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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

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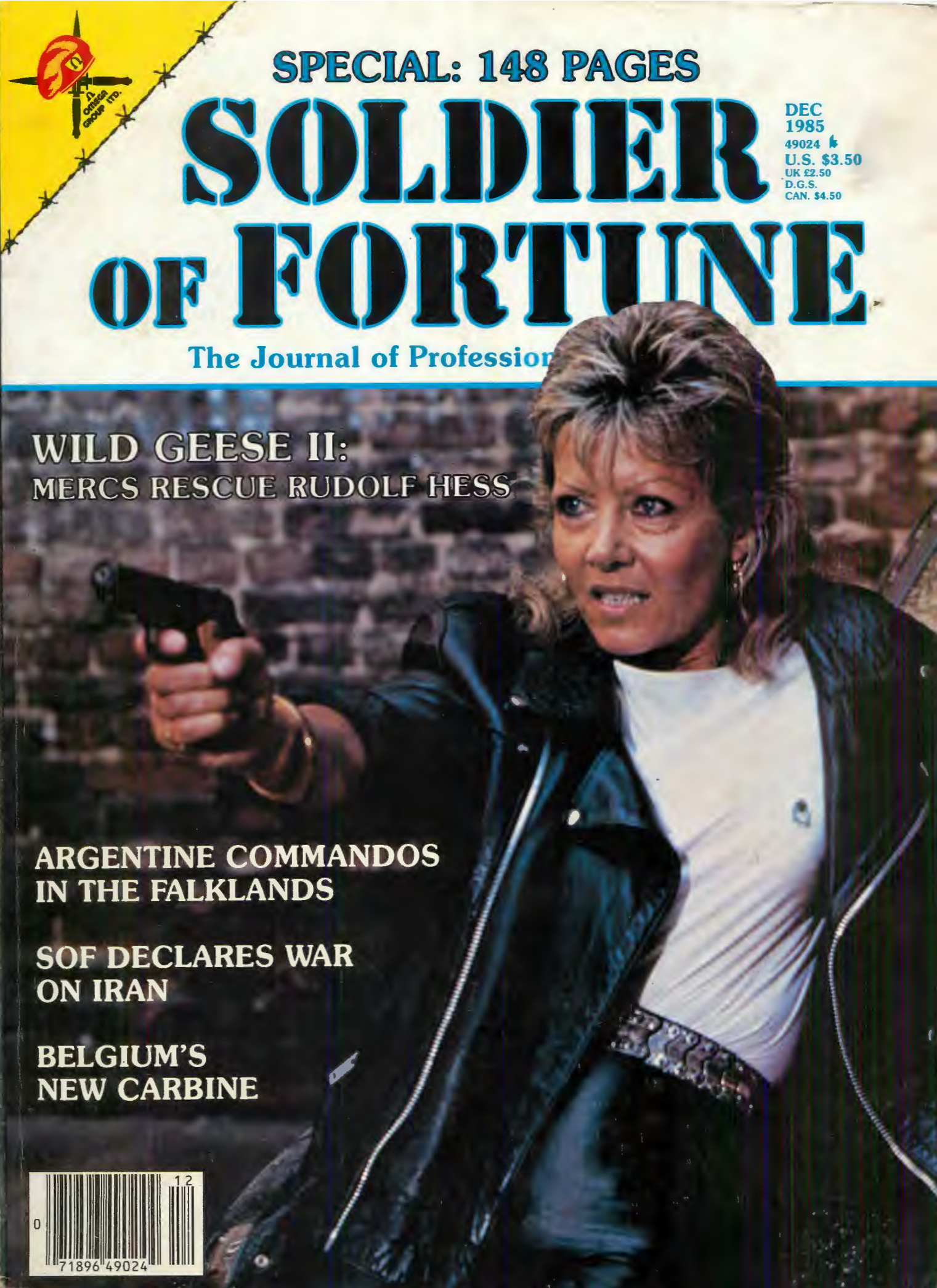
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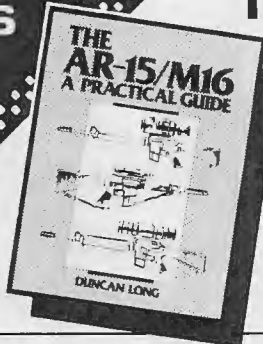
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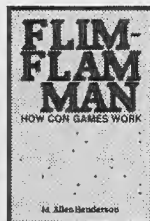
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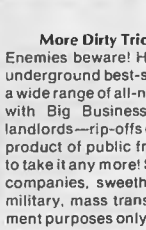
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

MACHINE-gun and military-arms collectors have bitched for years that the National Rifle Association doesn't represent them. That may have been true in the past, but it isn't now.

You all remember the operating principle of the hushpuppy. It's a little glop of cornmeal, milk, onions and spices that gets cooked in hot fat. They're a necessary accompaniment to fried catfish, but they got their name from another function. Thrown hushpuppies keep the dogs away from the food.

The NRA has been accused — perhaps justly — of throwing military and automatic firearms collectors and dealers to the opposition in order to keep them away from hunters and competitors.

Gangster-terrorized America of the 1920s and 1930s wanted protection. United States citizens naturally connected gangsterism with the weapons they saw George Raft and Humphrey Bogart sling on celluloid. Despite the fact that there are probably more accountants than killers in organized crime, a frightened Congress decided to outlaw certain guns instead of restricting calculating machines and three-piece gray suits.

The NRA took a look at the proposed national gun registration system and decided it was time to deal. In a time of national hysteria the NRA decided to let the gun confiscators make life hard on the minority of machine-gun collectors, rather than make hunters register their Winchesters.

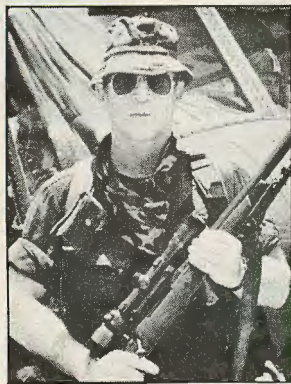
Even at the time, this made little sense. The .50-caliber machine gun has limited use as a weapon for burglary or mob killings. Taxing,

licensing and confiscating machine guns had value only as propaganda. It didn't stop organized crime, and didn't affect the spread of weapons among criminals. But the hard-pressed NRA needed a scapegoat. And since you couldn't hit a duck with a submachine gun, the duck hunters agreed that it was fine to ban burp-guns.

It's important to remember that the NRA of the 1930s didn't have the national constituency it now enjoys. In 1934 the NRA boasted a membership of thousands. Fifty years later the roll numbers in the millions. In 1934 the NRA represented a small percentage of a gun-owning public. Now the NRA represents a substantial portion of gun owners, while shooters comprise a minority of the population in some areas of the country. In 1934, that tradeoff of machine guns for hunting guns must have made sense. Now there may be good reason for the NRA to defend automatic arms collectors.

From the NRA's old, limited gun-club perspective, ignoring the plight of civilian machine-gunners was probably justified. Few members of the NRA were touched by automatic-arms restrictions, so they didn't need to care. But the war has grown.

Perhaps because no strong lobby rose in defense of machine-gun collectors, anti-gunners felt they could knock off each gunning minority one at a time. Silencers were taken from us, then concealed carry, certain kinds of compact weapons and the right to carry weapons in public under a wide variety of conditions. One privilege



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COVER: *Wild Geese II* scores high marks for realism, mood and good shooting on location. Ingrid Pitt does some good shooting of her own as she portrays an East German agent trying to kill the American merc hired to spring Rudolf Hess.

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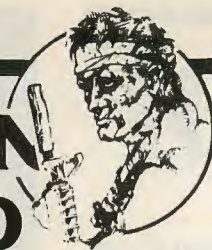
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MIA/POWS' LAWSUIT...

SF Major Mark Smith has filed suit in federal court against President Ronald Reagan, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State George Schultz and Defense Intelligence Agency Director General James A. Williams. The suit asks that the United States District Court compel the defendants to enforce the provisions of Title 22 U.S. Code, Section 1732, and Title 28 U.S.C., Section 2201. These laws require these federal executives to secure the safety of any American citizen held by a foreign power in violation of international law. Smith's suit springs from an aborted mission into Laos in 1984, and preparation for that mission, which was coordinated with the Thai military and began in 1981.

SOF will present the story of this operation and of ensuing legal action beginning with former SOF correspondent Jim Coyne's account of the op from the beginning of his connection with it in 1981.

To assist Smith in his case and SOF in its investigation, any person with information concerning government-sponsored MIA/POW operations organized from Thailand should write SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: Jim Pate.



Those above helped raise over \$2,000 at an auction to benefit the Democratic Force of Nicaragua (FDN). Among items auctioned were an RPG-7 rocket launcher sight from Nicaragua, an NVA belt and buckle captured in Vietnam and a badge from a Russian cap. The auction was sponsored by the Parachute Medical Rescue Service and held in conjunction with the Phantom Division Convention. Thanks one and all.

HONOR ROLL...

Refugee Relief International, Inc. contributors: Donation made in memory of Harvey G. Meyer.
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COLEMAN JOINS SOF...

John Coleman, a seasoned combat veteran, has joined the magazine's staff as an associate editor. Coleman spent six years in the U.S. Army and saw action among other places in Vietnam at Quang Tri — where he earned the Bronze Star — and Tuy Hoa. He is a graduate of U.S. Army Ranger School and the Jungle Warfare School in Panama.

After an honorable discharge, Coleman joined the Rhodesian Army. His three and a half year tour included service as OC of Recce Troop, Rhodesian Light Infantry.

The California native is finishing his undergraduate degree in journalism. Longtime readers will recall Coleman's contributions to the magazine, such as "Five AK Rounds" in the SOF special, *American Soldiers of Fortune*; "LALO Jump" and other pieces in *Soldier of Fortune*. He is also founder of the Rhodesian Veterans' Association.

SIGHTS ON HAYDEN...

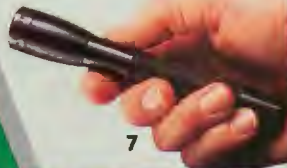
California War Veterans for Justice have drawn a legal bead on Tom Hayden, who gained infamy as a founder of the violently leftist 1960s radical group, Students for a Democratic Society. The Chicago Seven defendant also lent spiritual aid and comfort to our enemies in Vietnam by visiting communist leaders and personally assisting in their propaganda efforts against U.S. troops serving in Southeast Asia. Now married to "Hanoi Jane" Fonda, Hayden used his wife's considerable wealth to get himself elected to the California State Assembly.

Citing Article VII, Section 9(a) of the California State Constitution, the CWVJ has filed a civil complaint asking that Hayden be removed from public office. That passage states that "notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution ... no person who advocates the support of a foreign government against the United States in the

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MUCHAS GRACIAS...

Sirs:

A big "Muchas gracias" for the gear and clothes sent to my men in Central America. I want the fine people who donated those items to know they were greatly appreciated, and I explained to each Nicaraguan Freedom Fighter who received the gear who sent them and why. That particular gear went exclusively to the bodyguards and the security personnel of FDN directory.

Tambien, "Hola" to all my men who are back in the States, with whom I have worked in Nicaragua.

Tirador
Jefe of Security
Personnel,
FDN
Security Adviser
to Adolfo
Calero

Continue helping the freedom fighters by sending non-lethal military equipment, field gear and medical supplies — with an inventory sheet for each box — to SOF's El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, 5721 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80303.

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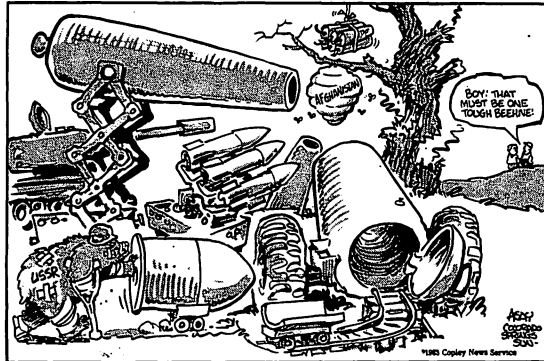
Sirs:

Thank you for printing my story, and thanks for mentioning my book (in progress) on Randall Made Knives. Also, I would like to credit Margaret P. Johnson for the uncredited color photos used in my article.

Robert L. Gaddis
Nordic Knives
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Copenhagen
Drive
Solvang, CA
93463



FLAK



CMA SALUTES ROBERT K. BROWN...

Sirs:

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to Robert K. Brown. With your help we have made great strides in advancement in our fight against the communists. You are not a mercenary, you are a patriotic American who loves his country. I have seen you cry from your heart asking for help. I have seen you enraged when you talk about our POW/MIAs. I have seen you take your own money to help the Freedom Fighters.

Sir, I salute you. God bless you and may we be together in Managua this year.

Tom Posey, Director
Civilian Military Assistance
Decatur, Alabama

Civilian Military Assistance has its place on the front lines of private-sector efforts to fight the spread of communism. Your appreciation means a lot to all of us.

ACCORDING TO THE PRESS...



WEAR IT WITH PRIDE...

Sirs:

With terrorism at a high here in Germany, servicemen are being told not to wear uniforms or dog tags. With all due respect, Mr. Weinberger, I love my uniform. I've earned the right to wear it and I will wear it. And if the Russians want to kill or have us killed for that reason we must be doing something right. So on some cold winter night remember the poor GI in Germany walking the beat guarding your freedom.

PFC Greg Lee
Germany

We're proud that our readers stand for their country and their services. But we would be the last to suggest that American servicemen should unnecessarily expose themselves to cowardly terrorist attacks.

CONCERNED CITIZENS...

Sirs:

Please find enclosed my contribution for the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund. It is only a token amount. Since the U.S. government is not allowed to help defeat the communist threat in the Western Hemisphere, the burden must be borne by the concerned American citizen.

Bill Polewchak
Euclid, Ohio

Our sentiments exactly. Thanks for taking your civic duty so seriously. We would encourage other readers to do the same. If readers want to do something close up and personal to help win the fight for freedom in Central America, there is a way to put your money where your mouth is without leaving home. Contribute what you can to SOF's El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

Continued on page 126

EDWARD JABLONSKI

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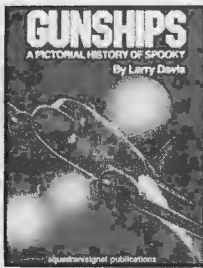
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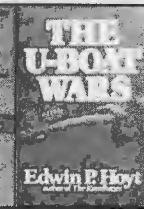
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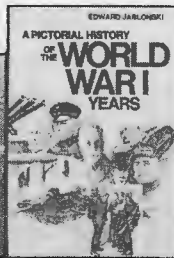
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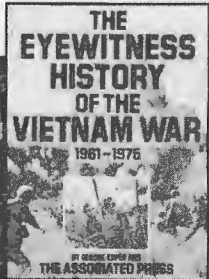
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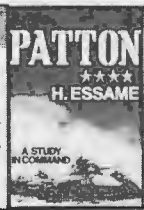
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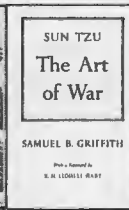
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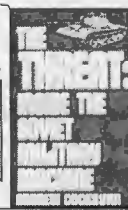
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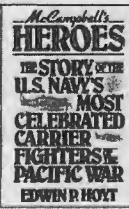
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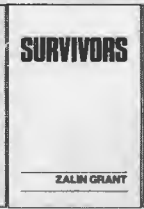
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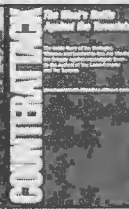
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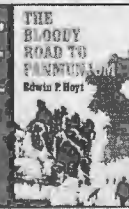
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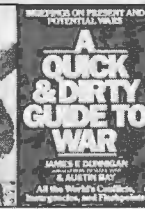
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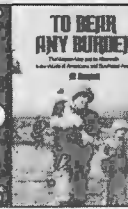
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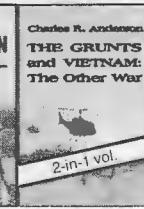
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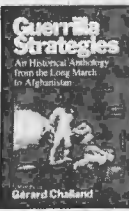
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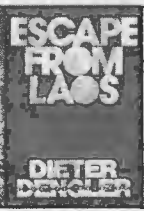
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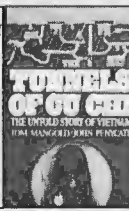
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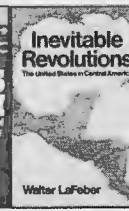
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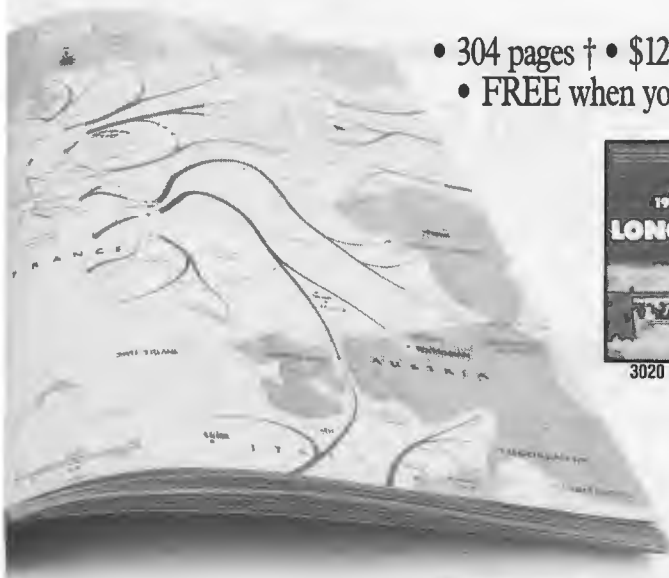


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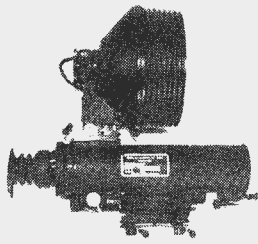
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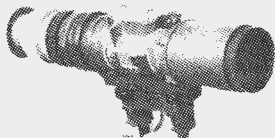
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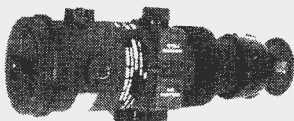
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I WAS THERE

by K.D. Clark

RLI Meets the Wild Bunch

After eleven years' service with the USMC and two tours in Vietnam, K.D. Clark bought a one-way ticket to Salisbury and found himself enlisting in 1st Battalion, Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). He became acting troop sergeant posted to 11 Troop, 3 Commando, of the RLI. On his first patrol in the bush, he found out that his most important asset was the Matabele sent to keep the men from poaching.

GOD must look after idealistic fools. In November 1979, 3 and 2 Commandos of the RLI patrolled an area of the Zambezi River Valley used as infiltration route for the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). Our objective was to maintain a high profile and thus channel infiltrating terrorists into ambushes or mine fields. My patrol consisted of seven white RLI Troopers and one African game scout, a short wiry Matabele who had been assigned to us from the Rhodesian game department because they thought we had very little experience with African wildlife. He was also supposed to keep an eye on us in case we decided to do a little poaching on the side. He seemed more of a hindrance than a help at first. But that would soon change.

At dawn we boarded two Alouettes headed for our patrol area. Flying 500 feet over the Zambezi Valley, we could see herds of elephants and wildebeest in the open vleis (meadows). Hippos and crocodiles were lazily sunning themselves on sandbars in the Zambezi River. Occasionally, a giraffe poked his head through breaks in the trees.

The first two days we patrolled the river, looked for spoor, fished with grenades and generally made our presence known. We spent the second night in a thorn bush thicket near a game trail. It was one of those dark nights when the moon was off on the other side of the world and the stars were asleep. At midnight it was my turn at guard. Although I couldn't see my hand in front of my face I sensed a presence nearby.

I strained my eyes and barely made out the silhouette of a huge elephant no more than fifty feet away. How it had gotten that close without my hearing it worried me almost as much as its being there. Silently flapping its ears, the elephant stood stock still, staring in our direction.

I didn't know whether to shit or go blind. Had the elephant picked that moment to charge he would have overrun our position with no help from me. Swallowing my pride, I quickly woke our game scout.

The Matabele confidently and quickly gave two sharp claps from his hands, and the elephant silently and gracefully melted into the bush. Imperturbed by the incident, the Matabele resumed his sleep. I was impressed, and filed the information away for future use.

Early on the morning of the fifth day we were climbing out of a *donga* (gully) when we stopped in our tracks. One hundred feet in front of us were three grazing Cape buffalo. I've heard that they are supposed to be one of the most aggressive and dangerous animals in all of Africa. So once again I relied on the expert advice of our game scout. The scout smiled, raised his rifle in his left hand and knocked twice on the magazine. The buffalo pivoted on their hind legs and galloped off into the distance. I was fast becoming a *fundi* (expert) on African wildlife.

The patrol continued without event except for a short exchange of fire with some ZIPRA or Zambian Army troops across the river. On the ninth day of what had been a boring patrol, we reached an old abandoned sugar estate and camped. About midday we decided to go down to the river in another vain attempt to find a cooler position.

The thickness of the thorn bushes on either side of the game trail forced us to move in single file. I was walking behind the point man and our trusty game scout was at the rear of the patrol. As we rounded a bend in the trail we came upon another Cape buffalo

Continued on page 108

Presenting...

THE WORLD WAR II



A firing Limited Edition of 2500 selectively plated with 24-karat gold, that hails the days of glory of the old .45.



For three quarters of a century
This gun has served us well,
On our march to Victory—
On our march through Hell.

Its long and glorious day is done
'Twill take its place beside
The Sharps, Springfield and Garand M1
Th' emblems of our pride.

We'll miss it. And who are we—
Who with the gun grow old?
We're America's Fighting Men, and we
Stopped 'em with it. Cold.

From "Farewell Old .45"
by The American Historical Foundation

Old slabsides." "Hand Cannon." "Kicks like a mule." "Thumbbuster." "Pocket Artillery." Since 1911, America's Fighting Men have defended our freedom with the .45 Automatic.

The design is older than most living Americans. But this pistol served longer, fought more battles and won more medals of valor than any other firearm in America's history. It was the first—and most powerful—heavy caliber automatic

pistol ever adopted for service use in the world. And its battlefield reliability, combined with the knockdown punch of the .45 ACP ammo, have made it one of the—if not the—most famous and beloved handgun in American military history.

Ironically, times change, and this proud workhorse is being put out to pasture—being replaced by a 9mm pistol.

But now, in this the 40th Anniversary year of the World War II Victory—and in the 75th year of its use by our men in uniform—The American Historical Foundation is proud to hail the days of glory of the old .45 by announcing the firing limited edition World War II Commemorative M1911A1 .45 Automatic.

When you hold this two and a half pounds of steel, gold and walnut you will recall the valor of Guadalcanal, Normandy, Iwo Jima, the Ardennes and the many distant battlefields that it once called home. It is a dramatic symbol of victory.

**FIRING LIMITED
EDITION OF ONLY 2500;
SERIAL NO. 1
TO NRA MUSEUM**

This is a firing limited edition of only 2500, worldwide. Each is specially serially numbered between 0001 and 2500, with the prefix WW (for World War II). This number is also inscribed on an accompanying Certificate of Authenticity. Serial No. 1 is being presented to the National Rifle Association's museum in Washington, D.C.

The fit and finish of each World War II Commemorative .45 Automatic is presentation grade. Special inscriptions are etched and gold-gilt inlaid on the slide. The flats of the receiver and slide are mirror polished and richly blued to con-

trast with the matt-finished, non-reflective, non-slip curved surfaces.

**MORE 24-KARAT GOLD
PLATING THAN ANY OTHER
.45 EVER ISSUED**

This M1911A1 has more 24-karat gold plating than any other .45 commemorative ever issued. The trigger, hammer, slide stop and magazine release are smoothly polished and richly plated



with gold. Even the grip screws are 24-karat gold plated. The hammer is the early, wide-spur design, and the G.I. lanyard loop is mounted on the mainspring housing. And all parts are interchangeable with G.I.-issued pistols.

**SELECT BURL WALNUT
STOCKS—SPECIALLY
FINISHED**

The beautifully figured American walnut stocks are specially crafted for this edition by the respected company of Herrett's. They are hand-

COMMEMORATIVE .45



finished with seven coats of lacquer to the "piano-grade" finish found on the finest presentation grade shotguns.

Each stock is fitted with a gold plated and black fired enamel cloisonne medallion.

NOT JUST A SHOWPIECE

This handcrafted M1911A1 Automatic is a fully functional, firing handgun. And because it's a firing weapon it could even be called upon to defend your home, family or country — with the same famous .45 ACP ammo GIs have used since 1911.

According to published accounts, it was Brigadier General John T. Thompson whose "... efforts in this direction are probably more responsible than anything else for the working out of the present service... automatic pistol (1911 Model)."

The .45 ACP rimless cartridge for this pistol is also credited to him. So, we went to Thompson/Auto-Ordnance Corporation, the company he founded to make his Thompson Submachine Gun, to custom build this .45 Commemorative to our specifications.

In fact, test firings of their .45 by the NRA showed its accuracy to be "... significantly better than the average as issued M1911."

COLLECTOR INTEREST

Only 2500 will be made — making it one of the rarest of all collectible firearms. Due to its highly collectible status, it has already been classified as a Curio and Relic by the BATE. You will be proud to own one and to hand it down to future generations of your family.

A furniture-grade walnut case is also available so you can display your World War II Commemorative on a desk, shelf or wall. With a locking

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THE type of steel in the blade of your knife is the most important factor in determining its performance capabilities. That's true. But all the potential and projected capability in the world is meaningless if the blade doesn't produce the performance it is capable of. Choice of steel is the first step in maximizing performance, but what really makes the blade live up to all of its potential is the temper, or hardening and toughening process that the blade is subjected to.

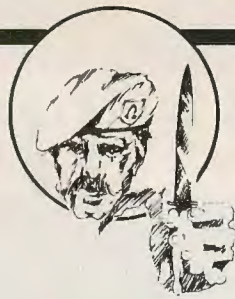
Steel is an incredible material. Heat it to its critical temperature and cool it slowly and it becomes soft and easily worked. Heat it and cool it quickly and it becomes exceedingly hard and brittle. Handle it with skill and care somewhere between these two extremes and the steel can become fantastically tough and resilient. In fact, a skilled knifemaker can vary the degree of hardness in different parts of a blade to achieve a hard, keen edge, a tough point, a back that is resilient, and a tang that possesses enough ductility to make it all but unbreakable. These characteristics are all vital in knife construction, but precious few knives have received the benefit of the tender loving care and skill that it takes to instill these qualities in a blade.

To understand why most knives are not as good as they could be, let alone should be, you need to have a very basic understanding of the hardening and tempering processes of steel. In general terms, the harder a given piece of steel is, the more brittle it becomes. The softer the steel, the more ductile it tends to be.

There is a mistaken notion on the part of many people that the harder their knife blade is, the better it will hold an edge. But hardness and toughness are not the same thing. For example, hickory is tough, but glass, while hard, is very brittle. A file may be quite hard, but it is also brittle. A decent knife needs to be hard enough to hold an edge, yet not so hard that it will break with pressure. The problem is that the optimum levels for edge-holding, resilience, toughness and ductility are each achieved at differing degrees of hardness in a given piece of steel.

Enter compromise. All commercial knives and over 90 percent of custom-made knives are tempered in commercial or privately owned furnaces that give the finished blade the same degree of hardness throughout which almost always gives optimum edge-holding for the piece of steel concerned. This may be a satisfactory compromise, but steel is an incredible material when handled correctly, and far more options are available.

By having your blade tempered to the hardness level that gives the best



BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

Holding Your Temper



Forging and tempering high-performance knives is an art, involving skill, long hours and a lot of sweat, as Bill Bagwell will attest.

edge-holding from one end to the other and from top to bottom, you have given up a tremendous amount of stress resistance and brute strength. In many cases this can easily result in a strength penalty approaching 50 percent or more. In a combat or survival knife this can make a critical if not deadly difference.

The knife must do more than just hold an edge and cut, although the edge *is* important. But the point is also important and actually receives more regular abuse than any other part of the blade. For this reason the point

should be tempered slightly softer and therefore somewhat tougher and more shock resistant than the cutting edge. The back, or spine, of the knife is the structural member that holds everything else together. It should be tempered to a level of hardness that gives maximum flexibility and resilience — somewhat on the order of a spring, if you will. The fourth and last basic part of your knife blade is the tang — the shank that goes inside the handle which should be tempered so that it is dead soft and will give the maximum resistance to lateral stress without breaking.

Commercial and most custom knives — and all stainless knives, to my knowledge — are tempered on the

Continued on page 103

TANTO

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I have witnessed or documented the self-destruction of no less than nine MG42 machine guns, including my own. I have always rushed to lay the blame on the nickle-a-round surplus ammo that collectors, including myself, are constantly running through firearms worth many thousands of dollars. However, in the case of the MG42, aging ammunition only magnifies a flaw endemic to the roller-locking design itself.

There is some evidence that the Germans had premature-unlocking problems during the war. MG42 locking rollers are cammed into their so-called locked position in the barrel extension's cutouts by the firing-pin holder. If a faulty primer gives a hang-fire of even the smallest duration, complete ignition will probably occur while the bolt carrier is bouncing away from the locked position. Damaged gun (bulged or cracked receiver above and below the barrel extension and bent barrel latch) and operator (bulged or cracked head above the neck and bent spinal cord) are the usual result.

Typically, the German solution was to add a part. A "bolt catch" inside the bolt carrier's body delayed the unlocking process by retarding the firing-pin holder's movement. To what extent this was used in the MG42 is not known.

Carried forward to new developments, this system was found in the prototype MG45 GPMG and the StG45 assault rifle. Eventually these little rollers were incorporated into the G3 rifle. After this built-in hesitation Heckler & Koch named the concept "delayed blowback."

During and after WWII, Aberdeen Proving Ground researchers and testers observed premature unlocking. And one of the old hands at Aberdeen even devised a new solution for this blight on the '42. John Wilkinson of Springfield, Ohio — now a Class 2 manufacturer — has a fast and dirty fix: Take an M1911A1 .45 ACP recoil spring and remove one inch of the coils. Fold the ends in and install inside the bolt-carrier body, in back of the firing-pin holder and under the extractor's spoon. This slick little anti-bounce device really works and will end forever the nightmare of watching your pet Hitler's Zipper unzip in a hundred pieces.

Portuguese G3

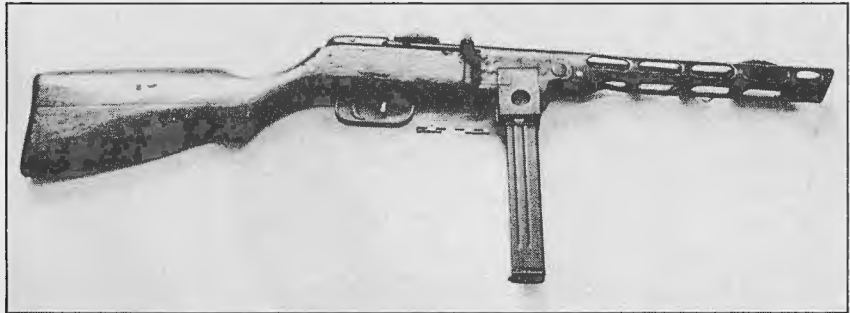
Qualified Class 3 dealers can now obtain brand-new dealers' samples of the Portuguese G3 rifle made by FMP/INDEP in Lisbon under license from Heckler and Koch. Well-made, they feature all-green military furniture and are, of course, selective-fire in 7.62x51mm NATO caliber. A delightful cyclic rate of 480-620 rpm will



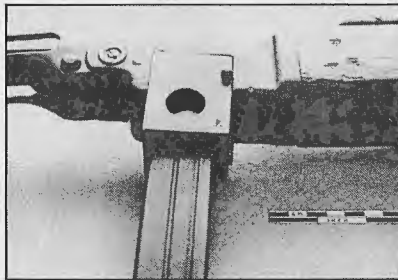
FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Blowback, Bayonets and Phony Baloney



ABOVE: PPSH41 SMG re-barreled to 9mm and fitted with magazine adapter and MP40 magazine. Photo: Imperial War Museum



LEFT: German magazine adapter for PPSH41 SMG. Photo: Imperial War Museum

guarantee you at least one hit on target before the remainder of the burst sequence goes sailing off into the wild blue yonder. Priced at only \$695 each, they are available from Kestrel International Corporation (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 809, Mesquite, TX 75149). Hurry, there are only a few. Best of all, these rifles have already passed through BATF Import Branch Form 6 approval. They await only Form 3 approval to a Class 3 dealer. NFA Branch assures me that this process now takes less than a month.

New HK SL7A1 Variant

For those who simply must employ a bayonet for the coup de grace, Heckler & Koch has sent me a prototype of a proposed SL7A1 version of their fine SL7 carbine in 7.62x51mm NATO caliber (See "SL6/7," SOF, June '85, p. 36.) The SL7A1 differs from its predecessor by addition of the spring-loaded female bayonet fitting mounted to the front barrel band, and a bulbous ring (to retain the bayonet) attached to the muzzle. By means of this and a spring-loaded male fitting on the bayonet, the HK engineers — obsessed with the usual Teutonic penchant for complexity — are able to accomplish with six components what others must do in only three. Fiendish-

ly clever, those Germans.

The SL7A1 also sports a smart-looking storage trap on the bottom of the buttstock to house the 5mm hex wrench required for disassembly. Everything else, including the outstanding accuracy potential (and presumably the price), remains exactly the same on this excellent modern-day G43 look-alike. If you would like them to produce the SL7A1, write directly to Heckler & Koch, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 14601 Lee Road, Chantilly, VA 22021).

New Galil Accessories

Recently announced are lower prices on the Galil rifles and four new accessories. A universal scope mount which slides into the dovetail slot on the left side of the receiver is finally available. This all-steel precision-cast and machine-finished mount can be used simultaneously with the iron sights and fits scopes of all types. Preferred, however, is the new Nimrod 6x40mm scope designed for military applications. Using standard one-inch rings, the Nimrod features a constantly centered reticle and rapid adjustment of the windage and elevation controls. Complementing this is a polyurethane ribbed cheekpiece which snaps on and off the stock. Finally, a re-designed magazine adapter mates the world's

Continued on page 104

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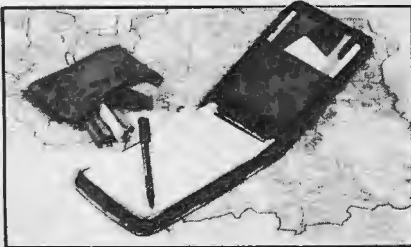
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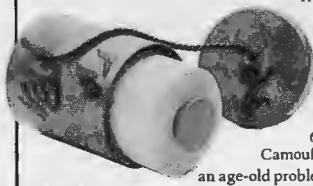
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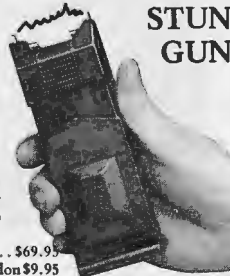
A pocket tool chest! Unfold handles to an 8" ruler. Keep going to lock handles back for a set of pliers/wire cutters. Plus there are 4 screwdrivers (large, medium, small and Phillips), a file for wood and metal, an awl/punch, a can and bottle opener and a 2 1/2" knife blade. All stainless. Made to military specifications. Comes with leather pouch and 25 yr. factory warranty.

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SF6M

THE ELITE — The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service. By Barbara Cole. Three Knights Publishing (Pty) Ltd., Natal, Republic of South Africa. 1984. 449 pp. 26 maps. 32 pages of B&W and color photographs. \$25 from SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306. Review by John Coleman.

RHODESIA'S C Squadron, Special Air Service, was always a shadowy organization, even to those of us who conducted training and operations with them. Cloak and dagger atmosphere was vital: If there was no security, there was no success for clandestine deep-penetration missions of the SAS. "My only regret is that the exploits of the SAS cannot yet be disclosed to the public so that they can share my pride in full," Rhodesian Minister of Defense Jack Howman said during the war.

Sadly — for those with an interest in freedom in Southern Africa — the time has come where SAS operations can be discussed. And since the fall of Rhodesia, Barbara Cole has accurately chronicled SAS exploits in her new book, **The Elite — The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service**.

Mrs. Cole builds a solid foundation for her book by using the experience and contacts of her husband, Pete, who was an active SAS operative during the war. This account is the real story from the inside. It's all buttressed with extensive research and numerous interviews with other principals. The book is a fascinating journey through the beginnings of the SAS in World War II, the early missions of C Squadron in Malaya in 1951, the official organization of the Rhodesian SAS and the war they fought in the Southern African bush from 1966 to 1980.

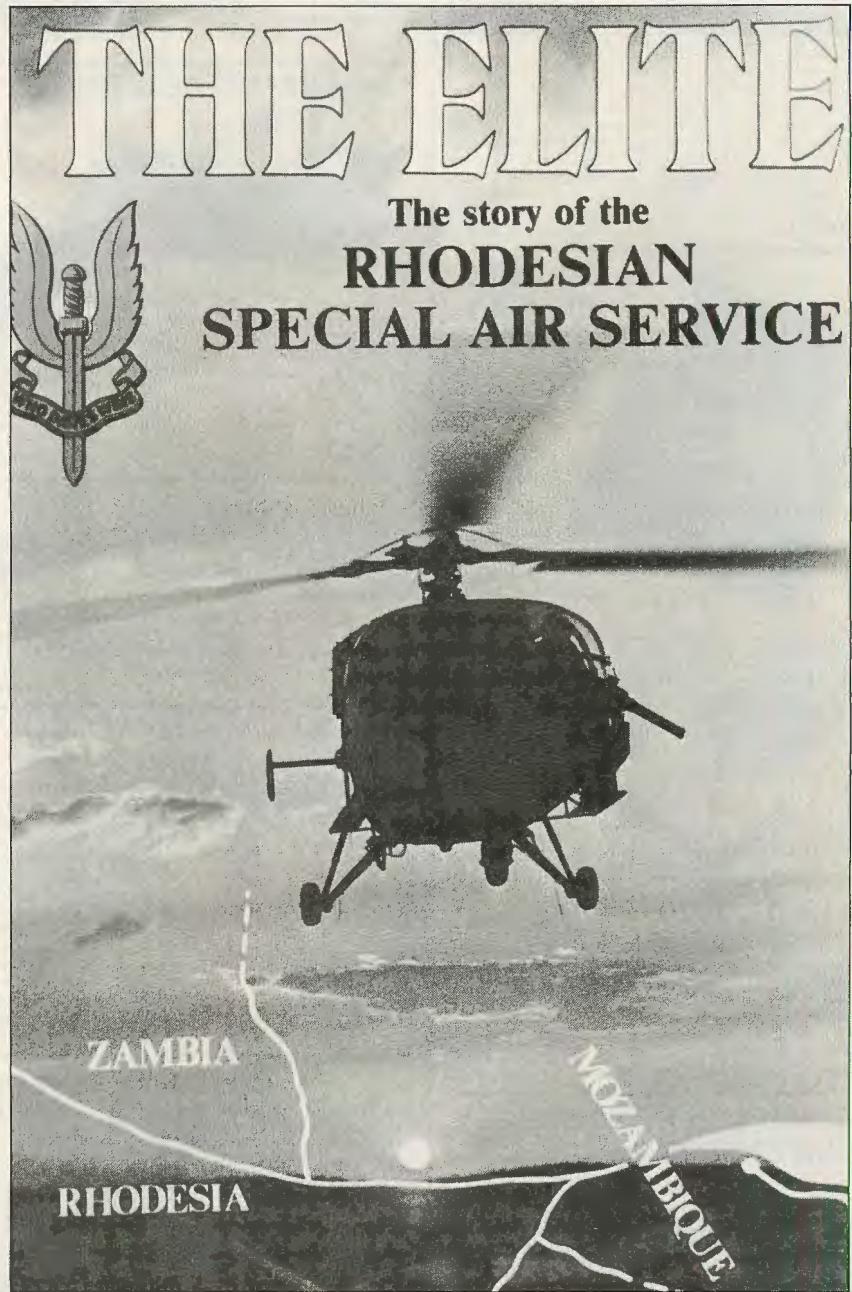
SAS philosophy was simple, direct and correct: Hit the bastards hard, fast and right where they live. And SAS hit time and time again in raids and sabotage operations deep inside Mozambique and Zambia against ZANLA and ZIPRA terrorist camps. Good and accurate history, Cole's accounts of operations read like adventure stories.

SAS ops reminded some of *King Solomon's Mines* or *Devil's Guard*, but Cole's relation is better than fiction: The story's real. **The Elite** bursts with detail of mission procedures, hard-fought operations and the men who carried them out.

Some of the operational scenarios accurately described in Mrs. Cole's book sound like an Indiana Jones celluloid fantasy:

- After years of operating inside northern Mozambique against Robert Mugabe's ZANLA terrorists and Samora Machel's FRELIMO army, the

IN REVIEW



SAS was becoming hard-pressed to avoid compromise during their extended ops behind the lines. An enterprising SAS troop commander, Bob McKenna, a U.S. citizen, developed an idea which exemplified the squadron's motto of "Who Dares Wins." McKenna's plan was to utilize the huge Lake Cabora Bassa in Mozambique as a floating base of operations, employing hit-and-float raids against strategic terrorist bases. Twelve members of A Troop, led by McKenna, paddled over 300 miles while literally living in collapsible canoes for six weeks and suc-

cessfully attacked numerous targets. ZANLA and FRELIMO never knew what hit them.

- By 1979, Rhodesia was barely able to contain the thousands of terrorists operating inside her borders. Yet a bigger threat, one that could topple the country within a matter of days, came to the attention of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization. Joshua Nkomo, head of the 20,000-man ZIPRA terrorist force operating from Zambia, was planning a conventional war-style attack on Rhodesia — an attack coordinated to put the capital of

Salisbury in enemy hands within 24 hours. There was only one solution: Assassinate Nkomo.

After meticulous planning and rehearsals, the SAS drove their Sabre Land Rovers 124 miles through enemy-controlled Zambian territory right into Nkomo's headquarters in Lusaka. Although Nkomo managed to escape by squeezing his bulk through a small bathroom window, the psychological impact of this Rhodesian SAS raid — Op Bastille — made it widely considered as the most important military operation of the entire war.

• **The Op That Never Was.** As the war ground down and internationally supervised elections drew nearer, many feared that Robert Mugabe would come to power through coercion and intimidation of the black Rhodesian voters. The Rhodesian military command developed Operations Hectic and Quartz to counter that threat. The SAS was tasked with the elimination of Mugabe, ZANLA military commander Rex Nhongo, and hundreds of key ZANLA personnel. In a plot and counterplot that would serve admirably in any Ian Fleming novel, Mrs. Cole tells of spies and traitors, covert surveillance, and a heretofore secret stockpile of Russian T-55 tanks.

Many in the SAS didn't like to think of themselves or be referred to as heroes. But among the characters encountered in this book are the two most highly decorated soldiers in Rhodesia, each earning the Grand Cross of Valour, Silver Cross and Bronze Cross. Both served with the squadron.

Despite the author's firsthand acquaintance with the characters and their story, **The Elite** manages to avoid over-glorification of the Rhodesians, Yanks, Brits, Aussies and a dozen other nationalities who comprised C Squadron. Instead, Cole simply tells the story and lets the deeds and the men who performed them speak for themselves.

When the Rhodesian SAS disbanded in December 1980, a fitting tribute was received from the Squadron's former parent unit in Britain: "Farewell to a much-admired sister unit. Your professionalism and fighting expertise has always been second to none throughout the history of the Rhodesian SAS. C Squadron still remains vacant in 22 SAS orbat."

At the ceremony on 13 December, the last CO of C Squadron, the most decorated man in the Rhodesian Army, said, "I know that in the years to come we can, with the greatest pride, say, 'I served with the Rhodesian SAS.'"

After reading **The Elite — The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service**, you'll understand why. ✕



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HIT probability. Submunitions. Multiple projectiles. Burst control. You remember ... All those buzz-words that floated like little angels around the birth of microcaliber select-fire weapons.

But none of those ideas was new. The idea of increasing hit probability by applying a pattern of fire or a beaten zone to a target area has been knocking around a long time. It began with the shotgun, proceeded with the machine gun (there was even a duplex round for 7.62 NATO that was manufactured in the '60s), laid the foundation of the concept of the assault rifle and was refined in the burst-control mechanism.

A precision-shooting advocate since my days as a Marine, naturally, I don't embrace the concept wholeheartedly, but I've found one example of it I would employ if I were a cop busting into a warehouse with an armed burglar on the other side of the door. The Multiple Munitions, Incorporated, (MMI) Multiplex cartridges in .38, .357, .45 and 9mm SMG (so far, 9mm is available for foreign sales only) are valuable special-purpose cartridges every duty officer should consider.

I'm not backing off one inch from my stand that accurate fire is the most important weapon any infantryman or street cop can offer in an armed confrontation, but there are times and places when ammo that will let your handgun *spray* lead may help you live to fight another day. Handgun shot shells are a natural possibility, but have rarely been considered for defensive purposes. Their light individual projectiles don't have the momentum to do much damage, and don't penetrate much.

But what about a pistol cartridge that spits two or three bullets in the 100-grain range? It makes the pistol into something like a hand-sized shotgun. You still must apply accurate shooting techniques, but Multiplex ammo helps you get the most out of that accuracy in some combat situations.

MMI Multiplex cartridges pack either two or three projectiles into a conventional case for increased impact surface area at close range (up to five meters) and increased hit probability out to 25 meters by virtue of the built-in separation produced by the load. Original velocity is roughly the same as .38 Special single-projectile loads, about 800 fps. But the bullets delivered have a total projectile weight that's been beefed up from the usual 150-grain neighborhood to a stunning (or *stopping*) 250 grains.

Yet, believe it or not, MMI Multiplex ammo features SAAMI (Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute) approval for pressures safe for



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Jack Thompson

One Shot, Three Hits



standard weapons for specified calibers. Of course, the plus-P rating on the .38 Multiplex *means* plus-P and it would be a mistake to load this little bomb into your Airweight. Otherwise, all MMI ammo should function in all standard service pistols.

The only real exception to that is the 9mm. MMI's Parabellum loads produce pressures appropriate *only* for submachine guns. This high-energy blaster blows two slugs (combined weight 160 grains) out of a full-length SMG barrel at velocities approaching 1,300 fps. And it automatically doubles the volume of fire from an SMG.

But .38 and .357 are going to get the most use from SWAT cops, so let's see how they work. Both the Special and Magnum cartridges throw three projectiles. The first and heaviest bullet is a specially made 110-grain FMJ hollow-point. It's backed up by two flat lead discs, each weighing 70 grains. The only difference is velocity: Magnum bullets fly at 1,235 fps to hit at a combined energy of 625 foot-pounds.

I had a couple of boxes of .38s for the SOF test. I can't testify to the worth of the .357, but I saw enough of the .38 to be impressed.

MMI .38s come ten to a box. (That box costs \$10.95, so that's one good reason not to misuse Multiplex ammo.)

Loaded into a standard six-shot revolver, that gives you 18 projectiles with a total weight of 1,500 grains and an impressive combined muzzle energy of 2,100 foot-pounds. That'll knock the bad guys down a peg or two.

Ideally, Multiplex is a fine round for forced entry, especially under poor light conditions. At ranges under 25 meters, accuracy is fine. At least one bullet always hit within an inch of point of aim. But the test at the 25-meter target showed what this cartridge is good for. One bullet hit point of aim, another struck three inches low and to the left, and the third barely cut the paper on the right side of the torso. That's what I call compensation for aiming error or target movement.

But before you get the idea that this hand-fired shotgun shell will cure all your problems, let me tell you what it *won't* do. Since the individual projectiles are lighter they will lose velocity and drop faster than a single, heavier bullet. Don't count on accurate shooting over 25 meters.

Again because of the lighter projectile weight, don't count on this ammo's penetration. These bullets don't cut much cover.

Also, be careful with this load if

Continued on page 103

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If this new rack concept sounds like a good idea to you, write to Big Sky Racks, Inc., Dept. SOF, Rt. 85, Box 4208, Livingston, MT 59047. Phone: (303) 799-1828.

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Choate Machine and Tool, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 218, Bald Knob, AR 72010. Phone: (501) 724-3138.

Continued on page 108

EL SALVADOR/ NICARAGUA DEFENSE FUND UPDATE

What we need: Medium and small sizes of the following: military combat and jungle boots, boot socks, cammie and OG fatigue uniforms, including caps and narrow-brimmed "boonie" hats, field jackets and rain jackets. Web equipment to include pistol belts, ammo pouches (the contras use a lot of FN-FAL's and G-3's, whose magazines go nicely in the old-style pouch for 20 rd M14 magazines) plastic canteens, canteen covers, canteen cups, ponchos, poncho liners, good, serviceable military rucksacks, preferably without the metal frames. K-Bars or equivalent good solid heavy field knives. Weapon cleaning gear. 30 round M-16 magazines, military compasses, GI flashlights and binoculars.

Each pair of boots should be tied together by the laces and each pair of socks either rolled or tied together.

Please break down the web equipment: detach the LBE suspenders from the pistol belt, and so on. Please pack bore-cleaner "Break-Free" and other oily items separately and try to make sure the caps are really on tight.

Medical supplies should be addressed to Refugee Relief International, c/o SOF Warehouse, 5721 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Then you get to write off your donation as a tax deduction.

Please enclose in each package a packing list detailing the contents, your name and address, and whether you wish your name to be printed in SOF as a donor to the fund. Donations to the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund are NOT tax deductible.

Please do NOT send firearms, ammunition or explosives. Also, we have no requirement for: steel helmets, helmet liners, helmet covers, machetes, civilian clothes, entrenching tools and E-tool covers, bandoliers and stripper clips, 20 round M16 magazines, carbine magazines or carbine magazine pouches.

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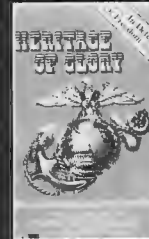
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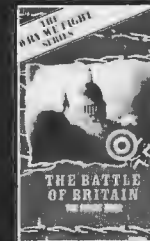
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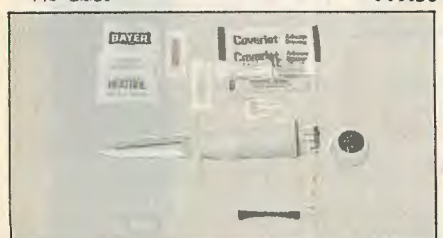
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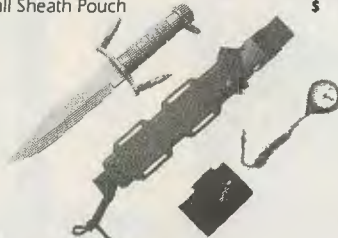
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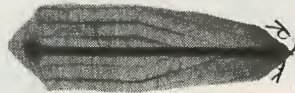
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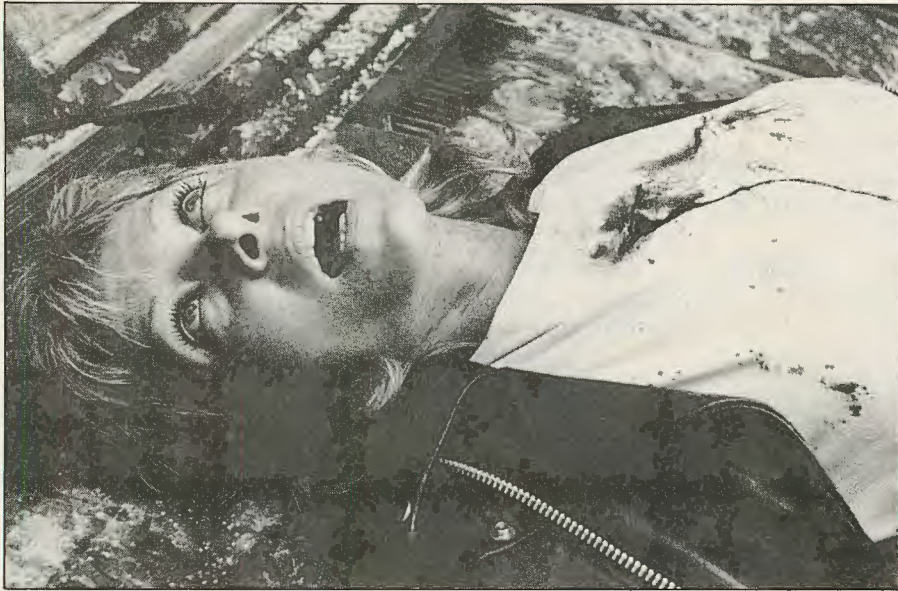
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Best supporting actress Ingrid Pitt plays dead East German agent.

WILD GEESE II

Surgical Strike on Spandau

by SOF Staff

SOFer Jimmy Monaghan (grimacing) enjoys work with Scott Glenn (in plastic bag).



Rambo, Terminator and Commando: That was 1985, the year of the escapist paramilitary movie. Easy as it would be to despair of ever seeing another plausible plot or real gun, you should wait a bit before you write off the year. There's one film a technically minded vet can see without getting the giggles: *Wild Geese II*. Moody, tight and technically correct, Euan Lloyd's latest will please the viewer who's looking for a little more realism in his entertainment. SOF's Jimmy Monaghan was on site to advise on technical accuracy (see "Holding the Line in Hollywood," SOF, June '85).

Don't look for Richard Burton, Roger Moore or Richard Harris. This is an entirely new operation, with new personnel and new materiel. Mission objective: Free Rudolf Hess.

Unfortunately, many SOF readers are too young to remember the stenographer for *Mein Kampf* and former deputy Führer or his desperate 1941 flight to Scotland in a stolen plane. Though it is suggested that Hess could still "topple governments" many who neither studied nor lived through World War II will fail to appreciate the significance of these dark hints.

That's not Lloyd's fault. Euan Lloyd has a justified reputation as a careful filmmaker whose credits include the first *Wild Geese*, *Sea Wolves*, and *Shalako* and he bends every effort to make movies clear, realistic and action-packed. Sadly, when the time came to package the film for American distribution, a lot of explanation and connective material fell on the cutting-room floor.



Barbara Carrera gets a couple of earfuls as she phones terrorist demands.



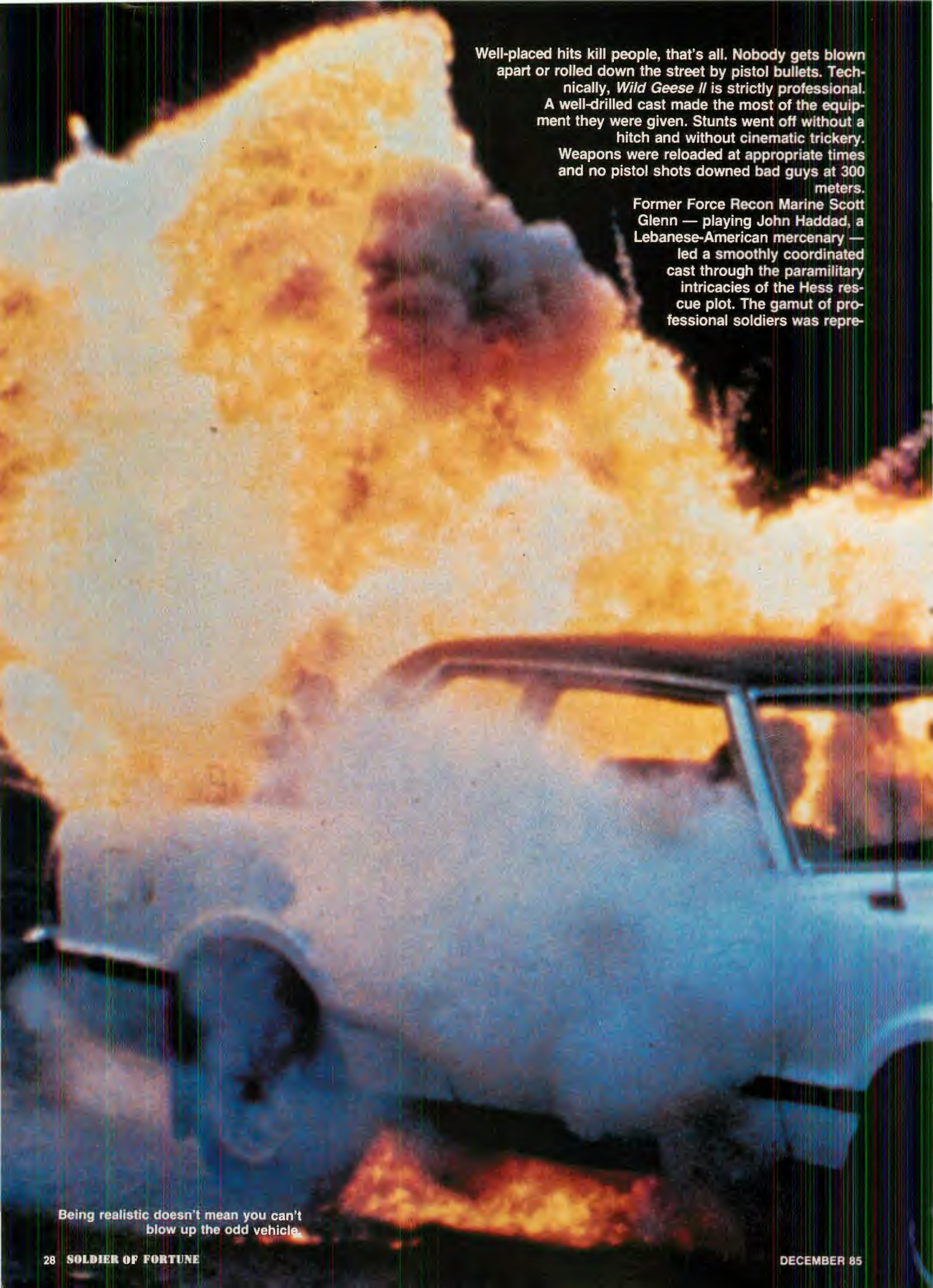
Scott Glenn gets the jump on the competition when they think he's a British military policeman.

So, if you don't know the Rudolf Hess story, look it up before you hit your local theater.

Motivation and background may be obscure, but *Wild Geese II* is extremely realistic: No magical martial arts, no James Bond gimmicks, no wild coincidences, no superman stunts. Battles of intel brains and carefully planned violence move the cast from action to action and scene to scene.

Guns feature prominently in most of the scenes of *Wild Geese II* and for once they're the right guns. In fact, from HK P7s to AKs to UZIs, everything's perfect. And the weapons have no magical powers.

Character actor Edward Fox gets high marks as a British sniper.



Well-placed hits kill people, that's all. Nobody gets blown apart or rolled down the street by pistol bullets. Technically, *Wild Geese II* is strictly professional. A well-drilled cast made the most of the equipment they were given. Stunts went off without a hitch and without cinematic trickery. Weapons were reloaded at appropriate times and no pistol shots downed bad guys at 300 meters.

Former Force Recon Marine Scott Glenn — playing John Haddad, a Lebanese-American mercenary — led a smoothly coordinated cast through the paramilitary intricacies of the Hess rescue plot. The gamut of professional soldiers was repre-

Being realistic doesn't mean you can't blow up the odd vehicle.

sented un sentimentally from a sloppy, vicious, drug-taking IRA terrorist to the coolly STRAC British colonel played by Edward Fox.

Surprising performances are offered by the supporting cast, and Jimmy Monaghan and Ingrid Pitt deserve special mention. Monaghan is well-known around SOF offices for his long service and good connections, but we never figured him for an actor. Jimmy is relaxed, natural and completely believable as he threatens, shoots, chases and fights his way through the film. It must have been hard to act like it's normal to suffocate a handcuffed man in a plastic bag, but Monaghan looked like he was sacking groceries. We were proud of him.

Top honors for a minor part go to this month's cover girl, Ingrid Pitt. She is known to devotees of 1960s Hammer horror films for her work in epics like *Vampire Lovers*. Twenty years later she's become more than biologically gifted scenery. From her natural, low-key entry into the film as an East German agent masquerading as a prostitute, Pitt's energy and focus animate the screen with her every appearance: She looks just plain mean.

Even Laurence Olivier — Lord Larry to the Stratford set — puts in an appearance. He dusts off his *King Lear* senility act for the last few minutes of the movie during his cameo as Rudolf Hess.

Locations are the real stars of this movie. London, Vienna and Berlin can't be mistaken for studio backlots. Spandau Prison's menace loads *Wild Geese II* with atmosphere.

If you're looking for pyrotechnics and gore, fantasy and fakery, try any of the season's mercenary offerings.

But if you want a realistic story, impressively filmed on location, with careful attention to technical accuracy, watch for *Wild Geese II*. ✂



Scott Glenn's Force Recon background helped him with his mercenary role and his weapons handling.



Col. Allan Faulkner — played by Edward Fox — added class and humor to the proceedings.

Unrecognizable English lord, Olivier plays disoriented, recently liberated Hess.



SOF AFGHANISTAN

FREEDOM FIGHTERS' MEDCAP

Journal of an American EMT

Text & Photos by Ron Jeffries



HUMID heat hit me like a wet hand, but that wasn't an unusual welcome for a summer visitor to Peshawar, Pakistan. It was 1700 hours on 1 June 1985 and after the 48-hour flight from Texas I was exhausted. That was a bad way to start three hot, dirty months observing and reporting on medical and logistic problems at Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. And in my spare time I had to start an ambulance program.

But "hurry up and wait" is still more the rule in the Third World than it is at home, and I had three fly-blown days' downtime

This mujahid goes to school in the U.S. during the summer and fights the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan the rest of the year.



EMT IN AFGHANISTAN

Ronald F. Jeffries was with the 82nd Airborne in the '50s, a fireman in the '60s, sold oil field equipment in the '70s and presently is an emergency medical technician in Wichita Falls. His concern for the Afghan refugees took him to the war-torn country for three weeks as a volunteer medical adviser to Afghan physicians.

before the action started. As a guest at a traditional Afghan dinner, I was an accidental participant in a conversation about the war raging just beyond the border. There's lots of war talk in Peshawar. But tonight there was more than talk: Mohammed Gailani, the guest of honor, told us about a future operation inside Afghanistan. Half in jest I asked if I could tag along. Unbelievably, Mohammed said that he would think about it.

At 1800 on 5 June, word came that I was to be at Mohammed's house at 0600 the next morning if I wanted to go inside Afghanistan. That night I got ready by writing a letter to my folks to be mailed if I did not return. My other thoughts were, "What is a 45-year-old doing such a crazy thing for?" The answer was easy: "Why not?"

The next morning I met a pretty, blue-eyed, blonde young lady who was going with us. She was Lea Jarosky, a free-lance journalist from Pelham, New Hampshire who worked with the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan in Washington, D.C. Lea and I were loaded into a Toyota ambulance for the trip past the Pakistan Army checkpoints. All of us were dressed in Afghan clothing so at the check points we would cover our faces with a scarf and pretend to be asleep. We had no trouble.

At 1600 hours we arrived at a small town almost on the border where the next 24 hours would be spent. Here I met Mike, an independent movie producer and his two sound men, Ron and Howard. Mike and Ron had spent three months in Afghanistan last year and I had seen some of their work.

Our meal that night was boiled goat, rice and *noone*. Goat is prepared by boiling it in hot oil (not deep fried). Rice is boiled in water, then mixed with cooking oil, or butter if available. *Noone* is Afghan bread that looks like a big thick tortilla and doubles as a plate. Everything is eaten with the right hand since knives, forks or spoons are nearly unknown.

That night, about 300 mujahideen moved in around our group of 100. By 0700 all 300 had moved on to Afghanistan. While our group waited to move out, I asked a young muj who went by the name of Hawk where he lived.

"Maryland," he stated. "I spend the winter in the United States going to college and the summers fighting for my country." The serious Hawk introduced me to his uncle, Captain Zalam Wordak. Captain Wordak was a regular army man instructing at the Afghan War College before the Russian invasion. Like other Afghan soldiers, Wordak kept his old army rank in the mujahideen forces.

At 1700 we left for Afghanistan in three Toyota Land Cruisers and 10 overloaded Toyota pickups. One more checkpoint and we were inside that embattled country. Five miles inside, we came to a deep canyon cut by a clear stream. Camels, horses and donkeys milled around as men tried to pack loads on their backs. We had reached the staging area.



Captured AKRs are a favored but rare weapon with the mujahideen.

It took about three hours to load the livestock. Each beast of burden was piled high with two multibarrel rocket launchers, two 12.7mm DShK heavy machine guns, one 14.5mm AA gun or 11 SA-7s and five launchers. The rest of the 50 or so animals were loaded with ammo and supplies. (Horses and donkeys had to carry their own feed but camels eat off the land.) All the muj were in high spirits while the officers were running around shouting orders and looking worried.

After a dozen cups of tea, half-filled with coarse sugar, and a handful of candy, we started walking. It was 2130. In the dark it sounded like everyone was talking at once. All the muj had a bounce to their steps. All over the mountains you could see small campfires burning. Every muj had a small flashlight that glowed green from the side. We must have looked like lightning bugs on parade to any observers at trailside.

The trail was very steep, narrow and rocky. Within a short time I took my associ-

ate's pack; Jim's smoking had caught up with him. Finally I had to leave him with a muj and go on with the main group.

Day Two

At 0200 we stopped on top of a mountain to eat and sleep. Not for long, though. We were up at 0500, and after some tea we walked for about an hour to a cave area where we rested until 1200. Passing jets and exploding bombs provided the background music for our rest period.

At noon we had rice, *noone* and goat and were back on the trail at 1400. The news crew was shooting film the whole time and Mike was surprised to see how much like an Afghan I looked. He said that if it weren't for the sunglasses you'd never know the difference. Needless to say, I took off the shades for the rest of the trip.

As we descended from the high country, the trail ended in a dry stream bed peppered with fresh bomb and rocket craters. Every so often we would see the carcasses of what used to be horses and camels. One camel must have taken a direct hit — his remains were strewn over a 50-foot circle.

At 1930 hours we stopped at the edge of the desert valley to regroup and wait for



FIELD EXPEDIENT HOSPITAL

Nobody believes the Afghan rebels have adequate medical facilities. I certainly didn't. But I was not prepared for the conditions I encountered when I visited a clinic run by the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan.

On 10 June 1985 I visited a "B" clinic. Nothing fancy — just a little room tucked away at the rear of a mud building tacked to a hillside. Light for the clinic came through three 18-inch square holes in the wall, one Coleman lantern and headlamps for operating doctors.

Now, one of the things you expect to find in a hospital is medicine. Imagine my surprise when all I saw was one half-full bottle of antibiotics and half a bottle of pain killer. There were about 20 bags of blood expander on a shelf on the far wall.

The examination table was six feet long, three feet wide, 40 inches high and covered with a dirty blanket. It should have been in a well-lit part of the building, but instead it had been shunted over to the darkest corner of the clinic.

The Afghan doctor at the clinic has his work cut out for him — he sees about 1,000 people per month. The doctor did not know exactly what a "B" clinic was, but he did say that an "A" clinic had X-ray facilities and electricity. How many "A" clinics were there as opposed to "B" clinics? The doctor knew of no "A" clinics that were operating and this was the only "B" clinic he knew.

On 11 June 1985, I got to see the clinic

This primitive clinic operated by the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan treats over 1,000 people a month — both military and civilian.

in action. A mortar round had hit the edge of a young officer's foxhole, sending a fragment into his head. The officer had been on the road for more than an hour before arriving at the clinic. He had lost a lot of blood and was in deep shock. A slimy white hemisphere of his brain protruded from the side of his head. It looked like a baseball. Within 10 minutes an IV was started and Dr. Hulab, a visiting doctor, wrapped the patient's head while one of the men kept a spoon in the patient's mouth to maintain an airway. He was given a shot of lignocaine (outdated) and panidure (also outdated) was added to the IV. The IV was set on slow drip and took two hours to drain. After the IV was finished, the patient was loaded onto a truck for a 15-mile ride, then to be placed on a camel for the trip to Pakistan. From the time the patient left this clinic, he would have no medical care until he reached Pakistan: about 24 hours' camel ride.

His friends told me later that he'd died in a couple of hours. They thought that was a good thing, since he would be with his wife. The Russians had killed her last year.

On the following morning, an 18-month-old baby was brought to the clinic with an ear infection. The father was told by the doctor "there is no medicine for babies." Things have gotten so bad that only fighting men get medical treatment. Unfortunately, they are not the only ones who suffer during this war.

darkness to fall. The valley trail was the same as the mountain trail: rocky. It would be easy to twist an ankle. We could hear artillery but could not see any hits. Off to the right winked the lights of Khost.

Danger was very near. No lights were used on the desert crossing and very little talk. At 2300 we stopped at some tea houses. I could not believe it: We were in sight of Khost and yet we were sitting around Coleman lanterns eating. We could still hear the artillery.

Day Three

At 0200, after two hours' sleep, we headed back into the mountains. In Afghanistan, you walk uphill 90 percent of the time. I don't know how that happens, but there never seems to be any downhill. The walking was hard — everyone's breath came in forced gasps. I put my pack on Lea's horse, but it was still all I could do to make it to the top of the mountain. A heart attack might have been a preferable end. The muj are tough and they don't know the meaning of the word quit. Some were carrying half their weight in equipment and still they made a better showing than I did.

At 0700 hours, Dr. Gran put me on his horse for one of those rare downhill stretches. At 0800 we stopped at a small, crater-pocked village of 25-30 people. We rested, but I hurt so much that I could not sleep. Instead, I doctored the blisters on my right foot. Just before we left the village, a muj came around with some goat shish kebabs. You have no idea how much better that sits on a Western stomach than does boiled goat.

Some of the muj and pack animals took off at noon, but the bulk of us left the village at 1900. We had been gone about five minutes when one shell went off behind us. A runner reported that the shell hit the river, killing a woman who was doing her washing. The Russians knew about us for sure.

I only made it halfway up. The muj saw that I wasn't going to make it so they hoisted me onto the back of a horse. I was ashamed of myself but jet-lag, lack of sleep and age had finally caught up with me. It was getting dark when we got to the bottom of the mountain. To my surprise, there were four captured Soviet trucks and a Toyota pickup waiting for us. The truck I was in did not have any lights so a muj stood on the front bumper with a flashlight, yelling back instructions to the driver. All the others ran with their lights on. At night the mujahideen control Afghanistan.

We arrived at a village at 2000 with about 150 mujahideen saluting our group by firing their weapons over our heads. Some of our group started saluting back and it sounded like a firefight. The mujahideen are partial to tracer. When they salute each other, they don't shoot straight up, they shoot over each other's heads. No, Afghanistan is not for the faint-hearted.

After a quick meal, it was back in the trucks and on to a small town where we bedded down on a roof. Dr. Holub brought

WAGING WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

During the early days of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, modern weapons were in terribly short supply. Mujahid resourcefulness and Russian carelessness soon remedied the situation. No longer are the newspapers filled with photos of rebels brandishing ancient Enfields or, worse, homemade flintlocks. Now the mujahideen can be counted on to show up for battle armed with the latest in Soviet weaponry: from AKMs and RPG-7s to DShKs and SA-7s. We saw plenty of these weapons on our trip — enough to convince me that if the Afghans lose this war, it won't be for lack of arms.

A quarter of the the group I was with had pistols as companions for their rifles. Most were Soviet issue with a few American and European .380s, .32s and one new Colt .45 thrown in. One of the Soviet pistols had a threaded barrel for use with a silencer. All of the pistols were semiauto and most had one extra magazine. Pistol ammo load was 15 to 60 rounds per each man. Unfortunately, the pistols were not kept very clean and some of the ammunition appeared to be corroded.

About 30 percent of the men in our group were armed with some type of bolt-action rifle — usually the venerable British SMLE .303 or copies of that warhorse. Some of the rifles were pre-WWII and pretty beat-up, but others were in excellent condition. Only one so-called Jungle Carbine was observed. Average rifle-ammo load per man was 60 rounds. Some of the ammunition was new Pakistani-made while the rest was English WWII issue.

Six of the older mujahideen seemed determined to remain in the past. They still clung to their decrepit Pattern 1914 Enfields. Some had made a small concession to modernization — they had the sporterized versions.

The remainder of the men were armed with automatic weapons, mostly AKs, although I did see one H&K G3 in the ranks. Some of the Soviet rifles were the older model AK-47 but most were the more modern AKM equipped with folding stock.

Weapon condition varied from man to man and there was no attempt to initiate a weapons maintenance program. Some of the rifles were very clean and some were very dirty; most of the weapons fell somewhere in between. All had dirty bolt faces and dirt under the extractor but all seemed to function. Average load was four magazines with 50 percent tracer.

I observed only one AK-74. It was a very short weapon with a folding stock: the "Krinkov." The barrel was only six inches long from the chamber to the



Mujahideen sort through equipment at a staging area before heading out on a mission.

flash hider. Load was four magazines with one mag filled with tracers. Serial #13183.

Machine guns can often make the difference between winning and losing a battle — a lesson not lost on the mujahideen. Many captured DShK 38 12.7mm heavy machine guns were sprinkled throughout the hilltop positions. I had an opportunity to view one that was in position near our camp — it was clean and ready to go. Strangely enough, though, there were only 50 rounds of ammunition with the weapon.

During my stay with the mujahideen I saw two well-worn Bren .303 light machine guns. They were well-maintained and each had one extra magazine — hardly enough to keep them active during a prolonged firefight.

Plenty of Soviet 7.62mm machine guns — probably RPDs — were to be found. All were clean and stocked with at least 300 rounds of ammunition and extra drums.

Soviet SA-7 surface-to-air missiles have proven to be a boon to the Afghan rebels. I observed 11 SAMs and five launchers. Unfortunately, most were in bad condition — several had the sights missing. I observed only one extra battery for each one. At 1900 on 22 June 1985, I saw a Soviet Mi-24 Hind heli-

copter hit by an SA-7. The helicopter poured smoke but acted like nothing had happened and continued the rocket attack, dropping heat flares as it went.

Hand grenades didn't seem to be a popular item with the mujahideen — I only saw six during my stay. All were of the pineapple type, probably the old Soviet F-1 model.

Although the Soviets have a clear edge in weaponry and resources, they are squandering that edge on faulty tactics. The Soviets have no desire to expend anything more costly than bombs and shells. And if that means keeping the MiGs and Hinds way up in the air out of harm's way, then so be it. Unfortunately for Moscow, those tactics don't get results. The mujahideen have little to fear — the Soviets fly so high that a direct hit is only a remote possibility. Artillery and mortar fire is equally erratic and inaccurate. Only tanks get close to mujahideen positions, but they roamed the country night and day with little effect.

The mujahideen use the tactics of opportunity. They use what few resources are available and concentrate them on what they consider important targets. There are problems, though. Operations are discussed for hours — sometimes days — before a firm decision is made. By that time, Soviet informers may have gotten wind of the plan and alerted the Russians. For all the guns and bombs, betrayal is still the most powerful weapon in the war for Afghanistan.

me a blanket — I thought I was in heaven. It doesn't take long to begin to appreciate the little things in life.

Day Four

0600. I had slept six hours and it felt great. At tea I was told that we would be here for two or three days so I thought it was time to scout around. The roof that we slept on turned out to be the Zalron Health Center. There was a bomb crater just back of the Clinic with a small cave next to it. My plan was to take pictures from the crater if we were bombed and if things got too hot, I could duck into the cave. Boy! Was I wrong. The crater setup turned out to be the local latrine.

I took a tour of the Health Center in the afternoon. The clinic is a large room in the back part of a 200-by-40-foot two-story building built on the side of a hill. The first floor in the front of the building has a dirt floor and the pack horses are kept there. The waiting room has wooden benches and a dirt floor, but the working area has a concrete floor. Lighting is provided by one Coleman-type lantern and three 18-inch square holes cut into the wall. The doctors wear miner-type headlamps.

Medicines are a real problem — meaning they're almost non-existent. What few antibiotics and pain killers they have are outdated. The doctor sees about 1,000 people a month, including war casualties, and I was impressed with his enthusiasm and dedication. His attitude and professionalism made up for the technological backwardness of the situation.

Day Five

At 0600 hours, after eight hours' sleep, I felt like a new person. It's amazing what a little rest can do. Some of the muj were taking two of the SAMs up the mountain to give us additional anti-aircraft protection so I followed them up as far as the 12.7mm HMG position and took some pictures. Afghanistan is a rugged country. Since the country is so rough, the MiGs have to really get down on the deck to hit anything. HMGs keep the MiGs high enough that accuracy beomes a real problem for them. In fact, none of the muj seem to be bothered by the MiGs except when they are in a truck. When a MiG flies over, a lot of the mujahideen run out of the trees into the open to watch the planes roar by.

The day passed slowly so I took advantage of the lull to rest some more.

Day Six

I spent the early part of the morning snooping around. Stumbling onto some wrecked Soviet APCs that had been stripped for parts, I noticed their poor workmanship. One thing became clear — the Soviet vehicles are 1940s technology. The sides are built of $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch plate while the bottom is only $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch plate. The sides had some AK-47 slugs buried in them and one 12.7mm hole where the slug went in one side and out the other. A 7.62mm NATO ball round should penetrate the side if the range is under 100 yards.

The amphibious personnel carrier had $\frac{1}{4}$ -

inch sides, $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch bottom and around the wheel wells — it was just heavy sheet metal. This unit had a few AK-47 rounds through the side. The gasoline engines were flat-heads of about 300 cubic inches. The mujahideen are replacing the engines in captured trucks with used 6-354U Diesel Perkins engines. This makes the Russian trucks dependable transportation.

Day Seven

After a cold night we were up and in the truck moving to a new position. We had been in the town too long and the Russians had spies everywhere. The truck bed was 13 feet long and eight feet wide and I counted 47 men with equipment. I had an RPG in my face and an AK-47 in my ribs. We were lucky — the other two trucks were *really* crowded.

We drove on a blacktop road for an hour, always looking at the sky. We felt much better when we started driving up a dry stream bed. After 45 minutes, two MiG-23s came over a hill streaking straight for us. They were flying low and fast. They must have been flying too fast to see us because they never came back. It was a real heart-stopper that gave everyone something to talk about for a few hours.

We arrived at our new camp after about three hours of driving. The area was a refreshing change after the gray rock and dried grass of the mountains. Here, everything was green. Large shade trees flanked a cool stream and pine trees covered the mountains around us.

We sat down to a meal of shish kebab cooked on AK-47 cleaning rods. Goat is great cooked this way. About noon I heard a pounding drum — the signal that heralded the arrival of a group of about 150 mujahideen coming to our camp. After the regular salute of shooting over each other's heads, the drummer got a traditional Afghan dance started. Only men dance. They formed a single file around the drummer, moving in precise steps and clapping their hands.

Any time of the daylight hours, bombs can be heard and large four-engine cargo planes fly in from Russia. The war goes on all the time.

Day Eight

There are more mujahideen coming in all the time. Some will not come in until the battle for Khost starts because it is wheat harvest time.

Some clear honey was brought in with fresh *noone* and I was given an onion. With the good food and sleep the last few nights, I

have all my strength back. It rained today so the night was wet for those of us sleeping on the ground.

Day Nine

We got up at 0430 hours. The morning was cold, but the hot tea perked me up. Drivers worked on starting their trucks. It was getting close to the battle and the muj were becoming more subdued. Today, we would be within artillery range of Khost.

We drove for two hours up the dry river bed. It was very slow going — about five miles an hour: Men who walked arrived at the same time as the trucks. We walked 2½ hours up the mountain. After 15 minutes' rest, I rode to a town in a captured Russian jeep. That evening the muj were having a little target practice and asked if I would like to shoot. I hit the target rock at 300 yards with my first shot from a WWII .303. This made the muj happy; maybe I wasn't just dead weight after all.

The Russian jeep was not running and I was asked to look at it. The carburetor was all gummed up. We had nothing to blow out the jets so that was the end of the jeep for this trip. There was an APC sitting under the trees that only needed a battery to put it in service. The mujahideen have no use for it.

Lea was very sick tonight. She has been in bad shape the last eight days.

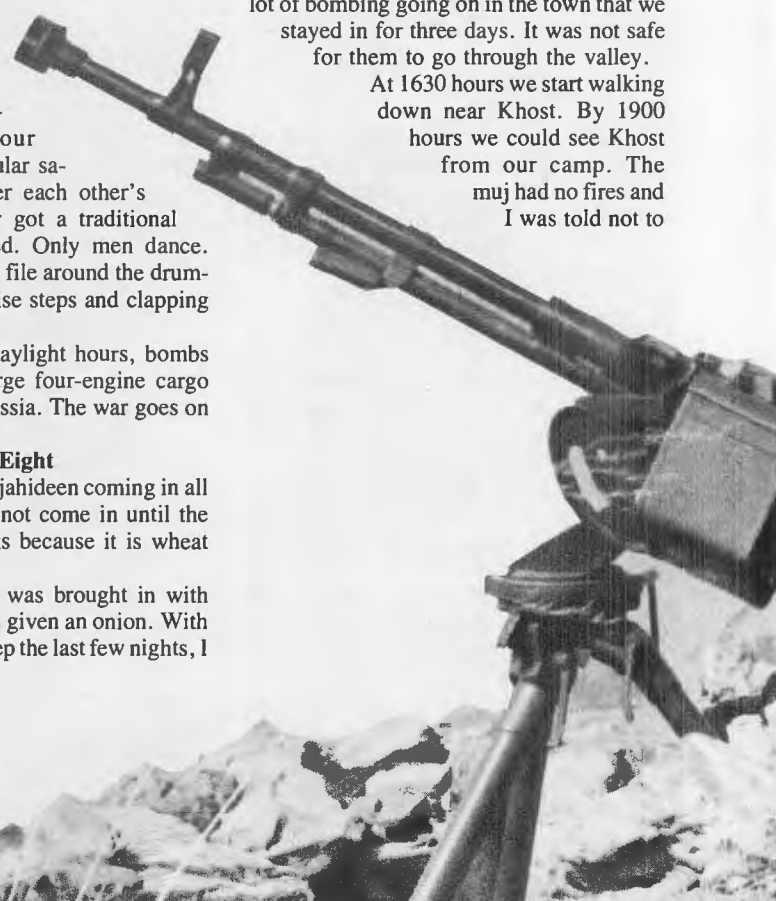
Day 10

One of the doctors is taking Lea back out this morning to Pakistan. She needed to be in a hospital. (It turned out that Lea had hepatitis and is still ill at this writing.) I was asked if I wanted to go back with them.

No way.

At 1530 hours, Lea and the doctor showed back up with the news that there is a lot of bombing going on in the town that we stayed in for three days. It was not safe for them to go through the valley.

At 1630 hours we start walking down near Khost. By 1900 hours we could see Khost from our camp. The muj had no fires and I was told not to





walk outside the camp. The guards were ready for infiltrators trying to get in.

Day 11

I was real sick today. I can't eat or drink anything, it goes right through. None of my pills will work. Ron gave me one of his pills out of his private stock. Everyone was concerned that we would be bombed and attacked by helicopter troops.

Day 12

I felt a little better after Ron gave me another pill.

There is more air activity than usual. Everyone is jumpy because we are in an exposed position. The attack has been called off for a few days. Mike and Ron went up on the hill to film the airbase at Khost. Two Mi-24 Hind helicopters flew over at noon but I was too sick to take a picture.

At 1700 a truck pulled up and we loaded our 14.5mm AA guns on it, plus supplies — then 40 of us piled on. The truck was so

Captured 12.7mm machine guns provide most of the protection against marauding Soviet aircraft.



Nobody rotates home in the mujahideen — they're there for the duration. This 18-year-old rebel (left) has been fighting the Soviets for three years.

overloaded that it overheated within a half mile. We got to our new camp high in the mountains at 2300 hours. I felt much better.

Day 13

After a good night's sleep, I felt better still. Mike gave me five more pills and it looks as if I will live. We were bivouacked in a small village. I was told that some of the people are moving back to Afghanistan to get away from the heat of Pakistan. But they can only move to the high mountains like the place we were in now.

This is the last day of Ramadan, which is a sunup to sundown fasting time for Moslems. There will be a feast tomorrow.

Day 14

I spent the day talking to the muj and observing all the meetings going on. Mohammed Gailani and General Wordak were meeting with five tribal chiefs. The Afghans are so independent that it is hard to get the attack coordinated. It was 1900 and we got back on the truck for a trip down the river bed for an hour and a half. On the trip downstream we stopped six or seven times because the truck overheated. One of the stops occurred in front of a store where one of the officers bought cigarettes and trail mix and handed some out to everyone. I got a bag of trail mix consisting of raisins and nuts.

At 2200 hours we started walking to the final camp where the attack would be starting from.

Arriving at midnight after a hard walk in rocky ter-

rain, with no light, we could expect little sleep. It is hard to share a trail with 300 men and 100 horses in the darkness. It rained all night.

Day 15

This was a slow day. We found a place to wash up. I had not had a bath or a change of clothes in 16 days.

MiGs were flying over all day, but our position was well camouflaged so they did not see us. I have not yet been able to catch a MiG with my camera.

MiGs are flying all over and I can see helicopters flying and bombing in the desert. I climbed a hill to take pictures of the MiGs but I gave up at noon — no MiGs had flown over since early morning.

Food was prepared in our camp but everyone had left to go to a meeting so I got to eat a whole chicken. I feel good and strong now, thanks to Mike and Ron's pills and one Afghan chicken.

I found out that I will be moving to the other side of the valley with Howard, the soundman, and Habib, a well-known cameraman from England. Habib had been the first to use night lenses in Afghanistan. At 2000 we started out with two muj with an AK-47, a .303 and a camel. Howard rode on the camel with the camera gear because his shoes had given up. We would make a loop around Khost and meet with another group by 0500. Howard could sleep any place and anytime. Somehow he tied himself on the camel and went to sleep. I had already been up 15 hours when we started walking. Khost could be seen to our left and two or three miles in front of us we could see helicopters bombing. At midnight we stopped for tea. I drank a full pot with a lot of sugar.

After midnight we headed through some small villages, trying not to make any noise. We could be shot by anyone in the dark. We could hear Russian tanks running around below us, about a mile away, their lights on hoping to catch a glimpse of the mujahideen.

We were walking as fast as the camel would go. One of the tanks got within two to three hundred yards of us. As it turned out, the lights went over our heads. Right then and there, I made up my mind that I would never again get in a position like this without a weapon. Habib did not seem to let the tanks bother him. I don't think Howard even awakened.

After leaving the tanks behind, we walked through a larger town. Not a light shone nor a dog barked. It was eerie. We had to take off our shoes to cross a stream just outside of town. The stream was about two feet deep and 20 yards wide. The rocks were slimy and sharp on the bottom of the stream. I put my shoes back on the wrong feet, but I was so tired that it took a little time to understand why my feet hurt. This gave Habib a good laugh, but I noticed that he checked his boots.

We were still in the desert at 0430 when it started getting light. It was clear that our guides were lost. I sure didn't want to be

Continued on page 86

SOF MIDEAST

THE IRANIAN CONNECTION

Khomeini Exports the Drug of Terrorism

by David Segal

The weapon of terrorism is most effective when cloaked in secrecy. The black hood not only creates a psychological impact, but protects the wearer's identity from his target and rival terrorist factions as well.
Photo: Mike Schiff



DESPITE vows of "swift and sure retaliation," the United States has taken no action against various Iran-backed organizations that have killed over 300 American citizens. The reason for our failure to retaliate was given by our chief executive during the recent 14 July hijacking of TWA flight 847 to Beirut by terrorists who openly proclaimed their membership in Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad.

"We don't know who they are," said our puzzled president, and, in the sense he meant that remark, it is probably true. His meaning became clear, even if his policy didn't, when Secretary of State George Schultz politely requested Lebanon to extradite the two Hezbollah hijackers (who had tortured and murdered U.S. Navy diver Robert Stetham and kidnaped 39 other American citizens for 16 days) to the United States for trial. Military action against their organizations and sponsors was ruled out.

Our response couldn't have been more inappropriate if we had politely requested the Japanese Imperial government to extradite the responsible carrier pilots after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In 1941, we clearly understood which organization was responsible for attacking Pearl Harbor and declared war on Japan.

Our evidence linking Iran to acts of war against the United States is more compelling than our evidence against the Japanese government, if only because Iran's acts of

war are far more numerous. The only major difference is that Japan declared war on us, leaving us no alternative, while Iran has not officially done that.

What follows here is a factual history of Iran-related terror so that however the United States finally responds to it, there will be no excuse for claiming that "We don't know who they are."

Iran and terrorism go way back to the founding of the Assassins by Sheikh Hassan Sabbah in the Elbruz mountains north of modern Tehran in the late 11th century. Led by Ismaili Shi'ite fanatics like Rashid al-Din Sinan, the dreaded Old Man of the Mountain, the Assassins terrorized the entire Middle East, Crusader and Saracen alike, for over 250 years from their mountain fortress of Alamut. They were finally exterminated by the Mongol Khan, Hulagu, who destroyed Alamut in 1256. Their tradition of sacrificing their lives in order to kill the enemies of Islam, however, lives on.

The involvement of Iran's modern Shi'ite clergy in terrorism goes back to the late 19th century and the formation of Fedayeen Islam (Self-sacrificers of Islam) under the spiritual and political guidance of Iranian

Supported both spiritually and logistically by Iran's fundamentalist Ayatollah Khomeini, these Mideast terrorists make their peace with Allah before battle. Photo: Mike Schiff

Moslem theologian Jamal-e-Din Al-Afghani, who was also instrumental in founding the Sunni-oriented Moslem Brotherhood, one of whose recent members is Yasser Arafat. Ties between Fedayeen Islam and the Moslem Brotherhood were close and remain so today, despite Fedayeen Islam's Shi'ite orientation.

Al-Afghani was a political refugee in London and, from the 1890s into the 1950s, Fedayeen Islam's most consistent feature was its opposition to Russian and promotion of British interests in the Persian Gulf.

Their first major action was the 1896 assassination of Iran's pro-Russian ruler, Nasr-e-Din Shah, by Reza Kermani, a follower of Al-Afghani. Assassination and intimidation of anti-British and pro-Russian Iranians continued, and even intensified, after the communists replaced the czars as Russia's rulers. It reached a peak in the late 1940s and early 1950s when, under the leadership of Navab Safavi, Fedayeen Islam was viewed by many Iranians as a direct tool of British intelligence.

In 1948, when the late Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was on an anti-British tack, Fedayeen Islam member Ali Fakr-Arai tried to assassinate him at Tehran University's commencement exercises. Fakr-Arai got in posing as a reporter for *Parcham Islam*, the Fedayeen Islam newspaper. Two years later, on 7 March 1950, the Shah's pro-Soviet strongman, General Haj-Ali Razmara, was



assassinated in front of Tehran's Shah Mosque (now the Imam Khomeini Mosque), by Fedayeen Islam member Khalil Tahmasabi.

In a dramatic turnaround, Fedayeen Islam played a crucial role in restoring the Shah to his throne by helping in the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh, Iran's virulently anti-British National Front prime minister, in 1953. An equally dramatic reversal of policy came in July 1963, when Fedayeen Islam enthusiastically supported Khomeini's first attempt to overthrow the Shah. In the course of that uprising, Fedayeen leader Navab Safavi was caught and executed, while his decimated organization went underground to continue its support for Khomeini, now in exile in Najaf, Iraq.

It was during the Najaf exile, from 1963-1978, that Khomeini developed his ties to the PLO, first through Fedayeen Islam's Moslem Brotherhood connection and, later, with the help of Iraq's Ba'athist government. During that period, many leading members of Khomeini's entourage, including Abbas Zamani, the first head of Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards, trained at PLO camps throughout the Middle East.

After Khomeini seized power on 11 February 1979, the first leader to fly to Tehran and offer his personal congratulations was Yasser Arafat. PLO ties remained very strong. According to a 1979 NATO

report, 580 Iranians were trained in PLO camps in 1979. A further 170 Iranians attended PLO courses, under an agreement between Abbas Zamani and the head of the PLO office in Tehran, Hanni al-Hassen. Also in that year, four PLO terrorists were arrested in Paris after an abortive attempt to assassinate former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar, an opposition leader who had been condemned to death by Khomeini.

Since those early days things have changed. Khomeini has broken with Arafat and now supports his mortal enemy, Syrian PLO puppet leader Abu Musa, in the PLO's internal struggle. The early training by Arafat's Al Fatah organization, however, was an essential step in the building of Iran's own terror network, replete with its own organizations such as Jihad Islami (Islamic Jihad), Amal Islami (Islamic Hope), Pasdaran Inqilab (Revolutionary Guards), Mostazafin (the Poor Masses, also called the Organization of the Oppressed) and Hezbollah (Party of God).

The old Fedayeen Islam has not disappeared either. After the Revolution, its

Their undisciplined appearance belies the effectiveness of the Mideast terrorist network responsible for the October 1983 suicide attack on the U.S. Marines in Beirut and the hijacking of TWA flight 847 in June 1985. Photo: Mike Schiff

new leader was reportedly no less a figure than Iran's first Revolutionary Prosecutor, Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali, Khomeini's infamous "hanging judge." Under his leadership, Fedayeen Islam merged with Hezbollah, acting as its enforcement arm to bring dissident Moslems into line. Khalkhali is now officially an ordinary member of Iran's parliament, but his unofficial powers are still widespread.

Khomeini's triumph in Iran was greeted with considerable enthusiasm by Lebanon's large Shi'ite community and Iranian organizations like Hezbollah and Mostazafin were exported to that country with money, support and training controlled by Tehran. Additionally, in 1982, some 2,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards were sent to Lebanon to train and support the pro-Khomeini Lebanese Shi'ites from the Syrian-controlled Ba'albek. They are still there today.

Also based in Ba'albek is Amal Islami (Islamic Amal), a rival organization to Nabih Berri's Shi'ite Amal militia. Led by Hussein Mousavi, Islamic Amal is under direct Iranian orders, as is the Beirut-based Hezbollah organization, led by Sheikh Muhammad Hussein Fadlullah. Both organizations get considerable Syrian support but act on Iranian orders. Their members furnish the personnel for Islamic Jihad, a "flag of convenience" with no independent existence. Both Islamic Amal and Hezbollah receive "spiritual guidance" and sup-



port from Lebanon's leading Shi'ite cleric, Sheikh Mehdi Shams-e-Din, a man with very close ties to Iran.

It should be noted that there are two Lebanese Shi'ite organizations which do not follow Tehran's orders. One is Nabih Berri's Amal, which favors a secular state in Lebanon and opposes a Khomeini-style Islamic Republic. Amal is, however, closely controlled by Iran's ally, Syria. Another is the Musa Sadr Brigade which has its own unique agenda — avenging the murder of the founding father of Lebanese Shi'ite activism, Sheikh Musa Sadr, at the hands of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi in 1978. Qaddafi is now a strong ally of Iran, and it is something of an irony that most Musa Sadr Brigade people seem to be connected with Hezbollah.

Still, the belief that Lebanon's Islamic Amal, Hezbollah, Mostazafin, and Islamic Jihad are not directly controlled by Iran is a polite fiction maintained by State Department legalists. In an earlier day, such legalists maintained that the Austrian National Socialist Party and Konrad Henlein's Sudeten German Party were not directly controlled from Berlin. That kind of polite fiction, however, can no longer be maintained in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

Even Israel and Iraq, not normally known for agreeing on things, agree completely on this particular matter. Israelis and Iraqis

both insist that Islamic Jihad is a cover name used by several groups of radical Lebanese Shi'ite extremists when carrying out operations specifically ordered by Iran's fundamentalist regime.

The Media Analysis Center in Jerusalem, a highly respected independent scholarly organization that researches facts, issues and personalities for a number of clients, including Israel's Foreign Ministry, has been a gold mine of hard information concerning the Iran-Islamic Jihad connection. Any resemblance between the Center and Israeli Intelligence is, of course, strictly due to the reader's imagination.

According to Center spokesman Benni Calvari, "Jihad Islami is almost certainly just a cover name used by extremist Lebanese Shi'ite organizations acting under Iranian orders. We know for certain that several groups seem to be operating using the name of Islamic Jihad, but we doubt if there is any such independent organization. All of the people involved seem to belong to other extremist Shi'ite organizations." Among the organizations mentioned were Islamic Amal and Hezbollah.

An Iraqi diplomatic source gave a similar

Soviet-made 40mm RPG-7V rocket launcher armed with PG-7 HEAT rocket supplies Islamic Jihad, Revolutionary Guards and Party of God terrorist groups with devastating firepower. Photo: Mike Schiff

assessment. "We have known for a long time, and my government has been saying for a long time, that the so-called Islamic Jihad is a false name for those who execute the orders of Khomeini. Their orders come from Tehran and their headquarters are in Tehran. It is the same for the Hezbollah and the Al-Da'awa Party. They are all the same thing. They all are taking orders from Khomeini."

Asked how Iranian plans and orders reach the Lebanese groups, the Iraqi said, "It is no secret. The Khomeini followers like Fadlullah and Mousavi are often going to Tehran for instructions. Also Sheikh Shams-e-Din makes frequent visits to Tehran and Qom," Iran's Shi'ite holy city.

"They also often meet with Khomeini's ambassador in Damascus [Syria], and also other Iranian officials there. In fact, only a short time before this second bombing of the American Embassy, [Iranian President Ali] Khamenei was in Damascus. He even visited Khomeini's followers in Ba'albek."

Like the Iraqis, the Israelis at the Center draw a link between the groups they believe comprise Islamic Jihad and Iran's ambassador to Syria. "It is believed that they are financed and directed from Iran by Iranian intelligence, with the Iranian ambassador in Damascus as one of the organizers of those actions," Calvari said.

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ARMOR IN THE JUNGLE

Thick Skin for a Thin War

by Keith William Nolan



ALPHA Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry rolled out the main gate of the Quang Tri Combat Base at a snail's pace. The men would have preferred revving past the sandbagged hootches of the clerks, mechanics and cooks, raising storms of dust with their Sheridan tanks and armored personnel carriers. But this wasn't the movies and such bravado had its penalties. Like the time a couple of troopers in Alpha cheerily raced their Sheridan about, flattening the dispatching hootch in the process. From then on, the base commander ordered guidons to walk the patrols to the gate.

The morning of 31 August 1971 was turning out to be another sizzling summer day as Alpha Troop rumbled slowly past the perimeter wire. Only when they hit Highway One did they pick up the pace, don helmets and flak jackets, chamber the .50-cal and M60 machine guns, and drop the barrels to face the flanking hedgerows. Everything past the wire at Quang Tri was Indian Country.

Alpha Troop usually operated north along the DMZ, but units from the 101st Airborne Division had reported increased NVA activity to the south. Another troop from 3/5 Cav, dispatched fifteen days earlier to support the 101st, had run into trouble and Alpha was going in to replace them.

Sp4 Mike DeAngelis was riding on the Alpha maintenance track, manning the left sixty. He'd been running a fever and lay uncomfortably on a minigun can filled with M60 ammunition, enduring the hot, noisy, dusty ride. When the column came to an abrupt stop, DeAngelis peeked up to see what was going on. It was an unsettling scene.

Alpha's sister troop faced them, an APC leaning in a mine crater with its tread blown off. A medic treated the driver's bruised and cut face as the grunts waited, unshaven, gaunt, filthy, wearily mumbling about what a shitty area it was.

Alpha got moving again and, in short order, their point track ran over a mine of their own. It was a small one that made a popping noise and did no damage, but they pulled off to both sides of the buffalo trail to get their bearings. DeAngelis hopped off his APC to tighten the strap but his track commander called him back to help refasten a tow bar that had come loose on the side of the APC. Moments later, someone noticed a trip wire where DeAngelis had been headed. It was attached to a rocket-propelled grenade staked down amid the tall elephant grass.

Shaken, they moved on. Platoons peeled off to make separate patrols when the troop commander halted with Third Platoon, radioed the maintenance track commander and asked what platoon they wanted to accompany. DeAngelis clicked the intercom on his radio helmet and laughed, "Hey, tell him we want to kill gooks and burn villages."

Second Platoon halts near wrecked bridge as point elements recon by fire into a hedgerow.

Waist-level elephant grass made going slow for the Second Platoon APC.

The TC, a wiry mustached blond called Indian, repeated the joke. But the captain was not amused and told them to hitch up with Second Platoon. Second was in a bad way; they had too many FNGs — a lieutenant who'd never been in a serious firefight, and a brand-new platoon sergeant. Fortunately, the maintenance track was overmanned with six seasoned veterans.

By dusk, the platoon pulled into what looked like a good night position amid the brush, only to discover that their sister troop had used the exact same spot. Their predecessors must have pulled a "search-and-avoid" because the spot was strewn with two weeks' worth of C-ration cartons and other GI junk. The NVA obviously had the place pinpointed, but it was too dark for us to move on.

Second Platoon formed a tight perimeter. The maintenance and mortar tracks were in the center of the circle, the lieutenant's track on line and the Sheridan facing the likeliest avenue of NVA attack with its 152mm main gun lowered to face the opposing treeline at waist level, fléchette round in the breach. The troops dismounted and went about their routine, stringing trip flares and concertina wire, staking RPG screens, wiring in Claymores, digging foxholes between each vehicle, breaking out their C-rations and coolers of beer, then dividing up watch time and settling in for an uneasy night.

DeAngelis racked out atop three cases of C-rats, pulled a poncho and two flak jackets over him and nodded off as an evening drizzle blew in. Suddenly, he was jolted awake by the incredible crack and whoosh of an RPG over his head and the jackhammering of five or six AK-47s. The RPG flashed directly over the Sheridan and exploded outside the perimeter. DeAngelis jumped to the ground and made a low-crawl scramble behind the wheels of his track as AK rounds sliced the air and ricocheted off the APC armor. There was a momentary pause as the AKs emptied and he lunged to the top of the APC to retrieve his M60. It was gone.

DeAngelis caught sight of the track driver running toward the Sheridan, '60 and ammo in hand, and he took off after him. They tumbled into the foxhole beside the tank.

"Where are they, where are they," DeAngelis screamed. The gunner pointed to the silhouetted treeline to their front. DeAngelis opened up with the '60, firing madly, and seconds later the whole perimeter cut loose. A hornet's nest of tracers dissected the treeline in a deafening roar.

A few minutes later, they realized there was no return fire. The platoon kept firing.

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ABOVE RIGHT: Sp4 DeAngelis and his trusty M60.

RIGHT: Sheridan tank being resupplied by a chopper.



MAD MIKE'S OWN STORY: Part II

From the High Seas to the Seychelles

by Chris Hoare



This is the second installment of a three-part series about the life and times of Colonel Mike Hoare, the most famous mercenary of the modern era. Chris Hoare, Mike's son, provides personal insights into his father's life otherwise unavailable to readers.

Part one, which appeared in the November issue of SOF, detailed Mike Hoare's early years, from his birth in colonial India, where his father was a ship's captain, to growing up near the family home in Ireland, boarding school in England and his enlistment in the British Army at the outset of World War II. A liberty call in South Africa on his way to serve in India with a reconnaissance unit convinced Mike that the Dark Continent was the best place left on the planet for adventure. After a brief stint as a London certified public accountant following his discharge at the end of the war, Hoare, his bride and their firstborn child — Chris — moved to Durban, South Africa.

Mike Hoare then began sailing around and motorcycling across Africa. He became a safari guide and thus learned his way around the continent's expansive, beautiful, often dangerous interior. When the Belgian Congo was suddenly granted

ABOVE LEFT: Mike at the helm of the "Colin Archer" off Durban in 1969. Photo: Chris Hoare

LEFT: Mike's dream was to sail the Med with his family as crew, and on Sylvia that romantic vision came true. Photo: Chris Hoare



independence in 1960, one of its mineral-rich provinces — Katanga — declared itself an independent state. Katanga's new leader, Moise Tshombe, immediately recruited a mercenary army, including Hoare. Katanga later was brought back to the Congo's fold, Tshombe went into exile and Hoare returned to South Africa and his safari business. But when Tshombe returned as prime minister of the Congo, Hoare and other mercenaries returned to fight for the army they once opposed.

Eventually all mercenaries were forced to leave the Congo. Hoare went home to South Africa once more and, and as the story is told in this second part, resumed his life of adventure.

SAILING runs long and deep in the bloodline of the Hoare family. Back in South Africa, Mike was learning the finer points of blue-water sailing on "Colin Archer," racing her offshore and to places like Lourenco Marques, now Maputo, in Mozambique. Once he sailed her to East London, 300 miles away and found himself, at the last minute, without a crew for the return journey. Attempting the voyage alone, Mike kept close inshore to beat the Agulhas Current, "a terrible mistake" he later admitted. With no self-steering and in a busy shipping lane he had to stay at the helm in the open cockpit day and night. He started hallucinating and at 0300 hours one morning hailed some fishermen on the rocks and asked them to stand by to take his line. He thought he was in Holland.

"Suddenly I had a flash of reality and

put the boat around and out of danger. Seven bloody days and nights after leaving East London I got in to Durban and tied up at a pier in the yacht basin. Two coons [Africans] helped me find my moorings and the last thing I remember is flattening a bottle of whiskey with them. I had grossly overrated my ability as a seaman."

In 1970 he visited Cambodia and Laos. The undeclared war was hot, and the communists were tightening their hold on these backward nations. Unfortunately, the adventurous colonel's activities must remain secret. Hoare only recently confessed to this sojourn. And he remains professionally tight-lipped about the mission.

Settling in Singapore he returned to the workaday world. He dusted off his papers from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of London, and re-entered the world of pinstripes and ledgers. He was joined by Phyllis, Michael junior and the latest addition, Simon.

Life became very settled for the Hoares, and the paychecks were regular. But, as he jokingly says, there are only so many ways you can cook prawns. When they had tried them all, the Med started to call.

And Mike answered. He had always dreamed of owning a large sailing ship and "doing the Med" with his family as crew. Early in 1971 he bought Sylvia, a converted Baltic 100-ton trading yacht, 71 feet, six inches long. Hoare made her seaworthy and the dream came true. She brought adventure, strange places, great people and the family's chance to lead a

Mike chats with South African actor, Winston Ntshona, on location in South Africa during the filming of *The Wild Geese* in 1978.

simple life.

Sylvia brought out the romantic in the captain. Mike's grandfather had been a captain on a square-rigger, and his own father had regaled him with sea tales. Raised on such rich tales (like Yokohama

SECOND GENERATION ADVENTURER

Chris Hoare is Col. Mike Hoare's eldest son. As a schoolboy he visited his father at Albertville, Congo, and participated in basic training. He showed a non-conformist streak on leaving school (high school) in South Africa when he hitchhiked to Tanzania for a holiday.

After doing a degree at university in Durban he spent about ten years overseas where his priority was simply to have a good time. He worked as a teacher and vice-principal at a language school, as a handyman, as a ski- and yachting-bum, and in construction. He spent time traveling, perfecting French and Italian, studying cabinetmaking and community living, and did a pilgrimage to India before returning to South Africa and working as a sub-editor for a major newspaper.

Chris, 36, is now a free-lance writer/photographer and PR man in Durban.



ABOVE: Immediately after his release from prison, Mike meets the press. Photo: Peter Duffy



LEFT: Mike is reunited with his wife, Phyllis, and the rest of his family after three long years in a South African prison. Photo: Peter Duffy

around the Horn to San Francisco in 141 days) and so nearly in possession of his childhood dreams, Mike had to be restrained by Simon and I from square-rigging Sylvia. This may seem cruel and insensitive, but the reader should remember that we were the ones who would have to go aloft in all weather!

But the colonel got his way in the end, as he usually did, and it didn't cost him a penny. The makers of the film *The Three Musketeers* hired Sylvia and turned her into two square-rigged Elizabethan galleons and painted one side of her red, the other side black.

It was on Sylvia that I had a firsthand experience of what living dangerously was all about. We got caught in a mistral (Mediterranean wind storm) in the Gulf of Lyons and started taking in a lot of water. The electrical and mechanical pumps failed and the huge flywheel was spraying water all over the engine room. Under a heavy shower of water Dad and I fought to repair the pumps as the boat heaved in an ugly sea.

Then the engine failed, leaving us with nothing to drive the pump even if we repaired it. We were sinking in a Force 9 gale and our last resort was the ancient deck pump. It hadn't been used in ages



ABOVE: Mike shows wife Phyllis and youngest son Simon a model ship he made in prison. Photo: Peter Duffy

RIGHT: Mike and son Tim hard at work on the *Sylvia*. Photo: Chris Hoare

BELOW RIGHT: The Hoare family dream boat, *Sylvia*, under full sail. Photo: Chris Hoare



so with each desperate stroke it spewed up a gallon of water, oranges, potatoes — trash it had collected in all its years of inactivity. After a lot of hard pumping, we reduced the water in the boat and the wind dropped. We'd made it.

Flushed with success, we sat out of the wind in the wheelhouse sipping liquor-laced coffee. Dad clapped me on the shoulder and said: "This is what life is all about, my boy. One minute you're staring death in the face, the next you're on top of the world." Colonel Hoare had a philosophy, and he acted on it at every opportunity. No matter how politically motivated and dedicated he may be, instinctive love of adventure drives him more than anything else.

Back home at the farm in South Africa, Mike wrote *Three Years with Sylvia* (Robert Hale, London), a lighthearted account of his life in the Mediterranean. But for the time being, his sailing days were over. His love affair with excitement and adventure and the company of real men brought out the mercenary in him once again.

"This is part of the mystique of



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SOF KNIVES

The
Green Beret
Cutler

AL MAR

by Greg Walker



“ANYONE that buys a survival knife and believes that he indeed will survive any given situation because of the knife is really buying his own ticket.”

Al Mar sat across from me in the showroom of his office, elbows on the table, his eyes filled with amiable intensity as we discussed this master designer's philosophy on knives. Mar is unique in his business. He holds both a BS and MS in industrial design from the Los Angeles Art Center.

“I don't like to spend hours in the books. I have a talent in drawing and a talent in working with my hands. So design caught my interest.” Mar's impressive scholastic background is coupled with an equally laudable military record. Al served with the 1st Special Forces Group during the early 1960s running special operations in Vietnam. For relaxation he devotes himself to the practice of judo and kendo.

A stint in an industrial design office led to a position with Gerber Knives as design director. Many of Gerber's present top-line knives have come from the drawing board chaired by Al Mar. When the decision was made to leave Gerber and form his own cutlery firm, Al was determined to produce the finest product for the client at the most reasonable price possible.

Through the years he has done just that and in the process has produced such dynamic contributions as the new SERE Attack Knife, designed especially for the Army's Special Forces, and the Shiva battle blade which should be seen in the near future.

Above all, Al Mar is a gentleman. His concern for his product and business is carried over into his desire to contribute to his community through local volunteer activities. To know Al Mar is to be associated with somebody very special.

Soldier of Fortune wanted Al's opinions in four areas. What knife should the average combat arms soldier have that would best accomplish his tasks in the field? Taking that one step further, what type of knife should the elite trooper (SEAL, SF, Force Recon) look for in relation to his specialized brand of warfare? And what about the civilian; what kind of blade does he need? Lastly, what does Al Mar think of the current craze involving the hollow-handle survival knife? In that order, let us tap into Al Mar's extensive experience.

“The everyday soldier, combat arms MOS, should not limit himself to one knife. He really needs two. One should be a multi-blade folder or a lock-back knife for the common everyday tasks such as opening cans and splicing wire. The other should be a ‘battle blade,’ with

Al Mar's selection of knives are made in Japan of a high-carbon, stain-resistant steel, RS 30, equal to 154 CM (U.S.).



a blade length no shorter than 4½ inches and no longer than eight.”

Mar suggests that the folder be carried in a uniform pocket or sewn into the uniform so that the soldier will always have an edged tool with him should he become separated from his equipment. The battle blade can be attached to the combat harness or worn on the belt, whichever method works best.

Each soldier needs to decide what knife is the best for the money. Most troopers cannot afford the expensive custom knives coming out today. But Mar advises that the market is full of affordable knives if the buyer takes the time to research and choose carefully.

“The special operations soldier has a

Special Forces SERE group OIC, Lt. Col. Rowe, turned to the expertise of Al Mar for a rugged folding knife to be used as a survival tool and close-combat weapon.

different need in terms of his knife concerns. As he will be called upon to perform many different kinds of missions he will have to carry different classes of gear. What may work in one situation may not be feasible in another.”

How to best accomplish the job?

“The special operations trooper should create his own war chest of edged tools. He will need a good blade like the multi-blade folder or lock-back. He may

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SAPPERS OF THE LEGION

“To Build, Sometimes to Destroy”

by Howard Simpson

SKIMMING in under low clouds, the helicopter banked and sank down over the tree-lined river, whirling blades rippling the slow-moving water. Wet-suited scuba divers dropped from the chopper's open doors and disappeared under the surface as the chopper pulled up and swept away in a wide turn. Combat swimmers waiting on the banks of the river for the air-dropped team took their cue. They glided silently into the water, pushing flotation bags full of weapons and explosives and headed toward their objective: an enemy outpost guarding a ford.

The scuba team surfaced under the overhanging scrub brush at the water's edge and removed their breathing apparatus and flippers. Drawing their knives, they proceeded to neutralize two sentries and capture their sleeping comrades. A flashed signal informed supporting swimmers to begin immediate probing of the bottom to determine the best landing point. The others fanned out to

form a defense perimeter.

A sudden hum of approaching outboard engines interrupted the silence. A wave of assault boats broke cover and churned across the river toward the secured bridgehead. Powerful engines rattled the countryside as heavy, large-wheeled AMX-10RC reconnaissance vehicles equipped with 105mm guns moved out of the trees to take up crossing positions. With the first assault wave ashore and the second on its way, the first AMX rolled down the bank onto the pebbles and lumbered into the water. It came to a lurching stop while the crew checked for faults in the watertight sealing. Finding none, the roaring AMX resumed its awkward advance toward the opposite shore.

Off in the distance, life-jacketed visitors observed the operation from a moored pontoon barge giving them a clear view of both river banks. Today, the 6th Assault Engineer Regiment of the French Foreign Legion had an audience. There could be no mistakes. Under a gray drizzle, officers from the Infantry Application School at Montpellier and their guests watched the river crossing with a critical eye.

The Legion assault team with blackened faces attacked a pill box with flame throwers and proudly demonstrated their new equipment. This included a mechanical mine layer that can place and recover 400 to 500 mines an hour, a mobile bore that can drill a six-meter hole in ten minutes, and a heavy-duty tracked digger for rapid excavation of tank and artillery emplacements, infantry trenches and anti-tank traps.

The operation had been modified for practical reasons and to facilitate the viewing,

explained Colonel Degre, commanding officer of the 6th Engineers. In an actual combat situation, the scuba team would have been inserted by parachute, not by noisy helicopters. In addition, the problem of erupting air bubbles that allowed some sharp-eyed observers to trace the progress of the underwater approach would soon be remedied by the arrival of closed-circuit breathing gear.

The Legion's 6th Engineer Regiment is one of the newest regiments in the French Army, created on 1 July 1984 at the Camp de l'Ardoise in the department of the guard near Avignon. The *sapeurs* of the 6th have inherited the traditions of the old 6th Infantry Regiment, a Legion unit last formed in the Middle East in 1939 from various famous battalions and deactivated in 1955.

There have always been small sections of

sappers in the Legion's ranks in the past, supplying construction battalions for such projects as France's nuclear testing range in the Pacific, but the Legion has never had a constituted engineer regiment. A special effort had to be made to form the training cadre. Selected officers from the French Army's 7th Engineer Regiment were assigned to the new unit and 45 noncoms were incorporated to train their Legion counterparts in the skills of the combat engineer. It is quite a tribute to the Legion's professionalism and flexibility that such a specialized unit can be called to perform a demanding tactical demonstration before a critical audience only eight months after its formation.



ABOVE: Combat swimmer of the 6th Engineers reports on his recon of far bank during river-crossing operations. Photo: Courtesy French Foreign Legion

RIGHT: Combat swimmers glide through the water with flotation bags full of weapons and explosives. Photo: Courtesy French Foreign Legion



BELOW: AMX-10RC heads for the river in the wake of an assault by the sappers.



LEFT: The 6th Engineer Regiment has retained the insignia of the dissolved 6th Infantry Regiment but included a sapper's breastplate and helmet.

The 6th Engineer Regiment, along with others, including Spahis (Algerian native troopers) and the Marine Infantry, are now assigned to the 6th Light Armored Division, part of France's Rapid Action Force and liable to short-notice "Leopard" alerts for overseas deployment. Earlier this year sections of the 6th Engineers were assigned to a detachment of the 6th Division at Bouar in the Central African Republic and sent to French Guyana for tropical warfare training.

Although other Engineer units perform heavy construction tasks, the Legion's regiment is a crack assault team with

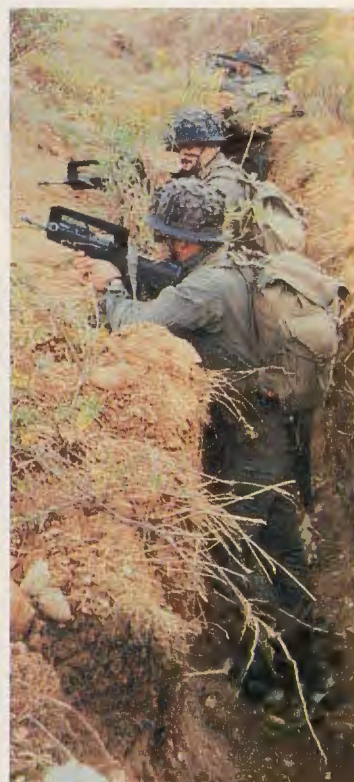


ABOVE: Assault crossing by Legion sappers. Photo: Courtesy French Foreign Legion

RIGHT: Combat swimmer probes riverbank to locate solid ford for armored vehicles.



BELOW: APC in position of support for a river-crossing exercise. Photo: Courtesy French Foreign Legion



LEFT: Sappers, armed with the FA MAS, occupy defensive position prepared by a mobile trench digger. Photo: Courtesy French Foreign Legion

definite combat missions. They include river crossings, road clearing and security, demolition, placement of anti-tank obstacles, reduction of strong points, lightning raids, urban warfare and the preparation of landing zones and beaches. All of the Legion's sappers, regardless of their specialties, are trained in explosives, mine placement and removal, and the passage of dry obstacles such as ravines and cliffs.

The 6th Engineers have retained the insignia of the dissolved infantry regiment with the two pillars of the ruins of Baalbek in Lebanon and its motto "To the Last One." Only a sapper's breastplate and helmet have been added to mark its Engineer mission. The regimental flag is the first in Legion history to bear the inscription "Genie" — for Engineer — and the battle honors of the old 6th, "Camerone 1863," "Musseiffre 1925" and "Syrie 1925-1926" have been painted on the silken standard.



Mechanical minelayer.

The Legion has a well-deserved reputation for eating well even in difficult field conditions. The officer's mess of the 6th Engineers was no exception. Although Colonel Degre explained that a new kitchen had not been completed and his cooks were making do with an obsolete installation, we were served a tasty meal. Baskets of fresh-cut,

crusty French bread and bottles of Côte du Rhône from the nearby vineyards were spaced along the table. We began with a plate of assorted cold meats followed by a herring salad with onions. The main course was a hefty helping of braised beef and potatoes. We finished with cheese and lettuce salad. Over strong coffee we discussed the age-old dichotomy of military engineering . . . construction or combat. The motto of the French "Genie" is "To build, sometimes to destroy" and we finally agreed that the 6th, with its clear combat role, would not have to worry about being utilized for public works projects or suffer from some other form of schizophrenia.

Later, as I prepared for my return trip to Marseille, a barrel-chested, bearded noncom approached me, smiling broadly. A deep scar ran from his cheekbone to his chin. He wore parachute wings and a decoration ribbon.

"Were you in Zaire?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied, puzzled, having spent a short time in Kinshasa, Bukavu and Lubumbashi in 1971 heading a USIA inspection team.

"I was with the 2nd REP (2nd Foreign Parachute Regiment)," he said. "You jumped with us at Kolwezi!"

I assured him he was mistaken, explaining that I was nowhere near Zaire at the time of the Kolwezi drop, nor would I have been jumping with the Paras if I had.

He wouldn't take no for an answer. As I climbed into my car and started the engine he gave me a conspirator's wink and threw me a farewell salute. A bugler was sounding colors as I reached the gate. I stopped and got out to watch the slow descent of the tricolor. Standing in the bitter wind blowing down from Mount Ventoux I wondered how soon the men of the Legion's newest regiment would be called upon to serve in some far corner of today's troubled world. ✕

LE CLARION

The basic small arm of the 6th Foreign Legion Engineer Regiment and of the French Army in general is the distinctive new FA MAS rifle, often called *Le Clarion* because of its resemblance to a bugle. Adopted by the French in 1976, the general compactness of this 5.56mm assault rifle and the hard-hitting cyclic rate of fire of 1,000 rounds per minute make this bullpup the perfect standard service rifle for all frontline units in France, Gabon, Djibouti and the United Arab Emirates. It has the advantage of being able to be fired from either shoulder on automatic, semiautomatic, or by three-round bursts.

Caliber5.56mm
 Operation delayed blowback
 Weight 7.5 lbs. (without magazine)
 Length 30.28 in.
 Barrel length 19.5 in.
 Feed 25-rd. box magazine
 Cyclic rate . . . 900-1,000 rpm and three-shot bursts
 Muzzle velocity 3,150 fps

SPIDER

Rhodesia's 12-Gauge Widowmaker

Text & Photos by Brady Ridgway

BLOODY brush fire wars often spawn strange and exotic weaponry and the war in Rhodesia was no exception. The multibarreled Spider was one of the more successful products born from the fertile mind of the inventor of the Striker shotgun (see "Striker," SOF, August '85).

The Spider was originally designed as a counterambush weapon for the protection of farm managers who often traveled alone in remote areas of the bush and were susceptible to ambush. It saw extensive service during the war in Rhodesia and was so effective, in fact, that a price was put on the head of its creator by those who came in contact with the business end(s) of the Spider. The design, however, was so successful that it was the only one of its kind to be officially adopted by the Rhodesian Army.

The Spider is a 24-, 36- or 48-barreled shotgun that mounts on the roof of a vehicle, adaptable by means of an adjustable roof carrier. The barrels of the weapon are arranged in two tiers around a central hub, much like the spokes of a rimless wheel. The top row is set at an angle of 90 degrees to cover distant targets, and the bottom row at 85 degrees to cover those who are foolish enough to get in too close. They cover a 360-degree arc of fire and are fired by rotating a crank handle inside the vehicle. The handle is attached to a shaft which passes

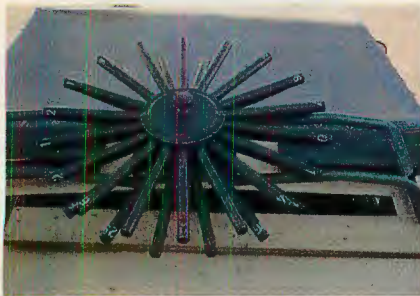
COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
Multibarreled Spider mounted atop a Land Cruiser.

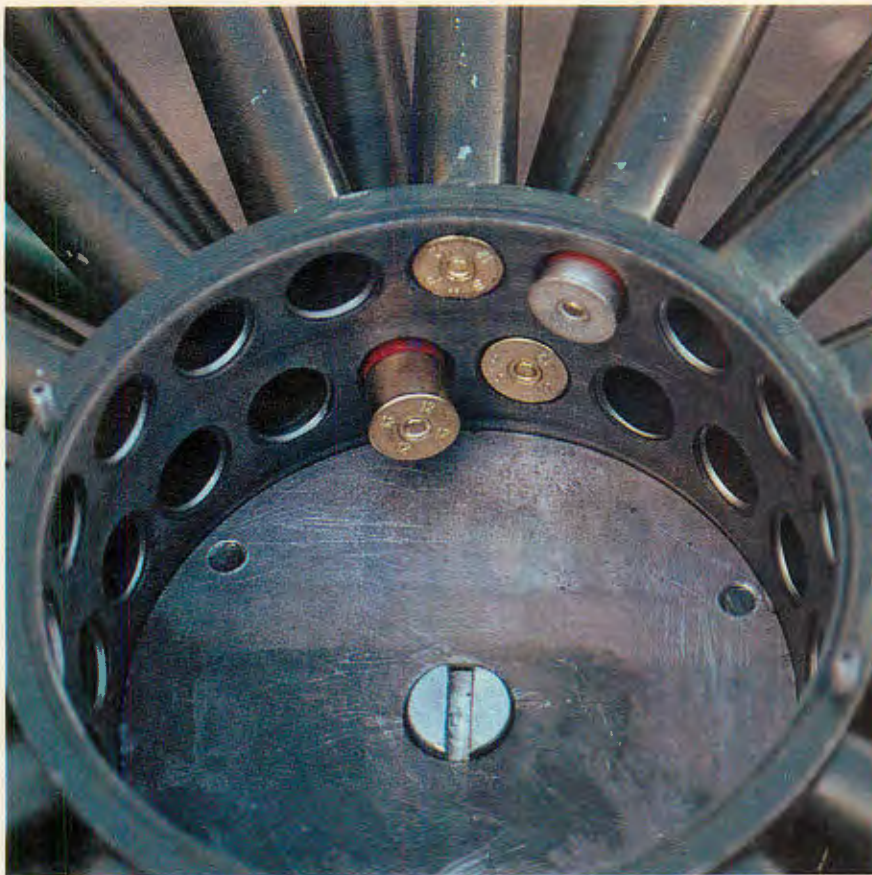
Roof-top mount allows 360-degree fire.

Manually unloading the Spider with the rod provided.

The firing mechanism of the Spider.

Interior of the Spider showing loaded and partially loaded cartridges.





through the roof into the hub of the weapon.

Within the hub lies the breechblock. This is a cylindrical assembly inside which are four cams (two for each layer of barrels) that operate the firing pins and are rotated by the shaft. The barrels are not fired in circular sequence as would be expected. Instead, for each quarter-turn clockwise, nine barrels are fired, covering a full 360-degree arc. This enables the operator to engage an ambush that has been laid in depth, by firing four "broad-sides."

The weapon is loaded by removing the breechblock and individually loading each barrel. Any 12-gauge cartridge can be fired from the weapon as there is no actual chamber — the barrel is merely a length of metal pipe. When the weapon has been fired the breechblock must again be removed and the empty cases pushed out with the rod provided. Obviously, in its fully loaded condition the Spider cannot be used if there are any friendlies about and it is suggested that the forward- and rear-facing barrels (marked with red tape) are left unloaded when traveling in convoy.

Many similar counterambush weapons were not as well conceived and subsequently were not accepted by either the army or the many civilians who required reliable home-defense weapons. These other scattergun concoctions were prone to accidental discharges. And nobody needs a gun that kills the people it's supposed to be protecting.

The manufacturers of the Spider claim that the system is completely safe and that no accidental discharges were ever reported in Rhodesia. The Spider can be made safe by simply removing the handle from the shaft. In addition, when the handle is fitted it can be padlocked to prevent it from rotating — again rendering the weapon completely safe. For absolute safety on entering populated areas, the breechblock can be removed and replaced with a "blank" one allowing the cartridges to be safely left in the barrels.

Much to my disappointment I was not able to fire the Spider. The 36-barreled scattergun that I viewed was stored in the middle of the city of Johannesburg and a safe firing range would have required a lot of driving to get to. I have no doubt, however, that the Spider can live up to its reputation. One observer remarked: "The Spider unquestionably saved many lives. When it became known that a farmer's vehicle was traveling with the Spider mounted, recorded incidents of ambushing and/or attacks on these vehicles became literally non-existent." Anyone foolish enough to go up against the Spider deserves all that he gets.

At the moment, there is little interest in bringing the Spider back to life. Africa has not seen a conflict that would warrant its use since Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, and the situation in South Africa has not developed sufficiently to call for its rebirth. But in the event of an escalation of rural terrorism, I will feel a lot more secure in the knowledge that the Spider is patiently waiting to fulfill its mission once more. ✕



GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY OFF LEBANON

Deep-Sixing PLO Terrs

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter



WE left harbor late that evening. Too late, perhaps, to avoid the sniper who had taken his position on top of one of the ramshackle buildings near Sidon's old bullet-pocked mosque. Being July it was still light and we were the only craft moving out to sea. We must have made an easy target.

Two shots rang out, piercing the silence just before the muezzin called the faithful to their final prayer of the day. The bullets ricocheted off the warship's forepeak. Instinctively all of the men on the bridge of the little Dabur Israeli Navy gunboats ducked a

The *Ginan* served as mother ship from which Al Fatah would have launched amphibious raids on the Israeli coast.

couple of inches, but it was clear that their flak jackets provided something of a psychological advantage. No one sought additional cover.

Dabur in Hebrew means "desert hornet," the kind you find in the south of the country, in the Negev. These little Navy gunboats follow a precisely coordinated program which is as varied as it is thorough: the perpetual search for terrorists.

The lieutenant — I knew him only

by his first name of Motti — quickly called on the radio and jabbered out a few staccato sentences in Hebrew. Another shot sounded, but by that time we had increased speed and the buildings we were being fired at from were at our stern as we headed into the setting sun.

Motti explained: "We get sniped at quite often. There is not much we can do about it, as most of the gunmen fire their shots quickly and then move into the *casbah* — the market area of the city." He also explained that because of snipers the only item his men were *not* allowed to remove while they rested at anchor in the harbor during the day was their flak jackets. He had made that point very clear to us on arrival at Tyre earlier in the day. "Take off your shirts, even your pants, but not your flak jackets," he had warned curtly.

The radio rattled and Motti again

VENTER IN HAIFA

Contributing editor Al J. Venter is *Soldier of Fortune's* longest-serving and most prolific correspondent on the books. His reporting has taken him to many of the world's hotspots for SOF, including Angola, Zimbabwe, Lebanon and Israel. He presently is a correspondent for *Intelligence Digest*, *International Defense Review* and *Gamma Presse Images*.

sounded some instructions. A squad of airborne troops based in the city — obviously on standby for just such an event — had moved into the suspect area by truck and were being deployed. From where we were we could see tiny silhouettes moving at the double. The sniping had ceased.

The Israelis left Tyre a year ago during their gradual pull southward. Troops based there were not sorry to go, for the city, which dates from pre-Phoenician times, remains a warren of narrow alleys, booby-trap possibilities, bunker tunnels and strong points, all of them dominated by half a dozen hills which surround the ancient city. More than once, Shi'ite bombers had hurled themselves and their vehicles at Israeli positions during the period of occupation and some good lives had been lost. Grenades thrown by these fanatics and side mines aimed at

passing Israeli convoys had taken more lives.

But for the Israeli Navy, Tyre remains part of the eternal daily routine of maritime expediency and survival is the name of the game. Even with the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon it sits at the end of the line of one of a succession of Navy patrols along the length of the Lebanese coast and further afield — some say as far north as Turkey.

Lt. Motti's Dabur worked out of Haifa. He and his tiny crew of eight men would go to sea for four or five days and spend most nights searching for possible targets. During the days they would lay up in Tyre. But with the pullback they'd been working day and night; even the layups are something of the past, though I'm told the patrols have gotten shorter as even the most

motivated sailor needs sleep.

Lt. Motti and his crew, working in conjunction with other Daburs in the region, patrolled a fairly large area. Once a blip had been established on their radar, it would be rated on a scale of between one and 10, according to the circumstances and the potential threat.

The Israeli Navy surveillance system is integrated with an even more sophisticated land-based monitoring machine that covers much

No matter how much electronics you pack on a boat, nothing replaces the human eye.



of the Middle East. Each target that is picked up on radar is passed on to a shore-based establishment for classification and possible reaction. Perhaps one in a thousand of these blips on the screen *could* be hostile. But every single one is painstakingly cleared nonetheless.

Foreign craft that have not been cleared by Israeli security forces are rated no less than "five" until physical contact has been made. Until then, the men onboard the Daburs regard each and every blip as potentially dangerous, especially at night when most PLO infiltration attempts are effected.

Having found a blip, the Dabur informs the shore-based establishment of her intention to intercept, if that order has not already been given. If the unknown factor is a possible enemy force, another one or two of these powerful little strike craft will be diverted to provide additional firepower should it be needed. Meanwhile the radios buzz as if there is a war on.

With three kilometers to go, the men are called to action stations. One sailor mans a .50-cal. Browning at the fore and another aft. Depending on the angle of approach, a 7.62 machine gun is mounted on either the port or starboard side of the bridge. The rest of the men are armed with Galils, the standard Israeli infantry weapon. In addition, a flare pistol and a clutch of grenades are brought to the bridge and placed within arm's reach of our captain — "Just in case," he says.

With only 600 meters to go to the intended target, a searchlight manned by one of the men is switched on. As it swings in the direction of the target, Lt. Motti prepares to use the loud hailer to call — in Arabic — for the boat to stop. Uneasy people with fingers on the trigger — any trigger — take few chances in the eastern Mediterranean these days.

The work achieved by these small craft has been likened to an air force patrol, flying in ever-diminishing circles over a vast expanse of terrain. It is just as time consuming and, to the majority of the men, just as boring. But it is work that needs to be done.

According to record, several times during 1984 and twice in the first six months of 1985, Israeli Navy search craft came under terrorist fire from Palestinian intercepts. In the first 1985 attack, a Dabur was raked by heavy machine gun and RPG-7 fire. The attacking vessel was blown out of the water by the Dabur; eight PLO insurgents were killed and one taken prisoner. No one onboard the Israeli ship was injured.





ABOVE: High rate-of-fire Browning .50s provide short-range offense and defense for light-armored patrol boats.



LEFT: Bone in its teeth, a Dabur fast patrol boat joins the Israeli sea patrol that stretches from Turkey to Egypt.

ABOVE: 20mm cannon give range and punch to the Dabur armament package.

More serious is the shelling of these small craft by Amal, Lebanese Army, Palestinian or Druze shore positions when their security role takes them too close inshore — as it must on occasion. Although the Israelis weren't telling, I was told by a reliable source that at least two of these patrol craft had been hit by shore fire in the past three years causing serious casualties. Details of the attacks were not made public by the spokesman for the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in Tel Aviv.

But even with all this maritime activity, the occasional terrorist craft does get through. The relatively small craft of the Israeli Navy, capable of about 50 knots, can only cover so much water. The PLO routinely vary their procedures as often as the Israelis and, as history has shown us, are sometimes successful.

On the afternoon of 11 March 1978, a small group of Palestinian terrorists

landed on the Israeli coast near the Kibbutz Maagan Michael. After killing an American girl, Gale Robbin, who had chanced upon them along a desolate stretch of beach, they set off the main coast road where they fired upon and stopped a bus traveling toward Haifa. They entered the bus and killed three civilians. Eight others were wounded.

Rubber boats serve for insertions.

A fierce firefight erupted when the captured bus was later stopped at an Israeli roadblock. By the time it was over, there were 34 Israelis dead and 72 wounded. Two Palestinians survived the attack. Their task, as fighting members of Al Fatah, was to penetrate Israeli defenses, take civilian hostages and "attempt to free Palestinian terrorists already held in prison" by the Israelis. The two men

have since joined their mates in prison.

An even more bizarre event occurred only six months later when the Israeli Navy once again prevented the kind of massacre the terrorists had hoped would rate world



headlines. A seven-man death squad manned a small Greek merchant ship, the S.S. *Agios Dimitrios*. Stacked amidships were several tons of high explosives that would be used to level the port of Eilat to the barren shore on which it was built. The terrorists intended to hit the harbor with 122mm rockets and then ram the ship into the port, at the same time setting off the explosives. The TNT would probably have completely destroyed Eilat and the nearby Jordanian port of Aqaba as well, had they been successful.

About the same time, the Israeli Navy captured another small cargo ship, the S.S. *Ginan*, the mother ship from which Al Fatah insurgents would have launched amphibious raids on the Israeli coast. The *Ginan* had originally embarked on its deadly mission from the Lebanese port of Tripoli, a recent Israeli Navy target.

A month later the *Staphanie* arrived off the north Israeli coast. It, too, was intercepted by a Dabur and another bloody holocaust was averted. This time an Al Fatah team admitted they had been sent on the mission by Abu Jihad, the fanatical head of the terrorist movement's military wing, opposed to the "more moderate" Yasser Arafat.

One four-man group of insurgents did, however, get through, entering Israeli waters in a rubber dinghy and disembarking at Nahariya on 22 April 1979. There they murdered a father and his daughter and an Israeli policeman.

One of the crucial messages that has emerged from several decades of Israeli maritime activity in one of the most volatile military theaters in the world is that it is possible, in this day and age, to successfully embargo those sea lanes which are most vital to a target country. Granted, the Eastern Mediterranean is one of the most unstable regions on the globe. But the Israelis have achieved a measure of control and are holding it in spite of some of the best the Eastern Bloc has to offer — Soviet and East European aid — assisting the terrorists in their objectives.

Their task is an extremely difficult one. Israel cannot and will not continually interfere with the livelihood of hundreds of Lebanese who legally operate off their coast either fishing, trading or sponge diving.

There is also a fair amount of maritime traffic in the area operating between Israel, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Greece, Egypt and other countries. The fact that the busiest single waterway in the world is nearby — the Suez Canal — does not ease their predicament.

Clearly, the Israeli intelligence machine must keep itself well-oiled in



The wreckage of a small craft attests to the seriousness of the Israeli sea patrol's mission.



The *Agios Dimitrios* was more than just a small Greek merchant ship — it was stacked with several tons of high explosives and headed for Eilat. Photo: IDF Spokesman

order to keep pace with what are literally thousands of ships, large and small, that enter the region each year. In the case of the *Agios Dimitrios*, there is evidence that Israeli agents were watching the ship long before she sailed from an Arab port (my sources indicate a Syrian harbor). They were watching as she made her way to several Mediterranean destinations (including Greece), before heading south through Suez and up into the Gulf of Eilat.

The Israeli Navy makes decisions quickly. They have to. For almost 40 years the Arabs have ranted about obliterating Israel from the face of the earth. Consequently, the Jewish option is fairly clear-cut — do what you need to do as quickly and efficiently as possible and the consequences be

damned. It's on that simple premise that people like Dabur chief officer Motti operates.

After spending several days aboard his boat, no one would question a decision to blow up a boatload of terrorists shielded behind helpless hostages if it meant keeping Israel's security intact. Motti is well aware that the correct alternative would be to quickly and efficiently do what needed to be done.

The men onboard the Dabur are equally single-minded. Almost every one of them has lost someone close to them in one of the Middle East wars and they need little coaxing. Like Lt. Motti, their training has made them highly efficient in routine duties aboard ship and in their task of apprehending terrorists. Each one of them handles every weapon and they are all experienced in telecommunications, cryptology and identification of craft. They must be able to differentiate, for instance, a British-built Egyptian "October"-class fast patrol boat from similar British or French craft operating in the vicinity of Beirut. These men were sharp: They were confident and proud of their ability as fighting men and didn't mind telling you so. And judging from the results, they must be right.

When I left the Dabur in Haifa harbor Motti was going on his last patrol the following week before taking command of a flotilla of six Daburs. He was still only 23, but the promotion reflected the Israeli view that if a man is capable of handling a situation, let him handle it. It's people like Motti that make it all tick. And good luck to those like him. History has shown that they will need it. ✕

TAURUS

This 9mm Ain't No Bull

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



PLAGUED by too many competitors, too many models, too high prices, oversaturation and public apathy, the U.S. firearms market has floated in a stagnant sea for more than three years. Companies continue to sink below the seaweed. Yet Beretta 92SB-F pistols flow out of the dealers' showrooms at more than \$600 each, as fast as the UPS truck unloads them at the back door. After all, it's the new U.S. Armed Forces service pistol.

But there may be an alternative. A raging bull from Brazil has entered the ring. During the mid-1950s, Beretta established a factory in Brazil to manufacture single- and double-barreled shotguns. Brazilian competition proved too stiff and, since no auto pistols were being fabricated in-country, they shifted gears and commenced production of .25 ACP and .22 LR pistols. Quality ammunition was not available in these calibers and sales languished.

In 1973 the Brazilian Army submitted a proposal for a new service pistol. HK, FN, Colt, S&W and Beretta all entered the trials. During this time, Taurus belonged to Smith & Wesson; their parent company, Bangor Punta, had purchased controlling interest in 1970. The Brazilian military contract called for 40,000 units. The first 10,000 could be imported, the second 10,000 had to be assembled in Brazil and the final 20,000 had to be manufactured there.

Beretta's Model 92 won by a small margin over the S&W entry. They also received

Taurus PT 92 AF has only mild recoil.

a contract for the Model 12 submachine gun. Considerable investment was placed into the necessary CNC machinery, although Brazilian suppliers were utilized for many small components. By 1978 the contract had been fulfilled. Since 9mm pistols cannot be sold on the Brazilian civilian market, Beretta's plant activity began to decline.

Meanwhile, private interests had purchased control of Taurus in 1977. In September 1980 Taurus purchased the machinery, tooling and blueprints for the Model 12 submachine gun, Model 92 9mm and the .25 ACP and .22 LR pistols. It was a portfolio purchase rather than a license and Taurus has no ties to Beretta. The only restrictions: the Beretta name cannot be used in Brazil for 10 years and Taurus cannot manufacture these

Taurus PT 92 AF pistol.



models outside of Brazil (hence their failure to enter the U.S. XM9 trials). In addition to these products, Taurus manufactures a complete line of revolvers, pellet guns, motorcycle and anti-riot helmets, hand tools and military electronics.

Taurus has fielded a pistol that, on the surface, looks like the Beretta 92SB-F adopted by the U.S. military. First introduced in February 1985, the Model PT 92 AF ('F' stands for firing-pin blockage) is designed to capitalize on this similarity to the maximum. The slide, manufactured from 4140 drop-forged steel (as is the trigger and hammer), is cut away at a point directly behind the front sight all the way back to where it becomes the pistol's breech, extending then from the chamber rearward. This design can be traced without interruption back to the Beretta Model 1915 blowback pocket pistol in caliber .32 ACP. The slide's open top removes the requirement for an ejection port as such. Top of the slide and the barrel have a matte surface. The slide's sides are high polish. These components have a black oxide finish which matches the black anodizing on the frame. All the mill-finished surfaces have been radiused to perfection. The recoil spring guide, changed to the anodized aluminum of the Beretta 92SB series, remains hard-chromed steel on the Taurus.

A red mark on the extractor, located on the slide's right side, acts as a loaded-round indicator. Small gimmicks like this are of



dubious value and small consequence. If in doubt, rack the slide a bit and visually inspect the chamber.

The fixed-blade front sight is part of the slide forging. The square-notch rear sight can be drifted right or left in its dovetail for adjustment of windage zero. There are no fluorescent dots (Beretta 92SB-F) or colored mark-

ings (Beretta 92SB) of any kind. Fluorescent sights may enhance target acquisition at subdued-light levels, but in a stress environment my concentration is on a "flash" sight picture which involves getting the front sight on target as quickly as possible. You will either not notice colored dots in such a scenario, or they may prove a distraction.

TAURUS PT 92 AF SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber	9mm Parabellum
Operation	Short recoil; semiautomatic; oscillating-block locking system; double-action hammer.
Feed mechanism	15-rd. staggered box-type magazine; single-position feed.
Weight, empty, without magazine	30.0 oz.
Overall length	8.54 inches
Barrel	6-groove; right-hand twist with one turn in 9.84 inches.
Height	5.39 inches
Width	1.45 inches
Sights	Fixed-blade front; square-notched rear, dovetailed to slide and adjustable for windage only; sight radius: 6.1 inches.
Status	In production. In service with the Armed Forces of Brazil and 18 other countries.
Price	\$317
Manufacturer	Forjas Taurus, S.A., Dept. SOF, Av. Victor Manzini 450, Sao Paulo, Brazil, CEP 04745.
Distributor	Taurus International Manufacturing, Inc., Dept. SOF, 4563 S.W. 71st Avenue, P.O. Box 558567, Ludlum Branch, Miami, Florida 33155.

Method of operation remains that of the Beretta 92 series, which in turn was the short recoil principle employed by the German WWII Walther P-38. A falling locking block is driven downward to disengage the slide from the barrel and halt the barrel's rearward travel.

The frame is fabricated from an aluminum alloy and the sides have a dull non-reflective surface. Top and bottom surfaces are mirror polished. The trigger guard has been squared off to look like that of the 92SB-F. It is not grooved and the front bottom of the grip frame is not flared. But the grip assembly is grooved, front and rear. Like the Beretta 92 series pistols, the ejector is held to the frame by two roll pins.

The disassembly lever and slide stop lever are identical to the Beretta 92 series. Be careful. If you use a modified Weaver hold, your thumbs may find themselves over the long slide stop lever. Springloaded, but not connected to a barrel link, the slightest downward pressure will result in a failure to hold open after the magazine's last round has been fired.

The magazine release button, located where it belongs, just to the rear of the trigger guard, can be moved from the left to the right side of the frame for left-handed shooters. Empty magazines fall freely away when ejected.

Safety systems on the PT 92 AF are as follows: 1) There is a half-cock position, of no use except to horse-mounted cavalry troops. 2) The firing pin is inertial. 3) The ambidextrous manual safety is frame mounted and as on the original Beretta Model 92, it blocks the sear. The 92SB-F's slide-mounted safety rotates the firing pin out of alignment and also acts to drop the hammer if engaged when the pistol is

Continued on page 92



Taurus PT 92 AF pistol, disassembled.

Locking block used on the Taurus has been taken from that of the German WWII P-38.



Belgium's Compact Carbine

FNC

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

MATURITY of a system — as I've said before — usually determines its reliability. And if there's a senior system for cranking out the tools of war, it's in Liege.

Liege, an old French-speaking city in eastern Belgium, has been selling weapons to foreign belligerents since the Middle Ages. In 1889 a group of Liege armsmakers formed a syndicate called *Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre* (National Manufactory of Weapons of War). They immediately entered into a contract to supply the Belgian government with 150,000 Model 1889 Mauser rifles. They've been busy plying their trade ever since. True to their calling, these unbiased merchants have often supplied weapons and/or designs to opposing sides. A most recent example was the Falklands fracas: Brits and Argies merrily blew each other away with FN's Browning Hi-Power pistols, FN FAL rifles and MAG 58 GPMGs.

In 1963 FN began development of a 5.56x45mm rifle in anticipation of that caliber's adoption by most NATO countries. The rifle was introduced in 1966 as the FN CAL (*Carabine Automatique Legere* = Light Automatic Carbine).

It was gas operated in the manner of the FAL. A unique double-interrupted thread on the bolt head locked behind a similar thread on the barrel extension when the bolt was rotated. The recoil spring was wrapped around the short-stroke piston to permit any type of butt configuration. The trigger mechanism, patterned after that of the M1 Garand, provided both full-automatic fire and a three-shot

burst control. Upper and lower receivers, as well as the forearm, were sheet-metal pressings and there was a hold-open device. The bolt, carrier and piston were machined from steel bar-stock. Screw-threaded to the upper receiver, the barrel was held in place by a lock nut dropped down from the muzzle and threaded onto a cone on the front of the receiver.

All in all, the FN CAL was a very smart-looking piece. It reeked quality. It had the FN FAL mystique. And it was a dismal failure. During trials conducted in France between 1971 and 1974, the CAL's deficiencies erupted. Expensive to manufacture, difficult to disassemble and properly maintain, the CAL's life expectancy in simulated combat proved all too short. The project was abandoned, and a small quantity of semiautomatic-only samples were sold in the United States.

Within two years, FN designers patched together another effort, called the FNC (*Fabrique Nationale Carabine*), just in time to enter the Swedish arms tests in 1976. This time around, FN stressed simplicity and reliability. And what better to emulate for these attributes than the works of Mikhail Timofeyevich Kalashnikov? The result is much easier to disassemble and maintain, usually reliable and far less expensive to fabricate. Some have suggested that FN's goal was to design a rifle that could be easily produced by Third World countries under the usual license-to-manufacture agreement. Nonsense. FNC's cost effectiveness has been achieved through extensive use of investment

castings, CNC (computer numerical control) machinery, robot welding and hammer-forged barrels. Making an FNC takes 421 machine and 98 manual operations. None of this equipment — or the technology required to employ it — is available to any Third World country on this planet. Furthermore, FN and Colt have been burnt badly in recent years by license-to-manufacture agreements with producers in the Far East who have badly abused their relationship.

Most of its components are finished with semigloss black baked enamel. This excellent rust-resistant surface works well in tropical climates and it also masks minor blemishes.

The gas-operated FNC fires from a closed bolt. Mounted above the barrel, the gas cylinder has six ports 1.5 inches behind the barrel's gas vent. At the end of that short stroke, all gases escape the cylinder when the piston head passes those exhaust ports. A handle welded to the rear of the gas cylinder rotates the cylinder, opening and closing a small port in the gas block. When the adjustment handle is rotated to the left, this gas block port is exposed and a small amount of the propellant gases escape before the piston begins its rearward travel. This is the "normal" operating position. Under adverse conditions, the gas cylinder can be rotated to the right which covers the gas block port and re-directs this extra volume of gas onto the piston face: nice feature but seldom required in this caliber.

Provision for launching grenades with ballistite (blank) ammunition is provided in the form of a sheet-metal, flip-up, combination grenade



sight/gas valve called the alidade. The alidade is mounted to the gas block/front sight assembly. When pivoted up to the vertical position the alidade axis turns to close the gas vent. Then all gases propel the grenade. (Of course, when all propellant gases bypass the gas system, the weapon does not cycle and the bolt must be retracted manually.) Once this sheet-metal switch is pulled upright, it acts as a

TOP: Firing the FNC rifle.

ABOVE: Upper receiver markings, rear sight and selector.

crude V-notch sight which must be aligned with the nose of the rifle grenade and the target.

The piston head is welded to a hollow extension which contains the front portion of the recoil spring and guide rod assembly. The piston

extension is pinched in the center and pierced by a hole which retains a roll-pin on the end of the guide rod. The piston head and extension, as well as the gas port block, barrel bore and chamber, are hard-chrome plated by an automated process developed by FN. A sheet-metal backplate is attached to the rear of the guide rod. Three robot welds have been used to mount the bolt carrier to the piston extension.

Another roll-pin holds the firing pin in place on the bolt carrier and a 3-inch firing-pin spring fits tightly over the pin itself. Patterned after the Kalashnikov system, the rotary bolt has two locking lugs which run in guide rails welded onto the upper receiver walls and the feed lug on the bottom of the bolt head drives the magazine's top round into the chamber. Rotary movement is begun and primary extraction is provided by a small lug on top of the bolt head.

A double roll-pin retains the extractor to the bolt head. I don't like this feature. Extractors take a lot of stress in selective-fire weapons. They break — usually when no armorer is present. The operator should be able to replace this component himself, without special tools. FN has now corrected this problem by changing the extractor attachment to a single roll-pin. This allows freer extractor movement and easier repair.

A stud on the bolt body moves in the carrier's cam track and rotates the bolt into the locked and unlocked positions. The retracting handle fits in a hole on the right side of the bolt carrier. It has a thin stem and it appears to me that several kicks with the heel of a combat boot would bend it. Canted slightly upward, it can be retracted with the left hand, but not quite as conveniently as that of the Galil.

A fixed ejector is riveted to the upper receiver above the rear of the magazine well and it puts one hell of a dent in the empty case (of no consequence to military users). Marked with the weapon's serial number, the upper receiver body is of robot welded, sheet-metal construction. An ejection port and retracting handle slot are cut into the right side and a peculiar six-component dust cover is mounted over the rear portion of the cocking handle's slot. Spring-loaded, it remains closed at all times. In my opinion, its primary function is to mesmerize observers, as it continuously oscillates open and closed in a strange elliptical pattern during burst-fire sequences. Ejecting cases frequently spring back to scuff the dust cover and receive a second dent.

The upper receiver is also welded to the barrel extension block. In turn the barrel is threaded to the extension and held in place by a heavy lock nut. Two barrel lengths are available: 19.1 and 15.8 inches (including the flash suppressor). Hammer forged, with six grooves, right-hand twists of either 1:12 or 1:7 can be ordered. Twelve ports arranged in four rows of three surround the barrel's muzzle device. Tapped at an angle to the bore's axis, these ports throw gas forward to propel rifle grenades and also to slightly moderate muzzle climb. The FNC's effective flash eliminator (taken directly from the FN FAL series) accepts the current hollow-handle FAL bayonet. A blank-firing adapter is available as well as an optional lug attachment to take the U.S. M7 bayonet. Rotating a full 360 degrees, the front sling swivel is attached to the barrel by two snap rings.

Annular ribs around the barrel in back of the sling swivel are used to attach a lightweight cast-aluminum bipod. Nonadjustable, the bipod offers a command height of 11 inches. It's sturdy and quite superior to the flimsy bipod supplied with the M16-series rifles. However, it costs \$78.43 and cannot be folded against the handguards.

Ergonomically pleasing handguards effectively dissipate heat radiating from the barrel during burst-fire



TOP: FNC with Thermold magazine recently adopted by Canadian Armed Forces.

ABOVE: Firing the FNC off the bipod.

sequences. A sheet-metal ventilated heat shield is riveted to each plastic handguard with six brass nails. A large rib, molded into the front end of the plastic handguard, prevents the support hand from sliding onto the heat shield. That's neat. But removing these handguards is only slightly less irritating than disassembling those on the M16A1. Since they are retained in the rear by a sheet-metal barrel collar, you are supposed to force the handguards' front retaining clip out of its notches with your thumb. You'd do better to

keep a knife blade or screwdriver handy for this purpose.

Protective ears for the front sight have been machined into the gas block assembly. They contain a conventional round front sight post which can be adjusted for elevation zero with the same tool used for this purpose on the M249 SAW (FN Minimi). The rear sight assembly has been welded to the end of the upper receiver body. Inside its protective ears is a flip-type sight with two apertures marked 400 and 250 meters, respectively. It can be adjusted for windage zero, but only by means of a special tool or pair of pliers. I don't like that. I suppose people who think soldiers are too stupid to zero their own rifles will.

A notch on top of the barrel



extension block and a fork in front of the rear sight accommodate a scope mount of rather unusual design. The mount, which costs \$101.96, will accept optics configured to NATO specifications, such as the FN 4x28mm scope (suggested retail price is \$638.92, actually manufactured by the now-defunct Hensoldt company). This superb piece of glass carries a reticle used by the German military ever since World War I. Although never popular in the United States, the single, thick, pointed post at the bottom of the field of view with horizontal side bars and stadia lines excels in subdued light and permits faster target acquisition than standard crosshairs. A special Steyr-manufactured NATO-type rail can be substituted with SSG rings so that almost any scope you desire can be mounted.

The lower receiver body is milled from aluminum alloy stock by computer numerical control (CNC)

ABOVE LEFT: Spring-loaded dust cover over the retracting handle's slot oscillates in a strange elliptical pattern as the bolt travels back and forth.

ABOVE: Piston extension attached to bolt carrier by robot welding.

machinery. Slab-sided and ugly, there are machine marks all over its exterior surface that no thickness of paint can hide.

Its magazine well is neither flared nor beveled. That's bad. FN engineers have obviously never inserted a magazine under stress. Located on the right side, the magazine catch release button is under heavy spring pressure, but can be manipulated with the trigger finger. The catch system is similar to the M16's.

Constructed entirely of steel, the FNC 30-rd. magazine is sturdy and reliable — far more reliable than the M16 magazine. Since the FNC does not feature a hold-open device, these

magazines — although they can be used in the M16 series — will not hold back the M16's bolt after the last round has been fired. When the bolt flies forward into battery after the final round has been fired, the feed lug on its underside strikes the magazine follower, gouging its soft sheet-metal surface. Also disconcerting is the magazine's floorplate which can be pivoted inward about an inch, along with any amount of sand and/or debris you might want to pour into the magazine. Both 20- and 30-rd. M16 magazines can be used in the FNC. Thirty- and 45-rd. Thermold plastic magazines, as adopted by the Canadian Armed Forces, will also function in the FNC, although they will not fall freely away when released. Those of us accustomed to buying cheap, used M16 magazines at local gun shows will wince at the \$37.65 charge for spare FNC magazines, but you can never own too many magazines.

The trigger mechanism remains the same as the old CAL. There are two spring-loaded sears — the rear sear is secondary. An auto safety sear in front holds the hammer at all times until locking has been completed. Pulling the trigger releases the hammer to fire a round. In semiautomatic fire the recoiling bolt carrier is held back by the secondary sear. When the trigger is released, both sears move with it and the hammer is once more caught by the auto safety sear. Placing the selector lever on automatic locks the secondary sear so that it becomes inoperative. Each time the bolt carrier goes into battery the auto safety sear releases the hammer. The cycle continues until the trigger is released and the hammer is once more captured by the primary sear. Cyclic rate in full-automatic fire is 625-700 rpm.

A removable three-shot burst mechanism is fitted inside the lower receiver. A three-tooth ratchet on this mechanism contacts a spring-loaded pawl on the hammer axis. When the selector lever is set to '3,' the secondary sear is retained by the rear of the ratchet device. The ratchet rotates with each round in the burst and after the third it slips off the secondary sear which moves forward to hold back the hammer. Unlike the mechanism on the M16A2, any interruption in the burst cycle will still result in another three-shot burst because the mechanism resets itself each time the trigger is released. Each three-shot burst lasts only two-tenths of a second, enhancing hit probability significantly.

Semiautomatic-only versions of the FNC are distributed as "police

models" throughout the world. Those imported to the U.S. are marked, "CAL. 223 REM. SPORTER," since the 1968 Gun Control Act prohibits the importation of military small arms (the recently passed Dole amendment applies only to firearms manufactured before 1946). In addition to the deletion of the full-auto and three-shot burst modes and their respective selector markings, FNCs brought into the U.S. have other modifications to the trigger mechanism (including the absence of the auto safety sear) to inhibit their conversion to selective fire. In all other regards they are unaltered; for instance, these "sporters" can launch grenades.

"Black" guns are not noted for crisp, light triggers. Yet, most production series M16s or AR15s will break cleanly at 6-7.5 lbs. That's more than acceptable in a military rifle. The 10.5-pound-plus trigger pull weights commonly encountered on FNC rifles are not — by any reasonable standard. I don't think I'm particularly trigger sensitive, but it's mighty difficult to concentrate on the sight picture and breathing while pulling back on an immovable object.

The selector lever is located on the left side just above the pistol grip. That's exactly where it is on the FAL series and, like the FAL, only Plastic Man will be able to manipulate it with the thumb of the firing hand. Moving down from 'S' (safe) to '1' (semiautomatic) is not too difficult. But as for continuing onward to '3' (three-shot burst, of course) and 'A' (automatic), or going back up to 'S' — forget it. You must use the support hand for this.

The plastic pistol grip is right off the FAL series, so it accepts the FAL cleaning kit which consists of an oil bottle and brass cleaning tips with nylon pull-through. You get all this for a modest \$26.35. Nice for appearance' sake, but far more useful — and expensive — is the FNC combo tool at \$43.56. This clever Walloon device can be used to scrape the interior of the gas block, gas vent, piston head and groove. It's much faster than a Swiss Army knife, but you can't peel mangoes with it in the Salvadoran bush.

Either of the two FAL-series buttstocks are available for the FNC. The excellent rigid stock provides a superior firing platform, but somewhat more popular is the folding stock featured on the so-called "para" models. Collapsing to the right, the FN para buttstock is the most stable folding buttstock ever designed. The trade-off is that a spring-loaded latch on the support block must be moved to the left while



ABOVE: FNC field-stripped.



LEFT: Gas block and front sight with the grenade launching alidade in a partially upright position.



ABOVE: FNC muzzle device patterned after that of the FN FAL accepts the FAL hollow-handle bayonet.

BELOW: FAL Pistol grip cleaning kit and special FNC combo tool for cleaning the gas system.



FNC ASSAULT RIFLE SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber.....	5.56x45mm NATO.
Operation.....	Gas. Two-position adjustable regulator with alidade and gas cut-off for grenade launching. Short-stroke piston. Kalashnikov-type rotary bolt. Fires from the closed-bolt position.
Cyclic rate.....	625-700 rpm. Also has three-shot burst mechanism.
Feed mechanism....	30-rd. staggered box magazine. No hold-open. Also accepts 20- and 30-rd. M16 magazines.
Weight, empty.....	8.4 lbs. (para model w/19.1-inch barrel).
Barrel.....	Six grooves with a right-hand twist of either one turn in 12 inches or one turn in 7 inches. FAL-type flash suppressor. Chrome-lined bore and chamber.
Barrel length, w/flash suppressor.....	19.1 and 16.5 inches (military short barrel: 15.8 inches).
Sights.....	Round front sight post of the M16 type with protective ears; adjustable for elevation zero only. Flip-type peep aperture rear sight with protective ears; 400- and 250-meter apertures; adjustable for windage zero.
Accessories.....	Bipod, \$78.43; hollow-handle FAL bayonet, \$89; pistol grip cleaning kit, \$26.35; combo tool, \$43.56; sling, \$37; spare magazines, \$37.65; scope mount, \$101.96; 4x28mm scope, \$683.92; and blank-firing attachment.
Price.....	Semiautomatic-only versions with 19.1-inch barrel: standard model (rigid stock), \$729; para model (folding stock), \$760.
Status.....	In production. Adopted by the Armed Forces of Sweden and Indonesia.
Manufacturer.....	Fabrique Nationale, Branche Defense et Securite, B-4400, Herstal, Belgium.
Distributor.....	Gun South, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 129, Trussville, AL 35173.

the stock is simultaneously pushed down out of the support block and then folded up against the receiver. The same process must be repeated to re-extend the stock and some may find this confusing. Two light alloy tubes are fitted to a heavier alloy buttplate. The upper tube is plastic coated for comfort in both arctic and tropical environments. It's all a bit too short for me.

Eyelets for sling attachment to the para models are provided on top of the buttplate (an excellent location) and on the left side of the support block, presumably for use of a sling with the stock folded. At the end of the web sling is a spring-loaded snap hook for rapid attachment to one position or the other. On the standard rigid buttstock the sling swivel is located in the conventional, but less useful, bottom position.

So, what does all this add up to? With the 19.1-inch barrel, all 121 components of the para model weigh 8.4 lbs., without the magazine. Heavy, by today's standards. Overall length of this version is 38.9 inches with the stock extended and 29.9 inches folded.

The FNC is a sturdy and reliable performer. I have fired thousands of rounds through two selective-fire specimens and two semiautomatic-only "sporters" without a single stoppage whenever FN magazines were used. Although hefty, its handling characteristics are excellent. Felt recoil is very low. Its handguards are the best of any assault rifle and significantly contribute to the operator's ability to acquire targets quickly. The ejection pattern is quite erratic and varies from three feet to the right at 90 degrees to 50 feet at 30 degrees to the right of the muzzle.

FN barrels exhibit outstanding accuracy potential. I recently had three FN M249 SAW barrels air-gauged and they were very close to match grade. This attribute is unfortunately muted in the FNC by the extremely heavy trigger pull. Because of this, I have never fired a group smaller than six MOA with any of these rifles. Nevertheless, the hit potential remains above average when the three-shot burst device is employed in snap-shooting exercises.

Ease of maintenance has been

improved by a considerable margin over the earlier FN CAL. To disassemble the FNC, first remove the magazine and clear the weapon. Push the rear retaining pin from the left to the right as far as it will go. Pivot the upper receiver away from the lower group. Push out the front retaining pin and separate the upper and lower receivers. Both of these pins are captive and are held in the lower receiver body by a snap spring. Pull the retracting handle to the rear, lift up the dust cover and pull out the handle: The bolt group can then be withdrawn out the rear of the upper receiver. Press in on the recoil spring's backplate and rotate it 90 degrees to the right or left. Pull the spring and guide rod out of the piston extension's hollow. Rotate the bolt body until its cam clears the carrier's track and remove it. Current firing-pin springs have a crimped end to prevent their inadvertent loss. Remove the handguards in the manner previously described. Rotate the gas cylinder to the left until the thumb piece is past the normal setting and perpendicular with the upper receiver's barrel block. Push the gas cylinder to the rear and lift away from the gas block. I suggest no further disassembly be attempted.

The barrel extension is difficult to reach and clean, but no more so than the M16. After cleaning, lubricate the receiver guide rails, bolt locking lugs, barrel extension locking recesses and recoil spring with either LSA, white lithium grease or PARR All Weather Weapons Lube (A.R.M.S., Dept. SOF, 230 W. Center Street, W. Bridgewater, MA 02379). G-96 in an aerosol spray will do for the rest. Do not lubricate the piston, interior of the gas cylinder or gas block. Re-assemble in the reverse order. Make sure the grenade launching sight is vertical when you re-install the handguards.

Semiautomatic-only versions of the FNC are distributed in the U.S. by Gun South, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 129, Trussville, AL 35173). The charging U.S. dollar and sagging U.S. sales have dropped the suggested retail price of these rifles by \$335 over the past three years. The standard model with rigid buttstock now sells for \$729 and the para for \$760. This price puts them in line with the Colt AR15A2, but the gun itself is not as good as the Colt.

Only Indonesia and Sweden have adopted the FNC. Members of the Assault-Rifle-of-the-Month Club (like myself) will have to put an FNC in their racks. But it's not my choice for humping the bush. Too heavy and not quite up to the usual FN standards of user-oriented excellence. ✕

SMASH! The Salvadoran Naval Commando sergeant slugged me in the forehead with the butt of his open hand. My head snapped back and my eyes opened. I had been sleep-walking and drifted from the Indian file of Salvadoran recruits.

"Get back in line and stay awake!" shouted the muscular sergeant.

That would be difficult. We were in our second night of "Los Tres Días de Infierno," or The Three Days of Hell — 72 hours without sleep, subjected to the utmost physical rigor and psychological stress. It was the last test to become a Naval Commando — the Salvadoran version of American Navy SEALs or Marine Force Recon.

Sarge meant business. He held a hickory stick over his head ready to whip me if I did not obey. His silhouette in the bluish glow of the pier's lamps was that of a swashbuckler, and this Latin Errol Flynn was not about to spare the rod and spoil this veteran war correspondent who in one more day would become the first gringo to complete Salvadoran Basic Training. My ass already had too many welts. Hunched under a knapsack stuffed with a 50-lb. sandbag and a couple rocks, I staggered back into line.

In 1982, the Salvadoran Navy decided a Naval Commando force would be better suited to fighting an insurgency than conventional Marine formations. (The Navy now believes a Marine battalion is essential, too, and started training one last February.) In August of that year, the Naval Commando unit was formed with 60 men just back from infantry training at Fort Benning or Panama. Today the Naval Commandos number 330 men, including 12 frogmen, 90 base security troops and 110 men who regularly man the weapons aboard Piranhas and other high-speed patrol boats.

Their training is no cakewalk. They spend a couple of months in basic, then do constant special training and re-training in patrolling, recon techniques, infiltration, ambushes, small boat handling, beach landings, explosives and demolitions. Everything is taught by U.S. and Salvadoran instructors at the Military Training Center at Punta Ruca Naval Base at the eastern port city of La Union. Physical fitness and endurance are stressed beyond nearly all other concerns. These guys will have to be able to hack it in the sea, swamps and deep bush.

Lieutenant Marco Palacios, the only Salvadoran to graduate from the prestigious Naval School of Venezuela and the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL Training School at Coronado Island, California, has commanded the First Company light infantry unit of the Naval Commandos since January 1985. He explained the hardships his men regularly face in the Salvadoran Indian Country of the coastal mangrove swamps. Commandos are subjected to long forced marches without food, hours in open boats under blazing sun and torrential downpours — not to mention long-distance swims.

The brutal training program for the Naval Commandos has paid dividends in combat.

In April of this year, a commando ambush wiped out a six-man guerrilla unit, including three rebel *comandantes* (see "El Salvador's Naval Commandos," SOF, October '85). The Naval Commandos' success is another example of the positive impact American military trainers have had in El Salvador.


But to really know how tough it is to become a Salvadoran Naval Commando, you have to suffer through the Basic Naval Commando Course — two months of torture designed to separate the men from the boys. As many as 50 percent of the candidates have washed out in some cases, according to Lt. Palacios. And it is not just a question of surviving the course, but one of real survival — emerging alive with everything intact. "A course usually has one death or serious injury," said one crusty veteran.

Well, I would get my chance to see if I could survive. On the night of 15 April, I took a bunk with the other 25 Commando candidates in the well-swept veranda of the First Company barracks. They were a young, enthusiastic gang eager to start the course in the morning. But otherwise, they were not typical of past basic training groups.

Except for four or five men who had already served at least two years in the army, they were peasant farmers fresh from the fields without any military experience. Usually, due to Navy preference, most of the candidates trying out for the Naval Commandos are Army veterans who want the challenge and prestige that this elite force bestows on its men. However, late last February 50 Naval Commandos — over a third of the unit — were incorporated into the new Marine battalion which began training that month. The emergency shortage of Commandos obliged the Navy high command to accept a higher percentage of greenhorns in a crash course. We would cram two months of training into an intense one-month program — a daily routine of classroom theory or field practice sandwiched by strenuous exercise first thing in the morning and just before dinner with occasional field maneuvers at night.

"Ah, it can't be that bad," mused a short, skinny recruit. "A month will go fast. Easy." That notion was quickly dispelled in the morning. At 0430 a screaming sergeant and corporal roused us from bed popping smoke grenades. "Two minutes to get your ass on the dock, old hags!" the sergeant barked. Choking on the red smoke, teary-eyed, we struggled into our shorts, T-shirts and tennis shoes. Tough NCOs kicked the slow-pokes. Still sleepy, we ran like drunks stumbling over each other to the wharf.

We spread out at arm's length in three rows perpendicular to the oil-black Gulf of Fonseca. The silhouette of a living hulk appeared in the bluish glow of the pier's lamps. It was an American adviser. U.S. Navy SEAL Petty Officer Stu (his name is changed for security reasons) would lead us



With smoke, flare and radio, Naval Commandos learn that communications is one of their best weapons against the Gs.



SOF NAVAL COMMANDO

Gung Ho Gringo's Month of Hell

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

through morning PT the whole course. He inspected us one by one. The recruits shook in their sneakers as the muscular, golden-haired instructor, dressed in gym clothes, snarled and grunted at them. "So you're the *Soldier of Fortune* reporter?" he asked me in a thick northeastern accent.

"Yes, sir," was all I could think of to say.

"I'd appreciate it if you don't take my picture or use my name," he said. "We're in a delicate situation." The Salvadoran guerrillas have declared that U.S. military personnel and their allies (including SOF members) are high-priority targets. The guerrillas assassinated one SEAL in 1983, Lieutenant Commander Albert Schaufelberger. And late last June they killed four off-duty U.S. Marine embassy guards and two American businessmen in a cold-blooded outdoor café massacre.

I assured the adviser that I would not photograph him, nor mention his real name. He still appeared wary of this bespectacled young journalist. After all, when he thought of the press, he thought of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

Stu led us through an hour of rigorous calisthenics. I should say rigorous for us. It was a breeze for Stu; his bulging muscles barely glistened with sweat. There was always some recruit out of synch, which pissed Stu off. "*No me chinga*" — don't fuck me — he would scream when someone slacked off. "If you fuck me, more exercises." On this first day I do not think we ragtag civilians could have done exercises in synchronization if our lives depended on it. Our half-hour of running after calisthenics was not too smooth, either. Several recruits and I tangled legs leaping a culvert and took a big tumble. I severely wrenched my knee which I had ripped up in a high school wrestling accident years ago. But, by God, I was determined not to let an injury keep me from completing this course and got off my ass pronto to limp on. I wanted to show the Salvos what gringos are made of.

Back in the barracks there was no ice for my knee, just the cold water in the dirty showers where we washed our sweaty bodies alongside the veterans. It was easy to tell who was a vet and who was a recruit. The vets were muscular and broad-chested. We were scrawny punks. We had 10 minutes to shower, dress in cammies, shine our boots and report for formation.

Sergeant Martinez met us in formation. Throwing out his brass chin, he barked us through close drill and marched us to mess hall. The Naval Commandos' chow was lousy by American standards: rice and beans, tortillas, cream, maybe meat or eggs once in a while, along with sugary coffee or Kool-Aid. A health nut trying to watch his cholesterol intake would have a fit. Virtually everything was fried in pig lard. I lost my appetite. If it were not for the women cooks who gave me a little fish, chicken, or vegetables every once in a while, I would have died of starvation. But the Commandos were content with the diet. In fact, some said one



Impromptu wrestling matches further test Commando candidates during the last hours of Three Days of Hell.

reason they joined the Commandos was that Navy food was better than the Army's.

After breakfast we met Cadet Duran. This young Desi Arnaz look-alike would be in charge of us the first week. He was tough, but fair. When he caught us napping there was no screeching and insults. No, he just made us run to the dock's 20mm cannon 300 meters away and back again.

Given the course's history of deaths and injuries, the first day's classes were dedicated solely to first aid. It was a good thing, for we would have to nurse our cuts and bruises from two hours of crawling through sewers strewn with broken glass, rolling over gravel and walking backward on our hands over hot concrete that afternoon. And I thought afternoon's PT was going to be easier than morning's because there wouldn't be a gringo instructor. Dream on.

The workouts increased in intensity. I felt excruciating pain in my legs. My knee was swollen like a football. My thighs were taut and tender. Everyone was hurting. Our soft bodies were not accustomed to the immediate shock of brutal exercise. It showed in morning PT. We creaked like the Tin Man.

"Forget pain, fuck pain," shouted Stu, grabbing one grimacing recruit by the T-shirt. "Press harder. Have heart. Never give up! Commandos never give up!" We were terribly sloppy. "Work together," bellowed Stu. "When you're out in the field, you'll have to depend on each other. Sergeant Stu is not going to be there to save you." Stu said the last sentence through gnashing teeth. He is a top-notch professional.

Our American trainer typified the dedication of all the fine U.S. military trainers in El Salvador, regularly working 16-hour days with his Naval Commandos whom he had grown not only to respect, but love. His sense of professionalism told him he should

be with his men in the field, observe their performance, correct their errors. But Congress and domestic U.S. politics say not. It is a frustrating, perhaps illogical restraint for America's advisers, especially considering the fact that as many as 2,000 Cuban military advisers in neighboring Nicaragua can lead communist Sandinista troops in combat against our Democratic Resistance allies there.

Stu was disgusted with our sloppiness. "To the sea," he shouted. "Roll around in the slime." This set an unpleasant precedent. Virtually every day we would take our "bath" for the slightest fuck-up. At least dripping muddy brine in the cold morning breeze momentarily took our minds off our sore bodies, if you can call that a consolation.

From day one the recruits complained about their aches and pains. Lt. Palacios, the First Company commander, spoke to us about this subject at company formation in the morning. If you wanted sympathy from Lt. Palacios for minor injuries, forget it. The hard-driving officer had successfully weathered U.S. Navy SEAL Hell Week so he knew what it was all about. He suffered for his physical achievements, and he expected the same of his men.

"The guerrillas suffer," said the lieutenant in a deep voice. "We have to suffer more. We operate in small groups of eight to 15 men — not companies, nor battalions — in a sea of guerrillas. We have to be more prepared. I know you suffer fungal infections, blisters, bruises, but it's necessary. How can you take a gunshot wound, if you can't stand a scratch?"

The recruits feared Lt. Palacios, but they respected and admired him. When he left after formation they eased up. Spirits were high. It was to be our first day at the rifle range: M16 familiarization fire. Of course, this was old hat for me and the four or five veterans in our course. Still it always feels good to pop caps.

It feels better to blast away at the com-

mies. Ironically, the 18-year-old veteran Tiger and I had blasted away at the Gs in Morazán province a year ago (see "The Taking of El Tablon," SOF, November '84). The veterans in our course were in an ironic position. God knows they did not need another basic training course.

In fact, the blond-haired, blue-eyed Tiger and another vet had already served as many as seven months with a special naval light infantry recon unit, now defunct, and participated in numerous naval commando operations. Just 10 days ago Tiger had pounded the hell out of guerrilla positions near El Espino beach with a 60mm mortar (see "El Salvador's Naval Commandos," SOF, October '85). But the nickname of Tiger's comrade from the dissolved recon unit said it all: Diploma. Protocol requires one to pass the Basic Naval Commando Course before officially becoming a Commando—the rigorous training program of Tiger and Diploma's former recon unit could not act as a substitute. But the vets did not grumble at the rules. They relished their leadership roles and were an inspiration to everyone.

On the evening of 27 April, we divided into two 13-man groups for war games. I was given the privilege of commanding one group. Crawling on our bellies under the cloak of darkness, we sneaked passed the other group's sentries and surprised the squad huddled in reunion. If they had been Gs, we would have massacred them.

Back at the barracks, we ribbed the other squad mercilessly as a ghetto-blasted pop music. Nearly naked recruits, sitting beside me on a bunk, the orange glow of their cigarettes punctuating the darkness, asked me to translate the lyrics of the American and English songs into Spanish. I happily obliged and they moved their shadowy faces close to hear my translation over the din of the music.

During the first days of May, we fired M60 machine guns and practiced fire and movement. But guerrilla wars are not won with military might alone. You have to win the hearts and minds of the people, too. The communists exploited excesses by government troops to swell their ranks to a peak 10,000 combatants in the early 1980s, according to a Western diplomat who wishes to remain anonymous. Now, communist fighting strength has fallen to around 6,000 men, the same source estimates. One reason for this has been an aggressive Salvadoran armed forces campaign, supported by the Reagan administration, to stop human rights abuses by government troops.

Top priority in this effort has gone to educating soldiers about the treatment of prisoners. In the afternoon, we sat cross-legged in the shade of a mango tree and listened to a lecture on this subject.

"We have to follow the rules of the Geneva Convention," said Cadet Carlos Omar Salinas. "The guerrillas are human beings also. They have the capacity to think. They feel pain just like us. They bleed just like us. They have families like we do. If we treat our prisoners well, they will be more likely



Salvo Naval Commando training includes drill in scuba technique and equipment.

to surrender." The recruits nodded their heads in agreement. "But don't be mistaken," continued the tall, bespectacled cadet. "The guerrillas are nothing more than bloody, son-of-a-bitch terrorists, murderers and thieves. In one firefight they captured a wounded Commando, a good friend of mine. And I know for a fact that they tortured him to death because he was a sergeant."

It would be hard for Cadet Salinas to pardon the guerrillas, but he is a professional soldier and his duty takes precedence over his personal craving for vengeance, even if it meant saving his friend's killers for interrogation. "After all, if they killed the *hijo de puta*, you wouldn't get any information from him," said the budding officer with a shrug. Good point.

After breakfast on 4 May we began a 13-kilometer forced march to La Playita beach. This was not only a training exercise. Guerrillas had been spotted near La Playita a couple of days earlier, according to Lt. Palacios. Hunched under knapsacks bulging with at least 50 lbs. of rocks and sandbags, we divided into three nine-man groups and walked 10 meters apart along dirt roads, up and down parched hills choked with dry brush, keeping a sharp eye out for the Gs. The sun blazed hot. Our heavy cammies were soaked with sweat. Smearing with black shoe polish, our faces itched. The paste streaked, stinging our eyes.

At 1300 we arrived at La Playita. Small boys were playing soccer on its golden sand. Oyster vendors sat bored in their bamboo stands, sputtering about how guerrilla violence had scared away the many beachgoers who would frequent their eateries in more peaceful days. Fishermen in outboard-pow-

ered dugouts cast their nets into the picturesque Gulf of Fonseca. Under the partly clear sky you could see the lush green coastlines of Honduras and Nicaragua across the warm, placid blue water. We climbed a hill and posted security. Cadet Salinas radioed the other two teams to join us and popped red smoke marking our location.

The recruits complained about being hungry. "Oh, poor babies, you're hungry," the tough cadet softly replied, making an expression of compassion like Mother Theresa. "Well, don't worry. You'll eat lunch all right." His voice changed harsh. "Corporal, shoot a buzzard. We're going to have lunch."

Fifteen minutes later a shot rang and the corporal returned with a big dead vulture. "Start plucking," Cadet Salinas ordered with a devilish grin. It was a bitch. The strong filthy feathers stabbed our fingers, yet we yanked out every one. The corporal took the naked white bird to a peasant woman who would cook it.

"We're not going to eat it," said a recruit with a dismissing hand-wave. "They just want to scare us." We chewed on the sugarcane some young boys brought us and laughed to ourselves. But no one was laughing when the corporal returned with the barely roasted vulture.

"Okay, eat," ordered Cadet Salinas. The recruits were reluctant. "Eat!" Cadet Salinas shouted, raising a stick threateningly. The recruits — hospitable people that they are — gave me the privilege of taking the first bite. I chomped the raw, gritty flesh and a spurt of buzzard blood shot from my mouth. The flesh tasted like beef. This vulture must have scavenged many dead cows. Who knows how many human corpses' bones this bird might have picked on the battlefields of this war-torn land, too? Seven Meals was next to try the cuisine. The dark-skinned recruit relished the "delicacy." He shook the buzzard in his mouth like a bird dog. Tiger and another recruit played along with the joke. They bit the buzzard hard and fought Seven Meals over it like rival hounds.

"Hey, stop fucking around, and share with the others," ordered Cadet Salinas. The rest of the recruits grimaced as they ate their bizarre lunch. The recruit who complained the most about being hungry seemed to have lost his appetite. He faked nibbling on the bones. Cadet Salinas caught him and forced him to eat the bloodiest piece. "I think I'm going to be sick," said the recruit after glumly swallowing it. It was possible. Who knows how many trichina worms or typhoid germs this creature might be carrying. We wiped our blood-stained lips and washed down the meal's rancid after-taste swilling water from our canteens. At 1600 we began the long hike home, arriving three and a half hours later. The recruits never complained about being hungry again for the rest of the course.

After the midday siesta on 6 May, Stu taught us something new — how to swim with our hands and feet tied. The technique

is simple: fill your lungs with air and curl into a cannon ball to float; arch your back quickly, lift your head from the water and kick hard butterfly style to propel yourself forward as well as breathe. The key is to stay calm. We prepared for the exercise without problems in the morning swimming in the sea with our feet, then only our hands tied. But when we plunged completely bound into the algae-covered pool on the grounds of a government institute, everyone, except me and a couple of recruits, thrashed in panic and sank like anchors. The Salvadoran NCOs, treading nearby, lifted the drowning pupils to the surface and sustained their heads above it. The terrified recruits coughed up water. They screamed to be taken from the pool. But Stu refused until they bobbed at least 12 times. The adviser re-emphasized the importance of the exercise afterward.

"If you fall overboard and can't move your arms or legs," he said as we put on our T-shirts over our wet torsos, "you still have a chance to survive." During the last course a recruit drowned, strait-jacketed by his shirt. "Also if you're captured and tied up, you can still escape if you get into water."

Stu was becoming very happy with our morning calisthenics. "This is the first time a course has done 150 eight-count body-builders," he praised us. It was pure pain. But we were no longer the scrawny punks of three and a half weeks ago. We were now just as strong and muscular as the veterans. But we still had to pass the toughest test of all to finally become Naval Commandos: The Three Days of Hell — 72 hours without sleep, subjected to the utmost physical rigor and psychological stress. "It's designed to show how much your body can take," said Lt. Palacios. "We were going to make it five days like the American SEALs' Hell Week, but we don't have drugs or the regimen available to the SEALs." We had to pass The Three Days of Hell on three meals of rice and beans a day without speed — just coffee. Only our will and recently gained physical strength would take us through hell to the Promised Land — a home in the First Company, Naval Commandos.

The Three Days of Hell began at 0000 May 9. Snarling NCOs roused us from our bunks and herded us into a small dirt bunker. We were wearing shorts and T-shirts and fire ants stung my legs mercilessly. But it tickled compared to the excruciating pain I would feel in a minute. A sergeant threw a couple of tear-gas grenades into our crowded hole and one burst on my knee, cutting the flesh with burning glass shards. Stinging white smoke immediately enveloped us. We choked uncontrollably. My lungs were afire, my blinded eyes burning facets of tears. We clawed and kicked each other in panic trying to climb out. But the NCOs kept pushing us back into the hell hole with their staffs. Just when I thought I was going to die, the momentum of a desperate surge by humans panicked into their most animalistic instincts for survival carried me from the would-be tomb to fresh



Salvo SEALs have many lessons to learn, including use of standard small arms, like this U.S.-made M60 GPMG.

life-sustaining air. The NCOs chased us into the sea. "Oh, sweet Jesus!" I shouted every step of the way, praying the pain would disappear. The warm salt water was soothing. Ironically, it would have stung my eyes if the tear gas were not burning them so badly.

NCOs hustled us from the water and we formed on the wharf. Stu appeared like a phantom in the bluish glow of the pier's lamps, wearing green battle fatigues, camouflage face paint, a green bandanna around his head buccaneer style and a crazed facial expression. His blue eyes twinkled like soft Christmas lights, but he was not going to give us any Christmas charity.

"Everyone into the mud," he shouted, thrusting his CAR-15 into the air with one



hand. We climbed carefully down slippery, barnacle-covered rocks and wallowed in the slime left by low tide. Some recruits cheated and lay on gravel in the shallow water. "Hey, you're not muddy," Stu scolded them when we returned to the wharf. "You have to do everything as a team." He sent us back into the slime. "Yeah, roll around in it. Put it in your hair. Smear it on your face." This time briny goo completely covered everyone when we returned to the dock. We were cold in the stiff breeze, but we warmed up doing calisthenics and running back and forth the length of the wharf. The mud on our bodies caked fast. My hair felt like tarred straw. My skin itched as if it were swarmed by thousands of mosquitos.

Five veterans of the First Company, who technically were not Naval Commandos be-



Salt-slime, seawater and PT don't excuse recruits from class: Here they learn camouflage theory from Cadet Salinas.

cause they had not passed their Three Days of Hell, had joined our course at midnight in a second chance to earn a diploma, but they dropped out not even an hour later.

Stu ordered them to line up in front of us and shout, "We do not want to be Naval Commandos." Still, the humiliation was not enough to make them change their minds and endure the 72 hours of abuse. They returned to the barracks as the NCOs jeered them.

We bathed in the sea, then boarded two Avon rubber rafts, 12 men in one, 11 men in the other. We had rowing races until dawn. We heartily drove our paddles in the pitch black sea studded with the reflections of stars. My triceps were throbbing knots. Even though our boat had one fewer man, we always won due to good team work. When we were not rowing, much of the time we would carry the Avons on our heads in races over land. It was punishing. The heavy boats pounded our heads with each step, bruising our scalps and jarring everything from knees to necks. The instructors would fight us when we carried the boats up steep mounds. Lt. Palacios would send us sprawling under the boat's wet flabby weight with one push with his Herculean arms. Every day of The Three Days of Hell we would carry the boats to the barracks and shout to the veterans, "We're not Commandos now, but we will be Commandos."

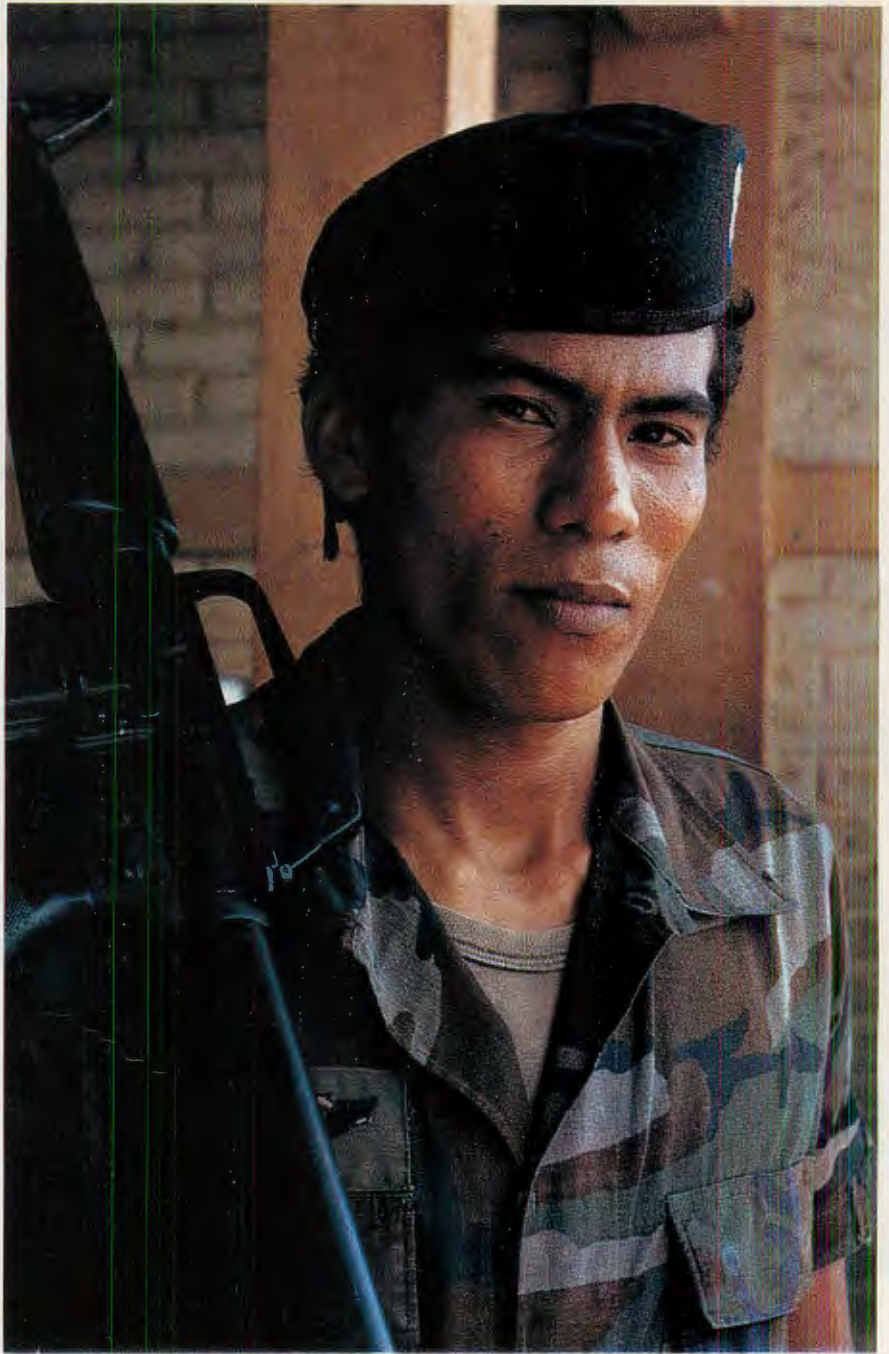
Two recruits were caught sleeping in a trench the first night. They were condemned to roll on the hot asphalt locked in each other's arms for three hours in the morning. "The next time you fall asleep, you're out," shouted Cadet Salinas. They did not fall asleep again during the remainder of the three days.

I had a hard time staying awake the next night. Sundown slowly came, but rest did not come with it. Fatigue hit me like a Tommy Hearn's left hook. I literally had to hold my eyelids open with my fingers to stay awake while we walked three hours hunched under knapsacks stuffed with 50 lbs. of rocks and sandbags. If not, I would have been beaten to a pulp by the nonsense NCOs who would nail us the moment we nodded off. Not even rowing, nor rolling in the mud, could stop my craving for sleep.

Crab-walks the following afternoon woke us up. Hot concrete blistered our hands so severely we could hardly hold them behind our heads when we walked like ducks and jumped like frogs immediately afterward. Fortunately, we could allow our hands to hang loose when we ran through La Union city at 2100. We would usually sing when we ran, but not now; we were too spaced out without sleep.

A film of sea salt covered my eyeglasses and I lost the troop. It was like a slow-motion nightmare. In the hazy white glow of street lamps, I asked townspeople, who looked like mannequins, where the recruits ran. "That-a-way," they would answer with frog-like voices.

I would arrive at an intersection and see



Sailors in combat boots, Naval Commandos are roughly equivalent in deployment to U.S. SEALs.

the recruits turning the next corner. I would arrive there and see them turning another corner. It seemed I would never catch up with them. A devilish voice inside my head tempted me to rest. "Dream about something pleasant," it repeated over and over. Although my body cried for sleep, the Basic Naval Commando Course had become more than a story for me; I wanted that diploma so bad I could see it floating before my eyes in the darkness. I charged on, finally rejoining the recruits on their return to the base.

The jukebox from the whorehouse across the road from the base was blasting "Like a Virgin." Scuzzy, heavily made-up *putas* wiggled their tongues, inviting us to a good time. In my grogginess, their snaking

tongues gave them the appearance of gargoyles. Even recruits were too tired to shout passes like they usually do. They would have plenty of time for prostitutes on leave.

We entered the base huffing and puffing. One husky recruit lapsed into catatonia. The sleep-drunk recruits laughed as Cadet Salinas waved his hand before their comrade's stare. They did not realize the danger of catatonia. Cadet Salinas did, and hustled the recruit to the excellent care of the Naval Commandos' crack medic's. The recruit completely recovered in the morning.

The rest of us had hardly a breather when Stu and three more burly U.S. SEALs snapped us through hundreds of pushups, sit-ups and eight-count bodybuilders, then sent us for a mud bath before our nightly round of rowing — which almost ended in tragedy at dawn.

A large stingray stung Seven Meals in the

leg as he straddled a tubular gunwale of the other Avon and he collapsed into unconsciousness. His buddy carried him to a clinic where a couple of hours later, Lt. Palacios informed us, he had died. Seven Meals really did not die; Lt. Palacios was playing head games to test our psychological mettle. We believed him, though, putting the swollen body of a sleeping Seven Meals into a pickup truck for a trip to the hospital. It was a shock to see him resurrected the next day.

The afternoon of the last day was the most enjoyable part of the course. We danced in the shade to the funny songs of an albino veteran, then traded jokes. In low tide, we competed in leap-frog races and wrestling matches of two-man teams riding piggy-back, then somersaulted in the briny slime. I gashed my knee on a rock. The salty goo burned my wound. I bit my lip to bear the pain.

"Don't worry," said a recruit, chuckling. "The mud will stop the bleeding." The American advisers also had a good sense of humor — but at our expense.

"Hey, I'm your friend," said a blond, mustachioed SEAL as we wallowed in the mud. "Yeah, you can call me Jack." (The name is changed for security reasons.)

"Yes, sir, captain," we answered.

"No, call me Jack. After all, aren't we buddies?"

"Yes, Jack," we replied.

"Hey, you're calling your captain by his first name," screamed Stu, throwing his arms in the air. "What a lack of respect. Everyone, pushups. Now!"

Jack chuckled. "What's my name?" said the U.S. Navy lieutenant who was called captain in the Salvadoran system of rank.

"Captain, sir," we answered, out of breath.

"What? I told you to call me Jack. You're insubordinate. Everyone, pushups!"

"Do you like cookies?" asked Stu with a devilish smile. I knew he was pulling some trick.

"Yeah," answered the recruits.

"Good, we'll make sugar cookies," said Stu. He ordered us to roll in the mud, then in the sand.

Stu could not resist singling me out for a joke. While we lay counting stars in the black of night, a Salvo NCO whispered in my ear that my uncle was calling long distance. I believed him in my groggy state and started to walk to the nearest phone.

"Hey, where're you going, recruit?" shouted Stu.

"To talk to my uncle, sir," I replied.

"No you're not, recruit. You're going to count stars. Now on your back," Stu ordered, grinning.

Probably the cruelest joke was when the advisers formed us to supposedly count down the last seconds of the course. "Four. Three. Two," we shouted, smiling.

"Wait a minute, Stu," intervened a husky U.S. instructor. "Your watch is an hour fast."

"Ah, fuck," said a disappointed recruit.



After graduation these webfooted warriors patrol El Salvador's borders with the sea.

"This is never going to end."

For the last hour we did head-stands and lay counting stars. A Salvo sergeant threw a plastic plate of water into my face with velocity of a Nolan Ryan fast ball when he caught me drifting asleep. But we would be able to sleep soon. At midnight the course ended. The advisers gathered us in a circle and shook our hands. "Congratulations, men. You are now Naval Commandos," they said. We were ecstatic and hugged each other. We huddled and put our hands together in the center, then shouted, "Commando," several times.

"Good job," said Jack, slapping me on the back with a smile. "Come by sometime and I'll buy you a beer." We showered (the base water pump was finally fixed after we suffered without fresh running water for the last three days), then took a well-deserved snooze.

According to the SEALs, this is the toughest basic training course in El Salvador. No other program there has The Three Days of Hell. Our class was exceptional. Twenty-three of 26 Commando candidates passed. And only two men dropped out because of injuries. This is a remarkable accomplishment, considering the Salvadoran Navy has no obligatory hitch and its personnel can leave service whenever they wish, in contrast to the Army and Air Force which require their male members to serve two-year stints. It was a testament to our drive.

Our graduation ceremony took place 14 June. Under a sunny sky, Captain Villalta, wearing his formal, cream-colored dress uniform, presented us with the diplomas we struggled so hard to earn.

"Commando Energico," he said with a smile, shaking my hand, "it's my pleasure to give you this diploma."

"Thank you, sir," I replied. I was proud to be the only gringo to receive it. ✖



Coveted diploma, awarded to few Salvadorans, and only one gringo: SOF's Steve Salisbury.

Hungry? Bloody buzzard tests the palate of the first gringo Naval Commando.



SOF FALKLANDS

ARGENTINE ELITE

Combined Special Ops in Las Malvinas

by Captain Javier Aristu



Bundled against the South Atlantic chill, Argentine commandos pause during an operation.



The Falklands campaign is over, but the commandos are still the elite within the Argentine Army.



During a lull in the action near Darwin, Argentine commandos pose for photos in front of their helicopter.

British victory over Argentina in the war for the Falklands put those tiny islands in the South Atlantic on the map for everyone to see. But they had played an important part in British/Argentine relations for many years and a confrontation between the two nations had been brewing for some time. On 2 April 1982 foreign policy maneuvering had proved futile and the Argentine Army sent its troops to occupy the defenseless islands — a scenario that the British had feared for over a century.

Argentina had claimed the islands — they called them the Malvinas — since 1770, when Argentina was still under Spanish rule. Britain didn't see things that way and has kept a small military presence in the Falklands since 1771.

Because the U.S. government came out in support of the British during the crisis, it's only natural that the press reported their side of the conflict. Besides, it was an easier angle to cover. As a result, only rarely did we get to read accounts written by Argentine soldiers who fought there. SOF wants both sides to be known, so here is an account of the fight by an Argentine officer who was there.

ON 2 April 1982, the same day Argentina occupied the Malvinas Islands, the Army General Staff ordered the Special Team "Halcon 8" commander to be on the alert to operate in the South Atlantic Operations Theater (Spanish acronym TOAS). Its members were all qualified for commando operations. (AEC in Argentine current military abbreviations).

The CO, Major Mario Castagneto, was a charismatic young infantry officer who was also a staff graduate. Three days later the preparatory order was followed with precise instructions for the organization of 601st Commando Company, based mostly on "Halcon 8" personnel. In order to reach operational strength, AEC officers and NCOs were called in from every Army unit.

In 10 days they were organized and equipped for combat duties. Of the 64-man group, only a few of the men were not AECs (Blowpipe operators and medical person-

nel). Between 15 and 26 April, training was intensified and available intelligence on terrain and the enemy was carefully studied. On the 24th, Maj. Castagneto, the S-2, the S-3 and the Signal Officer flew to Puerto Argentino (Port Stanley) for reconnaissance and agreements with other elements already stationed in the islands.

The next day the 601st was ordered to prepare for an airlift in 45 hours. On the 27th at 1100 hours they arrived at Puerto Argentino and were assigned directly to the Military Governor and Joint Forces Commander, General Menendez. Soon after their arrival Maj. Castagneto ordered the 601st to patrol, set night ambushes and look to population control. The 1st Platoon operated in Green Peach and Estancia House, the 2nd operated in the northwest area of Borbon Island, where they requisitioned some small arms and a radio set from a local farmer. The 3rd Platoon patrolled Fitzroy.

On 1 May Maj. Castagneto with the 1st Platoon arrested Mr. Pitaluga, a local farmer, who had contacted the British aircraft-carrier *Hermes* on his radio set. The radio was requisitioned and Pitaluga was put under MP custody.

Two days later 1st Platoon reconned five beaches on the Murrel Peninsula where enemy activity had been reported the night before. They stumbled on a Zodiac rubber boat with outboard motor and some lifejackets with the inscription "Hermes" stenciled on them.

The following day several night ambushes were set in different points of the islands, without any contact with the enemy.

On 6 May Marine Amphibious Commandos — who captured important objectives the night the Islands were occupied — linked up with the 1st Platoon and, transported on Air Force helicopters, reconned and conducted population control exercises in an attempt to find infiltrators on Sea Lion and Bougainville Islands.

Two commando officers started selecting suitable firing positions for the future employment of the Blowpipe missiles near Murrel bridge. San Carlos Establishment

was reconned and a population control program instituted as there had been information on enemy commandos operating in the area. A 25th Infantry Regiment company under 1st Lieutenant Esteban was sent to the place to stay there as an early warning in case of a major landing.

On the 15th a British commando raid succeeded in destroying 11 aircraft at an emergency airport in Borbon Island. The following morning the island was combed by commando patrols without success — the raiders had made their escape.

A so-called "anti-aircraft ambush squad" was created and one of them was sent to Port Howard as enemy air activity was getting intense there. On the 21st, 1st Lieutenant Fernandez shot down a Harrier jet with a Blowpipe missile after two near misses. Its pilot, Lieutenant Glover, ejected and was rescued from the water unharmed. An ambush was set northeast of Howard waiting for any search-and-rescue teams that might appear looking for the pilot. Evidently they had decided to leave Lt. Glover with us for the rest of the war. Nevertheless the ambush was overflown repeatedly by British helicopters and Harrier jets without any serious intention of landing.

That same day another Harrier was shot down over Howard with a Blowpipe fired by an NCO. The next day a search-and-rescue patrol was ordered to look for two Argentine pilots that had ejected near Howard the day before; they were found and brought safely back.

The British Task Force started a full-scale landing on San Carlos beach early on the morning of 21 May. Argentine troops there fought a fierce retrograde operation but finally a beachhead was formed assembling no less than three battalion-size units including full fire, combat and logistic support.

At dawn on the 22nd the Argentine Air Force GOE (Special Operations Group), Navy Amphibious Commandos and Army 601st were sent on an intelligence collection operation to the beachhead. They operated near Mt. Sussex, Mt. Simon and Chatta Hill respectively, obtaining important information on enemy

THE COMMANDO COURSE IN THE ARGENTINE ARMY

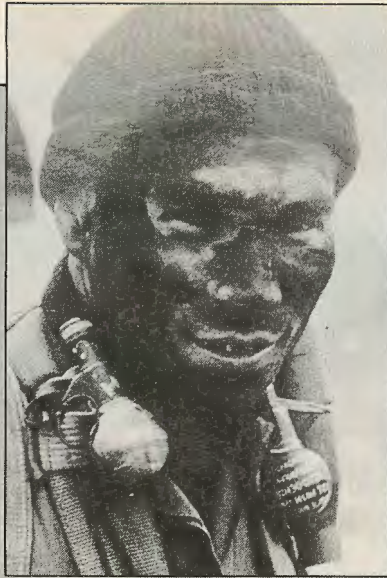
Commando training in the Argentine Army started in 1964 at the infantry school in the city of Córdoba. The course was directed by Lieutenant Colonel Narvaja Lique and counted on the advice of Major W. Coll, a U.S. Army Ranger and Korean War veteran.

During the early days of the training course — between 1964 and 1968 — the course was 30 days long and was run entirely in Córdoba. The training objective was similar to that of the U.S. Army Rangers with missions in the lowest tactical level and short-range operations.

In 1967 the commando course was suspended and in its place a counter-guerrilla course was given. When the commando course was reinstated a year later counter-guerrilla techniques were incorporated into the program. New techniques and procedures in intelligence collection in subversive environments, amphibious and underwater techniques, survival in different geographical regions, airborne assault and advanced marksmanship courses were added. Commando personnel were sent abroad to attend foreign courses in Colombia ("Lanceros"), Brazil (commandos), Peru (commandos), USA (Rangers — Special Forces) and Panama (Operaciones de Jungle).

In 1968 the course was extended to 45 days and it took trainees to different geographical environments throughout Argentina. Plains, marshes, low mountains, jungle and high mountains tested the trainees' skills to the utmost. Personnel for the course were all volunteers from among the officers and NCOs who had passed a selection board.

In 1974 the training program was reoriented toward the type of operations the Army was carrying on within its borders. Operations in the revolt-wracked Tucumán area demanded commando-trained personnel and it was there that the commandos took their first casualties. Captain Cáceres died in an ambush set by ERP communist guerrillas in Tucumán.



The face of war: This Argentine commando's smile will fade as the war drags on.

The existing problems in Tucumán provided a realistic backdrop for the pupils — they operated in combat and reconnaissance patrols against an enemy that was very real. In 1976, during its jungle environment phase in the province of Misiones, the commando trainees were involved in an anti-guerrilla operation in which they succeeded in killing a local guerrilla leader. During this period commandos were always in high demand by all commanders whose units were committed in counter-guerrilla operations.

In 1978 the first stable organization was created when commando personnel formed an anti-terrorist unit to provide security for the World Football Championships. They were designated the "Halcon 8" Special Team.

By 1979 the commando course had evolved into its present form. Today the course is a demanding three-month school with a high dropout rate. By any nation's standards, the course is tough.

The South Atlantic War with Great Britain gave the commandos their first test in conventional warfare. The reputation of the commandos was untarnished by the Argentine defeat in the Malvinas. The 601st and 602nd Companies fought with outstanding courage and their reputation has encouraged many Argentine soldiers to apply for the course.

mando company. Its newly nominated commander Major Aldo Rico was also an infantry officer and staff graduate with a reputation for being a practical and daring man. All AEC personnel that remained on the continent were called in. Those selected were rallied in the infantry school and on 26 May the company obtained an acceptable strength of 50 men. Weapons were hastily issued and some training on new material

was given.

The airlift to the Malvinas was executed in two echelons. The first carried personnel and their individual equipment while the second brought up all the logistics and collective equipment.

After several frustrated attempts the 602nd made it to Puerto Argentino on the 27th. Intense British aircraft activity and the local tactical situation kept the airport constantly on red alert. All flights from Comodoro Rivadavia had to be flown no higher than 10 meters so as to evade radar detection. The second echelon landed on the 28th after dawn.

Meanwhile, the 601st continued patrolling and reconning the Mt. Kent and Mt. Simon area. A combat ration and ammunition depot was set up on Mt. Simon for future operations support.

On 27 May the 3rd Platoon that had been occupying Big Mountain was relieved by the 2nd Platoon. From there massive enemy helicopter movements were observed. In order to get a better view of things, another hill four kilometers away was occupied. These patrols radioed important information on enemy area movements to HQ in Puerto Argentino.

At dawn on the next day, 1st Platoon commanded by Captain Vercest was given the mission to occupy Mt. Simon and from there establish battlefield surveillance posts, patrols and, if possible, AA or land ambushes. They operated without being detected until the 31st when they received the order to return. On the march back they were attacked by a force of 50 heliborne troops. In the desperate firefight that ensued, most of the 11-man patrol was killed or wounded and all the survivors were taken prisoner. The British suffered two dead and at least seven wounded.

The rest of the Army commandos, the GOE and the 601st were ordered to occupy some hills northwest of Mt. Kent. They were to allow the advancing British forces to pass them by and then harass their rear logistical line. When the Argentines arrived at their positions they were ambushed by British forces who were ready for just such a ploy.

The Argentines managed to withdraw to other positions losing three killed, one wounded and one prisoner. Apparently the enemy suffered some unconfirmed casualties, too. In that same operation an Army Puma helicopter transporting men from FE/GN 601st (National Gendarmerie) was shot down by two enemy aircraft. In the crash two officers and four NCOs were killed. Most of the wounded were rescued in a gallant action by 2nd Commander San Emeterio and 1st Sergeant Pepe who miraculously escaped the burning wreck unscathed before it exploded.

On the 31st, all Army and Gendarmerie commandos were put under Major Rico's command as senior CO. As a matter of fact, they had operated as a single unit almost from the very beginning, so the move was for appearances only.

activity in those uncertain hours.

On 24 May a patrol recovered equipment from Argentine helicopters shot down near Howard. New AA ambushes were prepared, but by then enemy aircraft flew prudently out of Blowpipe range. The same day the 601st engaged RAF (Royal Air Force) and RN (Royal Navy) jets over Howard.

In Buenos Aires the general staff ordered the immediate organization of another com-



Commandos head out on a patrol. Troopers in black berets are Blowpipe operators on loan from the Cavalry School.

An operation was launched to recover missing patrols supposedly still in contact with the enemy near Mt. Kent. Captured Land-Rovers and all-terrain motorcycles were employed for the approach. During the march they came under artillery fire from Mt. Kent, but they suffered no casualties. When they arrived at Two Sisters they continued the march on foot and on motorcycle. A seven-man patrol led by Maj. Castagneto made it to the northern edge of Mt. Kent where they observed enemy movements.

Suddenly they started taking mortar fire that damaged one of the motorcycles and had to be abandoned. By 2200 the patrols were pulled out. An officer, 1st Lieutenant Lauria, remained behind enemy lines helping an NCO who had been hit in the foot. After evading enemy patrols and carrying the wounded man on his shoulder for two days, he was finally rescued by a three-man patrol on motorcycles that volunteered to search for them.

Up to that moment the commandos had proved themselves as the most reliable intelligence source the Argentine general commander had. On one occasion a lone commando, Captain Fernandez, was sent on a recon mission behind enemy lines. He located nearly all the British artillery positions west of Mt. Kent before he was discovered by the British. They pursued him with mortar fire in a deadly mile-long race back to safety.

On the 3rd the whole 602nd — already

diminished to 40 percent of its strength — attacked enemy-held Mt. Wall successfully. The enemy withdrew, leaving armament and equipment on the field.

Three days later a 601st patrol infiltrated 30 kilometers to Mt. Rosalia near San Carlos to observe the beachhead. Another patrol raided enemy-held Murrel Bridge. In that action signal codes and ciphers were captured along with other equipment left by the British that had defended the position.

Meanwhile, on the other island, the Gran Malvina (West Falkland), the commando patrol assigned to Howard detected and encircled two British SAS men. One was captured and the other, a Captain Hamilton, was killed while covering his companion's frustrated escape. Their radio set, ciphers, codes and other FO equipment were captured.

On 9 June an ambush near Mt. Wall was prepared jointly by the 601st, 602nd and FE/GN 601st. As they sat in their ambush positions they came under heavy artillery and machine-gun fire and were attacked by a strong British force. Argentine artillery came to the rescue allowing them to maneuver to a better position from where they counterattacked. It is estimated that the British suffered many casualties. An Argentine officer and one NCO died in the action.

The following day several ambushes were set to prevent infiltration to Puerto Argentino. As there was evidence of enemy agents operating in the area, population control exercises were carried out on the

locals. As the British forces started the encirclement of Puerto Argentino some commandos were detached for the security of Gen. Menendez's Command Post. The 601st was ordered into blocking positions near the hills located north of Puerto Argentino Bay as a probable avenue of approach. The 602nd occupied area northeast of Moody Brook with the intention of delaying the enemy's advance. In that position they received intense artillery fire. These were the last combat missions before the surrender of Argentine Forces on 14 June 1982.

The Army commandos (Gendarmerie included) had an effective strength of 154 men when hostilities began. Four officers and eight NCOs were killed and four officers and six NCOs wounded. Three commandos were awarded Argentina's highest military decoration, the Heroic Gallantry in Combat Cross (two awarded posthumously), eight received the Gallantry in Combat Medal (two awarded posthumously) and 14 others received Abnegation and Sacrifice Medals and mention in dispatches for outstanding behavior.

The battle for the Malvinas is over. Both sides acquitted themselves with distinction and honor in a small corner of the world that was virtually unknown before the war. Remarkable acts of bravery and individual heroism marked this little war which pitted the elite forces of both sides against each other.

May they never be forgotten. ✖

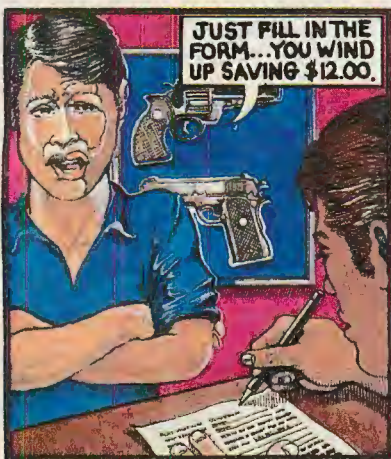


Argentine commandos stand near the wreckage of a British Harrier.



British Harrier pilot (center) is rescued from the water by Argentine soldiers.

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SOF EUROPE

EAST GERMAN NAVY

Warsaw Pact's Ace in the Hole

by Tom Starr



“**T**HE Soviet Union is attempting to take control of Europe by military means,” says West German Defense Minister Manfred Wörner. He contends Russian use of offensive military and political concepts proves the Kremlin considers war an extension of politics.

In 1977, Belgian General Robert Close claimed Warsaw Pact forces could reach the Rhine in less than 48 hours. Western intelligence sources speak of 253 Warsaw Pact divisions — six million soldiers with 60,000 tanks. The communists have got more airplanes, more short-range missiles, more medium-range missiles, and more strategic ballistic missiles. But what about communist navies? Are they up to the standard of their NATO counterparts?

According to the West German Defense Department *White Book 1983*, Warsaw Pact naval forces can float more cruisers, half again as many submarines, and twice as many torpedo boats as NATO. Those figures raise more questions, though. Are Warsaw Pact fleets operating along the same strategic

ALONG FOR THE RIDE

Tom Starr is a correspondent with Pacific News Service who currently resides in West Germany.

LEFT: The East German Navy uses small, fast patrol boats to fulfill its Warsaw Pact obligation. Photo: Fotozirkel Rostock

BELOW: Soviet-made Mi-8 Hip helicopters escort an East German patrol boat on a mission. Photo: Fotozirkel Rostock



The Straits of Denmark in the Baltic Sea are a key objective of communist aims in Western Europe and the East German Navy plays an important part in the plan. Photo: Fotozirkel Rostock

lines as NATO? Let's look at the East German fleet — perhaps the keystone to the success or failure of Soviet intentions in Western Europe.

Lutz Ahrend is the 34-year-old captain of a Warsaw Pact torpedo boat. His eyes are deeply set and he gazes at the horizon standing tall in a bright orange combat suit on the bridge of a 130-foot, 200-ton Russian-made combat patrol boat.

“Our coast duty is rough as the sea itself,” he says. “When we head out to sea, we never know exactly what's waiting for us. We've got to be ready for just about anything.”

Wot molodzy — tough guys — in the language of their Russian comrades, the East German *Volksmarine* is actually pretty lightweight. With about 100 boats — nearly all of the coast patrol type — the East German Navy is considered by Pentagon consultants to equal the naval strength of Denmark.

Continued on page 114





SOF PISTOLCRAFT

QUELL

New Concepts in the Kill Zone

by Robert Jones

Paris Theodore developed the ASP concealable 9mm automatic pistol and the now-collectible line of Seventrees, Ltd., holsters. His latest invention, the Quell System for pistol combat, may improve an already good reputation.

The Quell System is revolutionary, and appears to address several problems. Yet there are obvious problems with peripheral vision, addressing widely spaced multiple targets, low penetration of pistol ammo and difficulty of retraining experienced shooters. SOF experts will present their critique of Theodore's system in a future issue.

No matter the potential problems, the Quell System presents an excellent series of targets and an aggressively innovative approach to combat marksmanship, solidly grounded in physiology and the latest studies in the operation of the nervous system.

Further information regarding the Quell System and special targets is available from: Paris Theodore, Dept. SOF, TECHPAK Corporation, 115 E. 62nd St., New York City, NY 10021. Phone: (212) 980-1199.

BULLETS don't knock men down: That only happens in movies. Bullets kill by causing leaks in the circulatory system or by disrupting the nervous system. And bullets produce immediate incapacitation *only* by disrupting the nervous system. Providing a targeting system that centers on nerve pathways and a technique for applying fire to those pathways is the purpose of a revolutionary combat pistol method: the Quell System.

Targeting the nerve centers is the first step. The Quell Zone is that target area where a hit will achieve instantaneous debilitation of a human target. The Quell Zone consists of the kidneys, the spinal column, and the medulla oblongata (the thickening of the spinal cord under the brain that houses nerve centers which control breathing and circulation). And to help you find this zone, it appears on the back of Quell System patented targets.

Quell System targets are composed of photographs of human figures in varying dress and poses. And they are never neatly framed in the middle of the target. Learning to judge the position of the Quell Zone in the human body is essential to the system. Proof

Paris Theodore, developer of system, demonstrates Quell Stance. Photo: David Brand Spigel

VETERAN RHETORICIAN

Major Robert W. Jones recently completed his last tour of duty with the U.S. Army at Ft. Benning, Ga. He plans to cap a career with Special Forces by completing his doctorate in American Literature, and hopes to publish his dissertation on fiction of the Vietnam War.

of success is shown by inspecting the rear of the target after firing.

Clearly, the Quell Zone is a precise target, more precisely defined than target areas of other combat shooting systems. But precision is necessary to stop hostile action. And precision is the essence of the Quell System.

To achieve this greater precision, the Quell System uses the Quell Stance. This is the most unusual element of the system, and some will have to conquer years of shooting habit to adopt it. But the effort will pay dividends in more accurate, more rapid fire, even under great stress.

There is no magic to the Quell Stance. Although it takes some getting used to, and it is different from the widely used Weaver stance, the Quell Stance offers advantages in speed, stability and recoil absorption.

To assume the Quell Stance the shooter stands with shoulders almost in line with the target. The right hand grips the weapon solidly and the right arm is extended toward the target, straight as a rifle stock. The left hand supports the shooting hand as with the Weaver position and similar isometric tension is employed.

The difference is that the tension is applied to bring the bicep of the shooting arm into a firm point of contact with the pectoral muscle of the right side of the chest. This affords consistent positioning of the weapon and further aids in building a recoil-resistant posture. Furthermore, the Quell Stance eliminates most of the play characteristic of the Weaver and isosceles-triangle positions.

Now, drop the head as if to see the toes. Then roll the head laterally to the right so that the right cheek firmly contacts the bicep of the shooting arm. The right eye can't see the sights from this position, so the left eye is aligned with the sights.

This contortion sounds uncomfortable and impractical . . . but this has to be tried to be believed. Sights and eye are virtually automatically locked into a constant relationship. Instant and precise sight picture is the result.

Sighting with the left eye is an obstacle to learning the Quell Stance, except for those right-handers with a strong left eye. But there is a great advantage to using the left eye this way. When the shooter locks into this position he has grooved into an automatic, instantaneous sight picture with speed and consistency. With this comes a sense of calmness and control that aids in mastering the adrenalin surges known to competitors, hunters, and combat veterans.

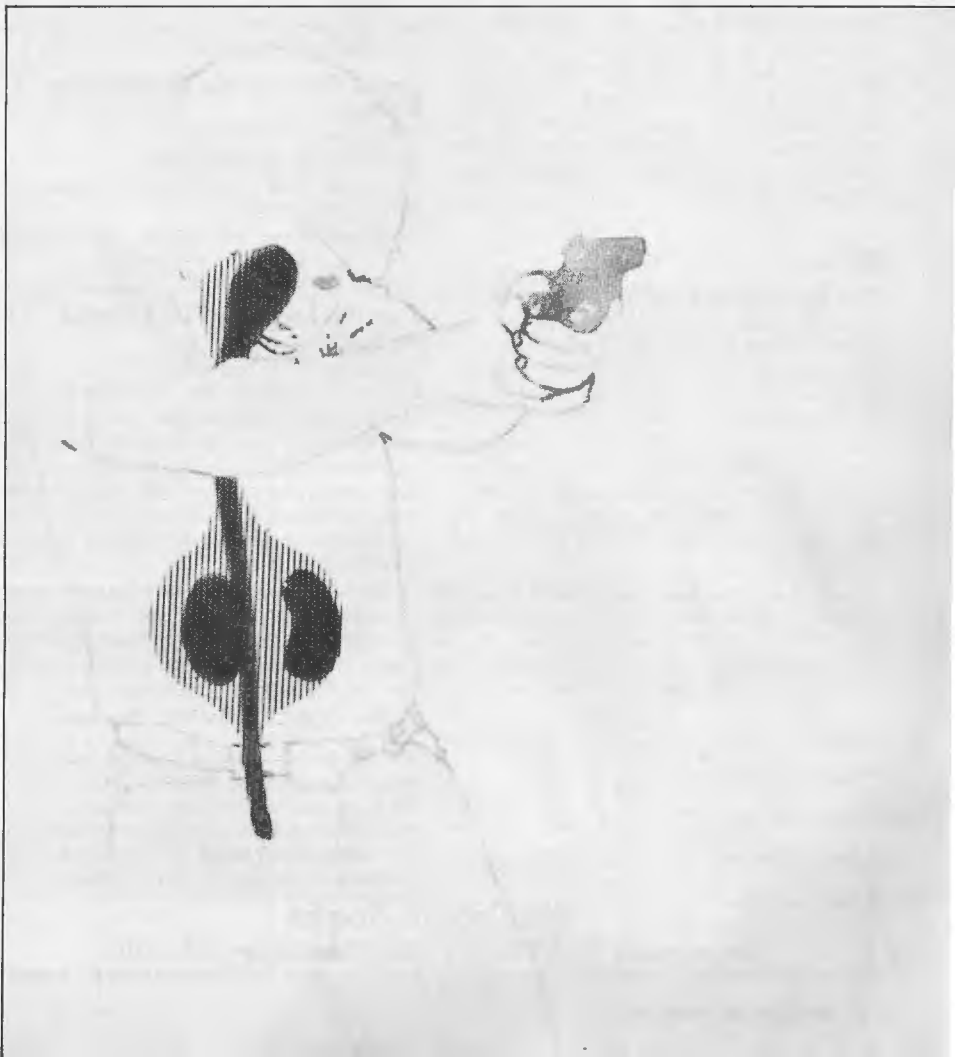
But there is a deeper cause for this reaction. Man's brain has two sides with roughly divided functions. The right hemisphere — connected to the left eye — is more creative and conceptual, and less verbal than the left side.

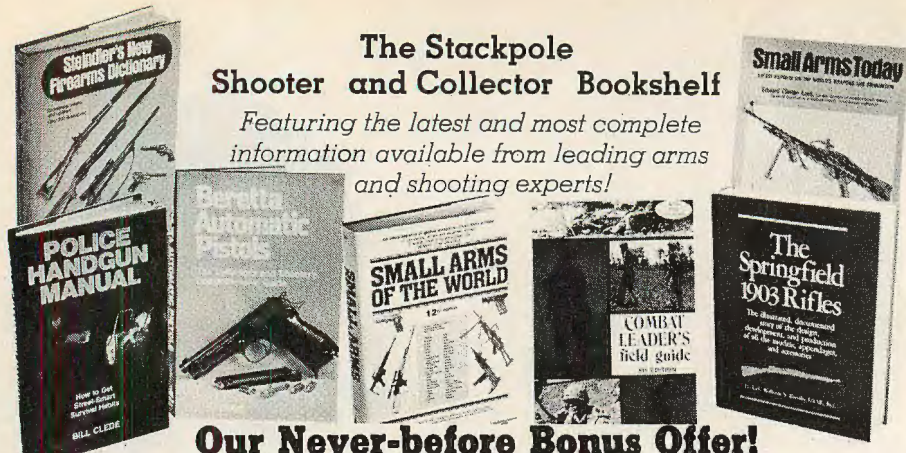
In theory — and in the practice of the Quell System — sighting with the left eye allows the shooter a quicker, calmer, more conceptual and instinctive grasp of the threat. And the result should be a faster, surer, more accurate and deadly response. ✕



Front of Quell System target features realistic figure and off-center framing.

Back of Quell System target shows graphically if shooter has hit — or missed — Quell Zone.





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AFGHANISTAN MEDCAP

Continued from page 35

still out in the desert in the light of day. The guides asked everyone they saw about the location of the group that we were looking for.

By 0600 it had been light for an hour and we were still out in the open. People and their livestock were headed for the hills. Everyone knew that this was the day that the battle was going to start. We fell in with some families going up in the hills. A young woman was ahead of us, carrying a single-barrel shotgun. It would have made a great picture, but taking pictures of Afghan women is much more dangerous than shooting at Russians.

Looking back I could see three tank columns. They were headed our way but were at least five miles away. Our guides found someone to lead us to the mujahideen camp that we had been looking for. We were told that we would be within sight of a Russian outpost most of the way. In the open, we walked about 40 yards apart. The group in front of us were receiving sniper fire from a 12.7mm or a 14.5mm AA gun. Fortunately, the fire was inaccurate and the MiGs and choppers were staying out in the desert.

At 0900 we arrived at the camp four hours too late. Almost everyone had gone and the battle was to start in one hour. The unit commander was there with a badly sprained ankle. They were putting him on a donkey so he could get down to his men. I gave him four of my Motrin tablets with instructions to take one every three hours. We all had been up at least 28 hours and had walked 30 miles last night. There was no way for me to go down to the attack area. We just lay down under an open-sided tent.

Two MiGs flew over. One saw our camp and started an attack. The muj had a 12.7mm HMG in front and back of the camp. As they started throwing tracers, the Russian pilot lost interest in us. As the MiG turned he let his bombs go, hitting a hillside about one-quarter mile away. The pilot must have radioed our position because we started receiving artillery fire. It was hitting about 300 yards above and behind the camp. A few mortar rounds fell within 50 yards. The muj just smiled and pointed at each hit. We were just too tired to move from the tent. After a few minutes the Russians got tired of trying to kill us.

At 1000 we could hear the mujahideen start the attack with a rocket barrage. I slept until 1300. I was told that we would be leaving Afghanistan in two days. At 1700 two muj with one .303 and a camel showed up to lead us out on the same trail we had come in on. But first the mujahideen stopped to pray, so Habib took my picture on the camel hoping to use up the slow film.

I tried to keep 1000-speed film in my camera so I could shoot in low light. You don't want to use a flash. It was just about dark when I put my camera away on the

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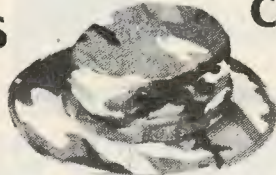
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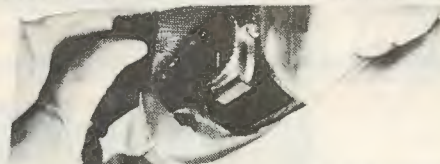
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camel. Then two Hinds started bombing below us. It looked like the front Hind took a hit from a SAM in the rear. There was a puff of black smoke but no real flash. The Hind turned left and started dropping heat flares on parachutes.

After dark, Howard said he could not take the camel anymore. He was going to walk, even if it was barefooted. I had not been on the camel 15 minutes when it fell off a very steep trail. I jumped to the high side of the trail, getting hold of a small bush. The bush kept me from a long fall. The camel fell several yards below the trail. It took the muj about 10 minutes to retrieve the camel. I will never get on a camel again.

At 2300 we stopped and had tea and slept until 0100.

Day 18

By 0130 we were off into the desert and, like last night, we would pass other groups going the other way with not a word said. It was an uneventful trip this time. By 0700 hours we were at a small village drinking tea. We only had a few more hours and we would be out. We met 300 muj on the trail in small groups going to the battle. At 1200 we were back at the tea house which we had taken off from on a night 17 days before.

Pakistan

By midnight I was back in Peshawar taking a hot bath.

The next day I found Pat and Jim had left, leaving no instructions on what was needed from me. I had agreed to stay for three

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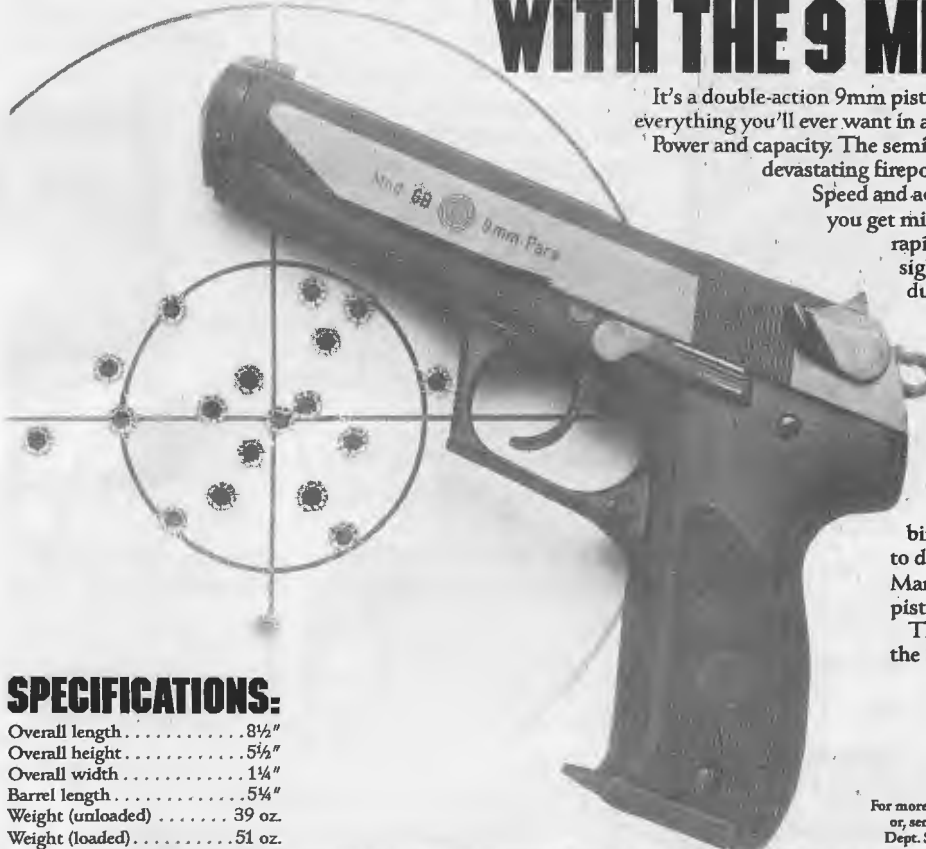
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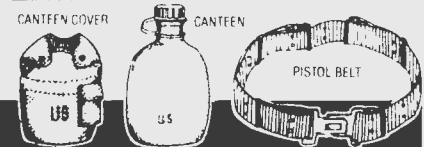


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 Genuine Leather Chin Strap \$2.00 each.
 Acorn Hat Cord (as shown) \$6.00 each.
 (Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue)

****EVERYTHING IN THIS AD ON SALE!!**
Deduct 10% from All Merchandise (except Strobe Light which is 25% Off) When Ordering!!

SUPER SPECIAL! \$10.00 OFF ANY STROBE LIGHT.
 Offer good for this issue of Soldier of Fortune only!!! To get sale price you MUST mention this issue of SOF. Offer good only thru Dec. 1985.

Distress Marker Rescue Strobe Light— This is a high intensity strobe beacon which penetrates rain and fog and is visible for distances up to 15 miles. Standard pilot survival gear, this light is about the size of a pack of cigarettes (1" x 2" x 4") yet it puts out a dazzling white flash (250,000 lumens) 50 times per minute for up to 9 hours. The unit is waterproof and shockproof. Sold complete with case and 1 battery. **\$39.50 each.**
 Replacement Batteries for Strobe Light **\$9.95 each**

THE CAMOUFLAGE TIE The Basic Wardrobe Accessment for Every Well Dressed Merc. Donchathink?
GREAT GIFT IDEA! Two great things about our ties: First, they're made especially for us in the USA from genuine GI woodland camo material of 50% cotton/50% nylon so they can be washed or dry cleaned. Second, they do equally well with anything in your wardrobe from your most formal blue pin stripe suit to your Hawaiian shirt with the funny looking fishes on it. **Choose from: Pointed and (traditional and conservative) or Straight End (punk and ironicistic) \$9.95 each; 2 for \$18.95.**

Ranger Combat Cap—Woodland Camouflage—latest Army issue. This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tucked into the hat when the weather's balmy. **Sizes run small! Also available in Olive Drab (OD) Green. \$9.00 each.**

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

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

Regulation GI Dog Tags— set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") **\$3.00 each**
 What's to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANYTHING up to 6 lines and 15 spaces per line.
 Printing only **\$2.00 per tag (\$2.00 per set)**

PLEASE, NO DOG TAG IMPRINTING ORDERS BY TELEPHONE.
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USAF Flight Jacket— These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for Intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20° to 55° F.) Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible, outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features: two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sewn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend.
 Specify:
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 New for 1985/86 Season!! Long Lengths in Flight Jackets Add \$6.00 per jacket

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

M-65 Field Jackets— This is the basic issue combat jacket. Designed for complete utility, these water repellent and windproof jackets feature 4 super large utility pockets, gusseted back for complete mobility and freedom of movement, epaulets, adjustable cuffs and collar, drawstring waistband, hidden hood in collar. Brand new of course. Sizes are XS, S, M, L, XL. Long lengths are available in Olive Drab (OD) Green and Camouflage, Woodland Pattern only. If you're unsure of your size, tell us your chest measurement when ordering. **XS-L... \$55.00 each; XL & all long lengths \$60.50 each; XL long \$85.00 each.**
 Choose from: Olive Drab (OD) Green, Camouflage, Woodland Pattern (latest GI issue to Army), Desert Tan (NATO issue), Camouflage, Tiger Stripe. (Commercially made in a US mil. to military specs)

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Use the "Special Holiday Offer" box on the order form and deduct 20% from any order over \$50.00! It is our way of saying, "Have a good holiday!" **ORDER NOW** as this offer expires January 1, 1986. (Available to retail customers only.)

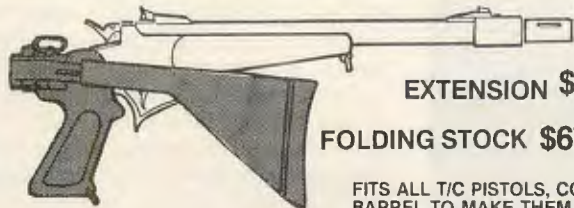
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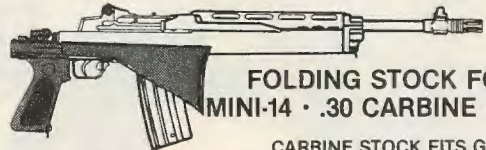


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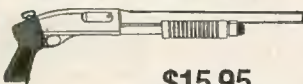
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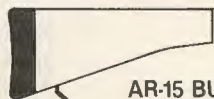
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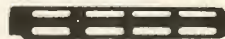
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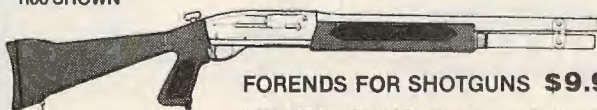


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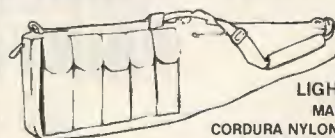
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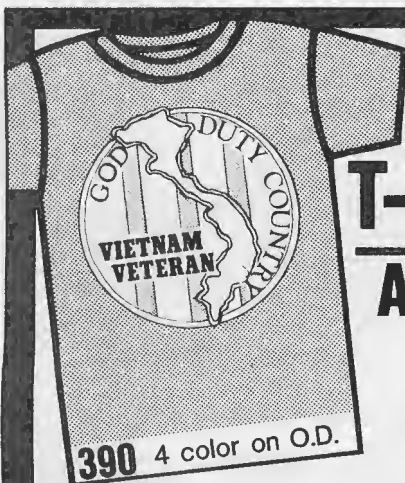
SF-12

FREE SHOULDER STOCK

Czechoslovakia's CZ 75 also offers this best of all possible worlds and these options are much to my liking. The Taurus safety lever is correctly located for effortless manipulation. And 4) a spring-loaded, notched-steel pin in the slide blocks the firing pin's forward movement until the last instant of trigger travel when it is thrust upward by a trigger-operated lever in the frame. This latter mechanism does not protrude through the top of the slide as it does on the 92SB-F and for that reason it is somewhat better than the Beretta.

The trigger itself, with a single-action pull weight of 10.0 lbs., apparently functions as another safety device as one must devote Herculean effort to discharge the piece. There is no overtravel in either the single- or double-action modes, but there is some nasty stacking (also called "loading") at the end of the double-action pull. The double-action pull weight was beyond the limit of my measuring instruments, somewhere over 18 lbs. Although not too much worse than the Beretta 92 series, the Taurus needs trigger work. Why don't they do these things at the factories any more?

An exotic Amazonian hardwood is used to make the grip panels. The dense wood has been left uncheckered (preferable, in my opinion) and given a semigloss hand-rubbed oil finish. Quite handsome, they contrast nicely with the pistol's black metal surfaces. A military lanyard loop is in the usual location on the heel of the frame.



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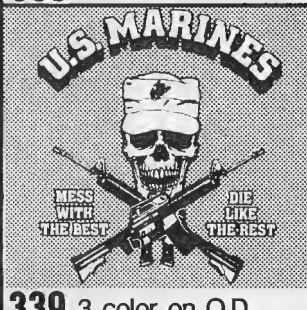
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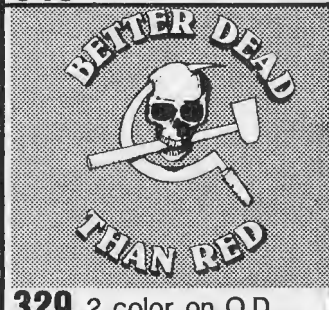
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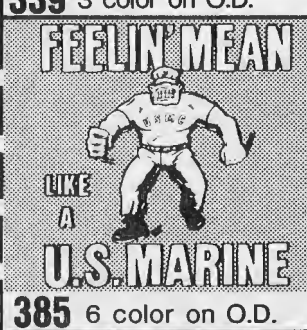
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#1515 — Soldier of Fortune Tour Jacket
 Black nylon satin jacket with flannel lining.
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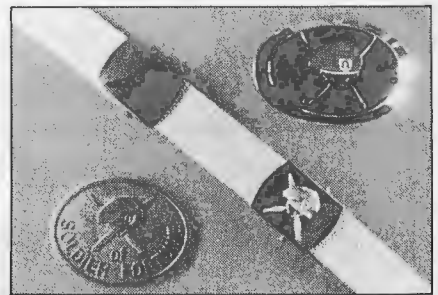
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#1014 — SOF Helicopter. Olive Green. S,M,L,XL. **\$8.95**



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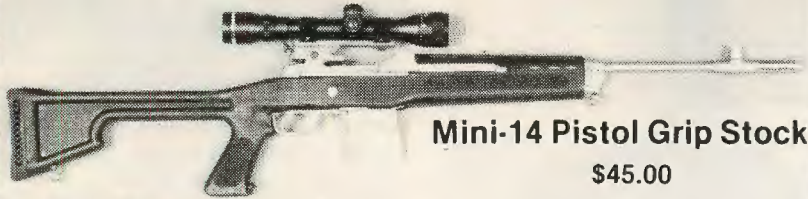
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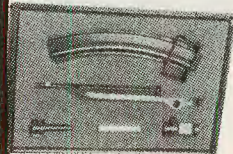


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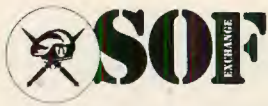


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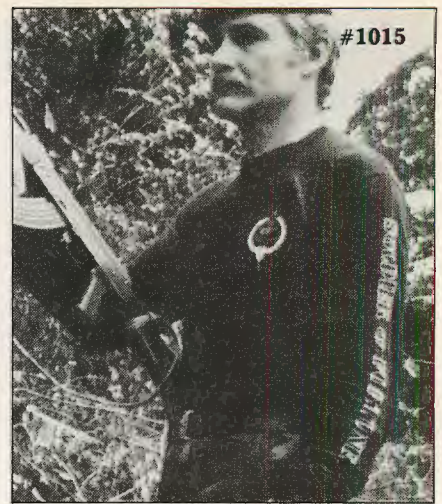


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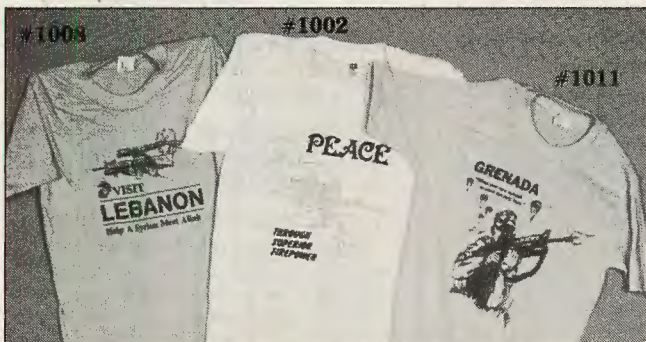
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IRANIAN CONNECTION

Continued from page 39

That ambassador, Hojatolleslam Mohtashami, was the subject of an unusual assassination plot in late 1983 when a gift *Hadith*, or book of Koranic commentary and interpretation, exploded as he opened it. Iran blamed Iraq for the attack, which Mohtashami survived. If he had died, one assumes they would have blamed the Israelis.

According to the Center's scholars, Damascus' links to the Shi'ite groups comprising Islamic Jihad go past the Iranian ambassador and right into the Syrian government. "They all go to Damascus to report to [Deputy President Abdel-Halim] Khaddam, sometimes twice a week. This includes Berri, [Lebanese Druse leader Walid] Jumblatt, and Shi'ite extremist leaders like Mousavi," Calvari said.

In order for Islamic Jihad to operate at all, they have to have "at least Syrian acquiescence, if not cooperation. Their operations are done from Syrian-controlled territory," Center director Yoram Ettinger said.

"Where do all the arms come from, if not from Syria? They can't come from anywhere else. If they come from Iran, it has to be with Syrian consent. If the Syrians disapprove of something, they know how to stop it very quickly. In the eastern part of Lebanon nothing can be done, especially in military matters, without the help or consent of the Syrians. They have controlled this area since 1976, and some areas have been practically annexed," Calvari said.

According to the Center's scholars, there is an arrangement between Iran and Syria that works something like this: Syria supplies Iran with weapons, munitions and diplomatic support in its war with Syria's Arab rival, Iraq. In return, Iran uses Lebanon's substantial pro-Khomeini Shi'ite community to further Syrian interests in Lebanon. In return for this Iranian help, Syria will tolerate or ignore other Iranian-inspired operations, as long as Syrian interests aren't directly threatened.

Iran, which has been at war with Iraq for five years, mounts terrorist operations against that country and its friends in the Arab Gulf, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Syrian intelligence is widely believed to support Iran's anti-Iraqi operations and even mount a few of its own, but it apparently has little or nothing to do with terrorism in the rest of the Persian Gulf. Iran's other Arab ally, Libya, surprisingly seems to have almost no involvement in Iranian terrorist operations in the Gulf or elsewhere, aside from giving Iran weapons and some basic training.



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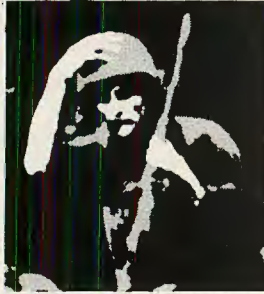
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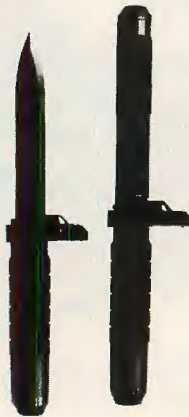
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The main Iranian organizations which terrorize Iraq and the Gulf states are Islamic Jihad and the Al-Da'awa (the Call) Party. Al-Da'awa is a fundamentalist Shi'ite group that advocates a universal Islamic Republic on the Khomeini model. It is particularly active against Iraq and Kuwait, and many of its operations are carried out by native Shi'ites although Lebanese and Iranian nationals are also used. Al-Da'awa is based in Iran, and its headquarters comes under the direct supervision of Iran's Hezbollah.

Iran also mounts terrorist attacks against French targets because France supports Iraq in the Gulf war. There have been no Iranian attacks on Soviet targets despite the Soviet Union's even greater support of Iraq. Iran's long, common border with the Soviet Union and the Soviets' well-known lack of humor may have something to do with this.

On the international front, Iran and its two Arab allies, Libya and Syria, are virulently anti-American and anti-Israeli, and they often coordinate their operations against those two countries. Additionally, Libya and Syria, but not Iran, are actively pro-Soviet, and it would be naive to think there has never been any Soviet involvement in Iran's terror campaign, particularly the 1983 assaults on the U.S. Embassy (which killed seven top CIA operatives) and the Marine barracks in Beirut.

With all this in mind, the various connections shown by the following list of Iran-related terrorism will become apparent:

1980

April — Al-Da'awa supporters launch a bombing campaign in Iraq, but fail in an assassination attempt on Iraqi Deputy Premier Tareq Aziz. Iraq blames Iran.

1981

6 October — Egyptian President Anwar Sadat assassinated during a military parade by Egyptian Army officers thought to have ties to Iran and Libya. Officers claim to belong to the Moslem Brotherhood.

1983

18 April — U.S. Embassy in Beirut destroyed by a suicidal truck-bomber. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

23 October — Suicidal truck-bombers attack U.S. Marine and French paratrooper positions around Beirut — more than 300 killed. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

4 November — Suicidal truck-bombers attack Israeli Army positions in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre — 32 killed, 23 of them Arab prisoners. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

12 December — Seven targets in Kuwait bombed including American and French Embassies. Islamic Jihad claims credit. Suspects interrogated by the Kuwaitis admit belonging to the Al-Da'awa Party and working under Iranian orders.

1984

1 January — Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for putting a bomb aboard a French train at the Marseille railroad station on New Year's Eve.

3 January — French embassy driver Raymond Henry Vautier shot outside the



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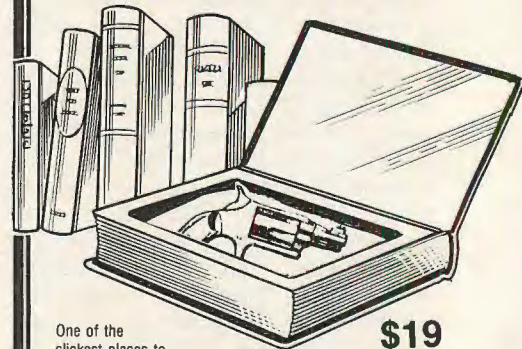
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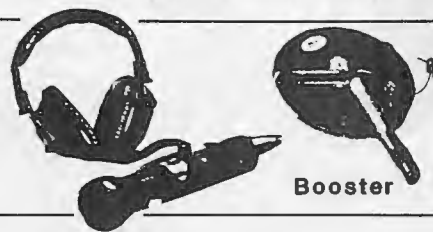
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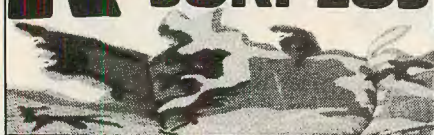
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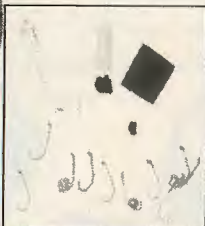
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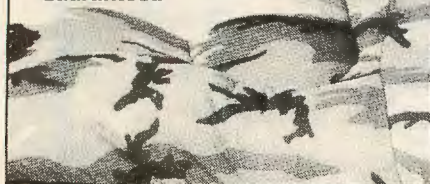
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home of the French Consul-General in Beirut. Islamic Jihad claims credit.

15 January — Dr. Malcom Kerr, president of the American University in Beirut, assassinated. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

17 January — Saudi Arabian Consul Hussein Abdullah Farrash kidnaped in Beirut, released 20 February. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

2 February — *Washington Post* links Syrian intelligence to the "Islamic Jihad" bombing of U.S. Marines on 23 October 1983.

7 February — The Shah's former governor of Tehran, General Gholam Ali Oveissi, and his brother, Colonel Gholam Hossein Oveissi, assassinated in Paris — both shot in the head. Islamic Jihad claims credit. Gen. Oveissi had been condemned to death by the Khomeini regime.

8 February — Khalifa Ahmed Abdel Aziz Al-Mubarak, United Arab Emirates ambassador to France, assassinated in Paris — shot in the back of the head. Islamic Jihad suspected.

July — Libyan diplomat Muhammad Airdress Hamed assassinated in Madrid, Spain. Credit claimed by the Musa Sadr Brigade. Two arrested suspects belong to Hezbollah. The killing was in revenge for Libya's presumed murder of Lebanese Shi'ite leader, Musa Sadr, in 1978.

July-September — Nineteen mine explosions disrupt shipping in the Gulf of Suez and Red Sea. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for laying the mines. Egypt openly voices suspicions of Iranian and Libyan involvement.

6 August — Khaled al-Marzouk, publisher of the anti-Khomeini Kuwaiti newspaper, *Al-Anba'a*, is attacked, and his Pakistani chauffeur is killed in Marbella, Spain. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

14 September — Two Saudis killed in Marbella, Spain. Islamic Jihad claims credit.

19 September — U.S. Embassy Annex in the Beirut suburb of Aukar bombed by a suicide-bomber driving a van. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

27 November — Italians arrest seven Lebanese Shi'ites planning to blow up the U.S. Embassy in Rome with a truck bomb. All thought to be members of Islamic Jihad and/or Hezbollah. Another conspirator arrested earlier in Switzerland. They had detailed plans of the U.S. Embassy and information on routine schedules and movements. Iranian intelligence suspected of involvement.

6 December — Islamic Jihad hijacks a Kuwait Airways jet to Tehran, demanding the release of 14 terrorists held for the December 1983 bombings in Kuwait. The hijackers reportedly belong to Hezbollah. Two American passengers are brutally murdered while the Iranian authorities do nothing. Finally, Iranian "commandos" free the passengers, but the hijackers are not prosecuted or extradited.

1985

28 February — Iraqi assistant cultural

attache at Iraqi Embassy in Kuwait, Hadi Awad Said, and his son are killed when four gunmen assault their home. Iran-backed Al-Da'awa Party suspected.

22 May — Iraqi Popular Army troops find an abandoned Mercedes truck stuck in a sand dune close to Al-Qa'em near Iraq's border with Syria. The truck contains three tons of TNT, eight fuses, three barrels of gasoline, and documents with the insignia of Syria's General Intelligence Directorate, Management Department #275.

25 May — Assassination attempt on the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmed Al-Sabbah. Direct Iranian involvement strongly suspected.

June — Twenty suspects with ties to Iran arrested in Kuwait for possible complicity in the 25 May assassination attempt on the Emir. The actual would-be assassin is identified as Mehdi Ramadan Shah, a pro-Iran Al-Da'awa operative living in Kuwait on a false Pakistani passport.

14 July — Two terrorists hijack TWA Flight 847 at Athens airport. A third would-be hijacker, Ali Atwa, arrested by the Greek authorities in Athens, claims he belongs to Islamic Jihad. He is released when the hijackers threaten to kill the plane's Greek passengers. The original hijackers, who murdered a U.S. Navy diver at Beirut airport, say they are members of Hezbollah. The hostages are finally released on 30 June after intervention by Syria, Iran, and Nabih Berri's Amal militia.

My best information is that four high-ranking Iranian officials probably planned and ordered the hijacking of TWA flight 847 on 14 June; *The New York Times* quotes Sen. Jesse Helms as saying Iran planned the hijacking and trained at least one of the original hijackers.

Helms said would-be hijacker Ali Atwa spent three weeks in training camps near Mashhad and Tehran, a detail I can't confirm independently. He also said an Iranian C-130 Hercules took some Revolutionary Guards' officials to Damascus on 8 June, and that three officials went to Ba'albek, Lebanon, on 10 June to plan the actual hijacking. I have been able to confirm this information independently. Helms didn't name the officials or say who they met with in Ba'albek, but I will rectify that omission here.

A quick perusal of news bulletins from Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) and Tehran's official *Kayhan* newspaper shows several visits by high-ranking Iranians to Syria and Lebanon just prior to the 14 June hijacking.

IRNA reported an 8 June official state visit to Syria by Revolutionary Guards' Minister Rafiq-Doust for talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shahr, and the 5 June *Kayhan* noted that Muhammad Lavosani, General Director for Middle Eastern Affairs of Iran's Foreign Ministry, was in Damascus but would be going to Beirut to meet with Lebanon's Shi'ite leadership. The same issue added that Ayatollah Montazeri's personal representative, Hojatolles-

lam Karou'i, was also being sent to Beirut for talks with Lebanon's Shi'ite leadership.

The 12 June issue of *Kayhan* noted that Lavossani and Karou'i both met with Lebanese Hezbollah leader Fadlullah in Lebanon on 10 June. No site was mentioned, but a reliable Israeli source said they met in Ba'albek.

The meeting with Fadlullah is significant since it was his organization that first held the TWA hostages when they arrived in Lebanon and continued to hold some of them even after Nabih Berri's Amal militia took over. The original hijackers were Hezbollah members.

Perhaps the most interesting Iranian visitor to the area, however, was Hojatolleslam Muhammad Khoeni Kani. IRNA reported Kani's arrival in Damascus for "substantive talks" on 8 June after which he dropped out of sight. Kani, a highly mysterious figure, seems to crop up at moments of crisis. On 4 November, 1979, for example, he led the "Moslem Students" who seized the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, precipitating the Iranian hostage crisis.

Considering the events of the past few years, there is obviously something wrong with America's response to terrorism, Iranian or otherwise. If we reacted appropriately to the situation, these modern-day pirates and political blackmailers would have grave second thoughts about attacking United States and allied targets.

Speaking about Islamic Jihad, Israeli scholar Benni Calvari noted some major flaws in America's response: "The whole intelligence apparatus of the United States is helpless. They are seeking a specific man or woman who was responsible for a particular bomb, and want to find out exactly what happened. It's a very juristic approach, as if they were going to bring these people to court in the United States, with lawyers and everything. They don't seem to realize that the United States is facing a war. It really doesn't matter which individuals were responsible for the bombings. What matters is who gave the orders and which organizations executed them. The United States has been attacked in a war, and they're treating it like a criminal case."

More than 180 years ago President Thomas Jefferson, not exactly noted for a warmongering attitude, knew how to respond to the terrorists of his day, the Barbary Pirates, at a time when the United States Navy was smaller than Portugal's. Now the world's strongest military power, the United States seems to be at a total loss when dealing with today's version of the Barbary Pirates. Perhaps President Reagan was wrong in saying our problem is that "We don't know who they are." Perhaps our real problem is that we no longer know who we are. ✕

**SOF ADS
GET
RESPONSE**

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 20

you're shooting around innocent bystanders. This is exactly the *wrong* round for a hostage situation. And don't even try it in a sidewalk shoot-out.

Finally, this is a special-purpose cartridge that shouldn't be left in your pistol if you're a regular duty cop. Fill one speed-loader, and always put it in the same spot on your belt. Shuck your regular ammo and replace it with the Multiplex rounds before a forced entry or for any projected short-range confrontation.

The best use I can imagine for Multiplex ammo is to stuff a SWAT officer's pistol. The duty cop needs pinpoint accuracy from single slugs, most of the time. But a SWAT team has a much more flexible and comprehensive arsenal than the officer on a beat. He pulls his pistol when the shit has hit the fan and his AR-15 has jammed. A revolver full of Multiplex would be just the ticket out of that fix.

One thing that will surprise you about Multiplex ammo is the company that markets it: Silent Partner, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 612 - 18 Third St., Gretna, LA 70053). Why would the manufacturers of the favorite body armor of

American cops make such destructive ammo?

When I asked Silent Partner's Tim Zuffe that same question, he said: "Many policemen are shot with their own weapons. Multiplex ammo will knock a man off his feet if he's wearing soft body armor. But the increased area of impact and the decreased individual projectile weight will prevent the bullets from penetrating even the *lightest* soft body armor."

Silent Partner is still watching out for the boys in blue. ✕

BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 14

order of compromise in favor of edge-holding simply because industry is not set up to do selective drawing or tempering on a single piece basis, and to do so would not be cost effective. The problem is compounded because stainless steels do not give reliable color readings due to oxide formation at lower temperatures which enable the knifsmith to read the hardness level of the steel. Most manufactured items in our society today are the result of one compromise after another, with manufacturing expediency being a dominant factor.

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Warriors who stake their lives on their weapons have been an uncompromising lot, at least where their arms are concerned. It is this pragmatism that caused fine bladesmithing and tempering techniques to be developed in Europe and the Orient through centuries of hard-earned experience. The hardy soldiers of fortune of yesteryear took a very dim view of bladesmiths whose work failed the rigors of medieval combat.

To have one's sword fail under these conditions was almost always an automatic death sentence. In fact, should a samurai survive the failure of his sword, it was expected that upon his return visit to the swordsmith he would forcibly insert the pieces of the blade into the body of the blademaker beginning with the rectum. This may seem somewhat harsh by current standards, but if such an attitude prevailed today the quality of edged weapons would rise dramatically.

If you are looking for an average knife, most of the commercial and custom knives will do well enough to suit you. If, however, you are looking for the best-cutting, toughest knife that money can buy, you need to be aware that the best and most skilled knifemiths of today can build you a knife with capabilities that most people don't even know exist. If you and your knife routinely go into harm's way, you

really should consider such a blade.

Men who make combat grade cutlery with selectively tempered blades are few in number. The hours are long and hot and the skills and dedication required are great. If you're interested in this type of knife, here's a list of a few knifemakers who make maximum performance knives who will help you begin your search.

Bill Bagwell, P.O. Box 265, Marietta, TX 75566, (214) 835-8441.

Howard Fauchaux, Box 206, Loreauville, LA 70552, (318) 299-6467.

John Smith, P.O. Box 293, Newnan, IL 61942, (217) 837-2952. ✉

FULL AUTO

Continued from page 16

worst 5.56mm NATO cartridge magazine, that of the M16, to one of the world's most reliable — although heavy — assault rifles. For more information contact Magnum Research, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 7271 Commerce Circle West, Minneapolis, MN 55432).

My favorite Galil has always been the short-barreled SAR. However, giant fireballs tend to erupt from its muzzle. This can be hazardous to your health during a firefight at night. Several of my friends in the Golani Brigade

have turned in their SARs for the standard ARM version for this very reason. Its designer, Israel Galili, is aware of this problem and a new model SAR has been developed for use by special operations units. The barrel has been cut back another inch and a new, and more effective, flash suppressor attached. Another pistol grip has been added and attached to the plastic forearm. The usual folding buttstock has been replaced by that of the Mini UZI, all of which is very much like the Hungarian AMD.

M16A2 Available to Class 3 Dealers

All five configurations of the selective-fire M16A2 series (See "M16A2: The Final Verdict," SOF, January '85, p. 60) are now available to Class 3 dealers and law enforcement agencies through ARMEX International (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 252, Broderick, CA 95605). The M16A2 rifle can be ordered with either the three-shot burst control (U.S. Armed Forces) or with a full-auto selector (Canadian Armed Forces) for \$799.97 each. M16A2 Carabines (14.5-inch barrel) and M16A2 Commandos (11.5-inch barrel) are priced at \$789.97 each. A heavy-barrel version with a 1:12-inch-twist barrel and M60 bipod will cost you \$999.97. In my opinion, the rifle and carbine versions, both with three-shot burst mechanisms, are better.

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The Los Angeles Times, Feb. 20, 1983

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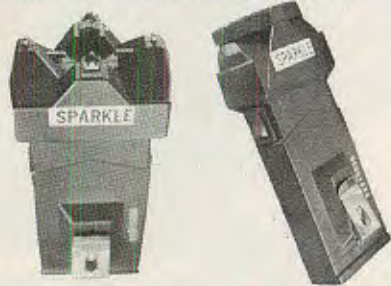
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It takes five to seven months for all the paperwork to be processed by ARMEX, Colt and the BATF. Class 3 dealers must include a letter stating that the weapon will be used for demonstrations to law enforcement agencies and will be sold only to a bona fide police department with notification of such transfer to Colt in writing. Now, once these Title II firearms have been transferred to a Class 3 dealer and constitute his chattel goods, nothing can prevent him from legally transferring the weapons to a qualified individual purchaser, since the firearms were manufactured in the United States and thus are not restricted-transfer import items. However, "Revenge is Mine," saith the Lord. If you do so — you'll never get another M16A2 from Colt, and that's their prerogative.

JAP 99 LMG Modifications

The Jap 99 LMG is no longer easy to find. The magazine never was. Jap 99 magazines commonly sell for \$200 or more. 7.7x58mm Arisaka ammunition must be handloaded from Norma brass (or formed from .30-06 cases). Reader Jack Boyce from Theodosia, Mo., offers a solution that may appeal to all but the purists among us. A little work with a Dremel tool to relieve the magazine well and it will accept the still-plentiful BAR magazine. A small cut on the BAR magazine will be required for retention by the Type 99's magazine latch. Run a .30-06 reamer into the chamber and you can safely fire .30-06 cartridges. Although the .308-inch projectile will rattle a bit going down the .311-inch bore, the dispersion will be acceptable out to 200 yards. As for me, I have a Type 99 magazine and a large supply of Norma brass in 7.7x58mm caliber.

9mm PPSH41 SMG

I've never seen a PPSH41 chambered for 9mm Parabellum, in a private collection, that I could believe was actually converted by the Germans in WWII. Every one that I've ever examined in this country was phony baloney. Yet, the Germans supposedly converted a number of captured PPSH41 submachine guns and were satisfied with the result. Conversion consisted of a new barrel and an adapter with a magazine catch release fitted to the Shpagin's magazine well to accommodate the MP40 magazine. This magazine adapter has never been correctly duplicated by the counterfeiters. Photos of an actual German conversion I examined in the Imperial War Museum clearly illustrate the adapter with its spring-loaded magazine catch release on the left side. Good luck to all the *Herr Waffenfabriks* in our midst.

Dangerous Dave

Those who wish to reload .50-cal. Browning machine gun or 20mm Lahti or Solothurn anti-tank ammunition will

find their drudgery simplified by the behemoth Rock Crusher reloading press available from "Dangerous" Dave Cumberland, a.k.a. the Old Western Scrounger, (Dept. SOF, 12924 Hwy A-12, Montague, CA 96064). It costs \$595 and develops over 20,000 pounds of pressure on the ram with only your body weight (even if you're just a 97-pound weakling). Dave is also the source for .50-cal. BMG primers. His catalog costs but \$2 and is a dandy reference on foreign and obsolete U.S. ammunition and components. For those who think they have everything, Dave will sell you an M113 Armored Personnel Carrier, in new condition, with I.R. night-driving light, weapons racks, radios, all TOE equipment and spare tracks, pads and wheels, ready to protect you and your loved ones from Armageddon for only \$85,000. ✕

ARMOR IN THE JUNGLE

Continued from page 41

Men screamed at the new sergeant to blow the treeline away with his Sheridan but he had frozen with fear.

Meanwhile, the mortar crew was having problems of their own. They scrambled and cursed some fool who had put a rag over the tube when the drizzle began and dropped the first round down without removing it. The round stayed in the tube and they had to disconnect it from the baseplate, slide the live round out, defuse it, dig out the rag, reset the mortar, and finally start lobbing rounds around the treeline.

The lieutenant called for additional fire support, working an artillery bombardment first into the far foothills, then closer in on the treeline, hoping to push the NVA back into their line of fire. But by the time the Cobra gunships arrived on station, it was obvious the North Vietnamese were gone.

The troops took the respite as a chance to catch their breath and relax — all except one man who was shaking. "Welcome to Vietnam," DeAngelis said with a grin.

The second day of the operation began quietly — no contact, only a dud RPG round, several piles of AK brass and footprints. By late afternoon, they were preparing to push on as DeAngelis, Indian, and a few other vets hashed plans with the lieutenant. Knowing that the trash pile in the perimeter would bring the NVA in as soon as they left, they decided to lay a few Claymores in the mess and also leave an ambush team. They wired three Claymores in the trash pile and laid the wire four or five paces into the high elephant grass. The three-man volunteer group composed of the gunner, a radioman and a staff sergeant, sat silently in the brush waiting. The staff sergeant was a hot young lifer on his second tour who dis-

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dainfully referred to his M16 as a "pogo-stick" and had a .45 on his hip.

At nightfall the team sat down in the grass while the rest of the platoon moved out, going about 500 meters before stopping to circle. The wait was not long: no sooner had the vehicles rumbled out of sight than three or four NVA emerged and began walking toward the trash pile. The ambushers watched with wide eyes, preparing to detonate the Claymores. Then the elephant grass rustled behind them.

The staff sergeant spun to see an NVA five feet away, unaware of the danger he was in. Bush hat crammed on his head, AK-47 slung over his shoulder, he suddenly saw the sergeant and jerked back in horror. Both men fumbled for their weapons — the NVA wrestled with his AK-47 as the staff sergeant jerked at his .45. The sergeant shot first, drilling the North Vietnamese through the center of the chest.

As the NVA slumped back the ambush cut loose. The gunner raked the NVA around the trash pile and the radioman set off the Claymores in a terrific blast of smoke, steel and flying trash. Two NVA collapsed in the fusillade while others quickly darted through the grass, dragging their wounded to cover.

Noise from the ambush reached the rumbling column. "The bush blew, the bush blew," screamed Indian. It's surprising how fast an armored column can turn around on a road. They hauled ass back down the dirt trail and ran right into the wild melee as torrents of tracers flew in all directions from the darkened fields.

The platoon wishboned, the point APC halted in place and the rest swerved right and left off the path. DeAngelis crouched on the track deck, burning on his '60 as he fired into the bushes. A burst of AK rounds punched into the side of the track just below his gun mount, ricocheting off with a sickening *riinnng!* He kept firing until another round slammed into a winch mount on the back of the track. It shattered and sent a hot fragment into the tip of his nose. DeAngelis swatted it off, cursing. Indian saw the trouble and poured more fire into the brushline from the .50 in one mad, sustained burst. The NVA faded away and the ambush team regrouped. A few men threw the dead NVA onto the Sheridan and took off to find a suitable night position.

But the action wasn't over yet. Bumping back down the dirt trail, the lead track ran over a mine which blew off a road wheel and dropped the vehicle in the dirt. The explosion slammed the driver's face into the lip of his hatch, breaking his nose and two front teeth.

While the rest of the platoon proceeded a bit farther to set up the night position, DeAngelis and three other GIs stripped the weapons off the disabled APC, piled the other gear inside and combat locked all the hatches.

DeAngelis' crew had a foxhole on the perimeter facing the downed track. It was his turn on guard when he heard the clank of

metal-on-metal contact.

"Do you hear that?" he nervously whispered.

"Yeah, I hear that," everyone whispered in unison.

DeAngelis whispered into the radio, "Recon by fire, movement to my front," then cut loose, raking the track with 200 rounds. The blackness lit up with flying red tracers and ricochets, the noise stopped, and in the morning they found a blood trail leading away through the undergrowth. No bodies, though.

The third day began as a Loach dropped in with an intelligence officer who wanted a personal look at the body count. It had been Alpha's first confirmed kill in a long while, and the officer left with the good news, taking the wounded driver with him.

After a breakfast amid the weeds, DeAngelis' maintenance track hooked a tow bar to the downed APC and, without escort, dragged it to Camp Evans, a 101st basecamp on Highway One. They rejoined Second Platoon as they wound into the high foothills of the Central Highlands.

The platoon pulled into a circle atop a peak with a commanding view of the surrounding ridgelines and valleys. The guns pointed almost straight down the slope. The grunts prepared for a long night, digging foxholes into the hill and registering mortar fire around them.

DeAngelis fixed a broken M60 and sent a test burst across the valley into a bush while the staff sergeant joked, "Ah, I think

there's a Chieu Hoi in that bush down there."

At dark, they wired in the Claymores and the staff sergeant took another three-man ambush out to a valley stream. All night long the men sat up, tense and alert, listening to the sergeant's whispered messages: he could hear NVA walking by fifteen feet away, there were voices in the bushes, someone was tossing pebbles into the stream. If you listened to him, the place was crawling with NVA and the ambush sat tight, afraid to fire, while the platoon on the hill hunkered in their foxholes, waiting for the mortars.

Nothing happened.

At first light, the ambush hiked back up the summit, the platoon packed up, and they began breaking bush downhill. Back in the rolling plains, the staff sergeant ran over a mine — and DeAngelis watched in horror as the track reared back, road wheels blown off in a tremendous explosion. The staff sergeant was hurled 20 feet straight up from his cupola and the '60 gunner did a wild flip before landing on his head in the dirt. The machine came down hard in the dust and smoke and, in seconds, the platoon medic was running toward wounded men.

The driver was moaning, teeth knocked out, face laid open, suffering a concussion, the '60 gunner was unconscious, and the staff sergeant grimaced from the pain of his two broken legs.

The rest of the platoon quickly deployed around the wreck and DeAngelis and his



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partners warily tramped around the potential minefield to police up the weapons and gear blown over the field.

It didn't take long for a Huey to show up outside the perimeter and DeAngelis helped hump the stretcher carrying the staff sergeant. As they shoved the litter inside, he cracked, "Must have been that dink's girlfriend that I shot that set the goddamned mine," then the bird was pulling up and out.

The night was peaceful — only one Claymore exploded in the middle of the night. At first light, they checked it out, found nothing, and continued their patrol. In short order, the Sheridan had its track blown off by another mine and DeAngelis' crew sweated and strained under the sun, hooking the downed APC and tank to their track. They left the platoon to drop the wrecks at Camp Evans, but the load was too large — Indian radioed the lieutenant, who called ahead for a Tracked Recovery Vehicle to be dispatched from Camp Evans.

What arrived was a TRV with a wobbly track that could not handle right turns, manned by two gutsy GIs. They sweated again, hooking up the Sheridan and two APCs, then put a man behind a weapon on each vehicle and took off. It was a slow, hot, clanking trip in the middle of nowhere and without escort. The TRV threw a track twice and halted to repair, but finally they reached the sanctuary of Camp Evans.

Crawling through the main gate, the only way to get to the maintenance hootch without throwing the track again was by cutting across the base parade field. And that's exactly what they did — tearing up the raked surface in the meantime.

In five days of the patrol, DeAngelis' platoon had lost three men wounded, shown a lot of guts, and racked up a confirmed and three blood trails. Their reward was the base commander flinging open the screen door of his air-conditioned hootch and screaming for whoever tore up his parade field to get his ass front and center. DeAngelis asked the two TRV crewmen if they wanted his crew to come too, but the guys shrugged. We did the damage, they said, we'll take the ass-chewing.

All's fair in war. ☒

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

Continued from page 22



NORWEGIAN FIELD AXE

The axe has often been seen secured to the web gear of troops in combat but its usefulness usually outweighed its disadvantages. Norwegian knife and weapons designer John Gulbrandsrød has taken the awkward shape and weight of the axe and produced the compact Norseaxe survival fieldaxe.

The Norseaxe is a combination axe, ice axe and mallet which is 15½ inches long and weighs 1.6 lbs. The blade is made from high-grade Swedish carbon steel induction-hardened to 52-54 Rockwell C which has been treated with a matted, rust-proof gun-metal finish. The housing is made from cold forged steel, the handle from weatherproofed hickory.

To test its usefulness the Norseaxe survival fieldaxe has been undergoing severe testing by both the Royal Norwegian Army and the Royal Swedish Army and it is expected that it will soon become regulation gear.

If you want to join the ranks of the Norwegian and Swedish Army with your very own Norseaxe, contact New Paths Inc., Dept. SOF, 1272 Washington St., Denver, CO 80203. Phone: (303) 830-7942. Each axe is \$57.95 and comes with a two-year manufacturer's guarantee. ☒

I WAS THERE

Continued from page 10

wallowing in a mud puddle less than fifty feet away. This time I knew what to do. Signaling the patrol to stop, I smiled, raised my rifle and gave two sharp raps on the magazine. But instead of running away, the buffalo exploded out of the puddle and charged us. My pointman and I back-pedaled as fast as we could while the rest of the patrol escaped by boring through the incredibly thick bush on either side of the trail.

Finally, after taking twenty or so high-velocity, 7.62mm rounds, the buffalo went down. "What did I do wrong?" I asked the game scout. I had done everything he had done earlier. Is there a certain way to tap the magazine? Do you have to be an African for it to work?

The scout came up and studied the buffalo for a second and showed me an old bullet wound in the animal's jaw that had become so infected and swollen it couldn't eat. The animal had attacked because it was enraged with pain and the smell of humans, its most recent tormenters. You had to feel sor-

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ry for the buffalo. None of us liked the way we smelled, either.

For the rest of the patrol I kept that Matabele scout close to me at all times. And I was glad to return to fire force duty hunting nice, safe, predictable, armed terrorists. ✂

AL MAR

Continued from page 47

want some inexpensive throwaway knives should he have to leave them behind. A fighting knife may be required also."

The gist of the message is that the special operations soldier must plan for different unique missions and no one knife will fulfill each job's demands. Is there a type or style to look for?

"Each man has his own tastes, his own likes and dislikes — his own 'feel' for what will work for him. His only concern should be to study and qualify the available blades. What can he afford? Will he really need one blade over another? In this way he can assemble the gear that will best serve him when the time comes to use it."

I had to ask Mar what he considered to be the difference between a fighter and a battle blade. For Mar, a fighter is a full double-edged-style knife which most people think of as a dagger. It can be

used in a utility mode although not as well as those knives designed especially for that task.

His favorite fighters are the Al Mar Fangs 1 and 2 and the Applegate-Fairbairn. "His [Colonel Rex Applegate] is the ultimate fighter. I like it so much that you may see something from Applegate-Mar in the near future."

The battle blade is a heavy-duty weapon that is single-edged with the false edge sharpened no farther back from the point than one-half the length of the blade. It must have a flat back to it so that you can apply pressure to the blade when bearing down to cut something. Blade length should be no shorter than 4½ inches and no longer than eight. The blade should have a full tang or at least a one-third-length tang that is well-anchored into the handle.

Can you avoid the banter normally aimed at those who have several different kinds of knives? "Probably not," laughs Al. "But, if you know the mission and the equipment available, plus you have your own reasons, what should you care what the others think? It's your ass on the line, after all."

After sandwiches and a tour through his shop we tackled the question of what the civilian/survivalist needs to concern himself with.

"The civilian normally has more money to spend and in many cases is less

knowledgeable concerning what is available to him on the market." The cutlery market is cluttered with every form of knife imaginable and many makers are caught between production costs and consumer retail pricing. This affects how they approach designs that are more practical than pretty, and sometimes too many concessions are made for the sake of sales over service.

"The civilian must decide what he wants a knife for. What is his environment? How much can he spend? Is he going to learn how to use his fighter or battle blade? Many things must be taken into consideration before making the final choice. It is not in how much you own, but in what you know about your choice and how it works for you. You can spend so much and get so little."

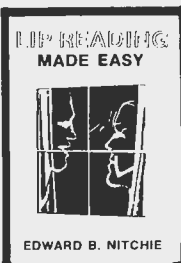
Mar stressed that the buyer is much more aware of what's going on than many cutlery manufacturers think. He urges all potential clients to read as many different views as are available and to make their own decisions. To his credit, Al enjoys taking the time to answer questions and to instruct those who demonstrate a genuine desire to improve their knowledge of the knife field.

Now for the big question. How about those hollow-handled wonders? Mar rolled his head back and said, "You've touched a very tender area with that

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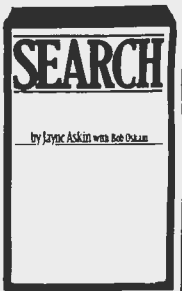


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question, but let's answer it and see what we get."

Mar believes that the hollow-handle survival knives have their place. Their leap into the public view began with the movie *First Blood*. "Without a doubt, after that film came out the market was flooded with production models of the Rambo knife."

Al believes that hollow-handle survivors are a compromise. Not all use a full, pinned, anchored or spot-weld tang. To do so would either remove or seriously affect the storage space provided by the handle. What happens with this compromise is that the knife is potentially prone toward breakage. And what good is your Rambo-style knife if it fails under pressure?

Handle material is a problem too. "Most survival knives use metal for their handles. When metal gets either very hot or very cold then you have a problem holding onto the knife. You don't think that's important? Try it sometime when you can't touch the knife because it's too hot or too cold." Mar favors the use of high-tech plastics when choosing a survivor for its handle construction.

Sawteeth get Mar going, too. He believes that Bill Bagwell answered this question in an earlier column done for SOF. It requires too much energy to saw through something using the teeth provided on any survival knife, especially



Al Mar's front-lock Airweight knife.

since most knives of this type have blades heavy enough to cut or hack through the same object with less energy expended. And conserving energy is vital in a survival situation. "The teeth are there because Rambo's knife had teeth. But never in the movie do you see him saw through anything." Mar will admit that teeth do give the blade an intimidating appearance which may help in certain self-defense situations.

What about storage? Al glanced around the room and then gazed out the window as he replied. "If you believe that you can provide for your total survival using what you store in the knife handle, you may find yourself in for a big surprise one day." He elaborated by saying that the true survivalist will have a "GO" bag packed with the basic requirements for survival and will have this with him as well as his knife. "Knife storage is

'last ditch' in nature. In fact it may be your knife that is ditched *first* due to unforeseen circumstances. Then what will you do? Without a doubt the survival knife made by Bo Randall [the Model 18] is the finest example of the breed. Randall hates making them because he is, and feels he has to be, terribly exacting in their construction. His knife was designed for a specific group of people [air crews] doing specific missions: flying."

Will an Al Mar hollow-handle survivor come out in the future?

"It is being considered. But until the time comes that we can produce a quality, functional knife for an affordable price we will not enter the field."

It was time to pin Al down on his personal choices in the categories we had discussed.

"For a battle blade I'd take our Shiva or Randall's Model 14. In the fighter class it would be either the Fang 1 or 2, or of course the Applegate. In the folder category I like the newest addition to our line, the Airweight. But any folder will do as long as it is of quality construction."

In the survival arena Mar reaches either for the SERE or Randall's Model 18. Both knives have waiting periods due to tremendous demand; the SERE, for instance, is backlogged four months.

The SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, Escape) Attack Knife is the creation of Colonel Nick Rowe, OIC of the SERE school located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The cadre of this intense program noted that many of the knives being brought by the students were not doing what was required of a survival knife in a SERE situation. So an effort was made to rectify the situation and to put something in the special operations soldier's hands that would see him through.

Rowe and Mar met and after a period of work-up drawings and negotiations, the SERE was born. This makes it the *only* knife developed for Special Forces and Al gives credit to Col. Rowe for being the father of the SERE. "Without Nick, his concept and backing there never would have been a SERE. I did not go looking for it, he brought it to me. He is the one that made it happen."

The SERE is a large front-lock folder which boasts a 4½-inch blade. The blade has a single edge with a false edge a full third back from the point of the blade. It has a flat back so that pressure can be applied during heavy cutting chores and the blade is of a lower Rockwell hardness so that it may be honed on nearly anything found in the field, including a rough rock.

The grips are Micarta and the overall feel of the knife is one of sureness and security. I had ordered one several months before our meeting and it was ready to be picked up when I arrived.

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My opinion? The SERE is the best thing on the market for the serious individual who requires a knife that can double as a field tool and/or combat weapon should things get rough out there.

Al hasn't been sitting on his laurels since coming out with the SERE, though. He showed me some things that he's come up with lately. The Scrambler is one of them. It's a special order for the movie *Wild Geese II*. One of the characters has to remove a guard during a particular scene and Al was consulted about providing a weapon that would do the job. Designed by Mar and bench-made by Bill Harsey of Crestwell, Oregon, The Scrambler is a dagger in the extreme which is meant to penetrate the ear cavity and brain. It is *not* a utensil for a gourmet cook.

Al's newest project is the introduction of his Utility Tanto. This entry into the Tanto market is designed along traditional Japanese lines in that the blade is beveled on the right side only and is shaped in a smoother flow than seen on the Cold Steel version. Grips are formed from Black Paka wood which is both attractive and functional. The blade is full-tang and 4½ inches in length. Rather than gear his Tanto toward the combat practitioner, Mar has offered one that serves mainly as a field knife but can double as a self-defense weapon. The sheath is an inside-the-pants affair,

durably stitched and providing a sure grip on the knife when not in use.

If you are looking for the Tanto style geared toward utility use at a low (\$65-\$85) price, this newest addition may be the one for you.

Last, I asked Al to what he attributed his success. His reply was immediate.

"I owe my success to good friends who are out there in the field doing things that require a good knife. They talk with me about what works as well as what does not work. All I do is give them a package: form and function. That's what an Al Mar knife is."

And that is the Warrior's Edge.

QUESTIONS FOR A MASTER KNIFEMAKER

Q: What steel is the optimum for either a fighter or a battle blade?

A: There is no single 'optimum steel' in this case. If one had to use a steel that was easily available today in the cutlery industry I would say it would be U.S. 440 A. The steel holds a good edge and in a battle blade you do not want the high Rockwell hardness, you want to be able to sharpen it in the field. A Rockwell hardness in the low to middle 50s, 53 to 55 RC on the Rockwell tester, is where you want the blade to come out at. With a knife of this steel and at this RC a man

could be put into a trying environment and still have a working tool for a long time.

Q: What about stainless steel?

A: Most cutlery steels that are called 'stainless' steels are really stain-resistant steels. Put under a corrosive environment they will eventually rust.

Q: What material do you prefer in a battle blade or fighting knife grip?

A: High-tech plastics or the high-tech rubbers. Putting them one over the other I would say plastics first and rubbers second. The Micartas, the nylons... I find they are the most durable under the most severe conditions, speaking about both physical and climatic conditions.

Q: What is your personal view concerning sharpening aids?

A: Most of your little steels and such that are out are really honing devices. They have a coating on them that does the work as far as bringing an edge up. Once that coating is gone the steel doesn't function any more. They are hones, and are meant to maintain an edge, *not* to sharpen the knife. You must use a bench stone, where you actually move quantities of steel in order to put that final bevel back on. Natural stones will sharpen a knife but they take a lot of time. And you must use a liquid for the stone to work. I like man-made stones; you can use them dry if you have to and they work faster. Two knives and a man-

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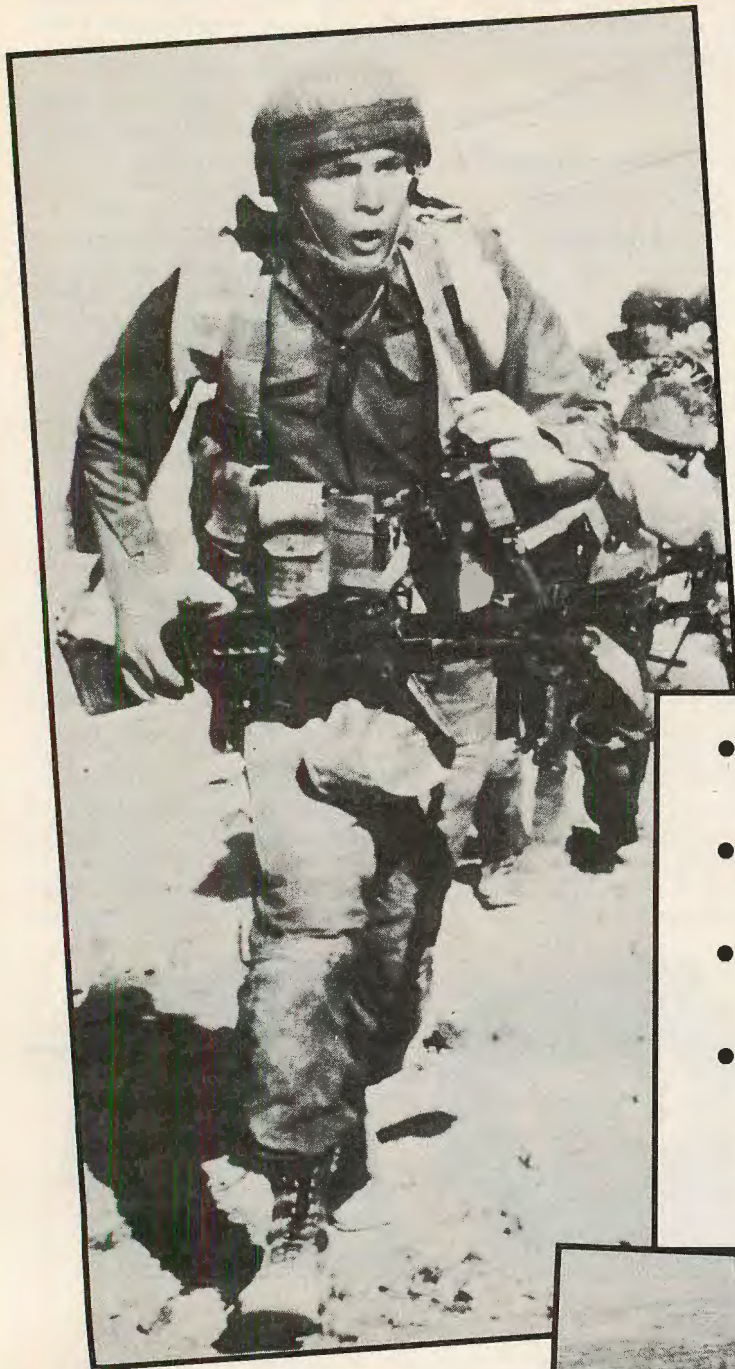


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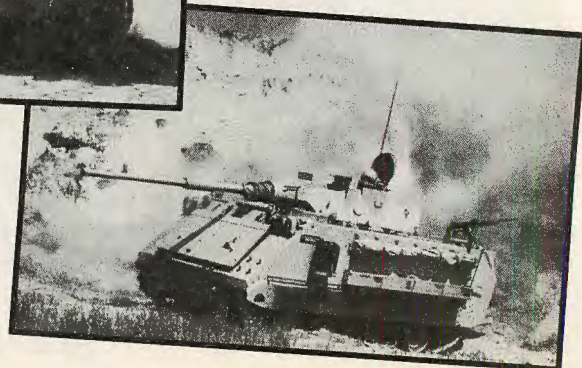


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made versus a natural stone. I would say that you would have the edge back on the knife using the man-made stone in 25 percent of the time it would take with the natural.

Q: Do you agree with Bill Bagwell that the way to sharpen a blade is to cut away from the stone rather than into it?

A: If he believes that and it works for him then that's fine. For me, I always go into the cutting edge. You have a blade that you're working on, without a doubt it's proven that if you go away from the cutting edge you're still removing steel but on the very, very edge you're creating wires that cannot be removed easily. What Bill is doing may be a two-step process, I don't know. Maybe he goes away from the cutting edge and as a final finish he removes the wire or the hair that is created from sharpening that way. But for me, why do double work? Let's sharpen it into the cutting edge. The majority of people that I know and the way I was personally taught, sharpen into the cutting edge.

Q: What is a good weight for a battle blade?

A: There is no ideal weight. Every man is different — big men, small men; there are weak big men, strong little men, and it is a personal preference. To spec a weight that is ideal is not being fair to anyone.

Q: What is your opinion of the K-BAR?

A: I think the K-BAR knife is still a well-designed and functional tool. As a fighting knife it came into being because that was all a lot of people had to fight with at the time. They didn't really have a choice. Although there is a greater selection available to the average soldier today what it boils down to is that a fighting knife is what one learns to handle.

Q: How about the M16 bayonet as a fighter?

A: To start with, it sure as hell is better than nothing. And if that's all you have and you have no funds and you have to depend upon that then you have to develop it into a fine tool. The soldier must decide right away if he is going to use the bayonet to open ration cans and cut wire or if he is going to develop it and treat it as *only* a fighter. He cannot use it for both jobs, it's either one or the other.

Q: How can he develop it?

A: He has to spend some time with it. Bevel a good cutting edge on the false edge and on the main cutting edge. And treat it like a fine tool once you get the edge and it will serve you well. It's like the K-BAR, if that's all you have and you learn to use it well you can become quite lethal with it.

Q: How about the bowie?

A: You're making me walk on Bill's toes... if you want to categorize about fighters and battle blades we can take the bowie on its own terms. But you can't say a bowie is all things to all people.

That would be insane. Taking it in its proper context, a bowie-style knife has its place. It can become a very effective fighting and utility tool. But it's not the answer to everything.

Q: Is it a viable approach to say that one should attempt to have a knife that will work in any terrain, any climate? Is there such a thing?

A: No. It is not a viable approach and no, there is no one knife that will do all things in all areas. Pick your tool well, learn how to use it correctly and it will work for you no matter what you're doing and where you are.

Q: What do you think about knife throwing?

A: Throwing a knife to me is just a sport. In a survival or tactical situation the last thing I want to do is throw my knife at a guy. You may hit him extremely well and in a vital area, but man is probably one of the toughest critters on this earth. And if you should miss him, or if you should just wound him and you're now weaponless... then that man, even before he dies is going to show you exactly what to do with that knife... and he sure as hell ain't going to throw it at you. Throwing a knife is more or less 'Hollywood' to me.

Q: Push-daggers, what about them?

A: Push-daggers are an old tool that was carried around more for psychologi-

cal purposes than anything else. It's better than nothing, agreed. But it is only a stabbing device. If you're even carrying a push-dagger for self-protection you have no business going to where you're going because the tool is not efficient. There are so many other things available that if you're worried about that kind of potential confrontation you should be carrying them rather than the push-dagger.

Q: Butterfly knives — very big today. What do you think of them for self-defense?

A: I believe they are one of the most unique designs in the world today. A very efficient design. It can be opened single-handed and can be locked so that there is no moving part that can fail on you.

Q: What about guard designs for fighters and battle blades?

A: Single-edged battle blade — single guard will do. Fighter, double-edged blade — then you need a double guard. The guard is there to keep your hand from sliding over the cutting edge, period.

Q: Can I have one of each of your knives for free 'cause we're friends and live in the same state?

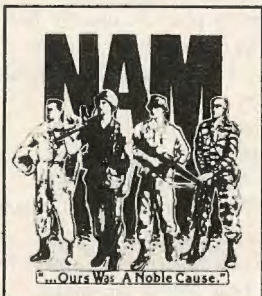
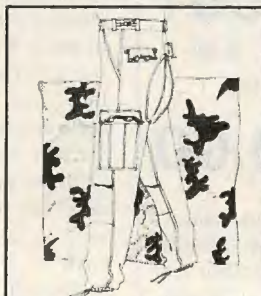

A: No.

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EAST GERMAN NAVY

Continued from page 83

Is the Evil Empire really arming itself to the teeth, getting ready for Armageddon? One possible theater of conflict where the tasks and variables of war are so theoretically clear-cut that Western military analysts readily concur is the Baltic Sea.

Stretching a thousand miles from the Straits of Denmark in the West to the Russian Red Banner Fleet's home port of Leningrad in the East, the Baltic has 103,000 square miles of salt water with outlets so narrow and shallow that it's virtually a lake.

Major military confrontation in Europe would certainly be accompanied by a Russian move to interdict Western shipping in the Atlantic. The Red Banner Fleet, accompanied by East German and Polish units, would have to run a gauntlet of Western ships, aircraft and mines in an attempt to open the Danish Straits. In attacking an equal force of West Germans and Danes occupying excellent defensive positions, military experts believe that the Eastern Bloc would be sure losers. Warsaw Pact fighting men see things differently.

"We can't close our eyes to the fact that the inner substance of imperialism hasn't changed," claims Captain Ahrend. "It's still aggressive."

Why does Lutz Ahrend persist in viewing things from a perspective foreign to most of us? Well-informed of NATO plans to keep Eastern Bloc forces bottled up in the Baltic, he's more concerned about contingency plans to use the Baltic to move NATO naval power into the socialist flank. The Baltic is a "critical link" and "key strategic position" according to former West German Defense Minister Hans Apel. West German Vice-Admiral Ansgar Bethe describes the West German naval concept as "... to keep Baltic access open, enabling NATO's superior sea power to be brought to bear within the Baltic."

The Baltic Sea fits well within U.S. AirLand Battle 2000 "forward defense" concepts, while Baltic exercises for NATO units include "moving forward" into middle and North Baltic positions. New NATO shipbuilding programs and the accelerated U.S. deployment of sea-launched Tomahawk cruise missiles are eyed suspiciously by the Warsaw Pact as possible puzzle pieces in a bigger picture.

East German sailors generally try to keep things in perspective by putting their noses to the collective grindstone. "Everybody has their assignment to complete with the highest possible performance. Of course, there is a bit of romanticism involved when standing on the bridge in rough seas, or lying at anchor when the sun sets," claims

Seaman First Class Frank Mahnke.

Captain Ahrend and crew are in many ways typical of the 17,000 signalmen, machinists, gunners and navigators making up the East German Navy. Possibly the son of a teacher or shop clerk, the average enlisted man serves an 18-month tour of duty. Preparations for it begin much earlier, though.

Smiling soldiers are a prominent feature of East German kindergarten picture books. Children may learn formation drill at age 10. Specialization begins in the eighth grade as a member of the semivoluntary "Society for Sport and Technology," where youngsters learn to row boats, to sail, and later to run and care for power boats. Sports like waterskiing and windsurfing are conspicuous in their absence, while signaling and Morse Code are offered. Seasickness is about the only thing left unconquered by the time young East Germans get to salt water.

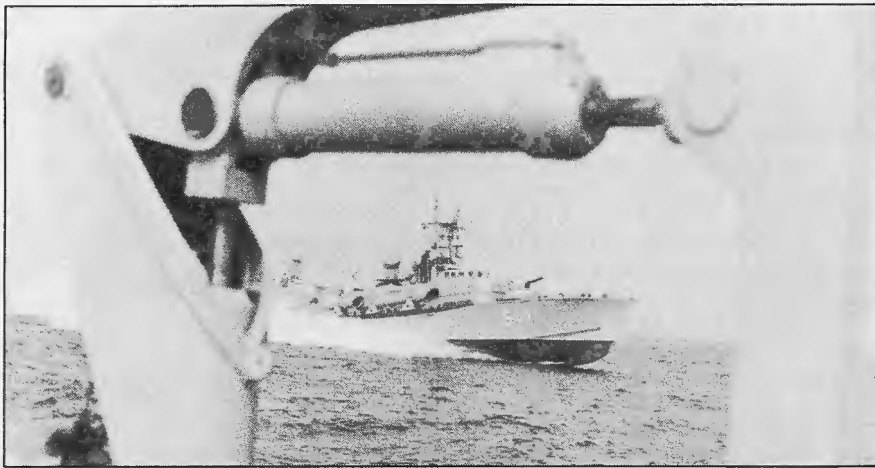
German People's Navy commanders are often little older than 25 or 26. One such commander is Lieutenant Captain Lothar Stadler. Born in Cottbus, a medieval town near the Polish border southeast of Berlin, he originally learned the ropes on local lakes. "Seamen are made at sea," he says. "Our training can't take place in the harbor alone."

This is easier said than done in the East German Navy. Compared to Western vessels, Warsaw Pact boats spend a disproportionate amount of time in port, making for less wear and tear and — so the frugal-but-dubious Russian naval dictum goes — assuring the availability of more ships should they be needed. It also allows the Eastern Bloc to build more boats with the money saved.

Available equipment is, of course, useless if not properly handled and Warsaw Pact units do go on maneuvers. This may mean a thousand sea miles in two days, running through everything from gunnery practice to "anti-mass-destruction-weapon" measures. Such an exercise begins at a floating operations base anchored off the East German coast. Providing the boats with fuel, munitions and supplies, these bases also have sleeping quarters and conference rooms for the East German, Russian and Polish units involved. Minimal, yet cordial, contact is the rule among enlisted men: an East German *Juwel* cigarette exchanged for a Russian *Papyrossi* while eyeing the markings on each other's so-similar boats.

Although the East German Navy and the Polish Fleet comprise less than one percent of world military naval tonnage, the Kremlin dearly depends on the extra front-line force provided by its socialist partners in the Baltic. German reunification sentiment and Polish internal disorder could be components of any Russian admiral's nightmare.

Leaving no doubt where his loyalties



Operating in small packs, these East German patrol boats count on a quick strike to neutralize NATO warships in the area. Photo: Fotozirkel Rostock

lie, Commander Stadler properly toes the party line, giving his version of the official slogan "*Der Frieden muss bewaffnet sein*" — the peace must be armed.

"The national People's Army and Navy are only as strong as their *Waffenbrüder* — brothers in arms — and only through it comes strength. Each one of us is part of the fighting readiness of the Warsaw Pact."

Lothar Stadler's boat is heavily — almost overly — armed. A combat patrol craft of the same length, width and speed as Lutz Ahrend's boat, its torpedo tubes have been removed and replaced with four gunmetal-grey hangars, giving the ship a bulky, overloaded appearance. Each hangar houses an SSN-2A naval guided missile.

Making up the bulk of East German naval capability, these boats were designed with all their firepower up front, to get in the first shot and make it count. Such ships and their armament provide the Warsaw Pact with the most punch for the least naval investment, and represent something of a milestone in modern naval development. With their 30-mile range, the guided missiles turn the once-lowly PT boat into an aircraft carrier, supplying the equivalent of a mini-squadron of Kamikaze aircraft. Nuclear-armed U.S. Tomahawk naval cruise missiles can be seen as the electronic perfection of this 20-year-old Soviet naval innovation.

The shrill tones of the ship's alarm signal the start of joint maneuvers. It's *klar zum ablegen* — clear to cast off. With the last rays of the setting sun sharply outlining the black cumulus clouds coming up in the evening sky, three small boats head out into the Baltic. The sea slowly turns rough, no joyride in a small attack boat.

Decked in clouds of spray, the tiny missile boats smash forward through the whitecaps and into the darkness. The deep black of the Baltic turns gravel gray

where it meets the horizon. A couple of lights — probably a freighter — move in the night. One can just make out the lead boat as a glimmer on the swell in the distance. The green, yellow and red lights aft belong to the boat following in the wake. There's no trace of the Russian or Polish craft.

These "loose-deuce" trios practice the ambush in bad weather and darkness. Russian naval strategy contends that swarms of small ships like these provide the numbers needed to foil even the most complex electronic weapons systems.

The pro-communist Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) claims NATO is currently spending 20 percent more than the Warsaw Pact, part of this to upgrade all 40 West German missile boats stationed in the Baltic. New NATO PG-class boats have twice the armament, half again the range, and even more speed than the current Warsaw Pact material.

Asked above the engine clatter if he ever thinks about the world situation in relation to his duty, one of the East German mates responded "That's what we're confronted with all the time." Captain Stadler added his thoughts. "That's it. We try to keep informed of what goes on. We're not oblivious to what happens in Nicaragua or South Africa."

Casting an occasional glance at the radar screen, he orders course and speed corrections. The boat's executive officer stands nearby, readying a Pentacon Six camera, which he'll use to photograph the radar screen when things get serious. Developed and enlarged onboard, the photos provide exact information about the performance of each crew involved when compared with similar photos taken on the Russian and Polish boats.

Night-attack maneuvers are a tough test of Warsaw Pact navigation and electronics expertise. The purpose is to find the "enemy" first and go on an attack course, then make necessary missile guidance calculations, run through launch preparations, and simulate missile firing.

Much of this would be done electronically on a more modern NATO

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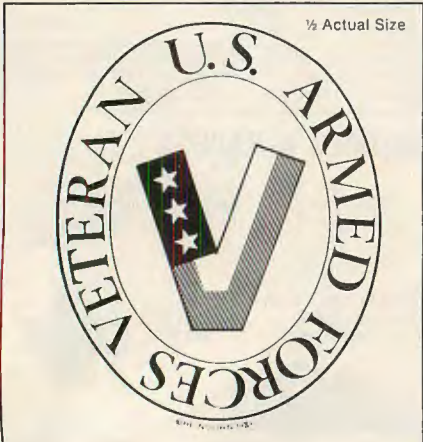
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boat where sensor and fire-control information are computerized, allowing the commander to grasp control of the whole battle while the executive officer commands from the bridge.

Warsaw Pact skippers still do command from the bridge, combining battle data in their own heads. As long as things go as planned, this is fine. Things may begin to fall apart should the unexpected occur.

"*Da sind sie!*" — There they are! Small blips appear at the edge of the radar screen and things get turbulent as the radar man reports target movement, course and speed. The ship slides and pounds through course corrections. Breakers crash over the deck before the boat returns to even keel. Instructions are passed to the missile guidance station. Hangar covers open.

"*Grosse Fahrt!*" — Full speed ahead! "Start!"

Guided by cable in the general direction of its target, the missile's terminal homing device takes it the rest of the way in. The once-innovative SSN-2A missile is still considered a "reliable" weapon, yet boats armed with it are at a grave disadvantage when confronted with more modern technology.

"If you can see it, you can probably hit it" is a modern military adage. Far superior Western naval reconnaissance makes it highly likely that Captain Stadler's boat would be seen first. NATO Harpoon and Exocet missiles have more accurate guidance systems and twice the range of the vintage Warsaw Pact materiel, whose well-known characteristics make it susceptible to jamming.

"I'm sure the Soviet Union will see to it," responds Captain Stadler in reference to new NATO missiles, "that we're a properly equipped deterrent." Perhaps optimism is one of the Warsaw Pact's primary weapons.

Swarms of small boats and a multitude of missiles do give the Eastern Bloc some initial attack capability, yet the follow-up force for truly offensive operations is lacking. Mutual assured destruction in a mass counterattack is, in Soviet terms, a credible deterrent. Not all that paradoxically, this holocaust potential could be a major reason why a European war is currently considered so unlikely.

This is the balance of force that makes for Captain Stadler's naval routine. Does he see his job as one of keeping the peace? You bet he does. Making and selling new weapons is a business. Patrolling the Baltic is a job.

Captain Stadler and his East German crew ought to be ready to bunk in when they get home from the night shift, yet their commander sees things differently. "First we've got to get everything shipshape." ✕

MAD MIKE
Continued from page 45

mercenary soldiering: The sharing of hardship and danger. It welds you together and you become brothers."

Meanwhile, the Russians were making strides in Southern Africa. In 1974 3,000 FRELIMO soldiers took Mozambique, claiming they represented the people. (Since no elections were held they can't prove their contention.)

Worse, in 1975 the unprepared colony of Angola was gaining its independence on an irresponsibly accelerated timetable following a socialist electoral victory in Portugal. Free Angolans prepared for elections. Communists prepared for war. The Soviet Union sent \$25 million of arms and equipment to support the Marxist MPLA.

That was when Mike was approached. "It was an Angolan Portuguese — a colonel. He wanted me to bring 100 men and seize the capital, Luanda, in support of FNLA — and it could have worked if we had had the backing of the CIA or South Africa. But at that critical moment the Clark Amendment was passed in America, and the West stood by as the Russians got the other foot into Southern Africa." Hoare very clearly identifies the war for Southern Africa as part of the global battle between communist tyrannies and free democracies. And he sees little hope for Africa without help from the West.

Mike opened a business brokerage and investment consultancy in Durban and discovered the joys of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in a boom. In 1978 he was military adviser to the film, *The Wild Geese* (see "The Wild Geese Fly Again" on p. 26), filmed on location in the northern Transvaal. Mike subsequently toured the U.S. and gave 100 interviews in 20 days to promote the film.

By this time the left-wing Albert René of Seychelles had toppled the elected government of James Manchem in a coup, and Mike had been asked to put up a plan to reinstate the pro-West Manchem. He went to the islands twice, posing as an accountant named Boarel, to do a recce. The plum was ripe for the picking, but the backers had a money problem.

By 1981 money was still at issue but Mike agreed to help anyway because of his political feelings. "For a mercenary to soldier on the basis of payment when he succeeds is madness, so there had to be something else and in my case it was a firm conviction that what we were doing was right.

"In the Congo I saw communism, naked and raw at a very low level — the destruction of all order, the killing of the intelligentsia. When you've got a whole lot of leaderless people you can



indoctrinate them with your particular brand of politics. I saw all this, and I've stood on 30 tons of Russian arms and ammunition. These things left a lasting impression on me, and since then I've been anti-communist and I still am to this day."

So, the West stood by and watched the Red plague spread across Africa. The communists never fired a shot, but in their traditional manner took advantage of trouble and fomented it. The Red bridge across Africa and the Indian Ocean was cemented by the formation of a Marxist Zimbabwe. And the Seychelles fell prey to a particularly blatant form of Marxism which included taking the children to distant islands in the archipelago for indoctrination by communist advisers.

"The Russians had foreseen — with more foresight than the Americans, I'd say — the strategic importance of the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. It lay athwart the shipping route from the Persian Gulf to the Cape, and would undoubtedly assume tremendous importance if Suez was ever closed, which, with Exocets, wouldn't take much. But the Americans, having other considerations, namely Bay of Bengal, Singapore and Indonesia, went for Diego Garcia 1,000 miles to the east of the Seychelles."

And so Operation Anvil got off the ground. Planned as a bloodless coup, the word went out and about 55 men were recruited in South Africa. They were paid 1,000 South African rand in advance; the balance of \$10,000 U.S. each for privates would be paid on successful completion.

"Thirty-three months of imprisonment . . . revitalized my soul, refreshed my liver and regulated my bowels. Beyond that, I cannot recommend it," Mike remarked upon his release.

Rumanian and Hungarian AKs and other weaponry were delivered to Mike's home by a sergeant in the SADF (South African Defense Force). But at the last minute the agreed manner of smuggling the weapons to the Seychelles fell through and they had to accompany the men in false-bottomed suitcases.

An advance party of about eight men dribbled onto the island. The rest, all experienced fighters, followed on 25 November 1981 posing as "Frothblowers" — beerdrinkers who raise money for charity. Everything went smoothly up to this point. All but one of the mercenaries got through customs, but unfortunately the last one, a Frenchman, had boarded the plane at the Comores with fruit, a prohibited item. An official seized it as he went through customs and decided to search the remaining tourists' baggage for fruit too. A weapon was found and all hell broke loose. The battle was on.

"Early on one of my men was shot dead by an American mercenary — it was a pure accident. We took the control tower and mounted an assault on the barracks nearby. Then I got news that an Air India Boeing 707 was approaching. I gave order for it not to land, but it did and the pilot, Saxena, was brought to me. Then the Seychellois opened up on the plane, full of passengers, with a

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- # 3032—**MCAR-SHOOTER'S SPECTACLE** Gold metal frames. Lens—gray, brown, amber, vermilion, clear. Interchangeable lens capability..... \$77.95

- # 3033—**MCAR-SHOOTER'S SPECTACLE** Gold metal frames Lens—Cadmium Oxide. Interchangeable lens capability \$87.95
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"I got President René on the phone, had him stop the firing, and got permission for them to take off. The pilot cleared the runway and then offered to take us with him, saying, 'You chaps saved us, now we'll save you.' The men wanted to go, but I advised them to fight on. Doorewaard, one of my officers, said, 'Let's go back to South Africa, the government will look after us.'

"I decided not to go and to wait for the resistance movement, but two of my men said they would force me to come. After takeoff Saxena came back into the cabin, shook me by the hand and said, 'We must celebrate.' He ordered champagne.

"Some hijack!"

In due course the men came to trial at the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court on various charges under the Civil Aviation Act. At the end of the trial, which Mike describes as "a travesty of justice," most of the men got six months' imprisonment. Three senior officers, one of whom was Peter Duffy, received an effective five years, and Mike, an effective 10 years (actually 20 with 10 suspended).

At the age of 62, Mike Hoare began his 21-month stretch in Pretoria Central Prison as a hard-labor prisoner with no special treatment. Most of the few visits I was allowed were non-contact and we had to speak to each other through glass and wire mesh.

Dad loved books and crossword puzzles. We tried to deliver as much as we could get away with. But often they would never get to him. One day I handed the officer in charge a book of London Sunday Times crosswords, a passion with Dad, but he never received it. Apparently, the officer had said that if he allowed Dad to have the book, all the prisoners would want one. Pathetic as it was, we had a good laugh.

Churchill used to be one of Dad's favorite authors, but during his prison days Christopher Marlowe became his passion. When he was in prison he kept his family busy scouring distant libraries for yet more biographies and literary criticism of Marlowe. He is a great believer in educating oneself through books and when we were kids he used to tell us over and over, "You can buy the sum of a man's knowledge for a few rand."

After his release from prison, Dad began work on his third book, *The Seychelles Affair*, which is due to be published in mid-1986. It gives details of the planning of the coup attempt, names of who was involved, the operation itself, the trial and his days in prison.

He also wants to write a novel based on his experiences, some of them horrific, some of them humorous, of prison life in South Africa. "Somebody has got to tell the world what goes on in

those places, and it's going to be me." At one point in Pretoria Central he worked as a cleaner (*scoonmaker* in Afrikaans) and titles another proposed book, *A Day in the Life of a Pretorius Scoonmaker*.

Dad was then transported — in handcuffs and leg-irons — to Pietermaritzburg Prison, where he worked as a petrol-pump attendant and nurseryman. Conditions were marginally better and Phyllis didn't have to drive nearly 400 miles each way to see him for half an hour twice a month.

During the trial he had "Wild Geese" patches and badges made to raise funds for his defense. *Soldier of Fortune* advertised them and gave them free editorial space and the response from America was overwhelming.

"While I was in jail Phyllis received more than 3,500 letters from America and many people sent much more than the advertised price. Their whole attitude was they wanted to help a man who was down. This generosity supported Phyllis and the two boys while I was inside and we are extremely grateful to all concerned."

The family felt the South African government had bowed to international pressure in charging the men, that they would be released after serving a token sentence. This was not to be. Even after President René of the Seychelles pardoned the six who had been captured on the island (four were sentenced to death), Dad and his officers were not released.

At Christmas of 1984, President P.W. Botha of South Africa announced an amnesty for certain prisoners over the age of 65. Dad would qualify on 29 January 1985, we calculated, and on that day Phyllis had a massive buffet prepared and welcome-home party planned. But the day came and went without explanation.

Three months later, 6 May, Phyllis and Simon noticed a car pull into their driveway. Simon knew exactly who it was at once and shouted, "It's Dad!"

"Oh my God, he's escaped," was Phyllis' first thought.

Mike had been unconditionally released, again without explanation.

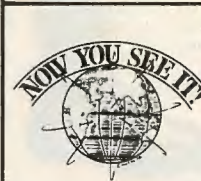
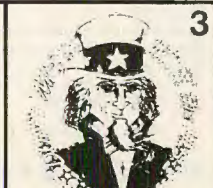
Dad has always had a sense of humor and he showed it to good effect at a press conference he gave the day after his release. The world's media was there waiting for a big announcement: "It has been a grim experience," he began. "Even so, 33 months of imprisonment did something for me. It revitalized my soul, refreshed my liver and regulated my bowels. Beyond that, I cannot recommend it." In the 45 minutes that followed he had everyone in fits of laughter and tears with his tales of prison life.

The press widely quoted him as saying that he had "hung up his guns." Well, I was there and he didn't say that. Later I

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asked him if that was the case anyway.

"I haven't made a conscious decision on this one," he said. "Age is irrelevant in these matters — don't forget, the Greek Cypriot guerrilla movement leader, General Grivas, was still commanding at 79. My style of leadership is a personal one. I like to actually physically lead the men — this is very unusual. I mean, can you imagine a colonel of a regular unit going on patrol? But I'm not like that. It's essential for a leader to show he's prepared to do everything he's asking his men to do, to share their dangers, and not to lead 'Belgian-style': from a Congolese hotel. So, to that extent, my days of active leadership in the fields are probably over."

But I know his search for adventure has not ended. As a child at boarding school, letters from Dad always contained the promise of adventure during the holidays. He was an exciting man to grow up around . . . sometimes a bit too exciting. But he would always say that the excitement heightens your appreciation of life. Clearly, his philosophy was that if you set out to live dangerously, you will have some magic moments which propel you through the quiet times or the worst times.

"On the day I was sentenced I received a letter from America. It said:

'Dear Colonel, On the day of the Stanleyville massacre you and some of your men and Colonel Raudstein, the

U.S. military attache in Leopoldville, rescued an American family who was living on the edge of the black ghetto which had been overrun by rebels. You placed a small girl in the back of your truck and drove her to safety.

"I am that little girl.

"I am now 24 and have my own husband and children, and I love them very much. Thank you for my life."

"That letter kept me warm in jail. It was a magic moment and in my life there have been many such moments."

(NEXT MONTH: Col. Hoare shares his private thoughts on the nature, madness and meaning of war in an exclusive interview.) ✕

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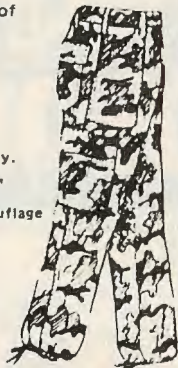
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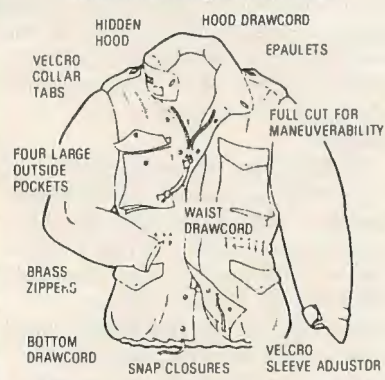
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Continued from page 4

event of hostilities shall hold any office or employment under this state . . ."

With preliminary hearings completed, Hayden's stable of lawyers is keeping the case tied up in the appeals process. A new round of legal activity is expected in early 1986. Those with interest in the case against Hayden, which is being supported through donations, should contact the attorney of record for the CWVJ: Victor E. Hobbs, 23113 Plaza Pointe Drive, Laguna Hills, CA 92653.

'GUMBO' GUMBEL'S GRUMBLE...

Gum-bo: a heavy, sticky mud. Bryant Gumbel's name is mud around the editorial offices of *Soldier of Fortune*. 'Gumbo' Gumbel grossly abused his professional media access in his role as co-host of NBC's "Today Show." Gumbel grumbled, "I've been holding *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. I feel like I should go wash my hands."

Bryant conducted interviews on gun control in a 23 July broadcast. Picking up a copy of SOF's 10th anniversary issue, Gumbel said the magazine carried ads for semiautomatic weapons and conversion kits for their conversion to automatic weapons. Of course, SOF does *not* allow conversion kits to be advertised in its pages.

As was later noted in *Human Events*, a conservative, Washington-based, national weekly newspaper, "Gumbel didn't identify anything illegal or even improper in any of this. But to him it was a dirty business. Perhaps Gumbel should go back to his old job of calling balls

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and strikes on the game of the week. *Soldier of Fortune* deserves credit, not abuse. It not only supports our right to keep and bear arms, but provides assistance to anti-communists around the world who are arming themselves in an effort to overthrow communist regimes."

Immediately after his imprudent remark, SOF's phones started ringing off the hook with supporters calling in, outraged at Gumbel. The editors tried in vain to reach Gumbel by phone for an explanation, an excuse, anything. We were denied by the network any opportunity to respond to this slander.

ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE...

During a recent meeting, SOF publisher Robert K. Brown took a phone call from an American who identified himself as a free-lance journalist representing Soviet television. He wanted a video interview with Brown.

Brown politely asked the appropriate questions concerning time, place, payment, audience and editing. Those questions answered, the caller told Brown that Soviet TV was very interested and hoped he would appear. Bob grinned, tugged on his moustache, and said, "Tell the Russians to fuck themselves."

Silence followed, then, "Excuse me, sir, what did you say?"

"I said: Tell the Russians to fuck themselves."

"Is that serious?"


"Yes."

"I... I'll convey your message." Click.

IVAN COURTS NORTH KOREA...

Decisive air superiority over South Korea by the communist regime north of the 38th parallel seems certain with the delivery of 50 MiG-23 (NATO code name: Flogger) multirole fighter jets. A Soviet announcement confirming the sale to North Korea signals a potentially ominous renewal of close relations between the two communist countries. Said one respected Soviet analyst who regularly reads the Soviet propaganda organs: "Pravda hasn't been so effusive about North Korea since the days of the Korean War."


Although initial reports indicated the Floggers marked for delivery to



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North Korea were stripped by the Soviets of much of their sophisticated avionic and weapons systems, *Soldier of Fortune* sources say otherwise. For instance, North Korean Air Force personnel began advanced training at various Soviet bases before delivery of the MiG-23s even began. SOF sources were bolstered recently when *Jane's Defense Weekly* reported that the Floggers possibly are equipped with the latest Soviet air-to-air missile, the AA-7 Apex. Most of the Kremlin's Third World sales of Floggers include only the AA-2 Atol.

Unfortunately for the West in general and South Korea in particular, the MiG-23 vastly outclasses the F-4, F-5 and F-86 fighter jets possessed by the Seoul regime. An initial delivery of six Floggers came in late May, SOF sources say, four of them to the Bukchang Air Force Base northeast of Pyongyang. And intelligence indicates large-scale construction at North Korea's Hwangu Air Force Base south of Pyongyang is complete, giving the facility a capability to handle MiG-23s.

Analysts think that the Kremlin's delivery schedule soon will give North Korea a clear-cut air

superiority over South Korea, despite 36 F-16s Seoul has ordered from Uncle Sam. Delivery of the F-16s is not set to begin until February 1986, and then at the rate of one aircraft per month.

Floggers aren't the only cause for concern. Recent weapons shipments from Moscow to Pyongyang also include Scud-B surface-to-surface missiles and a new type of Soviet surface-to-air missile. And the South Koreans have expressed worry over Soviet aid to North Korea for nuclear "research." Sources in Seoul say a nuclear reactor operated by North Korea north of Pyongyang is capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium.

No one ever gets something for nothing from the Kremlin, but it is unclear what North Korea's payback might be. Unconfirmed reports indicate that North Korean specialists will play an increased role in training pro-Soviet terrorists and insurgents around the world, especially in Africa and Latin America. Indeed, North Korea has long been a third-party conduit for Soviet arms to Iran. Consequently Iraq broke off diplomatic relations with Pyongyang over these shipments, leading to informed speculation that arms traffic

through the Iran pipeline will increase. Whatever the case, closer cooperation between the Soviet Union and North Korea certainly spells trouble for peace-loving people everywhere.

HIND-D UPDATE...

The word is out in Nicaragua. Managua's entire air force and its military high command are buzzing about the \$1 million reward being offered by *Soldier of Fortune* and private-sector sources. The first pilot, crewman or trainer who flies an Mi-24 Soviet attack helicopter out of Nicaragua and lands it safely in a neutral location will be an instant millionaire.

"Everyone knows about the reward," said one SOF source in Managua. When the original \$100,000 reward was offered by the magazine in February, Nicaragua's communist government temporarily grounded their squadron of 12 Hind-D gunships while it conducted new security checks on personnel with access to the aircraft. The squadron was not grounded when the reward was raised to \$1 million in August, but the ruling Sandinista Party did order the government to take other precautionary steps. Accordingly, the gunships' AOs have been tightly restricted to areas immediately adjacent to their bases. Even Cuban pilot/trainers are not allowed to take the Mi-24s out very far. And new crews are being selected for training in order to phase out the old pilots, many of whom are holdovers from the Somoza days.

Most interesting, however, are continued efforts by Daniel Ortega's regime to buy from its ComBloc allies the Aero L-39 Albatros, a subsonic, STOL jet fighter made in Czechoslovakia. The L-39Z, for instance, would be a much greater tactical threat in a counterinsurgency role against the Freedom Fighters than would be the MiG-21s, NATO code-named Fishbed. The MiGs were the subject of much ado about nothing last fall when an undisclosed member of the Reagan administration shrilly — and falsely — charged that the Fishbeds were about to be delivered to Nicaragua by the Soviet Union.

But SOF's source in Managua says the Sandinistas have another reason now for wanting the MiG-21s. The supersonic jet fighter could come in mighty handy if someone tries to defect with a

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Hind-D attack helicopter. This is certainly consistent with Soviet practice in Afghanistan regarding the Mi-24 gunships. Like Nicaragua, the Hinds in Afghanistan are deployed in groups of four. If one gunship is shot down, a second Hind moves in to fire a missile and finish off the wreckage and any survivors.

NICARAGUAN NAZIS?...

Although they are at extremes of the political spectrum, Nicaragua's Soviet-backed Sandinista Party and Hitler's Nazi Party have at least one thing in common: The systematic persecution and removal of Jewish people.

A member of the United States Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Sen. Chic Hecht, R-Nev., said Nicaragua's communist government has an institutionalized policy of anti-Semitism that rivals that of Hitler in everything but scale. Jews have been run out of the country and their property confiscated since the Sandinista Party betrayed the coalition that put it in power and seized control of the government with ample assistance from the Soviet Union and Cuba. Hecht, one of eight Jewish members of the United States Senate, said Nicaragua's vicious anti-Semitic campaign was undertaken to repay a debt of gratitude owed the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The PLO and the Sandinistas have had close ties since the mid-1960s, when Palestinian terrorists became some of the first to offer training to their communist brothers in Central America. Under Daniel Ortega's communist tyranny, Nicaragua has become the biggest supporter of the PLO outside the Arab world. Granted diplomatic recognition by the Sandinistas, the PLO has a fully accredited "embassy" in Managua. Yasser Arafat, the emasculated head of the PLO, was greeted warmly in Managua by Interior Minister Tomas Borgé, leader of Nicaragua's secret police, who told the Arab terrorist that "Nicaragua is your land and the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas."

Sandinista attacks on Jews in Nicaragua began even before they seized control of the government in the 1979 revolution. Managua's Jewish community was gathered in the city's synagogue in 1978 when the building was firebombed. As worshippers tried to flee the burning synagogue, armed members of the

Sandinista Party blocked their path. Only the quick arrival of firemen foiled the Sandinista attempt to have the Jews burned alive.

After gaining governmental power, the FSLN — the Sandinista National Liberation Front — enacted laws requiring the confiscation of Jewish property on the grounds its owner had abandoned or failed to properly maintain it. One Jewish refugee that escaped to the United States, Mr. Oscar Kellerman, said the Sandinistas "told us to get out, and then they confiscated our property [as abandoned] when we left. But when you are told you either lose your property or your life, there really is no choice."

As another example of the racist policies of Nicaragua's communist government, Sen. Hecht cited the plight of the Miskito Indians. "These proud and once autonomous people have endured beatings, interrogations, rapes and killings because of their unwillingness to join the Sandinista revolution. Thousands have fled to Honduras, many to join the ranks of the anti-Sandinista rebels. Those that remain have been forced from their homes into relocation camps."

The Sandinistas could name some

of these "relocation" camps. Some suggestions come to mind: Treblinka II, New Auschwitz. . . .

COMRADE SCHROEDER SOLICITS...

U.S. Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo., is helping raise money to assist Nicaragua's communist regime. A four-page letter from the Denver liberal urges the reader to "join me in a growing nationwide movement to redeem our country's honor by reversing the Reagan administration's tragically misguided policy toward Nicaragua. Our nation is responsible for launching a terrorist war of attrition against a poor nation."

Schroeder's fund-raising letter was written on behalf of the Nicaragua Network. According to Miguel Bolanos Hunter, a founder of the Nicaragua Network and a Sandinista State Security agent before his defection to the U.S. in 1983, the group Schroeder represents is controlled from Managua by the Sandinista regime.

"It is outrageous that a member of Congress is helping to raise money

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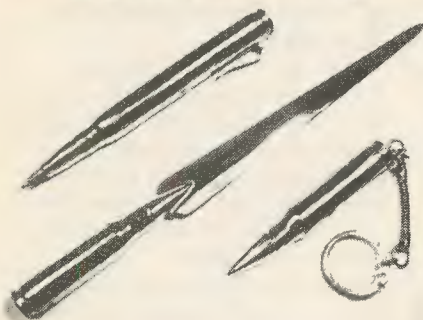
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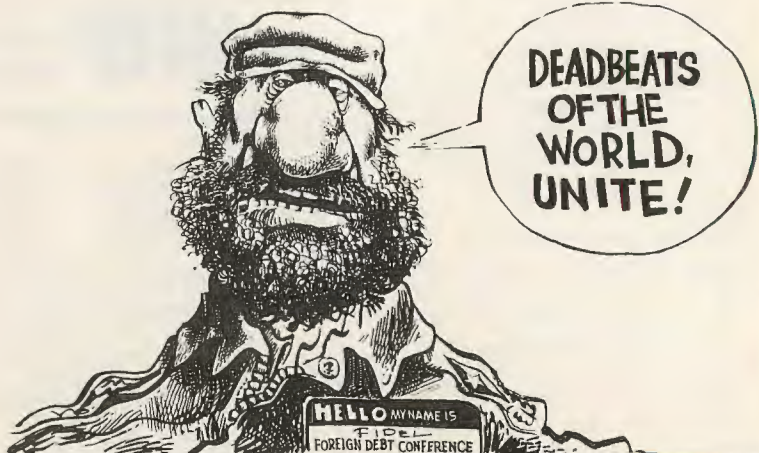
for a group controlled by the Sandinistas," said Ken Boehm, chairman of the Citizens for Reagan, who asked Schroeder to repudiate her letter. "Right now the Sandinistas are harassing the Church, censoring the press and persecuting Miskito Indians and Jews. . . . It is incredible that Representative Schroeder would have anything to do with these Marxist-Leninists."

SOA REUNION...

A reunion of the Special

Operations Association is imminent as this issue goes to press. The SOA reunion is set for 6-8 December at the Maxim Hotel in Las Vegas. It is open to the SOA's present 612 members and their guests, or to anyone qualified to join. SOA membership is available to anyone who served in classified or covert operations for U.S. or allied forces from World War II to the present. More information on the SOA and its reunion is available by writing to Special Operations Association, 5130 E. Charleston Blvd., Suite 5-583F, Las Vegas, NV 89122. Or you may call Bob Burton, the SOA secretary, at (805) 569-0604. ✕

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FLAK

Continued from page 7

THANKS, SOF...

Sirs:

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation appreciates SOF's donation of prizes for our recent Summer Conservation Banquet. Thanks to your generosity, our Conservation Banquet was one of the most successful ever.

Michael F. Corcoran
Executive Vice President
North Carolina Wildlife
Federation
Raleigh, North Carolina

BREN 10 BUYERS BEWARE...

Sirs:

I write so that SOF readers can know the quality of service they can expect from Dornaus & Dixon, manufacturers of the Bren 10. We originally placed our order 3 June 1983 with a \$1,000.50 deposit. Dornaus postponed delivery dates several times prior to the shipping notice. Then they notified us in July 1984 that they were ready to ship, but that the balance of the purchase price was due in advance. We complied but the pistols were never delivered. Several phone calls to

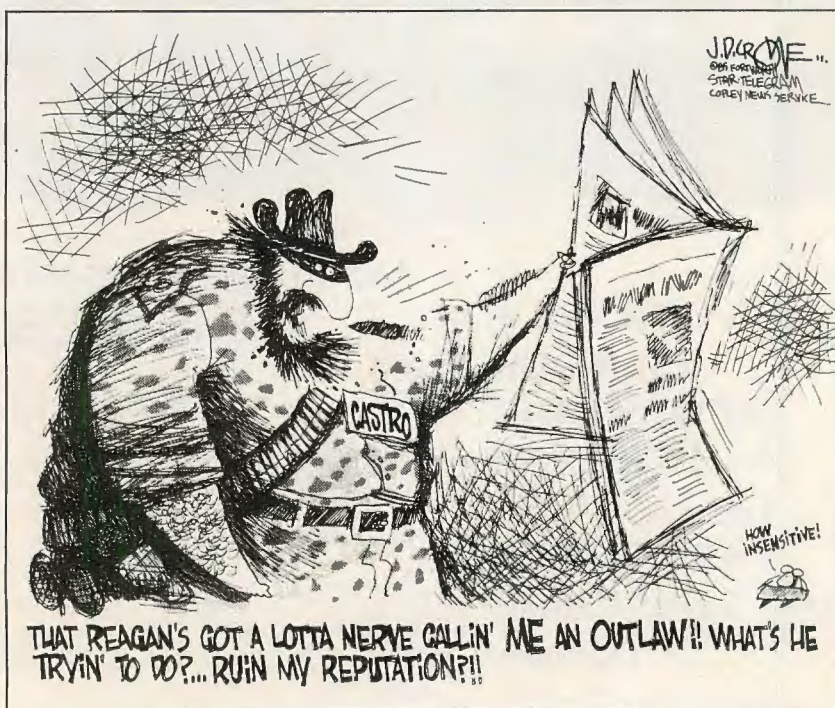
D&D followed, but to no avail. We decided to request a refund (\$2,001). D&D responded that they needed the request in writing. We complied again. This was two months ago and we have not received our refund. With this sour taste in our mouths, I doubt we could recommend this product to anyone.

Albert J. Garcia
Executive VP
Continental Guns, Inc.
Miami, Florida

I have never been treated the way Dornaus & Dixon has treated me regarding the Bren 10 mess: very dirty. On 10 August 1984, I paid \$441 by check for a Bren 10 standard model and three boxes of cartridges. They cashed the check immediately and sent a notice that the pistol would be delivered by 21 November. Since then D&D changed the delivery date five times. I sent them a registered letter saying I wanted a refund. It has been three months and I have never received an answer. I have had it. I want my money back so I can purchase a pistol from a reputable dealer.

Gary Bishop
Wichita Falls, Texas

These letters are a small sample of the mail SOF has received on this topic. They are typical of the complaints about the shoddy business practices of Dornaus & Dixon in marketing the Bren 10 pistol. So, readers, if you are



thinking about purchasing a Bren 10, let the buyer beware. Judging from the mail, the lucky folks were those who got a pistol with no magazines. The unlucky often got little but practice in letter writing.

OPPOSING H.R. 2024...

Sirs:

Is SOF a "smut" magazine? Apparently that's what NBC's *Today Show* host Bryant Gumbel thinks. On a July 23 show dealing with gun control he stated, "I've been holding *Soldier of Fortune* magazine. I feel like I should go wash my hands."

The reason this clown attacked SOF is because it had advertisements for semiauto firearms and conversion kits which might be used illegally. The discussion dealt with H.R. 2024 — a bill introduced by Representative Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) which would grant the BATF broad power in *outlawing* any semiauto they determined to be "readily convertible." Not only the sale but mere possession would be illegal.

It is important to get people aware of this bill's provisions. Don't be fooled by media generalizations that state it only deals with MAC-10s. It will affect all semiautos from the M1911A1 to the HK 91.

Robert M. Darden
Arlington, Virginia

This is an issue that will affect all SOF readers and we encourage SOFers to write their congressmen opposing H.R. 2024.

PROMOTIONAL FEE NOT PAID...

Sirs:

Thank you for your review of my book *Mercenary Troops in Modern Africa* (SOF, October '85).

You are correct in assuming that the scope of this initial volume did not permit me to address the role of military technicians separately. Instead, I included technical experts along with the operational forces which they supported. These personnel can indeed be considered part of the mercenary forces as we have defined them; and, as you are certainly aware, many of the mercs recruited for the Angolan debacle were contracted to fill just such technical billets.

I hope that an expanded new work in progress will be able to treat

the question of technical advisers more fully and help to clarify this aspect of mercenarism that has become particularly relevant as we approach the 21st century.

By the way, I appreciate the spot promotion tendered in your review, but the paymaster tells me that I'm still only entitled to the lieutenant commander scale as defined by the U.S. Navy.

Gerry S. Thomas
San Diego, Calif.

We thought Thomas' clear and scholarly analysis of a difficult topic merited a promotion, so we gave it to him. His highly recommended book can be ordered for \$15 from Westview Press, Inc., Dept. SOF, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301.

THE SEABEES "CAN DO"...

Sirs:

Having served in Vietnam in 1956-'66, I read, with great amusement, "Barging in on Charlie" by Robert Andrews (SOF, October 1985). While there was a large part of the story dedicated to the

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Lighterage Causeway, Mr. Andrews failed to mention that the Seabees built this deep-water landing.

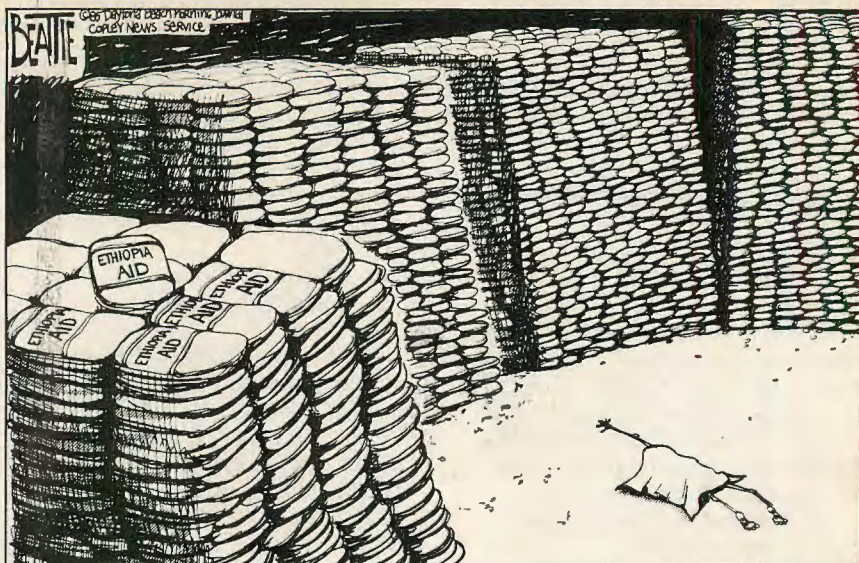
I was attached to USN MCB-9 and though we didn't "hit the beach" as the Marines did, we were right there with them. During the 12 years in-country, they built many roads, bridges, hospitals, air strips and lots of good will for the people of Vietnam. There are many fallen Seabees' names on the memorial in Washington, D.C. and thousands of Seabees whose deeds have yet to be recorded. I think SOF should share in the responsibility of getting that message out.

William F. Cote
Newport Beach, California

You're right. The Seabees haven't been given their fair share of recognition for courageous deeds and building prowess. We encourage Seabees with a tale to tell to submit their stories to: SOF Editorial, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. Attn: Suzanne Westgaard.

2ND MAU ON GRENADA...

Sirs:
Your 10th anniversary issue article



covering the spoils of victory in "Guns of Grenada" was highly enlightening. Being an enlisted Marine and member of the invading unit, I would, however, like to send a dart your way. The Marine unit that evicted the Cuban scum from the "isle of spice" was the 22nd MAU — not the 24th MAU.

I send my deepest respect to the Cobra gunship pilots. Thanks to them, another chapter in the book

of courage and bravery has been written.

Scott J. Kaufhold
Cpl., USMC

Good catch, corporal.

Need a new 4x4???

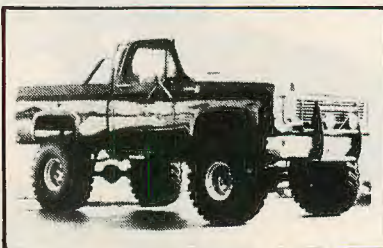
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LARGE FLORIDIAN REPTILES AGAINST WORLD HUNGER

SATISFIED READERS...

Sirs:

Congratulations on 10 years of expert coverage and informative views on military aspects around the world. While some publications have copied SOF, none have equaled it. I enjoy your articles on new military weapons and tactics, but I especially enjoy your reports on elite fighting units. I am a Jew, so naturally I am interested in events of the Middle East. Your excellent coverage of the

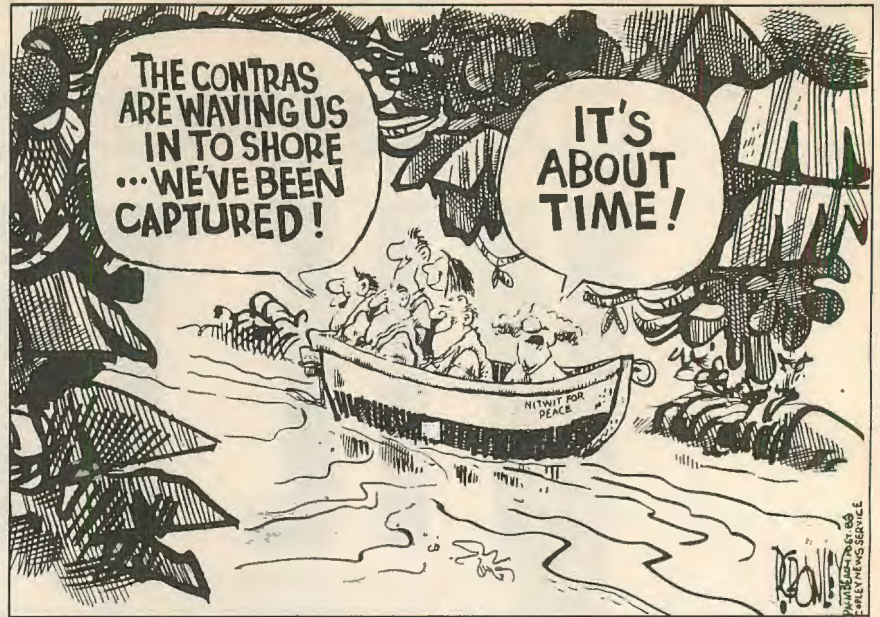
Lebanese war and operations by the Israeli Army has made me a constant reader.

Ron Keter
Las Vegas, Nevada

As a Vietnam Veteran and member of the NRA, Vietnam Veterans of America, VFW and the 25th Infantry Division Association I think your magazine is outstanding when it comes to coverage of the various small arms. You also do an excellent job in reporting major events in trouble spots around the world. I bet you were a bit surprised to get a letter like this from a VVA member. I can tell you that I do not support everything our national president has done, especially taking money from Jane Fonda and going over to Hanoi. Keep up the good work and here's hoping that you have many more years as successful as the first 10.

Mitchell D. Ryan
Hicksville, New York

Congratulations on your 10th anniversary. The reason for this letter, though, concerns something I read . . . the Russian soldiers' old tradition of not wearing socks. They wrapped their feet in triangle bandages, much like diapering a



baby, the toes going where the ass would in a diaper. Maybe this tip can help alleviate some foot problems in Central America.

Miss E.
New Jersey

Rags work to replace shoes in dry cold. The wraps give insulation, they're easy on the feet, and snow

doesn't wear them away rapidly. Unfortunately, none of those conditions exist in Central America. Combat boots are the real ticket, and combat boots in small and medium sizes are some of the most valued contributions to the Nicaraguan Freedom Fighters. ✘

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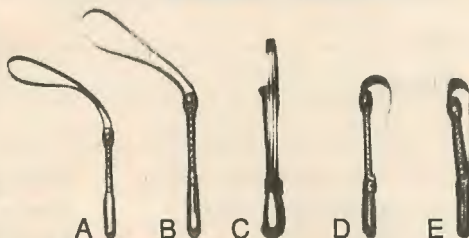
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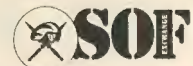
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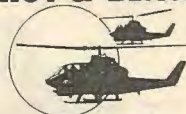
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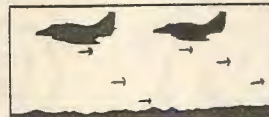
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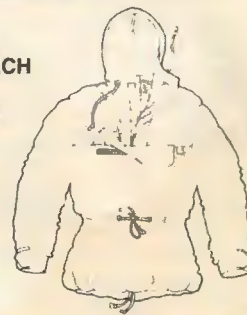
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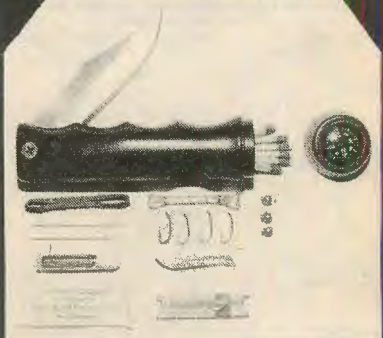
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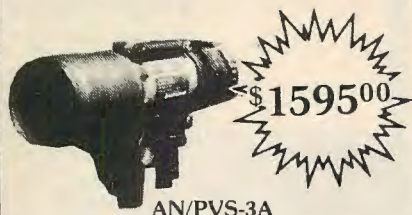
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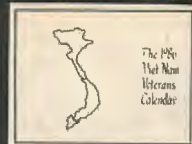
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Continued from page 2

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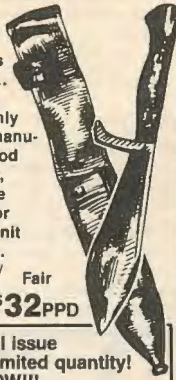
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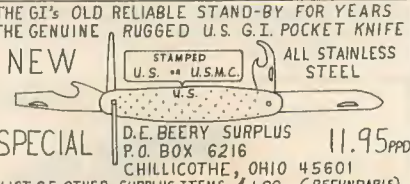
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