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The Journal of Professional Adventurer

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# DE-BRIEF

by Dale A. Dye, Executive Editor

**I**T seems hard to believe but the calendar tells me it's so. Ten years ago this month we all found out you can't win a war without a national will to fight. In April 1975, the wave of NVA troops sweeping down from the north crested in Saigon and the struggle for freedom in Southeast Asia went down like a tanker torpedoed amidships.

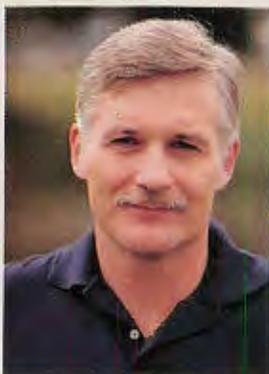
As predicted by hardheaded Hawks and other proponents of the Domino Theory, communism spread like an oil slick throughout the area. The Doves of the Vietnam era ignored that, concentrating on making veterans and families of men who died feel like deluded dupes, dirtbags, or drug-addled sociopaths who should be locked up before they bayonet someone's baby. Fortunately, the pendulum of popular opinion in this country is swinging in a more stable arc. The consensus on both sides of the Vietnam issue seems to be that our American fighting men performed magnificently in combat and won the battles that were ultimately lost in the political arena.

Most of our elected officials are on record indicating America should never again become embroiled in a fight she does not intend to win most handily. They say we *learned our lesson* in Vietnam and it ought to be time for a whole new history book before we take up the cudgel again in any sort of foreign war, no matter what's at stake. Unfortunately, as my country cousins used to say in reponse to an illogical argument, that dog won't hunt.

We are faced with a world situation today that fairly screams for

American involvement; American action and commitment to fights for freedom like the one which failed in Vietnam. Yet the spectre of that war — not to mention the nuclear saber-rattling being exercised by its former opponents in Congress — puts us on a short leash while communist attack dogs romp through the world with increasing potential to jump the fence into our back yard.

Syrians and their Soviet advisors are still calling the shots in the Middle East. The tragic loss of American servicemen there was not enough to make us do much more than retreat, leaving the Lebanese to wonder about the ultimate survival of their country. Our leaders refuse to provide much more than moral support and funds — which



are typically short-stopped — for the mujahideen in Afghanistan. Despite the President's personal commitment, we can't manage to muster any more than 55 trainers to help the Salvadoran Army fight communist guerrillas. We flatly refuse to vote money or other support for people fighting to free Nicaragua from the yoke of a communist government. And we still have not seen the light at the end of the tunnel in Southeast Asia. It continues to be guarded by the Karen in Burma and the KPNLF in Cambodia.

Those continuing struggles to preserve the freedom and dignity of oppressed people are the real lessons we should have learned from Vietnam.

In this 10th anniversary month, let me share a lesson I learned in that war. If you continue to retreat, your enemy will continue to advance. ☒

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**DOLE  
AMENDMENT**

**Bill Brooks**  
Weapons blockade  
breaker **29**

**UP AGAINST  
THE WALL,  
MARXIST  
MOTHERS**

**James L. Pate**  
Human rights hoax in  
Salvador **30**

**MORE MERCS  
AND THE LAW**

**Dana Drenkowski**  
More rights for captured  
combatants? **32**

**DEEP RECON**

**Harry Claflin**  
SOF contributes to Salvo  
combat readiness **34**

**SONORA  
SHOOTOUT**

**Dale A. Dye**  
Machine guns and  
memories **38**



**HARD CORE  
HEROICS AT  
THE FROZEN  
CHOSIN**

**Robert C. McNally,**  
USMC (Ret.)  
Stemming the Chinese  
tide **43**

**ANGOLAN  
AMBUSH**

**David Mills**  
SOF Treks the FNLA  
homeland **48**

**SOLOMON  
ISLANDS  
COAST  
WATCHER**

**Beth Hoagland**  
Keeping an Eye on the  
Rising Sun **59**

**HER  
MAJESTY'S  
MAULERS**

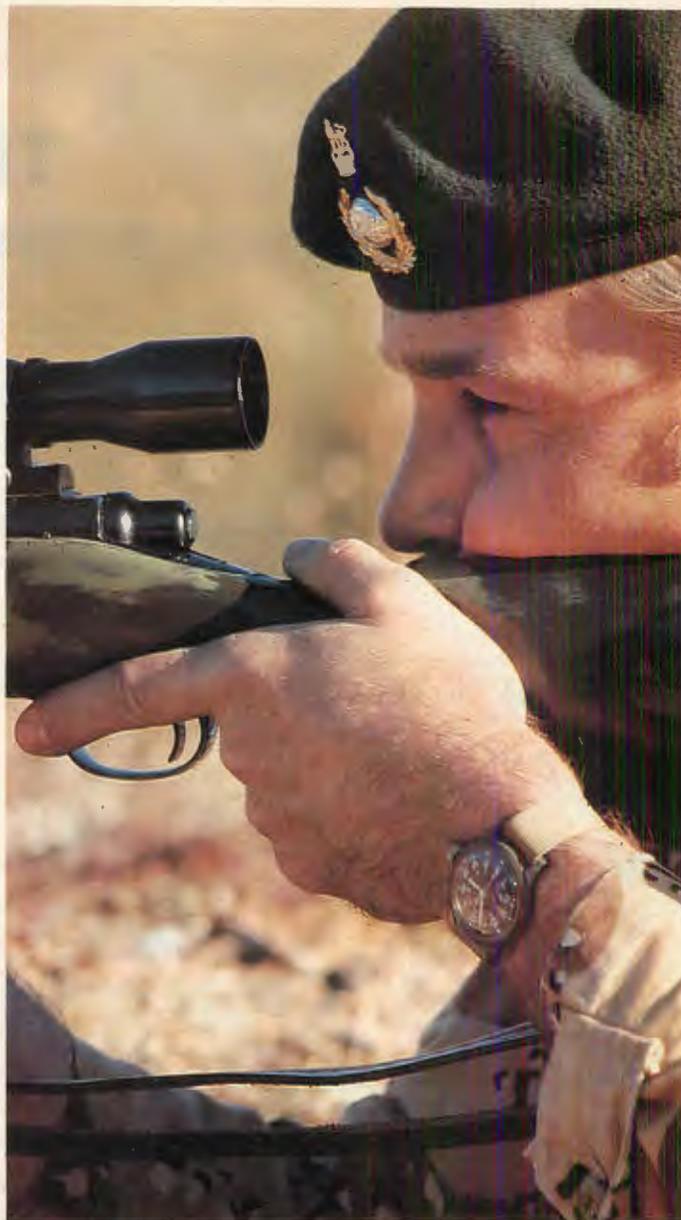
**George Barrett**  
Royal Marines take up  
Martial Arts **64**

**JATI**

**Peter G. Kokalis**  
Finland reinvents the  
SMG **66**

**BOONDOCK  
BEER BUST**

**Howard E. Simpson**  
Hoisting brews in  
Southeast Asia **74**



Page 38

**COVER: Capt. Dye shoots up the sagebrush in Northern Arizona, and flushes a few ghosts at the same time. "Sonora Shootout" continues the SOF Adventure Series on p. 38. Photo: Bill Guthrie**

**FLAK 6**  
Bulletin Board **10**  
Adventure Quartermaster **14**  
Combat Weaponcraft **18**  
Full Auto **20**  
I Was There **22**  
Battle Blades **24**  
In Review **26**  
Advertisers Index **108**  
Classified **109**

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**3 WW I Trench Knife**

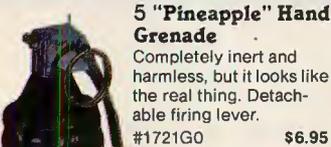
An exact reproduction of the famous World War I trench knife. "Knuckle Buster" grip, with a double edged 6" polished blade and a solid brass handle. This is truly a collectors item. Overall length 11".

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**8 Lifeknife Commando**

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**12 GI M-65 Field Jacket**

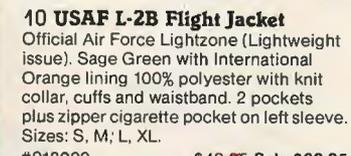
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## READERS IN ASIA...

Sirs:

Greetings from your one and only subscriber in Malaysia (at least I am the only one I know of). I have been following your articles concerning the problems and evolution of the M16 rifle, and the proposed plans to replace the M1911 service pistol with a 9mm pistol, with great interest over the years. After reading the article on the M16 in your January 1985 issue, I felt like most of the controversy concerning this weapon would probably be laid to rest.

Robert H. Taylor  
Kuala Lumpur,  
Malaysia

*Delighted to hear from our outpost in Malaysia. Hang in there with us and we will continue to keep SOF on target in 1985.*



## FLAK

### GOLDEN TEMPLE...

Sirs:

I am a Sikh from Punjab and a police officer. In your magazine, you try to bring the truth in front of the world. I thank you for that. The Indian government's action against the Sikhs was very right. Most of the people who were killed were not innocent, they were smugglers, robbers and murderers. They killed 490 people in the Punjab.

Bhagat Singh  
Punjab, India

*We watched the battle for the Golden Temple and subsequent events in India with some trepidation. There were atrocities committed by both sides and our coverage of the situation championed neither. Look for more on the situation in the Punjab when the government allows us in again.*

## A FIVE-YEAR FIGHT...

Sirs:

Please find enclosed a \$25 cash contribution to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund. Consider it a fifth anniversary gift to the brave Afghans' fight to free their country from the Soviet Army and the puppet government in Kabul. It is a small amount and I wish sincerely it could be larger — much larger. It is time that the West gets off its complacent ass and supports these brave men before we lose Afghanistan to the Iron Curtain.

W.H. Schreiber

*You're absolutely right. And we hope that our coverage and support of the Mujahideen will help get the West off its ass.*

## NEW, IMPROVED SOF...

Sirs:

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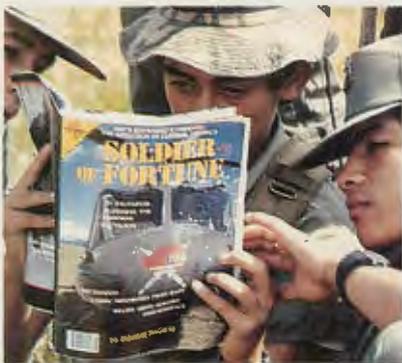
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When things get slack, the boys from the Recon Platoon sit in the shade and read SOF. After all, where else can they learn what's going on in Central America? Photo: Topaz

1983. It was an old 1982 issue and frankly, I was not impressed. In fact, the only reason I subscribed during 1984 was for the ads. I subjected each 1984 issue to severe scrutiny . . . and now feel adequately informed to . . . give a mark of outstanding. Keep up the good work.  
J. Malman

*Thanks for the kind words. We are constantly striving to bring readers the truth about what's happening in the world's hotspots. We will continue the march.*

## MORE ON THE M16...

Sirs:

I just received the January SOF and was extremely impressed by the in-depth article on the M16A2. I spent some time on that program and am convinced that it represents the finest combat rifle available in the world today. In February, 1963, . . . General David M. Shoup, 22nd Commandant of the Marine Corps, convened a Rifle Evaluation Board. The Evaluation Board's recommendations led to Secretary McNamara's decision to procure on a "one-time buy" the M16. That decision would have occurred after the board completed the evaluation, rather than January, 1963, as stated in your article.

The Marine Corps' role in the M16 was not widely known.  
W. H. Parrish  
Major, USMC  
The Commandant's Office  
Washington, DC

*Continued on page 102*

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screw and front sight, and check the trigger, magazine release, safety, slide stop, barrel band screw and barrel band spring—all also polished and plated with genuine 24-karat gold.

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## CANUCK M16A3...

Armaments contractors are saying the Canadian M16A2 (*we don't know what their designation will be*) will mount a 3.5-power optical sight in place of the much-maligned carrying handle. According to Pete Kokalis' sources, the completely sealed, European-reticle scope will be made by Leitz of Canada. The mount will provide all adjustment, and there are no plans for emergency iron sights.

Word is that the contract has been signed.

# BULLETIN BOARD



Model 92SB-F 9mm

## A NEW SIDEARM FOR THE MILITARY...

In late January the Department of the Army finally announced the winner of the exhausting JSSAP (Joint Services Small Arms Program) tests for a new military sidearm. Beretta won the whole shootin' match with the Model 92SB-F 9mm semi-auto pistol. The decision to procure and issue a new sidearm for soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines marks the first change in the standard American military pistol since the venerable Colt .45 was adopted in 1911.

In 1978, a House Appropriations Committee study recommended that the U.S. military adopt a sidearm that would fire the same 9mm cartridge as NATO military pistols. The JSSAP tests were the end result of that study.

Eight firearms manufacturers from the U.S. and overseas put their best entries into the ring but before the final bell only two were left. The SIG-Sauer P226 and the Beretta 92SB-F were the only handguns that could stand up to the rigors of the test and still come out fighting.

Beretta put on the meanest show. In addition to being the roughest and toughest performer, the military reported that the Beretta 92SB-F was also the cheapest to use. And in these days of tight military money, that's a welcome bit of news.

The new contract awarded to Beretta calls for them to manufacture 315,930 weapons for all branches of the U.S. military.

## MISSING PERSON...

SOF editor/publisher Robert K. Brown — former Team Leader of A334, Vietnam, January to August 1969 — wishes to correspond with anyone who has knowledge of Lt. Col. George R. Murray. Murray was B-Team commander of B33 from February 1969. Write Robert K. Brown, SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

## ARMED SERVICES SURPRISE...

With its vaulted ceilings and regal paneling draped with flags and crossed sabers, the House Armed Services Committee chamber has long been considered by military brass at the Pentagon as their safest haven on the less conservative side of Capitol Hill. No more. In a move that surprised many congressmen and angered a few, the House Democratic Caucus of the newly-convened 99th Congress skipped over five more senior members to name Les Aspin of Wisconsin as chairman of a committee that probably more than any other revolves on seniority and tradition.

Aspin joined Armed Services as a vocal Vietnam war critic. He has since become one of the Pentagon's toughest budget opponents on a panel long considered a sanctuary for retrograde hardware junkies and hardline defense hawks. He replaces Melvin Price, an 81-year-old, increasingly infirm, conservative Democrat from Illinois. Only one other member has served longer in the House than Price, who was unceremoniously dumped as HASC chairman after refusing to acquiesce to a growing feeling that his weak leadership and limited attentiveness during hearings gave HASC Republicans an undue amount of influence. The committee had been considered the best forum for Republican administration defense policies in the Democrat-controlled House.

Aspin is one of only three liberal defense critics still on the 45-member panel heavily weighted with hardline conservatives. Along with Ron Dellums of California, widely considered as *the* most liberal of the 535 Senate and House members, Patricia Schroeder of Colorado and two other liberals who are no longer panel members, Aspin was considered nominal leader of what their conservative HASC colleagues had referred to as "the feeble five," so named for perennially shrill but usually ineffective attacks on the defense budget.

It's a different story now. Any stands by Aspin against the Pentagon budget will obviously carry a great deal of weight. HASC has vast jurisdiction over defense policy and drafts the annual legislation authorizing maximum spending levels for weapons purchases, manpower ceilings and

*Continued on page 100*

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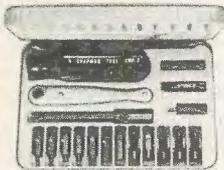
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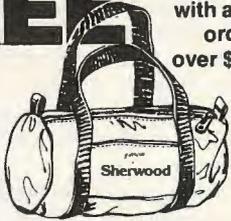


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## SNOW SIGNALS

Spot-It consists of a pocket-sized plastic flask filled with a surprisingly color-stable, bright red dye that spreads in snow and even soaks up through successive layers of fresh snow to leave a clear signal for aerial searchers. Tested by SOF staff, Spot-It performed as advertised. We found only two things wrong with the product: price and freezing temperature.

Considering that the few who stock survival supplies in their cars do so by shoving old camping gear and cheap **canned** goods behind the spare tire, it seems unlikely that most of them will shell out \$17.95 for about four ounces of an exotic dye. Spot-It is a good idea, but overpriced in comparison to smoking fires, road flares, mirrors and colored surveyor's tape.

SOF's most serious *criticism* of Spot-It concerns its freezing point. Although our test was insufficiently detailed to establish what the freezing point is, Spot-It Snow Marker was solid ice inside its little plastic bottle after it had been left out in a pack one below-zero night. This is an undesirable characteristic in a winter-survival aid that **must** be liquid to be useful.

Patents pending in the United States of America, Canada, Switzerland, West Germany, Japan and **Austria**, Spot-It Snow Marker could make the difference between being seen and not being seen in the snow. Thomas Rathbone, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2048, Spring, TX 77373. (713) 353-8250.

# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



## VESTED INTEREST

"Ruthemeyer's Individual Photographer's Vest" (RIP) is a prime example of the Marine tradition of taking a piece of sound gear and modifying it for personal use. Designed by Mike Ruthemeyer, until recently a Marine combat photographer, the RIP Vest is built around changes Mike made on a standard issue Air Force survival vest. SOF reporter/photographer Jim Pate wore the RIP on assignment in El Salvador while assigned to cover a 1984 SOF training mission.

Ruthemeyer's vest is designed to hold two camera bodies and four lenses — he suggests a 17mm, a 28-86mm zoom, a 70-210mm zoom with a macro-focus adjustment, such as a Vivitar Series I, and a 500mm. However, SOF could not make its Vivitar Series I lens fit in either of the two well-padded lens pockets conveniently located in the lower ribcage area of the vest's front panels. The Vivitar had to be stowed in an old version of the Army butt-pack attached to the vest to accommodate extra gear. This arrangement made it impossible to reach the bigger lenses without taking off the vest or fumbling behind the back with buckles and straps. That was a small problem.

But the RIP Vest does have plenty of pockets, all Velcro-closed and in easy reach. The two lens pockets were attached so they are easily accessible even when the photographer is lying on his belly with the vest zipped up. The lens-pouch zippers open from back to front, allowing a quick opening even in a prone position. Two elastic straps across the chest with quick-release buckles hold camera bodies down if the photographer is on the run.

The vest's utility belt accepts just about all NATO standard personal combat gear, except for the gas mask. But 30-round M16 magazine pouches are difficult to attach. It functions just as a combat harness does, except that it can accommodate much more equipment and is easier getting on and off when loaded with gear.

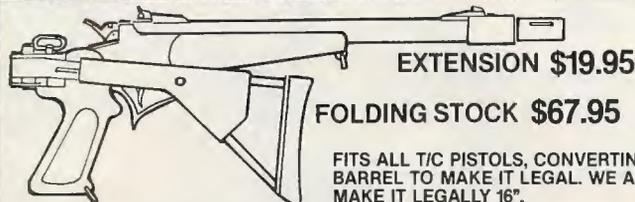
Ruthemeyer told SOF his vest is also compatible with parachutes, the bulky "Mae West" life preserver and the new style of flak jacket. It also functions fairly well rappelling with a Swiss seat, although the butt pack makes braking a bit tricky.

The RIP Vest is not yet in production, but Ruthemeyer said he thinks it will be in the \$100-150 range. Interested readers can obtain information on a custom-made RIP Vest by writing Dana Gleason, a friend who stitched Ruthemeyer's idea into a reality. Gleason can be reached in care of: Quest Vests Ltd., Dept. SOF, 109 Commercial Drive, Bozeman, MT 59715. ☒



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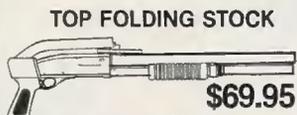


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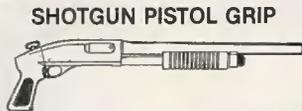
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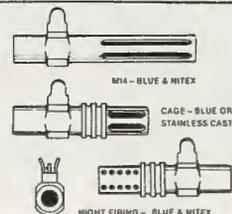


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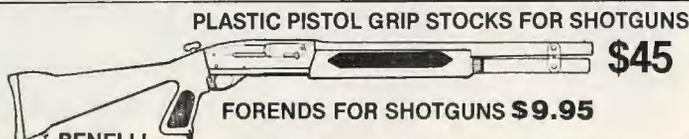


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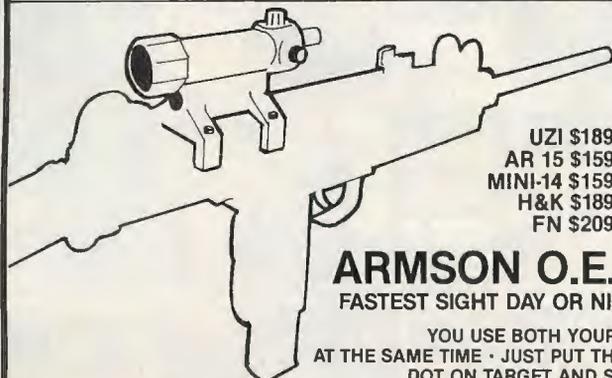
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**R**APPELLING down the side of some skyscraper and hurtling through a window to assault terrorists holding hostages looks great in the movies. But if you're doing it for real, the rappelling entry is one of the most dangerous tricks in the book. It's not really the best entry solution unless there is no other option. If that's the case, you should be aware that there is a recommended method.

Be prepared, get in fast, go in behind a stun or gas grenade, know your targets and don't fall.

Don't carry anything but weapons, radio and a gas mask. The set-up on top of the target building that serves as launch platform for your rappel has to be quick, secure and silent. The best point of attachment for your line will be some sturdy structural projection on the roof itself. Don't tie off to roof-top fence or TV antennas — and don't even think of letting one of your buddies try to hold the rope. The line must be thrown clear of obstructions on the face of the building, so learn your coils. One option is the rope bag. Since you have carefully coiled the rope inside the bag before the operation, there's nothing to snarl in other equipment. Another big benefit of the bag is that you carry the bag with you and rope is fed out as you descend, instead of blowing back and forth across the face of the building to tell everybody you're up there. Rope bags give less chance of rope fouling and a greater chance of surprising the terrorists.

Since the only excuse for a rappelling entry is an emergency, you aren't going to be as careful as a rock-climber on a descent. That means the rope has to be unusually strong (these days, everybody uses sheathed ropes instead of laid, or twisted, ropes) and care must be taken to pad any corners or edges the rope may cross. And be sure not to make unnecessary noise. Believe me, surprise is the *only* advantage you'll have. When you go through that window, you aren't going to have your gun in your hand, you probably won't know who's on the other side, you'll still have to figure out how you're going to get off the rope. And there's nothing to fall back on but air.

The military loves to wind and tie ropes around carabiners to make descending devices, but the working SWAT cop has to slide down ropes too often to fiddle with 'biner gates that are too loose, bent, or on the wrong side. Fortunately for military and police wall-crawlers, God made a race of guinea pigs called mountain climbers. They have developed a number of devices to loop ropes through so you can slide down them safely and detach yourself quickly. The simplest, strongest and most effective are called



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Fritz Borchardt

## TACTICAL RAPPELLING Is it Worth it?



**Author teaches tactical rappelling, but argues that it's generally a bad entry technique. Photo: Dale Andrade**

### WALL CRAWLER

Fritz Borchardt, 33, has startled and thrilled SOF conventioners with his hostage rescue demonstrations high above the pool at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas. He's even better known to the SOFers who took his rappelling class at the '84 convention. Fritz successfully completed the Dade County (Fla.) Metro Special Response Team Certification Course where he shared his knowledge with working SWAT cops. He is a tactical rappelling instructor, technical adviser to several U.S. police departments and field rep for various SWAT gear manufacturers. He is director of Stor-Fjeld, Ltd. (Dept. SOF, Box 548, Nederland, CO 80466).

"figure-eights" for their resemblance to the numeral 8. A "U" of rope goes through the top hole, the loop is spread around the curve of the eight's base and then gets cinched tight around the

eight's waist. The carabiner on your climbing harness gets clipped into the bottom hole on the eight. *Always attach the 'biner the same way.* You'll have to unclip quickly at some point. Take a final check of your weapons and radio, and you're ready to go.

Departure from the roof is by the normal lay-back, legs-horizontal posture used for everything from cliffs to choppers. Drop fast and quiet, but try not to bounce, keep control and don't kick any flower pots off to alert the bad guys. And don't overrun your target window, because you won't have any chance to climb back up to it.

Watch that window as you approach. If somebody is looking out, it's time to abort. And if there's a grate or wired double-plate safety glass, forget it. Don't try to smash through a steel window frame. If there's an open panel, go through that.

Now, here's the major hang-up: In spite of all the film you've seen on fighting entries to hostage siege situations, you won't have control of your body or the entry without both hands on the rope. Your hands will be full of lifesaving line when you crash through the glass, and your weapons will be

*Continued on page 78*

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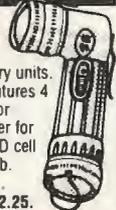
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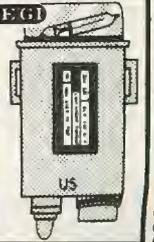
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**“S**CREW it in flush and back off two.” Any salty Marine can tell you that’s all you’ll ever need to know about Ma Deuce. There’s a lot to be said for keeping it simple, but quite a bit more than a rule-of-thumb for headspacing is required to wring maximum efficiency and firepower out of John Browning’s big, bad .50 caliber in its current configuration.

The idea for the .50-cal. BMG was born in the trenches of France in 1918. “Black Jack” Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, was alarmed by the increasing use of armor on vehicles, tanks and the individual soldier. His issue weapons were not penetrating and he sent an urgent cable to the War Department in April, 1918 requesting development of a large-caliber, heavy machine gun with a muzzle velocity of 2,600 fps and an effective combat range of 6,000 meters.

Winchester commenced development of the ammunition for a weapon which John M. Browning had started to design in July, 1917. The ammunition project was eventually moved to Frankford Arsenal. The first effort centered around a semi-rimmed case based on the German 13mm antitank cartridge. This was rejected and a rimless cartridge obtained by scaling up the .30-’06 case was adopted.

Browning spent slightly over a year from conception to successful firing of his .50-caliber machine gun. He retained the simplicity of his .30-caliber gun and all its basic operating principles. To this he added an oil buffer (to regulate the cyclic rate and absorb excess recoil energy), spade grips, and a thumb piece to actuate the trigger bar. An air-cooled aircraft version of Browning’s water-cooled heavy machine gun was fired on 12 November 1918 and was adopted in 1923 as the Model 1921. In 1933 it was renamed the M2. The ground, or infantry version, of this machine gun is called the caliber .50 M2 HB (Heavy Barrel). Its cyclic rate has been lowered from 850 rpm to 550 rpm. It can be immediately distinguished from the aircraft version by its long (45 inch) barrel and short ventilated barrel support. The aircraft Browning has a 36-inch barrel enclosed within a full-length ventilated jacket.

Ma Deuce, as it has been affectionately called by the generations of snuffies protected by its awesome firepower, is belt-fed (from the left side in the ground role), recoil-operated, and most certainly crew-served. It fires from the closed-bolt position — a mildly surprising distinction permitted by the massive heat reservoir its barrel and receiver group provide. I have spent a large amount of time taming



## FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

### THE CARE AND FEEDING OF MOTHER DEUCE



**Ma Deuce watches over besieged Marines at Khe Sanh. The Browning .50-cal. M2 has hammered away on the world’s battlefields for the better part of 60 years. Photo: Department of Defense (U.S. Marine Corps)**

this noble beast and these are my personal observations on what you need to know to meet with and destroy the enemy with the mighty .50.

In the infantry the M2 HB is mounted on the M3 tripod, an excellent ground support weighing 44 pounds. The front leg should always be extended as far forward as possible to offer the lowest profile behind cover and concealment (use a scratch awl to mark the leg so you can always return to this position without hesitation). This also permits the gunner to fire from the prone position. After the legs have been extended, the tripod should be lifted and the rear legs driven hard into the ground. Drop the front portion of the mount and jump on the front leg driving it into the soil too. If sand bags are available, long range accuracy potential can be significantly enhanced if two are placed under the center of the mount, below the pintle, and one or two over each leg.

The T&E mechanism should always be firmly locked to the traversing bar by the traversing slide lock lever. Firing without the T&E mechanism locked in place reduces the weapon’s effectiveness by 80 percent or more at ranges beyond 100 meters. Vehicular and pedestal mounts, such as those found on jeeps, trucks and M113 APC, which

permit free traverse and elevation changes without constraint, look impressive but ruin long-range accuracy potential of the .50 BMG. Avoid skate mounts whenever possible. Many experienced grunts can place rounds up a fly’s ass at 1,000 meters off the M3 tripod while some treadheads can barely hit a main battle tank at 100 meters with Ma Deuce mounted as a free gun on an APC.

Whenever it’s redeployed, the M2 HB is usually separated into its three carrying components: tripod, receiver/T&E mechanism and barrel. Unfortunately, each time the barrel is screwed back into the receiver the gun must be headspaced. John Browning thought he was doing us all a favor, since ammunition dimensions could vary considerably in his day. In our time of more consistent ammo, we still live with this ballistic brontosaurus.

The only way to properly headspace Ma Deuce is with the headspace gauge. Raise the feed cover; retract the recoiling parts just enough so you can screw the barrel all the way into the barrel extension. Back off two to three clicks. Cock the gun. Pull the retracting handle back until the barrel extension is about one-sixteenth of an inch from the trunnion block. Insert the “GO” end of the gauge in the T-slot, between the face of the bolt and the rear of the barrel. If it enters, turn the gauge around and attempt to insert the “NO GO” end. If it does not enter, headspace is correct.

*Continued on page 88*

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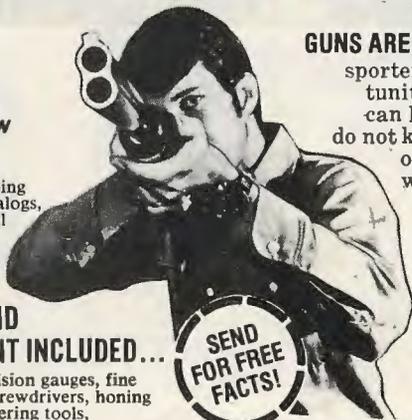
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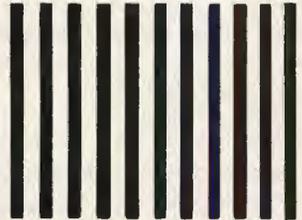
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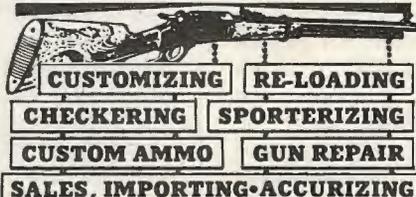
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**T**HE Huey transport choppers plopped like fat green flies on the smoldering LZ. Napalm had vaporized the plants and removed all signs of life except for my platoon scurrying to unass the choppers. Rotorwash blew dirt and ashes in all directions. The stinging debris blinded us and stuck to our sweat-stained bodies.

My men moved to the edges of the LZ to provide covering fire for the vulnerable helos should the cold LZ suddenly turn hot. As the choppers pulled out, I gathered my squad and moved in search of higher ground, cover and concealment. My job was to check out trails that led into this LZ and search for signs of enemy movement.

As we made our way into the jungle, we stumbled on an enemy corpse on the side of the hill. There was a fist-sized hole on the left side of his death-bloated head. Ants and other insects had gotten to him before we did. They had cleaned out his brains and all I could see was a gaping black hole in his skull. We threw dirt over the body and covered it with rocks. It wasn't because we had any particular respect for enemy soldiers, but I wanted to set up a position in the area where we'd have excellent observation and my troops could do without the company of a dead gook.

We ran patrols from the base area most of the morning and my guys were hot and sweaty with no contact. In the early afternoon one of my squad leaders approached with a look of concern of his face.

"Sarge, we got a problem."

"What's the problem?"

"Specialist Moore says he ain't staying here anymore." My squad leader was both pissed off and perplexed. "He said he has had enough of this bullshit and he quits."

I stared straight into the NCO's eyes. "Bring him here to me."

Moore showed up with an arrogant look on his face. He told me he'd had it "up to here" with Vietnam. He did not want to kill anybody or be killed.

I swallowed a large dose of anger and reminded Moore that a lot of guys fighting in Vietnam didn't know what they were doing here and did not want to have to kill anybody either. They damned sure didn't want to die any more than he did.

Specialist Moore was unswayed. "Hey, man. I ain't them. I'm me and I ain't fighting no more. I want to go back on the next chopper."

I tried an implied threat. "Do you realize that you will probably be court-martialed and sent to LBJ [Long Binh Jail]?"

Moore wasn't responding to threats either. "I don't give a fuck. At least I'll be alive."



# I WAS THERE

by Darwin Stamper

## CURING A QUITTER



**A stormy blast of rotorwash blinds soldiers as they struggle off the LZ in search of higher ground. Photo: AP Wide World**

I took a sip of my C-rat coffee and a drag on my cigarette, thinking about how I was going to handle this. It was one of the times I wished I had an officer present. I remembered reading about a platoon of GIs who had refused to go into combat and the hell the press played with it.

The whole platoon knew what was going on. Still, I didn't think this guy's actions would infect the rest of the troops. They were good men but the stress of one operation after another had them tired and edgy. But if I let this guy go out on the first chopper that came in, someone else might try it. And no one had been shot for this sort of thing in about 40 years. Specialist Moore had been a marginal soldier but had not been a real problem.

They just don't pay staff sergeants enough, I thought.

"Okay, Sergeant Sullivan." I addressed Moore's squad leader. "Take his weapon and let someone else carry it. Split up the rest of his gear among your squad."

Sullivan was not happy with my decision. "The squad is loaded down enough without carrying his shit."

I was not happy with Sullivan's bitching. "What the fuck do you want

me to do, Sarge? Leave it here for the VC?"

Moore thought he had a solution. "But a resupply chopper is coming in. I can go back on it."

No way was I going to let him off that easy. "I'm not bringing in a chopper just for you and we ain't going to get any supplies for a few days. In the meantime, we have a mission and you just committed a military crime. If I send you in, I have to send someone else as a guard. So forget it."

End of discussion.

We moved out early the next morning following a trail to the north. We cut sign of enemy presence about noon and I stopped long enough to send a five-man element up the trail. SP4 Moore came up and said he wanted his rifle back. It appeared the jungle boot was on the other foot now that we were within ambush distance of the enemy.

"Hey soldier, you're the one that said you didn't want to fight so you don't need it." I wasn't going to give this quitter an inch, enemy or no. I redirected my attention to a can of C-rations.

"Well, how about some food? Everyone else is eating."

"If you think I'm going to have these guys carry your goddamn food for you, you're fucked up. When I get time I'll get a chopper for you, but this ain't

*Continued on page 86*



**T**HE dagger is one of the most popular types of edged weapons in America these days. A lot of that has to do with Hollywood hype. Screenwriters tend to arm secret agents, double agents, adventurers, common thieves and murderers as well as virtually every variety of soldier with daggers.

Some people are getting rich selling daggers in their various incarnations from diminutive boot knives to larger, so-called "survival" versions. All that doesn't address the question of the dagger's effectiveness as a fighting knife or truthfully indicate how it stacks up against other edged weapons.

Disregarding eye appeal, I've never been able to reason why the dagger has enjoyed such overwhelming popularity in this country. Tales of our British cousins in the Commandos and their use of the Sykes-Fairbairn dagger in WWII are likely contributing factors. The fact that the Sykes-Fairbairn was prone to breakage and was not really all that popular with fighting men has been lost in the mists of history. What's needed is some hard information regarding what the dagger *really* is, its origins and the reasons for the dagger's development. Here's my contribution.

If you want to kill a man with an edged weapon, you do one of two things: punch a hole in him and hope you hit a vital organ or slash and slice him to the extent that he bleeds to death quickly. The slash and slice approach is generally the most effective, because the human body is quite vulnerable to it. Fighting men recognized that very early in the history of warfare and numerous types of swords and other slashing implements were developed to handle the task. Vulnerability on the battlefield prompts immediate response and warriors were soon at work developing armor which would protect them from the hack and slash attack of their enemies.

By the 15th century, European armor had developed so a man was really quite safe from a cutting or slashing attack from an edged weapon. Military thinking turned from cutting attacks to penetration as a counter. The idea was to attack cracks, crevices and seams in an opponent's armor. Armorers were soon at work making slender stabbing instruments that would slip inside the vision slits of a helmet, slide between the seam under the arm of an armored vest or puncture and separate the links in chain mail. The implement was not even required to have a cutting edge. The effectiveness was in the needle point rather than along a razor-sharp edge. Enter the dagger.

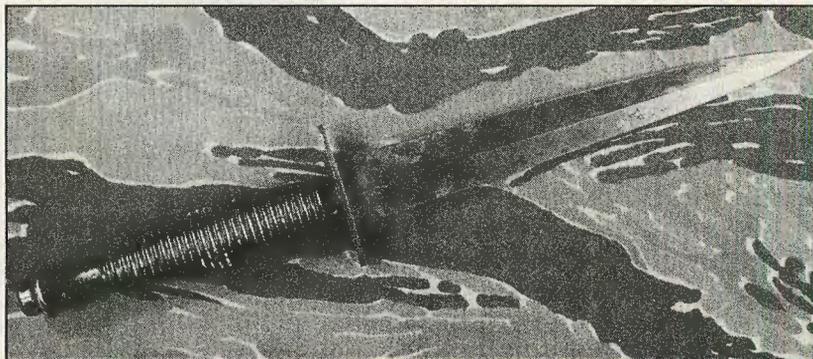
Many of the early models were simply glorified ice picks but the designs did advance into some stunning



# BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

## DAGGER DEFECTS



**Sykes-Fairbairn typifies modern fighting daggers: dull edge, light swing-weight and weak construction. Photo: Dale Andrade**

examples of art and artistry in knife design. In fact, some of the most beautiful knives ever made, both from an aesthetic and workmanship viewpoint, were the Italian and Spanish left-handed and quillion daggers of the first half of the 17th century. But these were *duelling* implements, used by gentlemen fighting other gentlemen in a rigidly controlled form of combat. Rules for duels were well defined and codified. When gentlemen fought each other, they followed the code. That allowed artisans of the period to concentrate on artistry in designing duelling implements. Weapons of war did not receive the same loving attention.

Daggers continued to be developed by people who traditionally went into battle wearing metal armor — mainly people of English and European extraction and soldiers of the classic military empires such as the Persians. Meanwhile, people on the other side of the world were thinking differently. The double-edged dagger was not widely used in Japan or Eastern Asia. Armor in those feudal areas was largely made of cotton and bamboo and the Japanese recognized that a slashing attack was the most effective counter to it. Their edged weapons reflect this. All this is interesting for historians, but we need to examine the double-edged dagger in today's arena.

In my opinion, this form of weapon is an anachronism. It will remain one unless soldiers go back to full body

armor that offers protection from a slashing attack. Most modern Kevlar body armor will protect you from a knife attack about like a Levi jacket, so don't expect to have to use your boot knife to breach *that* perimeter.

Simply put, I hope that the next guy who pulls a knife on me pulls a dagger. He will have given himself a handicap that will kill him. A man armed with a dagger is severely limited in the effectiveness of his attacks. He can stab but he can't slash. Here's why.

The dagger's double edge will not slash as well as a flat ground edge because the included angle of the cutting bevels runs from the median ridge of the dagger providing a bevel like an ax or chisel. A flat ground blade has a more gentle included angle between its cutting edge which gives it the tendency to slice like a razor. The fact that the dagger is ground with a double edge that tapers to the point also does two things that are detrimental to its combat capabilities. Such a design gives the weapon a very light weight and places the majority of the weight too far behind the point where it is sorely needed for balance. Further, light-weight daggers have less mass in their blades than single edge designs which makes them inherently weaker and more subject to breakage.

What all that means in the real world is that if you are presented a target such as an extended arm, and that arm is wearing the aforementioned Levi jacket, your dagger *just won't cut it*. If you and your dagger can get close enough to stab the guy, fine. On the other

*Continued on page 84*



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**WAR STORY.** By Jim Morris. Dell Publishing Company, Dept. SOF, New York. 1985. 304 pp. \$3.95. Review by Dale A. Dye.

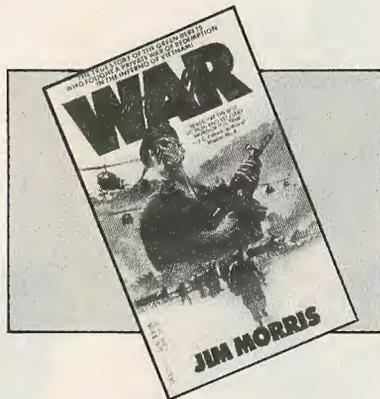
**F**rom the nightmare of the first chapter to the tearful end, *War Story* seems too real to be a genuine, first-person account of one man's experiences during the Vietnam War. That's probably because not many people got the same close-up view of war in Southeast Asia that author and Special Forces veteran Jim Morris reflects in bringing us his own war story.

No matter. Whether you were a Remington Raider in the rear with the gear, a line grunt punching holes in paddies or treelines, or a Special Ops type engaged in sneaky-pete stuff, there's something in *War Story* that will reach you. It's that sort of book — and Morris is that sort of writer.

Despite a surfeit of Vietnam books on the commercial market these days, there are few available that have the emotional impact of Morris' relatively simple story. It's a gut-slammer containing scenes that make you want to crawl under cover and yell "incoming."

This book is full of emotion, bile, adrenalin. Jim Morris stays away from artificial drama in his sometimes-sentimental Vietnam War autobiog-

## IN REVIEW



raphy. He understands that what's interesting is the human experience at war; not a book about the subject. That's why he avoids looking back at war through his own reflections and attempts to put his eyes in the reader's skull. You can see his war. It's all very direct but the book does not lack sophistication. You won't find any easy answers to difficult questions.

You also won't find any profound preachiness or political rhetoric. Morris makes but one discernible point about

man's greatest adventure. "Death wins all the battles but life wins the war." Don't bother to jot that down for posterity. Morris admits the thought occurred one night to a blitzed-out, punch-drunk, unwashed and very, very tired Special Forces captain who had heard his "Porgy and Bess" and Joan Baez albums too many times during a night of boozing. Morris doesn't take himself too seriously.

And it's a good thing for the reader. Morris regards such profundities with suspicion and that keeps *War Story* from being too sanctimonious or thoughty. It's not.

Morris' *War Story* begins with a warning concerning the difference between a war story and a fairy tale. That's also handy given the superficial claptrap that's appearing on the shelves now that it's no longer illegal or immoral to write serious books about the soldiers who fought in Vietnam. There is a depth of feeling coupled with a detailed, painful accounting of emotional and intellectual response to the rigors of combat that either transcends or stimulates what most veterans recall of their days at war.

This personal account is an artistic and argumentative reconstruction of events from the standpoint of a very intelligent, very literate, very sensitive man. Morris' handling of language and imagery makes you understand how many times his experiences have been dissected in his own mind. Actual events don't survive that much chewing without dissolving away from familiar shape and form. But the change doesn't hurt the story.

SOF readers won't want to read *War Story* to find out what *really* happened in Vietnam. Most of them already know. But if you want to know how one wounded and disillusioned vet handled thought and feeling after Vietnam taught him that life wasn't as simple as most war stories would make it seem, read Morris' book. If all that's too complicated, read *War Story*. Anyway. It's fine literature; perhaps some of the best to come out of Vietnam.

Morris has succeeded at writing an autobiographical account of a war that changed his life. He also knows that he wasn't the only soldier so touched. That's refreshing for those of us who have similar experiences but lack the talent or time to write a book about them.

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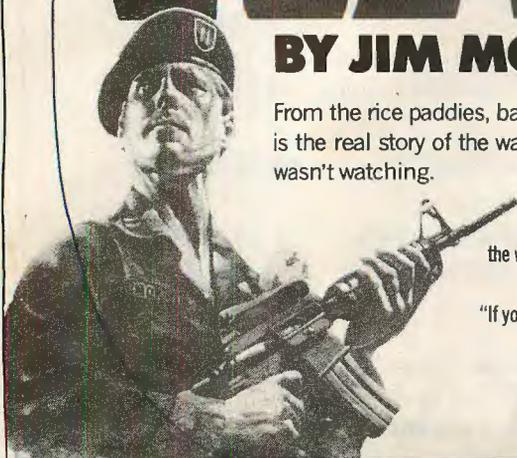
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*Continued on page 28*



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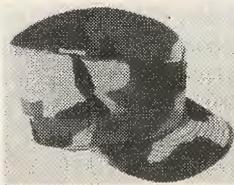
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**THE BROWNING HIGH POWER AUTOMATIC PISTOL.** By R. Blake Stevens. Collector Grade Publications, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 250, Station 'E', Toronto, M6H 4E2, Canada. 1984. 288 pp. 284 black-and-white illustrations. \$39.95. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

**A**T last: a comprehensive and exhaustive treatment of the renowned and revered Browning High Power model of 1935. In production now for 50 years, the High Power pistol has finally entered its twilight of the gods — soon to be trampled by the thundering herd of double-action whiz bangs now crawling out of every upstart's woodwork.

Stevens' work, a vast expansion of a 28-page pamphlet he authored a decade ago on Canadian High Powers, sets the stage with the late 19th century agreement that divided the world marketing rights to Browning pistols between Colt and Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre. Briefly discussed are the 9.8mm Colt Model of 1910 (doomed by U.S. Army adoption of this design in .45 ACP) and the 9.65mm FN Grand Browning (doomed by the advent of WWI). They put a more proper perspective on 10mm "innovations" of today.

The precise origins of the Browning GP (Grande Puissance, or High Power) pistol are discussed at length. Starting with John M. Browning's original prototype of the locked-breech version of a large-capacity 9mm military automatic, developed for the French military trials of 1922, the unheralded Dieudonné Saive redesigned the 16-

shot model of 1922 into the FN model of 1923 which featured an external hammer. With the death of John Browning in 1926, Saive assumed complete control of what was then called the Grand Rendement. Further streamlining, a curved rear grip strap, a reduced magazine capacity to meet French weight restrictions and numerous other modifications led to models of 1928, 1929, 1930, 1933 and finally the High Power as we were to essentially know it — but with a 1,000 meter tangent sight — in 1934. The French in the meantime, in their usual curriish fashion, adopted the locked-breech MAS model 1935, supposedly designed by a former officer in the French Foreign Legion, Charles G. Petter, but in reality a slavish imitation of the Colt-Browning-Saive concepts. In 1937 the French brazenly sold the rights to the 1935A Petter "design" to the Swiss firm of SIG Neuhausen where it emerged as the SIG P210 9mm Parabellum pistol.

Collector interest will accelerate with the chapter on pre-WWII High Power models as quantity production commenced. But here I must caution novice collectors against the "holy writ" syndrome. Books like Stevens' must, of necessity, attempt to make order out of chaos. Arsenal did not make weapons for collectors, but rather for war. Parts bins are apt to contain parts of both an old and new series. Workers are apt to install whatever they pull out of the bin, especially in wartime scenarios. Stevens states the "square-lug" modification to strengthen the barrel lug did not appear until late in the final contract run of pistols for the Belgian State with the serial numbers beginning in the

36,000 range. My own specimen, serial No. 31,922 (with matching barrel), has the "square-lug" modification as well as the 500-meter tangent sight with the graduations all grouped on the rear half of the tangent bar and supposedly found on only the very earliest High Powers. *C'est la guerre.*

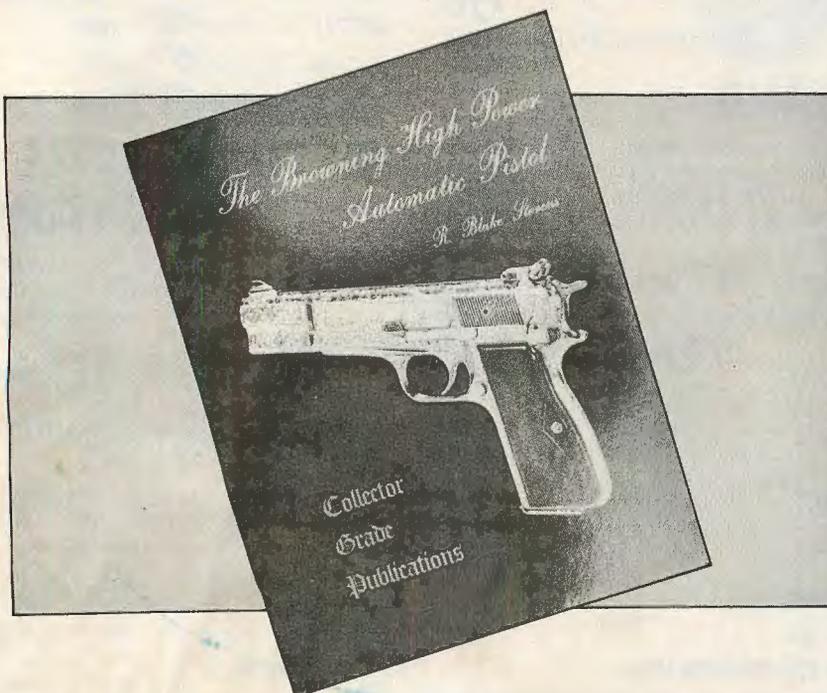
FN production under the Nazis is covered. The Germans managed to manufacture 319,000 High Powers under conditions of bureaucratic bumbling on a grand and magnificent scale. The story of the Canadian Inglis High Power is rendered in the most complete detail, including the post-war Canadian Arsenals Lightweight High Power and the short-lived NAACO (North American Arms Company of Toronto) Brigadier chambered for a .45-caliber cartridge similar to today's .45 Winchester Magnum rimless cartridge. The WWII British ploy to produce the High Power without acknowledgement of FN's proprietary rights is noted. That it fizzled, saved embarrassment on both sides of the channel.

Stevens' description of post-war FN production is all inclusive and all important in underlining the High Power's constant modification and improvement from 1950 to 1980. Changes to the barrel lug and cam, frame, magazine safety, extractors and sear levers are clearly illustrated, as are such oddities as the Winston Churchill Presentation High Power and a gold-encrusted tangent sight High Power made before the war for King Farouk of Egypt.

Escutcheons and other factory-applied military markings to foreign contracts are given five pages of original FN contract drawings. However, the markings illustrated for the contract to El Salvador are not those I have observed.

Sporting, target, engraved and the so-called "new family" of double-action prototypes are all illustrated. In all cases the photography is superb in this fine book. The Argentine "FM Browning" pistols (now replacing the FN High Powers of El Salvador) are discussed, but Stevens fails to mention that most will be found with a black enamel finish over phosphate. The Indonesian "Pindad" and the blatant and unauthorized Hungarian FEG FP9 and P9RA (alloy frame) are also covered.

This is a stunning book, eagerly awaited by the many thousands devoted to the great and classic Browning High Power. It provides collectors with the required pigeon holes and everyone else with some interesting reading. Highly recommended to all. Necessary to those involved with military small arms at any level. Stevens at his very best. ✕





# DOLE AMENDMENT

## The Weapons Blockade Breaker

by Bill Brooks

**M**1 Garands for under \$200? M1 Carbines for under \$100? Gun-show scuttlebutt has been rife with such rumors for the last year.

It's all prompted by a new law which has revamped the basic ground-rules for importation of military arms. The floodgates have been opened and some dealers and collectors are predicting a glutted market. That could mean a significant increase in availability and a drastic reduction in prices for certain military guns which have always been big favorites with buffs and collectors.

On 30 October 1984 Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, R-Kan., announced his amendment to the 1968 Gun Control Act was signed by President Reagan. That started the rumor mills rolling across the nation. The Dole Amendment reclassifies small arms manufactured between 1899 and 1946 as *curios* and *relics*, exempting most older military arms from the stringent import restrictions which had frustrated dealers and collectors for years.

Military firearms available to licensed importers will include military pistols, revolvers, bolt and semi-automatic rifles recently added to the BATF Curios and Relics list. Title 2 firearms, such as automatic rifles and suppressors (silencers), are not affected by the amendment. That would appear to be good news, but it has caused some concern among people with valuable collections.

Many military arms collectors are worried that the Dole Amendment will result in a sudden increase in supply and a subsequent decrease in price for pre-1946 military firearms. Meanwhile, the military gun buffs and small-time collectors are hoping they'll finally be able to buy reduced-price guns that were out of their price range previously. It has already had some of that effect on prices.

An ad in the January issue of *Shotgun News* hawked NRA "fair-minus" condition Broomhandle Mauser pistols, normally priced out of the small collector's range, for \$125. That may be an atypical case, since



**The M1 Garand — one of a number of pre-1946 dated weapons that have been affected by the Dole Amendment. Collectors have seen a decrease in the price of Garands from \$800 to \$275.**

the Broomhandle was one of the most widely manufactured pistols of the first half of the 20th century and only marketed as a collectible in this country because of the ban on importation of most 20th-century military weapons, but such price decreases are clear signals of things to come.

Gun writers and major collectors who study the market agree the Dole Amendment will produce a drastic drop in the value of all non-collectible weapons. M1 Carbines have already plummeted from \$350 to \$150. And M1 Garands which sold for as much as \$800 nine months ago are now being marketed for as little as \$275 with no bottom line in sight. Still the situation is not all roses for serious military weapons collectors despite the changes involved in the Dole Amendment.

Many weapons imported under the new regs will never wind up in classic collec-

tions because they will not be in issue condition. According to the provisions of the 1968 Gun Control Act they'll have a modern importer's mark stamped into the metal on the weapon. In the eyes of serious collectors, that significantly defaces the weapon which must be in original condition to satisfy their standards. But stamps or no stamps, it is scarcity and condition that will sell imported pieces, and those stampings required since 1968 have not affected prices.

Bill Rogers of Springfield Sporters, one of America's largest arms importation companies, believes the concerns are ill-founded and that collectors, both old and young, will come out ahead in the end. "Supply and demand is the name of the game. The price will fall off a certain imported model until they are all sold; then the price will go back up as the demand increases for the depleted stocks."

He also predicts that a lot of get-rich-quick commandos are going to lose their boots. "The U.S. Treasury Department [Importation Branch of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms] is deluged with requests for import licenses. These people think they are going to buy, with borrowed money, large lots of rare surplus military arms and bring them into this country and quickly sell them at inflated prices." A 90-day moratorium on import licenses (which cost \$1000) was imposed on the supposed effective date of 14 November 1984. When that lifts, the competition is going to help keep the prices low.

Peter G. Kokalis, SOF's military small arms editor, is not concerned that his collection will be affected. "Those collectors who had the foresight to purchase mint-condition merchandise will not suffer. The majority of the arms that will be imported into this country will be dredged from the river bottoms. Really fine pieces will always hold their value."

Many collectors have charged that the previous military firearms restrictions in effect since 1968 were inspired by the U.S. arms industry. Industry sources deny the charge and say they are delighted with the Dole Amendment. Our most highly placed source — who doesn't want to be quoted for obvious reasons — says that the industry will realize growth and profit from increased availability of military firearms. "Kids who can't afford a \$500 AR-15 or \$1000 Mannlicher may be able to buy a, say, \$50 Argentine Mauser," he commented. "We believe that the loosened import policy will herald a regeneration of the American firearms industry."

At this point, it's *all* speculation. The Treasury Department has neither published a BATF Curios and Relics list nor updated import regulations. NRA Field Representative George Nyfeler believes "it might take till July for the Dole Amendment to come into effect."

Whatever the final outcome following passage of the Dole Amendment, collectors like me are just itching to see what starts showing up in the trade papers this Spring. ☒

# UP AGAINST THE WALL, MARXIST MOTHERS

## El Salvador's Human Rights Hoax

by James L. Pate

Photos by Topaz



**M**ARXIST insurgents around the world will wave the hell out of a flag, many of them probably like apple pie, but they have no respect for motherhood if recent events in El Salvador are any evidence. Salvadoran women — many with a distinct flair for theatrics — have been organized into a group purporting to stand for peace at any price in Central America.

Swallow that lump in your throat. It's all a typical example of communist disinformation.

The "mothers" claim to have lost sons or other family members in the fighting between communist guerrillas and government forces and the tragedy has supposedly driven them to become political. During the media event that marked the first meeting between communist guerrilla leaders and representatives of the Salvadoran government in La Palma last year, they postured, posed and protested before banks of whirling Nikons and mini-cams, claiming to be "a group of mothers and families of political prisoners, and missing and assassinated persons in El Salvador."

They are putting pressure on President Jose Napoleon Duarte's government to knuckle under to guerrilla demands — no matter how ludicrous — so the fighting will stop. It's a familiar ploy aimed at human emotions and all the things civilized people are supposed to hold sacred. They may have taken a cue from the growing MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) movement in this country, but there is certainly no similarity in the sincerity or motivation of the people involved.

The Committee of Mothers — *Comite de Madres*, as they are known in El Salvador — is a classic example of the power, reach



LEFT: The Marxist Mothers exploit children such as the boy sitting in doorway of this war-scarred building near La Palma. Note the marks of heavy-caliber weapons fire. OPPOSITE: Despite the innocuous-nun look, the women involved with the Committee of Mothers spout sinister propaganda in La Palma. BELOW: The Committee of Mothers wades into a crowd of eager reporters in La Palma. Without cooperation from the mainstream media, the disinformation tactics used by the Marxists would never succeed.





and influence of the conductors waving batons to direct the well-orchestrated symphony of communist propaganda in Central America. If they fail to insert a bayonet in the gut of their enemies on the battlefield, they will go for the heart with an emotional appeal based on a faulty premise.

The message conveyed by the communists through the Committee of Mothers is clear: Stop the fighting at all costs so no more sons will be lost. No one bothers to mention that the sons who are saved will have to labor under cruel communist tyranny for the rest of their lives. The faulty premise is equally clear: Submission to communism is better than losing sons in the fight for freedom.

Naturally, that doesn't keep fuzzy thinkers in North America from climbing on the bandwagon and being taken for a ride. The Robert F. Kennedy Foundation has undoubtedly been duped the worst by the Committee of Mothers and it has cost the organization at least \$30,000. That's the amount of a cash award given by the foundation in recognition of work supposedly undertaken on behalf of human rights in El Salvador.

Directors of the RFK Foundation gave their first cash award to the *Comite de Madres* shortly after they organized to foster and support the late senator's "convictions . . . that all individuals have basic rights to participate in the decisions, social and political, that affect their lives." It's hard to argue with the spirit behind such dedication,

but lofty motivations won't mask faulty judgement. Fortunately, Foggy Bottom bureaucrats had their periscopes up and torpedoed what could have amounted to a major Marxist propaganda coup.

In announcing their decision to grant the award, the RFK Foundation generated wire service stories which cited the Committee of Mothers contained members who "have been imprisoned and sequestered and killed" because their work "is so dangerous and arduous" were presumably based on some of that imagination.

Other reports which said the Committee of Mothers contained members who "have been imprisoned and sequestered and killed" because their work "is so dangerous and arduous" was presumably based on some of that imagination.

The State Department wasn't buying any of it. Quick checks on such contentions brought flat denials from State Department area experts and the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador. The truth of the matter seemed to be that if any of the members of the Committee of Mothers had been killed, it was because they were working in support of communist insurgents and terrorists.

Four of the five politically active young women chosen by the Committee of Mothers to fly to the United States to accept the award from the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation were denied entry visas by the State Department. The decision was based on a State Department official's consultation with U.S. Embassy representatives in

San Salvador, according to spokesmen for both agencies.

Officials cited Title 212A, subsection 28F, of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, which bars persons professing the use of force and acts of violence from entering this country. That meant no entry visa for Maria Tera Zula de Canales, Elivia Cosme Hernandez Garcia, Consuelo Amenda Lemus Salinas and Dilia Haydee Nelgar Alvarado, all of whom, according to State Department and Washington intelligence sources, have been tied by name to Marxist guerrilla groups in El Salvador and implicated in specific terrorist acts.

So much for the little-old-lady-in-mourning scam.

The State Department notified the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation awards selection committee of the questionable backgrounds of the four women, but the foundation panel apparently chose not to back off from their avowed support of the Committee of Mothers, despite the evidence that they'd been had. They announced their intention to go ahead with the award ceremony. Four empty chairs were placed on stage at the ceremony as a symbol of protest against the State Department's decision to keep people who had been linked with terrorist activities out of the United States. The Committee of Mothers might have pulled off a propaganda victory *in absentia*, but a few Washington-based reporters turned over yet another shovel full of manure.

The Marxist Mothers were nominated for the \$30,000 award by a selection panel member, Ms. Patricia Derian, who served as Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Carter administration. She has long been affiliated with the Institute for Policy Studies, a Washington-based foreign affairs think-tank well-known for support of international leftist causes.

The set-back has not kept the Committee of Mothers from continued attempts to manipulate the media in their own country. Garbed in black robes and white headgear that intentionally resembles a nun's habit, the organization showed up at the first round of El Salvador's peace negotiations in La Palma. With good financial backing and political organization, they appeared at just the right moment to get plenty of attention from the press. Handing out propaganda pamphlets as they went, the women — many of them clearly too young to have children old enough to have been involved in military or political affairs — marched up the main street of La Palma. They had obtained and knew how to use electronic "bull horns" to amplify their maudlin message and played directly to the largest gaggle of reporters, which dutifully zeroed in with cameras and tape recorders to give the group an international forum.

Maybe some enterprising reporter will continue to track the Marxist Mothers and discover how many government soldiers are killed by bullets bought with the \$30,000 windfall they got from the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation. ❧

# MORE MERCS AND THE LAW

by Dana Drenkowski



How would a Nicaraguan court have charged these men if they'd been captured, under new treaty protocols? Left to right: Cliff Albright, Comandante Mack of the FDN and CMA's James P. Powell III, killed 1 September 1984 in a helicopter crash in Nicaragua.

**S**IGNING a treaty and ratifying it are two different things. Signing shows that representatives agree to the form of the convention, but approval of what it says only comes when governments ratify the convention.

In "Merc Work: Does the Geneva Convention Apply?" (SOF December '84) you read that two supplements to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 were signed by nearly 60 nations in 1978. These new supplements (called protocols) were not ratified by most of the signers. Everybody had agreed that this was the document they were talking about, but that didn't mean they were all willing to subscribe to it. And much of the disagreement revolved around the definition of "mercenary," since Article 47 of Protocol I had turned the traditional definition of mercenary on its head.

Formerly, a mercenary was someone who fought in foreign force for high pay. Foreign contractors weren't mercs. Even some fighters weren't mercenaries, as long as they didn't hold rank. Most foreign advisers, technicians and consultants — even short-term contractors — escaped the mercenary label simply by not joining a foreign army. Now, under Article 47, individuals who actually join the armed forces of a foreign nation, regardless of pay or other motivation, *cannot* be called mercenaries by those countries which have ratified Protocol I.

Article 47 defines a mercenary as an indi-



## LAWYER OF FORTUNE

Merc stereotypes aren't wasted on Dana Drenkowski. Two tours in Vietnam — one in F4s and one in B52s — were followed by fighting in the air and on the ground in every quarter of Africa, and in Central and South America.

But sometimes he strayed. Drenkowski graduated from the Air Force Academy, acquired a Master's in psychology and a law degree. A sometime correspondent for SOF, Dana practices general and international law in San Francisco, Calif., specializing in POWs and retrieval of equipment lost overseas.

vidual who (a) is recruited abroad to fight, (b) takes part in hostilities, (c) gets much more pay than locals get for the same job, (d) is not a citizen of the parties or nations involved in the conflict, (e) is not a member of the armed forces involved in the conflict, and (f) was not on official duty as a member

of the armed forces of another country.

Now, before we reconvene the Nuremberg Tribunal for those few who do qualify as working mercs, let's look at the consequences. Article 47 specifies no punishment, and there is no "crime" of being a mercenary under the Geneva Convention or its protocols. A captured fighter judged a mercenary under the definitions of Protocol I merely doesn't have the protections of POW status. But the soldier-for-hire isn't completely at the mercy of his captors, either.

Article 75 draws guidelines for protection of non-POW captives. The victors can't murder, torture or threaten the non-POW. Indeed, signers of the convention and its protocols may only try him in a regularly convened court of law. Since the codes of some countries grant little protection to their citizens, Article 75 further specifies guarantees of rights based on major nations' laws.

Only about two dozen countries had ratified the protocols when "Merc Work" was written. But now more than 40 nations claim to guarantee these rights to captured combatants, though some refuse to ratify Protocol I, with its mercenary definitions.

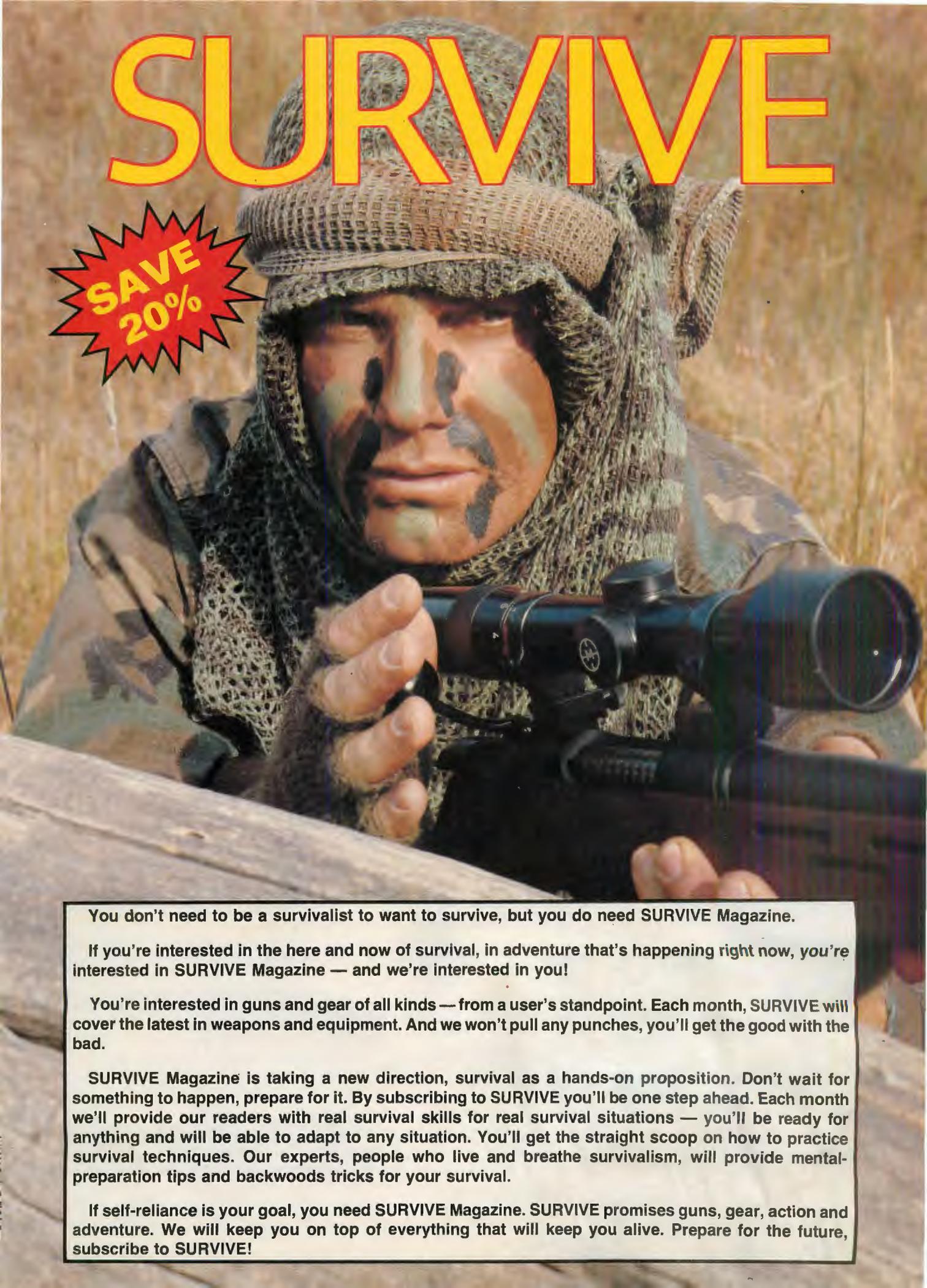
Presented here is a list of the nations that have ratified Protocol I. Would-be mercs are well-advised to check that line-up care-

*Continued on page 94*

## COUNTRIES RATIFYING OR ACCEDING TO PROTOCOL I, GENEVA PROTOCOLS TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949

- |                |                   |                        |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Austria     | 15. Jordan        | 28. El Salvador        |
| 2. Bahamas     | 16. Korea         | 29. Sweden             |
| 3. Bangladesh  | (Republic of)     | 30. Switzerland        |
| 4. Bolivia     | 17. Laos          | 31. Syria              |
| 5. Botswana    | 18. Libya         | 32. Tanzania           |
| 6. Cameroon    | 19. Mauritania    | 33. Tunisia            |
| 7. China (PRC) | 20. Mauritius     | 34. Vietnam            |
| 8. Congo       | 21. Mexico        | 35. Yugoslavia         |
| (Brazzaville)  | 22. Mozambique    | 36. Zaire              |
| 9. Cyprus      | 23. Namibia       | <b>Recently added:</b> |
| 10. Denmark    | 24. Norway        | 37. Niger              |
| 11. Ecuador    | 25. Oman          | 38. Cuba               |
| 12. Finland    | 26. Saint Lucia   | 39. United Arab        |
| 13. Gabon      | 27. Saint Vincent | Emirates               |
| 14. Ghana      | & Grenada         |                        |

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**SOF CENTRAL AMERICA**

# DEEP RECON

## SOF Boosts Salvo Bush Beasts

Text and Photos by Harry Claflin



**T**HE mission keeps evolving. Do more work with the same inadequate number of people. There's nothing the paltry group of 55 U.S. military trainers in El Salvador can do about it but bitch among themselves and get on with the task despite the frustrations of having their hands tied by political considerations. Making waves might swamp the leaky boat in which the soldiers float through their assignment in Central America.

Those considerations don't make the situation any easier to handle—or any more justifiable in the eyes of a growing number of Americans. The Salvadoran military has doubled and tripled in size since U.S. assistance began but the number of authorized U.S. trainers has been obstinately kept at the same inadequate level. Enter the private sector of American society, particularly *Soldier of Fortune* training teams.

SOF's training assistance has included numerous missions to help El Salvador's Army and Air Force, which includes the only airborne-qualified anti-terrorist battalion in the country's military establishment. The paratroopers are in effect El Salvador's primary special operations, quick-reaction force and a natural attraction to

SOF trainers, most of whom have similar military backgrounds.

Headquartered at Ilopango Air Force Base a few miles outside San Salvador, the Airborne Battalion denied communist guerrillas a major victory last summer. Only three hours after a major insurgent attack on the hydroelectric dam at Cerron Grande, which provides over half of the nation's electricity, the Airborne Battalion — spearheaded by its Deep Reconnaissance Platoon (DRP) — deployed in the area, overcame several ambushes and routed the enemy. This operation and others that followed clearly demonstrated the need for a high level of expertise in the DRP and a continuing training program to combat a high rate of attrition in the special operations unit.

In order to follow up on training begun with the DRP in June 1984, and to assist the rest of the Airborne Battalion in any way I could, I returned to Ilopango during November and December as an SOF-sponsored trainer. The battalion commander was glad to see me return and we quickly agreed on a curriculum concentrating on the DRP, given my Marine Corps Force Recon combat background. We set up a grueling training schedule, including insertion by rappelling, operation and employment of

Fortunately, the airborne DRP troopers were in from the field and we were able to start right away with basic rappelling topics such as knots, the various seats and their practical applications, plus safety measures. It was difficult to get some of the more motivated recon troops to observe those as I discovered later in training.

The original plan was to give all the DRP troops a chance to go down the 75-foot training wall four or five times before trying rappels from the free-fall side of the tower. The DR platoon commander thought that was a waste of time. After all his men had made a single wall descent, the lieutenant announced the second trip would be a free-fall. He had more confidence than I did but it was hard to argue with his rationale. Hueys, the primary air asset for inserting the DRP in enemy-held territory, do not have walls hanging off their skids, he said.

They caught on quickly and I wondered whether it was a matter of motivation, fear — or both. It wasn't long before their competitive spirit was kindled and they were having races to see who could reach the ground first. As the competition stiffened, troopers used their brakes less and less. One young soldier finally decided, what the hell, the brake just slows you down. He won his heat, but busted his ass.

By the fourth day, the recon trainees were ready and anxious for their first rappel from a Huey. I had more misgivings, this time about the helo crew. Holding a steady hover while the aircraft becomes lighter with the departure of descending troops can be tricky for inexperienced pilots. Our crew chief had never run a rappelling exercise before and I had to rig my own "doughnut" cable through the C-rings on the floor of the Huey to anchor the rappelling ropes. As an added safety measure, I hooked up a comm helmet and tested it to make sure I could talk to the pilot in case anything went wrong. A major training injury would erode the DRP troopers' confidence in this new insertion technique.

As the first stick of excited recon troopers approached the chopper to board and hook up, I carefully checked each Swiss seat to

make sure it was correctly tied and adequately secured. Each snap-link or carabiner was in the gate-up position. We were ready.

With four men hooked securely to the central anchor and rope bags in place, I gave the crew chief a thumbs-up and the aging Huey staggered into the air. We were over the training DZ shortly after lift-off and the pilots descended to a hover about 90 feet off the deck as I had instructed them to do. We deployed the rope bags and three seconds later we had four rappel lines, each with about 10 feet of slack on the ground, swaying under the bird.

Then came the dicey part. I spoke to the pilot and let him know I was putting people out onto the skids. He held a rock-solid hover while I motioned for all four DRP troopers to stand outside the door. Shifting from left pair to right pair, I reminded them that they must all deploy at once on command. If someone hesitated too long, we could have a disaster on our hands. They nodded acknowledgement of the warning and tensed on the landing skids with brake hands holding the rappelling line at mid-back and leading hands loosely holding the rope above them. They bounced slightly to test the brake and stood ready to push off with their legs.

From the grins on their wind-burned faces I could see they didn't realize this was the most critical part of any rappelling operation from a Huey. If all four men do not deploy at the same time, the chopper can quickly become unbalanced and possibly crash if the pilot is not on the ball enough to compensate quickly. U.S. Marine reconnaissance trainers have been known to take hesitant first-time Huey rappellers by the collar and shove them off the strut to make sure everyone deploys at the same time.

Our troopers didn't hesitate a second after I gave the signal to go. We fell rapidly into a pattern of brief touchdown to pick up another stick, get airborne to a hover, rappel and do it again until everyone had made at least one descent from the bird. The DRP troopers ate it up like beans and rice. By the next day they were deploying from the Hueys with full combat loads. At sunset on the second day of instruction we had one mighty bored helicopter pilot, a tired *gringo* instructor and a Deep Reconnaissance Platoon chomping at the bit to be inserted into Indian country by rappelling out of a helicopter. As far as I was concerned, that needed to wait until we could do something about the condition of their weapons.

Preventive maintenance tends to be catch-as-catch-can when you're fighting a real war with inadequate training. I wanted to do something about that by convincing the DRP troopers that it was a vital aspect of life insurance on the battlefield. It wasn't going to be as easy as the rappelling instruction.

The DRP CO said his men had no cleaning equipment or supplies. With the help of some friends in the logistics business, I scrounged the needed items and began

Claymore mines and preventive maintenance procedures for communications equipment and weapons.

DRP is made up of less than 100 personnel hand-picked from the the Airborne Battalion. Their mission is to gather intel and conduct hunter-killer ops against the Gs. Insertion includes sea, land and air options. Available in their weapons inventory are M16s, M60s, M79s and 60mm mortars.

## GUERRILLA WAR EXPERT

Harry Clafin should be increasingly familiar to readers of *Soldier of Fortune*. His extensive background in counterinsurgency warfare tactics and security techniques — both in the military and as a private-sector, government-contracted consultant — has made him a valuable asset during three separate SOF training missions in Central America. He has helped trained Army and Air Force regulars in El Salvador and anti-Sandinista guerrillas struggling in Nicaragua to retake their country from the Soviet-backed communist regime. His six-year Marine Corps enlistment included three

years in Vietnam as a member of the 1st Force Reconnaissance Company, part of that with the MACV Studies and Observations Group. Following his military service, he worked overseas under a private contract for four years as a weapons consultant for the Agency for International Development. Clafin has also been a security consultant for the U.S. State Department, helping provide protection for government VIPs traveling abroad. He now owns and operates Starlight Training Center in Liberal, Mo., which offers courses in outdoor survival, ranger-type operations and parachute ops to carefully-screened clients, many of them from law enforcement and military backgrounds.

teaching his men how to clean and maintain M16 rifles and M60 machine guns. In return for the supplies, the DRP CO agreed to let me hold a daily weapons inspection.

On Monday, when the DRP fell out for my first inspection, the weapons had obviously had *some* attention. But I found mud on many of the buttplates, and others were still pitted with rust on the metal of the receiver groups. These discrepancies were apparently within the limits of acceptability for the Salvadoran Army. I advised them differently by emphasizing the danger of carrying an uncared-for weapon. There were also front and rear sights rusted in place, broken gas rings, bolts that had *never* been cleaned. Chambers and barrels, despite some attention, were still dirty.

I was a bit depressed until I got to the machine guns. Then I got *really* depressed. The M60 is the only throw-away, belt-fed general-purpose machine gun ever made. Its chronic maintenance problems are compounded in El Salvador because there is rarely an armory handy to repair the weapon every other day. My job was further complicated because these three M60s had *never* been properly cleaned, so the gas systems on each one had not been taken down for cleaning and all the pistons were rusted in place. None would work properly.



**ABOVE:** Learning proper ambush basics is essential to survival for recon units. SOF students practice in the bush. **LEFT:** Preparing to deploy from the struts of a Huey, DRP member pauses to "watch that last step." **BELOW:** A Deep Recon Platoon member waits to hook up for his first helo rappel. Their enthusiasm for training became evident as races developed to see who could get on the ground fastest.





After this first inspection, I immediately advised each squad leader that it would be his responsibility to see that each weapon in the unit was cleaned to my specifications for each morning inspection. "My specifications" meant spending most of several days cleaning weapons with a vengeance.

While the DRP troops grumbled and sweated over their weapons, I moved on to inspect the condition of the platoon's old PRC-77 transceivers. Like the M60s, the comm equipment had been grossly neglected. No one had taught them there was a need for maintenance.

Of the seven radios I checked in the DRP, only two worked. Batteries had been left in them while they were in garrison storage, none of the batteries had been dated and battery usage logs had not been kept. I got rueful shrugs in response to my questions about the age of the power sources.

Three of five PRC-77s were inoperable because they were off frequency from too much banging around in the field. In El Salvador's military there are none of the sophisticated fifth-echelon maintenance services commonly available to U.S. RTOs. It was time for a familiar field expedient. I used a radio I knew to be on frequen-

*Continued on page 80*

**RIGHT:** Sometimes the best friend of a deep recon member when in the Land of the Bad Guy, a claymore mine is set up by student during SOF training course. **BELOW RIGHT:** DRP member at El Salvador's Ilopango AFB displays an old FN heavy-barrel. **BELOW:** Deep Recon Platoon member in hiding aims his M60 at imaginary enemy during ambush exercise. Gung-ho students can't wait for chance to dispatch real Gs to the "People's Paradise of the Marxist Dream."





**SOF ADVENTURE**

# SONORA SHOOTOUT

**Machine Guns and Memories**

by Dale A. Dye  
Photos by Bill Guthrie



**D**ESPITE my Dad's best efforts to keep my nose buried in *Boy's Life*, I managed to evade, escape and spend my formative years down in the trenches with Sgt. Rock and the Combat-Happy Joes of Easy Company. The comic book format had nothing to do with my affinity. In fact, Superman, Plasticman, Spiderman and even the venerable Green Hornet ended up as drop-cloths when I oiled the chain on my Schwinn. What I wanted was a role model for a budding professional soldier. Sgt. Rock provided that — and more.

Like any American kid with a latent maniacal bent, I was particularly fascinated with the automatic weapons Easy Company's gutsy gravel-crunchers used to dispatch Krauts and/or Nips. Rock was never without his trusty Thompson, Chief, the Indian, humped a BAR, and the freckle-faced Kid — my main man — was an artist on the ass-end of a Browning M1919A4 light machine gun. Hirohito's hordes never stood a chance when they Banzai'ed into the blazing muzzle of The Kid's gun.

BUDDA — BUDDA — BUDDA!

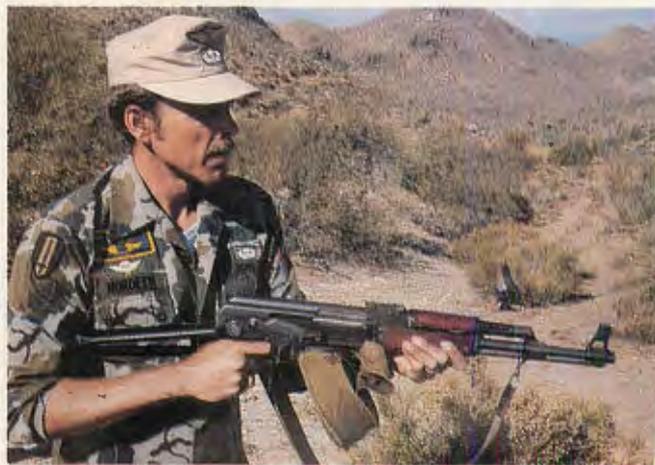
AI — EEEEEEE!!!!

It's the sound of war when you're 12. And it's the sort of thing that makes you want to be a machine-gunner when you grow up and get a uniform of your own.

Unfortunately, my Drill Instructor in the U.S. Marine Corps — a man who did his recreational reading in the Landing Party Manual — thought Sgt. Rock was some sort of faggot and informed me that he frankly didn't give a big rat's ass if I ever became a Combat-Happy Joe — in Easy Company or anywhere else. Staff Sergeant Newman burst a lot of my pre-Boot-Camp bubbles but the unkindest cut of all was his announcement at the tail end of my training that no left-handed puke would ever be a machine-gunner in *his* Marine Corps.

I was doomed to purgatory in an 81mm mortar platoon but I never lost faith. Somewhere, sometime I was going to find a way to BUDDA — BUDDA — BUDDA and make some slopeheaded slimeball AI — EEEEEEE! My big chance came in Vietnam shortly after Tet 1968.

The Combat-Happy Joes of Echo Company (I tried, but they wouldn't let me change the designation to Easy), Second Battalion, 3rd Marines were sweeping along a sandy peninsula south of Hue, searching for the remnants of the NVA 5th Regiment which had managed to escape the brutal



**Emma Gee AI Nordeen, a Phoenix PD helo pilot when he's not helping SOF test-fire weapons, cuts loose with his AK rigged with a drum magazine. The lash-up gave him some stoppage trouble when he ran it through the Wadi Assault Course.**

**SOF Executive Editor Dale Dye broke out day-desert camouflage for his run through the Wadi Assault Course which was complicated with green smoke for his benefit. The Colt Commando version of the basic M16 did well for Dye during the run.**



SOF military small arms editor Kokalis found himself totally enamored with the new FN M249 Squad Automatic Weapon.

Sgt. Rock and the Combat-Happy Joes of Easy Company would have been proud of Dye's performance with the Thompson. Despite its age, weight and relatively low muzzle velocity, the Thompson is still a formidable fighter in tight situations.



One of Dye's (and Kokalis') least favorites among the exotic weaponry displayed for the Emma Gee shoot was the 7.62mm NATO version of the M16 known as the AR-10. The weapon was all but uncontrollable in full-auto from the off-hand position.

fighting for control of the city. We had been told that sailors manning Swift Boats had sunk a flotilla of sampans headed for our area to evacuate the surviving NVA. Some weenie from Regimental S-2 also allowed as how there couldn't be *many* gooks dug in on the peninsula and they had been so badly demoralized that they'd probably break and run rather than stand and fight.

As usual, it was bullshit.

Everyone else in Vietnam must have been able to skate that day in March 1968 because all the NVA in the whole world seemed to be in our AO and they opened up on us as we pushed through a scraggly pine forest. The incoming mowed into us from the right flank. We went to ground nursing a plus-four pucker factor and stared at a linear clump of trees and bushes which seemed to wink and wave with muzzle flashes and back-blast from B-40 rockets being pumped at us. If they were going to get this upset over our little battalion-sized sweep, you'd have thought the bastards would hang out a No Trespassing sign or something.

Between us and a veritable labyrinth of bunkers and hard-points was a flat stretch of open sand: no cover, no concealment, no anything but sand swept by interlocking bands of enemy fire. Naturally, we were ordered to get up off our lazy asses and move across it.

Our CO must have been a closet comic book freak. I recognized the signs. In classic Sgt. Rock fashion, he ordered the company to pivot right on the base of fire laid down by one of our M60s. That move brought us face-on to the gook defenders dug in across the sandy stretch and we began to move out of cover in fireteam rushes. I sprinted across the sand like a horny camel headed for a big date at the oasis. Running in front of me with linked ammo belts flapping in the wind was Lance Corporal Beebe, one of our best machine-gunners, and his A-gunner, Smales the Shitbird.

Suddenly, Smales did a pratfall and uttered his infamous battle cry: "Ah, fuck! Why me?" A burst of AK fire had cut his legs out from underneath him. That left Beebe heading for a nearby berm to set up covering fire with only a 50-round teaser belt in the gun. Easy's Topkick would have been proud of my next move.

Pausing only long enough to inform Smales the Shitbird that I did not have the foggiest idea why him, I stripped off his extra ammo belts and became part of a machine-gun team. Beebe had already burned through his teaser belt by the time I flopped down next to him and his smoking M60. Popping the feed cover, I stuck in the first rounds of a fresh belt and shouted burst corrections into Beebe's ear as he raked the area to our front with fire. The primary targets were enemy machine guns in a series of three bunkers about 50 meters from our position. They were tough nuts to crack. We had a lot of BUDDA — BUDDA — BUDDA going here but I couldn't hear any AI — EEEEEEEs. In the next few seconds I found out why.

Somewhat pissed off by the hammering our gun was doing on their front door, two gook riflemen picked up their AKs and flanked us. Before I could get my M16 trained on them, they managed to put a burst into Beebe. He wasn't hit bad — shoulder, arm and leg — but he was out of the gunner business. And I was in — at last.

I've forgotten a lot about Vietnam, but I will never forget the feel of that big, hot gun hammering into my left shoulder. The empty casings rattling off my helmet didn't distract me a bit and, according to Lance Corporal Beebe who watched my act while trying to keep himself from bleeding to death, I did a good job as a gunner. The powers that were in those days finally forced me to give the gun up to a more competent man, but I never forgot the thrill and fulfillment of that day. It's likely the reason I jumped at the chance to spend a long weekend in the Sonora desert when SOF's Military Small Arms Editor Peter Kokalis called.

His message was typically cryptic. "Emma Gees. Many machine guns. You shoot. Come. Bring Fatso Guthrie." He

didn't need to say more. Emma Gee is a name Peter derived (from MG, the military abbreviation for machine gun) for the team of collectors and enthusiasts who help him stage the popular automatic weapons firepower demonstrations at SOF Conventions. They were going to gather at the site of an abandoned mica mine in a remote, desolate part of the Arizona badlands outside Phoenix to let 'em rock and roll. Peter was offering me a chance to relive some of the highlights of my long service career — and an opportunity to look inside myself at that odd fascination which made me a military man.

It's odd how instincts and reactions come pouring in to alter your demeanor when you put yourself in familiar situations or change your environment to resemble them. As we rolled into the desert, Peter's van was packed with weapons and people wearing battle dress uniforms. Closing my eyes to feel the slow roll of the vehicle as the driver negotiated around ruts and boulders in the road, I felt like I was headed for an assault in an amphibian tractor or armored personnel carrier. Automatically, I did all the right things: kept my head up and swiveling, scanned the terrain for suspicious movement, searched for potential ambush sites and slipped a magazine into the Steyr AUG Bullpup Peter wanted me to test-fire.

Approaching the free-fire zone, I got a jolt that nearly made me trigger a burst into friendlies. A red flare arched into the inky sky. Every Vietnam Veteran remembers that signal. Enemy in the wire. Open fire on targets of opportunity. Before I could remind myself of the realities, our headlights illuminated two cammie-clad figures cradling M16s and guarding the road. SOF Senior Editor Bill Guthrie leaned forward to ID them. Emma Gees Marty Hart and Sam Urschel were the advance party for the shoot.

While Guthrie erected a shelter against the cold desert wind, I dropped my rucksack, accepted a beer and got a briefing from Hart on the weekend's scheduled activities. The remainder of the crew was due at the site sometime the next day when they would show up with an incredible array of weapons for me to fire. The idea was to see what sort of reactions or memories would be triggered in my brain-housing group when I cranked rounds through weapons I had — or had not — used in my career.

Also on tap was a sniper-style marksmanship exercise using bundles of dynamite as targets and a special "Wadi Course" which would test reactions and close combat skills. For some strange reason, I insisted on taking a walk around the site before crawling into my sleeping bag. Checking the perimeter, I guess. Old habits die hard.

Shortly after reveille the next morning Bob Hall and Will Kurz arrived at our desert CP to begin setting up a devious, difficult course of quick-reaction-fire exercises in a deep, rutted wadi behind the firing line. No one was allowed to watch since advance intelligence on target locations or situations would provide an unfair advantage for the shooters who were going to run the route with the weapon of their choice. I walked down to the firing line to help Kokalis worship at the shrine of Mother Deuce.

Peter's affinity for the venerable M2 HB .50-caliber MG has been well documented in the pages of SOF, but you've got to see him caress the big Browning to understand the true depth of feeling involved. This was no "screw it in flush and back off two clicks" exercise. Touting the attributes of the gun as he worked, Peter flipped the combination tool around like a Filipino HUK brandishing a butterfly knife. He headspaced and timed the gun quickly and then grudgingly allowed me to load a belt of ammo. Firing a series of single rounds he massaged the traversing and elevating device to zero the weapon on a distant target. I'd seen that sort of machine gun marksmanship and trigger control before.

During the monsoon season of 1967, my battalion was sent up to the DMZ to relieve a unit of the 9th Marines who had been sweating out a deadly NVA artillery pounding at



**SOF Military Small Arms Editor Peter Kokalis goes over the bullpup design of a Steyr AUG before placing the weapon in Executive Editor Dale Dye's hands for a test on the Sonora Desert firing line.**

Con Thien. After dropping packs and Willy-Peter bags in the muddy bunkers abandoned by our predecessors on the hill, we got an orientation tour of the tight 1,100-meter perimeter around the "Place of Angels." The hilltop, teeming with bunkers and packed with Marines, made a tight target for NVA 122mm artillery gunners in defilade positions across the Ben Hai River. A buddy advised me to move my gear to a bunker on the forward perimeter since the majority of the incoming rounds tended to fall long, targeted on the CP bunkers and Battalion Aid Station located on the reverse slope. That's where I got to know Gunny Ski, the best .50-caliber marksman in the world.

He was bitching about having to "sit up here on this goddamn pimple and nursemaid McNamara's dumb-ass electronic fence." Gunny Ski said he'd had enough of defending hills when he was in Korea and everyone else could flog their logs in the bunkers if they wanted to, but he was going to engage in some offensive combat, by God. Our CO nixed the Gunny's original proposal to lead a bayonet attack on the NVA troopers we could clearly see going about their daily camp routine in North Vietnam, but he did authorize "prudent offensive measures to keep the enemy off balance in his sanctuary across the DMZ." Gunny Ski interpreted that to mean he could blow the cocky bastards away.

No ordinary sniping rifle would do for the Gunny. He wanted to make a big impression on the North Vietnamese just as he'd done on distant Chinese troopers back in 1951. Gunny Ski disappeared for a few days and then returned to the hill driving a gaggle of replacements who humped the components of a .50-caliber machine gun, ammo and a spotting scope up to my position. Ordering us to sandbag the gun and keep our grubby mitts off the T&E device, the Gunny announced he was going to commence sniping with the M2. We hooted about brain-damaged Lifers until he showed us what the weapon could do in the hands of an experienced gunner.

His target was a wise-ass NVA sentry who stood his post on the other side of the Ben Hai in plain view of the Marines on Con Thien. No small arm in our arsenal had been able to touch him and he knew it. An arty FO estimated the G-T distance at around 1,200 meters — very near the max effective range for the gun. That didn't bother Gunny Ski. He got down behind the gun, squinted through the scope and began to gingerly squeeze off rounds. We must have had every pair of field glasses in the battalion up on the line, watching as he fired. He observed the impact and adjusted the T&E device to bring himself on target.

After four rounds, the NVA sentry showed some discomfort. He kept staring around as though he were



**Using Dye as A-gunner and spotter, Kokalis zeroed his favorite rattle gun, the Browning .50-caliber M2 HB. Ma Deuce stole the show on the Sonora Desert firing line.**

searching for some big-assed insect that kept buzzing him. At the fifth round, he did a carnival cartwheel and dropped to the deck like a wet sandbag. Most of his upper chest was crimson goo. Gunny Ski had nailed the sentry at a fantastic range, sniping with the .50 caliber.

Kokalis liked that story. He also liked his brand-new, hard-hitting M249 FN Squad Automatic Weapon and left to take the SAW through the Wadi Course. Peter probably would have stayed on the firing line a little longer but he was no big fan of some of the other exotic guns being carried out by Marty Hart and Phoenix Police helicopter pilot Al Nordeen. An avid weapons collector, Nordeen was humping an AK that had been fitted with a drum magazine. I'd certainly seen my share of Kalashnikovs, but nowhere in Southeast Asia or the Middle East had I seen one with a drum hanging in place of the familiar curved box magazine.

Savoring the familiar feel of the AK, I knelt to line the sights and cranked a few off into the desert sand. It was eerie staring at tall cactus through that hooded front sight. How many times had an enemy soldier seen the same picture with me perched at 12 o'clock on the front sight blade? At least once, I was dead certain. The scars throbbled painfully as I triggered bursts through the AK.

Somehow the sound seemed different from behind the gun. I couldn't detect the familiar *crack* that we'd learned to *single* out and identify immediately on the noisy battlefields of Vietnam. Nordeen noticed my confusion, reloaded his drum and backed off about 25 meters with the gun. I closed my eyes at the first bark from the muzzle of the AK. *There it is.* That's the sound that used to make my balls crawl. The roar of the AK hauled me back to Hue, back to Beirut — and back to my senses.

Hart stepped forward with two SMGs he thought I might recall having handled before. The unsinkable Sten was fun to fire but held no real memories for me. I'd seen them in Asia and in several Mediterranean countries, but stayed away from picking one up because they really are a right-hander's weapon. I'd learned to fire fairly well from both shoulders over the years, but my reactions in combat tended to be instinctive. Without thinking, I'd probably pop a Sten up into my left shoulder and the weight of a loaded magazine would pull me off an aim-point.

Then there was the Thompson...ah, the venerable chopper, the choice of Sgt. Rock and the featured firearm of many Marine assaults during the island-hopping campaigns of the Pacific during World War II. This was the original star of the military rock & roll show back for a return engagement and it held a magazine full of memories for me.

Fighting with the 5th Marines in Hue during Tet 1968, a buddy and I wandered into an abandoned ARVN armory and helped ourselves from a buffet table that included

practically every weapon that had appeared and then disappeared from the American arsenal since before WWII. He policed up an M2 carbine and I became the proud owner of an M1A1 Thompson. That chopper was a champion in house-to-house fighting although the weight of extra loaded magazines got a bit cumbersome after a few days. Low muzzle velocity behind a blob of .45-caliber lead did a lot of damage on both hard and soft targets.

During a running battle with a retreating platoon of NVA we swept into an abandoned temple. It appeared to be empty and we were turning our backs to leave when I caught movement with my peripheral vision. A shadow flickered behind a large bronze casting of the Lord Buddha. Throwing the Thompson into my shoulder, I braced and pounded rounds into Buddha's protruding belly. The statue collapsed to reveal an NVA NCO who had been waiting in ambush. The Thompson slugs had penetrated nicely and ended his career. And they told me Sgt. Rock only carried a Thompson because it looked good.

Handgun expert Mark Yuen showed up before I could bum the barrel out of Hart's Thompson and hauled me away to practice the Weaver shooting stance. I'd managed to qualify for years on Marine Corps ranges with the standard M1911A1 .45 semiauto pistol, but the shooting stance they taught was nothing like the isometric Weaver position. Using a new Colt Series 70 purchased for me by Kokalis, I was able to put five quick rounds into a very tight pattern at ranges up to 20 meters. Where was Yuen when I was struggling to hit the bull in the ass with those issue bass fiddles they gave us in the Corps?

Yuen also reintroduced me to the MAC Models 10 and 11. The first one I'd seen was hanging under the sweaty armpit of some COORDS dude we'd rescued after a pitched battle at Quang Ngai. He'd been surrounded for two days by VC troopers and was so happy to be pulled out of it that he let me play with his MAC 10 as much as I wanted. It was an experimental model much like the original Yuen brought with him into the desert. It was also a bullet hose with little value at ranges greater than about 25 meters maximum. The effectiveness has not been changed in the Model 10 or the smaller Model 11, but it was fun to fondle the little beasts again and punch designs into targets that couldn't shoot back.

Kokalis ruined the reverie by informing me it was time for my run through the Wadi Course. SOF Senior Editor Guthrie had blazed his way through recently and was now locked in a two-way tie for best score with another shooter. That would never do.

Range Officer Bob Hall met me at the entrance to the deep wadi which snaked through the desert flanked by high walls covered with cactus and scrub brush. I had borrowed Sam Urschel's Colt Commando version of the basic M16 to run the gamut. I faced a fairly basic assault course dotted with silhouette targets strategically located at every twist in the trail and camouflaged along the hillsides. The idea was to spot, engage and hit each target or group of targets at ranges and under conditions reasonable enough for the Range Officer to presume you would have survived their fire. Fair enough, but Hall and partner Will Kurz had done their terrain appreciation work.

There were two close calls with targets tucked tightly in the folds of the wadi. I put close-range, passing bursts into both, recalling the time I had walked right up to an NVA asleep in his fighting hole somewhere in the foothills surrounding An Hoa. Apparently Hall had some similar experience. He let me get away with it. Bill Guthrie sabotaged my clean sweep by popping a green smoke grenade in my path. He claimed it was for photographic purposes. I insisted it was designed to make me walk right up to a cluster of five targets simulating a road junction ambush party.

*Continued on page 82*

# HARD-CORE HEROICS AT THE FROZEN CHOSIN



by Robert C. McNally, USMC (Ret.)  
As told to James M. Perry, USA (Ret.)

**“SONOFABITCH, Marines. We kill!  
Sonofabitch, Marines, you die!”**

A thousand Chinese voices echoed across Hill 1223. The sound would have been funny if it didn't hurt so badly ringing in the frostbitten ears of some 200 Item Company Marines hunkered to their hips in soggy, snow-filled fighting holes just below the crest of the hill. Lashed along by 25 mph

winds out of Manchuria that chilled the 20-below temperature another 40 degrees, the pidgin English death threats filled every rocky crevice with haunting sound and then faded with the howling wind along 20 desolate miles of Chosin Reservoir's frozen wastes. Bayonets fixed, we braced to repel another Chinese human wave attack. It wouldn't be long now before we'd have to see if our frozen trigger fingers would still work. There was no way any of us could know or be concerned with what was happening

back at the division's home base at balmy Camp Pendleton. General Merrill Twining, commander of the Replacement and Training outfit laboring to send us trained men to fill the decimated ranks, grabbed at an urgently ringing phone on his desk.

"General, we just received a message that the Chinese have the 1st Marine Division surrounded." Twining's breathless aide broke the incredible news. It was true according to reports reaching Camp Pendleton from the battlefield. One of General Sung Shin-lun's three army groups had crossed into North Korea, and 10 Chinese divisions, about 100,000 Manchurian troops, completely encircled 15,000 Marines near an obscure North Korean reservoir.

"Well, young man," Twining told the aide, "all I can say is that I'm damned sorry for those Chinamen." Back in Korea, we were beginning to feel a little sorry for ourselves.

Leathernecks of Item Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, holding a flank position on top of Hill 1223, were locked in a desultory and deadly embrace with two Chinese battalions. I was one of them.

Our surviving Marines clung tenaciously to a snow-covered, 10-foot-wide razorback ridge, refusing to fall back, yet incapable of stopping the suicide charge we knew would come. It was as if Item had been marked to die. The funeral was set for 0530, 2 December.

When the sun came up, the first two

Chinese companies would follow the light up the hill in a suicide charge. Thinking back on recent events here in the Land of Morning Calm, I realized our situation was predictable.

In early and mid-November, after crossing the Yalu River into Korea under the banner of "The Chinese People's Support Army," Sung's three army groups, a horde numbering almost 200,000, soon engaged and began to drive back the two United Nations commands that were separated by the mountain chain running north-south along the Korean peninsula.

They were headed for contact in the west with General Walton H. Walker's 8th Army, composed of the U.S. 1st Cavalry and the 2nd, 24th and 25th Divisions, and the Republic of Korea's 1st, 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions, as well as units from Turkey, Great Britain, the Philippines and Thailand. In the east, their targets included General Edward M. Almond's 10th Corps made up of the 3rd and 7th U.S. Army Divisions, the 1st Marine Division and the ROK's 3rd and "Capitol" Divisions.

Six of the 10 Chinese divisions, in the second phase of a counteroffensive, struck hard on 27 November, colliding head-on with the Army's 7th Division and the 1st Marine Division, which was literally "coming up the pass" between the two major commands. The communists quickly surrounded the U.N. forces around Changjin Reservoir (known as Chosin Reservoir in the west), eventually forcing the 10th Corps into a 60-mile do-or-die march down frozen mountain trails, constantly under Chinese fire from above the icy roads and valleys.

A full-bore allied retreat was in progress and the shattered focal point of UN resistance was drawn at the northernmost point of their advance prior to Chinese intervention. The "MacArthur Line" stretched from the east coast at Wonsan to the west coast at Pyongyang. Supreme headquarters in Tokyo had ordered troops to hold there but it was not a popular decision among field commanders.

Major General O.P. Smith, CG of the 1st Marine Division, had profound misgivings. "I do not like the prospect of stringing out a Marine division along a single mountain road from Hamhung to the border," he told his corps commander, Gen. Almond. Events proved his uneasiness was not unfounded.

As troops under Lieutenant Colonel Ray Davis of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, replaced ROK soldiers in the line, the Koreans told the Americans, "Many, many Chinese up here . . . an army of Chinese." Davis told his regimental CO, Colonel Homer L. Litzenberg, who told Smith and word was passed along to the corps commander. Almond immediately radioed the command in Tokyo that the Marines were facing a Chinese army.

"Continue the attack," headquarters radioed back, adding that intelligence reports indicated there were "no Chinese in North Korea."



## HE WAS THERE

Marine Corporal Robert C. McNally was medically retired after being shot in the left leg in a face-to-face encounter with a Chinese rifleman at Korea's Chosin Reservoir. McNally promptly dispatched the communist trooper to the Land of Ancestors but that did not keep him in the Korean War. The wound eventually required amputation of his left leg below the knee, and frostbite he suffered while lying in a frozen foxhole awaiting Medevac also cost McNally his right foot.

McNally saw his platoon sergeant, Jim Perry, for the last time when the two Purple Heart winners parted ways at a U.S. Navy hospital in Japan following their evacuation from Korea. Both of them were sure of that. But 34 years later, McNally, a devoted SOF reader, noticed that a Jim Perry was a regular contributor to the magazine. McNally made contact and a joyous reunion — as well as this article — resulted. Perry, who left the Corps after Korea to become an officer in U.S. Army Special Forces under the tutelage of Colonel Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, offered his editorial assistance to McNally in telling the story.

Marine Pfc. Robert C. McNally is awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received in Korea.

Of the men originally in their Korea unit — "Item" Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division — at the fierce and famous battle of the "Frozen Chosin," only a very few survived to make the miraculous march to the sea and salvation from POW camps in North Korea. To their knowledge only McNally, Perry, Pete Orozco, Richard "Dick" Throm, Ed "Sully" Sullivan, Alfred Thomas, Brynholf "Johnny" Johnson, Ed Nullinger and — perhaps — a few others made it all the way home. After being wounded, McNally was dragged back into his unit's lines by Orozco and Bob Talley, whose face was streaming blood from his own wounds. Although McNally begged Talley to stay with him, Talley picked up his rifle and went back up the hill. Not among the POWs exchanged in the "Big Switch," he was never seen again. And as McNally and Perry recall in their recounting of the heroic struggle with the Chinese hordes, "the rest of Item Company simply disappeared." *Soldier of Fortune* is proud to tell the story.

## REVISIONIST HISTORY

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Soviet advisers with the Chinese 9th Army Group in the winter of 1950 obviously had their own versions of the UN intervention in Korea and their own opinions of the U.S. Marines that the Chinese troops would soon be facing. To psych the assault troops up for the tangle with American Marines, an excerpt from an item of Russian revisionist history titled "The Bloody Path," by Captain G. Doidzhashvili of the Soviet Navy, was made and delivered to the Chinese by pamphlet and lecture. Here it is.

When in the summer of 1950 the American imperialist marauders, the newly appeared pretenders to world domination, provoked the bloody holocaust in Korea, the Wall Street house-dog General MacArthur demanded that the American 'so-called "Marines" be immediately placed at his disposal. This professional murderer and inveterate war criminal intended to throw them into battle as quickly as possible for the purpose of inflicting, as it seemed to him then, a final blow on the Korean people.

In putting forward such a demand, MacArthur proceeded from the fact that U.S. "Marine" units were trained more than any other types of American forces for the waging of unprecedentedly brutal and inhuman, predatory war against the freedom-loving heroic Korean people.

It was precisely to U.S. Marines that the Ober-bandit MacArthur addressed the words: "A rich city lies ahead of you, it has much wine and tasty morsels. Take Seoul and all the girls will be yours, the property of the inhabitants belongs to the conquerors and you will be able to send parcels home."

The events in Korea have shown graphically that the Marine Corps stalwarts did not turn a deaf ear to the appeal of their rapacious ataman. They have abundantly covered Korean soil with the blood and tears of hundreds of thousands of Korean women, old people, and children...

This is how the American monsters are behaving today in Korea. This is how they behaved dozens of years ago, also. The Wall Street bosses and the supreme American military command publicize in all possible ways the "combat services" of the U.S. Marine Corps, cynically calling them sometimes "our idol" and sometimes "our assault force." The process of surmising the true motives of such enthusiastic references does not present any great difficulties. The crux of the matter is that the American imperialists and the supreme military command of the USA consider the American Marines (and not without foundation) to be the most criminal elements in their armed forces and to be the most capable of discharging the gendarme-police



A Marine patrol accompanied by ROK interpreters flank and capture some Chinese communists.

functions of slaughterers and despoilers. This is clearly attested by the bloody trail of crimes against humanity which has been blazed over a period of many decades by the U.S. Marine Corps.

The U.S. Marine Corps was formed in 1775 on the lines of the British "Marines" and its disciplinary manual which came into force a little later was based on the corresponding manual of the British armed forces, which have pursued a course of colonial oppression and violence in many countries of the world, i.e., it was formed for the very same purposes and with the very same functions as the forces of the British colonial empire.

The American "Marine Corps," more exactly the corps of professional murderers and despoilers, is composed of 485,000 men. The Corps is led by a well-known reactionary, General Clifton Cates.

Already 80 years ago, i.e., in 1871, units of the U.S. Marine Corps carried out their predatory attack on Korea, encroaching on its freedom and independence with a view to seizing the rich and fertile lands of Korea and enslaving the Korean people...

Seventeen years later U.S. Marines disembarked in Korea for the second time. This was on 19 June 1888, during the insurrection of the Korean people against foreign oppressors.

Six years later the American government again, already for the third time, tried to take over control of Korea by sending a Marine detachment to repeat the disembarkation of a landing force and the campaign against the Korean capital.

In 1904 at the orders of its government the American Marine Corps disembarked for the fourth time in Korea, pursuing the very same aim — the seizing and enslavement of Korea.

However, the four failures of the attempts to conquer Korea did not benefit the American imperialists. In the summer of 1950 they undertook on a wider scale and in a more monstrous

form their bloody, filthy offensive against the Korean people. But there can be no doubt that on this occasion also they will not achieve their predatory aim here.

U.S. Marines participated directly also in the bloody raid on, and in the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands, in the seizure and colonial enslavement of the Philippines, in the forcible wrenching of Panama away from Colombia, etc. . . .

The U.S. Marines have played and continue to play at the present time an exceptionally ignominious, gendarme-police role in the suppression of the revolutionary movement of many countries of the world. . . .

In their own country the fascist stalwarts of the Marine detachments are guilty of excesses against their own people. They even adopt a haughty and scornful attitude to American soldiers and sailors who are not Marines. . . .

The officers, corporals and privates of the U.S. Marine Corps have always been noted in their operations for their brutality and cruelty against defenseless peaceful population and a weak enemy. But they, like the Hitlerite warriors, quickly lose their combat fervor as soon as they meet with a worthy rebuff.

To a certain extent this explains the shameful fact that in the Second World War, of the 485,000 men in the Marine Corps only three divisions (like 1st, 4th and 5th) took an insignificant part in the battles against Japan, the remaining divisions altogether took no part in the war and were *only stationed on* conquered territory as a gendarme-police force. Thus the "combat exploits" of the U.S. Marines in the Second World War bear witness not to military valor, not to boldness and fearlessness but only to the fact that in the person of the Marines the U.S. imperialists have a pack of despoilers, called upon to exterminate the peaceful population of towns and villages.

At the present time when American predatory imperialism is preparing to plunge mankind into the abyss of a third world war, the Wall Street monopolists are rearming their experienced gendarme-police force, the Marines, for better fulfillment of the role of stiflers of small states and peoples. . . .

Headquarters in Tokyo may have been convinced that there were no Chinese in Korea, but they forgot to tell Marine Staff Sergeant Archie Van Winkle of Baker Company, 1/7. While our third battalion fought its way up the narrow-gauge railroad running through the pass at Chinhung-ni to reach the MLR, Van Winkle's platoon fought off a night hand grenade assault by elements of what later proved to be the 125th Chinese Infantry Division. Van Winkle, although seriously wounded and bleeding heavily, refused evacuation and encouraged his men to continue fighting.

He was one of seven men awarded Medals of Honor on the way north to stem the Chinese tide and his action had a direct impact on those of us in the regiment's third battalion. Van Winkle's refusal to yield allowed Item Company and the rest of 3/7 to push their way to the base of the Koto plateau, 3,000 feet above and guarding the axis of advance.

Contact with the 125th gave us our first look at the Chinese soldier. Dressed in a quilted, mustard-color uniform, wearing tennis shoes and a fur cap, he looked larger than he actually was. These troops were primarily Manchurians who are taller than inland Chinese and they seemed more than willing to let us bring the fight to them. Every hill had to be taken by force. Every hilltop had to be cleared. The division struggled upward, its ammo trains roadbound, winding slowly and painfully up the steep mountain passes.

At Koto, we found the Changjin hydroelectric station still operating. A Marine lieutenant stepped inside, pulled the switches and put it out of order. This was the Funchilin Pass, where the Chinese would later destroy the only concrete bridge, stranding the 1st Marine Division on its march back to the sea until a treadway bridge was air-dropped to respan the gap.

On Thanksgiving Day, Item Company halted short of Hagaru-ri for turkey and trimmings. The heartened new war cry was "Home By Christmas." Everyone was saying it. Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller drew his 1st Marines into a reserve perimeter at Hagaru-ri, and the 5th and 7th Regiments poured through Toktong Pass and up into the reservoir area itself. That's when the shit hit the fan.

Bugles blew, flares popped and eerie-sounding shepherd horns filled the night with raucous blasts. Flashlights winked and Sung's army came pouring out of the hills like maggots deserting a rotting corpse. That's when our CG sent word back to the States. The 1st Marine Division was surrounded by hostiles; cut off from the sea by 10 pissed-off Chinese divisions.

While the division staff tried to convince Tokyo that we were hemmed in above Chosin Reservoir by Chinese troops higher headquarters did not believe existed, our CG ordered 5th Marines and 7th Marines to break out of the area and join Gen. Walker's 8th Army to the west. Both regiments tried but we got stopped cold at Yudam-ni.





ABOVE: Marching south from Koto-ri, these Marines brave bone-chilling cold and communist attacks. LEFT: Taking cover behind a hill, some Marines engage enemy forces. Close air support contributed to the success of the operation. BELOW: A Marine Corsair screams skyward through a cloud of smoke after dropping napalm on a Chinese concentration.



Puller's 1st Marines, still in division reserve, were fighting for their lives to hold a 3.5-mile perimeter back at Hagaru-ri, 17 miles south of Yudam-ni. Puller's call for 200 miles of concertina wire, immediately laid down after being delivered in the middle of the night, helped hold off a massive Chinese attack at next dawn. Not aware of the coiled obstacle just laid in their path, thousands of communist troops were left hanging on the wire like limp ticker tape.

With Puller pinned down, 5th Marines and 7th Marines — less than 7,000 bedraggled men remaining in 28 rifle companies — stood alone with no hope of reinforcements from our sister regiment. We worried over a dwindling ammo supply, fixed bayonets and prepared to take on six of Sung Shin-lun's divisions encompassing more than 100,000 Manchurian regulars. They had the upper hand but victory wasn't going to come cheaply.

Every Marine infantry company along the line had its hands full. No help was coming because none was available and we all knew it. Nowhere in the five-mile perimeter was there a command that wasn't locked in mortal combat against Sung's "human sea attacks." In the 5th Marines' area, Easy Company simply laid down in their holes and let the Chinese run over them. As the horde rolled over and down the reverse slope, Easy Company's men rose from their holes and killed 250 communist troops.

Some of the grunts at Chosin had served in China only a few years before and knew the nature of the enemy. He would keep coming to the last man. No one had to give the order. We automatically fixed bayonets and faced the fact that we would have to die in place if the Chinese broke through our lines. Rampant rumors did not help morale.

We heard that Walker's 8th Army on our left flank had buckled under the sheer weight of Chinese numbers and was inching its way south, desperately trying to regroup. On our right flank, the rumor-mongers claimed the Army 7th Division and the ROK "Capitol" Division had *been cut off* and driven back. It wasn't as bad as all that but there did appear to be some truth to the rumors. As we waited in frozen anxiety above Chosin, survivors of the Army and ROK divisions were painfully crawling across the ice, frantic to reach the relative safety of Marine lines.

Item Company's CO, 1st Lieutenant William "Red" Johnson, led us around the reservoir and up "How Hill" east of Yudam-ni to help Captain Thomas Cooney's George Company in their assault on the small mountain. We passed the ammo and they fired it at the Chinese.

Cooney was having his problems just holding on to what he had. With ammo being gobbled up at a rate faster than we could unbox it, Col. Litzenberg pulled everyone back and fired salvos from every major weapon he could train on How Hill. It marked the western-most advance of the 7th

*Continued on page 96*

# ANGOLAN AMBUSH

## SOF Treks with the FNLA

Text and Photos by David Mills



To bring readers first-hand accounts of what's happening in world hot-spots with a view from over the rifle sights, SOF adventurers have to go where most reporters can't — or won't. That's why we had the only reporters in fire fights in Rhodesia, correspondents training elements of the Salvadoran Army, and the full attention of military intelligence when we printed the first known report of test-firing the Soviet AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher in Afghanistan.

And that's why we had to have a photojournalist trek across the brutal terrain of Northern Angola with the FNLA (Angolan National Liberation Front).

For 52 days, David Mills lived on manioc bread, peanuts and bad water. He lost nearly 20 percent of his original body weight while dodging Angolan government patrols in one of Africa's most treacherous battlefields. He walked the mountains and jungles of Northern Angola, inspecting the few redoubts left to a dwindling FNLA resistance.

In this issue of SOF: Part I of correspondent Mills' report including a bush-level reconnaissance of this contested wasteland, his walk into FNLA country from Zaire and a brief history of the continuing conflict. Next month: Part II with Mills' observations as he treks from village to village in the FNLA's shrinking stronghold, and his assessment of their chances for survival and success in battling Angola's communist regime.

### ANGOLAN ADVENTURER

David Mills, a 12-year veteran of the British Army, has been an SOF correspondent for the last year. Chasing stories around the globe, he has flown more than 100,000 air miles, driven 50,000 road miles and walked 1,500 trail miles. More than 1,000 of those covered on foot were chalked up on his walk from Zaire to the outskirts of Luanda and back with three relays of FNLA guerrillas.

Much of the text is drawn from a journal kept by Mills during his ordeal in Angola.

**S**IX days into march: I don't know how much more I can take.

Unbaked manioc loaf and a little fish is all there is to eat — if we eat at all that day — and we walk at least 40 clicks every day, no matter what the weather or terrain. If it rains, the nights are too cold for sleep. If the sun shines, this arid land doesn't provide enough water to replace what we lose through sweat.

As a professional soldier, I'm sweating a lot but it doesn't have all that much to do with the weather. The troopers in this FNLA band don't take the simplest patrol precautions. With weapons manufactured before most of

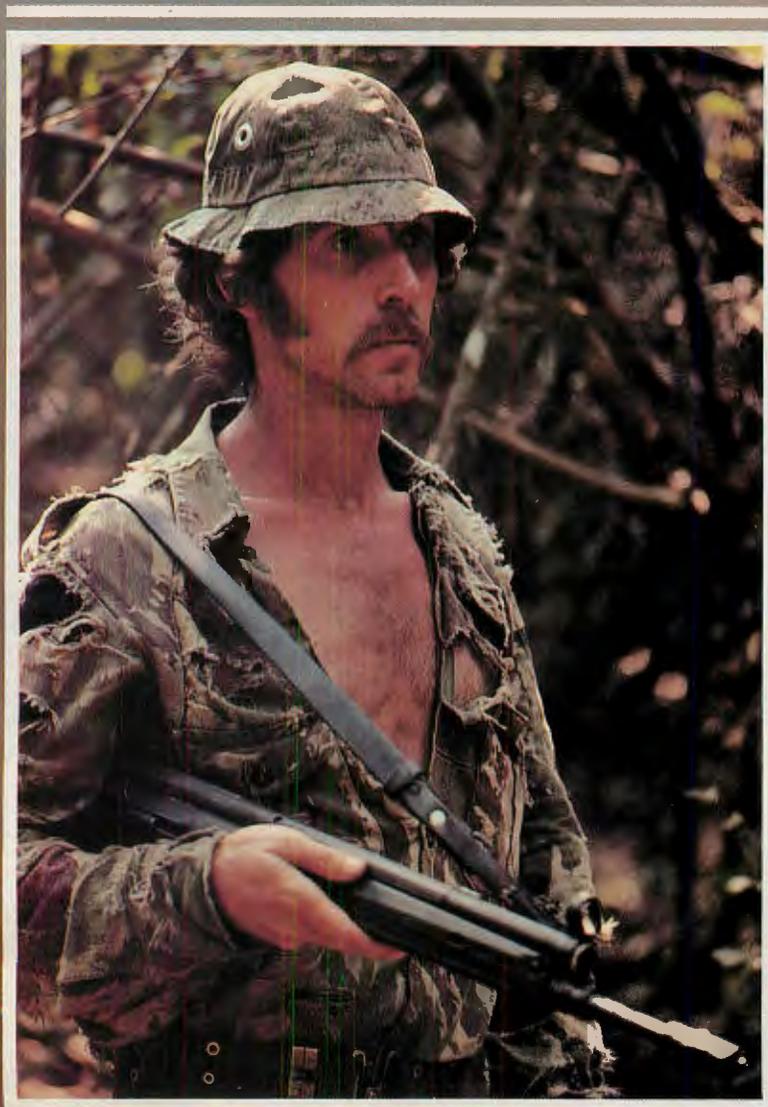
them were born slung casually over their shoulders, my escort contingent ambles in file across open ground, camps on hilltops and builds cooking fires within sight of other campfires stoked by government patrols.

The plan is to escort me through their territory and on to the outskirts of Luanda. Then we will march back to the Angola/Zaire border. That's a 600-mile round trip across mountains and through jungles in a countryside nearly denuded of wildlife with only a few year-round streams. We carry no rations. Those of us who are fortunate enough to have canteens can manage only a liter of potable water. Despite such hardships and the hazard of marauding government patrols, the FNLA guerrillas seem carefree and casual.

On 11 August I rolled out of my poncho soaked with condensation. Reveille was announced by our patrol leader clapping his hands. There was nothing to eat. We shouldered packs, wiped the dew off our weapons and marched off into the veldt at 0545. A sense of impending danger depressed me. Yesterday we saw a recon chopper that looked like a Gazelle. I didn't get a very good look from where I lay hiding in the tall elephant grass. Choppers are rare in this area near the border. The Angolan government troops — and the Cuban pilots who were probably flying the aircraft —

**Lunch break in the veldt. Midday stops don't necessarily involve food.**





Paulo, military commander of the escort for SOF's correspondent, wears ragged Portuguese cammo and carries a G3. He's very well-equipped by FNLA standards.



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must have been advised of our movement. They are looking for us and we won't be hard to find.

My escorts walk along grassland trails and wider tracks through the jungle. It's efficient but not very safe. There is little evidence of attempts to hide our presence. It's becoming obvious that government patrols are also in this area.

Soon after we crossed a small river by a well-used ford we saw threats scratched in the dirt. "MPLA" (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the party of the Marxist government), "LCB" (the men say those are the initials of one of the Angolan "Hunter" battalions), and the word *chiuamavista*: "We've seen you." We're still three full days' march from a sizeable FNLA base camp.

Tension increased after we read the MPLA messages. By the time we finished the day's march of 45 clicks at around 1500, I was too tired and hungry to concentrate on patrol discipline. I rooted around in my rucksack for diversion. I've carefully packed a book that bears a second reading. Pakenham's *The Boer War* seemed worth its weight and provides adequate

escape reading for a professional soldier.

The afternoon sun filtered down onto the pages through the branches of a gnarled tree I couldn't identify despite long service in the African bush. From the description of British soldiers fighting a war in similar terrain, I imagined I heard the whine of a Boer sniper's bullet. And then I realized it was not my imagination.

I rolled off my rucksack and focused on the dull, low-pitched popping sound. AK-47. I scrambled behind the tree with my FAL in hand and searched for the source. It was an ambush and I seemed to be the only one seeking cover.

Paulo, the commander of the FNLA detachment, crabbed across the clearing on all fours, without his weapon, hands and legs flailing in different directions like a gunshy spaniel. We were taking incoming rounds from at least two Kalashnikovs firing from different directions. Finally, I heard a couple of FNs returning fire in a desultory manner. Some of the FNLA troopers must have maneuvered into the bush to spot the attackers. It didn't sound as though they were doing

much good. I wriggled deeper into the dirt, checked around for an escape route and pulled my E&E bag off the side of my rucksack. There didn't seem to be much more I could do but I clicked the safety off my FAL and scanned the grassy skyline for enemy movement.

The firing stopped suddenly. I heard it start up again five minutes later about a half-mile away down the valley. No way to tell if the FNLA troops had chased the government ambushers away or they had simply decided to call their attack off for some reason. A couple of men trotted back into our clearing and jabbered at Paulo. Another trooper translated enough for me to understand that our advance party had bumped five MPLA militia as they scouted the same hill for a campsite. Fearing that our scouts were point element for a larger formation, the militia fled after cranking a few magazines at them. The rounds that had sent us to cover were apparently aimed at our scouts. Point of aim and point of impact may be two different things but the result is the same if a round happens to hit you.

There were no casualties on

either side but that didn't keep the troopers involved from talking up the action. They had shot up the MPLA again and were tremendously excited by the contact. The chatter became loud and boisterous as nine FNLA troops told their version of the fight with embellishments. In this low-level bush war, it amounted to a significant engagement.

The FNLA troops were somewhat more watchful as we lay down again under the trees. As dusk obscured the surrounding mountains we loaded up and walked off into the seven-foot-tall elephant grass. They had decided we should shift positions.

Due to the contact with government militia, the guerrillas were beginning to look more like soldiers. They took on the aspects of a genuine combat patrol, strung out in file, carefully scanning the tall grass on our left and right. They stopped and jabbered and signed to me when we reached the area where our point had engaged the militia formation. There were no blood trails and no bodies. I discovered contact had been broken only because our scouts fired all their ammo.

Ebony-skinned, tattered ghosts of a revolution betrayed, the FNLA troops moved before and behind me along the darkening valley floor. East, West and neighboring African nations have reduced and then withheld aid to these Freedom Fighters. Now they must fight on alone or submit to the communist government that controls their country. It was a humbling realization. We had no food and no water. Three of us were totally out of ammo after a brief, inconclusive fire fight. No one in the formation could muster a single full magazine. Despite that, the FNLA had made contact with government forces and driven them off so they could continue the trek. I'm not sure how or why.

Elephant grass blotted out the sky and absorbed all sound as we swam through a sea of vegetation. It was a good night. We were still alive and a safe camp lay just ahead beyond a tree-crested hillock. That's when they hit us again.

Deafening noise and muzzle flashes disoriented me. The flat pop of AKs filled the night with frightening sound. I hit the dirt and wondered if this would be my final fire fight. I can't remember how many times I've seen muzzle flashes in the dark. It's a familiar situation but this was beginning to look like a low-budget war movie. Within a circle around my position, there must have been 20 automatic weapons firing in my general direction. I don't know how the government troops avoided shooting into each other.

I could hear louder, sharper cracks



**Shivering against the cold on an early, cloudy morning, FNLA troops find little comfort in their rags.**

of FALs returning fire but they seemed farther from me than the roaring AKs. The return fire would have to get heavier if we were going to get out of this. Why is it so slow and erratic?

I tossed a mental coin about the relative merits of defending myself versus giving my position away and decided I should help the FNLA attain fire superiority. Shortly after I shouldered the FAL and sighted in on a muzzle flash, I discovered why we weren't doing better in this fight.

As a guest of the Military Commander of FNLA, I'd been given a full mag for my FAL. Nearly everyone else only had about 15 rounds. My increased firepower should have helped but it didn't. I pulled the trigger six times. Five cartridges fired. All failed to extract.

As I lay cursing the shoddy support the FNLA gets from people who could afford to spare them some good ammo, the firing suddenly stopped. I lay in the grass, happy to feel the sharp bites of huge ants that had disregarded the human conflict and concentrated on me as a late supper. In a few moments I heard the Angolan guerrillas whispering my name. It was time to go.

We had survived but the prospect of a restful night had been blown away with the fire fight. We hot-footed it 10 more hard clicks before we huddled back-to-back under some bushes to wait for dawn. The contact had forced us at least 10 clicks off our line

of march. It was clear to me during that cold night in the bush that the MPLA had been tracking us for at least two days. They obviously knew our direction of march and in this sparsely-settled country probably knew which FNLA base was our destination. There was no indication of why the government militiamen broke contact when they clearly had the upper hand. Maybe they were also short on ammo.

Perhaps we had scared them off with our limited return fire. No matter. They were probably better off than we were at that point. The militiamen were snug and warm at home chowing down on fish, manioc porridge and corn beer. They were probably stacking our bodies higher and higher for an admiring audience. Meanwhile, I shivered in the dirt, squirming around flint pebbles for a more comfortable seat and starving slowly. Nothing to eat in the past 48 hours.

That night was long and cold. I had lots of time to think. I wanted to remember better times . . . the regimental mess, Christmas leave at home. But memories kept revolving around food. I was getting obsessed with the idea of eating.

I tried to think about other places I'd been in service. Waiting for dawn, I recalled a sunrise when I stood at the edge of the Sahara, in command of a half-dozen Land Rovers and their crews. They were still packing and starting engines and testing radios 50 yards behind me. I stood, waiting for them to carry out my departure orders, watching the sky turn purple, then blood-red, then explode in the gold of full dawn. It was beautiful and I smiled as my hand rose to bring a canteen cup of hot, sweet, milky tea to my lips . . . and there I was again. Food.

Grudgingly I turned my mind back to this expedition. I should have known how bad this trek would be from the sympathy I got from the airline crew when they found out I was going to debark in Kinshasa. They talked and joked about it en route, but the stewardess grew more serious when she told me to put my camera equipment away before getting off the plane. I stowed my Nikon and waited to see other passengers get off, since my contact had told me to disembark last. Finally the stewardess told me the plane was leaving and I had to get off. I was the only passenger for Kinshasa.

Searching the open hangars for all the Hinds and MiGs I expected to see, I found out what the Zaireans were hiding: the worst-kept airport in the world. I could've smuggled five kilos of heroin into the country by handing the bag and a Rand tip to

any of the taxi drivers who mobbed me as I stepped off the aircraft gangway.

I've seen refugee camps that were cleaner and better-run than the Kinshasa airport. After you escape the taxi drivers and get into the terminal building you see dark corridors where electric lights don't work. And the few bulbs that do flicker are reflected in pools of water standing on the crack-

ed concrete floors. Welcome to yet another worker's paradise.

Customs and immigration were not so bad. But I had to lend the officer a pen to sign my papers. Other officers wanted \$200 import tax for my personal belongings and they all needed cigarettes. My contact found me outside, welcomed me to Zaire, and assured me things would be better in Angola. We drove to a bungalow on

the outskirts of the decrepit city that was an FNLA safe house. There were introductions to various FNLA officials but the charismatic leader Holden Roberto was not in town. Everyone but my contact seemed to speak only Portuguese and African languages, so after politely thanking them for meeting me, I asked if there was someplace I could sleep. We were leaving for Angola in four hours and I figured

## ANGOLAN HANDLOADER, MARK 1, MOD B

Add one Angolan guerrilla, one FN FAL, two empty magazines, a machete, a pair of pliers, a tin can, a stick, a medium-sized leaf and 20 rounds of 40-year-old .30-'06. Express the sum in 7.62 NATO cartridges. This is not a trick question.

Time's up. Your answer please. What is the total? Despite all evidence to the contrary, the sum is 20 rounds of .308 sometimes suitable for firing at FAPLA forces in Northern Angola.

Battling disease, hunger, the Marxist Angolan government and short supplies of nearly everything, FNLA troops have mastered a technique for emptying, cutting, shaping and reloading old, over-length .30-caliber cartridges until they fit an FN chamber. It's all done while squatting on their haunches under the shade of a tree.

When I reached the first FNLA camp, we waited two long, dull days for five troops to return from a trading expedition with a prized commodity of ammunition. When the traders straggled in and the ammo was issued I thought we were ready to hit the road. That was before I got a close look at the ammo they planned to fire through the worn FN FALs most of them carried, if we bumped a FAPLA patrol.

It was mostly 7.62mm NATO ball which is little more than .30-'06 with a case shortened to accommodate modern ball powders. It takes some sizing before it will feed through the FN FAL rifle so most of the FNLA troops have become field expedient handloading experts. Here's how they go about it.

They first pull the bullet out of the case with pliers. Some who have no pliers use their teeth. Powder is collected in a tin can, bullets go in one pile, and cases go in another. After the entire issue (usually 15 or 20 rounds per man) has been disassembled, the handloader picks up the cartridge cases and pushes them



Leaf serves as powder funnel. Propellant is measured by eyeballing level against case neck.



Bullet is carefully pounded back into reloaded case. Round, soft stick prevents igniting primer.



From left to right: factory 7.62 NATO, brass neck cut off .30-06 case, hand-rolled FNLA 7.62 NATO and original .30-06 cartridge.

into the FAL's muzzle device and twists them until a scratch around the case shoulder shows him where to cut. Sawing patiently with a hand-forged bush knife, he then trims the brass to approximate size.

Now the shortened case must be re-necked. Advanced handloaders in the West have dies and annealing formulas to neatly reform brass, but they have no edge on the Angolan guerrillas in speed. Crimped slightly with pliers, cases go into the chamber of the rifle for which they are intended and are rammed home with the bolt. When the action locks up easily, the case is nearly necked.

Pulled from an FN chamber, this brass would scare most American shooters out of pulling the trigger but the required shoulder is there. The neck of the round is also generally creased and bent but that's no big problem. The solution is at hand in the form of the bullet. The handloader merely inserts the slug backward into the crumpled case neck and beats on it until the neck of the cartridge case molds around the thickest part of the bullet.

After the backward bullet is removed, powder saved from the emptied cases is shaken from the can into a leaf which serves as a funnel for the soldier to carefully dribble propellant back into the case. There have been disastrous errors in measurement, so the Angolans keep it safe by visibly under-filling the cases. When there's enough powder in the case, the bullet goes back in ... the right way this time. A few solid, careful taps with a stick and the round has been reassembled. FNLA troops recommend a tight taper-crimp with fluted plier jaws, in order to keep the bullet from falling out.

None of the reloaded shells I saw fired would cycle the action of an FN. And some of them didn't fire at all. The most disheartening sound I ever heard was the FNLA guerrillas working their weapons to feed and fire reworked ammo when we were first ambushed by FAPLA militia.

BANG, click-click, BANG, click-click, click(!), click-click, BANG! Boo!

— David Mills



NCOs are the backbone of any army, and the FNLA is no different.

I'd need rest.

If I'd had a clearer idea of the situation over the border, I'd have spent the four hours eating. Sleep eluded me; I was too tense and too hot. I'd been lying there sweating with my eyes closed when my contact shook my shoulder. I gathered my kit and got in a van waiting outside. We were on the road to Angola at 1900 hours, 5 August 1984.

Four hours later, the van rolled to a stop and the driver shut down the engine. We had arrived. Out of the van, 10 clicks forward, and we were in Angola.

Just inside the border, at 0200 we lay up to wait for a group to join us from the Angolan side. Unarmed, my FNLA guides mounted a guard. The rest of them found more comfortable beds on the rocky ground, and we all tried to sleep in the mountain night chill.

There was a whispered challenge on our perimeter at 0500. The armed escort had arrived. We picked up our *mushilas* (packs) and followed the locals off into the dark. It was full light two hours later when we reached the first base.

Ten fairly clean grass huts made up the camp. Discipline is good, and there are no women or children living in the barracks. There are also no uniforms. Most of the FNLA

soldiers are clothed in rags. They are mostly armed with AKs and FALs with no finish left and deep pits every place it's hard to reach with a cleaning rag. Wood furniture on many of the weapons is weather-swollen, cracked or broken.

Those observations made their behavior seem ludicrous at first. They stood to and paraded with all the shouting and stomping of a Guards unit when assembly was called. Andre Paulo, military commander of the FNLA in this region, had called a formation to explain my presence to his 20 men. He asked me to say a few words of inspiration, but I politely declined. There's no telling what my translator might have rendered out of my words. And I couldn't afford to make this a speaking tour.

I had to get to Luanda. The fewer people to know who I was and what I was doing in Angola, the safer I would be. Paulo bought the rationale, reviewed his troops and dismissed them for breakfast. The three sections of roughly seven men each divided up to cook and eat *funj*, an unbaked loaf of thick porridge made of manioc flour and water. Only Angolans like the stuff and they eat it at practically every meal. As a guest of the commander, I feasted on canned sardines and fresh

French-style bread.

Paulo was not much of a conversationalist. He is very political — and very careful. Just as well. He speaks no English. A translator informed me we were waiting on a shipment of ammo before heading into the bush. There was time to observe life on a shoestring in the FNLA. An evening meal identical to the skimpy morning repast ended the day. At dark the Africans smothered their fires and retired to huts. I elected to sleep outdoors and watched the sentry announce Taps by clapping hands.

Day broke at 0530 on 7 August. I missed reveille. A soldier sweeping the dirt nearby woke me. Hygiene is stressed in FNLA camps even though conditions are primitive. The camp is swept with twig brooms every morning and garbage is not allowed to accumulate. It doesn't seem to help matters much. Disease is still the leading cause of casualties among FNLA troops. Malaria is common, the guerrillas operate in tsetse-fly country, and I was told venereal disease is epidemic. Surprisingly, a multi-vitamin capsule was given to each soldier. Each FNLA trooper is issued this supplement weekly and I'm sure it is a substantial addition to their meager diet.



Five men have gone to trade for ammo. They secretly meet Zairean troops who filch cartridges as they can. Life is relatively peaceful in Zaire, so they have more than they need. The FNLA has similar surpluses of marijuana and ivory. It's a convenient arrangement.

On 8 August 1984 the first shipment of ammo to reach this base camp in months arrived. It seemed to make everyone ecstatic but I can't see why. NCOs reluctantly counted out each man's allotment and the soldiers fondled the bullets like jewels. That seemed odd since it was an odd lot and much of the ammo wouldn't fit their weapons. Only a few rounds were 7.62 NATO stamped FN71 and 7.62 ComBloc marked SF08. Nearly half of the supply was .30-06 and 6.5mm Mauser. None of it was new and there was so much verdigris on the Mauser ammo that it looked dangerous to fire.

When everything was sorted out, each man had a little more than half a magazine. The NCOs issued stern directions to insure that each man would police up his brass and return with it to base. Outlying FNLA units rely heavily on reloads.

No one seemed overly worried about mismatched ammo and I quickly found out why. Soldiers set

to work bringing their ammo up to FNLA standard. Using their weapons' chambers as resizing dies and working with machetes and leaves, the FNLA troopers made the cartridges fit their AKs and FNs. (See "Angolan Handloader," p. 53.)

Delighted with their half-full magazines of bashed and reshaped rounds, the soldiers began preparing their meager kit for the march. It was a sad sight. The only firearms in the camp with full magazines are a half-dozen Soviet Makarov pistols which were taken from the bodies of Cubans found in the wreckage of a downed Soviet-made Mi-8 Hip chopper.

Packs and other load-bearing equipment were improvised with string, rope and grass fiber. The FNLA troops looked like hobos getting ready to hit the road. They refurbished their worn and broken weapons, tied short pieces of grass rope into longer pieces and sharpened their machetes. We would be on the march soon. It was dark by 1830 and the troops lit fires against the chill. There was nothing to cook for dinner. A loud handclap proclaimed lights-out at 2000. There is little nighttime diversion in Angola.

Through the night of 9 August

the horizon blazed with roaring fires lit by native hunters to drive the game toward them. At reveille we dusted off the clothes we'd slept in, picked up packs and trudged off into the warm ashes covering the seared, black grasslands. Heat rose from the remnants of the hunters' fires and beat down on us from a blistering sun. Chow that morning was soot washed down with salty sweat.

We walked from 0530 to 0800, rested half an hour and humped some more until noon. We sought shade and rested during the intense midday heat and then marched again on our way to covering 45 kilometers. There were no further stops until we camped at around 2100. The earth beneath our aching feet was baked hard — when there was dirt. Most of the terrain we covered was littered with sharp flint pebbles. I had been walking in plastic sandals to help cover our tracks but finally had to don my stout leather boots. Their distinctive lug soles might give us away, but so would my bloody feet. I don't know how the guerrillas made it. Some had plastic sandals, a few had well-worn boots, but most wore the same sort of rubber-tire sandals with leather straps that the VC wore in Vietnam.



Bread and a cup of tea for dinner. Fires were lit to boil the tea and the soldiers seemed to take comfort from them despite the 90-degree heat. They were reluctant to kill the flames with dirt when Taps was clapped 20 minutes later but I rolled up in my poncho well away from the fire pits. Nothing appeared to be happening in this desolate area but I didn't want to take unnecessary chances. FAPLA (Angolan government forces) patrols weren't in evidence and I'd seen no aircraft. But all that could have changed quickly.

We marched again at dawn. Every day was like the one preceding: the same hunger, the same fatigue, the same broiling sun. Even the series of ambushes staged by FAPLA militiamen seemed welcome in retrospect simply because they broke up the monotony of a long, painful patrol. But those deadly delays cost us time that had to be made up by an increase in march rate. We seemed to be holding to some mysterious itinerary. If Paulo knew why we had to stay on schedule, he wasn't sharing the information with anyone.

12 August.

All I can see is sky above my head and the man just in front. We're like shipwrecked sailors swimming through a sea of grass. At 1000 we stopped for breakfast (a roasted banana) in a small grove that allowed us some cover and a view of the surrounding area. Everyone was very hungry by the time we spotted two buffalo. All we could see was fresh meat for the pot. Two men trotted off after them.

It was terrible field discipline on this type of mission but hunger overrode my objections. They returned half an hour later with empty hands. Buffalo sounded wonderful but we had to settle for dust as we continued to pound along the grassy valley, watching for man-tracks, food and landmarks in that order.

Hypnotized by hunger and the rhythm of the march, I was startled to find us stopping for the night at 1700 hours. A full hour of remaining daylight would be devoted to a hunt. Our scouts has spotted a herd of zebra.

The first swoop on the herd scattered them with no kills. A column of dust raised by their fleeing hooves settled and I could see the dull despair in the soldiers' faces.

Then they broke into toothy grins. We heard a distant shot and shouts of triumph. Via much unbridled shouting

**Rare well-equipped FNLA troop sports OD utilities, leather boots (alternated with sandals tied to top of pack), pack made from whole cloth instead of patches, two knives, and all-metal and plastic AMD-65 Hungarian assault rifle.**



**Small Portuguese officer corps reflects the pro-West history of FNLA.**

## WHO'S RUNNING THE REVOLUTION?

Rebellion against the colonial government of Portuguese West Africa began in 1961 but there was never unified resistance. The Marxist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was heavily backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. The pro-Western National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) picked up help from the United States, South Africa and even Communist China. Holden Roberto led an African-backed compromise movement called the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE), based in Zaire.

They were all for the eviction of Portuguese rulers but none of the groups cooperated for very long, joined forces or even got along well off the battlefield. In one form or another, they are still fighting among themselves.

After alternating between interne-cine squabbles and combat with the Portuguese for a dozen years, the GRAE and MPLA finally joined to form the short-lived Supreme Council for the Liberation of Angola. This diplomatic mismatch was never consummated — since even the Organization for African Unity (Roberto's backers) couldn't convince themselves that the Soviets didn't want its own colonies in Africa — and the GRAE never joined military forces with the MPLA. It fell apart in 1972 and Roberto reorganized the GRAE as the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA).

Meanwhile, Portugal was losing troops, money and stature in world opinion for clinging to its colony in Africa. More than 50,000 troops were committed but they failed to keep control of the area and were finally forced to reform the administration of Angola as an "autonomous state." Portugal would oversee economic policy, represent the colony in foreign relations and provide defense, but an elected Angolan legislative assembly would tax, budget and manage the country's internal affairs.

That's when the leftists stepped in to thwart development of a responsible indigenous government and a self-supporting economy. The spoilers were people left in power after a 1974 military coup in Portugal resulted in a decision to divest the country of colonial holdings. Despite a raging civil war, the Portuguese pulled out of Angola in November 1975. UNITA and the FNLA made fast gains against the MPLA. That disturbing turn of events did not sit well with communists around the world and the native forces of the MPLA were bolstered with 20,000 Cuban troops. The tables turned almost immediately.

All sides employed mercenaries at one time or another, but the most effective of the foreign forces fighting in Angola were Cuban Army units which established control in most of the center of the country. Mercenaries — always in small numbers — disappeared from the FNLA and UNITA after the trial of Colonel Callan and his troops who were employed by the FNLA. UNITA continued to be supported by South Africa, while the FNLA's assistance dwindled to a few grudgingly-granted safe houses in Zaire.

UNITA's advances in the South have been heralded by the press but those reports rarely put the situation in perspective. Angola is twice the size of Texas but the country has less population than New York City. The Angolan government — no different from the old MPLA except that they're recognized by most of the world's governments — controls the territory its troops can occupy but that's not very much. Armed, militant UNITA troops freely roam sparsely settled Southern Angola and the less-organized, ill-equipped FNLA formations still scurry about in the bush near the Angolan border. The FNLA will probably continue to survive (barely) until OAU support materializes or until the MPLA can afford enough troops to drive them out of Angola.

— Bill Guthrie

across the valley we learned some kind of animal had been killed. A female Harness antelope arrived a short time later carried in two halves by the successful hunters. She was crudely and quickly roasted over the fire. The liver and kidneys were good but the cooks were too hungry to take much time with the other meat. Succulent antelope was turned into something that tasted like tough, hard, salt beef. Who cared? A full stomach for the first time in a week.

At midday the next morning we saw smoke from a large fire and began to use it as a navigation beacon. The fire was lit by a three-man hunting team from another FNLA band. They joined our party and we marched until 1400. No need to push any harder. We were only one hour's march from their base camp. An advance team went ahead to scout the route into our initial destination.

The delay gave me an opportunity to ponder the fits and starts with which the march had been conducted to this point. By better route selection and longer, faster legs on the march, we could have reached this area in half the time. Only one answer made sense. The FNLA was operating on some sort of timetable.

They route their patrols according to a meager flow through a supply pipeline that will not support too many troops in one area at a time. The unplanned presence of additional soldiers in an area could be devastating for local units. The FNLA has enough trouble without local squabbles among troops short of food and every other sort of supply. Cleared to enter the base camp we dove into a dinner of melon, manioc and some kind of wild meat.

14 August.

The usual handclap reveille sounds at 0515 but there's no rush to march this day. We ambled off at 0700, and reached the first outpost after an hour. I am scheduled for an inspection tour of this area which remains under FNLA control. An entire village population gathered on the square to sing patriotic songs. There were speeches of welcome to the foreign visitor, and there was a much appreciated breakfast of scrambled eggs and buffalo meat.

I paid for the meal. All 40 villagers lined up to shake hands. Some of the men who had been marching with us live here. They appeared in the welcome line holding their baby sons or daughters. Everyone looked quite healthy compared to those I saw on the march and in the base camp at the border. The people probably eat better here than in the towns. There's all the manioc they can eat, vegetables in both volume and variety



**Dwarves such as this man from Western Africa are sometimes involved in the fighting in Angola.**

grown in streamside plots and a little meat. They don't seem to fish the small river for some reason. This outpost is well in the sleeping-sickness belt, but there was little evidence of the disease.

When the reception was over, we walked toward the FNLA headquarters for this area: Camp Zero-X. A similar welcome was put on by the same cast supplemented by still more FNLA villagers. I was asked again to speak but I politely declined. Shortly after the ceremony I saw the Portuguese . . . four of them.

The FNLA's Inspector General was a Portuguese commando. He had served on the South African border and in Zambia. He even fought in the north against his present comrades prior to 1975 when he joined the FNLA. He hasn't left the jungle since — except once to get treatment in Kinshasa for a bullet wound suffered when his column had walked into a FAPLA ambush. He chuckled and told me how surprised the FAPLA patrol had been when he led his troops in a most un-African counterattack to foil the ambush. They killed 16 of the enemy.

Other Portuguese jungle fighters at Camp Zero-X had served in the infantry and military police. They are very light skinned, as opposed to black FNLA troops who have nearly ebony skin. The difference makes these Portuguese veterans very visible targets in the bush. They generally hold no positions of great responsibility in the FNLA but they have a lot of military skills to teach the guerrillas.

It won't be an easy task for the few Portuguese soldiers who choose to remain with the resistance in Northern

Angola. At Camp Zero-X there were only a few Belgian FALs, a handful of broken-up AKs, a half-dozen Tokarev pistols and a solitary Browning P-38. All firearms were old and in bad shape. Clothing for the troops was in worse disrepair than weapons. The patched pieces of cloth that covered the people at Camp Zero-X were so fragile and incomplete, it seemed as though the FNLA troopers who accompanied me on the march had been given a special clothing issue.

There is very little outside aid for the guerrillas and the FNLA was nearly destroyed by Cuban incursions after 1975. The commander told me that when he came to this area in 1979, he had weapons for six men. In the five years since he had managed to arm more than 500 fighting men and even stockpile a few arms.

But the men and the weapons they are forced to use have fallen into disrepair. The men drill well — for a Third World guerrilla movement — but there is no evidence of camp security, patrolling or reconnaissance activities. Everyone salutes, clicks bare heels and marches in a couple of parades a day but there is no real military training. There are no weapons classes, no indoctrination, no tactical drills and no PT. There are soldiers here but this is not an army camp.

Camp Zero-X is only a village that has removed itself from the control of the communist government of Angola. Most of the FNLA fighters in this area have been in the bush for too long and lived too hard to muster much martial spirit. It's not a war that attracts people already struggling to survive against isolation and the elements.

It's disheartening but I'm told evidence of more effective resistance may be in store. On 17 August we are slated to begin our march toward the Atlantic and into the heart of FNLA-controlled countryside. In a few days I'll see what free Northern Angola looks like. Until then there is time to contemplate the questions that have been bothering me since I got a first-hand look at the rag-tag resistance fighters of the FNLA.

What do the people of Northern Angola hope for? And how can a handful of ragged, barely-armed guerrillas give it to them? I've been assured that inside of two weeks I'll meet the General Staff of the FNLA and see a free city of 25,000. I can't help being skeptical.

The hunters have been burning the hills again and smoke obscures all but the nearest objects. If they are willing to burn their land to survive, will they fight to save it?

Tomorrow the torture of the march begins again. ☒

# SOLOMON ISLANDS COAST WATCHER

## Keeping an Eye on the Rising Sun

by Beth Hoagland



AT the outbreak of World War II — before they received recognition for their role in stemming the Japanese tide rolling across the Pacific — Coast Watchers were the envy of many American soldiers and sailors. It seemed like a pleasant way to fight a brutal war. Why suffer slogging through the jungle or sweat it out aboard ship when you could be a Coast Watcher, do your bit lolling around beautiful beaches and never have to get any closer to the enemy than the range of your binoculars?

And then the true stories of Coast Watcher danger and daring began to circulate. They were told by downed combat pilots, sailors from ships sunk by the Japanese and by senior officers who owed the success of their island-hopping campaigns to intelligence from Coast Watchers who literally crawled into enemy camps to spy and report their observations. The list of volunteers for Coast Watcher duty dwindled to a select few. Most were Australians or New Zealanders who had lived on Pacific islands for years before the war tending farms and plantations. The record indicates there was only one American officially assigned full

time to Coast Watcher duty but he made an impact. Before the end of the war, Franklin Nash helped rescue a future President of the United States and worked closely with a future U.S. Supreme Court Justice.

Nash was an Army Signal Corps corporal with the 410th Aviation Battalion on Guadalcanal in 1942 and he knew practically nothing about Coast Watchers. He spent most of his time at Henderson Field in the control tower watching shot-up Corsairs and Hellcats stagger back from tangling with Japs over the Solomon Islands. An officer — usually a tired pilot — was required to be on duty in the tower with enlisted radio operators and controllers. Many of the fliers had been directed to targets or been picked up by Coast Watchers after being shot down. Tales of these irregular operatives fascinated Corporal Nash.

During off-duty hours he began to compare his relatively placid air control duties with the mission of these seldom-seen, hardy souls who lived in the bush with little to protect them except their wits, their radios and friendly natives. If a pilot was shot down in the South Pacific, his best bet for

quick rescue was usually a local Coast Watcher who would either pick up the downed aviator personally or radio a boat to pluck him out of the water.

But Nash knew the Coast Watcher's most valuable mission was to observe and report via coded radio messages on the activities of the Japanese, which Nash later recalled "just intrigued the hell out of me." He began to seriously consider volunteering for an organization with a short but colorful history.

The Coast Watchers were organized by Royal Australian Navy Commander Eric Feldt shortly after the war in the Pacific began. He chose *Ferdinand* as a code name for his people recalling a Walt Disney cartoon character, Ferdinand the Bull, who instead of fighting sat unobtrusively under a tree and smelled the flowers. It seemed appropriate for a group that was supposed to look, listen and report from hiding in the midst of the enemy. Nash presumed such a far-flung network of spies would have a complex nerve-center in the Solomons. He was wrong.

Out of curiosity, he visited the Coast

Watcher headquarters on Guadalcanal during his off-duty time. He was floored to find no lights, no maps, no administrative party and not much of anything but a radio and some Australians to man it.

"Those Aussies just didn't know how to scrounge," recalled Nash. He decided they could use something better on the Canal to support their field operatives. He provided Coast Watcher headquarters with tables made from packing crates, six-volt batteries and lights. Nash's efforts put him on the good side of Lieutenant Commander Hugh Mackenzie, RAN, who was in charge of the Guadalcanal headquarters. He got an enthusiastic welcome when he volunteered to join the outfit but Nash knew the U.S. Army bureaucracy might have other ideas.

Cmdr. Mackenzie promised he'd get Nash an official transfer from the U.S. Army, so Nash dropped his other duties and went on 24-hour call to code and decode messages for the Coast Watchers. It was three months before Nash learned from his captain that he was technically considered a deserter because no transfer orders had been issued. Afraid he might lose Nash back to the Army, Mackenzie quickly cut orders detaching the corporal to the Allied Intelligence Bureau for duty with *Ferdinand*.

Cpl. Nash officially became a Coast Watcher but he did not remain on Guadalcanal for long. Sub-lieutenant Reg Evans, RAN, a Coast Watcher based on a Solomons flyspeck called Kolombangara, needed an assistant. Nash volunteered. Cmdr. Mackenzie thought it would be absurd to send an inexperienced American to live in the bush on the tropical island and turned Nash down flat. Calling in some previous markers, Nash got the backing of Mackenzie's right-hand man, Lieutenant R.A. Robinson — and the assignment.

Nash caught a Navy PBY to Segi, New Georgia, where he had a three-day indoctrination with Donald Kennedy, a long-time resident of the area. He began to learn Pidgin English, a bastardized form of language used to communicate with Micronesian natives. He was given a crash course in bushcraft concentrating on the ways Coast Watchers escaped detection by the wily Japanese. He also got some unorthodox lessons in his military communication specialty. Coast Watchers typically shaved the thickness of their radio crystals, which controlled transmission wavelength, to make it harder for the enemy to find the frequency and get a fix on their location.

"When they'd get 'em down to where they were almost exactly right," Nash recalled, "they'd take face powder and rub 'em a little bit. That would take a millionth of a micron off." The Japanese rarely managed to find Coast Watchers by RDF

U.S. Navy fighters flying in formation over Midway Island during World War II. Many of these and other pilots who were shot down owe their lives to the the Coast Watchers, who got to them before the Japanese. Photo: AP/Wide World





methods but remaining undetected was only one of the many problems they faced throughout the South Pacific. Providing solid intelligence was a major difficulty. Until May 1943, Nash indicated, "we had no good maps."

"The first maps we had just had dotted lines around the coast. We didn't know the depth for PT boats or if subs could get in. Until we got some good aerial photos, the only good maps we had were captured from the Japs. With good maps, we could code the messages with air strike vectors, and two hours later, Jap barges would be destroyed."

During May when better maps and charts became available from Coast Watcher headquarters, Corrigan and Nash carried new radio crystals and updated maps to Munda and Roviana Lagoon. From there, friendly natives paddled Nash in a dugout canoe to Kolombangara, where Nash had been ordered to duty as Reg Evans' new assistant. The Australian officer and his Yank assistant became close friends on the tiny island. Evans called Nash a "quiet, good-humored farming man from Colorado, so long in the the legs it was quicker to lead a horse under him than ask him to mount it."

The waters off the coast of their island were crowded with Japanese shipping and the Coast Watcher team began feeding a steady stream of signals on resupply barge movements. It was obvious to them that the Japs were trying desperately to reinforce Munda which was under constant assault by the allies.

"The barges would come in on the dark side of the moon," said Nash, "and stay as close to the islands as they could so the PT boats and destroyers in the channel couldn't see them. If you're on the island side looking at the ocean, you can see a silhouette anywhere. If you're on the ocean side looking in, you can't see anything.

"The barges would get so close they'd hang up on reefs every once in a while. The

Japs would unload at night and cover the barges with coconut palm leaves. I'd sit in a coconut tree with good field glasses and the first thing I'd do at daylight is look those reefs over good. Then I'd radio the position and here'd come the fighter planes."

On the night of 2 August 1943, Evans and Nash spotted a mysterious blaze in Blakett Strait. "We watched . . . but couldn't see much for the dark." On the island, there was no way for the Coast Watchers to know of the desperate battle going on at sea. The darkness obscured a Japanese destroyer bearing down on a collision course with a U.S. Navy PT boat. Nash and Evans learned of the tragic collision in an 0930 headquarters broadcast the next day.

"PT boat 109 lost in action in Blakett Strait. Crew of 12. Request any information," the transmission said. Evans and Nash alerted friendly natives in the area to be on the lookout for survivors. On 7 August, on a small coral reef called Gomu, Evans met four natives who turned over to him a bedraggled and exhausted PT-boat Skipper suffering from back and leg injuries. In a nasal New England accent, the Navy officer told the Army Corporal his name was Lieutenant (junior grade) John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Evans and Nash got the future President safely back into Navy hands and returned to their duties. The Japanese were once again making strides in the area and eventually forced the Coast Watchers to abandon posts on the Solomon islands of Gizo, Arundel and finally Kolombangara. The team of Nash and Forbes Robertson were assigned to duty on Gomu where they had to live entirely off the land. "Forbes Robertson really taught me how to live in the jungle," Nash recalled. "We started living like kings."

"The native fish boys would make goggles out of bamboo and a little piece of plastic for the eyes. They'd get underwater by those reefs, armed with a bamboo pole with a few rusty nails attached to it and swim along with those fish and spear 'em. They'd return with lobster, turtle, turtle

Map of Solomon Islands, showing areas of assignment for Nash while he was a Coast Watcher.



eggs and *toba*, what the natives called a fat green fish." All these delicacies from the sea had to be cooked and that presented other problems with Japanese troops on the island.

"The natives would pile up a bunch of rocks, build a fire under 'em and get the rocks hot," Nash remembered. "They'd lay banana leaves over the coals, sew chunks of *toba* into a banana leaf, place it on a pole and steam it over the fire for 30 minutes. Man, that was eatin.'" But Nash had to spend time away from the beach to observe Japanese concentrations on the island or scout for downed aviators.

"When we travelled, we lived on rice, American rations and, of course, those Aussies had to have their tea. They'd airdrop us anything we needed. When we were in the bush, they'd drop us shotgun shells. We'd give one shell to the 'shoot boy' and say we wanted two pigeons. We ate a lot of pigeons. I never ate pigeon before or since," Nash said.

The natives would trade bananas, pineapple, coconuts, limes, pawpaws and sweet potatoes. "All of these items had a certain value and you'd dicker with them. A half stick of tobacco would be good for a full basket of pawpaws. Nothing better than a ripe pawpaw with lime juice and sugar. Four sticks of tobacco and a sheet of paper bought a big chicken."

A close working relationship with the natives was essential to the Coast Watchers' success. Propaganda leaflets were distributed frequently informing the natives to report all downed pilots. There was a standing reward of a bag of rice and a case of tinned meat for each airman brought in by natives. The reward system worked. Natives rescued 22 U.S. airmen on the island of Segi alone.

In October 1943, New Zealand troops went into action to take Mono and Stirling in the Treasury Islands group in preparation for an Allied assault on Bougainville. Nash was sent to Mono with a New Zealand Army sergeant to recon the area in an effort to locate and rescue downed pilots reported in the area. In the crew of the PT boat that ferried Nash and the Kiwi sergeant to Mono was Byron White, later appointed as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice by President Kennedy. Nash had known White when both attended the University of Colorado. "I never saw anyone that could play football like he did," Nash said.

"When we landed that night, the PT boat let us off and we canoed ashore. It was so damned dark, we couldn't see anything. We pulled our canoes in, got our tarps, and just kinda sat there till daylight came. Just as soon as there was anywhere near light, we sent Harry Wickam out there to see if we could find where we were. He came back in about 30 minutes. We had landed right beside a little native village, quite a ways from the Japs."

Mono Island natives hid the Coast Watcher team in the bush where they waited for delivery of three downed Allied pilots

and intelligence on Japanese troop strengths and locations. The island was crawling with Japanese and the natives had trouble convincing some of the fliers that white men had arrived to rescue them. Jesse Scott, a radioman on a downed torpedo-bomber, feared a Japanese trick and at first refused to allow the natives to guide him away from his jungle hideout. Finally, one of the Coast Watchers ventured after him personally. After seeing that white men had come to their rescue, Jesse and other airmen came out of hiding.

"The natives kept watch on the trails for Japs until night came, then they took us to meet the PT boat in an outrigger canoe," Nash recalled. "First time I'd seen an outrigger. Down in the Solomons we had dug-out canoes. We went back to Vella Lavella, where the airmen were flown to Guadalcanal while we prepared for the invasion at Torokina" on the island of Bougainville.

Nash said the fight for Torokina and its airstrip was so intense that a lot of Allied aircraft were mistakenly downed by friendly fire. "The Japs would come at you with torpedo bombers, dive bombers and fighters. Our (pilots) were right in there fighting with them. If you're sittin' on a gun, and a fighter plane is goin' to strafe, unless you really been schooled in silhouettes and have a lot of cool, which is pretty hard to do at a time with bombs droppin' in on this side of

ya and that side of ya, you shoot 'em. Many a good Allied fighter was shot down by their own men and you couldn't do a damn thing about it."

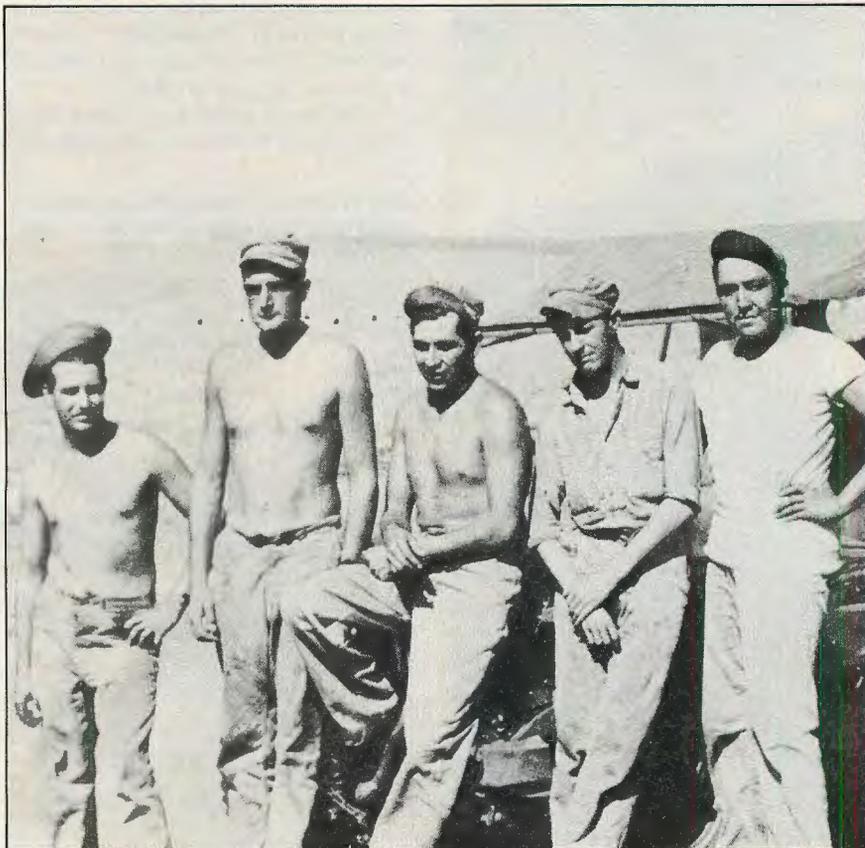
Once Torokina was reasonably secure, Nash and other Coast Watchers moved out to clandestine duty on other parts of Bougainville, which presented them with special problems.

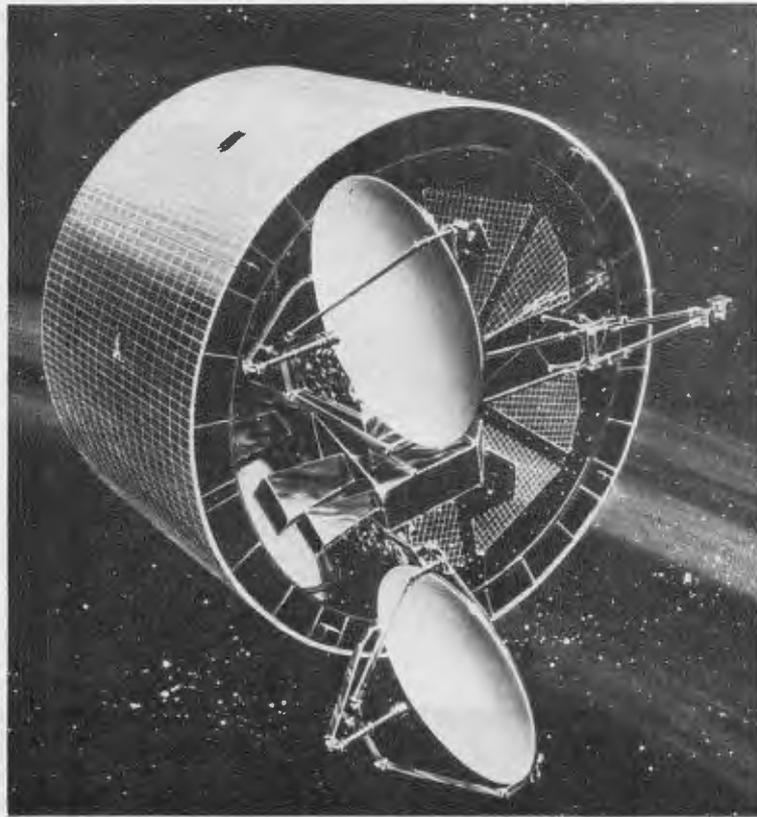
"The natives on Bougainville couldn't even talk to the natives on the other side of the hill from them and they'd been there for centuries. You got a beach boy a mile into the bush and he was lost. You got a bush boy on a beach and he couldn't swim, paddle a canoe or anything. The only time bush natives came to the ocean was to get salt once a year.

"Our basic job on Bougainville was to go up in the bush and keep an eye on the Japs so they wouldn't come back down while we built the airstrip at Torokina. There was a lot of Japs left on Bougainville and you not only had to keep a careful watch for them but also for the unfriendly pro-Jap natives. We had to be prepared to move at a minute's notice. The Australians were down on Torokina taking care of the air base and those damn Japs had it in their head they were going to make a last stand and march up there to take the base. There were a hell of a lot more Japs than Aussies, but they didn't get it done.

"As far as being jungle fighters, the Japs couldn't compete with us. They just didn't have the equipment. We'd capture a few and take their diaries. You couldn't believe the crap they'd write in those letters. They'd pray for someone to bring them food; they'd give their life for this or that. They weren't

Franklin Nash, second from left, on Guadalcanal with other members of the 410th Aviation Signal Corps before he joined Coast Watchers in Operation Ferdinand.





## TODAY'S FERDINAND

In the parlance of today's intelligence-gathering business, activities such as those carried out by Coast Watchers in World War II are referred to as HUMINT, an acronym for "human intelligence" which refers to information generated by people actually on the ground in an area in question. With the boom in space-age technology in the past 40 years, however, spymasters and military strategic planners have relied more and more on ELINT, or electronic intel.

The closest comparable ELINT counterpart to something like the Coast Watchers and the Allies *Ferdinand* operation would be the Defense Satellite Communications Systems, known as DSCS III.

DSCS III uses high-resolution photo reconnaissance satellites that have several antenna capable of connecting a wide range of users at different locations at the same time. The six independent surveillance channels can provide resources on command, grouping users by their geographical situation or by their operational needs. Competing users range from the United Kingdom, Diplomatic Telecommunications Service, NATO, mobile ground forces, U.S. Navy, Worldwide Military Control and Control System and the White House Communications Agency.

Although the satellites of DSCS III,

With the boom in space-age technology, spymasters and military strategic planners have relied increasingly on electronic intel such as this Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS III). Photo: USAF

unlike operatives in *Ferdinand*, have no offensive capability, the system can defend itself from certain anticipated modern warfare problems. Nuclear explosions emit intense bursts of energy known as Electronic Magnetic Pulse (EMP) that can permanently or temporarily damage all types of electronic equipment. DSCS III's equipment has been "hardened" to resist EMP effects. The satellites also have anti-jamming capabilities to protect their programs from enemy interference.

General Electric designs its defense satellite to do much of its own altitude control and station keeping in the event a ground altitude control station is destroyed. A constellation of four satellites placed in synchronous orbit over the Indian Ocean, and the east and west Pacific and Atlantic oceans provides constant worldwide ground contact and makes data from any global location available at any given time.

The Fleet Satellite Communications System, FLTSATCOM, was built by TRW for the U.S. Navy. It has many of the same capabilities as DSCS III, but is capable of transmitting to small mobile platforms equipped with low-cost terminals.

worldly at all. It was grilled into them that they were the chosen people. They fought hard and could kill ya but they just didn't have the supplies," Nash said.

When Nash took a month's leave and went to Brisbane, Australia, the Colorado cowboy in his blood surfaced. He asked if anyone needed any help on a ranch. "A guy told me if I wanted to go to the back country, I could find work. So I took a train to the interior, and got back to ranchin' for a while, workin' with cattle and horses."

When Nash returned to Bougainville, the war was coming to an end.

"We'd listen to the radio every night and when we defeated Germany, our spirits rose 40 notches. Nobody knew anything about the atom bomb until it was dropped. When we heard that bomb was dropped and then the next one, we knew we were going to get out of there. There weren't any happier people in the world to see that atom bomb dropped," Nash declared.

"If it's your life or morality, there isn't going to be any question about it," he said. "You may think there is, but when it's your survival and you're 9,000 miles away from home and somebody's huntin' you every day to kill you and you can get a weapon that will eliminate him, that's the weapon you're lookin' for. Harry Truman has been a friend of mine ever since. It was the right thing to do, 100 percent. If we had to go to Japan, we would've done it. But it would've been like Okinawa and Iwo Jima: tough.

"When the war was over, we all met down on the beach," Nash recalled. "In the meantime, the Australians dropped us some money, axes, and a lot more trade goods. Sergeant Yauwika and another two or three good police boys got the names of the natives that had been killed by the Japs when they were spying for us. We did the very best to pay their families off with shillings, axes, laplap, salt, paper and tobacco."

As members of the Coast Watchers melted away to return to peacetime pursuits, they were slow to talk about what they had done. And because *Ferdinand* was a highly secretive operation and all references to it were censored from the news, the public heard very little about the heroic group. But official recognition was made, in discreet quarters, of the invaluable and heroic contributions made to the Allies by the Coast Watchers.

Before he left Guadalcanal, U.S. Marine Corps Major General Alexander A. Vandegrift referred to the Coast Watchers in his final Order of the Day as "our small band of Allies who have contributed so vastly in proportion to their numbers."

From Major General Alexander M. Patch, Commanding General at Guadalcanal: The Coast Watchers' "magnificent and courageous work has contributed in great measure to success of operation on Guadalcanal."

Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. said the intelligence signaled from Coast Watchers on Bougainville had saved Guadalcanal, and Guadalcanal had saved the South Pacific. ✕

# HER MAJESTY'S MAULERS

## Royal Marines Revert to Martial Arts

Text and Photos by George Barrett



**E**XPERIMENTING with martial art forms is fine for the dojo but in combat you want to be sure of your moves. When you can smell the garlic on the bad guy's breath, it's no time for "Oops, let's try that again."

Those considerations — and a well-deserved reputation for combat readiness at all ranges — has led a significant segment of Great Britain's Royal Marines back to one of the most basic martial arts. After more than 30 years of close-combat evolution and experiments with various martial techniques including judo, karate and aikido, the Royal Marine Commandos have come back to jujitsu.

The Booties have geared this ancient, unarmed fighting system toward situations they have encountered — and expect to face — on modern battlefields. Most of the resurrection of jujitsu began around 1980 at stately Deal Barracks, a historic depot for RM training. That's appropriate. The acknowledged father of close combat techniques in the British Armed Forces, William Fairbairn, first joined the Royal Marines and trained at Deal.

The situation was significantly different in 1980 than Fairbairn would have remembered from his early days as a Marine. On the manicured fields of the Royal Marine Training Center (RMTTC), Commandos grunted and strained in mock hand-to-hand combat under the watchful eyes and short tempers of a Close Combat Training Team (CCTT). Fairbairn's successors were British judokas James G. Shortt and Bernie Finan. They instructed young Commandos in jujitsu, knife fighting and sentry elimination, bayonet fighting, baton and stick techniques and other close-combat skills. It was hard work for the trainees but Finan and Shortt were in the Royal Marine version of a hog's heaven.

In 1980, Bernie Finan was an NCO with the Physical Training Wing of 41 Commando, Royal Marines. His fame extended far beyond his own unit. Representing his regiment in British national judo competition, Finan had upheld the Royal Marines' reputation for fighting prowess and fitness in countless bouts. He is no stranger to other martial art forms including boxing, aikido, karate and French boxing (Boxe Francaise/Savate). That background made Finan a hard man to deal with in the sparring ring and a natural to teach the tricks of unarmed mayhem to other Marines.

At Deal he met James G. Shortt who was trained in the 300-year-old style of Ryoi Shinto Ryu by Sensei Kaiso Komito. Shortt was a highly-skilled proponent of this traditional Japanese fighting style which advocates an all-around method of combat training with emphasis on metsu bushi (to throw ashes into the eyes — a blinder). In this style, the student learns to strike an opponent as a shock maneuver before applying a

**Sentry removal is always taught at commando courses. The Royal Marine Commando School teaches its students to do it swiftly and silently.**

throw, projection or lock. Shortt is skilled in other martial arts and holds dan grades in judo and karate and a third dan in the modern jujitsu style of Juki Ryu. He and Finan found they fit in with each other like hand and glove.

They began to work on developing a program for training Royal Marines in close combat techniques ranging from grappling and unarmed encounters to the use of infighting weapons. They reached into their martial arts backgrounds and designed a variation of Nihon kobujutsu which teaches the way of the sword, knife, baton/stick/stave, spear and kusari gama. They also began to familiarize Royal Marines at Deal with other oriental armed combat methods using such exotic weapons as manriki-gusari (weighted chain), Tekken-zu (iron ring used as a knuckle duster), jitte (iron truncheon), nawa (rope), shuriken (darts, spikes and needles) and shaken (throwing discs or stars). It all seemed quite sophisticated for a basic military hand-to-hand combat class, but Shortt and Finan claimed it was simply an expansion of the basics.

Shortt claimed that modern methods of armed and unarmed combat taught to most military men are simply updated equivalents of ancient ways and the same principles of training can be applied to encompass modern weapon development. That seemed logical to the decision makers at White Hall and the close combat instructors were given the go-ahead to do their particularly violent thing with Royal Marines at Deal.

The experiment was well-received among the rugged Royal Marines and Shortt has expanded his reach to the point where he now exclusively concentrates on training military and police personnel. In the years since the Deal Barracks experiment large numbers of British soldiers and policemen have benefited from close combat training programs developed and taught by Shortt and Finan. That's fine with Shortt who had his first encounter with cross-training back before Deal in 1970 when he spent a short time instructing Green Berets from the U.S. 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) who were in Britain on leave. Both the Green Berets and Shortt came away with a new respect for each other.

"That was one of the very few occasions when I not only taught the military but learned from them," Shortt recalled. "To be honest it ended as an exchange of concepts, approach and technique. Since that time I have a respect for American Special Forces that will take hell to shift."

Soldiers and policemen came to Shortt for instruction in bayonet fencing, a technique that had sadly slipped from the military and para-military lexicon with the advent of modern assault rifles. Old soldiers applauded the effort.

Bayonet fencing in Britain's Armed Forces was a mandatory subject for all soldiers trained prior to VJ Day. It lost favor following World War II when machine guns and indirect fire weapons proved to be the more likely methods of engagement in modern warfare.



Using wooden rifles, these trainees lunge at each other during bayonet training.

A trainee hits the turf during jujitsu training. Maybe his mates standing around watching will learn something from the experience.



It was not an easy task since modern bayonets tend to be more suited for use as digging tools or can openers than as weapons, either in a soldier's hand or attached to the end of his rifle. Shortt got hold of some old practice pieces, mainly mockups or Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) rifles with 18-inch bayonets of WWII vintage. The SMLEs were used for drills while the mockups were used in one-on-one encounters to avoid injuries. The practice devices are designed in the general shape of a rifle but are much heavier and mount a rubber bung in place of the steel bayonet. The bung is connected to a hydraulic plunger system which allows the trainee to jab without injuring his opponent.

In training, soldiers wear padded gloves as well as a vest with padded chest and arms. That allows them to engage in no-holds-barred mock combat. Shortt — and many of his students — claim it's the next best thing to being there.

Wearing these "Michelin-Man coats" as they've been dubbed by the Royal Marines, padded warriors line up under the watchful eye of an instructor and prepare to do battle. Special operations troopers from the famed 21st Special Air Service (SAS) Regiment engaged in some particularly vicious contests using the methods resurrected by Shortt and Finan for battlefield bayonet encounters.

These days, classes in unarmed and close combat continue throughout the British military and within many of the country's police organizations using many of the methods developed by Shortt and Finan. The British Army was so impressed that they have formed Close Combat Training Teams (CCTTs) for virtually all regiments to standardize training for both regular and territorial units.

Military and police minds the world over are arriving at the same conclusion: conventional judo/karate/aikido type methods won't work across the board for one-on-one encounters on modern battlefields but they have some effective application in combination with the basics of unarmed combat training. The key — as indicated by pioneers Shortt and Finan — appears to be picking the best moves from all known techniques and teaching them to motivated students who understand lives may be at stake.

Both Finan and Shortt admit that CCTTs and a return to the basics of proven systems only represents a beginning for producing well-trained, deadly soldiers. They don't advocate laying down the rifle and kicking off the combat boots to take an enemy on bare-handed. That's for the movies.

For the real world, the goal is giving the modern fighting man an effective weapon when what he's been issued is inoperable or out of the ammo necessary to avoid a close combat situation. ☒

# JATI



## Finland Breathes New Life into SMGs

Text and Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

Firing JATI submachine gun.



**T**HE submachine gun refuses to die. Surrounded by snubbed-down assault rifles with fancy folding stocks, it continues to pop out of tank turrets and drop from the sky in the arms of camouflaged commandos. Foreign police strut on street corners with sub-machine guns slung nonchalantly across their shoulders. U.S. law enforcement agencies shuttle them through back doors in unmarked crates to counter charges that they are storing "gangster guns."

Meanwhile, a less familiar version of the arms race continues. As assault rifles get smaller and lighter, sub-machine guns scurry along just in front, chopping weight by using space-age materials and surgically removing unnecessary appendages. The new Finnish JATI is a perfect example. Weighing a mere 3.6 lbs., empty, and 14.8 inches in overall length, the JATI shaves the distinction between sub-machine gun and machine pistol to a fine line.

Designed by Finnish engineer Jali Timari in 1980, the JATI is a most surprising weapon. Manufactured by Tampereen Asepaja Oy, which specializes in dies for plastic injection molding, ABS-type plastics play an important role in the JATI's construction. The lower receiver assembly (which incorporates the pistol grip and magazine well), rear sight, retracting handle, trigger, sear lever and disconnect are all plastic. The three-piece upper receiver body, hinged receiver top cover, modular trigger housing and other small components are sheet-metal pressings. The barrel and bolt are stainless-steel forgings. The gun has a total of only 39 components, plus the magazine.

The JATI operates by unlocked pure blowback using a telescoping bolt which seals the receiver's ejection port except during the moment of ejection. Firing from the open-bolt position, the fixed firing pin strikes the primer after the bolt has enveloped 4.3 inches of the 8-inch barrel. There is no advanced primer ignition. The chamber is not tapered and headspace is on the case mouth. As a consequence, burst cycles are smooth and free of the loping pattern that often distinguishes submachine guns firing by advanced primer ignition.

While wrap-around bolts are no novelty to those accustomed to the Czech Models 23/25 and ZK476, UZI, Beretta 12S and numerous others of this configuration, Timari has wrung full potential out of an obscure concept which first appeared in the bizarre French MAS Model 1938 submachine gun. The MAS38 bolt moved in a cylindrical recess in the receiver body set at an angle with the bore's axis. When the bolt recoiled rearward, it dropped into a tube in the buttstock. Moving on an incline reduced the cyclic rate to a proper

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## Try driving out the roll pin that retains the MAC-10's extractor with a rusty nail in the tall grass and you'll develop a new perspective on these small matters.

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600 rpm. All was for naught, however, as the MAS38 was chambered for the pathetic 7.65mm French Long cartridge.

Chambering his submachine gun for the now ubiquitous 9mm Parabellum, Timari has repositioned this principle to move the bolt along a seven-degree angle above the bore's axis. This permits the pistol grip to be placed directly in line with the bore's axis and the forces of recoil. Felt recoil is thus reduced to the maximum extent possible. In addition, when the bolt moves rearward after ignition it presses downward on the barrel as its mass (the bolt weighs 1.25 lbs., more than a third of the gun's entire mass) is transported toward the bolt's axis and muzzle climb is significantly diminished. Finally, moving out of parallel to the bore's axis creates a mechanical disadvantage on the bolt which lowers the cyclic rate to 600-650 rpm.

The fixed firing pin is milled into a bolt head which can be removed from the bolt body by prying the extractor

### Firing JATI with Dater suppressor attached.



out of its retaining recess with a screwdriver and pushing the bolt head forward. This is really heads-up baseball. Pierced primers, prevalent in some lots of ammunition, will flame-etch the firing pin, leaving jagged pock marks whose sharp edges will then pierce the primers of all cartridges fired through the gun, regardless of lot, accelerating the firing pin's disintegration in geometric progression. Gently stoning the pin will sometimes retard the process, but eventually the bolt must be discarded. Only the JATI's bolt head need be replaced in this event. Extractors fail more often than any other component in full-auto weapons. The JATI extractor can be replaced as easily as that of a Colt M1911A1 pistol. Try driving out the roll pin that retains the MAC-10's extractor with a rusty nail in the tall grass and you'll develop a new perspective on these small matters.

The six-groove, eight-inch barrel has a right hand twist of one turn in 9.85 inches. The barrel is tapered and thins at the muzzle end to clear the bolt on its uphill run. Two circular rims milled into the barrel's exterior at the muzzle end are used to retain the barrel in the receiver body. They must be oriented with their flat surface up to provide clearance for the hinged receiver cover.

The barrel contacts the receiver only at the one-inch space between these rims and for the last 3/4-inch at its chamber end. There is little heat transfer. The receiver cover is also open at the muzzle end for air-flow cooling. This opening as well as that of the pistol-grip bottom have been plugged on specimens sold to Middle East clients who operate in arid, dusty environments.

The plastic lower receiver is attached to the upper receiver body (which con-

tains the weapon's serial number) forward of the magazine well by a steel, thin-walled tube, flanged at each end for retention on the upper receiver's side walls and at the aft end by the pin on which the receiver cover catch-rear sling-swivel pivots. The modular trigger mechanism is housed within the pistol-grip portion of the lower receiver and held in place by the JATI's only screw. It's simple, yet clever and totally unique.

There is no selector switch for semi-auto/full-auto. Semi-automatic fire is obtained by pulling the trigger a short distance to the first pressure point. When the trigger is pulled to the first stage the sear rotates downward and releases the bolt which is driven forward by the force of the compressed recoil spring. After ignition of the round in the chamber the bolt stops its forward movement and commences its rearward travel while the extractor claw draws the empty case out of the chamber. When the empty case strikes the ejector (an integral part of the stamped sheet-metal trigger housing) above the magazine well, the expended shell is thrown out the ejection port, now momentarily exposed by an opening in the bolt body. The bolt moves 1/2-inch past the initial sear engagement to push the disconnecter backward. As the bolt moves forward, so does the disconnecter, moving between the spring-loaded sear lever and the ceiling of the trigger housing to throw the sear up into engagement with the bolt's bent.

As more pressure is applied to the trigger, the sear lever — to which it is attached — cams up into direct contact with the ceiling of the trigger housing to prevent the disconnecter from moving forward and rotating the sear upward. The result is full-auto fire.

The JATI's retracting handle also answers as a vertical foregrip and provides the only idiosyncrasy that must be mastered. Non-reciprocating, the cocking handle must remain in the forward position or the bolt's travel will be inhibited. When in the vertical position, the support hand should push forward firmly on the foregrip during firing sequences. An alternative method is to fold the retracting handle under the receiver, in the manner of a horizontal foregrip, without completely closing it shut. A protuberance on the retracting handle molding serves as the JATI's only safety device. When the handle is folded completely up this nub blocks the bolt from moving in either the forward or retracted positions. In my opinion, firing the JATI in a stress environment with the cocking handle partially folded under the receiver is a potentially fatal procedure as it takes very little effort to squeeze the weapon hard enough to drive the safety nub up into the receiver body to block the bolt and

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## Hip and shoulder holsters are available, as well as a nylon mesh-type chest harness for magazines and other accouterments.

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shut you down. Some Middle Eastern users have ordered the JATI without the safety nub so it can be fired with the retracting handle folded up. As it is ABS plastic, the nub could be ground off easily enough, but then you are without any form of safety whatever and the gun would have to be carried with the bolt forward on an empty chamber until the moment of use.

That's foolish as it is much quicker to merely unfold the cocking handle with the bolt retracted than to have to cock it as well. When the bolt is retracted the word "FIRE" appears on a red enamel arrow in the ejection port.

The magazine release is of the flap-type and can be manipulated forward by a finger of the firing hand. The two-position feed magazine is available in two capacities, 20-rds., for concealment and law enforcement use, and 40-rds., more suited to military applications. The magazine bodies are fabricated from black anodized extruded aluminum while the follower and spring guide are plastic. Only the spring, sheet-metal floorplate, magazine catch and retaining screw are of steel. At 3.5 and 5.3 oz., respectively, they are the lightest I have ever used, yet sturdy and reliable. The magazines are interchangeable with the later 36-rd. magazines of the Swedish Model 1945 Carl





JATI is small enough to carry around in a hip holster.



This shoulder holster from Finland is of the finest workmanship but is not up to the standards of many U.S. rigs.

Firing JATI SMG from modified Weaver stance.



Gustaf ("Swedish K") submachine gun. They may also be used in the S&W M76, although it's a struggle to get M76 magazines into the JATI magazine well.

The 40-rd. magazine is best loaded to 38 rounds for absolute reliability. A much needed magazine loader is on the Tampereen Asepaja Oy drafting board. The front and rear panels of the magazine body protrude beyond the floorplate, so it cannot be slapped home into the magazine well with the palm of the hand in the customary manner.

There is no feed ramp. When cartridges are forced into a wild dance to reach the chamber mouth (worst case scenario: the French Chauchat in caliber .30-06) a feed ramp is required. Because the JATI's pistol grip/magazine well is in line with the bore's axis, the cartridge has a fairly straight run at the chamber. Thus, no guidance beyond that afforded by the magazine lips is necessary. Thank you.

The JATI's sights are rude and crude, as they should be on a submachine gun. The fixed, plastic square-notch rear sight is part of the lower receiver molding. The front post sight is adjustable for elevation zero and secured by two small hex nuts. It is protected by sheet-metal ears welded to the receiver cover.

The rigid front sling-swivel, adjacent to the left front-sight protective ear, is stamped into the left receiver panel. It is not large enough to accommodate a one-inch sling. Neither it nor the rear device will actually swivel. No sling is even issued with the JATI submachine gun, its designer having paid mere lip service to this accessory. It's a shame since people who carry submachine guns unconcealed place some emphasis on this often-neglected item. SMG shooters also know properly engineered sling swivels and a readily adjustable sling are of great assistance when firing from the hip assault position.

A shoulder stock will soon be forthcoming for the JATI. To date I have seen only photos of a prototype. The designer, Jali Timari, remains adamant in his contention that such a device is only atavistic clutter on his gun and is in no hurry to producing one. Some users — including me — *don't agree*.

Hip and shoulder holsters are available, as well as a nylon mesh-type chest harness for magazines and other accouterments. The holsters are fabricated from the highest grade leather, but receive the lowest possible grades in the area of design. The very best shoulder rigs I have ever used for small submachine guns are those of Gene De Santis (De Santis Holster & Leather Goods Co., Dept. SOF, 155 Jericho Tpke., Mineola, NY 11501). The JATI can also be equipped with a laser sight

*Continued on page 72*



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**#4108 — Lifeknife Trailmaster.** The Volkswagen of the Lifeknives. 5¼" 440 stainless-steel blade with sawback, super-tough molded VALOX thermoplastic handle with survival codes, watertight storage space, screw-cap with precision luminous liquid compass, camouflaged CORDURA nylon sheath and sharpening stone. Complete survival and first-aid kit, including fishline, hooks, sinkers, snare wire, needles, bandages, ointment, sterile surgical blade. **\$29.95**



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# JATI

Continued from page 69

for greater accuracy potential under stress and low light levels.

Sound suppressors are no longer just esoteric curios on submachine guns. They are the veritable life-support system that will carry the submachine gun well beyond its predicted life expectancy and into the 21st century.

Two suppressors are available for the JATI. Its manufacturer, Tampereen Asepaja Oy, markets a unit that is claimed to be effective. I have never seen it. Nor will I bother to seek it out, for the grand master of suppressors, Dr. Philip H. Dater (See "Doc Dater's Deadly Devices", SOF, November, '81), has designed the ultimate JATI "can."

Doc Dater's Model JATI suppressor is but 12.2 inches in overall length, 2 inches in diameter and weighs 1.5 lbs. (about 680 grams). It is of the so-called muzzle type which screws on the optional JATI metric-threaded barrel (16 x 1.5mm).

Just how effective is Dater's unit? The noise level of ordinary conversation is 60 decibels (dB) and a .22 LR pistol report is about 120 dB. Dater's Model JATI will reduce the sound of the SMG's muzzle blast by 33 dB as compared to the non-suppressed weapon. As the Model MP, this suppressor can be ordered for most standard threads. The suppressor's internal configuration is a modified multi-chambered coaxial design which yields increased efficiency in a somewhat shorter-than-usual envelope. The suppressor is of all aluminum construction for weight reduction and thermodynamic efficiency. Inside the suppressor housing is a diffuser tube with multiple small holes. Within the diffuser assembly is a central draw tube with multiple large holes and partitions dividing the draw tube into four chambers. Each chamber is filled with rolled screen.

Like all of Dater's suppressors, the unit is easily cleaned and maintained. A spanner wrench is provided to remove the front end cap. The diffuser tube will then drop out the front. Tapping the draw tube lightly will allow it to fall out the rear. The components can then be cleaned in solvent and re-assembled in the reverse order.

This suppressor is available from the JATI's U.S. distributor, Omni Ordnance, Inc. (Dept. SOF, One Galleria Tower, Suite 576, 13355 Noel Road, Dallas, TX 75240) or directly from Automatic Weapons Co. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1567, Friendswood, TX 77546), its manufacturer. A copy of their latest suppressor catalog is available for \$4, postpaid.

The JATI itself is every bit as simple to disassemble and maintain as Dater's



**Stainless-steel JATI barrels — optional barrel at left is threaded to accept sound suppressor.**

**TOP: JATI submachine gun disassembled.**

**ABOVE: JATI trigger mechanism with sear lever and retaining pin.**

suppressor. Remove the magazine and check the chamber. Swing open the retracting handle and use it to move the bolt, under control, to the forward position (never dry-fire open-bolt guns by permitting the bolt group to slam into battery uninhibited). Pivot the cover latch rearward and open the receiver cover. Push the recoil spring and guide rod forward and out of their recess in the lower receiver. Remove the spring and guide rod. Slide the bolt back and lift out. Lift the barrel up and out from the front end of the receiver body. To remove the trigger mechanism from the

lower receiver, first take out its retaining screw on the right side of the receiver. Gently pry the trigger housing upward by the ejector and pull out the entire unit. The disconnecter will drop out the back of the trigger housing. Disassembly of the bolt group has already been discussed. No further disassembly is required or possible.

Reassemble in the reverse order. Make certain you hold the disconnecter in its forward position under the cross-pin when re-inserting the trigger mechanism. The trigger spring (which remains in the pistol grip) must be behind the disconnecter, not under it (if it is not you will lose the semi-auto mode). Pull the trigger to its rearmost position and push the trigger housing down into the lower receiver. Use Locktite to secure the retaining screw. When the barrel is replaced the flat spots on the two barrel-support rims must be oriented upper dead-center.

More than 2,000 rds. of 9mm

## JATI SUBMACHINE GUN SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber:** ..... 9mm Parabellum.
- Operation:** ..... Unlocked; pure blowback without advanced primer ignition. Fixed firing pin. Telescoping bolt. Semi-automatic or full-automatic fire by two-stage trigger mechanism.
- Cyclic rate:** ..... 600-650 rpm.
- Magazines:** ..... Two-position feed type. Extruded aluminum magazine body. 20 and 40-rd. capacities, 3.5 and 5.3 oz., respectively. Will also accept 36-rd. Swedish M1945 magazines.
- Weight** .....
- without magazine:**... 3.6 lbs.
- Overall length:** ..... 14.8 inches.
- Barrel:** ..... Six-groove with a right hand twist of 1 turn in 9.85 inches. Stainless steel.
- Barrel length:** ..... 8 inches.
- Sights:** ..... Front post with protective ears, adjustable for elevation zero. Fixed, open square notch rear.
- Accessories:** ..... Shoulder and hip holsters, nylon chest pouch, laser sight system, extra magazines and suppressors.
- Manufacturer:** ..... Tampereen Asepaja Oy, Hatanpaanvaltatie 32, 33100 Tampere 10, Finland.
- U.S. Distributor:** .... Omni Ordnance, Inc., Dept. SOF, One Galleria Tower, Suite 576, 13355 Noel Road, Dallas, TX 75240.
- Status:** ..... In service with the armed forces of Finland and various police units throughout the world.
- Availability:** ..... Immediate. In U.S. to law enforcement agencies and qualified Class 3 dealers only.
- Suppressor:** ..... Muzzle type. Aluminum construction. 12.2 inches in overall length; 2 inches in diameter. 1.5 lbs. Manufactured by Automatic Weapons Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1567, Friendswood, TX 77546.

ammunition were fired through the JATI. Nine different types were used in an effort to exploit any possible weakness in the design, such as the lack of a feed ramp. They were Finnish Lapua 123 gr. FMJ (full metal jacket), Spanish military surplus 126 gr. FMJ, Match Grade Ammunition's (Dept. SOF, 3522 Treschwig, Humble, TX 77338) 130 gr. FMJ for submachine guns only, and their 148 gr. RNL (round nose lead) and 140 gr. JHP (jacketed hollow point) subsonic rounds, Federal 115 gr. JHP, Remington 124 gr. FMJ, PMC 115 gr. FMJ and IMI's Samson 9mm Carbine +P 115 gr. FMJ. The ammunition was chronographed and the results are given in Table I.

The subsonic ammunition was fired with Dater's JATI suppressor mounted to the weapon. Most commercial 9mm Parabellum ammunition is supersonic. That is, the projectile's velocity exceeds the speed of sound (1,087. ft./sec. at 32 degrees F at sea level). Fired through most muzzle suppressors (which do not affect the bullet's muzzle velocity) it will produce a significant residual sound from the bullet in flight, often referred to as a "down-range crack." Suppressor systems like those of the Sterling and Heckler & Koch incorporate ported barrels which reduce the muzzle velocity of standard NATO ball ammo to subsonic levels. Now, when you take a 115 gr. bullet and drop its velocity to 800 fps, you're not left with much energy upon impact with the target. If, however, a heavy projectile is chosen and loaded to just under 1,000 fps, the energy dump on the target is considerable greater. The U.S. Navy SEALs, for example, use 170 gr. FMJ bullets pushed by 5.2 gr. of Herco in their "Hush Puppy" suppressors. Heavy .38 Spl./357 Magnum bullets sized to .355" and propelled by shotgun powder in .38 Spl. +P charges will do the trick. The trade-off is the introduction of another ammunition type into the supply pipeline — an acceptable option for special-operations units.

The 148 gr. RNL subsonic ammunition was 0.08" too short in overall length and failed to feed correctly. It was withdrawn from the test, except for chronograph purposes. The other lots of ammunition performed without stoppages of any kind. Dater's can, as expected, is phenomenal. Hundreds of rounds were pumped through it and yet it always remained cool to the touch. Try firing an original MAC suppressor without the neoprene or Nomex cover and see what happens to the flesh of your support hand. The JATI has a substantial amount of bolt clatter which is quite noticeable, to the firer only, when the suppressor is employed.

The Federal ammo exhibited ex-

### TABLE I

- Weapon:** JATI Submachine gun — 8-inch barrel.
- Caliber:** 9mm Parabellum.
- Ambient temperature:** 57°F (91°F for Samson and PMC tests).
- Instrumentation:** Oehler Model 33 Chronotach with Skyscreen III detectors. All velocities measured in feet per second five feet from muzzle.

Ammunition	Low	High	Extreme Spread	Average	Standard Deviation
MGA 140 gr. JHP subsonic	882	931	49	911	15
Spanish FNT 126 gr. FMJ	936	1,007	71	974	23
MGA 148 gr. RNL subsonic	966	1,013	47	990	17
MGA 130 gr. FMJ SMG	1,073	1,143	70	1,119	21
Remington 124 gr. FMJ	1,142	1,169	27	1,155	8
Federal 115 gr. JHP	1,148	1,194	46	1,178	15
PMC 115 gr. FMJ	1,234	1,268	34	1,257	9
Lapua 123 gr. FMJ	1,234	1,286	52	1,261	15
Samson +P 115 gr. FMJ	1,321	1,376	55	1,347	17

*Continued on page 85*

# BOONDOCK BEER BUST

## In Search of Something Sudsy

by Howard E. Simpson



As a war correspondent in Indochina, I had it made. Despite some close calls that left my mouth dry and my knees weak, I did not have to endure what the soldiers did in the dirtiest days of the first war in Vietnam. Within a couple of hours after a fire-fight, I could usually be back in civilization, showered, shaved and seated before a tall, cool drink at Hanoi's Metropole Hotel or savoring steak *au poivre* at l'Amiral in Saigon.

There were some significant exceptions to that rule.

At one point I found myself stuck humping the boonies with French Colonial Infantry officers and noncoms who were leading the *Groupements de Commandos Mixtes Aeroporté*, or GCMA, an irregular force of Black Thai, White Thai and Meo tribesmen. We were deep into Viet Minh-controlled territory in the Thai mountain region of northwest Vietnam. The GCMA was fighting a no-quarter guerrilla war; ambushing patrols, mining trails, assassinating communist cadres, rescuing cut-off units and saving downed pilots. They seemed to be doing all of that on this particular operation.

It was one of those bone-weary times when you ask what in the hell could conceivably make you tolerate it all. In my case, the immediate remedy was generally a tall drink of good beer. It was obvious to me that there was little hope for such sudsy succor this far into the bush. And then the French Dakota appeared to bank lazily over our position.

Skimming over the high jungle canopy, the droning aircraft sparkled in the sunlight. I watched with idle curiosity as it clawed for altitude. Suddenly black blossoms appeared in the Dakota's wake. It was dropping something by parachute and I could see the kickers hanging out the cargo door to wave at us. We had plenty of ammo and chow. What could be important enough to prompt a dangerous aerial resupply?

Our squad commander, a tanned and tattooed French sergeant, raised his binoculars

marking the probable drop points for the crates lazily descending through the sky. "Allez!" he shouted to his men and moved off through the jungle. We scrambled through the thick bush ducking under heavy leaves and climbing over fallen trees. Whatever had been dropped was obviously important enough to justify this effort.

As we neared the drop zone, the crates crashed through the foliage. Some of the chutes fouled in the trees. Others thumped heavily into the deep leaf mould, sending startled flights of yellow butterflies fluttering among the thick tree trunks.

Behind our advance party, other soldiers were bringing a pack-train of mountain ponies to carry what had been delivered. The sergeant motioned me forward. He was rushing for one particular crate. I expected

to discover a brace of new Sten guns, plastic explosives or grenades as I watched the NCO hack away at his crate with a huge machete.

The precious cargo was not military but it was certainly vital to the French war effort. It was beer. An entire shipment of Export 33 beer had been carefully packed in several layers of padding and air dropped into us.

"Dieu merci!" the sergeant shouted. "Not one broken bottle!"

I shouldn't have been surprised. It wasn't my first experience with liquid resupply during the Indochina war. I'd quenched monumental thirsts with beer brought into Cambodian river patrol crews on the Tonle Sap, with Laotian Chasseurs near Luang Prabang and with the black-bereted Commando d'Indochina in the Tonkin Delta.

The labels varied but the importance of booze to combat troops did not. There were long-necked bottles of Tiger beer, heavy Mascara wine from Algeria and even Choum, a sneaky rice wine with an infamous kick. And French troops kept themselves fortified with air-dropped "Vino-Gel," a concentrated, jellied grape mixture which was supposed to simulate wine when the troopers mixed it with water. But the clear favorite — the item the troops craved most — was beer.

Time spent with the French Foreign Legion taught me that beer was the campaigner's best friend. It had a number of advantages. Beer provided refreshment and relaxation with a prudently low alcohol content. Beer was easily cooled in jungle streams and the bottles were light and sturdy enough to survive an air drop. You could learn to consume it lukewarm if you had to and, thanks to the *Brasseries & Glacieres de l'Indochine*, the huge French brewery network in Indochina, there was always a plentiful supply.

The Foreign Legion was at the height of its strength during the Indochina war. Most of its 50,000 members were serving in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Armored cars

### VETERAN TRAVELER, WRITER, ADVENTURER

As a war correspondent for the U.S. Information Agency, Howard R. Simpson was one of the very few Americans to make extended visits to Dien Bien Phu as a guest of the 6th Parachute Battalion (Bigard) and the 13th demi-Brigade of the French Foreign Legion (Gaucher) before the ill-fated mountain fort fell after a long siege by communist guerrillas. More recently, he has worked as a U.S. Foreign Service officer, a consultant on international terrorism, a newspaper columnist and novelist. His sixth novel, "The Jumpmaster," was recently published by Doubleday as a Crime Club selection. This is his first appearance in *Soldier of Fortune*. The editors welcome him aboard.

from Legion cavalry units were opening the Saigon-Tay Ninh road each morning, infantry battalions were clashing with Viet Minh regulars south of Hanoi and Legion paratroopers were being dropped in lightning raids on the towns of Lao Kay and Cao Bang near the Chinese border.

There were many Germans in the Legion during the early 1950s, which was very likely another factor contributing to the thirst for beer. At the Legion's traditional Christmas meal — whether it was served in a shell-scarred pagoda or a formal mess in Saigon — bottles of beer shared space with French Army-issue Gros Rouge. The Legion would go to great lengths to see that adequate beer stores were maintained. Battered, bullet-holed GMC trucks loaded with cases of Biere Royale rocketed through ambushes to reach isolated outposts south of Can Tho. Insistent Legion quartermasters pressured the crews of French naval monitors on the Red River to deliver consignments of Biere Hommel to their up-river units, suggesting that the red pompons on the sailors' hats would make perfect targets for marksmanship practice if the matelots were uncooperative.

It was no coincidence that the product of the local breweries was popular with the Legionnaires. The original brewmasters, sweating out the perfection of their blends in a new and difficult land, had come from the cool hills and valleys of Alsace. Their beer was light, dry and smelled highly of hops, approaching the quality of a good pilsner. The Legion had also found that their Indochinese allies could handle beer better than the heavy red mess wines. It wasn't as prone to induce giggles and unsteadiness among local troops unaccustomed to alcohol.

In 1955, I left the Legion behind in Vietnam, taking with me as souvenirs a chronic case of jungle rot and persistent indigestion of somewhat uncertain origin. The Legion's prescription for dysentery . . . a double shot of straight pastis . . . is not foolproof. Despite that, I found my thoughts tinged with regret when I finally sailed down the Saigon River. I'd met my wife on the terrace of the old Hotel Continental. Our first daughter had been born in the Clinique Saint Paul the night the Binh Xuyen rebels had attacked the Presidential Palace. I was sure I'd never see Saigon again or relish the pleasure of hoisting a beer with the troops.

I was wrong.

Nine years later, in 1964, a terse telegram arrived at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, where I was employed. It informed me that I had two weeks to get to Saigon and my next assignment as an adviser to South Vietnam's new Prime Minister, General Nguyen Khanh. Almost as an afterthought, the wire indicated I was to stop by Washington and Honolulu where I would be briefed by the American Commander-In-Chief, Pacific.

The CINCPAC conference was a depressing experience. How little we'd learned. The French had failed. We would



do it differently. No need to refer to history. It was as if the French Indochina war had never taken place.

Gung-ho U.S. officers tapped maps with stainless steel, collapsible pointers, reeling off optimistic statistics while the mandarins from Washington — Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, Dean Rusk and General Maxwell Taylor — nodded sagely and scribbled occasional notes. The Saigon contingent, including General Westmoreland, gave their views on VC losses, NVA logistics problems, the efficacy of air interdiction and our hopes for the new Vietnamese government. Someone even mentioned the light at the end of the tunnel.

I'd been away from Vietnam a long time but I left Honolulu convinced that American officials now involved with that country's morass of problems had been issued rose-colored glasses. I returned to Saigon as ordered.

At first it seemed the whole city had changed. The beautiful trees along the Rue Catinat — now Tu Do street — had been cut down. The sidewalks were cracked, the streets were dirty and the traffic was an incredible mix of Vespa scooters, motorbikes, military vehicles and sleek official sedans. Fortunately, I'd asked for a room at the Continental Hotel rather than the more modern Caravelle across the street. It was there I discovered that Saigon had retained much of its original character.

An old Taiwanese waiter with close-cropped hair recognized me as a past customer as he took my order. The frosted bottle of Tiger beer he brought had the same sleepy cat on its label. Some U.S. Green Berets seated at a nearby table shouted for "Ba-mi-ba," and while I wondered what exotic drink that might be, the waiter brought them a tray loaded with bottles of Export 33. Suddenly I felt better.

The influx of Americans had superficially affected the Saigon landscape. Rooftop officers' clubs with barbecue facilities filled the heavy night air with the distinctly American aroma of grilling hamburgers. Cans of American beer covered the tables.

The old colonial cafés along Rue Catinat with their lazy ceiling fans, potted palms and corpulent colonial drinkers with blood-shot eyes and roseate noses were gone. In their places were loud, brassy bars crawling with female lounge lizards in tight pants, heavy makeup and see-through blouses. The Café de Commerce had become the San Francisco Bar. The Bastia was now the Starlight.

Still, hints of the *old* Saigon lingered just below the glitzy surface. The Aterbea and Guillaume Tell restaurant continued to offer one of the most varied Chinese menus in Southeast Asia. You could still get a good bowl of Pho soup from the mobile vendors' carts.

After a few months a new job was added to my task at the Prime Minister's office. I became an adviser to the Political Warfare Section of the ARVN. This insured frequent sorties from the hot-house atmosphere of Saigon into the real world of the boondocks.

The war had changed some — but not that much. It was still an admixture of courage and stupidity, sacrifice and self-interest. The Viet Minh had become the NVA, the Regionals were now the VC. They were fighting their war. We were fighting ours. Unfortunately, theirs was a bit closer to military reality.

Certainly the climate and terrain of the battlefield had not changed since I walked over it with the French Foreign Legion. The new warriors still managed to work up a powerful thirst. And the new logisticians still managed to deliver the beer.

On Christmas Day 1964 while I was at a briefing the VC detonated a large explosive device at the Brinks BOQ. We rushed into the street to see black smoke and flames billowing out of the parking area under the building. Several Americans had been killed and the wounded were being helped into ambulances. After doing what I could to help, I walked down Tu Do crunching over broken glass. I stopped outside a familiar bar run by a Corsican who'd remained in Saigon after the French left. His windows had been shattered by the blast and he was in a foul mood.

"Eh ba, Simpson," he greeted me. "Is this the way you Americans operate? At least when the French were here we had security!"

I ordered a beer and watched the Frenchman empty two bottles of Kronenbourg into a large mug. After the first swallow, I reminded *le patron* that the French had considerable security problems and that one of the most murderous explosions in Saigon — directly in front of the Continental Hotel — had been engineered by a Cao Dai dissident group, former allies of French Intelligence.

My Corsican friend shrugged, watched me drain the mug, and indicated his philosophy on the matter. "At least the beer hasn't changed." It's all a matter of priorities.

Beer clearly makes things better in a war zone. An Air America C-47 carrying me back to Saigon from An Khe took some large-caliber ground fire and was struggling

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through a thunderstorm. We had loaded several cases of Budweiser aboard before take-off and began to dip into the cargo as the aircraft shuddered and jounced through the turbulent air. We were very likely to crash but I concentrated on not spilling the beer anywhere except in my mouth and didn't notice much else. By the time we landed at Tan San Nhut even the most nervous of our passengers was well relaxed. The beer helped keep the dragons at bay.

Cold brew saved the day for me again during a particularly exhausting operation in Chuong Thien Province. An ARVN battalion was moving slowly forward by fording mucky rice paddies and jungle streams. It was tough humping over slippery bamboo bridges and along muddy dikes under the staggering Asian sun. Groggy with heat and fatigue I recalled that I'd blazed this trail before with a French unit 10 years earlier. Considering my blisters, the sweat pouring down my cheeks and my mighty thirst, I concluded that the years *may have* made some difference after all.

The U.S. adviser with our unit — a husky, robust West Pointer — was beginning to eye me with concern. His wiry Vietnamese counterpart had already asked him twice how "the old one" was doing. By the time I limped into their base camp with the rear guard I felt like I'd made Lawrence of Arabia's cross-desert trek to Aqaba without a camel. Collapsing in the shade, my dulled senses picked up the welcome sound of clinking glass. I opened one eye to see the

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Vietnamese major standing over me, arm outstretched to proffer a chilled bottle of Tiger beer. The years and fatigue seemed to melt away with each swallow. By the time I climbed into the major's jeep with a second bottle in hand, I had decided I might be up to at least one more operation.

But I had to leave Vietnam again in 1965 for other duties. Some friends suggested a champagne farewell party at Tan Son Nhut. I squelched the idea and left a sticky table full of empty Export 33 bottles in my wake.

Ten more years passed before I returned to Saigon and I thought surely my taste buds were attuned to American beer. Not so. Once again, the beer seemed to be the only reliable constant that made things at least seem tolerable amid the chaos of the collapsing war effort. My "orientation" tour this trip included several days with the Australians in Phouc Tuy Province, where I was introduced to the charms of Foster's Lager and Tooth's Ale. Returning to Saigon I could clearly sense the impending doom in the country I had come to know so well. I needed comfort and companionship. I found her on the terrace of the Continental Hotel.

She was the sleepy, cross-eyed cat on the label of my Tiger beer. ☒

## SEA SUDS

Through the years of American involvement in Asia, many veterans have become familiar with the beers produced in that part of the world. Some even miss their availability in this country. To rekindle the spirit of the connoisseur and acquaint the taste buds with the brews that made the other side of the world famous, here's a partial list of the Orient's better beers:

<b>SRI LANKA (CEYLON)</b>	<b>JAPAN (con't.)</b>
Three Coins Lager	Kirin Light
Sando Stout	Sapporo
<b>HONG KONG</b>	Yebishu
San Miguel	Tesibu
San Lik	<b>KOREA</b>
<b>INDIA</b>	Crown
Flying Horse Premium	Crown Saeng
Lager	Crown Light
Kingfisher Lager	O.B. Lager
UB Export Lager	<b>MALAYSIA</b>
London Stout	Green Label
Jubilee Lager	Special Brew
Golden Eagle	Anchor
Sports	Tiger-
Asia 72	Lion Stout
Gymkhana	<b>SINGAPORE</b>
Solan No. 1	Tiger
Lion	Anchor
Continental	ABC
Esquire	Stout
Kent	<b>PHILIPPINES</b>
Dubble-8	San Miguel
Tipsy Extra Special	Pale Pilsen
Tipsy Extra Strong	Export Beer
<b>INDONESIA</b>	Dark Beer
Anker Bir	Lager Lite
Skol	Gold Eagle
Three Horses	Red Horse
<b>JAPAN</b>	Cerveza Negra
Asahi Honuama	<b>VIETNAM</b>
Minidaru	Export 33
Mitsuya	Larue Big Beer
Black & Stout	Generic
Kirin	<b>TAIWAN</b>
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## COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 18

secured. Once through the window and on the floor, pull out some slack and draw your weapon. Clear the room before unclipping and proceeding to the next room.

Weapon selection is doubly important here. What you carry through that window must be lethal and convenient. Shotguns are an obvious choice.

Police departments will usually provide pumps, and for non-military purposes they'll be just fine. But if you're a highly trained shooter, an auto-loader may be your best room broom. Sub-machine guns are a favorite with military entry teams, but the little bullet hoses are just a bit on the indiscriminate side for cops. As unlikely as it may seem, the pistol is becoming the favored firearm of high-tech entry teams. They are less likely to get caught in obstructions and functional in the most cramped spaces. It's easy to carry a backup and the pistol in the hands of a trained marksman is a controllable killer. There's certainly less chance of overkill with a handgun than with an assault rifle, shotgun or SMG. No matter what you pack, the presence of armed men on the other side of the glass requires you to have an edge.

Grenades are one answer. If you're a SWAT cop, don't expect your chief to issue frags. He spends most of his days with lawyers already and there are safer devices. CS tear gas is a standard answer to the problem but CS needs up to 10 minutes to take effect. Picture yourself hanging there in the breeze, counting the seconds on your Rolex, waiting for everybody to cry. And some people just aren't affected by CS. You could face fully effective resistance when you come blasting through the window frame.

A number of commercial manufacturers have developed suitable stun grenades. Police call them "flash-bangs" because that's just what they do. Under the right conditions, your bad guys will face 10 to 15 seconds of trying to regroup, see, hear and remember which way is up. That's still not a lot of time but it may be enough for you to gain entry and control.

Using what little time such devices or sheer surprise may provide, you still have to go through the window, extricate yourself from the shattered window frame, lower yourself to the floor, pull out some slack in the line and grab your weapon. Lots of luck.

If I were holding hostages, I'd want the black-suited swinger to come through the window on a rope. Windows are smaller than most doors, so I've got less area to cover. My attacker



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is going to be more encumbered with paraphernalia and have limited freedom of movement. And unlike the door-breaking variety of siege cop, he's not going to have a gun in his hand. That makes life pretty easy for me and pretty hard for him.

Now that doesn't mean rappels aren't good for anything. True, the tactical rappel exposes one or more team members, but properly executed, the defenders won't expect such an entry. And even though experts consider the rappelling entry a desperation move, a rope on the side of a building is a good platform from which to throw gas grenades and to divert attention as a conventional entry team goes through the door.

Films featuring rappelling entries are exciting, but we can only hope they won't encourage working police to risk their lives with an essentially dangerous tactic. Swinging through a defended window is *only* a last resort. But rappels are good as diversions or to lower assault teams to unusual staging platforms, like a roof next to unguarded windows. Just remember to check your equipment beforehand, get good training, and practice, practice, practice. ✕

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## SOF IN SALVADOR

Continued from page 37

cy as a guide, took the cases off the other three and turned the set screw back and forth until they were back on frequency.

Seven of the 10 handsets available to the DRP would not transmit. My suspicions about the cause — based on a great deal of experience with PRC-77s — turned out to be correct. Like the receivers, the handsets had been banged around and the transmitter module prongs had worked back and forth until they wore a hole in the wire mesh surrounding them and they no longer made good electrical contact. I'd seen that situation before in Vietnam.

The solution was to take a fine-pointed instrument and rearrange the wire mesh so firm contact was again made with the transmitter module prongs. I then checked the rubber "O" rings, locked the transmitter module into place, checked the plastic water seal to see if anyone had inadvertently poked holes in it and screwed the cover back on. We were back in the communication business after I cleaned all the connections and antenna bases. I wrote an SOP for cleaning and maintaining the comm equipment and showed the radiomen how to set up usage logs.

By the third week of training I was feeling fairly good about myself and my contributions to the combat-readiness of the DRP. That's when someone put a 10-gallon can of humble in my path and I tripped over it.

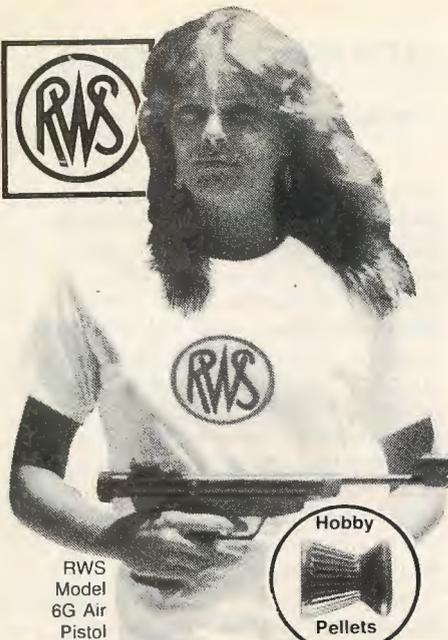
Everything planned had gone off without a hitch by the time we moved to a range and began training with Claymores. Maybe I was feeling a little cocky. I had taken the opportunity to soak up some of the country's culture, spending a couple of evenings relaxing at Gloria's, a nice little out-of-the-way place that specializes in Salvadoran delicacies.

Certainly, I didn't expect any problems with the familiar M18 and M18A1 Claymore mines I had used so frequently around the world. The platoon was formed into a school circle in a grove of trees where we breezed through the chalkboard portion of instruction. After chow we moved on to practical application in the techniques of selecting locations, aiming, arming and detonating the mines.

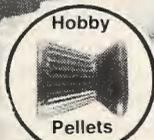
For this phase of training I was using an M18 claymore — with the explosive removed — hooked up to a detonating wire, tester and firing mechanism. Not being a trusting soul, I popped the back off the mine just to make sure the explosives had indeed been removed. They had.

The class had already been told how to pick a location for the mine, how to set it up and sight it in, how to run the wire and to make sure the wire is staked down and tied off so the Claymore won't be pulled over inadvertently. Fully confident that I had it all together, I went through my act, crawling up to the selected spot, setting the mine, sighting it in, running my wire back to a tree, hooking up the firing mechanism and so forth.

"So," I told them in Spanish, "when the amigos get in the kill zone you give the firing mechanism a sharp squeeze and . . ." KA-BLOOM!



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Holy Shit! The damned thing went off! You could study Techniques of Military Instruction all your life and never come up with a better attention-getting device. You should have seen the look on the students' faces. Hell, you should have seen the look on my face.

One thing I had not checked closely was the detonating wire, which apparently had a live blasting cap attached. The explosion blew the casing about 20 feet in all directions. Fortunately no one was hurt. My embarrassment, which the troops apparently barely noticed, was exceeded only by their enthusiasm. They immediately wanted to know if I would allow them to blow up a Claymore too. Moving right along . . .

The final two weeks of my training stint with the DRP involved more sedate classes on map and compass, small unit tactics, ambush and counter-ambush techniques, silent kill methods, prisoner snatches, bayonet training and weapons instruction, including such basics as how to sight in a weapon. Of the more than 50 men I worked with, including M60 gunners, not one was carrying a weapon which had been zeroed. I deemed it no wonder they had not been using the sights on their weapons during ambushes. We quickly got it squared away on the firing line.

The last week in El Salvador was made more hectic than usual because of a special request from the CO of the Airborne Battalion that I personally check his M60s and comm equipment. The radios had the same problems as those I'd seen in the Deep Reconnaissance Platoon, but the Airborne Battalion's M60 machine guns were in much worse shape. All 18 had frozen pistons and all were rusty inside and out from lack of cleaning.

The worst part was that the battalion armorers — acting on what they claimed was advice from a former U.S. MilGroup trainer — had sawed the bipods and sights off their M60s, which they had been told would make them "easier to carry." Thank God someone didn't advise cutting the soldiers' feet off at the ankles so the army wouldn't have to buy them combat boots.

The result of following this ridiculous recommendation was to leave a top-notch combat unit with 7.62mm, 750 rpm garden hoses that were about as useful in combat as C-ration can openers.

I left El Salvador with some disappointment over that situation and others I had seen, but it didn't last. I had made a significant contribution. Granted, we will have to return and do some things over again from the start. There is always some backsliding but the Salvadoran soldiers are benefitting from continued exposure to professional ideas and standards.

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I'd likely have collected another Purple Heart in the encounter but the little Colt Commando made a nice response and I managed to get a couple of rounds into each of the silhouettes. That's when Hall tossed the ca ca into the competition. Moving up on me from behind, he took my weapon indicating I had just experienced an unclearable malfunction. Spinning around I noticed a cluster of silhouettes to my rear and an unloaded wheelgun lying amidst a pile of ammo on a nearby rock. The move was obvious.

I dove for the gun figuring to load up and pepper the paper from the prone position. No such luck. I couldn't get the cylinder of the revolver to swing out from the frame! Hoping the pseudo-soldiers represented by the silhouettes were experiencing similar panic, I tried the cranky cylinder once more and then pitched the gun into the weeds. It was Big Iron time.

My new sidearm performed flawlessly and I drilled each of the targets neatly to end my run through the Wadi Course. Hall handed back the rifle and I asked him what he thought of an old soldier's performance.

"Not bad," he allowed. "I figure it's a three-way tie for best run — but you surprised me in the jammed weapon situation."

"Yeah, I know. Just couldn't get that damned revolver to open up."

Hall laughed. "Hell, that's not what I mean. We knew the pistol was going to give you trouble. What surprised me was that you went for your .45 when you had a fighting knife strapped onto your gear. I thought Marines always attacked with their Ka-Bars."

We let it go at that and gathered around a campfire to swap sea stories. I didn't know any of these men well but we warmed to each other as the fire chased the chill of the desert's night wind. I'd spent hundreds of nights like this: bunched around a blaze built to combat the monsoon chill under canvas in Vietnam or the Philippines, in snow caves or warming tents up above the Arctic Circle in Norway, or shooting the shit over ration-heating fires in Lebanon. There's something about the situation that melts human reserve and forges a bond of friendship. It's rare and rewarding which is, I suppose, why many men spend their most productive years seeking its solace.

I checked the perimeter, thanked the brilliant stars that I was not deskbound or forced to beat my brains out on a factory wall and crawled under my poncho liner.

The dingers showed up at dawn the next day. Peter's son Jason Kokalis had led a group of his friends out across the desert floor to emplace bundles of industrial dynamite at strategic locations across a hillside to our front. The maximum range was probably in the area of 400-450 meters. Each target was marked with a strip of reflective tape. Snipers could use any weapon they chose and we'd shoot in order from right to left along the firing line.

Marksman John Gannaway, senior rifle instructor at Jeff Cooper's American Pistol Institute in Gunsight, Ariz., brought some tuned shoulder weapons with him and offered me a choice. It wasn't difficult. He had a Remington Model 700 mounted with a Redfield scope and configured precisely like the standard Marine Corps sniper's weapon. I scooped up a handful of 7.62 NATO and took up a prone position in the center of the line. Many years ago and in painful repetition, Mother Corps had unscrewed my head and poured in the principles of rifle marksmanship. They paid off that day.

I held 'em and squeezed 'em and blew away a good portion of the Arizona desert. Sensing they were dealing with a ringer, the shooters even asked me to let someone else try the sniper-rigged Remington. It made no difference. I used Kokalis' Steyr AUG



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Bullpup, firing from the right shoulder with the issue low-power scope and continued to detonate dynamite. I walked away from the line with that old familiar feeling of accomplishment.

Before we left the desert the next day, I stood on a mesa above our firing line and sniffed the air. It was there. The olfactory trigger that used to heighten my senses on the battlefield. Napalm is nice, I suppose, if you're in a tight trick or you're an actor in a movie like *Apocalypse Now*, but I love the smell of cordite in the morning. ☒

## BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 24

hand, if that same target is presented to you and you are armed with a proper single-edged weapon, you will not only cut through the Levi jacket, you will cut the arm inside it damn near off. You can do this because a weapon such as the Bowie knife has a true cutting edge and it has adequate weight to balance it properly. You don't even have to get close enough to him that he can reach you to do this. All you have to do is to reach his arm with your knife — unless you are the guy with the dagger.

A double-edged dagger looks like it should cut both ways. That's true but in practice it doesn't cut very well either way. Also, a single-edged weapon like the Bowie has a superior back-stroke capability because of its sharpened, concave clip point. A single-edge knife offers a superior cutting-and-slashing performance. That's always preferable to a mediocre cutting capability both ways in a knife fight.

Because of its light weight and lack of balance most daggers have virtually no chopping ability. In other words, if you are presented the opportunity in combat, you can't take out your target in an attack from the rear by splitting his skull. You can with a weapon like the Bowie or kukri. With the average dagger you can only stab or possibly cut an opponent's throat in a rear attack — but you can also employ these attacks with other styles of knives.

Today's daggers are for the most part too small, too light and too flimsy to merit serious consideration as fighting weapons. There are too many other blades out there that will do a better job of seeing that you get home in one piece. If you do own a dagger, keep it for your collection. If you want to carry your dagger in combat, wait until men start wearing armor again. ☒

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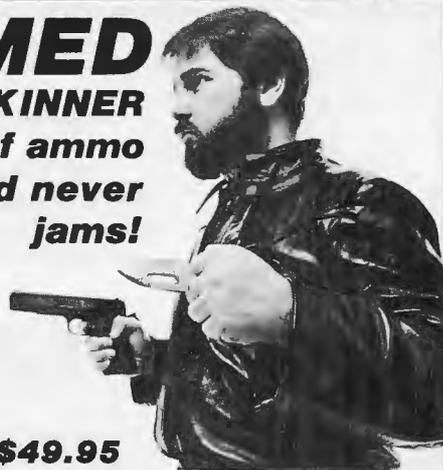
# JATI

Continued from page 73

tremely high pressure characteristics as the primers flowed out of their pockets and flattened against the bolt head. The JATI firing pin is cone-shaped and sharp — for positive ignition of hard military primers on the cold Finnish tundra. However, although all primer hits were deep, no primers were pierced and others have reported similar experiences with the Federal 115 gr. JHP cartridge. The Spanish ammo, manufactured by Fabrica Nacional de Toledo (FNT) in 1952, is bright and clean, Berdan-primed, mildly corrosive, sure-fire, cheap and subsonic. Amusing, as gun-show pundits are always touting European military-surplus 9mm ammunition as hot and high velocity (it was made for submachine guns, you know) and U.S. commercial 9mm as anemic and underpowered.

This Spanish ammo is available from Bill Petri (Dept. SOF, 26 Brookhill Lane, Norwalk, Conn. 06851). The Remington 124 gr. FMJ actually averaged 175 fps faster than the Spanish ammo. Yet, I cannot recommend the Remington round as it has consistently deposited circular brass shavings from the case mouth in the chambers of my

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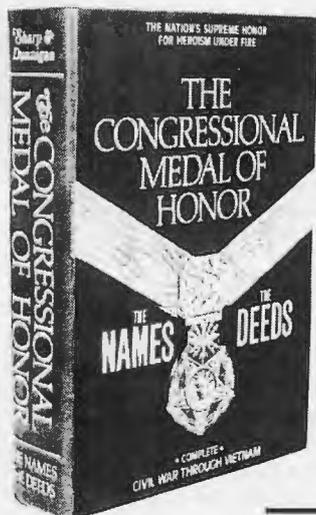
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With an average velocity of 1,347 fps, the Samson black-tipped submachine-gun ammo is really hot. And, as the firing hand is directly in line with the bore's axis, felt recoil approaches the punishing level. The higher the ammunition's velocity, the higher the submachine gun's cyclic rate. The difference between the Samson and subsonic ammunition (both Match Grade Ammunition and the Spanish surplus) is about 100 rpm and quite noticeable — again, because the hand is in line with the bore's axis. But, Finnish guns want Finnish ammo and the Lapua 123-gr. FMJ rounds flowed like melted butter through the JATI at 1,361 fps in a most controllable manner. All of the ammunition consistently ejected to the right, slightly forward and about eight to 12 feet from the weapon.

The JATI is best fired from a modified Weaver stance with the support hand pushing out on the vertical foregrip and the shooting hand pulling rearward on the pistol grip. Long sessions of burst firing from this position are fatiguing and, contrary to the designer's capricious theories, a shoulder stock will be mandatory in some scenarios. Yet, hit probability is extremely high and experienced operators can expect 85-95 percent of the rounds to impact in the body area of a police silhouette target at 25 meters. At closer ranges the JATI can also be employed from the hip assault position or from a Weaver stance in which the gun is lowered slightly and the shooter looks over the weapon using the front sight only.

With the exceptions noted, the JATI is the very model of a modern submachine gun. Having just arrived it has not yet made its mark, but it will. It has been adopted by branches of the Finnish armed services and a Paris counter-terrorist police unit. It has already become fashionable among certain palace guards in the Middle East. Narcs and the SWAT teams of several U.S. law enforcement agencies, who prefer anonymity, have purchased the JATI. It is currently being evaluated by some Federal agencies. All low profile, potential submachine gun users should take a long, hard look at this Finnish entry. ✕

## I WAS THERE

*Continued from page 22*

it." SP4 Moore asked some of his squad-mates for food and water but all he received was looks of contempt.

We moved on up the trail and linked up with the point element. There were VC footprints there and it was only a matter of time until we hit something.

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At this point my reluctant soldier was tired of the cold shoulder from his former buddies.

"Look, Sarge. I was wrong about quitting. I'd like to have my weapon and gear back. I don't want to go back to the rear."

My gaze shifted from SP4 Moore to his squad leader as I took a long, contemplative drag on my cigarette. "What do you think, Sarge? You got to rely on this guy. Do you think you can?"

"He ain't never been a problem before, Sarge. I think he'll be all right."

I looked back at Moore. "What you did was serious as hell, soldier. By regulation, I should turn you in, but if Sgt. Sullivan says he'll give you another chance, then I will too. Get your gear back from the other guys ... your weapon too."

As he left I thought about peer pressure. It was enough to change Moore's mind when coupled with the thought of hitting the shit barehanded. I couldn't decide which was the better leadership tool: peer pressure or flat-out fear.

SP4 Moore was a good soldier after that. It took a while for his buddies to accept and trust him again, but when they did it was because he worked hard to get back in the fold.

I think I made the right decision. ✂

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## FULL AUTO

Continued from page 20

If the "GO" end does not enter, headspace is too tight and you should back out the barrel one click at a time. If the "NO GO" end enters the T-slot, headspace is too loose and the barrel should be turned in one click at a time. Improper headspace can cause failure to fire (too tight) or ruptured cases and damaged parts (too loose). I prefer the older, wider headspace gauge. It fits the T-slot more positively. If you can find one, hang on to it.

Attached to the headspace gauge by a small chain are the timing gauges. Timing is the adjustment of the weapon so that firing takes place when the recoiling parts are between .020 and .116 inches out of battery to prevent contact between the front end of the barrel extension and the trunnion block. The timing should be checked whenever it is questionable, i.e., the gun fires with a loping or erratic cyclic rate. First adjust the headspace. Cock the gun. Raise the extractor and pull back on the retracting handle until you can insert the "NO FIRE" timing gauge between the barrel extension and the trunnion block with its beveled edge on the barrel notches. Close the barrel extension on the gauge. Depress the trigger firmly and attempt to release the firing pin. It should not release. Repeat with the "FIRE" gauge. The trigger should release. If the firing pin releases with the "NO FIRE" gauge inserted, the gun is timed to fire too early.

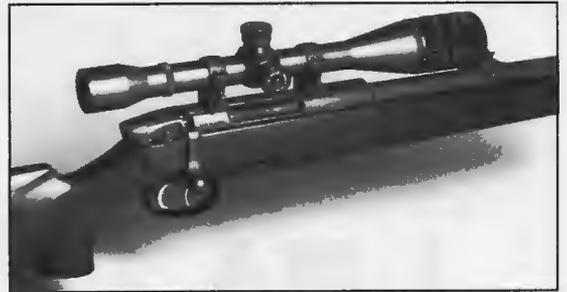
To adjust the timing, first cock the gun and insert the "FIRE" gauge. Remove the backplate and screw down (turn it to the left) the timing adjustment nut (some older guns are not so equipped) until it rests on the trigger lever. Then begin to rotate the adjustment nut to the right (upward) one notch at a time attempting to release the firing pin each time. When the firing pin is finally released, turn the nut up (to the right) two more notches and replace the backplate. You're ready to shoot anything.

And you *should* be ready to shoot anything, because there's more ammo out there than you'd ever imagine. You'll find a variety of types in combat zones around the world. At one time or another .50-caliber BMG (Browning Machine Gun) ammunition has been manufactured as ball, tracer, armor-piercing, armor-piercing tracer, armor-piercing incendiary, armor-piercing incendiary tracer and multiple-shot squeeze-bore. A lachrymatory (tear-causing) cartridge containing the explosive PETN and a small charge of tear gas (CN) was even developed during WWII. Just about every country

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from the U.S. to Singapore manufactures .50-caliber Browning ammunition. I recently used some Yugoslavian .50-caliber ball in El Salvador that was of the highest quality. Although armor-piercing ammo usually carries a black-tipped color code, tracer red and incendiary silver or gray, color codes vary with the country of origin. If you're uncertain, fire some before actual contact to find out what's running down the tube.

The Browning link is a metallic, disintegrating, double-loop pull-out type. It's quite sturdy and can be reused if cleaned and lubricated. If possible, all belts taken on a combat operation should be inspected and run through a small hand linker using a 1x2 stick to drive the small loop all the way down on the case's shoulder. Ammo should be carried in the metal boxes, *not* Pancho Villa style across the chest. It looks macho, but links rust and rounds slide out of the link loops.

When loading the gun always start with the end of the belt that has the empty double loops. The TM says to insert the belt with the top cover closed until the first round is engaged by the belt-holding pawl. Then retract the cocking handle once to half-load and twice to fully load the gun.

That's bullshit.  
Lift the top cover and the extractor,

withdraw the bolt slightly and set the first round in place against the rear cartridge stop assembly. Pivot the extractor back down on top of the cartridge and close the top cover (gently but firmly — slamming it down will eventually damage the cover latch). With the right hand — always palm up — draw the bolt smartly and completely to rear and let it fly forward. You have now visually inspected the feed mechanism, made certain the first round is properly aligned and fully loaded the gun with one jerk of the retracting handle.

I prefer WWII-vintage Ma Deuces for two reasons. First, they don't have a bolt-latch mechanism. When engaged, this device holds the bolt group rearward after every shot. The bolt-latch release — just below the trigger — must be depressed for the bolt to move forward into battery. This allows single-shot firing. But who needs the bolt latch? It's a pain in the ass to engage and disengage and any Ma Deuce gunner worth his beans should be able to tick off single rounds on a typewriter that only fires at 550 rpm. Use one thumb on the trigger to tap out single rounds and both thumbs for automatic fire. (By the way: When engaging point targets beyond 800 meters, fire single shot and load with tracer.)

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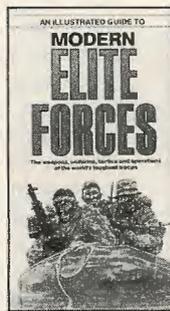
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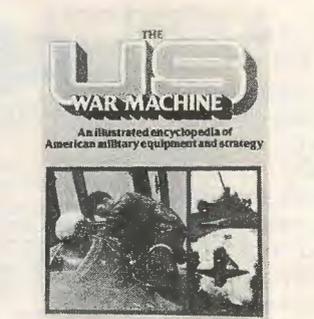
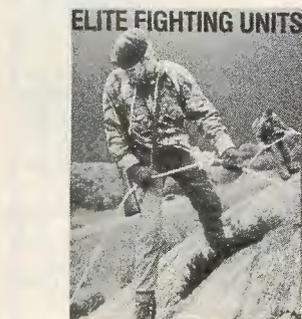
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Photo by Mike Schaefer

## 1985 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE CONVENTION & COMBAT WEAPONS MILITARY EXPO

*Soldier of Fortune* will hold its sixth annual convention and Combat Weapons Military Expo 19-22 September at the Sahara Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas. Full details will appear in the May issue of *SOF*.

Secondly, when these guns were arsenal rebuilt in the late 1960s the Imperial Wizards removed the dove-tailed slot on top of the receiver. Originally installed to accept the M1 Dial Sight (used with aiming stakes for defilade fire), this mount will accept telescopic sights which greatly expand Ma Deuce's sniping role. With a sturdy mil spec scope, such as the new Austrian Swarovski 10x42mm, the M2 HB can reach out to 1,800 meters and touch *anyone*. All this makes range estimation extremely important. It should be practiced, like prayer, without ceasing.

I don't like the newer Stellite-lined barrels either. They may last longer, but accuracy potential at the longer ranges is diminished considerably. Maybe the projectile tends to slide down the bore without as much spin. In any event stick to the original all-steel tubes.

Since it is recoil-operated, the barrel is the only component requiring any drudge-work. Attack it from the chamber end. Some older barrels will sweat fouling forever and no amount of brushing and solvent will ever produce a clean patch. After 45 minutes on any .50-caliber barrel my attention span has drifted over to watching *Fraggle Rock* cartoons on HBO and so should yours.

I have found the following reminders useful when reassembling the .50-caliber M2 HB. Replace the cocking lever with the rounded nose down and to the rear. Replace the bolt switch so that the groove marked "L" is continuous from the left-hand feed. Assemble the bolt group onto the barrel extension/buffer group (with the accelerator tips rotated up and to the rear) and install into the receiver as a unit, lifting up on the extractor until it clears the left receiver rail. Remember to align the bolt's stud hole with the receiver's clearance hole and replace the bolt stud before shoving everything into battery.

Very little ever breaks on the .50-caliber BMG. A proper field spares kit should contain at least one each of the following: firing pin, firing-pin extension assembly, extractor assembly, sear stop and pin (also called the accelerator-stop lock and stop), sear, sear spring, cocking lever, cocking-lever pin, and feed- and holding-pawl springs. The uncommon Korean War-vintage flash suppressor is a useful device if you can locate one. Broken cases should always be removed with the .50-caliber ruptured-cartridge-case extractor — never with a screwdriver or cold chisel.

Correctly employed by trained crews, Ma Deuce is still the ultimate infantry machine gun — bar none — even after more than 60 years of heavy use on all the world's battlefields.

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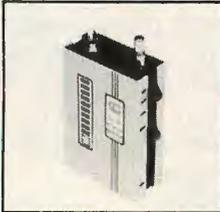


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## MERCS AND THE LAW

Continued from page 32

fully. If you do fight one of those countries, try to join an army. Then — believe it or not — you technically aren't a mercenary. You should enjoy the rights and protections of a prisoner of war under the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949.

But there are countries that haven't signed the Convention in any form, and 10 countries signed with reservations about the protocols. Many of these reservations concern limits of protection under the first protocol . . . including the article about mercs.

Note: Most Western democracies and Iron Curtain countries didn't ratify most of the protocols. Indeed, the United States Senate hasn't ratified any of the protocols. And there's going to be a fight when they do get around to the subject of ratification.

Major Gen. George Prugh (retired chief of the Army's Judge Advocate General and a U.S. representative to the Geneva Protocol debates) told SOF that most developed nations' governments don't like the gist of the protocols. Gen. Prugh explains: "For the first time in recent history, a treaty has been drawn up which limits rather than expands human rights protections in several areas." According to Prugh, the U.S. Senate either will not ratify the treaty at all, or will ratify it with severe reservations about the limits of Protocol I.

If the Senate does ratify the treaty without ratifying the protocols — for purposes of our observance of the Geneva Convention — the mercenary provisions don't exist. While we'll agree to treat POWs according to the Convention, the United States won't be bound by the provisions for mercenaries. Of course, that doesn't mean we're going to stage mock trials or issue a "shoot-on-sight" order. In fact, a merc captured by a Western army could reasonably expect to be treated better than if he were captured by a ComBloc or Third World nation which had accepted the protocols, since the protocols amount to a denial of POW rights.

But the Geneva Convention, itself, and its protocols have little force in combat zones. Either the combatant nation is committed to preserving POW rights, or it isn't. Aside from the nation's ethics, only world opinion seems to have any effect on those who break international treaties. When POW families and organizations publicized mistreatment of American POWs in the late '60s, the North Vietnamese government greatly reduced incidences of torture and starvation that had typified their treatment of captives before the campaign.

Publicity is like a spotlight. Those who commit crimes against others prefer to do them in the dark. The only means of forcing a government and its representatives to follow international law is by shining that spotlight on their crimes. ✕

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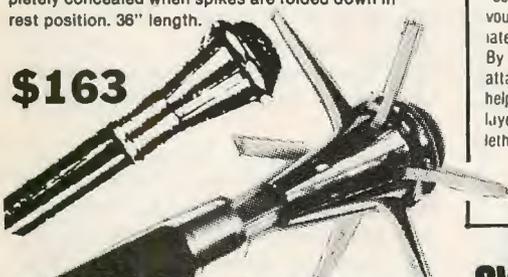
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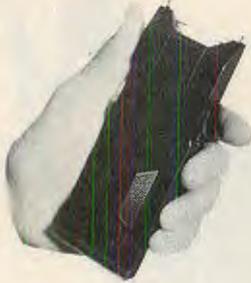
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**FROZEN CHOSIN**

Continued from page 47

Marines by 29 November. None of us knew it as we watched the frozen hump explode under barrages of artillery but we had just 72 hours before the brutal fight on Hill 1223.

Down in the valley below us, Chinese infiltrators crawled into the 5th Marines' CP and shot the place to pieces. As the Marines recovered from the lightning attack, the Chinese started to withdraw. But the Marines managed to kill every invader, several in front of the makeshift aid station. The tent was full of wounded Marines, many incapacitated with frostbite, and a few hand grenades would have killed them all. That made us mad and we vowed to take no prisoners.

On the morning of 1 December, we got the order to take up defensive positions on Hill 1223. We began to climb a gradual slope covered with several feet of slippery, slushy snow. If the Chinese were aware of our advance, they didn't respond immediately. About halfway to the top, we encountered the first small arms fire and ran into at least one machine gun protected by automatic weapons. It cost us our first casualty, Private First Class Kenneth O. Perry, who slumped into the snow with a stomach full of lead. Grenades thrown by our point squads silenced the gun.

As the slope became steeper and the snow deeper, we struggled upward, using our rifles as supports to keep our footing. From the valley below, 81mm mortars threw a few cursory rounds at the top of the hill and then quit firing. There wasn't that much of an ammo reserve and the mortarmen couldn't afford to fire on unidentified targets.

How Company, 3/7 and a 65-man support element was struggling up behind us. As the hill became steeper, it became impossible to put more than one platoon on line and the lead element had room to deploy a single rifle squad as skirmishers. The Chinese had chosen their terrain well. Once again, we had to carry the battle to them.

By mid-afternoon, Item Company had the crest, though it cost several dead and wounded. The Chinese had paid with more than a platoon to hold onto the height and lost it anyway. In the valley below, 105s and 81s registered to fire support for our position. It seemed obvious that occupying Hill 1223 was a temporary action designed to cover the troops forming for an "advance in a rearward direction" along the road below us. We could see trucks lining up for the convoy south.

Our Forward Air Controller, 1st Lieutenant Mullins, struggled up the slope of Hill 1223 with his heavy radio. When he'd caught his breath and wiped the sweat out of his eyes, he gave us the bad news.

"It's fuck, fight or draw small stores now," he said. "The Slopes have got us



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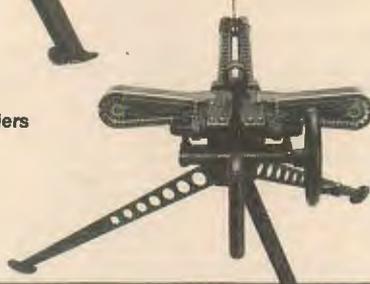
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surrounded." It confirmed our worst suspicions. We'd have to hold the high ground to cover the bugout from Chosin Reservoir.

As darkness fell, we slowly consolidated positions for a night defense. The first and third squads occupied the ridgeline, with the second crouching in reserve on the reverse slope. Normally, they would be safe from attack until needed but here above Chosin Reservoir there was no such thing as a safe position. The Chinese tactic of double envelopment put the reverse slope in as much jeopardy as was the FPL — the Final Protective Line.

If the moon came up that ominous night we didn't see it. The angry skies over Chosin were still shrouded with a heavy layer of snow clouds. Temperatures plunged again. Only a few of us had managed to hold on to our sleeping bags. Most Item Company Marines had to rely on hooded parkas and the body heat of a foxhole buddy to keep from freezing.

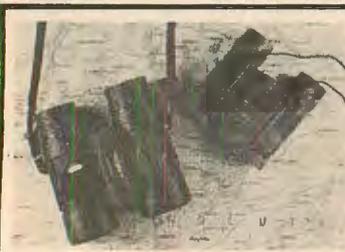
It didn't help much to realize the Chinese were no better off in the freezing season. Canvas tennis shoes don't provide much protection from the cold. POWs were in pitiful condition, always suffering from dietary problems and inevitably stumbling into our lines with bulbous, swollen feet, their hands high in the air. Frostbite was everybody's enemy in Korea.

Our efforts to get some much-needed sleep were thwarted by the need to remain 100 percent alert, two men to the hole, sleeping bags drawn no higher than the knees and never, never zipped closed. That was an invitation to sudden death. Many men, succumbing to the need for warmth, got deep in their bags and pulled the zipper tight. Zippers froze and there was no way out of the bag when the Chinese attacked. The mistake or weakness — call it what you like — cost many Marines their lives from bayonet wounds as the Chinese bayoneted everything that did not move or shoot back.

Shortly before midnight our first evening on Hill 1223, Al Thomas, the Heavy Weapons Platoon leader, walked down into second platoon's position and told Lieutenant Ed Sullivan that the CO wanted a night attack against the Chinese positions in an effort to keep them off balance. Our FPL was only 75 meters from the Chinese line. We assumed they were asleep since no searching fire had come from that direction for several hours.

I got "volunteered" for the attack and we walked forward of our lines around midnight, knee-deep in snow. No one was to fire until contact was made and then we were supposed to use grenades if possible. Someone on the point stepped on a sleeping Chinaman almost immediately. There were screams of rage silenced by the authoritative bark of a .45-caliber pistol.

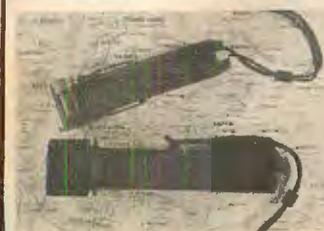
Flares began popping and we found ourselves in the middle of a very hot fire fight on a very cold night. Men were screaming and cursing, rifles cracked and the whole thing was undercut by the long, low staccato roar of automatic weapons.



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The Chinese opened fire all along the line and we were badly exposed. Those who could closed with the enemy and went to work with the 18-inch bayonet.

A black form loomed up out of a hole in front of me and lifted something short and dark into his shoulder. I saw the wink of muzzlé flash. Before I could recover and return fire a round hit me in the left leg. It felt as if someone had cracked me across the knees with a willow switch. I dropped into the snow as the gook adjusted his aim for the kill shot.

Throwing my M1 into my shoulder, I emptied an entire clip at him. When the empty clip spanged out of my rifle he had disappeared. I fell back, hugging my wounded leg and howling.

Two buddies, Pete Orozco and Bob Talley, found me. Talley had been hit in the face and was streaming blood. Someone from the direction of 1223 was yelling, "Item Company! Come on back in!" The ChiComs were lobbing "potato mashers," crudely made concussion grenades manufactured in the backyards of a thousand Manchurian homes. They didn't fragment very well, but a close explosion was enough to stun a horse.

Down in the valley, 105s opened up, dropping rounds in our position. They were shortly joined by the 81s, then Enright's little 60s. The Chinese crumpled under the barrage but our second platoon was having a hell of a time disengaging.

Orozco dragged me back into the reverse slope position, where they'd broken up some rifle stocks and had a small fire going. Because the bone in my leg had been completely torn away by the round, the limb acted like it was made of soft rubber. It stuck out at a wierd angle making it impossible to stuff me into one of the sleeping bags dropped there for the wounded. My rescuers made a move to return to the fight but I didn't want to be alone on that hill. Since Talley was also wounded I asked — almost begged — him to stay with me. He refused. I saw him go back up the hill with his rifle to help someone else and it was the last time I ever saw Talley. Refusing medical evacuation, he was one of the 171 out of 212 in the company who went up Hill 1223 and never came down.

It was now 0200. The long, cold night was just beginning.

Up on the MLR, scattered pockets of infiltrating Chinese worked their way toward our lines under the cover of white sheets, never realizing they were leaving tracks in the snow. Marines sharp-shot them all through the night.

Private First Class Tamsey Johnson, high on an OP with a Browning water-cooled .30-caliber machine gun, went to work on a wall of Chinese troops assaulting his position. When he couldn't hold out any longer, Johnson jerked the trigger mechanism out of the gun and fought his way back down the slope to the shrinking circle of Item Company's defenders. We all realized our little excursion to keep the Chinese off balance

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had prompted a full-scale counter-attack.

At 0530, when dawn finally broke, two battalions of Sung's army had Item Company totally cut off from aid. How and George Companies of our battalion had never been able to reach us and the support element had been wiped out to the last man by marauding bands of Chinese. I had spent the night huddled in my parka and was literally frozen stiff from the waist down when the weak sun finally appeared. I figured I'd just sit there and die but my buddies had other ideas.

Remnants of our shattered outfit began a slow, dangerous withdrawal from Hill 1223 under constant Chinese fire. Private First Class Dick Throm got a grip on my parka and began dragging me downhill. I was grateful for the total lack of feeling in my legs which jounced over the rough ground. Marines who could barely walk themselves managed to carry wounded men. From my position looking backward I could see the Chinese triumphantly flooding the blood-spattered crest and bayoneting the bodies we did not manage to take with us off the hill. They seemed pissed off that they couldn't find more corpses.

When we reached the bottom, Sgt. Jim Perry, who had risen to Company Gunnery from squad sergeant by filling dead men's boots, took a headcount. He reported 41 survivors, only half of them fit to fight.

The CO just turned away and shook his head. It was the last time I saw the Skipper until Yokosuka Naval Hospital in Japan when we counted noses in a ward. There were more of us there than remained in Korea.

Only eight of Item Company's men finally reached Hagaru-ri on their feet. The march south cost us the remaining few who'd managed to reach the valley floor from the heights of Hill 1223 to begin the march to the sea. Some were wounded but still walking. Everyone had frostbite, but that was no longer a reason to ride. Most walked, limped and staggered the 17 miles into the perimeter of "Chesty" Puller's 1st Marines' area. It was a long, bitter haul from there to safety.

Some called it a retreat as banner headlines focused on the Marine withdrawal. Puller said his men weren't retreating; they were merely attacking in a different direction. It doesn't matter.

The fighting 1st Marine Division had given the United Nations forces time to regroup, to hang on, to fight back. The division suffered a total of 7,294 casualties, about half of them to the Chinese and the other half to frostbite. But we earned a place in Marine Corps history alongside the guys who stormed the beaches at Iwo Jima "where uncommon valor was a common virtue."

Take it from me. There were equal amounts of both valor and virtue at the Frozen Chosin in the Freezin' Season. ☞

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Continued from page 10

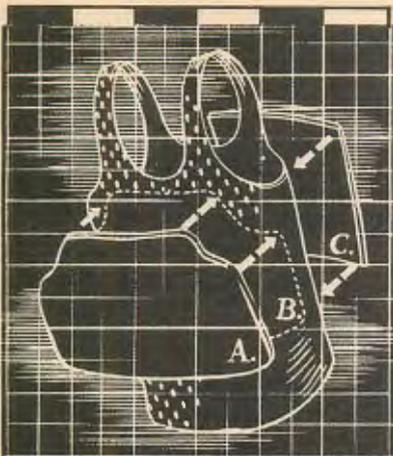
military construction. But some longtime HASC observers said Aspin's tenure as panel chairman may not be the problem many Pentagon leaders fear. These same sources point to HASC membership as "a sort of boot camp for 97-pound defense weaklings." And despite Aspin's flat denial that HASC membership turns liberals more hawkish, they point to his support of the MX missile program over the last three years as an indication of his own moderated defense stance. The sources claim it was all designed to enhance his chances of succeeding Price.

Aspin's name had surfaced in speculation as a possible — but unlikely — successor to Price because of intense personal animosity between the panel's second-ranking Democrat, Charles E. Bennett of Florida, and number-three man, Samuel S. Stratton of New York. Bennett and Stratton had also hurt their own chances because of disaffection with fellow Democrats. But Aspin's tenure may be brief by HASC standards. He has long considered challenging Sen. Bob Kasten, the Wisconsin Republican up for re-election in 1986. The lure of a possible U.S. Senate seat may be too much, even for chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

## FORTRESS NICARAGUA...

Central American intelligence sources have provided *Soldier of Fortune* with information indicating the Soviets are providing Nicaragua's Marxist regime in Managua with increasingly sophisticated weaponry that includes a squadron of Mi-24 Hind attack helicopters. It looks like the Sandinistas will have them airborne and harassing the Freedom Fighters in short order.

Unloaded from a Bulgarian freighter at the east coast port of El Bluff along with the Hinds was Ground Control Interceptor (GCI) radar equipment. A GCI network is essential before the Nicaraguans can utilize high-performance aircraft such as the Hinds to their full potential. Soviet and East German advisers have already helped the Nicaraguans set up permanent GCI stations in the



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towns of Esteli and Masaya, and a mobile GCI station is based in the vicinity of El Bluff. One or two additional GCI stations will complete a very formidable air control network for marauding aircraft.

In addition, SOF sources said the Soviets have provided Nicaragua's army with about 100 T-54 and T-55 medium tanks, about 20 PT-76 light amphibious tanks, 20-30 152mm howitzers, 20-30 122mm howitzers and approximately 100 57mm antitank guns. Also added to Managua's rapidly building arsenal — courtesy of Uncle Ivan — are about 100 BTR-152 armored personnel carriers, 12 BTR-60 APCs, 40 BRDM-2 recce-configured APCs, some armed with chemical warfare equipment. The Soviets have also kicked in some other little goodies, such as mine-laying gear and mobile bridges.

Nicaragua's air force and air defense batteries aren't too shabby either, thanks to a substantial number of U.S. aircraft provided before the revolution was betrayed. The air force has four T-28s, four T-33s, four SF-260s. These are all technically trainers but they can be easily outfitted with gun mounts and bomb racks. They also have seven O-2 push-pull reconnaissance planes, which can be easily converted for close air-support work. The 10 or 12 Mi-24 Hind gunships will supplement other Soviet aircraft already in the Nicaraguan air force inventory, including 12 Mi-8 Hip troop transport helicopters, which can also be outfitted as gunships. The Soviets actually delivered 14 Hips to Nicaragua, but two have been shot down, sources tell SOF.

Air defense includes an unknown number of radar-controlled 57mm anti-aircraft guns, some delivered by the Bulgarian freighter Christo Batov which brought the Hinds, 50 37mm anti-aircraft guns and about 80 ZPU anti-aircraft guns of both the two- and four-barreled varieties. There are also up to 200 hand-held SA-7 missile launchers in the Sandinista inventory.

Last but not least, Nicaragua's navy has received two French-built Vedette patrol boats, which in early 1984 managed to hit each other with gunfire as they pursued CIA-sponsored rebel piranha boats in Corinto harbor. They also have four North-Korean-built patrol boats and six Russian and Polish minesweepers, four delivered by the Bakuriani.

Of course the Nicaraguans do not have enough personnel with adequate technical training to maintain and operate all this

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equipment, which easily explains the 6,000-8,000 Soviet, East German, North Korean, Palestinian and Cuban military advisers in-country. With all this outside help, Fortress Nicaragua has amassed a military machine that far outstrips anything in Central America and rivals most armies in all of Latin America.

## JESUS SUPPORTS SWAPO?...

If you're one of the millions of Americans who fills church collection plates, you might want to check if your denomination and congregation contributes to the World Council of Churches (WCC). According to the Catholic Defense League of South Africa, the WCC through its Program to Combat Racism gave nearly \$200,000 to anti-South-African terrorist groups, including over \$75,000 to the Southwest African Peoples' Organization (SWAPO).

## SEAL/UDT MUSEUM...

A 12 November 1984 groundbreaking ceremony at Fort Pierce, Fla., signaled the beginning of a construction project designed to convert the birthplace of Combat Demolition Teams (CDT, now called Underwater Demolition Team — UDT) training into a museum dedicated to UDTs and SEALs. The St. Lucie County Historical Commission and Chamber of Commerce have provided initial grants, but more money is needed to complete the conversion.

Since this museum will commemorate all underwater warriors, the Historical Commission is especially soliciting former CDTs, UDTs and SEALs for memberships in the museum. For details write: St. Lucie County Historical Commission UDT/SEAL Museum, Dept. SOF, c/o 414 Seaway Drive, Fort Pierce, FL 33449, or call (305) 464-6635.

## FONDA FRAGGERS...

SOFer Pete Laurence has begun a veterans' letter-writing campaign to remind legislators of the crimes of Jane Fonda during the Vietnam War. Write Veterans Against Treason, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 55, Concord, CA 94522 for more information.

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## FLAK

*Continued from page 7*

*Semper Fi, Major. We think the M16A2 is a great weapon no matter how it came into service. Thanks for updating our information.*

Kokalis on the M16A2 cuts through the bull. I have shot the M16 in competition with the Marines and it is accurate within 18 inches to 500 meters. The gun functions well even when dirty. I have never seen a gun malfunction except for two reasons: 1) The gas tube was broken off the gun or leaking; 2) Firing blanks. I have seen literally hundreds of 16s rendered useless from gas tube blockage from blanks.

Doug Burnham  
Gainesville, Fla.

*Blank cartridges will foul ny gas system, particularly in the M16 series. It's another facet of the argument for using bullet-trap-type rifle grenades which utilize standard ball ammo.*

I am writing to tell you that I was delighted to find that you mentioned my Master's thesis on the M16 rifle in your article in the January 1985 issue of SOF. Writing it in 1969 was just something I had to do so I could get into a decent law school, etc. I certainly never guessed at that time that it would be cited in a national publication like SOF. Thanks again!

Bill Kirby  
Los Angeles, Calif.

*Your comments are a tribute to the thorough job Peter Kokalis does in research. If he used your thesis, it must have been good.*

## GUNS AND GLAMOUR...

Sirs:

You have a good magazine and I

*Continued on page 109*



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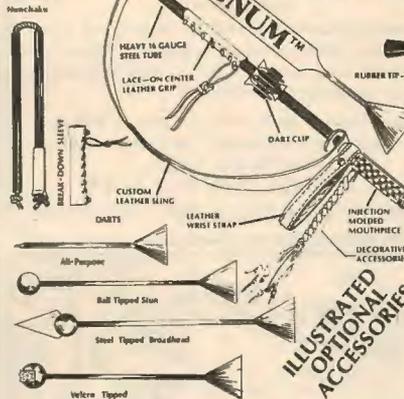


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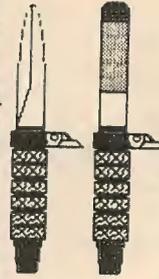
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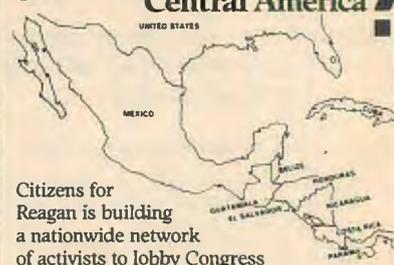
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### ADVERTISERS INDEX

Advertiser	Page
Action Arms	76
Adventure Game	Cover 2
American Historical	9
Amport	80
Armour Products	98
American Pistol	86
Assault Systems	6
Atlanta Cutlery	90
Auto Ordnance	84
Brigade Quartermasters	27
Citizens for Reagan	108
CCS Communication	94
Collector's Armoury	92
Cold Steel	77,85
Combat Weapons	Cover 3
Command T Shirts	79
D.C. Brennan Firearms	7
Diebel Military Equipment	102
Doubleday	16-17
Dragon Master	99
The Dutchman	95
De Santis Holsters	78
Dynamit Nobel of America, Inc.	81
El Salvador/Nicaragua Fund	84
Enforcer's Outfitting	96
Excalibur	7
Exotic Sports	77
Gun South, Inc.	80,89
Guaranteed Distributors	87
Hans Klepper, Corp.	81
Heckler & Koch	Cover 4
House of Weapons	86
INCO	88
Kaufman's West	19

Knifeco	1
L.L. Baston	93
LARC International	109
Law Enforcement	90
Lenny Magill Productions	109
Light Enterprises	82
Loompanics	83
North American School of Firearms	21
Paladin Press	11
Parellex Corporation	4-5
Phoenix Systems	100
Quartermaster Sales	15
Ramline, Inc.	82
Refugee Relief	94
Safariland Hunting	78
SARCO, Inc.	101
Sharp & Dunnigan	85
Sherwood Int'l.	12-13
Silent Partner	101
SOF Back Issues	97
SOF Three Gun Match	92
SOF Exchange	70-71,91,98,104
SOF Subscription	25,106
Spyderco	96
Survival Books	102
Survival Store	76
SURVIVE Subscriptions	33
SWAT Viper	79
Thompson Cigar	87
Universal Military Outfitters	83
U.S. Calvary Store	23
U.S. Optics	99
Valley Surplus	96
War Story	26

### SUPPLY LOCKER SECTION

A.C. Products	104
American Small Arms Academy	106
Blue Angel Fireworks	103
Bryg's	105
CCS Communications	103
CATCO	104,106,107
Cloudland Enterprises	106
Creative Horizons	107
Devil's Brigade	107
Eden Press	105
Feather Enterprises	108
Ferde Grofe Films	105
Global School of Investigation	108
Guaranteed Distributors	105
Jimmy Lile Knives	107
Lifeknife	103
LRRP Enterprises	103
Matthew Police Supply	107
Neptune Fireworks	107
Nevin's Ammo	106
Norbay Securities	106
Numrich Arms	105
P&S Sales, Inc.	105
Philatelic Services	103
Prime Targets	106
RP Knives	106
Scientific Systems	106
Sin Loi Productions	104
Stackpole Books	107
J.R. Stupero	103
Special Action Commmando School	104
T-J Jewelry	103
Westbury Sales	107
Wells Creek Knife	108
World Wide Publishing	104

# FLAK

Continued from page 102

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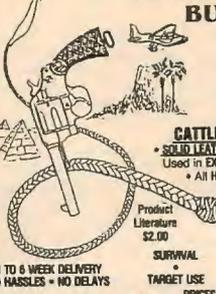


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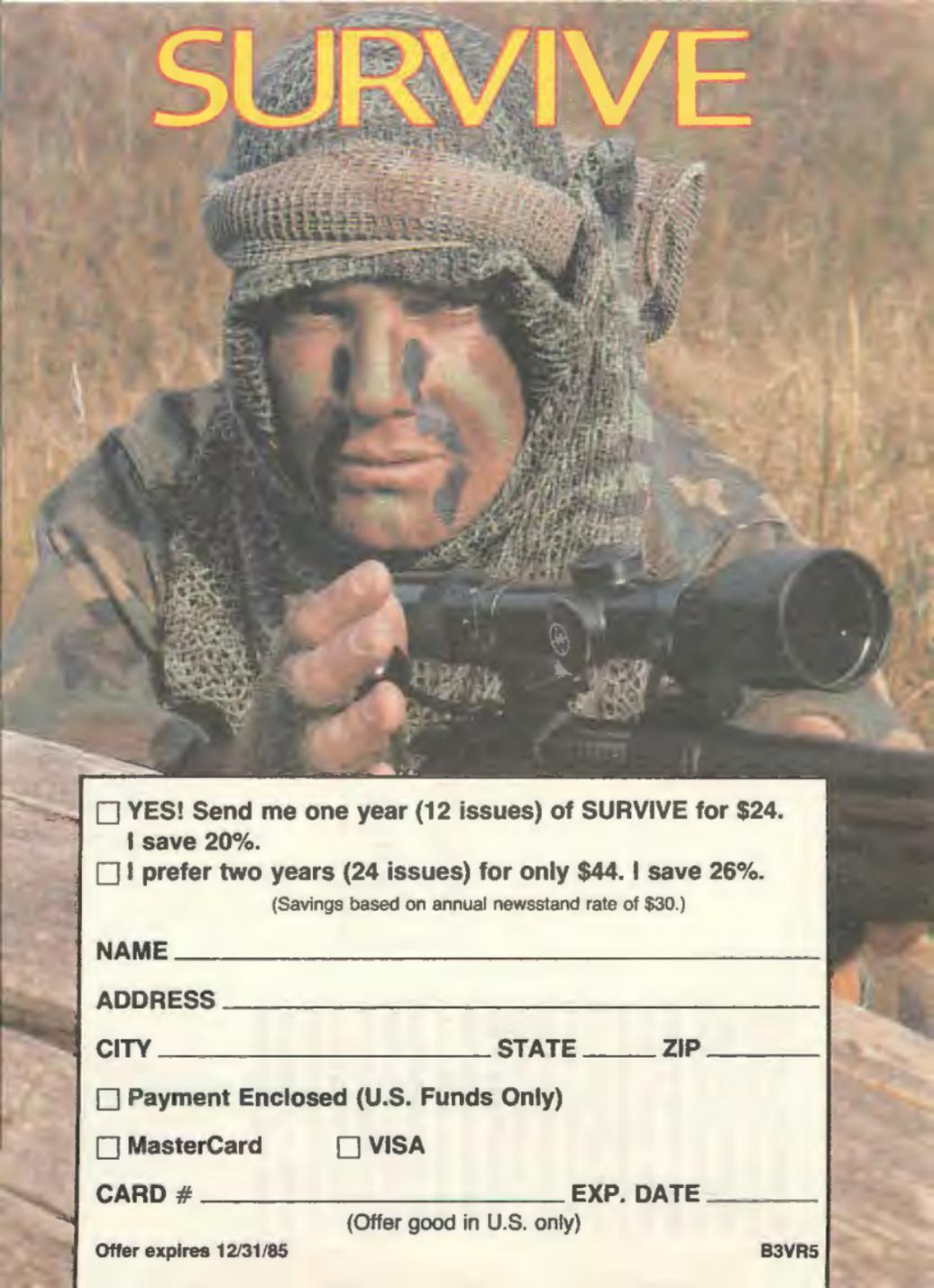
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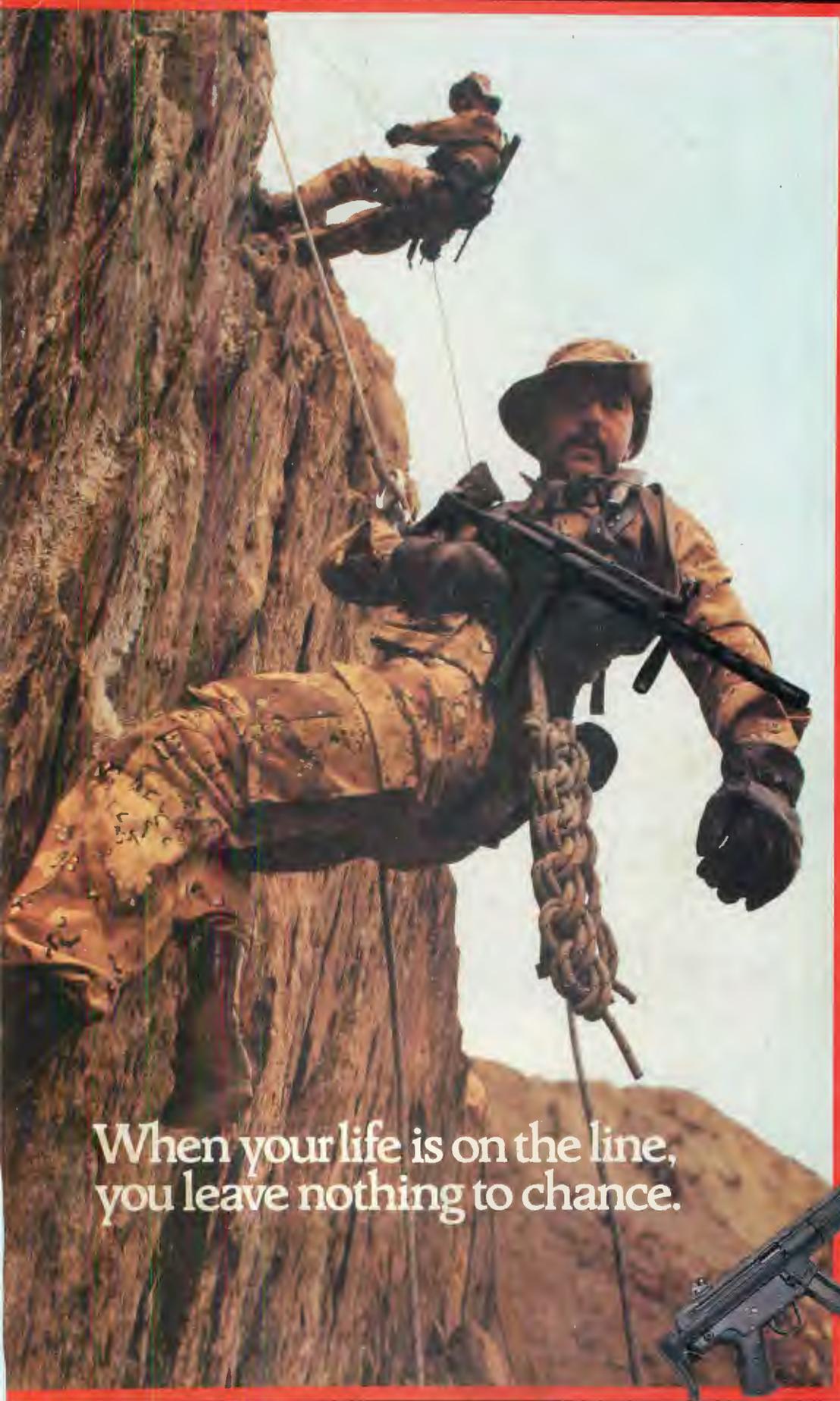
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