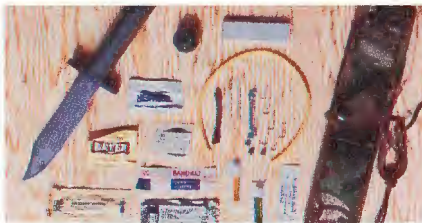
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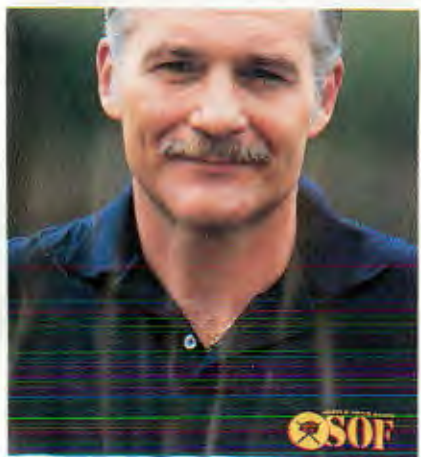
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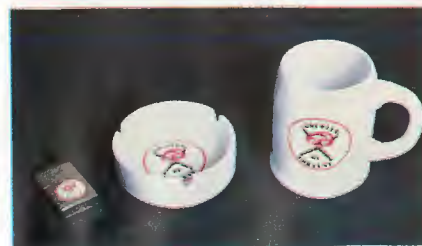


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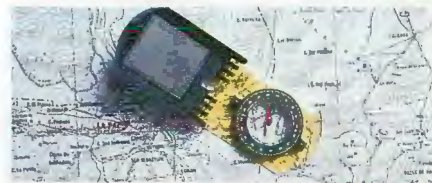
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PATROLLING HOT WATER

SOF Sails Salvador's Troubled Seas

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

THEY may never match Lord Nelson's elegant maneuvers at Trafalgar or the sheer power and gritty tenacity of the British Navy at Jutland, but Salvadoran sailors are determined to keep the troubled waters of their homeland safe from communist piracy. When it was launched in 1951, the fledgling service had only two 72-foot wooden patrol boats and 80 sailors, mostly former fishermen culled from coastal villages.

El Salvador was at peace then and the Navy's only real role was rescuing the crews of fishing boats in distress or settling petty squabbles among the shrimpers that ply the coastal waters. They were more like a waterborne police force than a combat arm. All that's changed by the communist insurrection which continues to rack this tiny Central American republic. The Salvadoran Navy — little discussed and generally ignored in press coverage of the fighting here — has swelled to a strength of some 325 sailors, 455 Naval Commandos (the Salvadoran version of Marine Raiders or Force Recon units) and 18 heavily-armed patrol vessels used to attack guerrilla-controlled coastal areas and interdict arms shipments sent to the rebels from Sandinista compatriots in Nicaragua. This relatively-tiny force functions for the country as blue-water fleet, Coast Guard and Marine Corps and, while the incidence of close combat has been low, it's clear that where the Salvadoran Navy goes, guerrillas fear to tread water.

The Navy's dreadnaughts are three 100-foot, radar-equipped Cam Craft Point cruise boats armed with four .50 caliber machine guns, an M24A1 20mm cannon at the bow and a U.S.-developed combination 81mm mortar and .50 caliber machine gun rig at the stem. According to Captain Humberto Villalta, Commandant of the Salvadoran

Navy, these 80-ton powerhouses were bought minus arms in 1975 for \$1,875,000 from an American oil company that used them to transport crews to rigs off the Louisiana coast. Three Detroit Diesel engines, developing 470 horsepower each, push the vessels through the water at speeds up to 25 knots. In the amphibious assault role, they can transport up to 200 troops. The three biggest boats in El Salvador's relatively-tiny fleet also serve as mother ships for the small, high speed craft that form the bulk of their patrol squadron.

There are also six 27-foot Piranhas that rattle the sailors' teeth while cutting along at up to 35 knots pushed by two 50-horsepower Johnson outboards. These two-ton, radar-equipped speedsters, delivered by the United States at the beginning of 1983, are armed with a .50 cal. at the bow and an M60 port and starboard. The Salvadoran Navy uses them primarily in pursuit of gun-running boats or for inland waterway operations where their shallow draft allows them to roam close to shore.

The nine remaining boats in the Navy inventory include four American-built, outboard-powered 36-footers, two World War II-vintage 40-footers, two 75-footers delivered in the mid-seventies, and a 65-footer delivered in June of this year. All are radar-equipped and armed with .50s in various mounts. The 75- and 65-foot patrol vessels also carry bow cannon in 20mm and 25mm respectively.

The picturesque Gulf of Fonseca seems too placid to require vigorous patrolling by Navy boats bristling with guns. You expect to see surfers and water-skiers plying the waves which wash the shores of three countries: El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Warm gulf waters are all that separates El Salvador from Nicaragua in some places. In certain areas the stretch is as short

The Piranha gunboat is the fastest craft in the Salvadoran Navy. Armed with two .50 cal's and two M60s, the Piranha is a formidable fighter.

as 20 miles over water. It's here that the Salvadoran Navy must do its most aggressive patrolling. The Reagan administration has long maintained that Nicaragua has been shipping weapons to the Salvadoran guerrillas. The sailors based at La Union will not only confirm that for you, they'll tell you exactly how it's done. They see plenty of it.

In early August, General Paul Gorman, commander of the United States Southern Command headquartered in Panama, showed a congressional committee, meeting in closed session, infrared aerial videotapes reportedly showing guerrillas unloading arms from fast, high-powered launches onto remote beaches in El Salvador for further transport inland on burro caravans. That came as no surprise to El Salvador's senior naval officer who has stepped up his patrol activity in an attempt to catch Sandanistas in the act of delivering weapons to their rebel buddies.

"Our problem is that we haven't been able to catch an embarkation from Nicaragua yet," said Captain Villalta, "despite the fact that several boats always patrol the Gulf." I thought perhaps the presence of a gringo with a camera might change their luck and got permission to accompany one of the patrols on 3 August.

Sunset painted the Gulf of Fonseca in a crimson glow. While fishermen in outboard-driven dugouts hauled in their nets for return to the sleepy port city of La Union, work had just begun for Navy Lieutenant Jose Daniel Castellanos. On the concrete and asphalt wharf at La Union Naval Base, the 26-year-old officer, dressed in



army-style green fatigues, supervised seamen loading the Cam Craft Point cutter he commands.

It was hot and muggy. The bare-chested sailors glistened with sweat. The lieutenant wiped his brow then pointed to smudges on the darkening horizon which marked Honduras and Nicaragua. Soon we would be just a few hundred meters from Nicaraguan territorial waters, he said. We boarded the vessel. The engines coughed into a snarl at the urging of Castellanos' chief engineman and we swung smartly away from the dock. The boat rocked gently beneath my feet as I followed the skipper up to the bridge. A husky sailor was loading the .50 caliber machine guns mounted on the port and starboard wings. He indicated it was a prudent precaution since he'd had experience with Sandinista patrol boats who hold target practice on Salvadoran vessels whether they actually enter Nicaraguan waters or not. "If you're in their range, you're fair game," he commented. The mission, as usual with virtually all Gulf patrols, was to catch gunrunners.

The breeze brought the stench of rotting fish over to us from the holds of two passing trawlers. On the bridge, the skipper checked the instrument panel and radar screen, then gave a course change to the helmsman. He was crisp, professional and business-like. I almost expected to see an Annapolis class ring on his finger.

Lt. Castellanos is typical of the new breed of Salvadoran naval officers. After three years in the Salvadoran military academy, he went to the American naval training facility in Panama in January of 1982. There he passed a five-month course of instruction in basic naval skills before going to the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve Training Center in Yorktown, Virginia for six months of advanced training. He loves his country and the sea.



Sailors in the Salvadoran Navy vary in age from 18-year-olds to salty veterans of the sea like this crusty engine room mechanic.

Cutting through the placid waters of the Gulf of Fonseca, a radar-equipped Piranha heads toward Nicaraguan territorial waters.



Standing over their M60s, two crewmen check fishing boats for gunrunners.



It was now pitch-black on the gently rolling waters of the Gulf of Fonseca. I could barely make out the bulk of sailors standing watch near the deck-mounted weapons. The Cam Craft normally carries a crew of 14, but our patrol was scheduled for a Friday night and half Castellanos' crew were on liberty in La Union. The CO wasn't particularly worried about being short-handed for this short patrol, but he demanded a full complement for the arduous eight to 15-

day, full-scale war patrols he makes about once or twice each month. Given that schedule, he likes to let his sailors have as much weekend liberty as he can.

Castellanos' crew was typical of those found on practically any Navy vessel in practically any country. There was a crusty old salt who has been a Navy engineman for 30 years. He seemed uncomfortable on deck and only relaxed when he was shouting over the noise of roaring diesels. There was a teenage gunner's mate who seemed a little overwhelmed by the size and potential power of the machine gun he kept wiping with an oily rag. Uniform regulations in the

Salvadoran Navy would give an American Chief Bosn's Mate nightmares. Uniforms are not even mandatory at sea and crewmen stand watch in whatever is comfortable. I noticed everything from the skipper's formal, cream-colored dress uniform to a basketball jersey, shorts and sneakers. But appearances count for little when you're doing a dangerous, difficult job. The sailors were respectful and enthusiastic about crewing their craft. Despite the temptation, you can't call guys like that a "motley crew." Given the Navy enlistment standards, the term wouldn't fit anyway.

Only physically fit 18-year-old males



with a sixth-grade education or better and a letter of good conduct from the local judge in their hometown may apply to join the Salvadoran Navy. People who have already served their two years of obligatory service in the Army are given preference for the few slots which open up each year because they need less basic military training. "A lot of people want to join, but we already have enough sailors. We need more officers," Lt. Castellanos indicated.

Salvadoran sailors receive three months on-the-job training in basic seamanship subjects such as knot-tying, navigation, signals, docking and ship handling, formations and waterborne maneuvers. They spend as much time training at sea as possible, said Petty Officer Cardona, a 30-year-old Quartermaster who manned the helm of our craft. He is an eight-year Navy veteran who sometimes teaches seamanship. His rank is roughly equivalent to an Army corporal. He had wanted to conduct some training for new men in the crew on this patrol, but the skipper had vetoed that given reports of increased guerrilla activity along the coast.

Sailors then are assigned to a ship or station where they apprentice in specific duties. Depending on their aptitude and the scholarship availability, some sailors are sent to the U. S. Naval Base at Rodman, Canal Zone, in Panama for further training in their respective specialized fields. When they return, they spend their shore time standing base security posts or working at the inevitable logistics and maintenance chores. When their sea duty rotation time comes, they go aboard a vessel where they will serve until it's someone else's turn in the barrel.

Phosphorescent plankton glowed in our foamy wake. We patrolled carefully at low speed watching the ominous silhouettes of volcanic islands which guerrilla gunrunners regularly use as stop-overs on their way in or out of El Salvador. The lights of the Honduran naval base at Amapala twinkled in the distance. During the 1969 Salvadoran-Honduran "Soccer War," Salvadoran warplanes bombed the airstrip there. The four patrol boats which the Salvadoran Navy had at the time played a major role in the 100-hour conflict using their .50 caliber machine guns quite effectively on the Honduran aircraft that bombed the oil storage facilities at La Union. These days El Salvador and Honduras are allied in their effort to combat Sandinista infiltration and support of communist subversives in both countries. According to Captain Villalta who spoke with me in El Salvador after the patrol, the

A Salvadoran commando team scrambles aboard a Cam Craft patrol boat after a training session in the jungle.

At only 100 feet, the Cam Craft Point cruise boat is the largest craft in the Salvadoran Navy. Despite the small size, it gets the job done.

Lt. Castellanos pilots his Cam Craft on another patrol in search of Sandinista gunrunners.





M24A1 20mm cannon mounted in the bow of Cam Craft is a formidable piece of equipment for any enemy boat unlucky enough to run into its fire.

Stern-mounted Browning .50 cal fixed to an 81mm mortar points skyward in anticipation of enemy aircraft. Salvadoran cutters mount sufficient armament to handle most Sandinista craft.

two navies cooperate in joint maneuvers and, more importantly, assist each other in repelling Sandinista patrol boats intruding into their waters.

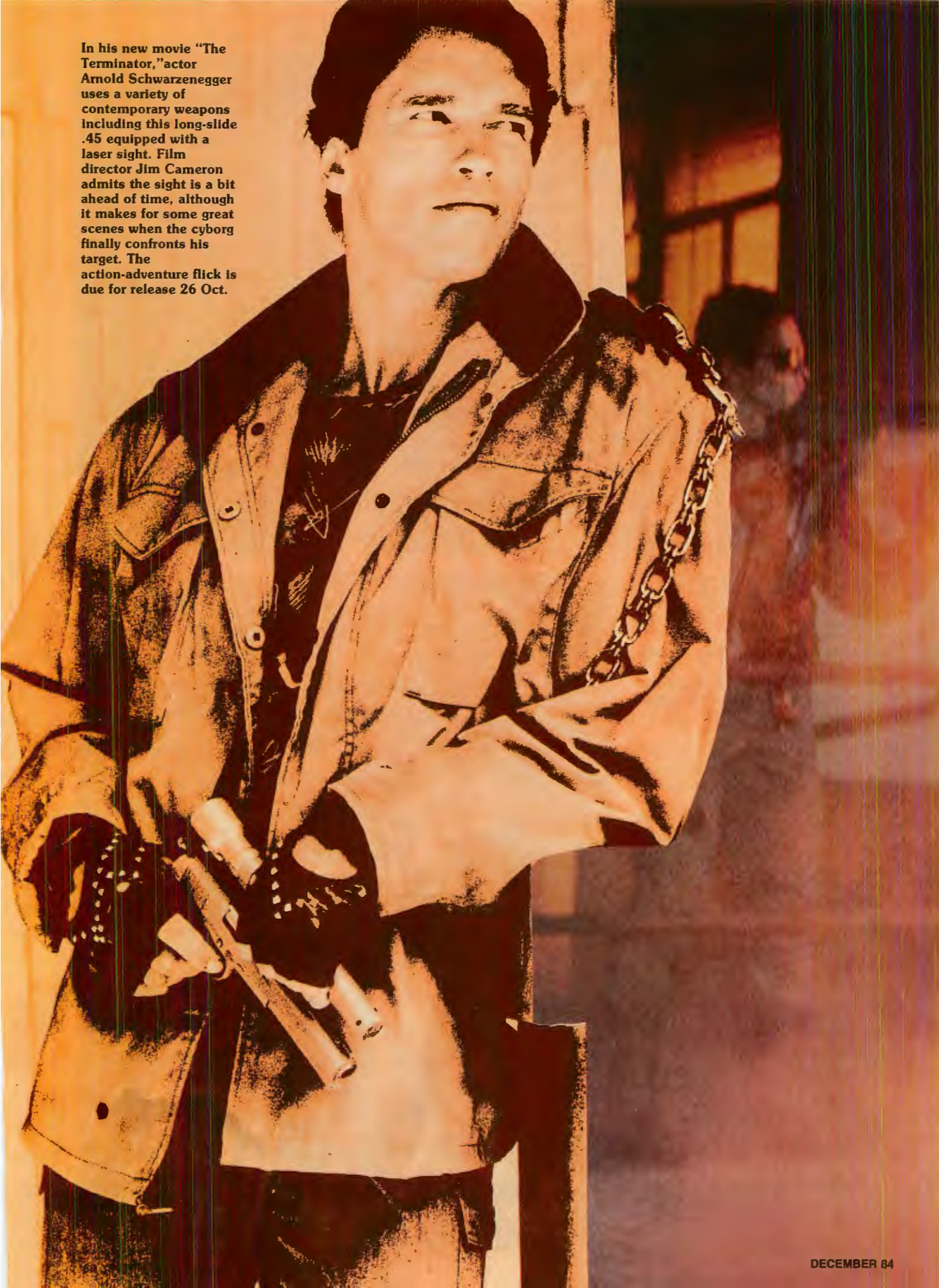
Gunner's Mate (Corporal) Victor Manuel Valnegas recounted one engagement with Sandinista sailors that may be one of the largest naval battles ever fought in El Salvador. He was manning a .50 caliber machine gun on one of two Piranhas involved in a confrontation with three Sandinista vessels on a sunny April afternoon in 1983. "One of those coast guard cutters that they (the Sandinistas) got from France and an armed fishing boat entered our waters," remembered the 25-year-old combat veteran. "We approached them and were maybe a couple kilometers away when they fired on us with a .50 cal and a 20mm. We made big circles and figure eights and fired back with every pass. We radioed the base for reinforcements and they called the Hondurans. Two of their Piranhas and a cutter arrived a half-hour later and the Sandinistas fled to their coast. We had no casualties, just a bullet hole in our Piranha."

There have been several such clashes between the Salvadoran and Sandinista sea forces, one involving the vessel I was riding



Continued on page 114

In his new movie "The Terminator," actor Arnold Schwarzenegger uses a variety of contemporary weapons including this long-slide .45 equipped with a laser sight. Film director Jim Cameron admits the sight is a bit ahead of time, although it makes for some great scenes when the cyborg finally confronts his target. The action-adventure flick is due for release 26 Oct.



CYBORG TERMINATOR

The Ultimate Merc

by Dale Dye

Photos Courtesy of Orion Productions

OBJECTIVE: *Create the ultimate mercenary soldier, a one-man wrecking crew that can't be defeated by conventional weapons.*

PARAMETERS: *He must have the power and endurance of a Roman Centurian, the cold-hearted ruthlessness of a Mongol warrior, the violent audacity of a Cossack cavalryman, the tenacity in combat of a French Foreign Legionnaire, the weapons and tactical precision of a Waffen SS NCO and the deviousness of a veteran Viet Cong.*

SOLUTION: *Cyberdine Systems Model 101*

CODE-NAME: *"Terminator"*

It's 2027 A.D. — some 30 years after a devastating nuclear war — and what's left of the human race is locked in a brutal guerrilla struggle for control of their destiny. The enemy — the tyrants who control post-war civilization — are machines, endowed by their creators with an artificial intelligence that leads them to believe all humans are security risks and must be eliminated.

Despite their ability to create superior weaponry, including cyborgs or machines wrapped in living human flesh, the computers are losing the battle for control of the earth. In a fit of diode desperation, the machines decide to solve their problems by eliminating the leader of the guerrillas in a most unconventional manner. Having developed the technology to make time travel possible, they decide to send their most efficient killing-machine — a cyborg titled "Terminator" — back to 1984 to kill

the mother of the human guerrilla leader. If he succeeds, the future will be changed. The human resistance will have no charismatic leader to direct the fight against machine control of the world.

Fortunately for the humans, the plot is uncovered and an experienced guerrilla fighter also manages to slip through the time warp. His mission: protect the woman who will become the mother of their leader and stop the Terminator.

The result? Sorry, sci-fi fans. Revealing that would be unfair to film star Arnold Schwarzenegger and the hard-working crew from Orion Productions who have just finished editing "The Terminator," a new film scheduled for nationwide release 26 October.

What we can reveal is that "The Terminator" is full-tilt action from the first handful of buttered popcorn until the house lights bring you back to ground-zero. SOF was fortunate enough to get a mid-editing preview of the film, but you couldn't have convinced me that the fortunes had smiled so brightly when the call from Schwarzenegger's Hollywood publicist came through in mid-August.

"Why would SOF be interested in reviewing a science-fiction film?" I wanted to know. "We're not a fan magazine."

"Because," the publicist responded, "it's got all sorts of stuff and action that SOF readers would love to hear about, if I'm any judge of your magazine."

I decided if Hollywood could judge SOF, we could take a shot at judging Hollywood. I was particularly interested in checking the technical aspects of the

CYBORG TERMINATOR

movie. Was this another epic in which weapons have an unending ammo supply and the heroes handle them like they aren't really sure which end to point at the bad guys? Or could it be, as several sources claimed, that the director and the actors were all trying to play it as straight as possible given the plot. Only a flying trip to the studio would tell.

Director Jim Cameron led me into his editing facility and arranged to show me four or five major slugs of the movie he was editing. He was pressed for both time and money, but seemed perfectly willing to discuss his film-making philosophy on technical accuracy. "It takes me right out of the film when I see something technically inaccurate," he stated. "On the other

hand, I think general audiences like to maintain a sense of antagonism with the film; to look for flaws. If they see a minor one, that's OK. It gives people the feeling that they know more than Hollywood."

That fit in fairly well with my own attitude when I watch a movie — particularly a movie that centers on military action or weapons. But it was showtime and I con-



ABOVE: In one of the best gunfight scenes from the movie, Schwarzenegger, as the cyborg Terminator, sweeps a downtown L.A. disco with an Uzi. The actor called in Action Arms VP Mitch Kalter, who died shortly after completing work on the film, to coach him in automatic weapons techniques.



LEFT: The cyborg merc from the future can be temporarily disabled by gunfire, but not killed. In several scenes he is caught by the blasts of a variety of weapons wielded by both his human antagonist and the LAPD.

THE GOOD SOLDIER SCHWARZENEGGER

It's probably just as well for the NATO alliance that 18-year-old *Panzerfahrer* Arnold Schwarzenegger didn't have to complete his three year enlistment in the armored forces of the Austrian Army. In his initial year as a tank crewman, the muscular movie star and former Mr. Universe managed to do about as much damage to civilian property and the army's fleet of M-47 Patton tanks as a Russian anti-armor squad.

Not that Schwarzenegger was a particularly bad soldier. Like many young U.S. GI's, he was simply full of somewhat more, uh, "spirit" than the bureaucracy thought was really necessary for your basic private in the rear rank with a rusty rifle. Hot-rodding at the controls of the Austrian Army's M-47 No. 134 (see photo) was the one thing other than pumping iron that delighted him. The *panzergrenadiers* that rode on top of his 44-ton plaything were not similarly amused by his antics.

"When you're 18 years old, you don't think," Schwarzenegger chuckled recalling one of his more infamous escapades while stationed with a tank unit outside his Austrian hometown of Graz. "The tank is just a robot you can have fun with."

Nearly wiping out a squad of infantry one night during maneuvers cost Private Schwarzenegger a week of KP that included peeling potatoes all night long. "I was in tank driver's school," he remembered, "and we had infantry riding on top of the tanks. It was at night and we were parked on top of a hill while my tank commander was off doing something else. I heard over the radio from a friend of mine that the commander wasn't aboard and we decided to see who could be first down the hill. It was a really wild ride, especially in a tank where you can feel every bump and roll. We started challenging each other with the infantry hanging all over the tanks. By the time we reached the bottom of the hill, there was no one aboard anymore. They were all gone. We turned on the lights so we wouldn't run over anybody and there were all these guys screaming and howling about being injured. Of course, we were punished heavily for that."

Most young Austrian men must do a year in the military, but Arnold had signed on for three in order to get training as a tank driver. He came by the military vocation honestly. His father had been an officer in the *Wehrmacht* during World War II and was a police official in Graz when his son enlisted in



1965. "I joined when I was 18 because I wanted to be a tank driver," Schwarzenegger said, "but I knew there would be problems because I was too tall. Anyway, you have certain privileges when you volunteer and one is that you can elect to stay in your hometown area." Arnold was particularly anxious to stay around Graz where he had begun a promising bodybuilding regimen at a local gym, but the army had different ideas. Military recruiters seem to sing from the same sheet of music whether they are American or Austrian.

"Normally what happens," Schwarzenegger chuckled, "is that you say you want to stay in Graz and they send you to Innsbrook at the opposite side of the country. If you say you want to be a tank driver then you end up walking around the mountains with a machine gun." Obviously, Schwarzenegger was going to have to pull some strings in order to juggle the army's plans and his own.

"I told my father they were going to send me to Vienna for tank training but I wanted to stay in Graz. He said to let him call a buddy from the Second World War. I told him to do the dealing—whatever it takes—and he went out with his friend who was one of the top officers at the station where I wanted to go. I got notice a week later that I was to be based at Graz."

Thus began a series of military misadventures. "It seemed like I had something happening to me every week," Arnold recalled of his time with the *panzer* unit at *Wetzelsdorf kaserne*. "One time I parked the tank on a downhill slope while we went to eat and it rolled into the river. Another time I had to start the tank and check the gauges. I put the tank in gear and got ready to roll, but someone screamed that I couldn't drive until the

engine had run for 15 minutes or something. I came out of the driver's position and forgot to take the tank out of gear. When I got back down in to check and see if it had warmed up, I felt the tank shaking and then people began screaming at me and bricks were falling all over. The tank had backed through the wall of a garage, wiping out the gas lines and water pipes and everything. People were screaming for me to shut the engines down and water was all over everything.

"I got out and went to see the commander. He was having a very happy day; laughing and everything because he'd had a good time with his wife or something. He asked me, 'Arnold, how's it going?' and 'What is it?' I said I had a little problem and he told me not to worry about little things. Then he went out and saw my tank half way through this building. He started screaming and I wound up in trouble again."

Schwarzenegger finally appealed for a release from his three-year contract and the Army officials decided the bodybuilder could do more for his country by winning titles and international recognition than wars. He doffed his uniform and went to Germany to train for the Mr. Universe contest that he eventually won. But he retains fond memories of his time in service.

"I got a lot of things out of it," he says. "I learned about *comeraderie* and all the basic things like how to sew your shirts, brush your shoes and take care of leather and share with buddies. . . all the things I feel very strongly about. I learned all that and decided it was time to move on."

Every army has its Private Schwarzenegger. They are the ones who make it all so interesting.

— Dale Dye

CYBORG TERMINATOR

centrated on a sequence during which the cyborg Terminator amasses his arsenal of 20th century weapons after traveling through time back to Los Angeles, circa 1984. In a downtown gun-shop, firing off names and model numbers like the machine he portrays, Schwarzenegger asks the proprietor for "the Uzi in nine millimeter, the AR-180, the .45 long-slide

with laser sighting, the S-P-A-S-12..." The shop-owner is happy as a clam, stacking guns on the counter and grinning about the money he's about to make off the stone-faced customer who just keeps ordering. And then the Terminator tosses a curveball. Without missing a beat he orders a "phased plasma pulse-rifle in the 40-watt range."

The shopkeeper responds, "Just what you see here, Pal," at which point the Terminator reaches for a box of 12-gauge shells, conveniently displayed on the counter, loads the SPAS-12 with buckshot, and blows the gun dealer away. It was an absorbing scene but I had some

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One of Terminator's handiest weapons in the film is a Franchi six-shot, 12-gauge Special Purpose Automatic Shotgun, the SPAS-12. The muscular actor handles the eight-pound weapon with one hand in most of the scenes where he uses it.



TALKING WITH THE TERMINATOR

Despite a muscle-bound image that's been perpetuated by reviews of his earlier films, "Terminator" star Arnold Schwarzenegger is a personable, articulate man with an intense interest in weapons as well as movies. In his Ventura, Calif. office, the 37-year-old former Mr. Universe sat down with SOF Executive Editor Dale Dye to talk about his new movie and the technical work he did to prepare for it.

SOF: I understand Mitch Kalter from Action Arms helped you out with the Uzi work.

A.S.: Yeah, he came out specifically to work with me on the various different aspects: how to take the gun apart and put it together quickly, how to look professional when you do it and not have to look down when you put the magazine in... stuff like that. So that helped a lot because I'm a big believer in getting all that stuff done before you do the film. If it's working with the sword or with knives and axes, you should do it before you go on location so you don't have to worry about it and it doesn't take away from the acting. If I were worrying about how to hold the sword the proper way or how to hit the proper way it just would be too much. The same with the gun thing... if it was the .45 or the SPAS shotgun we used, I tried to get ahead of time and work every day assembling it and taking it apart so when it comes down to shooting a scene where I actually had to put all the weapons together, I would look like a professional. We never shot that scene because the movie ended up already longer than they wanted and they thought



Executive Editor Dale Dye presents Schwarzenegger an SOF t-shirt.

that the problem would be solved if we took the scene out. Some smart people take it out before they even shoot and other people shoot it anyway, waste another million dollars and then they take it out. We didn't have that budget with this film. It had to be streamlined a bit, so they decided to take the scene out because it wasn't necessary to establish him (the Terminator) as an expert. But there's a gunshop scene where I look at the gun, check it out and do a few moves. I think that was sufficient to make it look like he knew what he was doing.

SOF: Well, as a professional military man, I'll tell you the moves I saw looked good, particularly the move in the gunshop scene when the owner turns around to get something and you reach over and get the one round for the 12-gauge. Then you just flip it over, load it and it's down on him. It's very nicely done.

A.S.: Good. I love shotgun shooting; that's my favorite. That's what I do all the time, skeet and trap shooting.

SOF: Why the one-handed busi-

ness with all the weapons?

A.S.: They felt that it would be much better looking if I started shooting everything with one hand and have nice swift movements, more like a robot. That's what he (director Jim Cameron) wanted to accomplish in the movie, more the direction of a mechanical man. So, anyway, we practiced in the trailer with all those things and I figured out how I could use it in the scene — pulling it out and shooting from the hip.

SOF: Do you work all that out personally for the most part when you do a scene involving weapons handling?

A.S.: You have to because you can't rely on the director. Some directors have a very clear vision of what ought to be done on the scene but many times they don't. They write the scene from A to Z but when it comes down to details, it's up to the individual. If you wait for him to tell you, he maybe directs you to do it a certain way that isn't comfortable. So you try these things and then you go to the director and say, 'This is the way that I think would be comfortable for me. Is that okay with you?' Then he looks at it and the cameraman looks at it and he says, 'That looks great. Try to stay on the floor one or two seconds longer so we all get the feeling that you are dead and then there will be a surprise when you come up.' And he'll make little adjustments like that. Or he will say, just move from here to here but don't move over there or something like that. Little adjustments are made, but other than that we work more with the people that are trying to teach me the weapons than working it out with the director. Because they know how it is



In an effort to acquire his arsenal without having to pay for it, the Terminator orders the SPAS-12 off the shelf at a local gunshop and then uses it to blow the proprietor away. For show-biz purposes a supply of 12-gauge buckshot shells was conveniently displayed within reach on the counter.

done in real life and that's what I want to base it on — how it's done in real life rather than how somebody fantasized it when he wrote it.

SOF: It seems to me that's very important to the box-office appeal in your movies. If you obviously look like a klutz handling weapons, the folks who would normally come to see the film would be kind of put off by it. Does that enter your mind?

A.S.: Absolutely. There's enough experts out there who can handle weapons and have weapons at home and who go skeet and trap shooting and know how to hold and load a shotgun. You'd be busted immediately. There's no two ways around it. It's the same with the sword. Even now I get suggestions (from his "Conan" films): 'When the huge guy tried to attack you with his ax, why didn't you hold it this way?' Although I've worked years with the sword now, they still come and say you should've done this block or that block and then stabbed him in the chest. That's why I know that it's very important to get those props handled properly and make it second nature. You don't have to think about it. Because you never can learn in two or three months the things that come for a person that has been handling the weapons for 10 years. There's no way. But you try to get 20 percent of this professionalism and the rest you rely on the editor.

SOF: How long did you work with weapons of all the types that you used in this film?

A.S.: Approximately a month and a half. I worked a month before we started shooting and 14 days into the shooting. By that time we had used all

the weapons. The first day, maybe we used the .45, then we used the SPAS and then the Uzi, and as time went on, I practiced all the things continuously on the set while doing another scene. That's all the time I had because I came on February 15 from shooting "Conan" and then March 15 we were shooting "Terminator."

SOF: I noticed that there wasn't a lot of naked skin in your new movie. Obviously, they are relying on Arnold Schwarzenegger as an actor, rather than a sex symbol or a macho-man.

A.S.: They have a lot of guts. I was amazed. Although I have done movies like "The Jane Mansfield Story" where I was dressed two-thirds of the time, the one-third that people were waiting for was when I was competing or taking my shirt off. Jim Cameron wanted me to play Reese (the human guerrilla fighter) first and then I read the script and I was more excited over the Terminator, the idea of the weapons and playing a robot villain. I told the director that I was very excited about that part and could see clearly how it should be played. I gave him recommendations and said that he must send the actor to (Director John) Milius' special school of weaponry. He called me back an hour later and said, 'You play the Terminator.'

SOF: Did you find it tough playing a non-human?

A.S.: No, it was basically the idea of locking into this robot behavior; this cold, no-emotion behavior. When you shoot, you have to make sure not to squint your eyes. You have to take care of the job and go on. It's just a job, something that you were programmed for and that's it. That is sometimes

hard. In most films, the killer shoots and he really gets into it, but you can't do that as the Terminator. I always had to remember that this is not a human being. You don't show emotions, you don't show excitement, you don't show fear or anything like that. What you do is just work with the director and tell him, 'If you see me blinking when I shoot or if you see any funny facial expressions, just tell me. I want to do it over again.'

SOF: Switching subjects for a moment, Arnold, how many guns do you own?

A.S.: About 15, mostly pistols and shotguns. I have an Uzi also. They gave me one when I went over last week to do the photo for the poster of the movie.

SOF: Are you any kind of a marksman?

A.S.: I'm pretty good. When I go shooting with the pistol, I get a lot of bullseyes.

SOF: Does it help to have such control over your hand and wrist muscles? Does a guy your build have any advantage in shooting?

A.S.: Well, I shoot better with heavy weapons rather than the light ones. I do much better with a .45 than with one of those light aluminum nine millimeters. I don't have a firm grip with them. Take the long-slide .45 we used in the movie for instance. That was great for me because it was heavy, and when you've held heavy weights all your life, you need something substantial. I felt very comfortable target shooting with the Uzi. The lightweight .25 calibers and all those, they get lost in my hand. The heavier the gun, the better for me. I shoot very well with the Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum.

SOF AFGHANISTAN

PAKTIA RECON

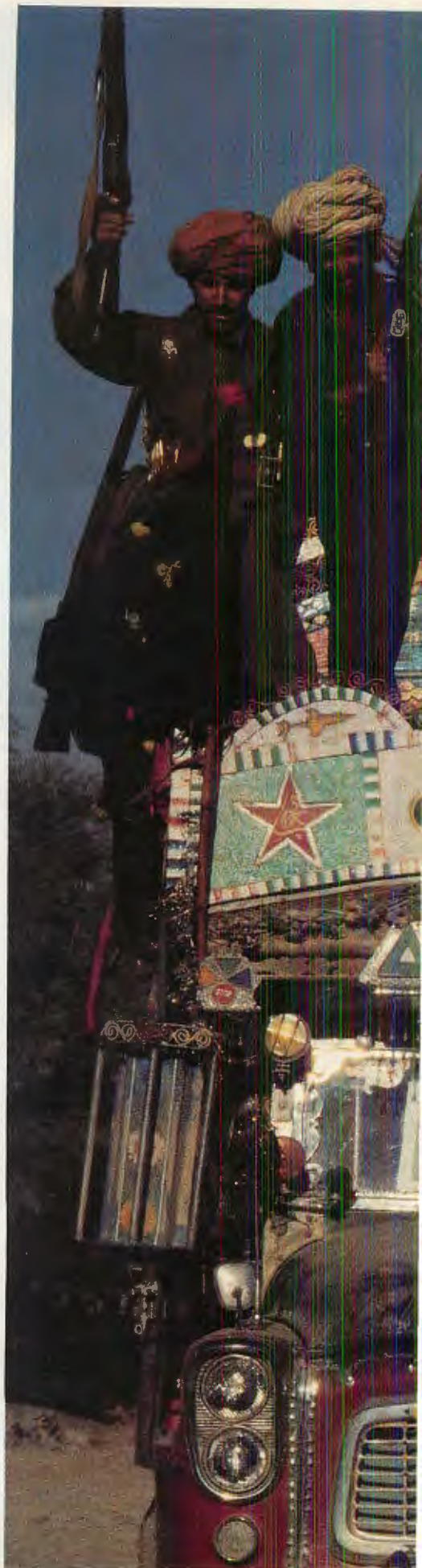
SOF Tours Occupied Afghanistan

Text & Photos by Jim Graves

This mujahid from the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan is one of about 20 percent of Paktia province freedom fighters that are armed with AKs. The rest use whatever they can get.



The Afghan answer to Soviet armor. Decorated International truck sporting a roof-mounted DShK HMG heads towards action with a party of freedom fighters.



STARTLED by rocks crashing beside us and the cries from above, we looked to the top of the canyon wall. Shouting, "Allahu akbar [God is great!]" the battle cry of Islam, four of them were hurling rocks at us. That cry has preceded many an ambush in Afghanistan, a centuries-old trigger of terror that has made thousands of English — and more recently Russian — hearts miss a thump.

Seeing us riding in Soviet trucks, they assumed I, with my light hair and skin, was a Russian adviser and my companions Afghan government soldiers, and "by Allah" we were not to proceed through their canyon unmolested. But these warriors were little boys of five or so.

We were a reconnaissance party of mujahideen from the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) and three Western

journalists (Erich and Kurt Pelda of Switzerland and myself) scouting the Soviet-Afghan Army base at Urgan in Paktia Province.

Our Russian trucks with their mounted DShK 12.7mm heavy machine guns were a gift from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics taken in ambush 50 kilometers from Urgan 10 May 1983. That day 3,000 mujahideen had caught and destroyed an 800-man communist unit in a narrow, twisting canyon near a village named Zawara.

Urgan, 35 kilometers west of the Pakistan border, is the home base of the Afghan army's 22nd Mountain Brigade and the 15th Border Guard Brigade. However, because of desertions to the resistance forces, NIFA estimates troop strength inside Urgan at about one-third of the numbers expected, or about 1,800 men. Freedom fighters esti-



mate a maximum of 20 Russian advisers are stationed there.

The fort of Urgan lies in a wide, flat valley which runs roughly northeast-southwest. Like most Afghan forts it has mud-brick walls but Urgan's are unusually thick. During the 1983 siege, the defenders kept mortar-carrying jeeps stationed on the walls to respond to harrassing fire. Urgan's fort is a four-sided rectangle, with two gates, four corner towers and a fifth, detached tower just outside the west wall.

NIFA's military command decided to make a major effort to take Urgan in early 1983 and began moving troops in from outlying areas of Paktia — where the Unity commander claims he has 20,000 armed men available — and from other NIFA or Unity strongholds in neighboring provinces. Base camps were established on all sides of Urgan within effective patrolling range; all roads coming into the area were put under watch and cut, and all Afghan army outposts outside the fort were overrun.

By the end of the year, the mujahideen had brought their siege almost into the shadow of the walls, having overrun government positions within just a few hundred yards of the fort. But there the NIFA attack stalled, as the mujahideen were unable to either penetrate the close-in mine fields or hole the walls — despite use of captured T-55 tanks and D-30 122mm howitzers.

In January the Soviets upgraded Urgan's support and pounded the mujahideen bases daily with both fixed-wing MiG and Mi-24 helicopter strikes. In late January, the Soviets managed to get a column through with reinforcements and ammunition.

NIFA's commanders intended to continue the siege through the winter, but Russian bombing of the civilian villagers in the area made it necessary to evacuate most of the nearby communities. Because NIFA is one of the most poorly equipped mujahideen organizations — the besiegers ran short of food, ammunition and clothing — and because weather in February and March was severe, the siege was lifted.

The May '84 reconnaissance trip had been set up so the NIFA commanders could get a close look at the resources available to them in Paktia, select sites for base camps and evaluate morale among the local mujahideen. If the conditions were right, NIFA intended to have another go at Urgan.

I joined the patrol, getting the chance to cover more of Paktia than any SOF staff member had yet seen. According to NIFA headquarters staff, they had enough control over the province to allow motorized convoys to pass through safely on a 300-kilometer recon.

Abdul, my NIFA escort officer and translator, had promised me that we would have no difficulty crossing the border and that we would ride all the way to Urgan.

I doubted both promises.

Pakistan, where the mujahideen organizations have their political headquarters, is sensitive to USSR pressure to deny journalists access to Afghanistan through Pakistani

Afghans love to pose for photos.

This fighter cradles his AKS while sitting atop the barrel of a captured D-30.



Mujahideen from a reconnaissance party examine a D-30 122mm howitzer captured 10 May near Zawara.



MISSION OF MERCY

The reality of Soviet aggression in Afghanistan came home to the American people with grim severity one Wednesday evening in early August as seven critically-wounded Afghan guerrillas, one a 10-year-old boy, landed in Washington, D.C. They were immediately transported by ambulance to Walter Reed Army Medical Center for treatment of wounds that, had they remained in Afghanistan, would have killed them. Care in the United States was the only lifesaving alternative.

Dr. Christina Kuhn, medical director for the non-profit relief organization, *Americares*, consulted with refugee doctors in the selection of patients. All the victims needed either reconstructive or neurological surgery unavailable in either Afghanistan or neighboring Pakistan. The mujahideen's injuries included facial wounds and three men, including the 10-year-old boy, had "bullets in the brain and three are missing at least one eye," said Dr. Kuhn. They have been brought to the United States for treatment that would "make them look like humans again," according to Dr. Kuhn.

This mission was prompted by a letter to Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger from 10 Congressmen requesting a one-time waiver of medical fees. The legislators asked Weinberger "to authorize the use of military transport and treatment facilities to help those for whom no treatment exists in Pakistan."

One man, Dr. Robert Simon, felt that the Afghan people deserved something more than lip-service from the United

States. The California surgeon trekked across the Hindu Kush in May 1980 to reach the Afghan guerrillas, becoming the first American doctor to enter Afghanistan with the resistance fighters battling the Soviet troops that occupy their country. For more than a month he provided medical treatment to the mujahideen in a rocky valley in Kunar Province about 40 miles inside Afghanistan.

Since Dr. Simon's courageous expedition, the *Americares* Foundation has obtained permission to send teams of American doctors into Afghanistan to treat wounded mujahideen in the field. The task won't be easy. Only qualified volunteers will be accepted and there is no guarantee for the teams' safety. Each team will remain in Afghanistan for three months at an estimated cost to the sponsoring organization of \$40,000.

This is a step in the direction of humanitarian assistance for a beleaguered people. Human aid is as important as military aid because the Soviets destroy everything — schools and homes as well as lives. Their scorched-earth policy has placed millions of Afghans in danger of starvation. The Soviets have designed a campaign based on terror. Perhaps the best example of this is a delightful little device with absolutely no military use. It's called the toy bomb and it serves no purpose other than to kill and maim children who are unable to resist the temptation of picking it up and playing with it. This brand of barbarism must be stopped before the number of shattered lives and bodies increases. They are, after all, fighting and dying for what we take for granted: freedom.

— Dale Andrade

territory. To clear the roadblocks of the Pakistani Frontier Constabulary, Army and Militia, I had to dress in Afghan clothes and go in well-hidden. The border crossing turned out to be nothing. We never even came to a complete halt. In fact, I only realized we had negotiated the border when Abdul turned to me, grinned and said, "Welcome to Free Afghanistan. Because we want to cooperate with Western journalists, we will waive the normal passport and visa requirements." He had made good on his first promise.

Frequently you enter "Free Afghanistan" as soon as you cross the border, since the mujahideen are control the terrain along it.

Except for the threat of Soviet aircraft — which is the one thing the mujahideen won't guarantee against — the Freedom Fighter's control of some crossing points and their knowledge of Soviet ground-force movements are so good it is safer crossing the frontier than some streets in America.

As we headed west, up into Afghanistan's mountains, on a dirt road through a stony, arid valley, it was exactly 0800. The sky was clear: good flying weather. The valley — treeless, rocky, wind-swept, dusty and fiercely hot — had little permanent housing, although it supported a substantial population. It was dotted with refugees' tents, brush lean-tos and crude bomb shelters, and camels and goats. There are 2.3 million registered refugees in Pakis-



tan and perhaps 500,000 unregistered refugees (Afghans who have not signed up with the Pakistani government and who receive no aid, mostly due to Pakistan's inefficient bureaucracy). Perhaps as many as 750,000 refugees have fled to Iran. Mujahideen and Western aid groups estimate that the internal refugees — those who have moved from their permanent homes to temporary camps to avoid Soviet attacks — outnumber those who have left the country. That means as many as seven million of Afghanistan's 15.5 million people have been driven from their homes since the Russians invaded the country in 1979.

We shared the road up into the mountains with a substantial, exotic mix of traffic. If it rolls or walks on its own power, Afghans put it to use: camels, horses, tractors pulling flatbeds or carts, trucks, buses, cars and jeeps hauled people and material in and out. Most of the outgoing traffic was refugees headed for Pakistan or camels hauling out wooden timbers; incoming traffic consisted of refugees returning home to liberated areas, loads of foodstuff and mujahideen off to the war.

During the next week I often puzzled my hosts by chuckling at incongruities. When we passed two AK-47-armed mujahideen struggling up the mountain on a Vespa motor scooter, I chortled at the sight of Afghan bikers. I was still chuckling when we hit the saddle near the top, rounded a corner on the road and ran out of pine trees. Below me I saw something I would not have taken anyone's word on — a mujahideen truck park, and a big one.

The motor pool and operating base, flying the black flag of a NIFA camp, consisted of both permanent mud-brick structures and tents scattered through a two-mile-wide, generally treeless mountain meadow. Right beside the road was a platoon-size tent which I later learned was the school for the kids.

The mujahideen had one BTR (running but seldom used, since this gas hog is powered by two engines), 18 trucks (troop transports, tankers or utility vehicles, which appeared to be in running condition), five hulks (shot up by the communists and kept for spare parts), a towable Soviet field kitchen and one D-30 howitzer. To protect the vehicles, the Afghans had one 12.7mm DShK and one 14.5mm gun. They had modified the 14.5mm into an antiaircraft weapon by building a handmade tripod and colorfully-padded swivel seat.

Commanders Aid Mohammad and Madare, two of the three who control the 3,000 mujahideen attached to that command, were there with about 100 men to show us around and organize the switch-over. From then on we would be riding in Soviet troop transports, sporting the NIFA symbol and Aid Mohammad's name instead of the Afghan Army logo on the doors.

A junior commander, Muhammed Afzal, led the tour through the truck park and insisted I look inside every utility van — all of which were filled with batteries, generators, radios, boxes of ammunition and other

Houses built to follow the contours of the hills are common in Paktia province. A house this large would be home to three or four related family groups.



Abdul Wakil Akberzai (left), my NIFA escort officer, lets a youngster try out my Sony Walkman, valuable diversion on long, dusty drives. The youngster loved it. Abdul, when he tried it said: "Too much noise."



CANYON OF DEATH

In early May 1983, intelligence information reached the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan military commanders in Paktia Province that some of the 12,000 Soviet troops based at Gardez in northern Paktia Province were going to be redeployed south of Urgun.

The Soviet move came following the signing of a "nonaggression" pact between Commander Ahmad Shah Massud and the Soviets in the Panjsher Valley north of Kabul. The pact enabled the Soviets to redeploy the 38th Commando Brigade, which consisted of the Afghan Army's 33rd and 73rd Commando Regiments, to Paktia Province. Shortly after their arrival in Paktia, the Soviets decided to deploy the 4th Battalion of the 73rd Regiment to establish a new Soviet base at Goman, south of Urgun, because of massive desertions to the Freedom Fighters and the war's general unpopularity with the people, Afghan Army units normally operate at about one-third strength.

The Soviet column which set out from Gardez to Goman by way of Urgun in early May consisted of the 1st, 2nd and 4th Battalions of the 73rd, a tank battalion, a reconnaissance battalion and an engineering company.

After the 4th Battalion and some support units were dropped off at Goman the other forces headed back north toward Urgun.

The movement of the Soviet/Afghan force had been tracked from the time it left Gardez, and north of Urgun near a small village named Zhawar, the Afghans had laid an ambush. Commanders Aid Mohammad, Madre and Mohammad Afzal had selected a narrow, twisting canyon as the site for their strike. At the time it was swampy due to heavy rain which continued to fall even

as the mujahideen laid anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in clusters along the stream bed which meandered through the canyon floor.

On the walls of the canyon, 3,000 Pathan Freedom Fighters, assembled from all over Paktia and armed with 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns, 7.62mm light machine guns, AK-47s, Lee Enfield bolt-action rifles, RPGs and mortars, waited quietly for the communists to appear. Many prayed silently to Allah for strength to pull off such a daring ambush.

The communists — approximately 800 crewing five T-55 tanks, 12 BTR or BMP Armored Personnel Carriers, 18 troop trucks, an odd lot of utility vehicles and some towed artillery — drove into the trap at 1400 on 10 May. Command-detonated mines destroyed the lead tank and halted the column. At the rear of the column, mujahideen blocked the exit from the canyon by destroying the trail vehicles with RPGs.

The slaughter began with grisly scenes reminiscent of ranchers destroying diseased cattle.

Small-arms fire from the mujahideen on the canyon walls raked the stationary column and mujahideen with loud-



The author keeps with Islamic standards of cleanliness by shaving in an ice-cold stream on the first morning in Afghanistan.

spoils from various actions.

As word spread through the valley that three Westerners were in the camp, more mujahideen drifted up, until there were at least 150 of us standing around out in the open.

I was chatting with Kurt Pelda, who had been an officer in both the Swiss Army and the Rhodesian Light Infantry. Both of us were puzzled that the camp had never been bombed since it was so open and nothing was camouflaged. Then I heard it — a jet, close enough to make a lot of noise but out of sight somewhere in the hills. Some of the mujahideen did turn toward the noise, but most gave it only a nonchalant second of attention before going back to socializing.

The roar from the jet was fading when an impressive-looking mujahid arrived. He was warmly greeted by the commanders and the men I had come in with. I was introduced to him: Khataque, a wiry, hard-as-nails fighter of 65, who is something of a

hailers added to the commotion with taunts and demands for the Afghans to put down their weapons and surrender.

The weather was severe that day — it was raining hard — so the Russian advisers' desperate calls for air support went unanswered. The mujahideen had known that would happen. They deliberately picked a day when the fearsome Mi-24's would be grounded.

Four hours after it started, it was over. Four Russian advisers and 300 Afghan Army troops were Killed-In-Action while 500 took up the mujahideen surrender terms. On the rough battlefields of Afghanistan, Moslems fighting for the communists have the option to surrender, but surrender is always best done when one still has some ammo left. As one mujahid explained the process, if the communist had a full magazine left in his weapon it was one thing, but if he had waited until he was down to only a few rounds — that was another matter entirely. It meant that the majority of the man's ammo had been burned at the mujahideen who were now considering his surrender.

The 500 Afghan Army soldiers who surrendered were disarmed and some were given the option of joining the mujahideen or heading north back to their base in Gardez. "It was indifferent to us," said Commander Aid Mohammad. "Some stayed, some went back."

One mujahid was killed and three wounded in the ambush. Two of the wounded died later. The mujahideen captured two tanks, three BTRs, more than a dozen troop transport trucks, some utility trucks, a field kitchen, two D-30 122mm howitzers, small arms and a considerable stock of ammunition.

The following day Soviet helicopters and fixed-wing jets bombed the civilian villages in the area.

The mujahideen were long gone.

— Jim Graves

legend even among the mujahideen, connoisseurs of courage. In the 10 May ambush, he had knocked out a BTR and its entire crew — hand-to-hand.

The BTR was immobilized in the bottom of a canyon between two other vehicles, which had been destroyed by mines or RPGs. Khataque fired up all of his AK-47 ammo and then jumped down from a perch

on the canyon wall to the top of the buttoned-up BTR. Witnesses saw him running around on top, banging on the hatches and yelling at the soldiers to come out and die like men. They speculate Khataque made so much noise that the soldiers inside assumed their vehicle was covered with Freedom Fighters and they would be set on fire — a standard mujahid method of dealing with

immobilized APCs and tanks.

Khataque said he heard a rifle being cocked inside one of the hatches, so when the hatch cover flew open and a crewman emerged, he was ready. He bashed the crewman with his empty AK, pulled the body out of the way and stripped him of his weapon. He killed the rest of the crew with it.

NIEM THE LUCKY

His name was Niem. He looked like most other 11-year-old Afghans: black hair, brown eyes, slight build and ragged clothing.

But Niem's way of handling himself set him apart. He displayed a curious arrogance modified by fear. That figured once you found out more about him. Eleven-year-old Niem was a captured Soviet spy.

The son of a school headmaster and local communist party official from Kandahar (a major city in southeastern Afghanistan), Niem was selected in 1982 for a special study program in the USSR. With 10 other children, selected on the basis of their intelligence, honesty and their families' loyalty to the party, Niem was taken from his neighborhood school and sent to become part of a class of 100 students.

"We were told we had to go to the USSR," said Niem, "in order for our country to be liberated from the bandits." As a loyal, atheistic party member even before the 1979 Soviet invasion, Niem's father had not raised his son as a Moslem. He encouraged the boy to pursue the proposed Russian curriculum.

After a one-month orientation course in Kandahar, the 100 youngsters were transported to Kabul and from there went first to Tashkent and later Samarkand in Soviet Uzbekistan, one of the USSR's Central Asian republics.

In Uzbekistan the youngsters were lodged with the families of party members. Their schooling consisted primarily of military training (physical training, weapons identification and familiarization firing, use of terrain, camouflage techniques, use of marker panels to assist air strikes and communist party indoctrination). The Russians also tried to identify those youngsters with reactionary Moslem beliefs and subvert them.

Spotting my pack of Camels on the table, Niem asked for one while I interviewed him. I cast a questioning glance at the interpreter and he nodded okay.

There was no doubt that Niem was an experienced smoker, unusual among Afghans and rare among 11-year-olds. He pulled out a Camel, tapped the unfiltered cigarette on the table and lit his own smoke with my Zippo, snapping it open, striking it and closing it with a

deft, experienced motion. Other Afghans to whom I had offered my lighter had usually given up after a minute or so of fumbling and asked me to do it.

I looked at the translator and he said: "Oh yes, he smokes, drinks, takes hashish and knows women. He's a real sonofabitch."

"He's had a woman?" I asked incredulously.

"To show we were no longer Moslem," explained Niem. "We were encouraged to experience sex. Either with the Afghan girls in our group or with the Russian women."

Niem struck out with the Afghan girls. He said he was too nervous, so the family he stayed with provided a Russian girl who was willing.

"How old was this Russian?" I asked.

"She was a woman, grown," answered Niem. In addition to the Russian women, Niem was provided with another willing Russian female at party headquarters in Tashkent. Niem explained that as part of their routine ration while in Russia, the youngsters were supplied with cigarettes and alcohol. All three — sex partners, cigarettes and alcohol — were supplied to break down fundamental Moslem cultural orientation which denies the faithful such things except under strict conditions.

After six months of training, Niem's group was divided, some staying in Russia for additional training, others returning to Afghanistan to go into the field. Niem was sent to Herat, far to the northwest of his home in Kandahar. His instructions were to go into the bazaar and pretend to be a homeless, internal refugee. He was to speak against the communist regime and the Soviets until he was accepted by the mujahideen. He was too make himself useful and pick up intelligence by volunteering to load and unload supplies, to serve as a runner and, if asked, to go into the countryside with the resistance.

Niem was a member of a net of younger Afghans run by two older Afghan boys of about 16, who were the only two authorized to have frequent contact with the Soviet controllers out of the Herat political headquarters. Each boy was paid 1,000 Afghani (about \$15 U.S.) per month.

One of Niem's infrequent contacts with the Soviets — he described them as

civilians (probably KGB) and Soviet Air Force — led to his arrest. Another bazaar youngster, pro-mujahideen, who had become suspicious, was following him and saw Niem making contact with the Russians.

The local mujahideen organization arrested Niem and one of the older boys. Niem had been told the mujahideen would hang him if he were captured and was surprised when he was not. The Herat Freedom Fighters were trying to trade the older youngster for some of their POWs, but the Russians would not trade and the other youngster was killed during the negotiations. The mujahideen decided to move Niem to a more secure location.

Niem said he had witnessed mujahideen being interrogated during his time as a communist spy. According to him the mujahideen were routinely tortured and usually executed.

Niem's version of the loyalties of the Afghan people was that the people in the cities were pro-government, while the people in the country supported the mujahideen. The translator pointed out that Afghans living inside the communist-controlled cities had little choice.

A prisoner for three months when I saw him, Niem stated he was well treated, not as well as he would like, but treated reasonably. He complained of being forced to work, and being denied alcohol and cigarettes. He was still a good little communist, with almost no knowledge of the Koran.

Niem had been told inside the Soviet Union that the United States was behind the mujahideen revolution and was still convinced it was true. When I asked him why he still believed that, after his stay with the Freedom Fighters, he pointed to my camera and binoculars and replied, "Because I have seen other Americans like you, with the same equipment."

As I prepared to leave I asked the commander who had arranged the meeting what they would do with Niem. "I don't know," the commander shrugged. "We can't kill him. The Koran says you can't kill women or kids unless it is during actual combat."

"But he's not going to change. He's a real shit."

Niem is also real lucky.

— Jim Graves

Khataque, a 65-year-old Freedom Fighter, single-handedly wiped out the entire crew of a Soviet BTR.



Mujahideen take pride in their weapons whether they are ancient Mosin-Nagants or modern AKs. Decorations have religious and personal significance.



MURDERER'S ROW

If Afghanistan's President Babrak Karmal hears strange noises in the night, it would probably be expedient for him to grab a pistol or start remembering the prayers he renounced when he became a communist.

Karmal's three predecessors in the office went the hard way. They were shot, strangled and poisoned/shot.

This friendly system of changing leadership started in 1978 when Prince Muhammad Daoud Khan (who came to power by overthrowing his cousin King Mohammad Zahir Shah) made a slight miscalculation. Daoud was appointed prime minister in 1953 by King Zahir, who then forced him to resign in 1963. Daoud, who had fallen under the influence of the leftists in the 1950s, came back to power in 1973 in a bloodless coup — backed by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA: the communists) — and conducted with the assistance of Soviet officers stationed in Afghanistan.

The PDPA, which was founded in 1965, is divided into two factions. The Khalq faction was founded by Nur Mohammad Taraki and its membership is primarily rural-based, Pushtu-speaking Afghans. Taraki was a Ghilzai Pushtun from Ghazni Province who once worked — probably on behalf of the KGB — as a translator for the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.

The Parcham faction was founded by Babrak Karmal and its membership is primarily urban-based, Dari-speaking (Afghan Persian) people. Babrak Karmal — which is a self-given *double en-*

tendre surname which means "Friend of Labor" and "Kremlin" in Dari — is from a small village near Kabul. He claims to also be a Pushtun, but this is suspect, since his ancestors were probably Tajiks. Karmal is presumed to have been a KGB agent since the 1950s.

Daoud started Afghanistan on the road to becoming a communist state in 1973 but either too slowly or too rapidly, depending on whether one was a Khalq (in favor of sudden dramatic changes) or Parcham (in favor of gradual evolution). To the majority of the people of Afghanistan either course was wrong and the Moslem resistance, although not the armed resistance, dates to this time period.

Late in his regime, Daoud became disenchanted with the USSR and Afghanistan's communists and started moving toward the West. Daoud's biggest mistake was in arresting — or at least trying to arrest — the leaders of the PDPA — Babrak Karmal, Taraki and Hafizullah Amin, a member of the Khalq faction, on 26 April 1978.

Mistake number two was not to kill the lot once he had them under arrest. Amin, in fact, appears to have been under only house arrest and it was from his house that he plotted the coup of 27 April.

The Khalq faction of the PDPA had suborned the military and Amin was able to reach them on the phone from his house. One of those who answered his call was Air Force Lt. Col. Abdul Qader. He had a serious grudge against Daoud since he had helped him come to power in 1973 only to be rewarded some

years later by appointment as director of Kabul's slaughterhouses, after criticizing Daoud for going too slowly in socializing the country.

Qadar and two tank officers, Cols. Mohammad Aslam Watanjar and Mohammed Rafiee, led the coup against Daoud. Tanks led by Watanjar moved in on the presidential palace, which was spiritedly defended by Daoud's West German mercenary bodyguards. Air strikes flown by MiG-21s from Kabul settled the issue. When a young officer went in to ask Daoud to surrender, Daoud pulled out his pistol and shot him. In the ensuing excitement, the officer's men sprayed the palace with machine guns, killing Daoud, his entire family and the West Germans.

Since the central government is unimportant to most Afghans — they are fond of saying Kabul's business is important only to Kabulis — the Afghans initially ignored the bloody coup of April. However, that did not last long. Taraki started throwing people into Pul-e-Charkhi prison — where they were tortured, shot, hanged, drowned and buried alive by the thousands. Among those taking one-way trips to the dungeons were some members of the Parcham faction. The USSR managed to save the leaders — like Babrak Karmal — who obtained posts as exiled ambassadors, primarily in Eastern Europe.

More importantly, Taraki backed a radical reform of education and agriculture in the country. When the devoutly Moslem tribal *maliks* (chiefs) and *mul-lahs* (religious leaders) resisted, Taraki started having them shot.



Our Dashika gunner keeps his eye to the sky during a dangerous crossing of Urgan valley.

At that point the Afghan revolt began in Nuristan, which was the first province to take up arms and declare itself *azad* (independent).

By 1979 the resistance was clearly out of the government's control — there were revolts going on in almost every province and in Herat Russian advisers had been massacred and their heads displayed in the bazaar mounted on pikes — so there were differences of opinion within the ruling Khalq faction of the Communist Party. These differences of opinion turned into a power struggle between Taraki and Amin.

Amin, like Taraki, was a Pushtu-speaking Ghilzai. He was educated in the United States (University of Wisconsin) and joined the Khalq faction of the PDPA in 1966. He is widely believed to have been behind the assassination of his rival Mir Akbar Khyber in April 1978. It was the killing of Khyber — blamed on the CIA — and a subsequent anti-American demonstration which led to the arrest of the PDPA members by Daoud.

Taraki took a trip to Havana in September 1979 and on his way back to Kabul, he met in Moscow with Babrak Karmal, the exiled leader of the Parcham faction. Amin was suspicious; rightfully so, since Taraki and the Russians were plotting his removal.

But Amin struck first, triggering a power struggle by ousting three pro-Taraki ministers (including former tank commander Aslam Watanjar). Taraki disagreed and asked Amin to attend a meeting in his office in the presidential palace.

Amin initially declined, since he had been informed that the three ministers whom he had ordered fired were in Taraki's office and armed. Eventually he showed up — with eight bodyguards, all of whom were shot down by Taraki's bodyguards as they got out of the car.

Amin escaped, rounded up reinforcements and went back. A grenade went off in Taraki's office — thrown by an Amin agent working inside the palace — and Taraki was badly wounded. He was rushed to a hospital and died that night of his wounds.

The version one hears over tea in the bazaar is that Amin came to Taraki's room that night and had him strangled. This could probably have been denied by the doctor and nurse who treated Taraki — but both of them were killed shortly after his death.

The resistance, now countrywide, didn't even notice and continued to try to throw the communists out. In October in Paktia Province, a 5,000-man mechanized brigade was wiped out in a battle with the mujahideen.

Moscow, which never liked Amin and which was reportedly highly upset when he had Taraki strangled, was increasingly alarmed by the strength of the Moslem guerrillas and determined Amin had to go.

On Christmas Eve 1979 people all over Kabul were puzzled by the sound of incoming AN-22 troop transports passing overhead to land at the airport. Soviet soldiers from the 105th Airborne Division were in control of the airport and the incoming Antonovs were bringing in the rest of the 105th, the 103rd and

"It was bad in there," said Khataque, disgustedly. "They bled a lot and it smelled. It took a lot of cleaning before we could use the vehicle."

Before we left the camp we had to take tea with the mujahideen based there. Afghans are exceptionally polite to visitors — except for Russians — and are deeply offended if visitors don't drink a cup of tea with them in their house or mosque, especially VIPs — and Western journalists are VIPs to them. By sharing tea or a meal with you, they gain status.

Another curious Afghan custom is that their hospitality also includes protection. If visitors are harmed while receiving their hospitality, Afghans are required to exact revenge. Moreover, if a guest were to deliver an unforgivable insult to them, they would ignore it while he was in the house. That custom *does not*, however, prevent the host from tracking down the offender and taking appropriate action outside.

Our next stop was a Unity center well-hidden in pine trees not far from the truck park. There we broke for lunch. We had breakfasted lightly, so I greeted my first Afghan homecooked meal with real enthusiasm. Meals varied little for the next week

104th Airborne Divisions.

Amin, depending on the word of Soviet Lt. Gen. Viktor Paputin, believed the planes were bringing in a contingent of Soviet soldiers to help him solve his problem with the Moslem guerrillas.

A number of subterfuges carried out by the Russians were immobilizing the Afghan Army. Kabul-based units were told to turn in their weapons as the Soviet unit they could hear flying in was bringing them new ones. All tanks were called back to motor pools for engine maintenance. Unknown to Amin and those officers loyal to him, four motorized rifle divisions had crossed the Amu Darya River and were pushing toward Kabul, and one of the AN-22s had returned Babrak Karmal to Kabul.

Amin never did learn what was going on. On 27 December, he ate a lunch prepared for him by the Central Asian cooks supplied by the Russians. Something he ate upset his stomach — it is reported that he was already dead when the tanks started rumbling through Kabul's streets that evening, led by Col. Aslam Watanjar, an old hand at coups.

Lt. Gen. Viktor Paputin and a contingent of KGB troops arrived at the Darulaman Palace, where Amin, his family, bodyguards and some loyal supporters were. If Amin was not already dead, he died in the ensuing fierce fire fight. Paputin was also killed.

Babrak Karmal, a Dari-speaking Parchami, was the new president and resident of Darulaman Palace. He would be well-advised to shoot Watanjar and others like him now and keep a pistol or two under his pillow.

Some Afghans have fair skin and light colored eyes. Legend has it that Alexander the Great's soldiers, who passed through Afghanistan in 327 B.C., are responsible.



— goat, rice, tea and *nan* (Afghan bread) — and my enthusiasm for them was soon blunted.

We rolled out at 1300, moving only a few kilometers down the road. I realized something was up when I heard the deep, bass “K-Wham, K-Wham, K-Wham” of a 12.7mm and saw the bullets arching way up in the sky. I hadn't heard one of those damn things fired in 17 years. They can be startling.

As I twisted to aim my camera at the DShK, my translator explained that the firing was honoring Mohammad Gailani, the son of Sayed Pir Gailani, head of NIFA, who was in the convoy with us.

It was a marvelous and stunning spectacle. At the entrance to the village, the mujahideen had placed a BTR with a tripod-mounted DShK on the roof. A tough-looking muj blasted through a can of 12.7mm ammo, and before my ears had stopped ringing 200 mujahideen came out of the houses to greet Gailani.

I had been told of the reverence the Afghans hold for the Gailanis and this scene



The killing continues: This list of villagers killed by Russians was presented to an NIFA official by the headman.

confirmed it. As head of the Sufi Qadiri brotherhood, a Moslem mystical sect, Pir Gailani, who is also a direct descendant of the Prophet, is treated as a saint.

Our truck — which had a 12.7mm mounted on a tripod at the back — continued on as did another which had a tripod-mounted 7.62mm Goryunov MMG, but the Toyota jeep carrying Galini stopped while they loaded up another Soviet troop transport with the 12.7 off the top of the BTR. It didn't take long for experienced hands to convert from saluting to anti-aircraft battery.

Close to the frontier the mujahideen travel when and where they please, but as they push into the interior, the possibility of contact increases dramatically and care has to be taken in selecting routes and times for convoys to get on the road. Travel is relatively safe before 0800 and after 1600 because the Soviet pilots prefer — and normally adhere to — a routine flight schedule. Up at 0600, breakfast at 0700 and in the air at 0800. The war secures at 1500; they have to clean up before going to the officers' club.

Having been told of the Soviet routine, I foolishly assumed we would wait in the trees outside the village for late afternoon and safe driving time, but we were back on the road within a half-hour.

The bazaar of Angoor Adda, which I was told translated to Grape Bus Station (no one knew why), at the edge of the mountains was our stopping point. Angoor Adda is the last spot for buying diesel or — if you're into luxuries — oranges, watermelons and vegetables. The tanks were topped off with diesel (each truck also carried a full 55-gallon drum lashed down in the bed). Although Soviet Army trucks have gas engines, gas is difficult to find in Afghanistan and twice as expensive as diesel, so, when possible, the mujahideen swap engines.

A dozen or so vehicles — mostly civilian trucks and buses — plus tractors, donkeys, camels and several hundred people parked, stood or moved around in Angoor Adda. Most of the men were either from the Ghaljis tribe, a very different sort from the settled Ghaljis of Pakistan, or Waziris. The English, who had many bloody battles with the hill tribes, generally rated the Waziris, the Mahsuds (a closely related tribe), the Afridis and Baluchis as the four fiercest.

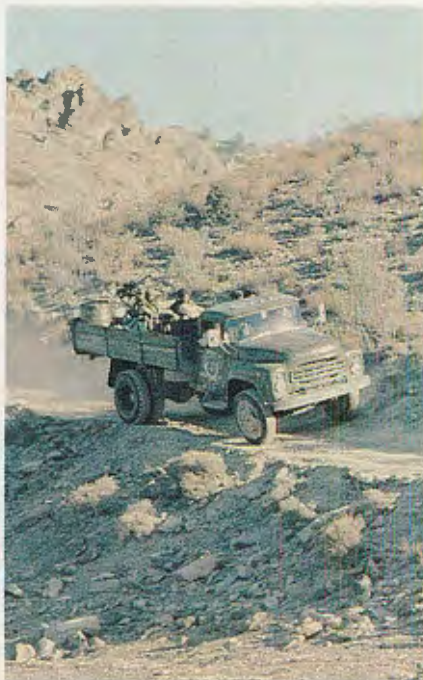
Most of the people in Angoor Adda were unarmed and looked like farmers, tradesmen, woodcutters or merchants. But the Soviets had bombed the bazaar only a few weeks back.

Our biggest concern while halted there was the possibility that either the Swiss or I would be spotted by a government informer. Bazaars like Angoor Adda's serve as information outlets. All people and things passing through are counted and commented on by the sharp-eyed Waziris.

Thus, I once again wore my Chitrali hat (khaki-colored serge and scratchy as hell), had my *patous* (a square of cloth, usually cotton or wool, used as a shoulder blanket or cape) thrown over my shoulder and the sleeves of my *salawar*, a two-piece outfit of loose cotton trousers with a cord and a long-sleeve, nearly knee-length shirt, worn outside the trousers rolled down to hide as much white skin as possible.

Although we drew a few glances, I thought I'd gotten away clean until a Waziri moved up to me and asked in passable English: “English? French?”

I pretended not to understand, and one of our English-speaking mujahideen told him in Pushtu that I was from Nuristan and didn't speak Pushtu or Farsi (Persian) and that it would be a good idea if he went somewhere else. Since we had the AKs, he did.



Part of a mujahid convoy negotiates a bad section of road.



Deafening gun salute honored Mohammed Gailani (left), son of Sayed Pir Gailani, head of NIFA and a direct descendant of the Prophet.

From time-to-time villagers camouflage Russian vehicles by throwing brush on them. It was wasted effort since the tank was left in open terrain.

Afghan C-rats: Meat on the hoof obviates need for canning or freeze-drying. Accompanied by rice, tea and flat bread, goat was the main dish for every meal.

Nuristan is the area of choice for all Western journalists trying to blend in with the Afghans. Located in the high-mountain area in the northeastern part of the country, Nuristan has a large number of fair-skinned, fair-haired, green- or blue-eyed people who speak an obscure language unrelated to either Pushtu or Farsi, the country's two dominant languages.

The story goes that the light-complexioned Nuristanis are descendants of Greek soldiers left behind when Alexander the Great fought his way through Afghanistan in 327 B.C. It is possible, since Alexander did go that way and there are physical and cultural resemblances between the Nuristanis and Greeks. The "foreign" influence in Nuristan was so strong that Islam has only become dominant in the last 100 years. Before, the people were pagans — the area was also called Kafiristan (The Land of Infidels).

I was not happy about the curious questioner. The Soviets are interested in Westerners travelling in Afghanistan: Any they manage to capture or kill provide gist for their claim of CIA backing for the war. A Dane and an Englishman have been killed, and a French doctor was captured in 1983. The Afghan regime convicted him of spying, sentencing him to 10 years. He was released after the French government pressured the USSR. (The French threatened to back out of a deal to buy natural gas from the Russians. An SOF writer captured in Afghanistan would get a lot more than 10 years, and I doubt our government would be as willing or successful as the French in applying pressure on the Russians for my early release. I can't believe that the State Department would threaten to stop selling wheat to the USSR, for example.)

Our convoy got on the road about 1500. Shortly thereafter, we came down out of the foothills onto the fertile plain of Zadrán. Heavily populated with Waziris, its massive mud-walled, fortress-like homes owned by wealthy farmers stretch in every direction. Houses in Afghanistan have two-foot-thick walls and double as forts, complete with towers and firing embrasures. The plain was huge and flat, and I could see we were going to be crossing it for the next hour or so.

Our Dashika gunner checked the belt feed on his gun. If a MiG caught us going across, the Dashika would come in handy, but if it was an armored Mi-24 helicopter (virtually impervious to anything under 20mm), it was head-for-the-brush-to-play-rock time. Also, the Waziris were buttoned up inside their forts. We were the only traffic on the road.

What the hell? With time to kill and nothing to see, I broke out my pack and, with about 20 puzzled mujahideen watching me, I loaded up my Sony Walkman with a tape and leaned back, listening to the soundtrack from *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* all the way across Zadrán.

The mujahideen loved it.

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SOF ARMOR

THE DAY OF THE JACKAL

SADF's Bush Beast

Text and photos
by Alastair R.F. MacKenzie



“Africa semper aliquid novi,” said Pliny, the Latin historian, quoting an old Greek proverb: “There is always something new coming out of Africa,” in reference to the ancient travelers’ tales of fabulous monsters. Fabulous monsters are still to be seen in Africa, and the Jackal is one of them.

The Jackal was developed because the Pathfinder Company of the South African Parachute Brigade (see “Pathfinder Parabats,” *SOF*, October ’84) needed a light, air-portable, air-droppable, cross-country vehicle with enough logistic support for a four-man crew and enough fire support for vehicle operation behind enemy lines in Angola and South West Africa.

The usual South African Defense Forces development process has the military first define a requirement. Then Armscor, the controlling body of a federation of companies in the armaments

industry, examines the requirement and farms the project out to the company or companies with the necessary expertise. Armscor also assists with R&D, if necessary. A prototype is developed and given to the military for testing. The military reports its findings, and the prototype is modified and retested until it is satisfactory. Then Armscor allocates its manufacturer. This system of development probably gives the SADF the most rapid turn-around time in the world, since equipment can be tested and conclusions given in a matter of days, rather than months as in most other countries.

The Jackal’s development proceeded rather differently, however, since the Pathfinders tended to do most things differently. Members of the unit, including a warrant officer who had been in on the development and operation of “Q Vehicles” in Rhodesia, worked from the beginning with the Department of Scientific

and Industrial Research (DSIR), the South African organization responsible for development of the more esoteric vehicles used in South Africa’s bush war. Among their creations are the *Buffel* APC, a masterpiece of the art of mine-proofed vehicles, and the *Ratel* (honey badger) MICV.

The Jackal was based upon British three-quarter-ton Landrovers and Toyota Landcrisiers. Eight vehicles were stripped down and thoroughly checked. Their paneling was removed and the chassis strengthened by welding and bolting alloy bars in front under the seats. Duplicate fuel tanks were added behind the original ones and all were filled with multi-mesh aluminum to deter fuel explosion from incendiary-round hits. Then a protective mesh grill was placed over the engine compartment. Testing showed that this grill needed a canvas screen under it to prevent yeldt



ABOVE: Prototype Jackal at HQ, 44 Parachute Brigade, at Hammanskraal north of Pretoria. At this stage, no weapons are mounted and only the initial camouflage is painted on.



ABOVE: The SADF *Buffel* (Buffalo) *Mynbestande Voertuie* (mine-resistant vehicle). Based on the Mercedes Unimog Model 416 Mark 1 and Mark 2, it is a remarkable example of SADF excellence in the field of mine-resistant vehicle design.



RIGHT: "Whiskey Mike" with Jackal on operations. Rhodesian jump suit and R4 with 40-round magazine; chest webbing carries six 30-round magazines, Star auto pistol with two magazines, and two HE grenades. Combloc AKM rests against a tree.

INSIDE ANGOLA

We're a contrary bunch, I suppose.

There are only 12 of us in the reconnaissance unit of 32 (Buffalo) Battalion of the SADF. Maybe it's just the small size of the unit that makes us such an independent lot. I'd hate to think it's because we're too individualistic to operate well when the rest of the battalion's in the bush with us.

No matter, I suppose. We've got a tough task here in Southwest Africa and as long as we keep SWAPO in sight, the rest of the lads can bash them at will. That's the job for us and we normally operate as a single unit, but we do split up into smaller four- or five-man teams, as the occasion demands.

Take the time the unit penetrated about 160 clicks into Angola. On this operation I took a five-man team out on an ambush to target a group of villages. The ambush was a complete success and we scored the first kills of the op.

Most of the 12 in our unit are white and we come from countries around the world. Our firepower is considerable. For most tasks we carry four PKMs, four RPDs and four AKMs. Those with AKs also carry M79s. When we're ambushing a vehicle we also carry mines and RPG-7s.

Our last series of operations into Angola, in which we scored very well, will give you an idea of the kind of independent ops in which we shine. Six of us came across a GAZ truck and four FAPLA (Angolan Army) troopers. We took them out with small-arms fire. We were able to take a variety of weapons from the truck, including two SAM-7s and some communications equipment. The success of our strike really stirred up the hornets' nest, however.

The next morning, FAPLA sent out a sizable force to trap what they themselves called a "small foreign mercenary force," but they couldn't find us. We spent the next five days out-foxing FAPLA and SWAPO vehicles by dodging east, west and south, always on the run. While we were running, we managed to take the time to attack a SWAPO base. We didn't do too well — only killed five out of 20 — but we did capture a mass of arms, food (including some of that delicious chocolate milk that the Swedish insist on giving SWAPO) and equipment.

This small diversion stirred the hornets even further and they kept buzzing around looking for us. Once we were almost surrounded by convoys of vehicles that were riding the cut-lines. I guess they didn't think we could "bandu-bash" (move through the thickest part of the bush), but that's what saved us. We found a gap and took it right back toward the battalion's firm base.

We were out in the middle of nowhere

when we stumbled across an empty BRDM armored vehicle. That's when the adrenalin really started pumping. We could see "spoor" (footprints) all around it but the owners were missing. Well, we put that vehicle into orbit with a couple of RPG-7s and kept on going. We got back to base and had 24 hours before we were flown out to a place between Cahama and Checussi for a vehicle ambush.

We got ourselves settled into our ambush position. From it we monitored the road no more than 20 meters away. Five troop-laden vehicles rumbled by with 14.5mm heavy machine guns mounted on them. Our position was uncomfortably exposed and I was sure someone would see us. The convoy continued down the road to Cahama. When there was a break in the flow of vehicles, our mine-laying team of three moved onto the road.

They laid three TM67 antitank mines on the surface and got back to cover. Within minutes, a large Russian Star truck came along. I'll swear that the driver saw the mines two to three seconds before we initiated. Another success, we learned later, though we didn't stick around to find out. The next day, intercepted radio messages reported the loss of six SWAPOs and the truck "with all the supplies from the UK." God knows what those supplies were.

Within 30 minutes after we bugged out, 60mm and 82mm mortars came in bracketing both sides of the ambush site. As if this weren't enough, it was followed by 122mm rockets from "Stalin Organs" and either artillery or tank fire.

Their saturation pattern was ineffective, but it was slowly but surely catching up on us as we moved north. By the next morning, we'd reached the spot where we were to be exfiltrated by helicopter, when another sizable force came buzzing out looking for us. To top this off, the Air Force refused to pick us up. There we were, hearing the increasing rumble of approaching vehicles and no help from the air. Luckily, the enemy wasn't sure exactly where we were. They started firing blindly into the bush with 14.5s, but they still deployed in a horseshoe around us.

Thankfully, shortly after 1100 hours, a helo support force with Impala strike aircraft came overhead and engaged this FAPLA mechanized force. By 1130 we were airborne and heading back to our base west of Buffalo.

I am now down in the Republic as I write this, enjoying a little leave, but I'm afraid I'll spend most of my time plucking out the gray hairs I seem to have grown since joining the Buffalo recon group.

— Alastair MacKenzie

grass seed clogging the air intakes.

The Jackal's gun platform is a solid tray of ¾-inch steel fixed over the rear axle. Other trays can be fitted onto this platform if other weapons, such as the 106mm recoilless rifle, .50-cal. MG or 7.62mm MAG, are needed. The Jackal has no doors or windshields. Instead, a front grill protects the driver and commander, and boxes for radios are situated between them. Each vehicle has three radios, one for inter-vehicle communication, one to communicate with foot patrols and a frequency-hopping set to link up with the Tac HQ. Storage bins are set behind the driver and commander and jerry cans for fuel, connected to a quick-release device, are clamped onto racks on the rear and sides of the vehicle. If the cans are ignited by a hit, the No. 2 gunner can pull a lever and have them fall away.

The Jackal has still another extra: its smoke dispenser, based on the Soviet armored-vehicle smoke-generating method. A small container of brake fluid is placed over the exhaust manifold. It has a valve connected to a tap on the dashboard. When the tap is opened, the fluid drips onto the manifold, producing dense clouds of white smoke from the exhaust pipe. This system enables each Jackal to lay down a screen for self-protection or to cover the maneuvers of others.

The Jackal's armament varies, depending on the type of operation and enemy. The Pathfinders liked the Belgian 7.62mm MAG, especially for engaging infantry. Twin MAGs, called "people-eaters," can be mounted on a pedestal behind a shrapnel shield. Each has a 500-round box welded to the side of the pedestal. Empty cases ("doppies") are collected in a sack under each gun, so they won't roll around on the floor and trip up the gunners. Another armament option is the .50 caliber Browning, especially good for anti-vehicle work. Mixed belts of armor-piercing tracer and ball ammunition make short work of anything SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) or FAPLA (the Angolan Army) can field. One vehicle mounted twin Brownings but their accuracy was unsatisfactory due to platform instability. Another experimental mounting featured a 20mm cannon "borrowed" from a SAAF Canberra bomber. The cannon had excellent range and penetration but its cooling and recoil system didn't work well on the ground.

The Jackal must carry a team of four, since Pathfinder patrols operate under the British SAS four-man system. The team consists of the driver, the commander, who has a pintle-mounted MAG in front of him and is responsible for navigation and tactical deployment, and two gunners: No. 1, who's responsible for the primary weapon, and No. 2, who protects the gunner and replaces him if necessary.

The Jackal has to carry plentiful supplies: rations and water for 14 days, personal weapons for the crew — R4s and Spanish



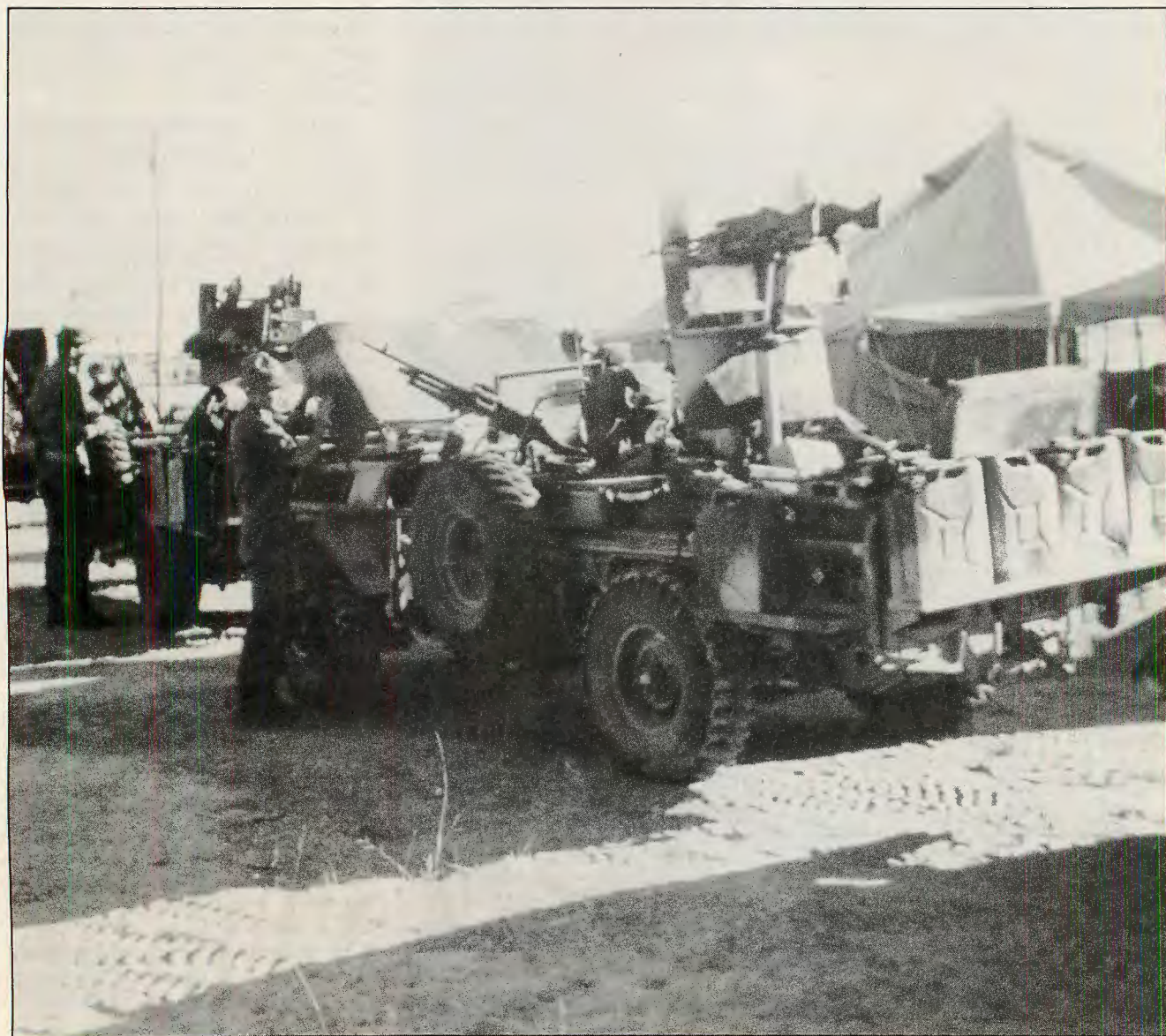
Operational area: Jackal column about to depart from the Pathfinder base at Ondangwa in Sector One Zero in SWA.

“Star” 9mm automatic handguns (called “bush hammers” because that’s all they were good for), M79 grenade launchers, RPG-7s, STRIM rocket launchers (they’re similar to the U.S. 3.5-inch) — and lots of ammo, as well as specialist items; including explosives, mines (the Pathfinders preferred to lay captured Soviet mines; it appealed to their peculiar sense of humor), flares, extra radio batteries and two spare tires. All tires were filled with a foam that kept them inflated when punctured by several rounds of AK fire. Unfortunately, the foam was no match for the *mpani* stumps, those palisades of razor-sharp barriers that protect the grass huts of native *kraals* (villages).

Due to weight restrictions, the Jackal had no mine protection. Its only insurance was to stick to operational procedures and avoid tracks and roads, using the keen eyes of the crew and the skill of the driver to avoid danger.

After four months of development the Pathfinder’s Jackal had been born. Soon a pack of the fabulous beasts was ready to start hunting.

It took seven days for the pack to travel from Pretoria to the operational area of Sec-



THE IRISHMAN

Croukamp did not like O'Connor. A mean mother himself, Croukamp thought the Irishman was a lazy bastard and up here on the border, there was no room for lazy bastards.

Brought up in South West Africa, Croukamp had moved to Rhodesia and joined the RLI. After being awarded the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia for gallantry in the field, he joined the Selous Scouts. When Rhodesia was sold out, he joined the South African Parabats of the SADF. Given his background, he was not one to put up with sandbagging work and finally lost his temper when O'Connor forgot to organize some ammo for a Pathfinder. In Croukamp's direct military manner, he simply clipped the Irish quartermaster on the chin and dropped him like a bad habit.

I was the Pathfinder commander at the SADF base at Ondagwa, SWA. I didn't like O'Connor either. He didn't have his act together, and with most of the Pathfinders out in the bush hunting the terts, we had no room for wasters back in base. When I looked out of my tent and saw O'Connor staggering away from Croukamp's tent, blood pouring down his face, I thought, "Shame," not knowing that this was only Act I in the long night's drama.

Croukamp, my second in command, joined me later at the Command Post. Together we studied the map of Angola, planning our next visit by Jackal to SWAPO. "Ja, boss, I reckon we can get some long culling north of these kraals. They won't know what hit them, and if we can get a K-Car [Alouette helicopter gunship] in . . ."

Act II began at 2100 hours, when the CP door burst open and automatic fire shattered the silence.

"Christ, a ground attack. . . ." I tried to burrow through the concrete floor. When I looked up, I saw O'Connor. He was wearing brown combat clothing and carrying an R4 assault rifle with a 50-round magazine attached. He had on chest webbing with another six magazines and a Star 9mm auto with two magazines. He was mad. Real mad.

"I'm going to sort you out once, and for all," he screamed at Croukamp, punctuating his words with bursts through the CP wall between us. "Sit over there across from me," he ordered Croukamp, covering him with the R4.

I had some hostage experience from exercises during my command of the 22 SAS anti-terrorist team but this time it was real. I had to let the rest of the base know what was happening to keep them from thinking some terts had taken over the CP. If they thought that - even for a moment - we'd all be creamed. I asked O'Connor if I could go outside and let

them know what was happening.

He agreed, ordering me to contact the commander of Sector One Zero, a brigadier general, telling him he would kill his hostage if the brigadier didn't come to Ondagwa.

I left the tin shack. The camp was buzzing like a hornets' nest and groups of heavily armed Parabats flitted through the darkness. I briefed the officers and we worked out a quick immediate action plan we could use if O'Connor started shooting to kill. The plan was rather basic. A gunner quietly set up a MAG machine gun on a tripod just outside the shed by O'Connor's seat while another man set up a second gun in line with the door. O'Connor's position put him in the line of fire for both weapons.

"Start firing if I yell," I said. I just hoped that the streams of 7.62 rounds could take him before he got his shots off and after we had hit the floor.

I returned to the little room. O'Connor was getting agitated. He had placed Croukamp in line with the door so he could shoot him and anyone trying to enter. I managed to persuade him to move Croukamp to the other side of the room, to protect the duty signaller, I said. Through all this, he had been faithfully manning his radio. I really wanted to increase the area O'Connor had to watch.

I now had to calm O'Connor down so that his behavior would be more predictable. Therefore, I talked to him about his next leave in the Republic, his home in Londonderry and, of course, the weather.

Croukamp's deep-brown veldt tan had turned ashen. O'Connor kept waving his R4 around. I persuaded him to put on the safety, but because it was difficult to remove quickly, he returned it to automatic.

I had to persuade this maniac to hand over his R4 since the Star was a lesser threat, and I was feeling rather vulnerable. Croukamp and I were wearing tiger shorts and "tackies" (lightweight boots) and I couldn't hide a handgun, which I could have collected on one of my trips outside to get coffee and soft drinks for O'Connor. All that was intentional. I wanted the Irishman to see me as Mr. Nice Guy.

"Come on, man," I said. "Do you really think this *ouens* going to come wandering into here with you manning that R4? He'd have to be crazy!" My logic was getting to him; soon he'd be willing to give me the R4. My big worry now was that the brigadier, who had just flown in by Alouette, would do the Fearless Leader bit and come striding in, getting us all blown away.

I sat on the edge of the bench, one of

several briefing seats between O'Connor and me, talking rubbish to keep the Irishman's mind off Croukamp, who was trying to make himself inconspicuous in the corner of the hut.

Suddenly, the constant thudding of the generator outside the tents missed a beat and the light in the hut flickered. "Shit!" I said to myself. "If that light goes out, he'll think we're going to rush him and start blazing. And even if he's a lousy shot, he'll hit someone with all those rounds he's got."

"The generator's going on the blink," I said. "Let me get a gas lamp."

When I came back with it, he had moved further away from me so I couldn't hurl the lamp at him and reach him over the benches.

Three hours had gone by, and the last act was about to begin. O'Connor, waving his R4 wildly, announced, "I'm going to take him off at the knees." He emphasized his statement by a long burst through the roof.

"Wait," I said. "Let me show the Brig you mean him no harm. Give me the R4 to show to him, and you keep the Star."

He looked at me closely, and I stared back, sincerity oozing from every pore. He had already cocked the pistol during one of my earlier trips. He now took the magazine off the R4 and slid it toward me along one of the benches, keeping the pistol aimed at Croukamp's damp shining forehead.

"Well, this is it," I thought. I hurled myself at O'Connor, grabbing for the pistol. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Croukamp "gapping" it for the door . . . he was gone!

For a puny sod, that O'Connor had me a little worried. I was still entangled in the benches and we struggled for that pistol for what seemed like an eternity, but must have been no more than a second.

It was all over when Croukamp and the Parabats came bursting in. I had the Irishman on his belly, the Star in the back of his skull grinding his face into the concrete floor. I was thinking, "Will I? . . . No — there are too many witnesses now. . . . Croukamp, you came back too soon!" But I couldn't resist the urge as I stood up: I sank my boot into his kidney.

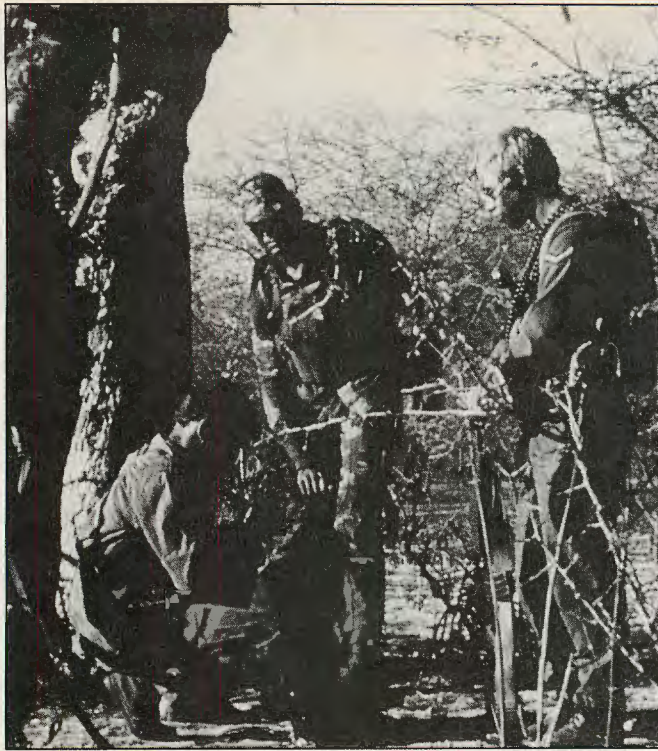
O'Connor groaned. I looked across at Croukamp; he said nothing, but nodded.

They put that mad Irishman in the cells at Oshakati, the area HQ. A week later they sent him back to Pretoria, to see his lawyer, without an escort, so he could arrange his defense at the court-martial. Funny . . . he never came back.

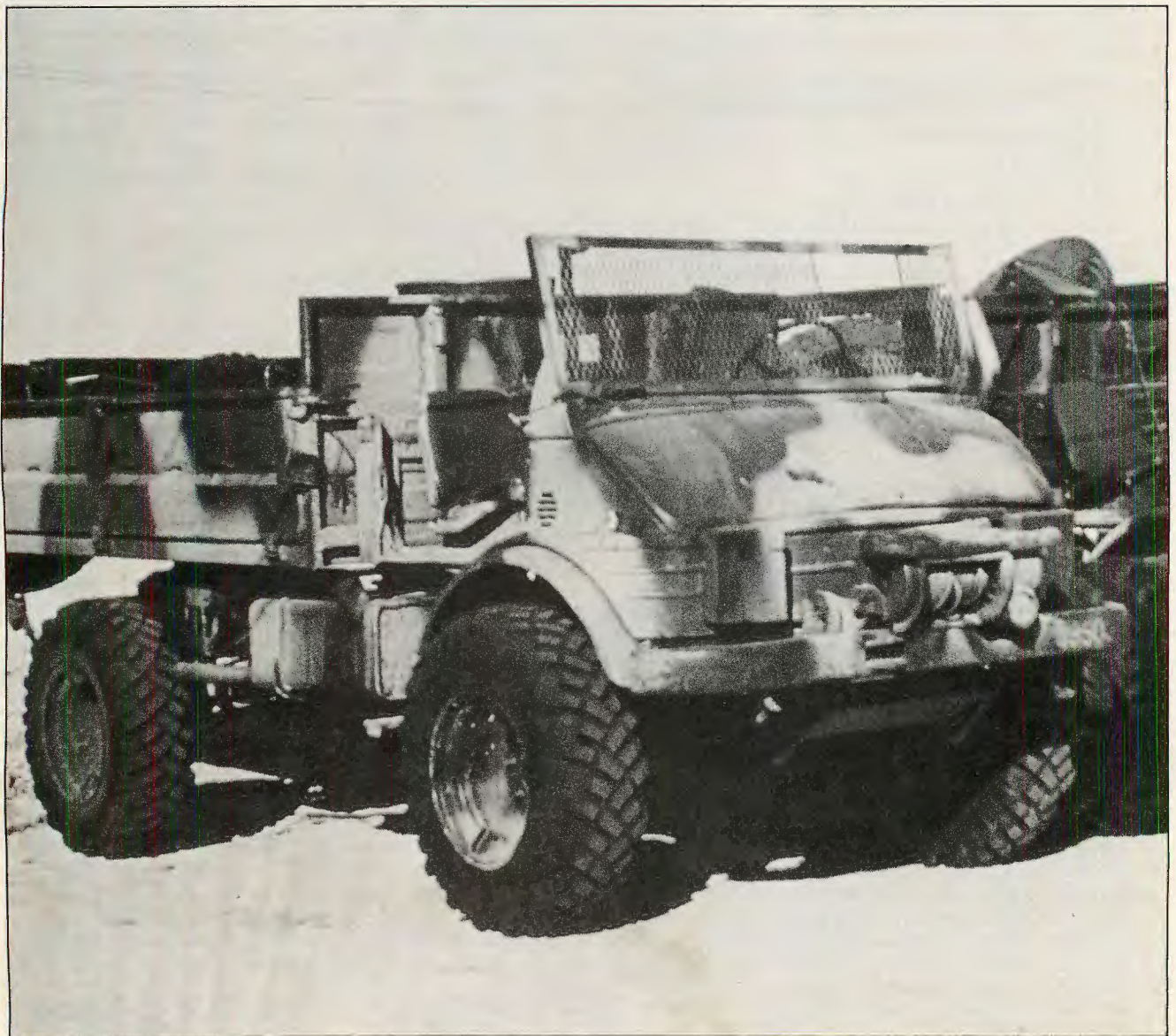
Mind you, I would rather be in the cells too if I knew Croukamp was looking for me.

— Alastair MacKenzie

RIGHT:
Pathfinder
Company on
dismounted
operations north
of Angolan
border.



BELOW: The
mother ship: 2.5
Unimog armored
vehicle carries
supplies for the
Jackal columns.



for One Zero in SWA, an arduous journey that thoroughly tested the mechanics of the beasts. Only one vehicle broke its back crossing a river bed. After it was welded together, it worked as good as new but had a rather strange V-shaped profile.

When the Jackal joined Pathfinder operations, it became obvious that it needed a "mother" vehicle to provide reserve stores of fuel, food, water and, most importantly, ammunition. The Unimog 2.5 Mercedes was the most suitable truck available. Two were stripped, provided with *pintle*-mounted MAGs, extra fuel tanks, a pair of foam-filled spare tires each, and a captured Soviet 14.5mm heavy machine gun bolted to the rear. Although designed as an anti-aircraft weapon, this MG was extremely efficient in the ground role with its fearsome rates of fire and plentiful supplies of captured ammunition.

On operations, Jackals moved in pairs of one twin MAG and one .50 vehicle. The flat, sandy countryside where the Pathfinders operated was bisected by *shonas* (river beds), which could fill with up to 18 inches

Continued on page 110

“DUSTOFF, WE’RE DESPERATE!”

Helo Gamble Saves Grunts

by Alfred G. Nichols

Photos courtesy of AP/Wide World

THE four of us sat back in the air-conditioned club at Dong Tam hospital, sipping cold Cokes and talking about the morning. Our chopper was being refueled on the helipad outside. If someone had told me that in the next half hour I’d be flying a crippled bird into an LZ so hot I could see the Viet Cong firing at us, I’d have laughed in his face.

Eight January 1968 was our second day at Dong Tam. My outfit, the 82nd Medical Detachment, based at Soc Trang (a former Japanese airfield deep in the Mekong Delta) was responsible for IV Corps medical evacuation. Although I was the new operations officer/XO of the 82nd, I still had to qualify as a mission commander. I’d been assigned as a pilot to a four-man Dustoff or helicopter

ambulance crew flying medical evacuation missions from the hospital at Dong Tam for the 9th Infantry Division, its mobile riverine forces which were based at the city, and the Vietnamese forces in the Mekong Delta area. ARVN aviation units usually refused to pick up their own wounded and we’d be ordered in by TOC (Tactical Operations Center) at Corps headquarters in Can Tho.



During my eight-month tour, I saw only two ARVN choppers pick up wounded.

Robbie, the regular mission commander, was the only old-timer. The rest of us were new to the 82nd. The crew chief and the medic had been sent in TDY about a week ago from a detachment up north. They'd come in with a replacement helicopter because we'd lost a couple of ours when one of our men was killed and several wounded. Robbie was getting short, but he was still enthusiastic, and like most Army warrant officers then, I knew he had lots of experience and common sense. I was going to learn that he also had lots of courage.

We decided our morning had been pretty routine. We'd been called out across the river to the paddies between Ben Tre and Vinh Long to pick up ARVN wounded and the only excitement on the first trip came when we lifted off for the ARVN hospital at My Tho. Our rotor wash exploded a Viet Cong booby trap. On the second trip, as we made our high overhead recon to set up our approach, we got another surprise. A Vietnamese Air Force CH-34 helicopter appeared out of nowhere and beat us down. We followed it in, in case they couldn't pick up all the casualties. When we touched down, we found they'd left the wounded men's weapons for us to collect and a Vietnamese soldier to guard them.

I took another sip of Coke. The crew

MILITARY MERIT

In addition to his experience as a helicopter medical evacuation pilot in Vietnam, Alfred G. Nichols, of Canon City, Colo., also served with the Special Forces for five years. In the Special Forces, he served as an A-team commander at Ft. Bragg, and one year on an A-team in Vietnam. Nichols has been a National Guard adviser and commander of the MAST helicopter rescue unit at Ft. Carson, Colo. His highest military award is the Silver Star; six of Nichols' medals are for valor. SOF applauds his distinguished service.

chief laughed and said, "Thanks for the Tommy gun."

"No sweat," I told him. "They owed us one, making us carry their gear from a combat area." On the way back to My Tho, the crew chief had seen a Thompson sub-machine gun among the ARVN weapons. I'd gotten Robbie and the medic to point out the left window to distract the ARVN guard and told the crew chief to slip the Thompson under a blanket seat. The trick worked and now we all laughed about it, enjoying our Cokes and listening to AFVN.

Our laughter stopped when the RTO from operations rushed in. We had another mission. We had to pick up six wounded 9th Division infantrymen in the rice paddies northeast of the city, between Dong Tam and Tan Tru, about 15 minutes away. The area had been called in as secure.

We scrambled out the door and were airborne in about four minutes. As we neared the area, I tried to call the platoon with the wounded on the FM radio. I could only get the company's commander. The company was about 500 or 600 meters from the platoon and they'd lost contact with it, the CO told us, "but I can throw smoke and direct you in."

We spotted his smoke and began our approach to a paddy along a tree line.

Suddenly the CO yelled, "Stop! You're flying into the enemy's position!"

We were already receiving automatic-weapons fire and mortars and grenades were exploding on the ground where we'd be touching down. The CO had given us the direction for our approach, but he was about 180 degrees off. I broke off the approach and got the hell out, climbing to about 2,000 feet so we could survey our damage. We'd been hit several times. A funny "swoosh-swoosh" noise indicated that our blades had been hit and the smell of fuel meant that our fuel cells had been hit as well. I called,

Paratroopers rush a wounded buddy to a Dustoff helicopter during fighting north of Saigon. These medevac helicopters saved countless lives by quickly delivering seriously wounded soldiers to medical facilities.

"Mayday," on the guard radio frequency, giving our location.

A new voice came up on our radio. It was the platoon leader. "We're pinned down," he said. "Everyone's wounded or dead. Whenever we try to move the VC start shooting. They're in the L-shaped tree line and we're about 75 to 100 meters away in the paddy. We'll try to give you as much fire support as we can and we'll try to throw smoke."

Just then a Sting Ray gun ship team came up on our channel, telling us they were working the area: "We have you spotted and we'll give you one gun run over the enemy position."

The four of us had a quick conference. We'd give it one more try. The Sting Rays made their gun run, placing machine gun and rocket fire on the enemy position. The platoon leader threw smoke to mark the pick-up position.

"You're going to die on this one," I told myself, "but you've got to try to do it." Having made up my mind, a feeling of calm washed over me. The decision had been made and my fate determined. I knew that the other crew members felt the same way. We'd all do our best until we went down.

We started our approach.

The Sting Rays, their gun run over, told us, "Go on in, Dustoff. The area's secure." Having used up their ammo, they had to turn back to refuel and rearm. They received no hostile fire as they left. We were on our own.

As the ground rose to meet our prop wash, we could see the wounded scattered about across a 75-yard area. Fifty yards short of touch-down, all hell broke loose. Automatic weapons fire from the tree line hit us from the left and rear of the Huey.

The other three were returning fire from the door and window as I brought us down. We could plainly see crouching black-clad figures firing at us from among the trees. The medic and the crew chief, who was standing on the skid, jumped out.

Several of the wounded infantrymen dived into the open door. I heard the dull thud of bullets hitting them while they were scrambling aboard. Bullets zipped and zinged by my head and ricocheted through the pilot compartment but I kept control of our bird. All this time, Robbie was firing out the left window at the muzzle flashes. His M-3 grease gun jammed just as the crew chief shouted.

"I'm hit!" Shot through the legs, he sprawled on the ground. Robbie threw his M-3 out the window, jerked open the left pilot's door and ran back to the crew chief. He dragged him inside with the other wounded and jumped back into his seat, yelling, "Take off!"

But I'd seen another wounded GI in front of us. He was on his knees, screaming, "Don't leave me!" and clawing at the air. Blood was running from the corner of his mouth and it covered his chest. Robbie saw him too. He darted out into the crossfire and picked up the wounded man, shoving him in





Under a hail of VC sniper bullets, a wounded trooper from the 9th Infantry Division is loaded onto a medevac helicopter.

the back with the others, before he jumped back aboard.

I knew it was time for us to take off. We'd been on the ground for about two hour-long minutes. But try as I might, the collective would not move. I had to yell because our communications system was shot out. "Robbie!" I screamed, "The skids're stuck in the mud. Help me with the controls!"

He helped me pull, yelling, "We've lost our hydraulics too." Then we concentrated on pulling on the collective power controls and I manipulated the pilot's cyclic controls. We were getting airborne — after a fashion.

We wallowed and bounced through the air, getting translational lift. Our full load of wounded kept up a steady stream of fire out the doors, as we plowed our way through banana and coconut trees, knocking out the lower chin bubble on the way up.

Our hydraulics were gone, and the radios and intercom were shot out. All the gauges looked inoperative and the engine and transmission warning lights were lit up like a Christmas tree. Robbie told me to head for Ton Son Hut airport. We could make a running landing there.

I motioned to the fuel gauge. It showed we had only 250 pounds of fuel. We'd just gone in with 850 pounds. If we could trust the gauge, we were losing fuel fast and only had a few minutes to fly.

Someone screamed behind me. I jerked around in my seat. The soldier with the chest wound had rolled out of the open door and was hanging half in and half out. The medic had grabbed him by the arms but the soldier was so weak he couldn't pull himself

up. Another soldier reached over and together they got him back in.

"We've got to put down!" I yelled to Robbie, and pointed to a paved road below us. We'd moved about four miles away from the enemy contact. He nodded.

"Do you want to take over?" I asked. He flashed a determined, confident grin in reply and signalled for me to keep the controls.

We made a long shallow approach to the road, passing over an ARVN outpost, and landed about a mile away. We hit the road and slid about 150 feet in a straight line, still upright.

As we stopped, Robbie jumped into the back to help with the wounded and I ran to our front to set up security. I spotted a Vietnamese coming down the road at us on a motorcycle and fired a warning burst in the air from my M16. With 10 wounded and a disabled helicopter I didn't want anybody around us but Americans. He stopped and turned, heading back down the road.

Within five minutes several ARVN vehicles pulled up. Their American adviser was with them. They set up a defensive perimeter for us. A few minutes later, a slick ship from the Grey Hounds and two Dustoff choppers that had heard our "Mayday" landed and loaded the wounded aboard. As I walked past the right side of my helicopter to board the rescue craft, I saw the blood.

The red cross painted on the cargo door was streaked pink and red from where the soldier had been hanging.

Going back I rode in the right "hell hole" (the right passenger seats up against the transmission compartment facing outward) with the platoon leader I'd just rescued. He had been shot along the side and I could see his rib.

"All of my radio men were shot," he told me. "I had to crawl to a radio to reach you. It was awful. Every time one of us moved, the VC shot us. I thought I was going to die for sure until I heard 'Dustoff' on the radio."

I smiled at that: About the time he was feeling good again, we'd been sure we were going to die.

The rescue copter landed at the hospital pad at Dong Tam. I walked beside the stretcher carrying our brave crew chief into the triage area. He grinned up at me. "Keep the Thompson," he said. "I won't be needing it in the hospital."

I turned, dragging myself back to the pad to check the rest of the crew.

A young soldier approached me and asked, "Sir, will I be court-martialed?"

Confused and tired, I just stared at him for a minute, before I thought to ask, "What did you do?"

"Sir, I got on your helicopter when you landed to pick up the wounded back there. I'm not wounded."

I chuckled to myself and spoke gently. "No, you won't be court-martialed. Son, did you really think we'd leave you there by yourself?" I think he was the only person in his unit who wasn't wounded or killed. All of the wounded we'd carried out made it, even the soldier with the chest wound. There were about 10 or 11 of them.

I looked at my watch when I walked back into the club. I'd been gone about an hour. I began to shake. Fear had finally caught up with me. My thumb and forefinger were throbbing — I must have sprained them while I tried to hold the helicopter steady during that last emergency landing. It was weird. I'd started the afternoon, having a Coke in an air-conditioned club with American radio and TV. Then we'd moved out into Indian country, come under heavy fire, been shot down and taken our own wounded. I'd flown a severely damaged aircraft out of a hot LZ with a full load of wounded and crash-landed. Now I was back at the same table drinking another Coke.

I was to have another eight months of this bizarre life. My comrades were other Dust-off crews, gun drivers, slick-ship pilots, scouts and bird dog pilots. During this time, 38 more 82nd Medical Detachment aircraft were hit. I was flying eight of them. I was forced down twice more by enemy fire and once by aircraft equipment failure. We lost nearly all of our aircraft when the 1968 Tet offensive began.

But I remember that afternoon best. For what we'd done, the four of us were awarded Silver Stars. Robbie was recommended for the DSC, but the medal was downgraded. ✕

SOF HISTORY

THE UNBEATABLE BREN



Britain's Classic Just Keeps Cranking

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

THE Bren has served the British Army well for almost half a century now. It has stoutly helped hold the line on the sands of North Africa, in jungles from Burma to Malaysia, against the Mau Mau in Kenya, on the frozen hills of Korea and, most recently, in the Falkland Islands.

For my money, that more-than-merely-admirable record for a military weapon marks the Bren gun as nothing less than the finest magazine-fed light machine gun ever put into service — by anyone at any time.

At the end of World War I the British Army had substantial inventories of the Vickers medium machine gun and the Lewis gun. At the time, the Vickers water-cooled gun was second only to the marginally-superior Colt Browning M1917A1. Both were clearly better than the Lewis gun which had numerous deficiencies. It was heavy, bulky and used an easily-damaged pan-feed system that produced entirely too many stoppages. It was also subject to excessive parts breakage. A replacement was badly needed.

In 1922, the Ministry of Defense proposed adoption of a modified version of the American BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle), but the deed never got done. For reasons known only to the post-World War I decision-makers, the British simply continued to test various light machine guns indecisively for a period of several years. The Hotchkiss, Beardmore-Farquhar, French Chatellerault, McCrudden, Swiss Furrer, Erikson and Type D Lewis gun were all tried without success.

In 1930, comparative trials were held between the U.S. Browning, the French Darne, the Danish Madsen, the Swiss Kraly-Ende, the British Vickers-Berthier and the Czech Zb 26. The Zb 26 had come to the attention of the Small Arms Committee through the British Military Attaché in Prague, who had written a glowing report. An improved model, the Zb 27, was submitted. These trials were gruelling and lengthy. They included such parameters as accuracy, rate of fire, overheating, firing at elevation and depression, fouling effects, position disclosure, use with damaged ammunition, stability of mounting, ease of handling and endurance. The Zb 27 fired more than 10,000 rounds with few stoppages and negligible wear. The Vickers-Berthier and Darne were the only other weapons to pass the trials with a recommendation for further testing.

In 1931, another improved version of the Czech gun, the Zb 30, was ordered in caliber .303, as the original Czech entries were all chambered for the rimless 7.92mm cartridge. The new trials included an endurance test of 30,000 rounds and long-range accuracy competition (out to 2,500 yards). The Zb 30 was the clear winner. However, it exhibited excessive fouling from the British cordite powder and faulty ejection from the rimmed .303 case. The gun was again modified by moving the gas vent farther back toward the chamber and fitting a new gas block, gas cylinder and piston. During the 15,000-round endurance test this speci-

men had 90 stoppages, of which 61 were caused by loose primers in the ammunition. The gun was again modified by the addition of a 30-rd. magazine and alteration of the piston buffer to take the recoil of the barrel and receiver, as well as the piston — which significantly reduced felt recoil.

Now called the ZGB 32, it fired 29,500 rounds, mostly at Enfield Loch where a new ejector was designed to prevent the primers from popping out. Still not satisfied, the Small Arms Committee called for another version, the ZGB 33, with another 25 modifications. The most important of these were a reduction in the cyclic rate from 600 rpm to 480 rpm, reduction of the barrel length and removal of the cooling fins, lengthening of the piston's free travel to further delay opening of the breech, and changes in the retracting handle, butt-slide catch and ejector. The ZGB 33 trials were fired in 1934 with complete success. Not only had the accuracy been improved, but more than 140,000 rounds were fired before any parts failed! A final test of 50,000 rounds was fired in mid-1934 against the latest heavy-barrel Vickers-Berthier, which proved once and for all that the Czech Zb was the best entry.

Arrangements were then made to produce the gun at the Royal Small Arms Factory at Enfield Loch. The gun was named the BREN from BRno, Czechoslovakia and ENfield Loch. The first model was designated the Bren Machine Gun, Mark 1, and production commenced in September 1937. By the end of that year only 42 guns had been completed. But the Bren was fabricated by conventional milling techniques, and the receiver body alone, cut from a single block of steel, required 270 separate operations! This component was checked by 550 gauges — each made to an accuracy of 0.0005 inch. Two years later, in 1939, production had risen to 400 guns a week, and by June 1940 more than 30,000 Brens had been manufactured and issued. By 1943, Enfield's production reached more than 1,000 a week.

The Royal Small Arms Factory was the sole producer of the Bren in Great Britain. Magazines were manufactured by Birmingham Small Arms, Ltd. (BSA) and the Austin Motor Works. Due to a drafting error in the conversion from the rimless 7.92mm cartridge to the rimmed .303 case, the magazines would not always function correctly with the intended 30 rounds. Canadian magazines are commonly encountered with instructions to load only 28 rounds painted on the side. This advice should be heeded. To double their capacity for AA use, two of these magazines were sometimes welded together.

The Bren's distinctive magazine is curved to accommodate the rimmed .303 British cartridge. The all-steel magazine had a folded flat-steel follower spring. If the Bren's magazines are loaded correctly they will cause no problems. The rim of each round must be *ahead*, not behind the round below it. The best procedure is to insert each cartridge with its head slightly forward,



BELOW: Four Mk I Bren guns mounted in tandem on armored vehicle skate-mount for AA use. Experimental 60-round magazines were fabricated by welding two 30-round magazines together.





ABOVE: Venerable Bren Mk I is the finest light machine gun in the world. Designed in 1930 to replace the Lewis, it was adopted by the British army in 1934.

BELOW: The Vickers water-cooled medium machine gun somewhere in France during WWI. The Bren was intended to replace this as well, but the venerable Vickers refused to die. It's still in service in South Africa in caliber 7.62 NATO.



and, as you press the round in, slide it back to the rear as far as it will go. A magazine-loading tool and automatic filler were developed, but never issued in quantity. Magazines used to fire blank ammunition are fitted with a spacer at the projectile end and painted with a broad yellow stripe. A magazine-well dust cover must be pushed forward to insert a loaded magazine. After the bolt has been retracted, the front end of the magazine should be placed in the well first. The magazine is then rocked rearward until it engages the magazine catch release. At the rapid-fire rate, an experienced gunner can change and expend four magazines per minute. Bren magazines are packed 12 to a steel chest.

After the evacuation of Dunkirk in June 1940 during which many weapons had to be destroyed or abandoned, the British were left with only 2,300 Bren guns in the inventory. Emergency manufacture of the Bren was started shortly thereafter by the Lithgow Small Arms Factory in Australia and the John Inglis Company of Toronto, Canada. Inglis also manufactured a Mark 2 version of the Bren in caliber 7.92mm for the Nationalist Chinese (and others, as we shall see). Beginning in 1952, the Nationalist Government on Formosa placed a modified Mark 2 Bren in production. Called the Model 41, it was chambered for the .30-06 cartridge. I have recently examined L4A3 Brens in caliber 7.62mm NATO that were manufactured in 1982 by India. The buttstocks and pistol grips of these guns are finished with a peculiar reddish-brown stain. It has been estimated that a total of 300,000 Bren guns were produced — a figure I think is too low.

Although enormously complex to manufacture, especially by today's standards (just think how much time and effort would have been spared on the receiver body by modern investment-casting techniques), the Bren's method of operation is straightforward and contributes in no small measure to its tremendous reliability. Magazine-fed and gas-operated, the Bren fires from the open bolt position. The retracting handle is non-reciprocating and can be folded when not in use.

When the Bren is fired, a small amount of the expanding propellant gases moves down the barrel's gas vent (after the projectile has moved past this point), through the regulator, striking the piston head and moving it rearward. During this period of initial pressure build-up, the receiver, barrel, gas cylinder and bipod also recoil rearward approximately 0.25 inch on the butt slide, as previously stated. After this energy has been absorbed by the piston buffer and spring, the spring returns these components to their normal positions. By this means, felt recoil is considerably reduced and component life is greatly enhanced.

An extension is attached to the piston which supports the bolt body. A post on this extension fits inside the hollow interior of the bolt body. When the gun is in battery, two ramps on the extension hold the rear of the bolt up into engagement with the locking

recess at the top of the receiver and against what is called the locking shoulder. The piston extension moves rearward through about 1.25 inches of free travel, during which time the bolt remains locked. After this the ramp support under the bolt is removed and the piston post's inclined surface shoves the bolt's rear end down and out of the locking recess.

This tilting motion offers primary extraction after which the empty case is withdrawn from the chamber by the extractor claw. A chisel-shaped fixed ejector rides in a groove on top of the bolt and burrs brass over the primer to prevent the latter from falling out. The empty case is pushed through the piston extension's cut-out center and expelled downward for maximum protection against position disclosure (a sliding ejection-port cover prevents debris from entering at this location — opened by the bolt's movement, it must be closed by hand). The compressed recoil spring and the soft buffer throw the piston forward again. The buffer's low coefficient of restitution holds the cyclic rate to about 500 rpm. Feed horns on top of the bolt push a fresh round out of the magazine and down into the chamber, as the extractor claw slips over the rim. After the round is chambered, forward movement of the bolt ceases. The piston continues forward, and the two ramps at the rear of the piston extension lift the bolt up into the locking recess. The ramps remain under the bolt body to keep it locked. The piston moves forward another 1.25 inches, and the front face of the piston post serves as a hammer to drive the spring-retracted firing pin into the primer. This 1.25 inches of free travel before contact with the firing pin, and the initial non-alignment of the cartridge primer and firing pin, prevent slam fires. Unlocking before gas pressures have dropped to a safe level is also prevented by the piston's 1.25 inches of rearward free travel and the location of the gas vent 15 inches from the bolt's face. It may not sound like it from the description of the firing cycle, but all of this is mechanically simple and extremely safe.

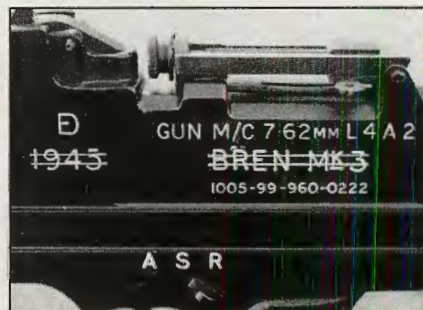
The trigger mechanism provides for full-automatic fire ("A" which is the selector lever's forward position) and semi-automatic fire ("R" = repetition — the selector lever's most rearward position). The safe position ("S") is located in the middle (on Inglis-made 7.92mm Brens these markings are "20," "1" and "0," respectively). The sear is cut-out for projection of a tripping lever. When the selector is set to "R" the tripping lever's head is raised through the sear's cut-out into the piston's path of travel. The piston forces the tripping lever down, and the sear is released upward to hold the piston to the rear. Releasing the trigger repositions the tripping lever against the sear, pushing it down to fire another round. When the selector is set to "A" the tripping lever is forced down and pulled clear of the piston. Firing will then continue as long as the trigger is depressed and ammunition remains in the magazine. When the selector is set to "S" the trigger is



ABOVE: Author Kokalis demonstrates correct method of changing Bren magazines.



LEFT: Bracket milled into left side of Bren Mk I receiver to accept the dial sight.



ABOVE: Receiver markings trace the history of this converted 7.62mm Bren, which like all those manufactured at Enfield, started life in 1945 as a Mk III in caliber .303 British. M/C indicates modified/converted.

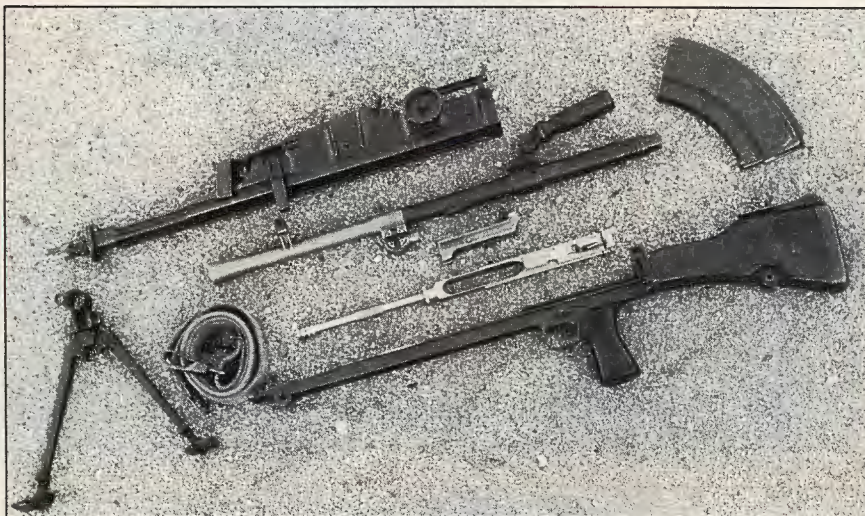
disconnected from the sear by holding the tripping lever in the middle of the sear's cut-out. Theoretically, a heavy blow to the gun could jar the sear out of the piston's notch, but I've never heard of this happening.

Bren trigger-pull weights usually hover at 7-8 lbs. The semi-automatic trigger-pull weight is commonly somewhat heavier (by a pound or two) than the full-auto pull weight. However, my Mk I Bren has a trigger-pull weight of 8 lbs. in semi-auto and 16 lbs. in the full-auto mode.

The six-groove barrel has a right-hand twist of 1 turn in 10 inches. The front 10¾ inches of the barrel are encased within a single-piece, stainless-steel shroud that incorporates the flash hider, the front-sight bracket and the gas block. Holes were drilled into the flash-suppressor portion of some experimental barrels in an attempt to further reduce muzzle blast and modify the flash characteristics. The results were negligible and the project was abandoned. The barrel has a carrying handle, used to transport the weapon, assist in barrel changes, and lend support when firing in the hip-assault position and from the AA mount. The barrel is retained in a barrel nut by four interrupted threads. Unlike a number of



Bren Mk I with 100-round drum and unusual AA mount with geared elevation device. This is not the Mottley mount.



ABOVE LEFT: The Bren series — front to rear: L4A2 in 7.62mm NATO; Mk II Canadian Inglis in the Mk I 7.92mm configuration; and early Mk I in .303 British.

ABOVE: The Lewis gun which the Bren replaced — shown here on Vickers tripod with adapter and single spade grip for AA use.

LEFT: Field stripped Bren Mk I has few moving parts to break down.

BREN GUN SPECIFICATIONS

Calibers: .303 British, 7.92mm and 7.62mm NATO (L4 series)

Method of Operation: Gas-operated, adjustable 4-position regulator, locks by tilting block

Type of Fire: Selective: full-automatic or semiautomatic

Cyclic rate: 500 rpm

Method of Feed: 100-rd. drum (.303 only); 30-rd. magazines (.303 and 7.62mm NATO); 20-rd. magazine (7.92mm)

Barrel: .303 British barrel — 6-groove, right-hand twist, 1 turn in 10 inches

Barrel length: Mk 1 & Mk 2 — 25 inches
Mk 3 — 22.25 inches
L4A4 — 21.125 inches

Overall length: Mk 1 & Mk 2 — 45.5 inches
Mk 3 — 42.9 inches
L4A4 — 44.625 inches

Weight, empty: Mk 1 — 22 lbs. 2 oz.
Mk 2 — 23 lbs. 3 oz.
Mk 3 — 19 lbs. 5 oz.
L4A4 — 21 lbs.

Sights:

Front: Protected blade, adjustable for horizontal zero

Rear: Mk 1 — Peep aperture with drum-operated arm. Adjustable for elevation from 200 to 2,000 yards in 50-yard audible click increments.

Mk 2, Mk 3 and L4 series — Peep aperture on folding leaf. Adjustable for elevation in yards or meters depending upon caliber.

Manufacturers: Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Lock, England; John Inglis Ltd., Toronto, Canada; Small Arms Factory, Lithgow, New South Wales, Australia; and the Indian arsenal.

Status: No longer manufactured. RSAF still offers the L4 series conversion. Still in service throughout the world.

other machine guns with quick-change barrels, the Bren's barrel can be removed only when the bolt is completely forward. The barrel nut is held into the receiver by a spring-loaded ball bearing and can be removed. To remove the barrel, close the bolt, swing the barrel-nut latch upward and pull the barrel forward by the carrying handle. All of this consumes no more than 2-3 seconds. This feature *alone puts* the Bren a generation ahead of the BAR.

The gas regulator is also fabricated from stainless steel. It's still a pain to clean, but its adjustments offer increased reliability when operating under adverse conditions (sand, mud and firing at elevation or depression), when fouling becomes excessive and with different types of ammunition. It has four ports of increasing diameter which are rotated into position as needed. I recommend use of the second-smallest opening under normal operating conditions. The gas used to drive the piston rearward moves down the cylinder tube only a half-inch before most is exhausted into the atmosphere by vents in the cylinder walls. The cupped gas-exhaust shield at the end of the cylinder shields the operator from blinding flash when firing at night.

The bipod is located to the rear of the gas regulator, where it serves double duty, as when occasionally rotated it scrapes and cleans the exterior end of the gas cylinder. The loosened carbon fouling is then blown out by the next blast of gas. With its bipod located at this spot, nine inches from the muzzle, the Bren gun is capable of delivering both acceptable accuracy and a useful distribution of fire at normal combat ranges for light machine guns. In addition, the arc of lateral movement is more than adequate for flanking coverage and the engagement of swiftly moving frontal targets.

Three types of bipods are encountered. The Mk 1 bipod manufactured by BSA has adjustable legs which offer a total increase of 3¼ inches in height. The Mk 2 bipod appears identical, but the legs are of fixed length. The non-adjustable Mk 3 bipod has been further simplified with fewer components.

The Bren was originally intended to replace not only the Lewis gun but the Vickers water-cooled medium machine gun as well. To that end, a bracket was milled into the left side of the receiver to accept a dial sight for defilade fire and coverage of multiple pre-selected target zones. The sight itself was a simplification of that fitted to the Vickers. It was carried in a standard-issue British Army binocular case. However, it was determined early on that the Bren could not supplant the belt-fed Vickers when heavy sustained-support fire was required. The bracket, which necessitated a larger block of steel for the receiver body and numerous tortuous mill operations, was eliminated from the Mk 1 Bren by the end of 1940. Subsequent variants of the Mk 1 are usually marked Mk 1*, Mk 1/M (modified) or Mk 1/I (improved).

The Bren's normal sights are offset to the left because of the top-loading magazine. The Mk 1 rear sight is of the peep type. Its *arm* is mounted on a radial drum with adjustments for elevation only from 200 to 2,000 yards. The adjustments are in 50-yard increments. The blade front sight is adjustable for windage zero by sliding in a dovetail milled into a bracket which is an integral portion of the stainless-steel front barrel/regulator assembly. A pair of protective ears is retained by a set screw.

A 100-rd. spring-wound drum was also issued for use with the Mottley AA mount — a chair-like affair that bolted down to the deck of a boat or to a ground pad. As the drum obscured the issue sights, the Mottley mount was equipped with its own sighting system. With jury-rigged sights these drums were sometimes employed on armored vehicles with Brens in swivel mounts. The drum resembled that of the Vickers-Berthier machine gun. It was never produced in large quantity as it possessed all the deleterious qualities of a drum magazine, i.e., it was expensive to manufacture, difficult to load quickly, heavy and easily damaged. An adapter bracket is required to fit this drum to the Bren gun.

The Mk 1 buttstock has a shoulder strap which folds over the top of the butt. It was



Bren magazines: Left to right, top, .303 magazine, .303 blank magazine, 20-round 7.92mm magazine, L4 7.62mm NATO magazine, 20-round SLR magazine. Below: 100-round drum magazine and Australian 30-round HB FAL magazine.



Bren spare parts wallet and cleaning gear.



also issued with a peculiar handle (in configuration similar to later barrel-carrying handles, but with different fittings) that attached to the underside of the buttstock. It was intended to steady the gun when firing in the prone position or from an AA mount. As it proved to be of dubious value and was instantly detachable, most were thrown almost immediately into the nearest ditch, and today this strap is rarely encountered. Outside of the Enfield Pattern Room, I know of only one in private hands (not mine, unfortunately).

Another unpopular item was the tripod, also manufactured by BSA. Heavy (almost 32 lbs.) and extremely cumbersome (but stable in use), it was carried on the back of some poor devil by means of two Enfield rifle slings. Its T&E (traversing and elevation) mechanism was simple and sturdy. Two pivoting locking levers, attached to the gas cylinder and buttstock, respectively, and permanently retained by a small steel ball bearing, are used to mount the gun on the tripod. But the tripod was useful only when firing from static defensive positions and by WWII had already lost much of its relevance. The earliest version, the Mk 1, had a telescoping front leg and two leg components stored in the side support tubes, which, together with a bracket on the front leg, permitted conversion into an AA mount

that allowed the gunner to fire from the standing position (this was still presumed to be an important function of the LMG at the beginning of the war). The Mk 2 version of this tripod omitted the AA capability but retained the telescoping front leg. The final Mk 2/I tripod dropped the telescoping front leg also. These tripods are commonly found with Israeli markings, as the IDF fitted a substantial number of them with adapters to accept the German MG 34 GPMG in the early 1950s.

Bren gunners carried a small web wallet that contained an oil bottle, pull-through cleaning rod, scrapers for cleaning the gas system, broken-case extractor, and tin of spare parts (rarely needed). This kit could also be fitted into the spare barrel bag (often mistakenly advertised as Sten gun cases) which also held a combination tool and wood-handled cleaning rods. The spare barrel was marked with an "S" after the serial number. The Bren sling was a lengthened version of the Enfield rifle's, with 360-degree spring-hooks added to each end.

As the war progressed, a simplified Mk 2 model was introduced to reduce production cost and time. The one-piece stainless-steel flash suppressor/gas block/barrel sleeve was fabricated in three components with only the gas block in stainless steel. The elaborate cupped gas-exhaust shield was re-

placed by a piece of flat stock. The rear sight became a leaf type mounted on top of the receiver. Numerous lightening cuts were eliminated from the gas cylinder/receiver body. The retracting handle could no longer be folded. The buttstock was modified in configuration and by removal of the folding butt strap and the fixture for the handle on the bottom. Access to the recoil spring was provided through a capped opening in the buttplate. With the exception of the rear sights, all the new parts are compatible with the Mk 1 Bren. Unfortunately, the changes resulted in an increase in weight from 22 lbs. 2 oz. to 23 lbs. 3 oz. Most of these modifications were gradually introduced into production well before the official change in the Mark designation.

As the Mk 2 Bren manufactured by Inglis in Canada in caliber 7.92mm for the Nationalist Chinese was the first version chambered for that cartridge, the receiver is marked "7.92 BREN Mk. 1" — more than a little bewildering to Americans unaccustomed to British ordnance nomenclature. I have an Inglis 7.92mm Bren that was manufactured without a serial number on the receiver or any indication as to manufacturer. It was part of a CIA contract and intended for use at the Bay of Pigs. Many of them also saw service in Southeast Asia where they were held in high regard by the members of SOG fortunate enough to draw them. A serial number, taken from that of the barrel, was added with a Moto tool to mine by Interarms at the behest of the BATF.

Toward the end of WWII, the Mk 3 Bren was inaugurated. It further simplified production. The barrel length was cut back $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches to 22.25 inches overall and the weight reduced to 19 lbs. 5 oz.

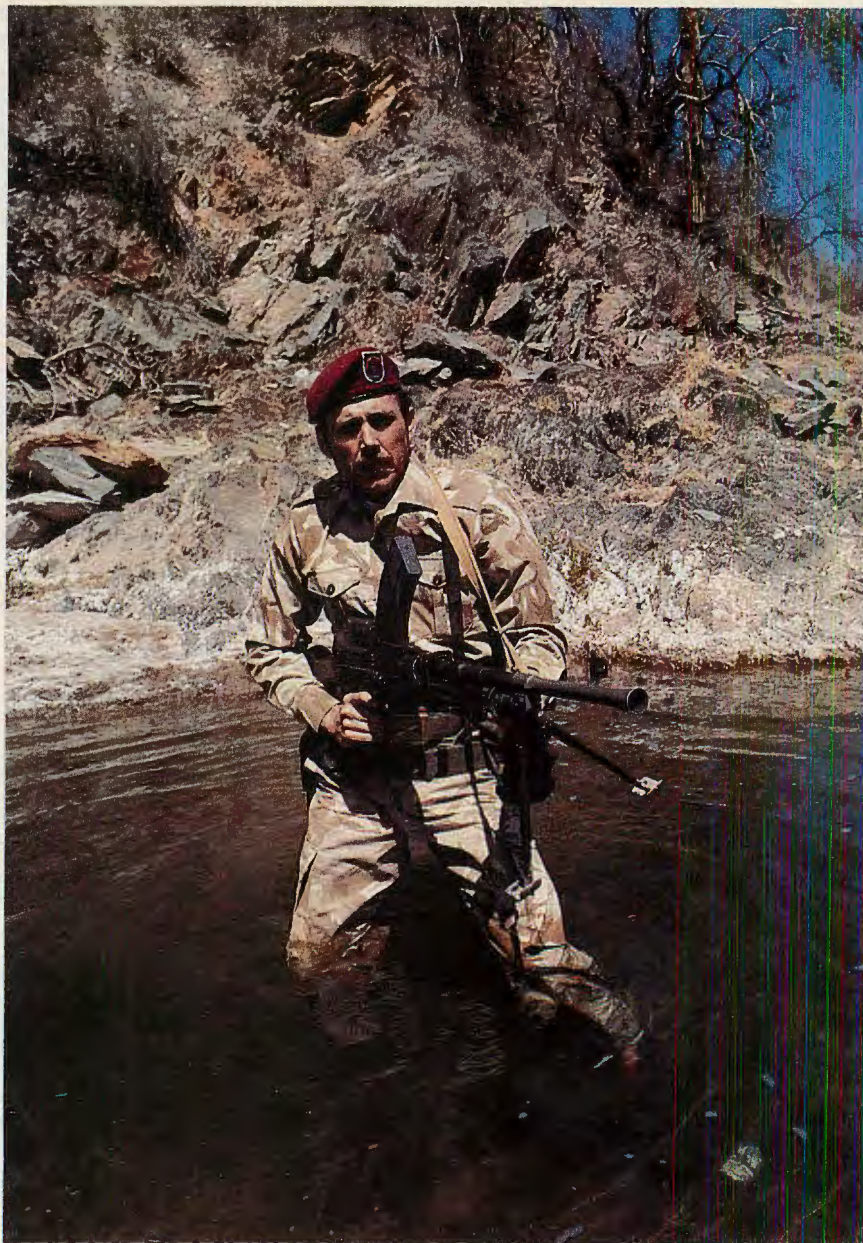
Most of the Mk 3 Brens were eventually converted to 7.62mm NATO caliber. Using Mk 2 and Mk 3 Bren guns, the 7.62mm NATO L4 series, as it is called, passed through six variations (A1 through A6) and a proposed seventh. The L4A3 (converted Mk II) and the L4A4 (converted Mk III) are the most common. Both feature a new chrome-plated barrel with an improved flash hider, modified magazine well with a 30-rd. magazine (interchangeable with the 20-rd. Commonwealth FAL magazine), replacement magazine catch, ejector block, bolt (the Canadian 7.92mm bolt can be used), extractor and rear sight. Numerous modifications were made to the receiver, and a bipod sleeve cover was added to shield the flash from the gas-cylinder ports. A coat of Enfield's semi-gloss black paint and small red enamel blocks on the receiver's left and right sides with "7.62mm" painted thereon complete the L4 conversion. RSAF (Royal Small Arms Factory, Enfield Loch) still offers this service to its clients. Supposedly replaced in British Army service by the L7A2 GPMG (RSAF version of the FN MAG), the L4 Brens are still very much preferred by elite groups, such as the SAS, as they are almost three pounds lighter. They were used with great effect by the Royal Marine Commandos in the recent real-estate dispute in the Falklands.

No LMG is easier to disassemble than the Bren gun. Remove the magazine and check the chamber. Place the bolt and piston group in the closed position by pulling on the trigger and easing the retracting handle forward. Remove the barrel. Using the tip of a cartridge, push the receiver locking pin, located at the top rear of the receiver body, out to the right until it stops. Slide the butt and trigger off the receiver body. With the barrel-nut latch completely closed, withdraw the piston and bolt group out the rear of the receiver. Pull the bolt rearward and lift it off the piston extension. Twist the receiver body a quarter-turn counterclockwise to separate the bipod. Reassemble in the reverse order. Make certain the barrel-nut latch is open when sliding the butt and trigger group back onto the receiver body.

The rifle and the machine gun are still the principal killing tools of the infantry. The section, or squad, is the smallest infantry unit equipped and organized to fight on its own. Each eight-man British infantry section had one Bren gun, which every man in the section was trained to use. The section, in turn, was divided into a rifle group and an LMG group. The Bren gunner, called No. 1, carried the gun and five magazines. He fired the gun according to the fire direction given by the squad leader or by the No. 2 (assistant gunner). No. 2 actually commanded the LMG group. His primary functions were to (1) observe, correct and direct fire, (2) supply the gun with ammunition (he carried the other eight spare magazines) and (3) provide liaison between the squad leader and the Bren group. Another 12 magazines were dispersed among the rifle group.

During WWII, *fire and movement* became the basis of all small-unit infantry tactics. The infantry can seldom move into the final assault position without receiving *fire from the enemy*. As a consequence, whenever a group is moving forward, others must provide fire support to inhibit enemy reaction. While artillery, mortars, tanks or aircraft are often called upon to serve in this role, the squad's machine gun can most quickly produce accurate fire support wherever and *whenever* needed. Making the best possible use of ground and cover, the most important element of this concept is that before one group moves, the other must be in firing position ready to open fire at once, or actually firing. The final assault is usually taken to the enemy by the riflemen, with the machine gun in support, but the Bren gun can be effectively fired in three- to four-round bursts in the hip-assault position if the sling is properly employed and the gunner keeps his weight well forward over the weapon. The carrying handle should be swung out to the side and used by the left hand for muzzle support and control. The trigger should be tapped each time the left foot hits the ground. The Bren is entirely too heavy for shoulder firing except for emergency snap-shooting.

But the Bren, like all LMGs, is best employed from its bipod in the prone position



The Bren machine gun has been around for a while. Although it was the main light machine gun in WWII, the Bren shows no sign of being phased out. It still does the job.

behind low cover. In this position, the left hand should press down over the top forward end of the buttstock which has been contoured for this purpose. When firing from high cover (an embankment, boulders, defensive wall, etc.) it may be necessary to fold the bipod legs.

Single rounds may be fired from the Bren to disguise the presence of an automatic weapon. Burst length depends upon the target, the range and the skill level of the gunner. Bursts of two to three rounds provide the greatest accuracy potential and smallest group dispersion. Bursts of four to five rounds increase the hit probability on moving targets and are easier for the assistant gunner to observe for fire redirect.

When mounted on the tripod, the Bren gun may be fired on fixed lines. If the tripod has been secured by sand bags and the T&E

mechanism clamps left undisturbed, the gun can be removed and remounted and the target accurately engaged even when firing from defilade. More commonly the tripod is used when firing within fixed limits by means of its two traversing clamps. The same effect can be obtained when firing from the bipod by means of limit stakes set on either side of the barrel in front of the bipod legs.

I have owned and fired Bren guns for a decade now. The only stoppages ever incurred in tens of thousands of rounds were a direct result of over-age and very tired surplus ammunition. However, even in this regard, the Bren is far more forgiving of faulty ammo than the Vicker's less flexible lock mechanism. Other than barrels worn out by normal usage, I have never had call for a single part.

Proven in the crucible of war for more than four decades, the Bren needs no test and evaluation from me or any other weapons technician. It is the best magazine-fed light machine gun ever-produced. It will continue to be that far into the future. ✕

NEWS GRUNTS

Some Sat in Saigon; Others Opted for Action

by **Bob Poos**

Photos: AP/Wide World

VIETNAM War correspondents came in two shades: those who did and those who did not. That is, those who went out into the war with the grunts and did the things they did in order to get the closeup story of the war, and those who remained behind in Saigon and wrote what they could learn and observe from that vantage point.

Those who stayed in Saigon were not all cowards afraid of getting hurt. Most were, but not all. And they had a precedent for doing what they did. That was essentially how World Wars I and II and the Korean conflict were covered. Military authorities tried to keep correspondents out of real danger. In those wars, correspondents were under military discipline and had little choice about where they could go. This was not always the case of course; Floyd Gibbons lost an eye to a bullet with the Marines in Belleau Wood in WWI and Ernie Pyle was killed on the island of Ie Shima in WWII. But they were exceptions to a greatly enforced and accepted rule.

Photographers were another matter. They had to be where the action was in order to get authentic pictures, although the majority of combat photos taken in both world wars and Korea were shot by military combat photographers. Joe Rosenthal of the Associated Press is one example of what civilian news-service photographers accomplished, with his famous photo of the Marines raising the flag on Iwo Jima.

Vietnam was entirely different. For a reason I have never been able to learn, the decision was made by the top command to leave it up to the newsmen themselves to determine how to operate. There were vir-

ABOVE: Shrapnel doesn't discriminate: Grimacing with pain, AP photographer Henri Huet lies in a trench at Con Thien after being hit by shell fragments during a communist bombardment of a Marine outpost.

RIGHT: Newsmen missing in Laos: Photographers Henri Huet of AP (left), Larry Burrows of *Life Magazine* (right) and Kent Potter pose for pictures before leaving on their last assignment. All were lost when their helicopter was shot down near the Laotian border on 9 February 1971.



tually no restrictions on where one could go or to whom one could talk.

A man's (and some very few women's) physical courage and desire to see the war were the only limiting factors.

A sizable majority, needless to say, preferred to remain among the relative safety and certain comforts of Saigon but a few of us covered the war on foot with notebook, pencil and camera.

To illustrate: One day in 1965 a very fine combat correspondent named Paul Dean, then of the *Arizona Republic* and now of the *Los Angeles Times*, and I were out on an operation with a company of the 7th Marines. Twilight began to throw shadows and the company came to a halt and set out a perimeter. Paul and I had done this many times before so we hastily began scooping a two-man foxhole out of the soft, sandy dirt of Vietnam's Piedmont region just inside the coastal area of II Corps.

Flareships — C-123s and C-47s — dropped their aerial illumination, the cannisters eventually thumping to the ground around us, their cargo's ghastly green light throwing flickering shadows. We expected a mortar, which came, but meanwhile to pass the time, since the flares interfered with sleep, we began making a list of correspondents who went regularly into the field.

There were about 350 newsmen and women in Vietnam at this early stage of the war. Our count stopped at 34 names.

Correspondents had various motives for doing what they did and how they did it. Men like the inseparable Dana Stone and Sean Flynn (son of the late actor Errol) used to say, "We want to get rich and famous." They didn't do that. They turned up missing in Cambodia late during the war there and haven't been heard from since.

I don't know anybody in the print media who got "rich and famous" out of covering *Southeast Asia*. However, some TV reporters (Dan Rather, Morley Safer, Ron Nesson) used it as a stepping stone to fame and fortune, some reporters for large newspapers and magazines went for career advancement, and some famous newspaper columnists visited Vietnam briefly: I don't know of any who went out into the fighting.

The reporters and photographers for the two major wire services, AP and UPI, were the real news grunts of Vietnam, just as they are back here in this world. For one thing, they did double-duty. A reporter was expected to carry cameras and turn out pictures suitable for competition with the other service. A photographer had to make notes and be debriefed by one of the combat correspondents who would write the story.

The wire services wanted, and expected to get routinely, reports and photos from the fighting as well as from MACV, which was covered mostly by the bureau chiefs or combat correspondents who happened to be in Saigon for a few days. AP Bureau Chief Ed White made a joke out of it when I got there. Glancing over my AP records, he said: "I see you were in the Marine infantry during the Korean War. Do you like that sort of thing?" I replied that I didn't know if I liked

it or not, but the Marines made you skillful at it.

"Good," he said, "because that's what you're going to be doing." Why not? That's what everybody else in the AP and UPI did, including Ed, when he could.

Despite the fact that we were all tough competitors, we were also all close friends.

What did they, the media warriors exposing communism and the war to Americans back home, actually do over there? I can recall what a couple of them did. Henri Huett, AP photographer: You've probably never heard of him, although he won several awards in Vietnam. For my money, he was one of the five or six finest photographers to cover the war. But Henri wasn't just another photo-journalist covering Vietnam. In a sense he was Vietnam. His father was French and his mother Vietnamese. Henri was born on a tea plantation near Pleiku and he frequently walked over the same ground his dad hunted tigers on years ago.

One day at a village called An Thi, just shy of the highlands, Henri and I were lying in a trench over which a great many bullets snapped and which was being punished on the one hand by North Vietnamese 60mm mortars and on the other by short rounds from U.S. 105s. Three of these short 105 shells burst on impact inches away, just outside the trench parapet, making us bleed from the ears and nose.

What did they, the media warriors exposing communism and the war to Americans back home, actually do over there?

Henri turned his head and said through sand-caked lips: "Bawb. I don't thenk we geet out of here." I groaned: "Please don't say that, Henri," because I had an enormous respect for this man's judgment in such things. Henri had been a photographer with the French Foreign Legion in an earlier Vietnam War. He gave a humorless smile and said, "*C'est la guerre*." But he and I did make it out of there, thanks to the matchless courage of the 7th Cavalry.

Another time Henri didn't. He took one chopper ride too many.

I cannot begin to name all the correspondents who did it for a living in Southeast Asia. But some of them should be named and here are a few whom I knew best and will never forget:

John Wheeler, Peter Arnett, George Esper, Bob Ohman, Huett of the AP, Joe Galloway of UPI, Paul Dean and Don DeDura — both of the *Arizona Republic* (that paper had a way of sending good people over there) — Leon Daniel, Steve Northup, Seve Van Meter, Sawada (also killed) of UPI, Pete Braestrup — who worked for both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and later authored *Big Story*, a definitive analysis of Tet offensive press coverage

PRESS ESCORTS

Maximum disclosure with minimum delay. Get the newsmen to the action. Scrounge transportation, run interference with the unit commander and let the newsmen get their stories, flicks and TV footage. Simple enough, I thought, and it sure beat hell out of walking point with a grunt outfit. I reported to the III Marine Amphibious Force in Danang for duty as a Press Escort Officer.

Early in the Vietnam War, the reaction from unit commanders in contact with the enemy was something like this: "Jesus Christ, just what I need: a REMF escorting a hippie reporter out here to get his head blown off or to ask me a lot of damn-fool questions about how I feel about the U.S. involvement in Vietnam."

And from the newsman's viewpoint, a Marine holding his hand on a search and destroy operation smacked of censorship. Both views were incorrect. An escort had no power to deny a reporter anything and many newsmen proved themselves perfectly capable in the field while providing daily coverage of the Vietnam War.

To get to 'Nam, a newsman (or woman) had to be accredited by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, or OASD-PA. Obtaining accreditation simply required a written request on a news-gathering organization's letterhead. These ran the gamut from the *New York Times* to the *Bent Kidney Bugle*, from network TV crews to the wet-behind-the-ears kid whose old man had a small radio station back home.

And all kinds came to the field. There were professionals, glory-seekers, blatant anti-war activists and at least one free-lancer who could eat more C-Rations than a squad of Marines. Some came prepared for the field and others apparently thought each grunt unit had an Abercrombie & Fitch outlet ready to provide them with the latest in safari gear.

In 1966, the Da Nang Press Center was established by the Marines who were almost exclusively doing the fighting in I Corps. The idea was to provide hotel, restaurant, bar, communication facilities and a press escorts for civilian newsmen who came north to cover the Marines. It was my base of operations for a year. Initially we tried to take newsmen on as many operations as possible but that proved inefficient. No enemy contact, no story. It was just a walk in the sun. Also, we needed more escorts.

Col. Tom Fields, a short, cocky, extremely sharp Marine Raider in WWII and a Korean War vet, asked me what type of Marines I wanted to organize into a full-time escort section in the Combat

Information Bureau (CIB), the official title of the Danang Press Center. "Former Drill Instructors," I replied. "They know the Corps, they can talk to unit commanders, they can scrounge, and they won't be tempted to help write their stories or expose their film."

Staff Sgts. Foster Knight, Richard Schaad and Bill Evans arrived shortly, just off the drill field. They escorted newsmen to the war, earning the respect of the newsmen and unit commanders, scrounged what they needed, and handled after-hours disciplinary problems in a bar catering to newsmen and Press Center Marines from private to colonel. They became known as "Tucker's Gorillas" and they were damned good.

To prevent walks in the sun, we monitored upcoming operations. If a unit was going into an area known for enemy contact, we alerted the civilian newsmen to be prepared to go to the field the following day. No code name, unit, location or size of operation was given, but if interested, be prepared.

If significant enemy contact was made, we usually went in on Medevac choppers because this didn't require bringing in additional helicopters and it got the newsmen to the action. Often it was a hot LZ. Escort and newsmen jumped off. The wounded were loaded on.

When the newsmen got their coverage, we usually caught a resupply bird after it dropped its load. If choppers were grounded by weather, newsmen were sometimes stuck with the unit until the weather improved.

Few "would-be" newsmen went out the second time but many of the pros saw more combat than the average grunt. By the end of my first tour, I went with these guys on 16 multi-battalion operations and 51 smaller ones. Newsmen and other escorts made more than I did. Some correspondents went out on their own after the escort service started. A press card was a plane ticket and they went to the news. One small group drove from Da Nang to the DMZ, approximately 100 air miles, in 1965, paying a Viet Cong road tax enroute.

Camaraderie developed between press escorts and civilian newsmen that continues today. Good times and bad are occasionally reshaped over a cool one (no longer *bah-moui-bah*, or "33" beer). Like the time former UPI correspondent Joe Galloway (now with *U.S. News and World Report*) made a rash statement about the inability of his press escort to get a helicopter during Operation Texas.

Two press escorts and about a half-dozen newsmen had "hitchhiked" from Da Nang to Chu Lai on an unscheduled fixed-wing, then caught a chopper to the Tam Ky area and were dropped on a hill about two clicks (kilometers) away from

one hellacious fire fight. No choppers available. Almost dusk. Angry newsmen.

During a break in the conversation between the senior U.S. and Vietnamese officers in I Corps, the press escort asked about the possibility of diverting a couple of Medevac choppers overflying their position en route to the fire fight. After explaining his situation, he received a "yes" and a few remarks about the judgment of the entire group.

By the time the escort assured Galloway that helicopters were coming, darkness was falling, along with newsmen's hopes of getting to the action.

Rather outspoken in his younger days, Galloway told his escort, "If you get a helicopter pilot to fly us into that mess after dark, I'll kiss your ass in the middle of Doc-Lap [Da Nang's main drag]." The words were scarcely out of his mouth when blinking lights appeared on the horizon and the beat of UH-34 rotor blades could be heard.

Galloway, a couple of others and a press escort jumped on the first chopper, with the rest of the group loading aboard number two. Galloway's chopper started taking ground fire on the way in, and the pilot radioed the crew chief to pass the word that he would take it down to jumping distance but would not touch down.

Spiraling down rapidly, it was only seconds until the crew chief yelled above the deafening noise, "Jump!" The second chopper was waved off. Galloway and crew were face-down in a rice paddy, caught in the middle of a fire fight.

Always the inquisitive reporter, Galloway asked his escort, "OK, smart ass, which way do we go?"

Doc-Lap came to mind, but I suggested, "When you hear the AK, crawl the other way."

It usually takes a case of beer to adequately discuss the time Bob Poos of AP, British photographer Tim Page and French photographer Alain Taieb got their butts in a sling at a Buddhist pagoda in May 1966, during a rebellion in Da Nang (see "Bad Night at Tien Hoi Pagoda," *SOF*, November '83). A rebel had contacted the Free World Press Corps and led them to believe there was going to be a monk-fry (immolation) at the pagoda. Hours passed with no volunteers coming forward with gasoline and matches.

Poos, Page and Taieb were inside one of the few remaining rebel positions, being surrounded by Vietnamese Marines and airborne troops sent in from Saigon to quell the rebellion. (U.S. forces were ordered to remain in their compounds as it was a mini-civil war between Vietnamese factions.) As the three started easing out of the area, shooting erupted. They were wounded

by a rebel-fired grenade, and caught in a three-way cross-fire.

Ron Nesson got the word of their plight back to the Press Center. In violation of orders from COMUSMACV, a couple of press escorts and a visiting Marine went in by jeep and came out with a payload of nine, including two wounded Vietnamese children. (Rumor has it that one of the newsmen owed piasters to one of the Marines.)

In a pinch, newsmen have been known to lend a hand in a fire fight. Going in with a relief platoon to pull out a small unit that had been ambushed during Operation Hastings in July 1966, AP's Bob Ohman and a press escort were carrying a wounded Marine to a chopper. Both were knocked down by the concussion of an enemy mortar round that air-conditioned the helo, but scratched neither.

The NVA hit again. The relief platoon was pinned down in a large patch of elephant grass. "Charlie" had a 12.7mm machine gun in the edge of the jungle and his mortarman, set up on a nearby hill, made himself known.

After some discussion, the press escort convinced Ohman to don a helmet and a flak jacket taken from a dead Marine. Ohman was also given an M14 and asked to lend a hand. The Marines fought their way out, carrying their dead and wounded (with Ohman's help). The following morning back at the battalion command post, Ohman's helmet saved his life.

A sister service's artillery battery was softening the area around the LZ before the Medevac came in. Due perhaps to poor quality control back in the States, one round of the 155mm barrage was short. A golf-ball-sized fragment centered on the front of Ohman's helmet, ricocheted off and knocked his press escort down. Escorts and media reps shared a lot in 'Nam. Ohman has the badly dented helmet and fragment. The escort has a picture of the fragment held in Ohman's hand.

A few days later, the escort learned that Ohman had taken a short break on the M14 and took one more pic that is still treasured after 18 years.

Media coverage of the Vietnam War has been cussed and disussed. However, I feel that Eddie Adams' "extension pic" and the six o'clock TV news successfully destroyed the post-WWII movie myths about the glory and honor of combat. The American public now knows that the price is paid with life and limb. Try to imagine public reaction to the Peleliu, Tarawa, Normandy and other WWII invasions, had they been televised into America's living rooms.

Thanks, Bao-Chis...

— Fred Tucker

—Rick Merron of both UPI and AP, Steven Stibbens — assigned from the Marines to *Stars and Stripes*, who later worked for AP — free-lancer Kathy Leroi, Mal Browne — an ABC reporter when I knew him — Joe Treaster, who went from the 1st Cavalry Division PIO shop to the *New York Times*.

Many of us differed vastly in our political viewpoints and thoughts about the war and its justification, or lack of it. That didn't

prevent us from being a band of brothers, maybe closer than brothers.

The Marines like to proclaim gloriously — and with reason — that they are "The Few, the Proud." The combat newsmen in Vietnam had a less noble slogan. Its acronym was TWAP: Terrified Writers And Photographers. The TWAPs had a challenge and a counter sign: "I'm a TWAP and will you stick with me?"

"Working, working" (words that had to be bellowed again and again during conversations over the shaky MACV communications system in order to ensure not being cut off), "In a pig's ass I will."

The one who failed to give the challenge or utter the proper response had to buy the drinks. ☒

JOHN HOAGLAND

John Hoagland was the quintessence of a war photographer. Brave, resourceful, skilled at his craft, modest almost to a fault, friendly and — I keep coming back to that word — brave.

The first time I met Hoagland, I had done something fairly remarkable for a reporter in El Salvador those days: obtained a ride in a military helicopter to where the fighting was, at the time high atop a volcano near San Vicente City, about 40 miles northeast of the capital of San Salvador.

Hoagland appeared from somewhere, grinning, handsome with his clipped military-style moustache, and said, "Mind if I tag along?" I thought it would be just great to have a companion who spoke something other than Spanish, which I speak, but imperfectly.

Hoagland said, "We haven't met yet, but I'm John Hoagland, contract photographer for Gamma-Liaison. Most of my stuff gets in *Newsweek*."

I later learned that was an understatement, just the sort of thing that one came to expect of John Hoagland, when one got to know him. He was the *Newsweek* photographer in El Salvador, all of Central America for that matter. And a very good job of it he did, too.

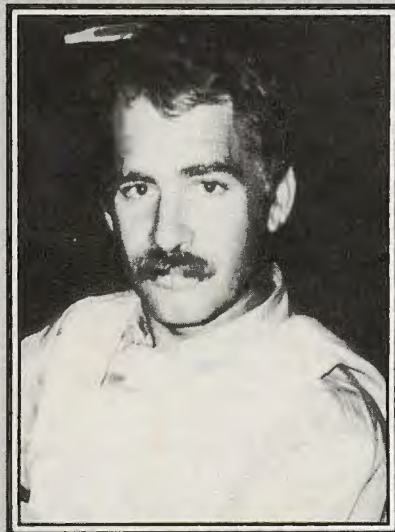
But that day in 1981, we leaped aboard the chopper, which deposited us on the slope of a volcano outside San Vicente, and we joined up with the troops from Bravo Company, First Battalion, Fifth Brigade, Army of El Salvador. And not long after we got there, the shit hit the fan. We had a long, lung-busting hike up to an abandoned, hundreds-of-years-old stone farmhouse. It was surrounded by a stone wall. We did not know it when we stopped to take a breather with the troops, but we, too, were surrounded — and vastly outnumbered — by several hundred communist guerrillas.

They launched an attack upon Bravo Company, an attack preceded by mortar fire and a lashing from heavy machine guns.

The infantry assault followed. It was repulsed by the badly outnumbered troopers from Bravo Co.

I was crouching behind the stone wall, trying to take pictures with my old Nikon camera.

Hoagland was upright, snapping



Killed in action: John Hoagland, a photographer working on contract for *Newsweek* magazine, was killed in El Salvador during fighting between government troops and communist rebels.

photos in all directions. Hundreds of bullets missed him and he ignored them all, just as he had the incoming mortar rounds.

He was simply doing his job. Throughout his short, 36-year life, he did it well, he did it all the way and he did it all the time.

On my next trip to Central America, he looked me up. "Got a line on choppers going up to the fun?" he asked, laughing. As it happened, I did and we went. And so it continued through the three years I knew John Hoagland. He was always looking for the action, and inevitably he found it and left a memorable record of published photos in *Newsweek*.

The last time I saw John was at the beginning of March, once again in El Salvador. I was going to San Miguel, to visit an old friend, LTC Domingo Monterossa, newly named commander of that military district.

I asked John if he wanted to "tag along."

He laughed and said, "Not me. I'm so short here that you wouldn't believe it. The magazine's sending me to Beirut. And you know what I told them? I said that I was going to spend all my time with the Marines. None of that getting-shot-at-by-the-Muslims stuff for me. I

figure with the Marines, you'll be as safe as you can be in this business."

And he added: "I'm going to get married. Come meet her."

I did. She was, is, a beautiful El Salvadoran woman, an employee of a television network. I grieve for her loss.

But the Marines, John's photo subjects, left Lebanon.

He returned to El Salvador, to do his job.

I hear he told colleagues there he was glad to be back, that Lebanon had not been a good trip.

He resumed doing what he was paid and self-trained to do: Taking pictures of the fighting in a hot war.

Just outside Suchitoto, some 18 miles outside the capital of San Salvador, and not far from the helicopter landing zone where we were introduced, John met his fate. A bullet fired by the communist insurgents.

His official obituary reads: "Hoagland, an experienced and well-respected combat photographer, lived and worked in El Salvador since August 1980. He was slightly injured in January 1981, when the car in which he was traveling hit a landmine."

Experienced, well-liked and well-respected, John Hoagland certainly was. But whoever wrote that he was "slightly injured" obviously has never been hit by shrapnel. One is never "slightly injured" when that happens. One is damn badly injured and he is scared as hell that he's going to die.

An eye witness said that John lived only for a few seconds after being hit by the bullet. That, at least, was a blessing. He did not have to suffer.

Another war correspondent, named Rudyard Kipling, wrote many years ago the perfect epitaph for John Hoagland, one which should be remembered by the soldiers whom John covered and the photographers and correspondents with whom he worked.

"I've eat'n your bread and salt.

"I've drunk your water and wine.

"The lives ye've led, I've lived beside.

"And the deaths ye've died are mine."

Goodbye, John. It was an honor and a privilege to have known and worked with you.

— Bob Poos

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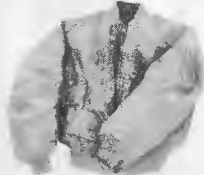
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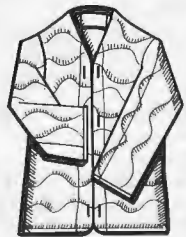
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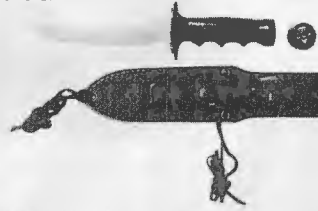
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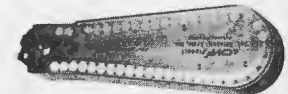
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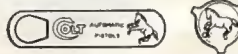
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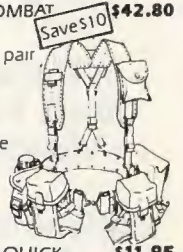


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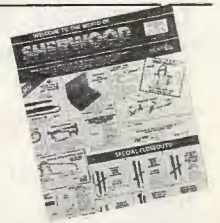
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DAY OF THE JACKAL

Continued from page 90

of water in the wet season, and dotted with clumps of distinctively flat-topped, thorn-covered *mpani* trees in which lived swarms of tiny black flies that feasted on the liquid in eyes and mouth. These trees were surrounded by barriers of thick thorny scrub. In scrubby areas, a Unimog support vehicle joined the Jackals to "bundu bash" a passage for the lower-chassied vehicles.

On a typical external operation, the pack moved to a forward SADF base just south of the "Cut," the border with Angola, where they set up a Tac HQ and held final briefings and rehearsals. Finally, all weapons were test-fired to ensure their perfect functioning. Then they moved out after last light, avoiding all waterholes, Portuguese-made reservoirs and *kraals*. If deployment to the task area took longer than a night, the vehicles were concealed during the day, and the crews — except for those assigned to observation posts — rested.

On the other hand, search-and-destroy operations moved by day so they could follow spoor (enemy tracks). If they found fresh spoor, they plotted the terr's likely destination and a pair of Jackals moved on a flank to cut off their route. The rest of the pack moved parallel to the track to hunt down the enemy. Contacts would also come from ambushing terr routes, water points or sympathetic *kraals*.

The pack also supported 32 Battalion, especially in camp attacks. Pairs of Jackals would be located on terr withdrawal routes, each pair with a 60mm mortar to provide cut-off fire or illumination. Alouette helicopters circled overhead to direct Jackals to escaping enemy or to carry out "culling" operations themselves with their amazingly accurate, doorway-mounted 20mm cannon.

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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 16

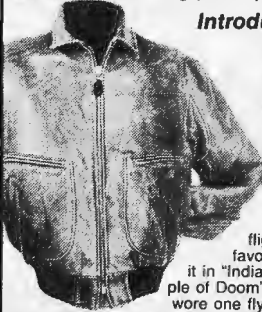
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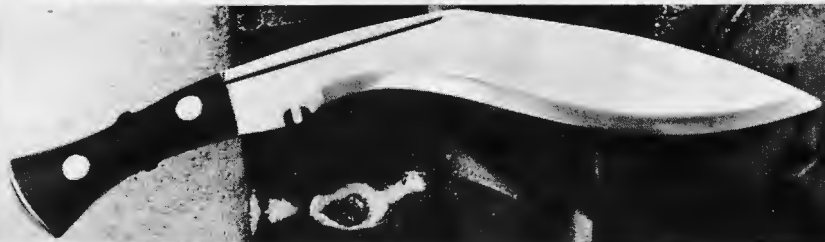
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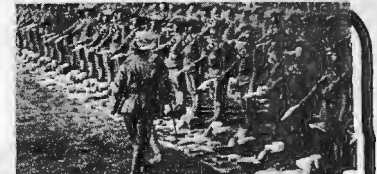
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TERMINATOR

Continued from page 72

problems with it. The laser sight for the AMT .45 ACP Hardballer bothered me as did the wisdom of a downtown LA gunshop owner who keeps ammo readily-accessible on his counter.

Cameron, an intense young director and regular recreational shooter, had some answers. "The laser business was mostly for dramatic effect when he (The Terminator) lays the sight on his target in later scenes. But the technology for mounting it on handguns is just around the corner."

"I'll buy that, but what about the ammo on the counter? 'It's license,'" Cameron responded with a wry grin. "The scene works well that way." The director of "Terminator," who spent 10 weeks shooting in various LA locations, indicated he covered other flaws superficially, such as the fact that the AR-180 and the Uzi ordered by the film's star could only be obtained over-the-counter in semi-auto versions. When the Terminator begins to use them in an attempt to take out his target, they are ripping along on rock & roll.

"In the Terminator's LA hideaway," Cameron said, "we have some scenes where you see gun parts scattered on his table. That's to indicate he has been programmed with enough weapons expertise to make the conversions."

More scenes of absolutely intense action rolled by on the editing machine. The Terminator had discovered his target could be found relaxing at an LA disco named "Tech Noir." Without batting a bionic eye — despite the fact that he's just come from chopping his target's roommate and her lover into hamburger — Schwarzenegger heads for the nightspot packing the laser-mounted, stainless steel .45 and his converted Uzi slung under his coat in a De Santis shoulder rig. The human time traveler, played by actor Michael Biehn, follows to prevent the hit and keep the future of the world intact. He has obtained a standard police Model 870 Remington 12-gauge by simply stealing it from a parked police car. In a nice bit of attention to detail, director Cameron shows him sawing off the stock and attaching a jury-rigged loop sling for concealment.

What follows is one of the two best scenes of an action-crammed film. The

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human bodyguard keeps a concerned eye on his principal and the Terminator who approaches, dead-pan and shoving his way through a throng of gyrating dancers, to lay the laser sight on her forehead at point-blank range. Schwarzenegger does a nice bit of gun-handling here, jacking a round into the chamber in one fluid motion despite the cumbersome laser sight, and never twitching a facial muscle as he prepares to put a round into her brain-housing group. That's when the human bodyguard makes his move — and a nice one it is for a non-professional.

He swings the Remington scatter-gun out from under his overcoat, jacks a shell into the chamber and blasts the Terminator, who takes the round in the back, allowing his target to hit the deck. In response to that attack, The Terminator — who can be distracted but not mortally wounded by mere gunfire — whips the Uzi out of his shoulder rig and begins to sweep the disco clean with a 9mm broom. What ensues is one King Hell gunfight in which virtually all the moves by both shooters — believe it or not — are entirely plausible.

If action fanatics are not entirely satisfied with that, they can send out for another box of popcorn and wait until the Terminator takes on an entire LAPD precinct, firing both the AR-180 and the SPAS-12 with one hand each, a la Wild Bill Hickock. I had some trouble with that, especially when the previews showed Schwarzenegger holding on target with both weapons and absolutely no reaction to recoil.

Cameron simply shrugged at the criticism and stroked his beard. "You've got to remember," he responded, "this thing is a cyborg with super-human strength. You'd expect that he could hold those weapons on and not show the effects of recoil."

Come to think of it, I guess I would expect something like that. I'd also expect most SOF readers to genuinely enjoy the latest Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle. The former Mr. Universe and star of two recent "Conan" films turns in a superb performance without ever taking off his clothes. He's a gun-owner and regular shooter who worked for six weeks perfecting his weapons-handling before and during filming of "Terminator." He's also a stickler for accuracy who went as far as calling in Mitch Kalter, former Vice President for Marketing and Sales of Action Arms (the American firm which exclusively handles Uzi weapons) to coach him in professionally handling the Uzi which plays a major role in the film.

Kalter died unexpectedly earlier this year but "Terminator" stands as a tribute to his dedication to accurate portrayal of automatic weapons techniques. The movie also stands — with several others recently produced — as an indicator that Hollywood is beginning to see weapons and the actors who handle them as something more than props. It's about time. ✕

DECEMBER 84

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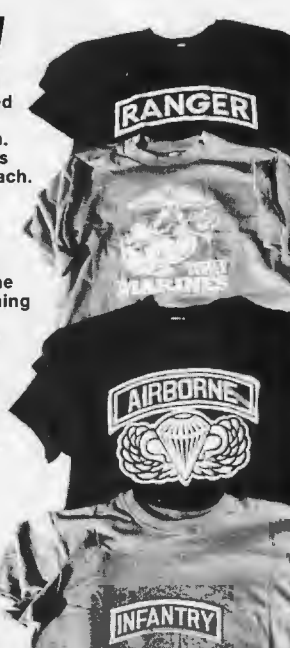
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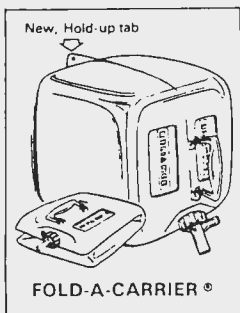
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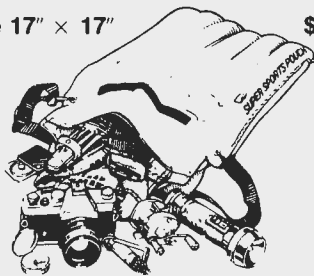
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HOT WATER PATROL

Continued from page 67

happened in 1982. None of the crew on the patrol I accompanied were aboard during that skirmish but they'd heard the tale many times from sailors who lived through it. The event was described to me as follows:

Two Salvadoran Piranhas and the Cam Craft were patrolling near Los Farahones, a cluster of rocks marking the territorial water split between El Salvador and Nicaragua. Two armed Sandinista fishing boats and a Coast Guard cutter appeared in the distance. The Sandinistas opened fire with everything — .50 cal. machine guns as well as 20mm and 40mm cannons. The Salvadoran gunboats replied with four 81mm HE mortar rounds. A plume of smoke confirmed a hit and the Sandinistas limped back to their naval base at Punta Consiguina to lick their wounds. The Salvadorans shoved off out of the area with no casualties and only light damage to the superstructure of the largest vessel.

In November of last year the guns of the Salvadoran Navy again proved lethal to the guerrillas. An encampment on the Bay of Jiquilisco was the target.

"We were in a joint operation with the army," said Lt. Castellanos. "They gave us the coordinates of a terrorist encampment at Granada Ranch. We neared the shore, calculated the distance to the target with our radar range-finder and fired three mortar rounds. They were perfect. *Campesinos* later reported the encampment was destroyed and many subversives were killed or wounded."

At the mouth of the Gulf we killed the engines and drifted the rest of the night. The crew stayed alert. I slept below deck in one of the four two-bunk berthing spaces. The roar of the engines awoke me at dawn. I rejoined Lt. Castellanos on the bridge. "Buenos dias," he said cheerfully. The night had passed without incident. We were returning to La Union.

The rising sun bathed the Gulf in amber splendor. The islands, ominous shadows last night, were now lush, verdant pyramids. Our gray cutter cruised through the pale blue channels between them. Sea gulls glided over the village of Meanguera, a collection of huts and hovels built on the rocky shore of its namesake, a 30 square kilometer island, El Salvador's largest. Fishermen cast their nets from splintered dugouts. It seemed so peaceful until the port look-out shattered the mood.

"Look, my lieutenant!" shouted the sailor handing his binoculars to the officer and pointing off in the distance. Lt. Castellanos swept the sparkling water and spotted an obviously over-loaded, outboard launch. He ordered speed and course changes to intercept and we pulled carefully alongside it. The crewmen were all at battle stations manning their weapons. A worried-looking man and a teenage boy were sitting on

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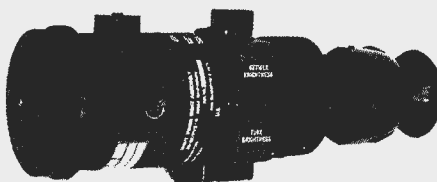
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dozens of golden sea bass, neatly packed in ice. Gun-runners regularly pose as innocent fishermen and pack their arsenals under a good-sized catch. It all smacked so much of the U.S. Navy's "Market Time" interdiction operations in the South China Sea during the Vietnam War. I don't know if Lt. Castellanos had ever heard of that business, but he was taking no chances with this fisherman. He bent over the deck railing and ordered the pair to lift the fish. There were no guns and the lieutenant let them go, apologizing for the inconvenience. "The weight could have been guns," he said to me. "You never know who's smuggling them."

After docking at La Union I hooked up with some 20 fully-camouflaged Naval Commandos who were preparing to launch two Zodiac rubber rafts from a mother ship which would take them near their target. Maybe this foray would provide some of the action I missed on the routine patrol last night. They clambered aboard the vessel and we headed for a beach in the area we had kept under close surveillance from off-shore last night. Suspicious activity had been spotted by a crewman.

The commandos, the Salvadoran version of SEAL teams or Marine Recon troops, were going to spend the next five days along likely trails setting ambushes for the guerrilla units in the area. They were a young, full of piss-and-vinegar and armed to the teeth with M16s, M60s and M203 grenade launchers. They milled around the deck and

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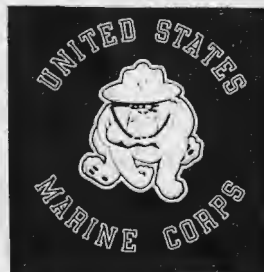
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hammed it up for my camera. Hotdog is spelled the same in all military services. It may have been false bravado but I supposed these guys rated it. They had a tough job to do in a dangerous situation. Eventually the cooler head of an NCO prevailed. He reminded the troopers that they had a tough hump ahead when they got ashore and most of them took advantage of the voyage to catch up on sleep in the shade of the superstructure.

In 1982, the Salvadoran Navy decided a Naval Commando force would be better suited to fighting an insurgency than conventional Marine formations. In August of that year, the unit was formed with 60 men just back from infantry training at Fort Benning. Today the Naval Commando's number 455 men, including the "Barracudas," a 60-man, elite recon unit formed at the beginning of 1983, and 110 men who regularly man the weapons aboard the Piranhas.

Their training is no cake-walk. They spend three months in basic, then do 10 weeks of special training in patrolling, recon techniques, infiltration, ambushes, small boat handling, beach landings, explosives and demolition. The advanced stuff is all taught by U.S. and Salvadoran instructors at the Military Training Center at La Union. Physical fitness and endurance is stressed beyond nearly all other concerns. These guys will have to be able to hack it in deep bush.

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mediate reaction battalion before volunteering for naval service and passing the special training course, has commanded the First Company, Naval Commandos, since December 1982. He explained the hardships his men regularly face in Indian Country throughout the mountainous terrain of El Salvador. Commandos are subjected to long forced marches without food, hours in open boats under blazing sun and torrential downpours, as well as long-distance swims.

The brutal training program for Naval Commandos has paid dividends in combat. A typical commando operation occurred on 20 February 1984. Cadet Ricardo Antonio Velasquez led a mission to be inserted at night. The Salvadoran armed forces frequently employ military school cadets as active patrol leaders due to a shortage of fully-trained officers.

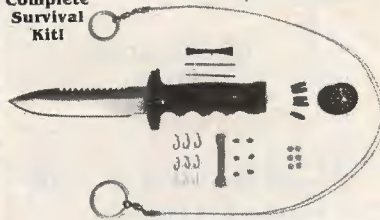
"We received information that subversives were on Piraya Island," said the 20-year-old junior officer. "I took nine men in a boat from Port Triunfo in the afternoon and we disembarked on the western shore. We patrolled the houses. The people were terrified of the guerrillas and didn't tell us anything. Just then, a commando saw five armed men near a boat on the beach. The subversives saw him and fled into the bush. He fired. We surrounded them, set up the M60 and fought for a half-hour. I fired 12 grenades from my M203. Their *commandante* died and two subversives surrendered. Two escaped. The *campesinos* later said they were lightly wounded. One was a 14-year-old kid. We captured three AR-15s, a carbine, ammunition and a radio. We had no casualties."

The commandos also are involved in clandestine operations. On 12 October 1983, trooper Salvador Guzman Velasquez was part of an eight-man team that penetrated enemy territory disguised as guerrillas.

"We were two groups," said the 23-year-old former Naval Commando who has since been transferred to an Army recon outfit with the Third Military Detachment in La Union. "Our team dressed like guerrillas: part blue jeans, part camouflage. Some wore FMLN bandanas around their necks. We wore blue ribbons on our chests and painted our faces green so that we wouldn't be confused when we tangled with the subversives. In the afternoon we left our Coast Guard cutter in two Zodiacs and disembarked at El Espino. We were patrolling the beach when a man approached calling us 'comrades.' He was a subversive. We put an M16 to his nose and, *puta*, was he surprised! He cried. He told us 300 subversives were in the area and where their encampments were. We couldn't attack them; we had too few men. We took the subversive to the cutter and returned at night to lay two ambushes. We didn't wait long. The terrorists fell into it. We fought the rest of the night. Dawn broke and we walked three kilometers through the bush to the hidden Zodiacs and returned to the cutter. I don't know how many we killed. It was dark. We

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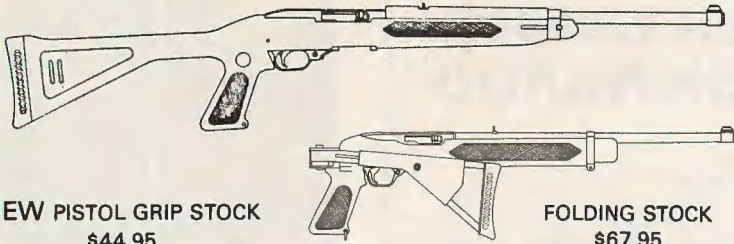
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We returned to La Union's harbor as two Piranas sped out to sea. We did not intercept any communist launches or illegal cargo, but we did keep them at bay. That's mostly what the Salvadoran Navy is designed to do. If they can keep Sandanistas and subversives from running guns to the guerrillas, the resistance will dry up rather quickly.

"Subversive infiltrations are centering between the Lempa River and Amapala," said Captain Villalta in his San Salvador office. "We don't have sufficient means to be able to cover this entire extension. When the Navy moves to an area where we have information of infiltrations, they infiltrate somewhere else. We have too few boats. Besides, we have mechanical, electrical and maintenance problems with them. Three cutters are in repair now. We don't need destroyers or frigates; we need three or four more cutters to work 24 hours a day and four in port to relieve them. Moreover, transportation vessels are sorely needed since we are used to take logistical support and troops from San Salvador to La Union for CENFA (the Armed Forces National Training Center), Detachment Three, and the Third and Sixth Brigades. As it is now, each time we make administrative transportation runs it takes away a boat from patrol operations."

But the Salvadoran sailors keep on trying. They ply the coastal waters trading rounds with Sandanistas and picking up the occasional AK or M16 from an "innocent fisherman." They keep putting their Naval Commando buddies ashore to do battle with the G's. It's all they can do until the commies are forced to hang it up and go home. ☒

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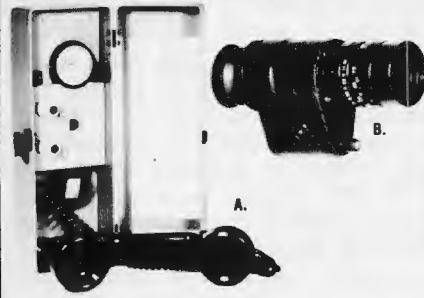
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GUNNING FOR Gs

Continued from page 52

(blooper, blooper, chunker, '79 or thump gun). Glancing up one day from the M60 I was repairing (I have now replaced at one time or another every single component on this foul beast) in the Atlacatl Battalion armeria, I found Major Armando Azmitia, the battalion commander, standing in front of me with an M203. They had just received four and he wanted me and 1st Lt. David Koch to evaluate them as possible replacements for their M79s. Nobody has to ask Kokalis twice to shoot up a case of ammo in any caliber. The next day it was off to the *poligono* (range) at the Playón in the armored car with an M79 and an M203 mounted on an M16A1 and a case of HE.

Unfortunately, the Salvadorans are allowed only HE 40mm grenade cartridges by their munificent benefactor, Uncle Gringo. They desperately need the M576E1/2 multiple projectile round for fighting in the bush. The issue HE round uses an impact detonating fuse. The M552 fuse is spin armed about three meters from the muzzle. The M551 fuse is both spin and setback armed and must travel between 14 and 28 meters before arming. I do not know which fuse is used on the HE ammunition issued to the Salvos.

The spin stabilized 40mm projectile requires a high-low propulsion system when fired from a shoulder-held weapon. When the firing pin strikes the primer, the primer flash ignites the powder within a small brass cup inside the high pressure chamber built into the center of the cartridge case. The burning propellant creates a pressure of 35,000 pounds per square inch inside the chamber. The high pressure causes the brass powder-charge cup to rupture at its vent holes. The escaping gases flow into the remainder of the cartridge case which now acts as a low pressure chamber, dropping the pressure to 3,000 pounds per square inch. This is sufficient to propel the projectile through the barrel and to the target with a high trajectory, but tolerable recoil force. The grenade leaves the launcher barrel with a muzzle velocity of 250 fps and a right-hand spin of 37,000 revolutions per minute. A trained grenadier should consistently be able to pass rounds through a window-sized opening at 150 meters. At area targets the maximum effective range of the 40mm grenade cartridge fired in either the M79 or M203 is about 350 meters. The minimum safe combat firing range for the HE round is given as 30 meters, but I have fired the M79 at ranges considerably under that when the pucker factor was really high. The HE round has an effective casualty radius (defined as the radius of a circle about the point of detonation in which it may be expected that 50 percent of exposed troops will become casualties) of only five meters.

The M79 is very much like a single barrel shotgun. To load it you merely move the

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barrel locking latch fully to the right and break open the breech. Insert a cartridge into the chamber and make certain the extractor makes contact with the case's rim. Close the breech and push the safety, which automatically engages when the barrel locking latch is operated, forward until the letter "F" (fire) is exposed. The front sight is a guarded tapered blade. The folding blade rear sight is adjustable for windage and elevation from 75 to 375 meters in 25 meters increments. The 100, 200, 300 and 375 meter settings are so marked.

The M79 is rugged and reliable. Under normal conditions it is rarely required to more than break it open for cleaning and maintenance. On occasion, the firing pin retainer in the breech face should be tightened with the spanner on the M79 combo tool. In wet climates, like El Salvador, the fore end assembly, barrel group, receiver group and stock assembly can be easily separated for detailed cleaning. The M79 takes a licking and keeps on ticking. Very rarely do I see one in the armory for anything other than replacement of missing rear sight components.

Enlisted men, other than platoon sergeants, are not issued pistols in the Salvadoran Army. The grenadier moves out armed only with his M79 and basic ammo load (18 to 36 rounds), some M67 hand grenades and a very sharp machete. Enter the M203. An admirable concept which gives the grenadier back his rifle and adds

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another rifleman to the section. Developed by the AAI Corporation, the M203 was type classified by the U.S. Army in 1969. Since 1971, Colt Industries' Firearms Division has been the sole producer of the M203.

After it has been mounted below the barrel of the M16A1 rifle, the M203 is used and operates in the manner of a pump action shotgun. The action is opened by depressing the barrel latch, located on the left side, and sliding the barrel assembly forward. This movement forces the cocking lever downward and depresses the spring loaded firing pin to the rear. Moving the barrel assembly to the rear, after inserting a round, forces the cocking lever to move the firing pin forward to engage the primary trigger sear. As the barrel assembly is opened, the spring loaded extractor holds the empty case against the receiver until it is clear of the barrel. When the barrel is fully forward, a spring loaded ejector thrusts the spent case from the receiver where it was held by the extractor. A safety lever is located just forward of the trigger, inside the trigger guard. To fire the M203 this safety must be in the forward position. The trigger guard may be rotated down and away from the magazine well for firing with gloves or mittens. The M203 is best fired with a 30-round M16 magazine in place to serve as a pistol grip.

The M203 has two sight systems. The forward system is a folding leaf assembly mounted to the forearm. Its adjustable open ladder design supposedly permits rapid firing without sight manipulation and uses the front sight of the rifle as its front aiming post. In my opinion, it requires the rifle to be held in such an awkward manner as to render it worthless for anything but emergency use under the most dire of circumstances.

The M203's principal sighting system is a plastic quadrant sight that mounts to the left side of the M16A1 carrying handle. It includes a mounting screw, quadrant sight assembly, clamp sight bracket assembly, sight latch, rearsight aperture, pivoting sight aperture arm, front sight post and pivoting sight post arm. Entirely too many components and entirely too fragile. This plastic fly trap wouldn't last one operation without returning to the cartel in a paper bag. The elevation quadrant is graduated in 25 meter increments from 40 to 400 meters. Rearward pressure on the sight latch unlocks the quadrant's sight arm allowing it to move along the elevation quadrant and centering the desired range. Horizontal zero is adjusted by pressing the rearsight retainer and moving the aperture toward the barrel to move the impact to the right. The M203 I tested shot so far to the left it could not be corrected by manipulation of the horizontal zero adjustment.

The accuracy potential of the M79 and M203 are about equal with perhaps a slight edge going to the M203. The concept of combining a grenade launcher with the rifle is a righteous one. It is not only more comforting to the grenadier but a more expeditious exploitation of manpower. The execution of this concept in the form of the M203

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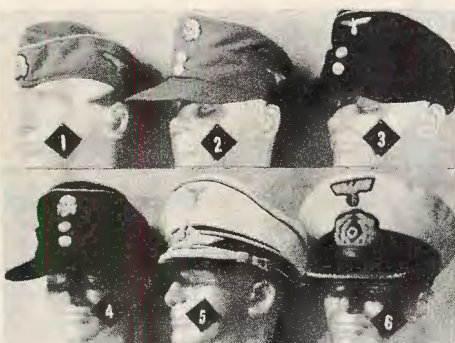
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is wrong, however. One of the four M203s assigned to the Atlacatl Battalion fell out the bottom of its shipping carton two feet down onto the concrete floor of the *almacén* (supply room) when we were drawing them out. The trigger guard sheared in two pieces. Unless backed by a substantial inventory of spare parts at the battalion level, adoption of the M203 would increase down time of the battalion's 40mm grenade launchers by an unacceptable amount. It was my recommendation to Major Azmitia that they decline the replacement of their M79s with the M203. He did so.

Our patrol was preparing to return to the cuartel. It was after midnight and no contact or hard intelligence on G's in the area. I spotted our machine gunner humping along silently with his FN MAG and smiled into the night air.

Designed by M. Ernest Vervier in the early 1950s, the FN MAG (*Mirailleuse á Gaz*) still reigns supreme as the world's best belt-fed general-purpose machine gun (GPMG). From Israel to South Africa and from Western Europe to Latin America it continues to chop down mostly bad guys. Only the United States and Australia were foolish enough to adopt the pathetic M60 (our Third World surrogates have no say in the matter). The FN MAG has even broken into the U.S. inventory through the guise of its vehicular version, the M240, (See SOF, "Blue Force Blast," December '82) produced by FN Manufacturing, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 104, Columbia, SC 29202).

Very briefly (as it will soon be the topic of a major SOF test and evaluation), the FN MAG is gas operated (as its name implies), belt fed from the left side and fires from the open-bolt position. The quick-change barrel is chrome lined, as is the receiver's interior, feed tray, piston and feed channel. The gas regulator has three positions for operation under adverse conditions and for variation of the cyclic rate from a low of 650-750 rpm to a high of 900-1100 rpm. The principle of operation is that of the Browning Automatic rifle (BAR), but turned upside-down (i.e., the locking lever engages a locking shoulder at the bottom, instead of the top, of the receiver). The feed mechanism and trigger mechanism are those of the MG 42.

Weighing about the same as the M60 (23 pounds), the FN MAG is reliable and can be disassembled with ease. Firing pins break on occasion and the gas regulator's split rings are wont to be lost in the bush during field maintenance, but there is little else to fault in the MAG. The cyclic rate is a bit high, but trained gunners can deliver four to five-shot bursts with less group dispersion than the M60 (not always an attribute when engaging area targets).

While training the troops of the 3rd Infantry Brigade in San Miguel (now under the dynamic and charismatic command of Lt. Col. Domingo Monterrosa) in the M60 and M2 HB .50 caliber Browning machine guns, I uncovered eight FN MAGs abandoned by the Somozistas when they fled Nicaragua. Chambered in 7.62mm NATO these guns were unfortunately set up for the

German DM6 non-disintegrating belt (successor to the Gurt 33 belt used with the MG 34/42 machine guns). As they were of little use in this condition, they departed with me on the helicopter back to the America at the Atlacatl Battalion cuartel.

The extractor groove tab on the DM6 link is located upper dead-center and therefore the rear cartridge stop was positioned at the bottom of the feed tray. The FN armorer's manual states that conversion to the disintegrating U.S. M13 link, which has the extractor groove tab on the right side, requires a new feed tray, feed mechanism and top cover. Not so. Whaling away with hack saw, swiss files and Moto tool, I soon converted all eight feed trays to reliably accept the M13 link. Cannibalizing parts, five of these guns were put back into the choir to sing loudly for the G's.

Central America has shuffled through so many wars for so many years its armories are veritable cornucopian coffers of military weaponry. In search of M60 barrels and bipods one day, I came upon the rarest of the rare in a corner of the Atlacatl *almacén* — four unfired Solothurn MG-30 light machine guns still packed in the original cosmoline! Furthermore, they were chambered for the 7x57mm cartridge — an unknown chambering, as all were previously thought to be in caliber 7.92mm Mauser only.

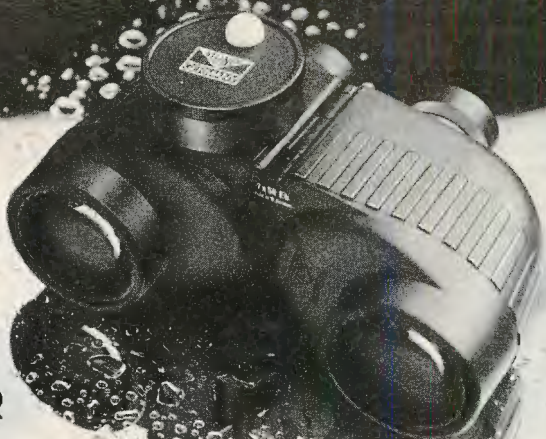
The Solothurn MG-30 LMG (known by the factory as the S-2-200) offers a classic study in the devious intrigues employed by the European merchants of death during its era. The weapon was actually designed by Louis Stange of Rheinmetall-Ehrhardt in Dusseldorf, Germany. In 1929 Rheinmetall purchased the Swiss firm of Waffenfabrik Solothurn A. G. Two months after its purchase, Solothurn offered the Model 1929 machine gun for sale. In 1930 the refined version, the MG-30, was adopted by Austria. Not surprising, as Steyr is credited with building all the components for the gun which was assembled only at the Solothurn plant (located outside the jurisdictions of the Versailles treaty). Hungary adopted the gun in 1931 as the Model 31.

The MG-30 is short-recoil operated, air cooled and weighs only 17 pounds. It is fed by a 25-round magazine from the left side. The cylindrical bolt has a central locking ring which holds the bolt and barrel together by means of six interrupted threads. Using a peculiar system called timed inertia firing, the firing pin is permitted to strike the primer only after locking is completed and an obstruction is removed. The face of the trigger has two depressions, the uppermost, marked "E" for semiautomatic fire and the lower one marked "R" for full-auto fire. The cyclic rate is 750 rpm.

Upon firing, the barrel, bolt, bolt extension, recoil spring guide and locking ring move rearward under the action of recoil as a single unit. After a short distance, the rollers on the locking ring engage a spiral groove in the walls of the cylindrical receiver to rotate and unlock the bolt. While the bolt and recoil spring guide continue to

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Using FN ammunition manufactured for Venezuela in 1934, I fired many hundreds of rounds through the MG-30. Other than a few hang-fires, caused no doubt by the 50-year-old ammunition, the gun fired without malfunction. And, what a joy to clean a recoil operated machine gun as opposed to the gas pigs of this day and age. Very reliable, graceful in appearance, beautifully made, fitted and finished with a high polish rust blue, they really don't make them this way anymore — well-worn cliché that it is.

And so the Germans sold machine guns to their enemies through Switzerland, the Gs shot at the Salvadoran Army with M16s we left in Vietnam and the Salvos shoot back with ammunition made in communist Yugoslavia. It remains forever as Aeschylus said two and a half thousand years ago,

"So in the Libyan fable it is told
 That once an eagle, stricken with a dart,
 Said, when he saw the fashion of the shaft,
 'With our own feathers, not by others' hands,

Are we now smitten.' "

That theme was running through my mind as our patrol straggled back into the Atlacatl cuartel for debriefing and rest. There had been no trace of the G's. It was time to write my story about the war weapons of El Salvador. ✕

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PAKTIA RECON

Continued from page 83

Tension decreased rapidly once we reached the foothills on the north side of the plain. We turned off onto a stream bed. The road had once been a camel path, but since the war began, the Afghans have improved and widened it for wheeled traffic. Just barely: The sandy bottom was full of sharp rocks, the walls were about 30 feet tall and barely wide enough for our drivers to squeeze through. In places we left paint behind. Speed was agonizingly slow and "kickers" walked in front of us to remove recently fallen rocks too large to drive over. Despite all that, the narrow gorge provided perfect cover, since it was virtually impossible to spot the convoy from the air.

The canyon eventually petered out, and we turned north on a wider stream bed, 50 to 100 meters across mostly dry but with small, shallow streams running along the sides. We occasionally passed houses but, except for one stop at a mosque for evening prayers, which drew out the locals, we saw few permanent inhabitants in the canyon.

Since it was getting dark and I knew we were close to Urgun, I rashly assumed we were near our night position. I never thought the Freedom Fighters would drive within a few kilometers of a Russian base with their lights on. When they went on, I discovered I was riding in the only truck with two headlights that worked. The first truck stopped and word came back for us to take the lead. One mujahid said something in Pushtu. Everyone else laughed.

I joined in when Abdul translated: "The business about the headlight is just an excuse. The others wanted us to lead because of the mines." Actually the Soviets never plant mines in stream beds, and they have, for reasons known only to themselves, decreased the number of air-dropped anti-personnel mines. There are support groups in the States that would like to take credit for that by saying they have brought the pressure of world opinion down on the Soviets for using air-scatterable, indiscriminate mines on the mujahideen. More likely, the Russians have simply decided the tactic is no longer effective since the Freedom Fighters have long since learned to spot and avoid these explosive devices.

We were getting closer to Urgun. The canyon walls loomed 200 feet or higher on either side and seemed to shimmer in the dancing shadow of six headlights. I asked my translator if the Russians wouldn't spot the light and react to our movement.

He laughed: "The Russians can see those reflections, but they won't come out tonight. They'll be shit-scared. The lights will tell them we're in the area and their concern will be what we'll do to them."

Around 2200 as we maneuvered through yet another stream bed, we finally spotted a light, coming from a fortified house high up

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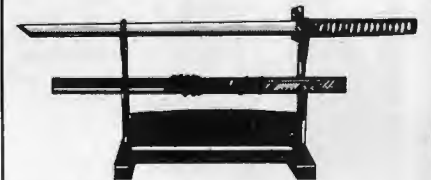
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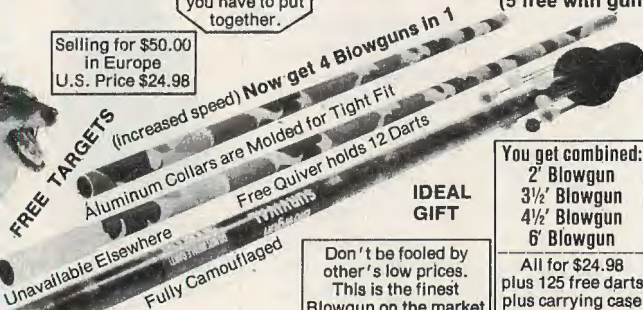
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on a steep hill. Our truck led the way up. Our "kickers" greeted the woman who had come out of the house. Once she saw who they were, her fear of a marauding government patrol turned to joy and considerable bustle as she prepared to receive us. While the mujahideen moved the other trucks and unloaded supplies (generally they take food with them when travelling in a large convoy so they won't impoverish the civilians whose hospitality they enjoy), I watched lanterns being lighted throughout the canyon. The locals had figured out what was happening. From every house men or women brought food (curds and bread), tea or cold spring water.

Reveille came at 0400. There was no time for breakfast since we had a long drive. We were to meet local guides who would take us on foot to within a kilometer of Urgun. So much for Abdul's second promise. We passed several recently bombed-out settlements. Russian policy: they bomb civilian settlements extensively to create free-fire zones immediately around Urgun and to leave the mujahideen without a civilian base for support.

Our objective was a canyon north of the fort. It had been a major base during the 1983 siege. The Russians bombed it and heli-lifted troops into the canyon in January 1984. At the time of the Russian attack, only two muj were in the base and they scrambled over the cliffs to escape. But NIFA lost a considerable stock of food and ammunition. The ammo dump took a direct hit and the explosion blasted a cave some 20 feet across and 10 feet deep into solid rock. Our guides failed to show up so we started to drive back the way we'd come to another base.

I never made it. Another truck broke down about halfway. Our truck was delegated to stay while the other one was repaired. The two trucks were parked under trees near a house and the mechanics went to work. The area looked prosperous. I saw several large houses fronted by fruit-bearing trees along the edge of the stream and well-irrigated fields. In the shade, high up in the mountains, it was quite pleasant. As I looked around at the pastoral scene, it was hard to believe that the country was actually occupied by a hated enemy and that a vicious war was blazing. Only the ever-present AKs and Lee-Enfields within reach of the farmers working in the fields belied the peacefulness.

Around noon the mechanics had the truck running again, so we headed for the other camp. There we found that part of our group had already left to walk over the hills to Urgun. We settled down on cushions for tea in the shade of a grove of trees. When the recon party returned, the local commander, a teacher and wealthy landowner, laid out a feast: goat liver and kidneys, goat kabobs, boiled goat, rice and chicken, goat in onion sauce, *nan*, tea and — much more to my surprise — two kinds of cornbread and cold goat butter milk. After lunch we settled down to drink tea and wait for the end of the Soviet flying time.

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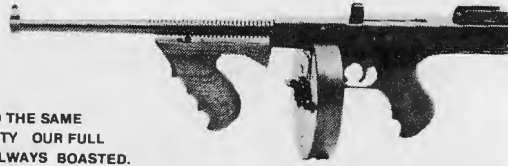
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We left about 1700. While following the stream bed back out toward open country, we had our "contact": the little boys in the canyon. After a long, tedious drive through more streambeds on the west side of Urgan, we reached our night position just before dark, a fort overlooking a good-sized, open valley. On the hill it was windy and chilly. The mujahideen wrapped up in their *patous* settled on cushions and waited for the inevitable goat. Lanterns were lighted. The men sat around joking and talking. I deeply regretted not knowing any Pushtu, since my translator wasn't there. From the laughter, I knew it was an interesting, witty conversation.

Later, the Afghan sitting next to me, who turned out to be an electrical engineer and reasonably fluent in English, told me that the men were telling jokes about the Russians and various mujahideen. The engineer was quite knowledgeable about the Soviets, having once worked on the Russian air base at Bagram, north of Kabul. He had a low opinion of their army and troop morale, which he attributed to poor housing, inadequate food and their officers' general lack of humanity.

"They are taking the long view toward the war," he explained. "They don't care how long it takes, what it costs, how many of our people they kill, or how many of their men die."

He, like many educated Afghans I talked to, was concerned about America's apparent disinterest in the war and Russia's success in the propaganda war inside Pakistan.

Without Pakistan to operate from, the mujahideen could not wage a war of independence against the invaders. The Russians actively support leftist political groups inside Pakistan, which are pressuring Gen. Zia-ul-Haq to end his support of the mujahideen. The engineer also thought the Russian support and training of Baluchi nationalists was less to create and secure an independent Baluchistan than to keep pressure on Zia over Afghanistan. (The Baluchi tribes of southwestern Pakistan have never enjoyed wearing the Pakistan collar and it is widely known in Southwest Asia that significant numbers of them are receiving training inside Afghanistan.)

"Although when the time comes, they [the Russians] will try and take Baluchistan, too," the engineer said. "They are a peace-loving people, you know, not like you Americans. Breshnev said it in a speech. All the Russians want is peace — a piece of Poland, a piece of Germany and a piece of Afghanistan."

He continued, "Why won't you give us the weapons [surface-to-air missiles] to win? We are fighting your war. We are willing to fight, willing to die to force back the Russians, but we are poor people and you can't fight helicopters with rifles. It is not possible. Give us some money and give us the missiles. If we could beat their air force we could be on the way to Moscow in 24 hours!"

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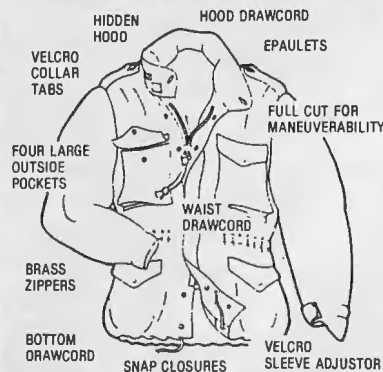
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ning to attract some real support among the mujahideen, and not just among the hard core. Although they can't presently break the existing stalemate and force the Soviets out, some Afghan leaders have already stated that as soon as they can, they plan to take the war to Central Asia. The war against the Russians is not only political and nationalistic, it is also a *jihad*, a holy war, officially sanctioned by the Muslim religious leaders in Afghanistan and by international Islamic organizations.

Some raids across the Amu Darya River, the border between Russia and Afghanistan, have occurred but they were more rustling forays to obtain food or publicity rather than strategic military operations. The political leadership is now discouraging that type of activity.

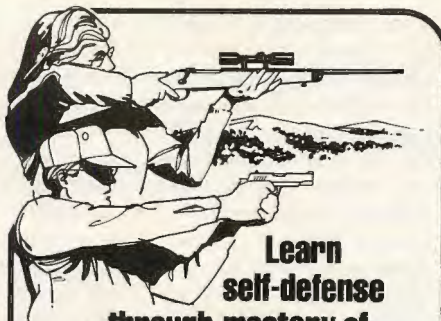
Meanwhile, the more religiously-oriented leaders remain quite serious about taking the battle to Central Asia and shoving it to the atheist invaders who are occupying their sacred lands. The Central Asians from Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are ethnically related to the Afghans, and although the Islam of Russia's Central Asian Republics is under the heel of the communist party, it would make fertile ground for Moslem rebellion, particularly if enough religious indignation could be stirred up against the Soviets. The first Red Army units which came into Afghanistan in 1979 were primarily Central Asian units and they proved ineffective against the Afghans. Told by their commanders they would be facing CIA-backed mercenaries, they instead found themselves on the wrong end of a Moslem *jihad* and openly collaborated with the mujahideen.

Although the Russians have lately sent more Slavic troops to Afghanistan, the Soviet Moslems who remain are still in close contact with the Afghan resistance. Copies of the Koran in Central Asian languages are valuable trading stock for the mujahideen, and the highly effective intelligence the Afghans have concerning Soviet movements can probably be traced directly to dissatisfaction among Central Asian troops regarding the war against fellow Moslems. Despite all the communist rhetoric and political indoctrination, the Russians have yet to discredit Allah.

By mid-morning of the next day, we had moved quite close to Urgun, settling into a position in the foothills to the west, waiting to cross a deep valley which was the only terrain feature separating us from the re-doubt. The sparsely inhabited valley resembled a high-mountain meadow in the Rockies. Its only residents were nomads from the Abeskhel tribe.

Not long after dismounting from the trucks, some of the Afghans started wandering up the closest, highest ridgeline. We followed. At the top we learned that the Afghans climbed it to get a good look at Urgun, but all we could see was part of the valley and some abandoned villages. Our view of the fort was blocked by another jagged ridgeline.

Even though we had no local guide, some



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of the commanders decided to walk over to the next ridge. I went along for the opportunity to finally get a glimpse of this fabled fort we had been approaching over such a long and difficult trek. When we reached the top, I realized my mistake. All we saw was another ridge line, but the mujahideen were determined to press on. As we set off, I counted canteens — one, mine — and weapons — three bodyguards with AKs, one with a Lee Enfield and a half dozen pistols — and realized if we ran into even a squad we were going to be badly outgunned.

We met no one — the Afghan government troops and their Russians advisers stay buttoned up inside the fort and do not patrol on foot — but my doubts about our route of march were confirmed. The foothills were badly eroded and the rock crumbled underfoot. Our view from the next ridge was still another ridge.

The commanders wanted to see the approaches to the valley, so they turned down a wash. I wanted some photos from above, so three Afghans and I moved across another six ridges to the edge of the hills.

Urgun was much as it had been advertised: stunning. A large rectangle of enormously thick mud-brick walls with five towers, it squatted silently in the center of a desolate valley.

An abandoned village lay between us and the fort. South of it were some buildings, which I learned were called the German settlement. There was no visible movement in the fort, in any of the villages we could see or on any of the roads running through the valley.

It was malevolent too. I don't believe in haunted houses, but the fort at Urgun truly seemed an outpost of The Evil Empire.

All three of the Afghans with me on the ridge had participated in the siege of Urgun. Now they talked of the siege and the climactic battle for the fort. It began in the Spring, they told me, staring with vacant expressions at the fort to our front. Base camps were established on all sides of Urgun, convoys ambushed and all outposts around the valley overrun. By late August the defenders were dependent on aerial resupply.

Because the communists could call and receive aerial support from Mi-24 helicopters from Gardez (about 60 kilometers northwest) and fixed-wing air support from Kandahar (about 150 kilometers southwest), the mujahideen were able to launch attacks directly against the fort only late in the afternoon or at night. During the day, they lay up in the hills — where we were — but in late afternoon they moved down to the villages and closer positions where they had penetrated the mine fields surrounding the fort: There they harassed the defenders with mortars, RPGs, recoilless rifles, 12.7mm heavy machine guns and small arms.

In close-quarter assaults just before the fateful 19 December attack, the mujahideen overran the German settlement — the closest village and, in a daring assault, managed to overrun the fifth, independent tower. From those locations, they could fire

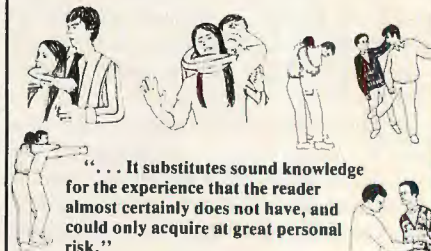
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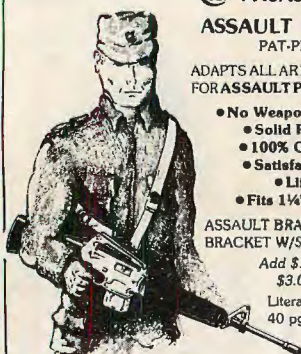
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RPGs and recoilless rifles directly at the walls, but their weapons were completely ineffective against the 20-foot-thick walls and massive gates. The mujahideen brought up two D-30 howitzers — captured in the 10 May ambush — but they too were powerless against the wall.

On the night of 19 December, NIFA brought up its armor — two T-55 tanks which two mujahideen had learned to drive — to spearhead an assault through the minefields and to force the gates. On the approach to Urgan, one driver lost his way. When he got out of his tank to check his surroundings, he was killed by fire from the fort. The second tank almost made it, getting most of the way through the minefield and close to the gate before breaking down.

The assault was doomed. Within two weeks the mujahideen started to break contact. Their resources were exhausted.

Looking down at that fort made me realize just how courageous and tough the mujahideen are. Any grunts who tramp through snow-covered mine fields, behind two tanks of dubious value, to assault that place at night are guys I want on my side.

Although there was no movement inside the fort, Abdul decided we'd been out in the open long enough. After I delivered a parting gesture consisting of an extended middle digit, we headed back. We reached the others by late afternoon.

When the mujahideen said we would cross the valley, I didn't realize we'd pass within sight of the walls. I realized something was amiss when our DShK gunner started to check the feed belt on his 12.7 and the mujahideen looked nervous. When we popped out of the foothills and roared across the valley, I looked to my right and realized that the brown smudge on the horizon was the wall at Urgan. It looked as if Abdul had kept his second promise.

We went flat-out for the condition of the road, about 35 to 50 kilometers per hour. It was a long, long 20 minutes. About halfway, we crossed the main road between Urgan and Ghazni. Shortly thereafter, we went through the valley's major village, which had been bombed by the Russians and is now abandoned.

Once we reached the hills and got into some trees, tension evaporated rapidly, and soon the mujahideen were back to their usual carefree, happy-go-lucky routine.

About 10 kilometers from the fort we encountered evidence of the last Russian excursion into that area. Scattered along the side of the road were bits and pieces of Russian vehicles and an immobilized T-55 tank, which had been stripped by the mujahideen. From time to time, villagers try to camouflage the hulk by throwing brush on it. A wasted effort. The tank was sitting right in the middle of the road in open terrain. And, you'd presume the Russians would remember where they left it, even if they weren't particularly anxious to retrieve their property. The mujahideen said the Russians had not tried to recover the tank, which is surprising since retrieval of armor, particularly lightly-damaged vehicles such

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as this one, is entirely within the Russian Standard Operating Procedure.

Turning into increasingly narrow washes, streambeds and canyons, we drove for several hours to reach our night position, high up in the hills. About 30 kilometers north of Urgun, we went through the canyon in which the mujahideen had sprung the big ambush in 1983, but we didn't have time to stop. Our night position was in a narrow canyon, a full-time mujahideen base. The garrison of about 100 men had two 12.7mm guns to defend the position and were well-armed with AKs, having profited considerably from the 1983 ambush on their turf.

We were on the road the next day before light. By daylight we were back at the canyon where the Russians had been ambushed. I saw little evidence of a major battle. The Afghans gather up everything that is transportable — and everything up to and including a tank is transportable. All villages in the immediate area had been bombed and most were abandoned. Today the Afghans live in the hills and walk down to the valley to cultivate the remaining fields, which is why the NIFA commanders expect a hard winter in the area if the Russians can't be evicted. With the best fields lying fallow due to Russian air attacks against the civilian population, the Afghans in the Urgun district have a very difficult time staying alive, let alone carrying on military operations.

We would lay up in one of the villages near Urgun to wait for late evening. After a brief stop, the mujahideen mounted up the trucks suddenly. The Swiss and I were trying to figure out what was up as the mujahideen were all chambering rounds and obviously arranging things in the trucks for action. Abdul broke away from the commander's conference, telling us, "We're not waiting. We're going across the valley now."

A high-noon transit of the valley during prime Russian flying hours? Who's running this show?

It didn't help when the mujahideen — including Abdul, who presumably knew what was going on, since he had been a party to the decision-making conference — all held their hands up (palms in, parallel to their head) and said: "Allah Negahban." That's Pushtu for "God protect us." The Swiss and I knew it was a ritual for the mujahideen when they were about to step into it.

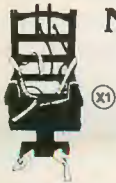
As we broke out of the foothills, and the scarce air cover provided by the scraggly trees, our four-vehicle convoy gathered speed and for the first five minutes or so, an enormous dust cloud puffed up behind us. All eyes were on the sky and ears were cocked downrange toward Urgun.

There was no response from that direction, so some of the mujahideen started to joke and cut up as usual. Joining in, I started to kid one of the Swiss about his seat — the only space left when he climbed aboard was the lid of the 55-gallon drum of diesel tied down in the back.

"You know," I said, looking around at

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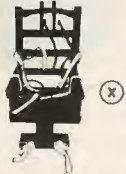
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the featureless, treeless plain, "if we start hearing a WHAP-WHAP-WHAP off in the distance, I wouldn't even bother to get off that drum. You'll go out faster and with more flash that way."

About halfway across, our jovial bravado turned to complete amazement. Why weren't we in the middle of a mortar or artillery barrage? We knew that any decent 20th-century army would have observers on the walls and pre-plotted defensive fires to take care of moving dust clouds in a free-fire zone. Ten minutes later we were still shaking our heads at the laxity of Urgan's defenders, as we turned up into the foothills and moved back under the trees.

A week later in Kabul, Col. Wardek offered the best explanation for the Russians' puzzling lack of aggression. He pointed out that many of the Afghan government troops were less than enthusiastic about the USSR's cause in Afghanistan and even less enthusiastic about picking fights with the mujahideen. "Sure they had observers up on the walls. Sure they saw you. But if there was no Russian adviser up there, I'm sure they forgot they saw you."

But that afternoon, when we stopped for a supply drop-off, I questioned our senior commander about his dangerous order to cross. He responded, "It was safer to move than to sit in the village that close to Urgan. The people in the village had told us it had been 10 days since there were any Russian helicopters in the valley."

Since the Russians offer lucrative rewards for information on people like us — Westerners and high-ranking commanders — a four- or five-hour layover just outside of mortar range from the fort was dangerous, he told me. "One man on a bicycle could have gone into Urgan, and when the Russians heard who was there, the valley would have been full of helicopters."

The mujahideen pulled all the mats out of the truck I had been riding. We were scheduled to spend a day-and-a-half in that position, and the supplies were being broken up for transport to other locations. While banging around on what passes for roads there, I'd felt a lot of lumps underneath the mats, but I never suspected that they concealed about 30 plastic antitank mines, two boxes of plastic explosives, det cord, caps, two boxes of anti-personnel grenades and tins of 12.7mm ammo.

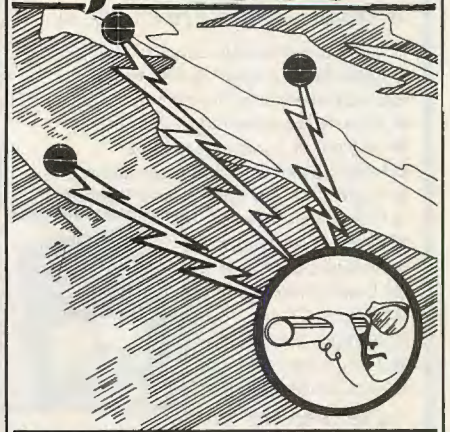
Kurt, standing next to me, said: "And you were kidding me about the diesel drum?"

Our position that night was in a nearby mosque, on the highest hill in a valley some distance from Urgan. The village was smaller and poorer than most we had seen but the mosque was spectacular. The village also had an outdoor mosque — a simple, raised earthen platform on the sheer edge of a hill with an upright, notched rock to point the direction of Mecca to the faithful.

I elected to risk sleeping on the ground outside that night. About 0200 I was awakened by barking village dogs. Shortly thereafter, I saw a long convoy of trucks transporting approximately 400 heavily-

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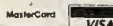
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armed mujahideen up the valley. They were from NIFA too, so they stopped for tea before pushing on about 0400 to get well west of Urgun and up into the next province before Russian flying hours. The convoy was headed toward Mazar-I-Sharif, some 500 kilometers to the north, near the Afghan-USSR border (See "Night Raiders on Russia's Border," SOF, September '84).

Although a good portion of their route has been opened up and secured for mujahid vehicular traffic, it was not open all the way. I never learned where the end-of-the-line was but was told it was north of Kabul.

The next day we loafed.

The mujahideen had one more surprise for me. The following day we broke camp and mounted up early, since the plan was to drive directly out in order to make it back in two days. On the way down to our crossing point, while still inside the Urgun District, we rounded a curve and came upon a convoy of NIFA fighters halted in a streambed for another gun salute.

The lead vehicle of the incoming column was the Afghan answer to Soviet tanks. The Pathans, who make up the bulk of the population in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier and southeastern Afghanistan, are fond of decorating their vehicles with tassels, reflectors, chrome embroidery and colorful drawings. The lead vehicle for the incoming convoy was a classic of the genre. It reminded me of nothing so much as the colorful Jeepneys which rule the roads in the Philippines. But this was a war wagon, with a picture of Pir Gailani proudly pasted to the windshield, loaded to the hilt inside and on the roof with rifle-toting mujahideen and sporting a roof-mounted 12.7mm DShK for anti-aircraft defense.

The mujahideen have been fighting the USSR since 1979. Casualty figures are anybody's guess, but a reasonable estimate is 20,000 Soviet and more than 100,000 Afghan KIA, most of those civilians. More than three million Afghans have fled the country and, conservatively, an additional four million have been driven out of their homes into the hills by Soviet attacks on villages.

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Afghanistan and has now increased its troop strength to about 175,000 men, supported by MiGs, Mi-24 helicopters, tanks, armored personnel carriers and other high-tech weaponry, has been fought to a draw by an army that goes to war in tricked-out, beat-up, old trucks. Western military observers, and some Afghans, have zeroed in on the factionalism, shortage of modern weapons, lack of logistical transport and the Afghans' 19th-century tactics as major weaknesses of the resistance.

In rugged Paktia, the resistance has solved at least two of these problems: factionalism and lack of transport. From all appearances, the Unity seems to be working toward a common goal in Paktia and the existence of both vehicles and passable roads goes a long way toward solving the problem of logistics. The critical shortage in Paktia is weapons, communication devices and mine sweepers. NIFA demonstrated, at least to me, its capability to move large shipments of fighters, but they don't have the supplies. While Afghan tactics could be improved, I remain unconvinced that the manner in which they are fighting the Russians inherently dooms them to defeat.

There have been many invasions of Paktia, yet historically no invader has been able to subjugate it. With motivation, courage, intelligence, skill at arms and the ability to set and spring effective ambushes, the Afghans have evicted their enemies time and time again. The Freedom Fighters control everything outside the walls of the USSR's forts in Paktia and with enough of the proper arms they could conceivably shoe-horn Ivan out of his strongholds.

Improbable? An analysis of history indicates not.

The Afghan Freedom Fighters have now been fighting the USSR longer than the Russians fought Germany in World War II. They are not winning but neither are they losing.

True to their traditions, the Pathans remain unconquered. ☒

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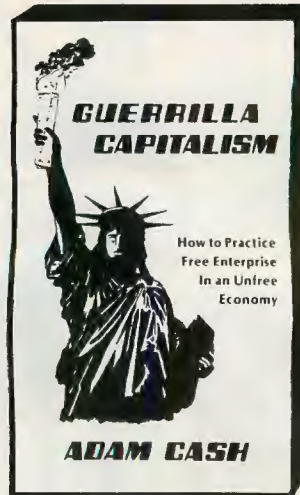
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BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 14



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handle were placed on the knife at a slight downward angle. People who understand blades and cutting know these things. Take a look at a Gurkha kukri if you want to see leverage approaching the limit. Long kukris are used to behead oxen in one blow at Gurkha regimental ceremonies in Nepal. I can't imagine how long the straight-handled KA-BAR would have to be to do that, and I don't know if an ordinary man could lift it.

The upshot of leverage in combat is its multiplication of the force given a blow by good balance, and a lot of that has to do with how your hand is built. The blade has to drop from the top of your hand, or effective chops and slashes must be made with the wrist cocked at a weak angle. In a fight, the man swinging the knife with an angle between the blade and the handle is going to make stronger, deeper cuts with given effort than the man with a straight knife.

The third of our basic factors, cutting capability, doesn't fare too well in the KA-BAR, either. The steel used to

make the blade is a straight carbon, not stainless steel. It is well tempered and holds an edge fairly well. Our test KA-BAR held a shaving edge through 55 whittling strokes on a well seasoned stave of Osage orange kept in my knife shop for that specific purpose. By 60 strokes the edge would not shave. This is not a bad performance, but there is better to be had. The last Case pocketknife I tried this with quit shaving after 15 strokes, and the last forged blade to leave my shop was still shaving after 125 strokes on the same hard stave.

The biggest problem with cutting capability that the KA-BAR has goes back to the design committee. The choice of bevels and angles used to form the edges, both primary and clip, are poor. The use of the fuller demands that the blade be hollow ground or flat ground from the median ridge of the blade to the edge. The resulting angle of the cutting edge becomes more like a chisel than a razor. However, the thin 5/32-inch blade keeps this drawback from showing.

But the most detrimental characteristic to this knife's combat cutting performance is the poor point placement. The point is too high, and you would have to push a large part of the arc of the front of the blade through resisting flesh and around bone on a stabbing stroke. If the point were dropped to the axis of thrust, the blade would pierce and penetrate like a dagger, since the sharpened clip on the back side of the blade aids penetration, as well as tearing on the backstroke. A high point on a knife also forces the curve of the blade to the point to be such that the point has an overwhelming tendency to be blunt and the edge around it to be hard to sharpen. This means your thrusts are not as deep, and require more effort.

In fact, there's obviously something good about the KA-BAR; the Marines are still issuing it to their officers, NCO's and practically everyone else who carries a pistol. You'd be hard-pressed to muster a Marine formation of any caliber today and not find a bushel-basket full of KA-BARs among their gear. Maybe it's mystique. Maybe it's image, but the KA-BAR remains in the hands of our fighting men when a number of better options exist.

So what do we really have in the KA-BAR? A good feeling, good fitting handle. An adequate if not decent choice of metallurgy in the blade, and a good job of tempering. But the blade will not slash, cannot penetrate easily, and is hard to sharpen. The blade is not as strong as it should be, and weaker than it could be, if the fuller were left out. The tang is far too skimpy for strength and is prone to break.

But it is a fighting knife. W.A. said so, and W.A. would know. ✕

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Continued from page 57

the Geneva Convention. If a captured individual is not entitled to protection afforded a full-fledged soldier under the Geneva Convention, Article 75 of the same Convention provides the minimum treatment a country is required to provide, including the protection of a fair trial. No one bothered to point that out to the Angolan government.

The show trial, such as the one in Luanda is the rule, not the exception, in many countries. Virtually none of the requirements outlined in Article 75 of the Convention were met in handling the men who were eventually executed in Angola for their "status" crime. (One of those executed was properly accused of killing his own men, though it is not clear if that was the grounds for his conviction.)

As the Angolan example demonstrates, some nations simply signed the Convention for propaganda purposes and have no intention of subscribing to or honoring international law. Iran and Iraq are providing fresh examples of this sort of hypocrisy. Both governments signed the new Convention and have proceeded to placidly ignore all the conventions contained in it regarding treatment of captives taken in their current war.

Western democracies and some Asian countries such as Japan will likely honor the Convention in all the portions they formally ratify. If a conflict involving one of them is well-covered by the press, prisoners might expect treatment at the *minimum* levels prescribed by the Convention. The treatment of captives by both sides during the recent Falklands/Malvinas War was an example of countries attempting to adhere to the Convention.

By contrast, the war in Vietnam was exhaustively covered by the press in South Vietnam, yet the North Vietnamese had such tight control over news and information coming out of that country that the extent of torture, starvation, public humiliation and other maltreatment outlawed by the 1949 Geneva Convention was not generally recognized until 550 of the POWs were released in 1973 — almost eight years after the tortures began.

So what's the bottom line? To ensure treatment with privileges as a soldier under the Geneva Convention, sign up as a full-fledged member of armed forces and don't get involved with other than free nations. They generally adhere to a rule of law, rather than using law to further political ends.

Don't count on Geneva Convention protection if you join a private army of any sort, even if the struggle they are waging is most noble. Sit down and place the appropriate value on your life. Ask yourself what it's worth in cash. If they aren't paying that much, stay home and read SOF. ✕



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Continued from page 22

matic fire. Continued backward pressure until the second trigger is also engaged will produce fire in the full-auto mode. A modification of this principle is encountered on the Steyr MPi69/81 submachine guns and the AUG rifle using a single trigger.

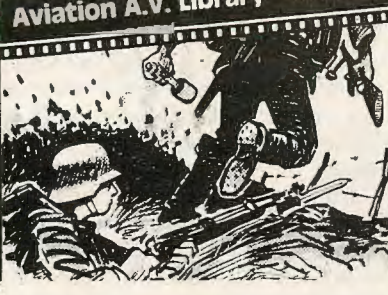
The safety lever is located on the left side of the receiver body. Located below the rear sight, it is too far forward to be operated with the firing hand. The forward position is "S" (safe) and the lever must be pulled rearward to "F" (*feuer* = fire). There is an additional safety, just forward of the lever, which can be rotated when the bolt is closed to prevent its retraction.

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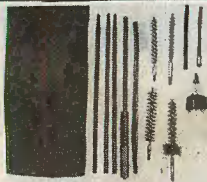
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EDITORIAL

Continued from page 30

many Europeans are plainly frightened enough by the Soviet military buildup to wonder, however subconsciously, whether some form of neutralism might be better than an alliance with the United States.

To date, strong leadership within the alliance has kept NATO together in the face of these internal strains and Soviet pressure. Britain's Margaret Thatcher, Germany's Chancellors Schmidt and Kohl, France's Mitterrand, and President Reagan have exerted crucial leadership. The common denominators of that leadership have been personal strength and resolve, and a hard-headed recognition of the seriousness of the Soviet military and political threat to the West.

Lamentably, there is little in Walter Mondale's record as a U.S. senator or as Jimmy Carter's vice president to demonstrate that he grasps what the Soviets are all about, or that he could rally the alliance once he understood. Rather, Mr. Mondale's failure to repudiate the Carter foreign policy, and his repeated displays of personal irresolution, indicate that Walter Mondale offers mainly a rerun of the weak, confused leadership of the Carter years.

NATO, for one, might not survive four more years of that. ☒

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DE-BRIEF

Continued from page 5

first-hand experience the precarious situation facing virtually all Central American democracies put the Civilian Military Assistance volunteers and other individuals who are willing to lay their lives on the line in defense of freedom in the idealist category. They are simply unwilling — particularly after the dismal, politically-hamstrung American performance in the fight against Asian communism in Vietnam — to stand idly by and let it happen in Central America.

That puts such men in honorable company along with American volunteers for the Lafayette Escadrille in WWI, the pilots of the RAF's Eagle Squadron and the men who served with Claire Chennault's Flying Tigers during World War II. Those were other patriotic Americans who would not placidly ignore threats of worldwide tyranny despite their country's unwillingness to respond officially.

Those were patriots and genuine heroes. So were the men who died on 1 September 1984 helping in the fight for freedom in Nicaragua.

Such idealism cost them their lives, but they did not die in vain. I think Powell and Parker would appreciate this eulogy: We believe those who beat their swords into plowshares generally wind up doing the plowing for those who do not.

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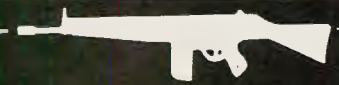
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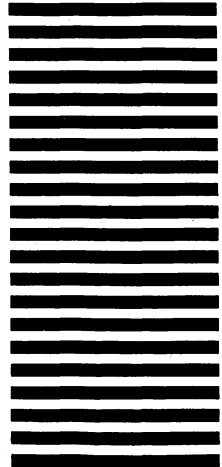
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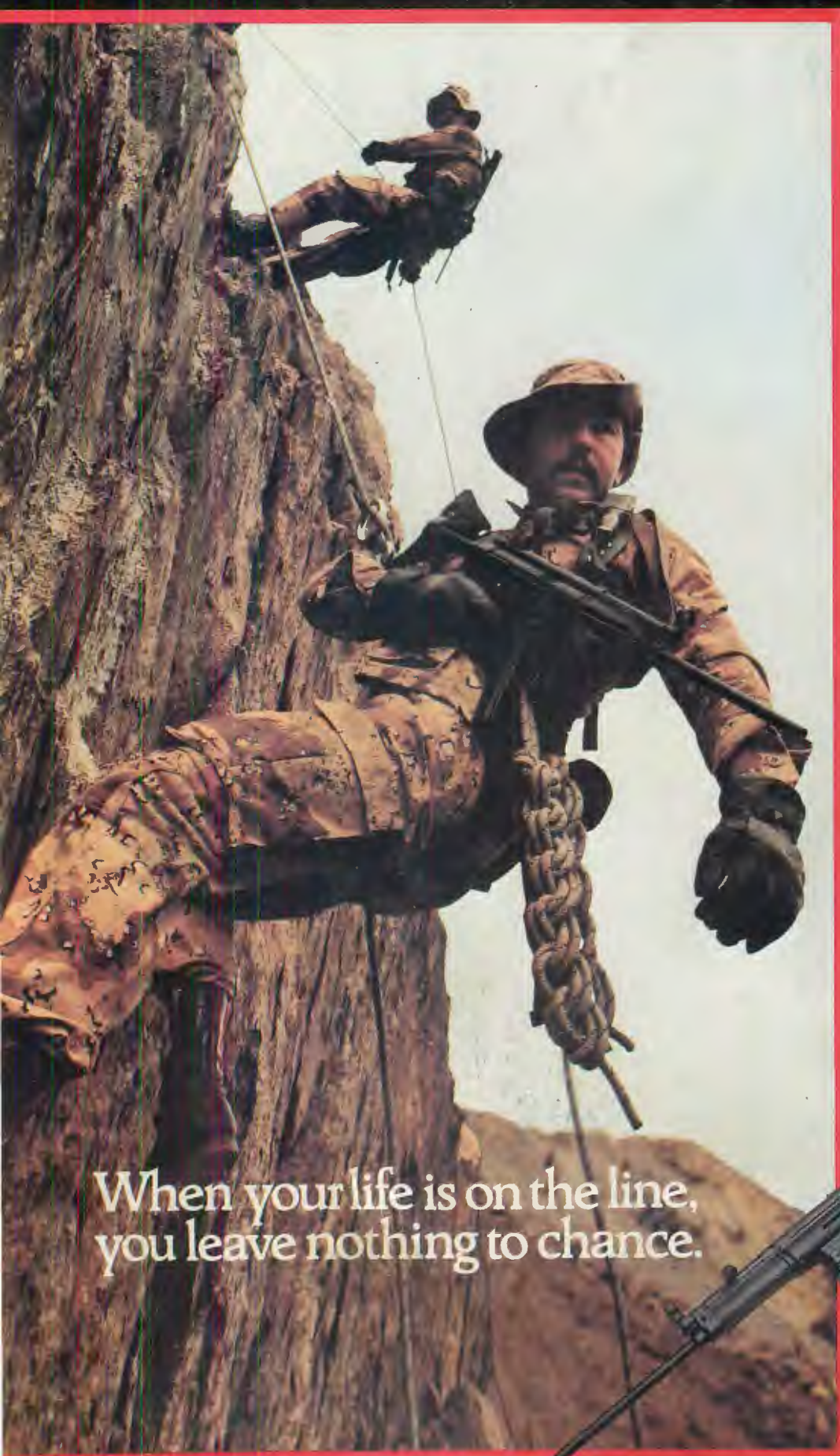
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