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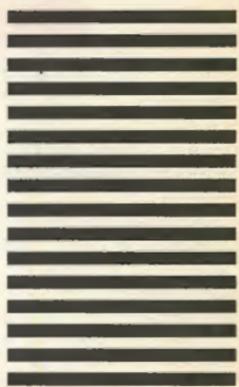
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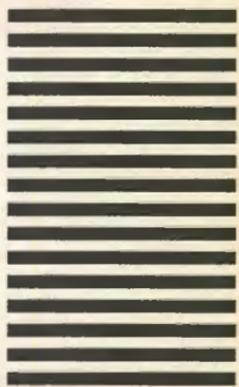
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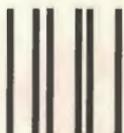
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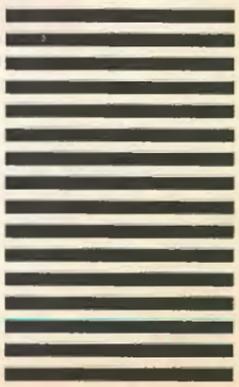
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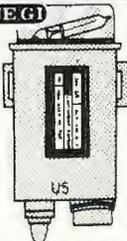
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New for 1985/86 Season!! Long Lengths in Flight Jackets Add \$8.00 per jacket

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.

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Standard model comes complete with a black leather case. 11 1/2 inch overall length with 6 inch blade.





COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

WITCH-HUNTERS have a long history of being slow learners. Because few anti-gunners read *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, I never expected my warning from December to have any effect. Investigators howl and hunt for mercenary schools, and as I said before, the operators of short-order Parris Islands are catching all the game. While the unknowing scurry to find academies to teach them dread arts before bureaucrats close paramilitary day-schools, "veterans" of everything from the SAS to the Turkish army are raking in other people's paychecks.

If I were running such a camouflage diploma mill or an S&M school in a swamp, I'd be sending anonymous campaign contributions to Pat Schroeder.

All the smokescreen aside, there are good private schools and trainers. Some have misinterpreted my statement to mean that all private training is irresponsible. That's nonsense.

I run short-term, private, military training schools. Of course, the schools I manage have never been in the United States: Afghanistan, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras ... but never the United States. They are staffed by trained professionals with verifiable military records. Our trainees are members of anti-communist resistance groups, and soldiers in legally constituted defense forces of non-communist nations.

I offer my experience, not by way of saying that I'm the only one who knows how to run private training cadre, but to show that I neither condemn contract trainers as a group nor am I ignorant of the services such men perform. Good contract trainers

provide fresh approaches and flexibility no entrenched military can match. Working professionals from Secret Service to SEALs hire private trainers and sometimes attend private schools to expand their technical repertoires, sharpen their reactions and learn new strategies. Individually, the man-at-arms can enhance his tactical skills or the veteran can take a quick refresher course. The slick-sleeve novice can be introduced to the world of weapons and the bush without signing on for five in the Legion. All these are useful, realistic functions of the private military trainer and school. Only one problem: it has to be a good school.

Good private military training schools have professional staffs. They have a defined curriculum that parallels current military practice. The course as a whole should have concrete and realistically limited goals. Technical education should be emphasized rather than any fantastic recreation of the combat environment.

All these requirements seem obvious if you stop to think about it. But people looking for a paramilitary school or a way to upgrade old combat skills don't always think of these requirements. Like the characters in the joke, they want to "share the experience."

As long as ignorant reporters emphasize the "experience" of being yelled at and shot at, and as long as they confuse that with military training, the gullible will keep seeking poor private training. And entrepreneurs will provide poor training as long as there are people to pay for it. The witch hunt shall have created its perfect prey by inaccurate publicity. ☒



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QUELL QUIRKS

Andy Langley
 Professional trainer
 returns fire **28**

ZULU

William H. Northacker
 Massacre at Isandlwana
30

POWs vs. UNCLE SAM

Jim Coyne
 A sad saga of forgotten
 heroes **38**

MAD MIKE'S OWN STORY

Chris Hoare
 Soldiering, adventure
 and the rules of war **44**

COPPERS ON CYPRUS

Michael R. Doyle
 United Nations police
 duty **48**

SUPER BLOOPER

Brady Ridgway
 40mm multishot grenade
 launcher **52**

MAC ATTACK

Peter G. Kokalis
 Poor boy's SMG refuses
 to die **54**

.HONDURAN NAVY

Francisco Carberry
 Gulf of Fonseca patrol
58

REBELLION IN BURMA

Mark Johnson
 The Karen's 37-year
 fight drags on **64**

.44 SPECIAL BACK-UP

Peter G. Kokalis
 Charter Arms' Bulldog
68

"FIND THE BASTARDS — THEN PILE ON"

Timothy D. Kerns
 1st Cav's Operation
 Twinkle Toes **70**

BREND'S BLADES

Pete Weizenegger
 Walter Brend's new
 Model Two **74**

RECCE COMMANDO

Stephan Terblanche
 Stalking prey in the
 Southern African bush
76

COIN AIR

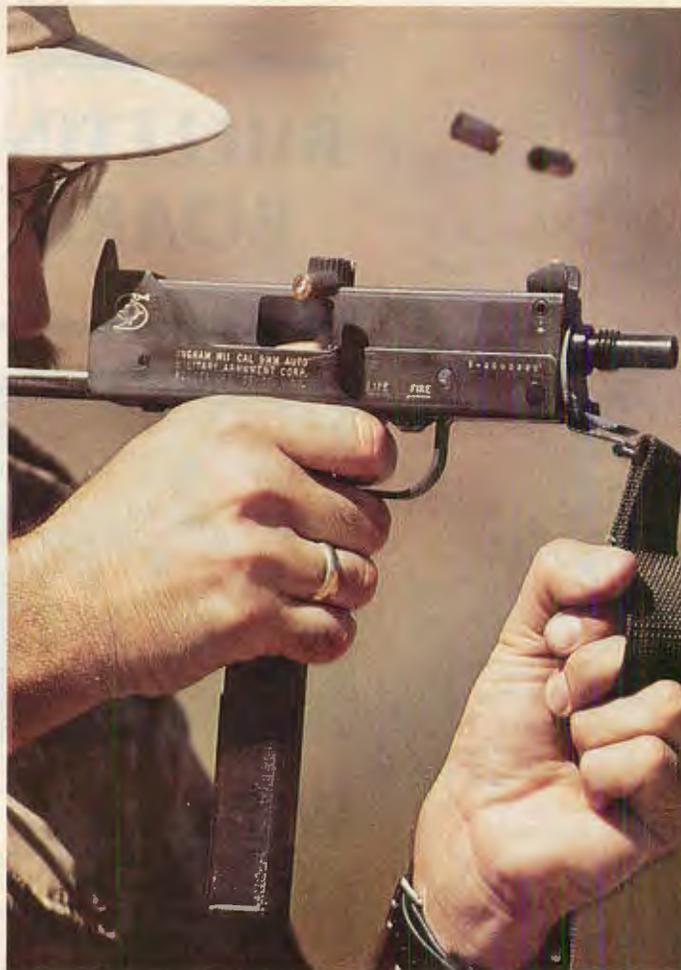
Dana Drenkowski
 AC-130s in Central
 America **84**

FAST BREAK

Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston
 Bucheimer's front-break
 for semiautos **90**

KNOCKDOWN NONSENSE

B.R. Hughes
 It only happens on
 celluloid **92**



Page 54

COVER: MAC 11 submachine guns have been media stars and whipping boys for the last couple of decades. High rate of fire, compactness and sound-suppressing systems design have attracted buyers and publicity, while pros found it problematical. Technical editor Pete Kokalis takes the MAC apart, and puts the picture back together for SOF readers. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

NGUYEN CAO KY

Larry Englemann
 On Vietnam, America,
 communism and war
 after a decade of exile
96

CONTRACT IN OMAN

Peter Shelldrake
 A Brit in the Sultan's
 little army **102**

Bulletin Board 4

Ivan's tank busters

FLAK 10

Three Bren Ten mags?

In Review 12

South African War Machine

Battle Blades 14

Gurkha knife technique

Combat Weaponcraft 16

Toe-poppers to bear traps

I Was There 20

Lizards are neutral

Adventure Quartermaster 24

Executive protection

Full Auto 26

Open season on MG collectors

Incoming 128

Celebrate 100 issues

Supply Locker 134

Advertisers Index 138

Classified 139

AS YOU WERE...

Bulletin Board has three corrections for our readers and contributors.

First, a byline was omitted from a sidebar to an article titled "A Tale of Two Battles" (September 1985). The sidebar, "Firebase Becky" on page 72 of that issue, was written by Kregg P.J. Jorgenson.

Second, the article "Polishing Pump-Gun Technique" (October '85) photos should have been credited to S. Lauman.

Finally, a standing feature — "I Was There" — ran in the November 1985 issue with an incorrect byline. The column, "By the Book: Combat Common Sense" on page 16 of that issue, was written by David Sherman.

Sorry for the confusion, folks. And SOF stands corrected.

SCOTCH THAT RUMOR...

Rumors have circulated in soldier of fortune circles for months now that the South-West Africa Territorial Force has been hiring foreigners to serve in a special military unit. Wrong. An SOF source in Windhoek, where the SATF is headquartered, tells us that *only* South African citizens are being accepted for service in the Territorials. Others need not apply. This was confirmed by the Embassy of South Africa in Washington, which also stressed that local citizenship is required for service in the South African Defense Forces.

BULLETIN BOARD



WINGED MAGNIFICENCE...

SOF extends its gratitude to artist Denny Rogers for sharing his sculpted work, "Winged Magnificence," with those who attended the 6th Annual Soldier of Fortune Convention and Combat Weapons Exposition. Rogers, being congratulated in the accompanying photo by actor Robert Duvall, spent 2,500 hours in 1983-84 designing and executing the hot-cast bronze of our national symbol, the American bald eagle.

SOF's Las Vegas convention was only the fifth time Rogers' piece has been displayed. Upon its completion at the University of Illinois, where Rogers is a sculpture and art instructor, Gov. Jim Thompson exhibited the work in his executive office. It was unanimously selected by a search committee as the only sculpture to be officially displayed at the second inauguration of President Reagan, after which it was moved to the Republican National Headquarters Presidential Museum for a showing. It also served as a backdrop for speeches by Reagan, Vice President George Bush, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and other cabinet members at the Republican National Committee's Presidential Dinner and Dance at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington.

SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown said he was pleased to have the work displayed at the convention as a proud symbol of our freedom as Americans, the pro-America philosophy of *Soldier of Fortune* and its affiliates, and to remind the public of the eternal vigilance our nation must have against those who seek to impose tyranny over other free men. Those interested in obtaining small-scale replicas of "Winged Magnificence" should contact: Tom Henderson, Dept. SOF, 12920 Audelia Drive, Dallas, Texas 75243, or call (214) 907-1163.

IVAN'S TANK BUSTERS...

The Soviets' new T-80 main battle tank, now entering service in significant numbers, will be fitted with gun-launched Kobra anti-tank missiles, reliable sources tell SOF. The laser-guided Kobra is thought to have a range in excess of 3,000 meters and will be fired from the T-80's 125mm main gun. The same sources say the Kobra gun/launcher systems will be retrofitted on selected T-72s and T-64s, all of which mount the same 125mm smooth-bore main gun.

The T-80 has a T-72-type chassis, but is thought to be powered by a gas turbine engine instead of the T-72's V-12 diesel. Confirmed information on the Kobra gun-launching system is very limited. So Western analysts are uncertain whether the T-80's automatic loader will be retained or conventional loading will be done by a four-man crew. The Soviet automatic loader — introduced on the T-64 and standard on all T-64, T-72 and T-80 tanks — cuts Soviet tank crews to only three men. Western tanks typically require a four-man crew.

Use of gun/missile launchers by the West is limited to the 152mm gun/missile systems used on the M60A2 MBT and the M551 Sheridan light tank. This system is less than satisfactory in several respects. First, the system's infrared-guided Shillelagh missile, with an effective range of about 3,000 meters, cannot be brought under control in less than 800 meters. The rate of fire is slow and the gunner has to keep the target in his sights until missile impact. Because the tank has to stop to fire the Shillelagh, it is vulnerable during missile flight time.

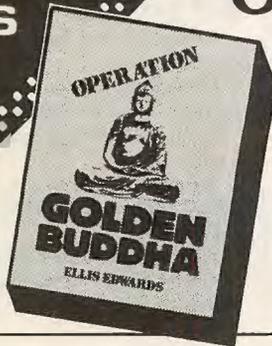
The Kobra's laser guidance gives it a possible advantage over the Shillelagh's infrared system. For instance, the Kobra may be able to home in on a laser beam directed on the target by a source outside the tank. This would enable the Soviet tank to move during or immediately after the Kobra is fired and let a forward observer direct the missile to its target.

Incidentally, the T-80's regular 125mm smooth-bore gun has an effective range of 2,100 meters using APFSDS (armor-piercing, fin-stabilized, discarding-sabot) anti-tank ammunition and 4,000 meters using all HEAT-FRAG (high-explosive anti-tank fragmentation) general purpose rounds.



OPERATION GOLDEN BUDDHA

by Ellis Edwards



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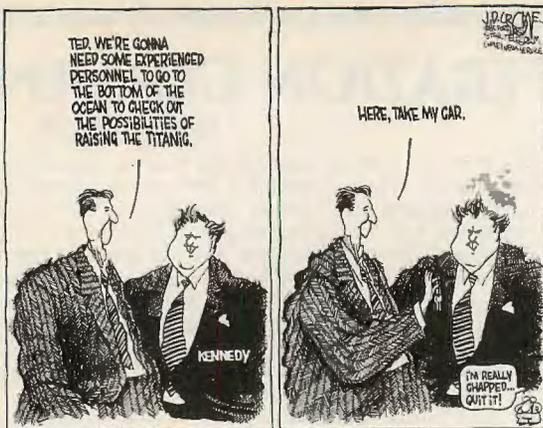
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VIETNAM ERA VETS...

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UNDERWATER OPS...

At long last Navy UDT/SEAL men are being honored with their own museum, scheduled to open 10 November 1985 at Fort Pierce, Florida — home of the original NCDU/UDT training site. The museum will eventually expand under a five-phased approach depicting underwater ops during World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the present. For further information contact Captain Norman Olson, U.S. Navy (Ret.) at Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1117, Fort Pierce, Florida 33454, or call (305) 464-FROG.



SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT...

In reading various news accounts about SOF spawned by our recent convention in Las Vegas, the editors noted a couple of errors serious enough to warrant comment.

First, in writing about the convention for *The Australian* in Sydney, Sally MacMillan (who, incidentally, did not even attend the convention) reported that SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown was a technical adviser to Sylvester Stallone for the movie *First Blood*. Brown wants everyone — especially Sly — to know that he has never told anyone that he worked in any such capacity for either one of the Rambo films. If this so-called reporter had bothered to attend, she would have known that John Donovan was teaching scuba diving in the Sahara Hotel pool, not underwater demolitions, as she claimed.

Last but not least, F.J. Borchardt of Stor-Fjeld, Ltd., wants everyone to know that nobody has ever been killed in any of his rappelling courses, as a few newspapers erroneously reported.

SOF DIVE TOUR...

Those interested in taking diving instruction on location in the Cayman Islands under the tutelage of SOF Contributing Editor John Donovan, listen up! A five- to seven-day trip in the late winter is being planned on a first-come, first-served basis. Instruction will be geared toward attaining SCUBA certification. Already certified divers are also welcome on a limited basis. If you think you'd like to make the trip, write immediately for details to: **SCUBA Trip, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. No phone calls please.**

HONOR ROLL...

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Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund: Christopher Marquette, Robert G. Wheaton.

JUNGLE RUMBLE...

A rumble in the jungle indicates that the Marxist-backed governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe are having more trouble with the democratic resistance movement than they would like to admit. Mozambique's President Samora Machel and Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe have repeatedly claimed that RENAMO — a Portuguese acronym for Mozambique National Resistance Movement — is nothing more than a few isolated pockets of poorly organized "bandits."

If that's true, it doesn't reflect well on the defensive capabilities of either country. For instance, Machel recently told his comrade in Zimbabwe that Mozambique is mobilizing its "entire population" against RENAMO's Freedom Fighters. Then Comrade Bobby asserted in a recent House of Assembly debate that Zimbabwe would defend its railroads, highways and oil pipeline linking the two nations, *whatever* the cost in money and manpower, even if it ties down 30,000 Zimbabwean soldiers.

A knowledgeable SOF source tells us that over 20,000 Zimbabwean National Army troops *already* are deployed inside Mozambique, protecting supply lines from raids by RENAMO, which has some members who were trained by the Rhodesian SAS. The source also threw in an interesting tidbit. Some of the ZNA troops in Mozambique are under the command of a former Rhodesian Army officer — and a Yank at that — who is serving in Mugabe's army as a colonel. File him along with Benedict Arnold, Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden.

If the reader finds the idea of a U.S. citizen serving a pro-Marxist

Continued on page 127

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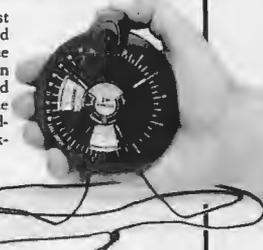


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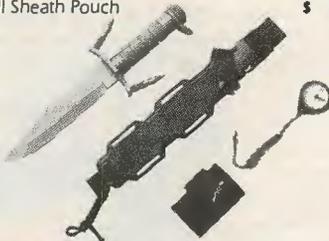
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ACADEMIC ATTITUDES...

Sirs:

An upperclassman at the academy subscribes to *Soldier of Fortune* and is an avid reader and collector of the magazine. He lent me the August Anniversary issue and as I leafed through it I realized that my previous conception of the magazine being strictly propaganda was false. Instead, I was very impressed with the wide assortment of interesting articles it presented. The stories, pictures, letters and even the advertisements exhibit the importance of defense to SOF, to the people in the magazine, and especially to the subscribers. I never knew there was a magazine with such patriotism, such an idea of the rights of the United States of America, or such a positive attitude toward national defense. Please continue the excellent coverage of those issues that affect us as free people.

Tiffany J. Troxel
Midshipman
United States
Naval
Academy

IN THE INTEREST OF ACCURACY...

Sirs:

"SEAL Saga," October '85, turned out pretty well, but as I busted ass getting it right and putting it together, let me in the interest of accuracy point out a few printed mistakes...

General Gene Tunney's "Tunney Fish" is actually Commander Tunney. C&C is command & control of JCS/DOD, not Commander-in-Chief of the JCS.

John B. Dwyer
Dayton, Ohio



FLAK



WANTED IN SURINAM...

Sirs:

Dr. John's article, "Merc Rip-Off in Surinam" (SOF, August '84) was read with great interest as I frequently travel the former Dutch colony. I had the opportunity during a recent trip to Surinam to visit the main post office of Paramaribo and was shown a wanted poster for Dr. John and Boss who were wanted for mercenary work in Surinam.

I have seen Surinam's deterioration under the revolutionary leader, Lieutenant Colonel Desi Bouterse, who seized power in a coup in 1980. And Bouterse's new-found friends, the Libyans, are ever present in increasing numbers.

My good friends praise the results in Grenada. They keep wishing the same would happen to them. It's only too bad the situation Dr. John faced didn't take a different turn. Much of our concentration at the moment is on Central America, but we also need to be looking further South.

Name and Address Withheld

SOF's New Year's resolution is to intensify coverage of the explosive tensions of economically beleaguered South America. Watch for more reports.



TED KENNEDY STALE RIDER

DETERMINED DONORS...

Sirs:

Almost daily I read about federal and local law enforcement agencies who confiscate caches of weapons in drug busts or in raids on suspected gangsters. During the course of a year they must amass a great number of weapons. After these weapons serve their purpose as evidence in a trial, they must be stored until they can be disposed of or destroyed. Why can't we collect all confiscated weapons and ship them to the freedom fighters in Central America or Afghanistan?

I know that it would take special legislation to get something like this going, but it could appease those in Washington who support sending aid and also those who don't want tax dollars spent on supporting a war.

Nick Stroffolino
Brooklyn, New York

Once again the terrible dragon of communism has set out to annihilate new lands and its people. This time the target is El Salvador and Nicaragua. And many Americans sit in the comfort and safety of their homes saying: "Can't those people ever stop fighting?"

These people are fighting for their freedom and it amazes me how quickly many Americans forget our own country's history and the uncertain future that our fellow Americans once faced. Back then our country may have been quite small, but the hopes and dreams that those colonists had were anything but small. They not only wanted but demanded their right to freedom and would settle for nothing less.

The people of El Salvador and Nicaragua are not asking for us to hand them their freedom. They are willing to fight for it as we once did. All they're asking for is a chance. Our donations will give them the chance. I urge all SOF readers to do as my family and I have done and make a donation to the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

Judy Babcock
Austin, Texas

Continued on page 130

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR MACHINE. By Helmoed-Römer Heitman. Presidio Press, Dept. SOF, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, CA 94947. 1985. Review by Brady Ridgway.

SOUTH AFRICA has become an easy target for journalists armed with a myopic view of history. The South African government has responded to such trust and affection by limiting access to its internal security apparatus, especially the South African Defence Forces (SADF). So, naturally, we're all a little suspicious when we see a South African book entitled the **South African War Machine**.

Author Heitman's 15-year service and recent staff postings with the South African Army Citizen Force indicate that there are few surprises in this hard-bound recruiting pamphlet. But it's not entirely a whitewash, either.

This book, well-illustrated with dozens of excellent color and black and white photographs, does provide a reasonably balanced overview of the South African military structure and its operations against both internal and external insurgent forces. Heitman can be forgiven his occasional lapses into subjective analysis of his topic simply for the detail he provides on each branch of service.

Heitman traces the little-known

South African Navy's (SAN) history from 1885, when the first naval volunteer unit was formed in Durban for port defense, to its current role as South Africa's coastal defense arm. Included is a breakdown of the SAN command structure, a listing by name of SAN vessels in service (three French-built Daphne-class subs home-based at Simonstown, for instance, each sporting 12 55cm torpedo tubes), locations of SAN bases and schools (to include an excellent short piece on the Navy Diving School at Simonstown), and a wealth of other information not easily obtainable elsewhere.

Heitman follows much the same format for the other regular services — army and air force — and also devotes a section to South Africa's special forces. As he points out, "none of them is eager to discuss its doctrines or tactics," and of course the text has been edited (read "censored") by SADF staff officers. However, this section does give basic insight into the clandestine units that carry out the darker side

of the South African bush war.

Heitman examines the roles of 1 Reconnaissance Commando (see "Rece Commando" on page 76) the SAS-type unit tasked with long-range recon missions and other more active assignments inside neighboring Mozambique, Botswana, Angola, and Zimbabwe, although he concentrates on the rugged training required of each potential member. Second on the list of elite South African forces is 44 Parachute Brigade — the Parabats. Again, Heitman's description of South Africa's external and internal para reaction force is superficial, but the background is credible and interesting. Heitman also provides data on 32 Battalion, the light infantry unit comprised primarily of former Angolan FNLA fighters, which spends much of its operational time in southern Angola. The South-West African Specialist Unit (SWASpes) also earns mention in this segment for its unusual composition of mounted, motorcycle and tracking wings, as does the Operation K in the



IN REVIEW

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Ovambo region of South-West Africa.

Heitman does more than just chronicle military units and operations by inserting an excellent 14-page study of Armscor (Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd.). Armscor is the South African government's umbrella arms manufacturer, and is the main supplier to all branches of the defense force. Since the United Nations' arms embargo against South Africa in 1977, SADF has had to rely on locally manufactured weapons and equipment for the bulk of its requirements. The weapons designed in South Africa and adopted for service — 155mm G-6 self-propelled guns, 127mm Valkiri self-propelled multiple rocket launchers, frequency-hopping communications equipment, and fire control systems for their fighter aircraft, among many others — have proved to be of excellent quality since all are tested under battle conditions. Armscor production has become so successful, in fact, that the United Nations deemed it necessary in December 1984 to ban the purchase of South African-produced weapons.

To further round out his study of the South African area of operations, Heitman provides a brief synopsis of the military forces of the "independent" black states located within South Africa: Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. Of particular interest is the Transkei Defense Force, now com-



manded by Major General Ron Reid-Daly of Rhodesian Selous Scouts fame. Reid-Daly assumed the post of GOC — General Officer Commanding — in May 1981 and quickly incorporated former Rhodesian Selous Scout, SAS and RLI members as the nucleus of his command. Now composed of an infantry battalion designed for COIN operations, one operational squadron of a Special Forces regiment, an infantry school, and other command and staff elements, the TDF is considered one of the better counterinsurgency forces in Africa.

Covered in more detail are the counterinsurgency operations con-

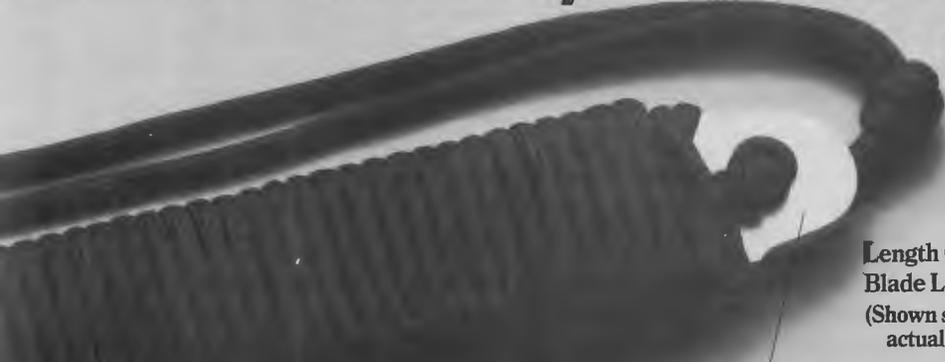
ducted by SADF from their first involvement in South-West Africa/Namibia to the present day. Cross-border operations into Angola, specifically South Africa's major push against MPLA and SWAPO forces in 1975-76, receive the lion's share of Heitman's attention although lesser-known raids into Mozambique and Lesotho also merit brief mention (bearing in mind the background of this book, operational details of the raids are apologetically absent).

Perhaps the most thought-provoking section of this book, located appropriately at the end, deals with South Africa's potential to develop and use tactical nuclear devices. Heitman opines that South Africa has the ability to develop nuclear weapons on short notice, "however, it seems unlikely that any weapons have actually been produced."

The question of actual use of atomic weaponry, according to Heitman, seems to center around South Africa's aging air force. If strike and fighter aircraft cannot be replaced (leaving South Africa open to a potential conventional force invasion), then South Africa could be left with "little choice but to take up the tactical nuclear option." Since this book no doubt reflects current SADF command thinking, the "tactical nuclear option" should be

Continued on page 126

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SENTRY removal: it's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it. But how?

A guitar string or a silenced pistol firing a subsonic round make a neat job of a distasteful, unpleasant and dangerous chore. But there are those occasions when a knife is the weapon of the moment.

The idea of taking out a sentry with a blade is a topic that has received a lot of attention. Let me go on record as saying that I don't believe that a knife is the best tool for this sort of thing. Still, let's take a look at how our pros do it.

In a best-case scenario, the sentry is approached from the rear and seized under the chin and over the mouth with the free hand. His head is bent backward and, his jugular vein and larynx are slashed, or he is stabbed so the blade reaches the carotid artery. Some favor a stabbing attack to the kidney. Done properly any and all of these work after a fashion, but there are a lot of caveats here.

Murphy is a mean son of a bitch. And he's alive and well in combat. There is just too much that can go wrong with the classic special ops throat slash. That technique is based on too many shaky suppositions to be considered as primary mode of attack.

In the first place, don't assume that when you get your hands on the sentry you'll be able to overpower and control him. Put yourself in the sentry's shoes. He sure doesn't relish his assignment, and at zero-dark-thirty the guy is as jumpy as the proverbial whore in church. The sound that he thought he heard ten minutes ago hasn't helped his nerves any.

And when you touch this guy he is going to get a jolt of adrenalin that will make yours seem tired. You will be lucky if you can hold him still and keep him quiet long enough to cut him.

Worse, his probably trained and certainly violent reaction makes it likely that you'll stab or cut yourself before this whole thing winds down. Your arm that is trying to hold the enemy's chin effectively shields half his neck and throat from the blade, and the possibility of cutting your own arm is not to be taken lightly.

Second, cutting a sentry's throat is *not* the quickest or quietest way to kill him with a blade. While loss of blood may be the cause of death in such a case, the victim usually dies of suffocation due to insufficient blood in circulation carrying oxygen to continue the vital processes. Anyone who hunts big game with a bow and arrow is well aware of this. Making a person or animal bleed, even in great and sudden amounts, is not the quickest or quietest way to kill him.

Actually, we really don't need an instantaneous *kill* in the case of a sen-



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try, but we do need instantaneous immobilization coupled with total silence. We don't want the sentry we are taking out to kick and thrash in the leaves while he dies, or make wet gurgling sounds that tell his buddies that someone on the perimeter just got his throat cut.

It doesn't matter if it takes a few moments for this enemy to die, but we *do* need him to be quiet about it.

Our Rangers, SEALs and Recon Marines are the best we have at this sort of thing, and even they are poorly and improperly trained and equipped for the specialized technique of sentry removal with a knife. The British SAS are just as deficient. To be blunt about the matter, the training and technique of neutralizing a sentry with a knife now being taught in the military actually makes a tough job even more difficult and dangerous than it need be.

The real pros at killing the enemy with a blade, quietly, quickly and unobserved, are the Gurkhas. They are so good at it that part of their outstanding reputation as fighting men is a direct result of their uncanny ability in this arena. What makes them so good? Background, equipment, and technique, all of which differ from U.S. and

British military training.

Gurkhas have a very simple and straightforward approach in *their* best-case scenario. After slipping within reach of the target they simply split his skull like a coconut or cut his head off. None of this risky and shaky business of grabbing the guy with the hands and bending him backward over the knee. When a Gurkha has a choice, he doesn't touch his target with his hands. If the target is wearing a helmet the Gurkha strikes a horizontal blow to the base of the neck. This severs the spinal cord and often results in a complete decapitation. If the enemy sentry is bareheaded and there is no helmet to contend with, the blow is simply a vertical chop to the top of the skull. The Gurkha's blade usually doesn't stop until it reaches the chin. Very simple, very basic and very effective.

Either attack will silence and kill instantly. These are actually attacks on the *nervous system*, not the circulatory system. A man who has just had his brain split has had his capacity for speech destroyed. So it is a safe bet that he won't issue a vocal warning after he is hit. The same thing holds true when the spinal cord is cut. The entire nervous system is separated from the brain and everything stops instantly.

This attack is by far the safest because the first thing that touches the

Continued on page 126



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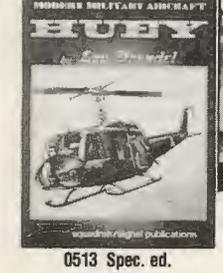
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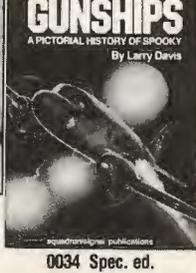
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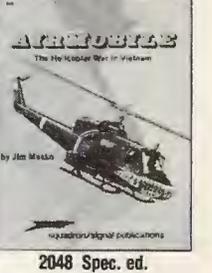
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COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Mick Doyle

Battle-Tested Booby Traps

THERE'S something inherently frustrating about patrolling through a jungle that's laced with booby traps. They are hard to spot and they rarely miss. But perhaps their worst feature is psychological. Booby traps cause casualties from the shadows — there is no enemy to take return fire or charge at with fixed bayonets.

Although the use of booby traps is almost as old as warfare itself, American soldiers got their most lethal dose of them during the Vietnam War. Violent death was often heralded by the sharp explosion of some simple trap fashioned by an enemy that preferred to remain unseen. In fact, booby traps were often the primary cause of U.S. casualties during the Vietnam War. Lieutenant William Calley's famous platoon had taken numerous casualties from booby traps the week before the My Lai massacre — a statistic that galled Calley even more because his patrols had failed to see a single enemy. And that is the main value of booby traps: they cause death and psychological mayhem to the enemy without a troop commitment.

The U.S. clearly came out of the Vietnam War on the short side of the booby trap tally sheet. But the military did learn a lesson from the war — booby traps can be just as valuable in counterinsurgency warfare as they are to a communist insurgency. And U.S. soldiers are learning more about them at the Jungle Warfare School in Panama. Again, the value of the lesson is largely psychological. If you learn the basics of what you're going to be up against, then much of the unreasoning fear disappears.

Jungle Warfare Branch instructors cover the employment of 12 booby traps as a basic introduction in the hope that we gringos will be able to watch out for ourselves in the deep, dark, dangerous and dreaded jungle. They are all pretty simple — it's a wonder everybody doesn't already know them.

The famous "frag in a can" has got to be first on everybody's hit parade of booby traps. It's simple. Just take a hand grenade, remove the pin and



Third Marine Div. troops advance across paddies south of Dong Ha. Tripwires and punji pits were among these Marines' chief concerns. Photo: Department of Defense

place it inside a C-rat can so that the spoon is retained. Then attach the ensemble to a tree, camouflage it and run a tripwire across the trail. The enemy saunters down the trail, a foot snags the tripwire and yanking the grenade from the can, releasing the safety spoon. Boom! Someone is now missing part of his anatomy.

If you don't have a C-rat can, it's OK. You can rig a variation. Just tie a tripwire to a grenade pin that has been carefully straightened to ensure that it will slide right out. Attach the grenade directly to a tree and run the tripwire across the trail. The result is the same as the frag in a can — "Adios, muchacho."

The garbage dump is a good place to stick a booby trap. Soldiers often rummage through such things in search of useful intelligence. Or they might walk through it as an alternative to the trail. So the guerrillas give them a surprise. For this easy booby trap, place a fragmentation grenade on the ground, pull the pin and place debris, rocks, trash, etc., on top to hold the grenade's spoon in place. When a passing soldier disturbs the garbage the grenade spoon is released. Frags from the grenade, along with airborne debris, rocks and trash, cause casualties among those near the man who triggered the trap.

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the grenade. Natural, non-explosive materials work just as well. The Bamboo Whip is a nasty device that has been used effectively in past jungle conflicts. It's easy to conceal and can be constructed out of material found in any jungle area. All that is needed is one large length of bamboo for the whip itself and several smaller pieces, sharpened to act as knife points. Attach the points securely to the whip, bend the whip back around an anchor point and attach the whole thing to some sort of trigger mechanism that allows the whip to deploy upon body contact. Not only does it mess up the poor fellow it hits, the whole event also tends to demoralize the troops around him.

Any tale of battle in Southeast Asia, whether it be from the Philippine Insurrection or the Vietnam War, will undoubtedly recall accounts of the dreaded *punji* pit. This is another booby trap which is ideally suited to thickly vegetated areas which make the trap easy to conceal. Dig a pit approximately six feet by six feet and place some type of sharp stakes at the bottom — steel, bamboo or native timber will all do. Sharpen the points and dip them in something really vile; like old engine oil, acid, shit or all of the above. Anyone who falls in the pit stands the chance of having his body impaled on the stakes. At the very least, the victim's foot or leg will be

shredded by the stakes. Infection soon follows.

There are many variations of the *punji* pit. Perhaps the most common is the "bear trap," a small hole dug approximately ankle deep and slightly wider than a human foot. Nails are driven through two boards about 10 inches by 10 inches and fastened together at the bottom by straps. The contraption is then placed in the shallow pit and covered. Any unwary patrol that passes along is bound to take a casualty. If a soldier steps in it, the two nail-studded boards close around his ankle. The wonderful thing about this booby trap is that it bypasses the steel insert in the U.S. Army jungle boot. What a deal.

Heavy weights dropped on unsuspecting prey have been used as a hunting trick since time began. It is also used in hunting human quarry and has seen use in the jungles of Central America. Appropriately called the "deadfall," this booby trap is a heavy timber or platform into which spikes are driven. The trap is suspended overhead on a trail or area through which troops must pass. The deadfall must be heavy enough to impale the body or head of the man on which it falls. Any tripwire setup will do. All you have to do is hope that your intended casualties don't look up.

An alternative to straight gravity is

the pendulum effect. The mace is a variation of the deadfall that works basically the same way except that the mace swings into the enemy. Ouch.

The so-called "toe popper" is a good example of technology mixed with native materials. It uses a very simple principle of deployment — guerrillas like to keep it simple. Find a small canister the size of the caliber of the round to be used. It can be made of bamboo or steel pipe, with a piece of wood approximately two inches square attached to it for a base. Drive a small nail through the base. Place the round so that the firing pin is over the nail and fill the canister with stones, nails or whatever nasty little items you can think of. Then bury it along a trail so that the round will go off causing severe injury to the poor soul who steps on it. This trap rarely causes death: It maims the victim and requires a minimum of two more soldiers to evacuate the wounded man.

Since Latin America has provided the stage for the most recent U.S. involvement in guerrilla warfare, it is only appropriate that we call these next improvised booby traps Latin American mines. They are constructed of wood, electrical wire, two metal contacts and a power source. The power source and wire need only be strong enough to

Continued on page 124

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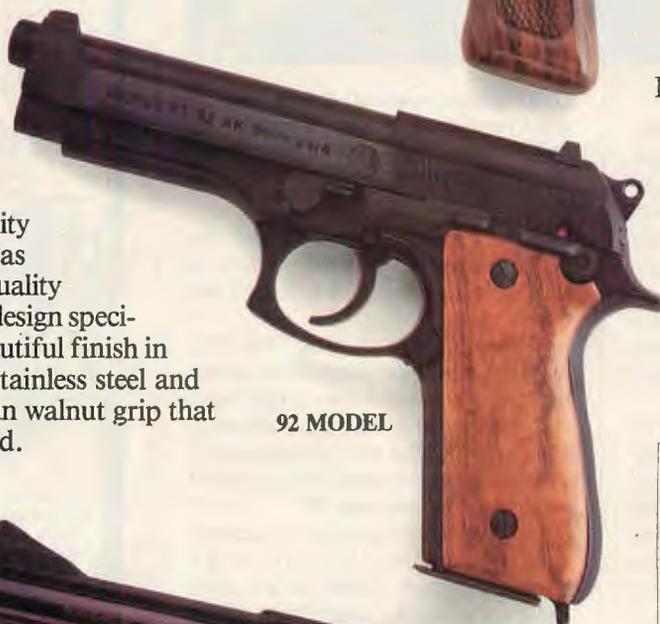
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I WAS THERE

by Kregg P.J. Jorgenson

LRRP 'n' Lizards



BLACK Virgin Mountain, the towering Nui Ba Den, stood sentinel against the morning, keeping birds, snakes and other jungle life quiet until the midday sun could overpower the cold and shadowy giant. Even then the Vietnamese jungle remained awkwardly quiet and dark until the sunlight could force its way through the living layer of dense, musk-smelling vegetation.

During the long twilight morning the five-man LRRP team had cautiously pushed their way into the section of rain forest they now occupied. While they moved, seemingly never-ending wait-a-minute vines and branches clawed and scratched at the team of weary intruders.

When the patrol reached the grid coordinate marked on the map they dropped their too-heavy rucks, positioned Claymores and set up their ambush overlooking a recently used trail. Satisfied their position was secure, the team settled in to watch and rest.

Minutes stretched into an hour, then suddenly an eerie voice cut through the jungle silence. "FUCK YOU," it wailed.

"Hey Renfro, wake up," the new guy on watch whispered to the patrol commander. No response.

"RENFRO! Wake up, dammit!" the whisper turning into a shout.

The LRRP team leader, breaking out of his shallow sleep, turned in controlled panic toward the new guy wrestling with the detonator to the daisy-chained anti-personnel mines. Surveying the empty trail he reached

LRRP teams penetrated deep into the Vietnamese jungle, "snoopin' and poopin'" and setting ambushes. Photo: Department of Defense

back for his CAR-15 and nudged the ATL (Assistant Team Leader) who in turn quickly readied the rest of the team.

"What the hell's going on?" the ATL asked in a hushed voice while staring into the green and brown jungle wall.

"The new guy heard something," Renfro said. "Get on the radio just in case." Turning to the frightened guard he asked, "Where was it?"

"There!" the new troop whispered urgently, pointing his M16 in the general direction of the jungle while clicking the selector switch from safe to auto. "I dunno . . . maybe 10, 20 yards. . ."

The team leader nodded and turned toward his ATL. "Tell Mac to open up with the AK first, got it?" he said softly.

The ATL nodded and passed the message to the rear scout. The team lay tense and still, trying to pierce the hostile jungle for enemy movement.

"FUCK YOU!" the unseen voice screeched, this time danger-close.

"There it is again!" yelled the new guy in shaken glee, security forgotten as he readied his rifle for a possible ground assault. "Maybe it's a gook trying to locate our position!"

The rest of the team greeted his revelation with incredulous silence.

"Yeah, a trick of some kind," reasoned the new guy to the veterans.

"Is that what you heard?" Renfro

Continued on page 127



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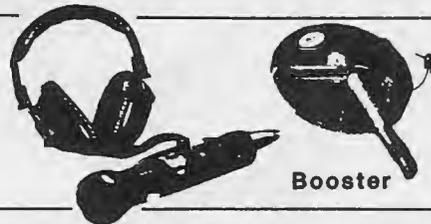
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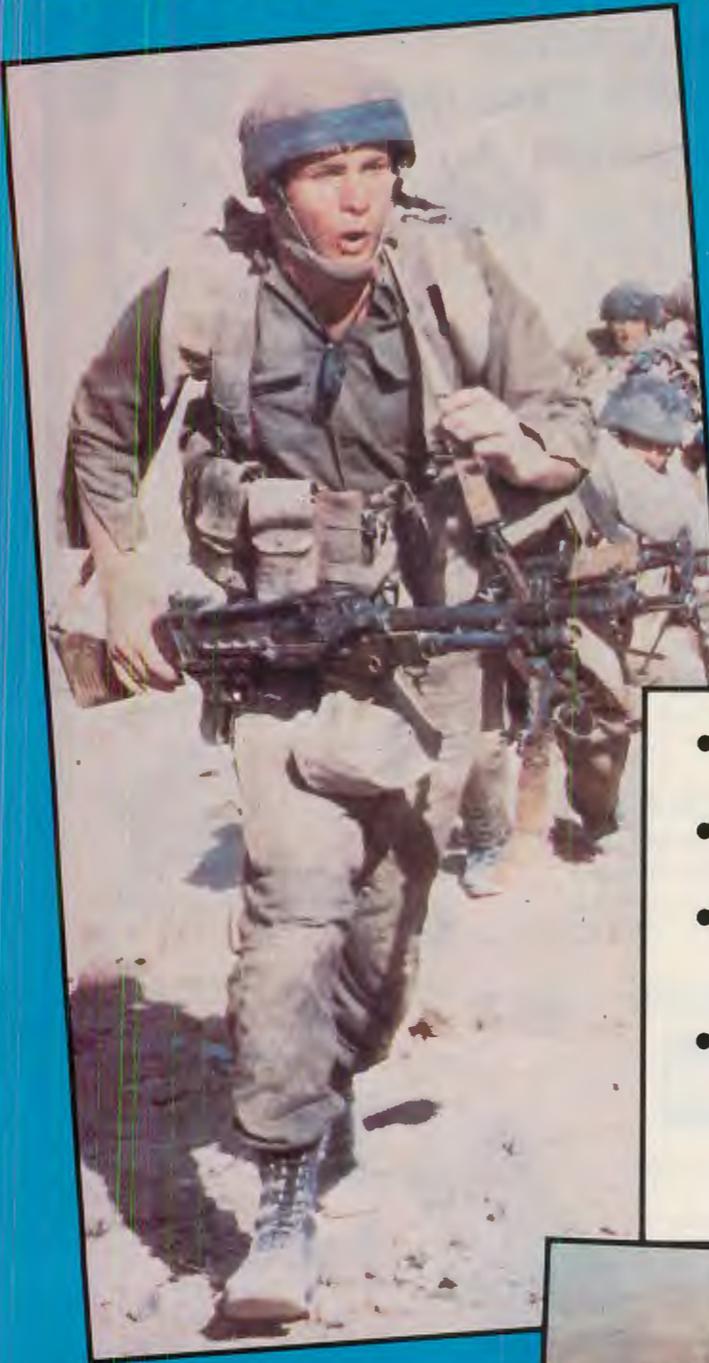
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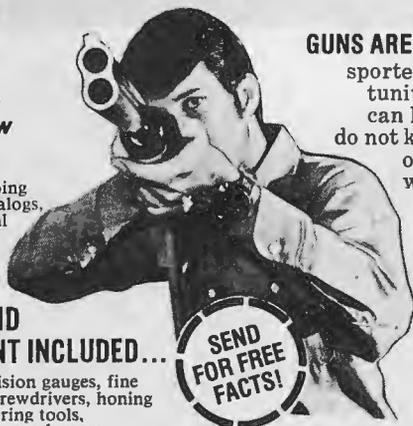
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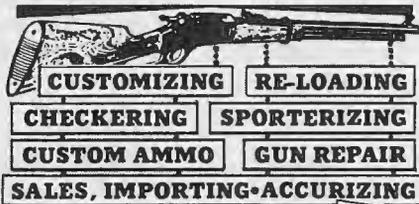
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The briefcase sells for \$59.95, the carrying strap for \$6.95 and the armor panel for \$84.95. Further information or a catalog of other Special Weapons products may be obtained by writing: Special Weapons Products, 8740 Flower Rd., Dept. SOF, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730. Special Weapons toll-free numbers are (outside California) 1-800-262-2220 or (inside California) 1-800-341-3330. ☒

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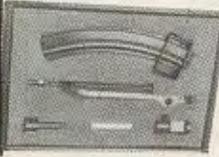
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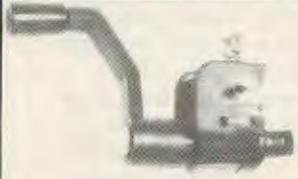
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LLEFT-WING schemers have always believed that man is basically good. Only his environment needs minor adjustment to turn a flawed world into utopia. Take away a man's gun, and he won't kill. Take away his machine gun and he won't invent criminal organizations or make war. Simple, right?

Wrong. Most of the world's great religions teach that there is a seed of violence within the human soul. History backs that up. Take away the gun and man will kill with poison gas, the jawbone of an ass, a samurai sword or pinkie shears.

For 52 years these utopians have hounded owners of Title II firearms — those weapons controlled by the National Firearms Act (NFA) of 1934. NFA firearms owners are certified and approved by local law enforcement agencies, fingerprinted, photographed and investigated by the FBI. If he passes all the tests the successful applicant is also subject to a \$200 transfer tax. These restrictions were reinforced, extended and tightened by the Gun Control Act of 1968. Despite such suspicion and restriction, I know of no crimes committed with registered NFA weapons in half a century.

In a personal communication, Phillip C. McGuire, Associate Director (Law Enforcement) of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, stated, "Part of the ATF's Law Enforcement mission is, of course, the implementation of the Gun Control Act of 1968. The Gun Control Act provides avenues through which persons not prohibited from possessing firearms may legally register and own machine guns and silencers. Thousands of United States residents now own and legally possess registered weapons. The vast majority of these persons cause no problems for law enforcement."

It would be unfortunate if Title II firearms owners were a high crime group, since this select society includes a former Secretary of the Treasury, and several state governors and U.S. senators.

McGuire continues, saying, "Obviously, not all possessors of NFA weapons do so legally. In 1983, ATF conducted criminal investigations that resulted in the seizures of the following quantities of unregistered weapons:

Machine guns.....	120
Machine-gun conversions.....	90
Silencers.....	657
Sawed-off shotguns/rifles.....	184
Pen guns.....	59
Other NFA weapons.....	27

Additionally, 1,973 handguns were seized from prohibited persons (felons, illegal aliens, fugitives from justice, narcotic addicts, adjudicated mental



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Gunners Under Fire ... Again



World War I British soldiers return to HQ after confiscating German racketeer's weapon. Photo: Imperial War Museum

defectives) and illegal firearms traffickers."

The penalty for illegal possession of an NFA weapon is clear: a \$10,000 fine and 10 years in the palace of justice. Furthermore, criminals rarely obtain machine guns from low-profile, closely guarded private collections. They steal M16s and M60s from National Guard and Army Reserve armories. Needless to say, your tripod-mounted World War I Maxim machine gun holds no interest for them.

Yet, notorious anti-gun congressmen Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-NJ), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee (and Ted Kennedy's anti-gun counterpart in the House of Representatives), and William J. Hughes (D-NJ), Chairman of the Crime Subcommittee, have recently introduced H.R.3155, hysterically labeled the "Racketeer Weapons and Violent Crime Control Act." This bill would prohibit the possession or transfer of machine guns and sound suppressors. A grandfather clause would permit the current owner to retain the weapon until his death. His estate would then be forced to sell the weapon to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Let's take a closer look at what this would cost the taxpayers. Current BATF figures list the following Title II items on the NFA registry books:

Machine guns.....	114,332
Sound suppressors.....	14,613
Short-barreled shotguns.....	21,628
Short-barreled rifles.....	11,453
Destructive devices.....	18,544
Any other weapon (Marble Game Getters, etc.)..	31,952
Unknown category.....	1,745

Total: 214,267

It would cost several hundreds of

millions of dollars for the federal government to acquire these firearms for anywhere close to their real market value. And for what? The BATF already knows exactly where they are and who has them. If there is a problem with Title II firearms, it lies with the estimated more than 500,000 "unpapered" machine guns that returned in duffle bags from WWII, Korea and Vietnam or were illegally converted from semiautomatic firearms such as the AR-15 and MAC pistol. And we already have laws enough to take care of such foolishness. More vigorous enforcement by the BATF is all that is required.

Surely H.R.3155's sponsors know all this. What then is their motive? Their goal is a victory, however small, for anti-gun forces. Without doubt they feel the owners of registered Title II firearms are too few to mount a successful counterattack. Rodino and Hughes have, in fact, disguised H.R.3155 in a mask of respectability. Among its other features, the bill allows gun show sales by dealers, raises the FFL yearly fee to \$200, eliminates ammunition record-keeping (except for sales of 1,000 rounds or more), imposes a 15-day waiting period on handgun purchases and broadens BATF discretion in issuing FFLs.

But I don't own a machine gun or sound suppressor, you say. How can this affect me? If H.R.3155 passes we are but one small auto safety sear away from their next goal — a complete ban on all semiautomatic military-type firearms. Efforts to this end commenced several months ago when Robert Torricelli introduced legislation that would make it a crime to possess a "readily convertible" firearm. That's a pretty transparent cover-up of their real feelings because any semiautomatic firearm on the face of the earth can be converted to full-auto fire in minutes — from a Colt M1911A1 pistol to a Rem-

QUELL QUIRKS

An Unnatural Act?

by Andy Langley

December *SOF* carried a promotional article for a new combat pistol training regimen; the Quell System. At the time we were laying out the article, *SOF* staff were given their first working exposure to Paris Theodore's unorthodox approach in a seminar and demonstration at the *SOF* Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

We felt obligated to deliver Theodore's message to our readers. And we felt that it was important to show what experimentation is taking place in this vital area of the application of weapons and men to combat situations. But the Quell System is certainly not part of *SOF's* editorial policy.

Readers trust *Soldier of Fortune's* critical judgement on weapons and weapons training. Yet, readers should understand that we do allow a forum for the exchange of ideas. Robert Jones and Paris Theodore were allowed fair representation in the magazine. But that doesn't mean we embrace their system. And it doesn't mean we won't allow comment from the other side.

Andy Langley is well-known to *SOF* readers. He's been a competitive shooter on three continents, a professional soldier in three wars and an internationally touted contract security and weapons trainer. *SOF* publisher Robert K. Brown asked Langley to give our audience his perspective on the Quell System.

— The Editors

AT the end of an alley, at two in the morning, every cop knows there are three rules of combat shooting. Shoot at the center of mass, shoot straight and shoot fast. You want a fast, accurate shot that stops the threatening situation. There are a limited



number of ways to train for those goals. The Quell System isn't one of those ways.

The Quell Stance is a good stance for certain shooters. I have no quarrel with it. But those who've spent some years in the training game will recognize it for what it is: the Weaver stance adjusted for a right-handed shooter with a left master eye. I know some great competitive and combat shooters who have this peculiarity, and their Weaver stances are a lot like the Quell Stance. The Quell Stance, like the modified Weaver, will probably work well for shooters with master eyes opposite their shooting hands. But it's not revolutionary.

My real problem is with the Quell Zone: the kidneys, spine and medulla oblongata. This zone is a target which supposedly translates into instant incapacitation. Unfortunately, there are several problems with it.

For one thing, I've been in as many punch-ups as anyone I know. And I've been shot at *and* hit. From the men I've shot, and from my own wounds, I've learned two things: 1 — If you don't take somebody's

Some systems are easy to teach, some systems are hard to teach. This photo shows FBI Academy trainees in a progression of stances from full-front one-hand crouch to isosceles and Weaver stance. Photo: FBI

head off, it's possible he'll come up shooting at you, and 2 — *any* bullet wound on any part of the body *can* stop the fight.

Most men in most circumstances will fall over if hit in the Quell Zone. I'm sure that's true. Many people will fall over no matter where they're hit. But the Quell Zone is going to be hard to hit with pistol ammo, and it misses one of the biggest, best and most obvious instant-incapacitation targets: the brain.

If the object of the Quell System is immediate incapacitation, what happened to the head shot? Hitting these branches of the nervous system targeted by Quell will probably drop your opponent, but they are all dependent on the brain. The best way to interdict nervous function is to take out that command center. Also, the brain is some-



thing you can easily hit with pistol ammo. And hitting any part of it will do the job. Conversely, the medulla oblongata is first, a small target, second, it's at the back of the body and third, it's got several times the bony protection of the brain.

Short, rounded, light projectiles traveling at fairly low speeds don't penetrate very far in a body. And a handgun bullet fired through the ribcage isn't likely to hit the spine, even if it entered the body in a straight line with the backbone. The best way to hit the Quell Zone is to handcuff your enemy, make him kneel, and shoot him from behind. That'll work every time.

Theodore's target system is basically good. It gives an interesting twist to the principle of reinforcement. And reinforcement is vital to any training system. But that's nothing new. B.F. Skinner and experience tell us that practice makes perfect,

Even the conservative FBI has finally abandoned the infamous Bureau Combat Crouch in favor of the Weaver stance, since it offers maximum unrestricted vision, address of widely spaced targets, good balance and speed. The Quell stance compromises all these qualities for an uncertain and unproven direct line to the central nervous system. Photo: FBI

with positive reward. Repetition of the Quell System will make it work, such as it can.

But no matter how many drill cycles, no matter how much positive reinforcement, some things are just easier than others. Theodore's system is harder to learn because it's less natural. For instance, in the Weaver stance, the strong arm lines up under the master eye like the sighting rib on a shotgun. Body and nervous system work

together to apply quick, accurate fire. That's a system.

Theodore's technique tries to push the shooter's body, mind and reflexes into a box built on an entirely theoretical model. It's hard to learn because the nature of the shooter's body isn't considered.

Theodore's system also fails to consider the mechanics of targeting. Center-of-mass shooting is a direct application of the way the eye works to a pistol's sighting mechanics. Also, just try to hit the Quell Zone on a moving target in low light. If you do it's an accident.

But in targeting terms, there's one thing worse than the unlikelihood of hitting the Quell Zone. The Quell Target tends to reward poor shot placement. Basically, Paris Theodore is teaching students to apply a vertical spray of fire to a hard-to-reach target area. The teaching problems Jones and Theodore admit to wouldn't exist if the Quell Target gave a more natural target area.

Still, these concessions and criticisms of Theodore's system address only minor technical inaccuracies in his argument. The Quell System's real problems are in theoretical groundwork and tactical application.

Tactically, the Quell shooter applies his system by drawing, establishing a rigid, sidelong Weaver stance, dropping the head, rolling it laterally to contact the weapon-holding arm, and sighting with the left eye. Then he shoots. That stance is stable, recoil resistant and conducive to rapid recovery between shots. It also reduces peripheral vision by 50 percent, probably causes balance problems, limits address of horizontally and vertically spread targets, and it's *slow*.

By the time the Quell marksman twists himself into position, a real pro like Bill Rogers will have emptied a .45 into that contorted body.

Paris Theodore's gymnastic combat concept is loosely based on recent theorization about the physical division of the human brain. Such airy ideas are burning up academic philosophy departments and literary critic's circles. But the Marines haven't bought it yet.

Anyway, Theodore suggests that since the right side of the brain has been associated with conceptual thought, using the right-brain-connected left eye will help conquer panic. It's too bad that right-brain conquest of fear is *not* a conclusion of bicameral brain research. The big picture isn't necessarily less frightening than the immediate situation.

And finally, if tilting the head to limit sighting to the weak eye and to block most of the master eye's field of vision would limit fear and enhance combat effectiveness, there would be a more logical method than the Quell System. If the Quell System's contortions worked, the greatest amount of fear could be controlled by completely closing both eyes.

Now try to fight in that position. ☒

SOF HISTORY

ZULU

South Africa's Little Bighorn

by William H. Northacker



SOLDIERS' lives have usually been considered expendable to the demands of national interest. As it is now, this manpower economic system was in place in January 1879 when a 17,000-man British force, pushing northward out of the east coast Natal colony in South Africa, encountered 50,000 of the finest fighters in Africa — the Zulus.

The reason for this drive north of the Tugela River boundary between Natal and Zululand was threefold. First, rapidly growing Natal needed to expand its agricultural capacity and increase its pool of cheap native labor. Next, border disputes between the Zulus and colonists in Natal and the Transvaal — although generally settled in favor of the Zulus by a British commission in July 1878 — still rankled both sides. But most importantly, the primary reason for the British expedition was to break the back of Zulu military power in the region, considered by High Commissioner of Natal Sir Bartle Frere to be a threat to Natal, the Transvaal, and to all of South Africa.

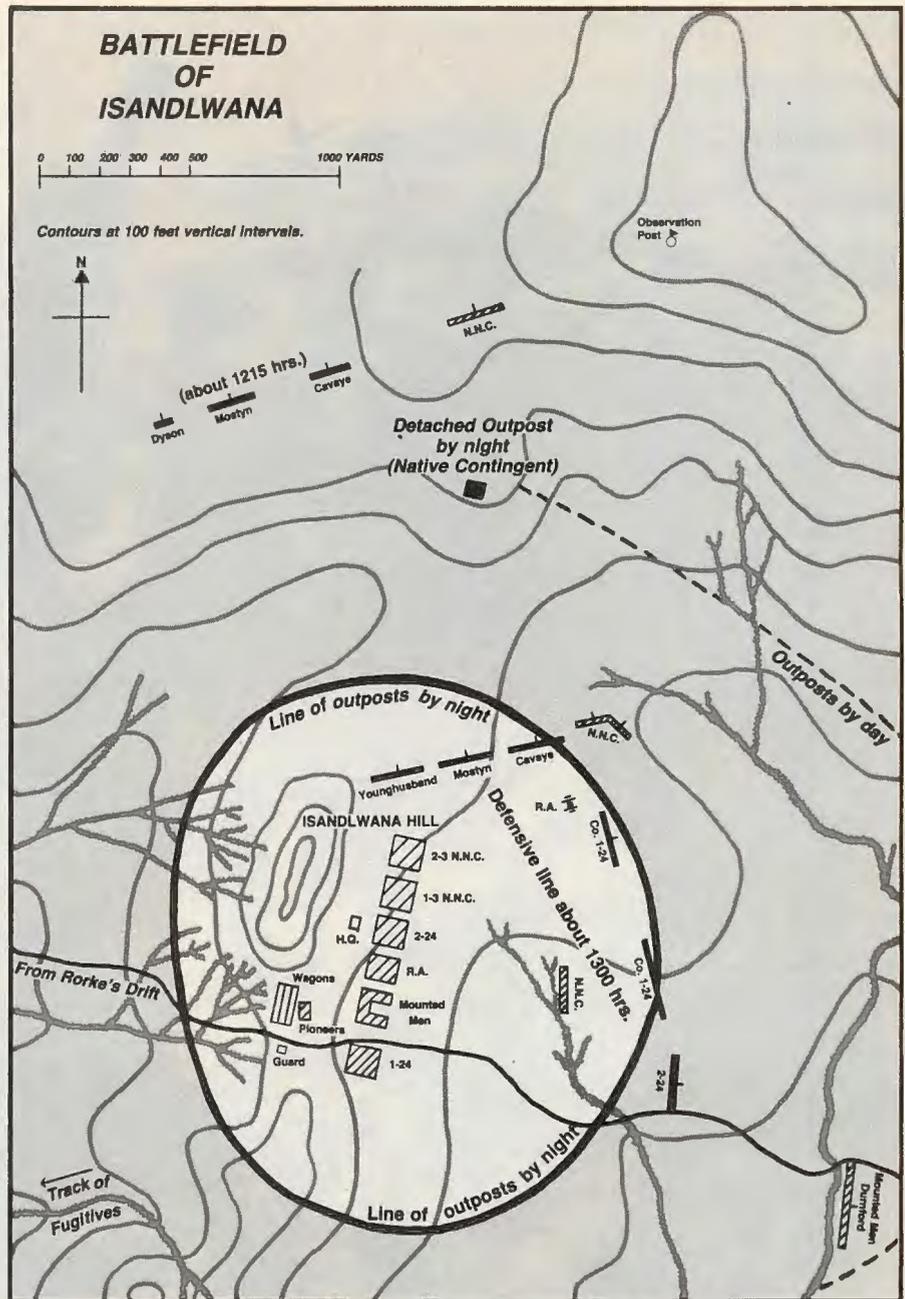
Led by King Ceteyweyo, the Zulu nation comprised an area somewhat smaller than Ireland. Size of territory, however, in no way reflected upon the abilities of these fierce native warriors. Their army was organized by company, regiment and corps, and each warrior was practiced continuously in the arts of battle. They were superbly fit and savage in battle; Zulu warriors were required by ritual to disembowel enemies whether dead or alive thus allowing spirits to escape the body.

Ceteyweyo himself has been described as "an able man, but for his cold, selfish pride, cruelty and untruthfulness worse than any of his predecessors." Regardless, his ability as a military leader reflected the greatness of the Zulu empire. Reviving the tactics of his uncle Shaka, Ceteyweyo refined the use of the "fighting bull buffalo" form of attack — soon to prove deadly against British forces.

The buffalo's horns are a left and right flanking envelopment. The buffalo's head or main attack force accompanies the envelopment with a frontal charge. Reserves form the loins of the buffalo and would be sent into battle by the senior military *induna* or commander. Once the envelopment was complete, thousands of Zulu warriors would attack with their *iKlwas* (short stabbing spears), clubs and cowhide shields. A few carried rifles into battle, but strength of numbers and pure ferocity were enough to overcome indigenous foes.

Aligned against this formidable military machine were the British forces under Frere and military commander of Her Majesty's forces, Lieutenant General Frederic August

Lieutenants Coghill and Melvill, charged with saving the Queen's Colour as Isandlwana camp fell, fight their way through walls of Zulu warriors. Both were later killed, but were awarded the Victoria Cross for their actions. Photo: South Wales Borderers Museum



Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford. The backbone of this 17,000-man expeditionary force was the 2nd Warwickshire Regiment consisting of the 1st and 2nd Battalions 24th Foot. First Battalion had been blooded during four years of service in South Africa and many of its troops had over 10 years with the battalion. Second Battalion was new to South Africa but its troops had faith in their leaders, weapons and tactics — especially in the face of the heathen Zulus. An amalgamation of other units — Royal Artillery and Rocket Battery, hospital detachment and staff elements — rounded out the regular British troops. The remainder of the force consisted of European-colonial units and volunteers, but the preponderance of troops came from the Natal Native Contingent (NNC).

NNC troops were not trusted by the regulars and were generally used to exploit Imperial successes on the battlefield. Nine out of 10 were armed only with assegai (spear

Isandlwana battlefield as mapped by British Intelligence in 1881. Zulus swept in from the northeast driving British defenders to the base of Isandlwana. Their "horns" never completely encircled the camp, allowing native and colonial volunteers to escape to the southwest through the Isandlwana saddle.

and shield; the one rifle issued came with only five rounds. Their standard of training was well less than regular forces, and there was little confidence in their loyalty to the Crown when put under pressure.

Thus organized, Frere and Chelmsford moved their forces across the Tugela River at Rorke's Drift into Zululand on Saturday, 11 January 1879.

Chelmsford knew Zulu tactics and realized his heavily laden forces would be no match for Zulu light infantry maneuverability on the open battlefield. Accordingly he split his forces into four columns — Num-



ber 1 Column under Colonel Evelyn Wood in the north, Number 2 Column under Colonel Anthony Durnford in reserve at Rorke's Drift to prevent any Zulu incursion into Natal, centrally positioned Number 3 Column under Colonel Glyn, and Number 4 Column under command of Colonel Pearson nearer the coast. The plan: find, fix, and then finish the Zulu army.

Chelmsford himself moved with Glyn's Number 3 Column consisting of 4,239 infantry, artillery, mounted infantry, support, and colonial volunteer troops, 2,400 of whom were native levy.

For the next seven days the column slowly pushed its way into Zululand, searching for the main Zulu force, but only encountering and defeating several small Zulu borderbandit factions. On 18 January Chelmsford received a report that three Zulu *impis* (regiments) had departed Cetyweyo's royal kraal at Ulundi to attack the British.

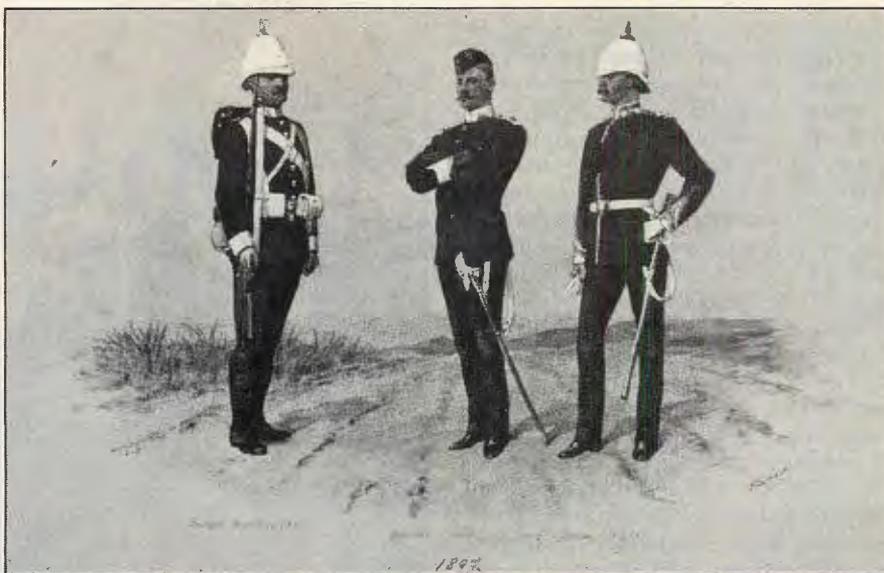
Chelmsford pushed on, and on 20 January the column, with its 110 wagons each drawn by 16-17 oxen, plodded up the Bashee Valley to reach Isandlwana — a rocky, sparsely scrubbed, sphinx-shaped hill jutting out of the barren countryside.

Chelmsford felt the terrain was defensible as indeed it was. The 500-foot high Isandlwana, connected by a saddle to another rocky outcrop in the south, formed the backdrop for his defense. To the north, a spur leading from Isandlwana connected to the iNqutu Plateau, a relatively broad plain running east-west for several miles. To the front, or east, of his position, the sun-baked terrain spotted with dry river courses, *dongas*, sloped gently downhill as did the ground on his southern flank.

Troops were assigned tentage areas along the base of Isandlwana and camped on-line facing to the southeast. Five attached companies of the 1/24th were positioned on the right, or southern, flank; to their left, respectively, were the 1st Squadron Mounted Infantry, one company of the Natal Mounted Police, one company of mounted Natal Carabineers (volunteers), N Battery of the 5th Brigade, Royal Artillery, seven companies from the 2/24th, and two NNC units on the left, or northern, flank. Chelmsford and his staff were tented below Isandlwana in the saddle, about center rear of the defensive line, and the wagons, oxen and their *voorloopers* (wagon team guides) were scattered to the right rear of the 800-yard tent line.

Considering Chelmsford's knowledge of Zulu tactics, and especially in light of his orders prior to the offensive that all forces would *laager* (a 360-degree defensive position) at night, his failure to do so at Isandlwana, even in the face of imminent attack,

Zulu strategy followed that of the "fighting bull buffalo." The two horns encircled the defenders while the head — the main attack force — moved in for the kill. These warriors pour off the iNqutu Plateau to form the right horn of the attack force.
Photo: South Wales Borderers Museum



remains unexplained. This failure to provide complete barrier protection for the Isandlwana camp would have disastrous consequences.

A very casual demeanor pervaded the troops throughout the next day. In fact, some officers spent their time hunting and prospecting miles from the camp, ignorant of the closeness of the advancing Zulu *impis*. It wasn't until later in the afternoon, when intelligence was received indicating war parties were assembling in the hills to the northeast, that the camp began to react.

Column commander Glyn believed that all the troops should remain in camp until the next morning when reconnaissance patrols could be sent out to ascertain the position of Zulu forces. Lord Chelmsford, eager to pursue his strategy of "find, fix, and finish," overruled Glyn and dispatched two-thirds of the Natal Native Contingent, the Natal Mounted Police and the Carabineers, all under command of Major Dartnell, to find the Zulu force. After Dartnell's departure, the camp settled back into its routine to await word on the Zulu disposition.

King Cetyweyo had not been sitting idle while British forces maneuvered across his territory. He knew the invasion force was on its way and had summoned a field force of his own. The military kraal at Nodwengu swelled with Zulu warriors ceremoniously whipped into a frenzy typical of pre-battle ritual. Mock fighting, inter-*impi* competitive bragging and dancing, interspersed with witch doctor potions and blessings, brought the Zulus to the peak of battle readiness.

On 17 January Cetyweyo issued his orders. Basic field tactics were left to the *indunas* but strategically the Zulus were to march slowly to avoid fatigue, attack in daylight, and avoid crossing into Natal. Although Cetyweyo was not convinced that battle with the British would be beneficial — he respected Queen Victoria and fancied her as a sort of "mother" image — he was fully prepared to defend the Zulu homeland.

A last piece of advice Cetyweyo gave his troops, a tidbit which ultimately saved a few British lives, concerned target identification. British soldiers, the warriors were

British private on the left and officer on the right display field uniforms of the type worn by troops at Isandlwana. Photo: South Wales Borderers Museum

told, could be distinguished from the non-combatants by their red coats. Of the few surviving officers at Isandlwana, all wore blue patrol jackets.

Following Cetyweyo's instructions, the Zulu army moved out slowly, intending to attack on 21 January. Differences of command opinion altered the date to 23 January; in either case, the warriors would have probably engaged the entire Number 3 Column. As fate would have it, their force closed in on Isandlwana and was prepared to attack on 22 January — a time when Chelmsford had split his forces and sent Major Dartnell out on a reconnaissance in force to locate the Zulus.

On the evening of the 21st Dartnell's party, located about 10 miles east of Isandlwana, felt they had spotted the Zulu army. In actuality, Dartnell had spotted the mounted, rear-guard screening elements for the force. Chelmsford's intelligence earlier in the day, positioning the Zulus in the northeast, was correct to the extent that a Zulu *flanking* element had been seen. The main force, camped in a ravine traversing north to south across the iNqutu Plateau, had not yet been located by British forces.

The battle record of Isandlwana begins around 0100 on 22 January when Lord Chelmsford received word from Major Dartnell that Zulus were camped in force on the hills to his front. Dartnell stated his intention of commencing an attack at 0600 and requested two rifle companies from the 2/24th be attached for support.

Chelmsford believed that the main Zulu force was located near Dartnell, and Dartnell's report was enough to encourage Chelmsford to mount a major offensive. Around 0200 he issued two orders which would have a decisive impact on the day's events. He first sent an order to Brevet Colonel Anthony Durnford, Royal Engineers, commander of Number 2 Column

stationed at Rorke's Drift, ordering him to move his troops out "at once" to reinforce the camp at Isandlwana. Durnford's troops consisted mainly of native troops commanded by a few colonial European officers and NCOs. Chelmsford then gave a warning order to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Henry Pulleine, commander of the 1/24th, to prepare his force for a road march to Darnell's forward position. After consideration, however, the 2/24th was chosen since their strength exceeded the other battalions'.

Pulleine was left in charge of the Isandlwana camp with orders from column commander Col. Glyn "to keep his men in camp, to act strictly on the defensive, draw in the Infantry and extend the Cavalry pickets." Glyn was well aware of the vulnerability of the Isandlwana camp in the face of a potential major Zulu offensive. His chief of staff confirmed with Pulleine that the orders were understood. They were.

Chelmsford's force moved out about 0400 as dawn broke across Zululand. Six companies of the 2/24th, four artillery pieces, and Mounted Infantry were on their way to reinforce Darnell in order to "fix and finish" the Zulu army.

Pulleine was now left with an awesome burden. He had only recently taken command of his battalion and he was now deep inside enemy territory. His general was on his way to encounter a Zulu force of unknown size while Pulleine himself was left with only a remnant of Number 3 Column to protect the Isandlwana camp. Early warning pickets had been sent out around the camp, but there was little else he could do but wait.

Around 0600 a colonial volunteer officer rode into camp and advised the senior staff that Zulus were appearing on the extreme left of the iNqutu Plateau in front of the NNC position on the camp's left flank. Pulleine sent another officer out to scout the situation; his return at 0700 coincided with the appearance of more Zulu troops on the middle of the plateau.

As Pulleine and his staff watched, the gap between the two Zulu forces filled with more warriors. The camp commander wasted no time in organizing his troops. The bugler sounded "fall in" and "sound the column call," officers mess orderlies were returned to line units and band members dispatched to act as stretcher bearers, and the two rifle companies on picket duty were withdrawn from their forward positions to fall in. Having assembled the column, Pulleine marched the force up to an area between the 2/24th and NNC positions.

Troops stood to in full battle equipment, each man armed with a .577/.45 Martini-Henry Mark I or Mark II rifle with 40-70 rounds of ammunition. In conjunction with the British tactical practice of the "box" formation, the Martini-Henry with its 480-grain bullet was an excellent weapon practical at 600-800 yard ranges in volley fire. Against a relatively unarmed Zulu force, the troops had every confidence that a bayonet attack — a hazard to troops because the rifle had no upper handguard and therefore



The last moments as an estimated 20,000 Zulus swarmed 1,777 British defenders. According to a survivor's account the last order given was "Fix bayonets, men, and die like English soldiers do." Photo: South Wales Borderers Museum

seriously burned hands after a few volleys — would not be required.

Zulus were now appearing in large numbers on the plateau. Pulleine dispatched another officer and a sergeant-major to obtain reports from the pickets near the NNC positions on the north side of the camp. Shortly thereafter, Col. Durnford arrived from Rorke's Drift at about 0800 in advance of his Number 2 Column and the two senior officers conferred on the situation. Apparently, Pulleine relinquished overall command to Durnford as the officer-scout sent out earlier was referred to Durn-

ford by Pulleine to make his report — disturbing news that a force of 5,000 Zulus had circled around Isandlwana.

To Durnford, having just arrived on the scene, these were no more than pockets of Zulus who needed chasing and insisted on moving out of the camp to attack them. Pulleine, under orders from his column commander to remain in place, disagreed but promised that he would provide Durnford with limited infantry support if the situation so required. Durnford sent mounted NNC troops up to the top of Isandlwana as lookouts and then moved up to the NNC forward camp on the left flank to observe the situation for himself.

In the meantime Pulleine composed and dispatched a note to Chelmsford reflecting the latest intelligence on the approaching Zulus. Sent at 0850 the message read: "Staff Officer: Report just came in that the



Between 1030 and 1100 Durnford's Number 2 Column, consisting of a small staff element, Rocket Battery, Natal Native Horse, and 1st Regiment Natal Native Contingent for a total of 524, approached the camp from Rorke's Drift having been on the march since dawn. Rapid artillery fire, rifle volleys and single shots were heard in the east and then moved northward, Chelmsford's advance force having engaged various Zulu scout, forage and screening parties.

Around 1050 Durnford received word that the Zulus on the camp's left flank, having engaged Cavaye's A Company and NNC units, were in retreat — an erroneous report. Durnford was a brave man, but his boldness was touched with recklessness. With only limited battlefield intelligence, Durnford decided to attack.

Picking as his target a small *kopje* (hill) about two miles to the left of the camp, Durnford sent a mounted contingent of Carabineers around the right flank while he himself would lead two troops of mounted native Basutos around the left. The Rocket Battery supported by two companies of NNC troops would provide fire support.

Just after 1100 the Rocket Battery and supporting elements, about 100-150 troops, rounded the *kopje* and immediately went into action against the enemy — a Zulu *impi* between 3,200-6,020 in strength. Unloading their tubes and rockets from the pack mules, the battery managed to loose one rocket before the battery commander was killed by rifle fire. Spooked by Zulu fire, the mules carrying spare tubes and rockets bolted, effectively putting the battery out of commission. Only three members of the battery escaped while the rest were killed by advancing Zulus.

NNC companies in support of the battery initially laid volleys of rifle fire into the approaching Zulu ranks, then broke and ran for the main camp. Durnford and the rest of his troops also withdrew in the face of the superior force while maintaining a steady rate of fire.

Back in the main camp a small detachment sent from Lord Chelmsford's forward force, a force flushed with victory over small Zulu outrider detachments, arrived around 1130 with the order to "strike the camp and come on with all speed leaving sufficient guard behind to protect such as could not be mounted without delay." The detachment commander, Captain Gardner, sensed indecision in Pulleine and advised his "disobeying the general's order for the present, at any rate. The general knows nothing of this, he is only thinking of the cowardly way in which the Zulus are running away from our troops over yonder," referring to the token victories at Chelmsford's advance position.

Two notes were sent to Chelmsford in rapid succession, the first stating, "Staff Officer: Heavy fighting to the left of our camp. Cannot move camp at present," and the second: "Heavy firing near left of camp. Shepstone [staff assistant to Durnford] has come in for reinforcements and reports the

Zulus are advancing in force from the left front of camp." The message was received by Chelmsford's force at 0930 on 22 January having been delivered by a messenger riding 10 miles in 35 minutes.

Zulu forces continued to appear on top of the iNqutu Plateau but without making threatening moves toward the camp. On Durnford's advice, Pulleine ordered the troops to stand down for a delayed breakfast although the soldiers were instructed to remain in battle equipment. Soon, however, a mounted native force sent out by Durnford engaged the Zulus with rapid fire and the troops were again called to fall in. Lieutenant Charles Cavaye, commander of A Company, 1/24th Foot, was sent with his troops to occupy an outlying position on the iNqutu Plateau about 1,000 yards north of the camp's left flank and nearly a mile from headquarters. Cavaye was now cut off from

quick communications with Pulleine, but more importantly, his line of ammunition resupply was stretched far too thin.

Logistically the Isandlwana camp had sufficient ammunition to kill every Zulu warrior fieldable by Cetyweyo, a force of about 50,000. Between the two battalions of the 24th Foot, roughly 450,000 rounds packed in wooden ammunition boxes were available. However, the tops were screwed down by nine screws and doubly secured by two thick copper bands wrapped around top and bottom. There was a conspicuous lack of screwdrivers and cutting tools in the camp which made emergency resupply nearly impossible. Further, British Army practice was for each battalion to issue ammunition *only* to its own troops and not those in other units. Even in battle, the 2/24 Quartermaster wouldn't issue ammunition to the remaining 1/24 troopers.



Regimental colors of the 24th Foot, lost after the battle of Isandlwana, are returned to the CO of the 1/24th at Rorke's Drift after recovery from the Buffalo River. Photo: South Wales Borderers Museum

Zulus are falling back. The whole force at camp turned out and fighting about one mile to the left flank." Chelmsford was not shown the second dispatch. Regardless, nothing more was now possible to help the men at Isandlwana.

The remaining rifle companies of the 1st and 2nd Battalions 24th Foot deployed out into the plain east of Isandlwana between 1115 and 1145 hours and took up defensive positions ranging from 800-1,200 yards in front of the tentage area. Accounts vary as to the status of the remaining artillery pieces, supported by

NNC troops, but they did fire almost continuously in support of Durnford's forward mounted troops and against masses of steadily approaching Zulu forces.

Durnford's force of mounted police, infantry and colonial volunteers out in front of the Imperial Infantry defensive lines were fighting a valiant but hopeless delaying action as they were forced to withdraw to the southern, or right, flank as the Zulus' left horn inexorably tightened its circle around the Isandlwana camp. In the north the right horn of the fighting bull buffalo continued to press forward, sweeping around and behind Isandlwana, beginning to choke off any escape routes.

There is no way to fix the number of Zulu warriors who fell on the 1,777 beleaguered combatants at Isandlwana. Three sources,

two Zulu and British Intelligence, estimate 13,400, 18,995, and 32,170. Based on the ability of the Zulus to surround the battle area by forming a multiranked circle, a force of some 20,000 warriors would be a reasonable assumption.

Against these overwhelming odds, volleys of rifle fire from Imperial Infantry and colonial troops continued to take a tremendous toll as the Zulus swept in as close as 200-300 yards. Artillery fire continued to blast holes in the Zulus' ranks until the NNC units around the guns decided to withdraw to the main camp area. Their departure opened a tremendous hole in the defensive line which would result in the outflanking of British units located left and right of the guns' position.

Durnford's mounted force had by now taken shelter in a dry watershed on the southeastern flank of the perimeter. Such was the tenacity of their defense against the attacking left horn that a civilian survivor of the battle estimated 1,000 Zulus lay dead in front of their position. Zulu attackers, seeing so many of their comrades mown down by deadly British rifle fire, would flatten themselves on the ground while awaiting reinforcements and then advance with the replacements.

As he ran out of ammunition, Durnford saw no further use in remaining in his present position and withdrew to the camp. The Zulu left horn took advantage of this and moved forward as well.

Between 1245 and 1300 hours the Zulus began a general advance, tightening their circle around Isandlwana. Fortunately for the British, the left and right horns of the fighting bull buffalo never really closed together in the west behind Isandlwana. Civilian wagon drivers, some volunteer colonials and many NNC troops found that way out of the slaughter. Regular British troops held firm, however, as did mounted native Basuto troops who conducted a fighting withdrawal to the rocks of Isandlwana itself.

Ammunition was now becoming critical for the remaining forces. So distant were they from their supply wagons and so rapid was the fire that redistribution of ammunition was not feasible. Rolling volleys of fire checked the Zulu advance, but at that point the last of the ammunition was exhausted. Tens of thousands of rounds packed in wooden ammo boxes were neatly stacked at issue points — useless to the men on the line. Lieutenant Smith-Dorrien, one of the few survivors of Isandlwana (he was fortunately wearing a blue patrol jacket instead of a red coat), also recounted the debacle of regimented ammunition issue.

He approached the quartermaster of the 2/24th following a withdrawal from the front as the camp was falling and asked for ammunition. As Smith-Dorrien was not assigned to the 2nd Battalion, he was roughly addressed by the quartermaster, "For Heaven's sake don't take that, man, for it belongs to our battalion!" Smith-Dorrien replied, "Hang it all, you don't want a requisition now, do you?"

As the ammunition ran out units began a fighting withdrawal into the main camp. The southern flank held by Durnford was crumbling. Refugees, wagons and oxen retreated over the saddle adjoining Isandlwana. Zulus prostrate to avoid gunfire were suddenly addressed by the senior *induna*, Undhlaka, "Never did his Majesty the King [Cetyweyo] give you this command [to lie down on the ground]. Go! And toss them into Maritzburg!" With that the Zulus pressed the attack across the front, from horn to horn. Everyone who was in the camp who could move was either firing or handing out ammunition.

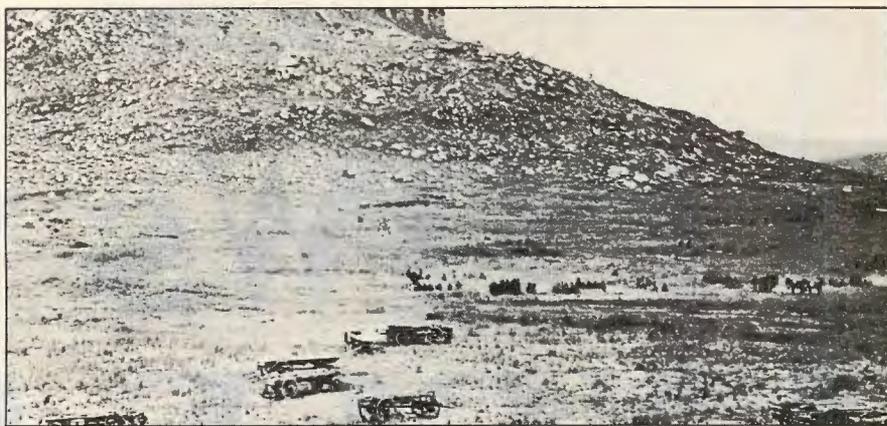
By about 1300 the end was near. Zulus no more than 100-150 yards away and confident of victory yelled their battle cry "*Usuthu!*" and moved in for the kill. Cavaye's northern flank was turned and the company overrun. Durnford's force in the south was swept away, he being shot. Men of the 24th fixed bayonets and continued to fight, withdrawing in an orderly fashion and consolidating in new fighting positions while drummers and other support troops smashed and tore wooden ammo boxes apart. As fast as ten-round packets were distributed they were fired. The fighting was fierce and bloody, assegai versus bayonet, club versus rifle butt.

Miles to the east, Lord Chelmsford, who had already received urgent dispatches from Col. Pulleine as well as other scouting reports on the situation at Isandlwana, received yet another. "For God's sake," the message read, "send every man back to camp, it is surrounded and will be taken unless helped at once." Elements of Chelmsford's force struck off at once for the camp but were ordered back to their original positions. When they returned, they met Lord Chelmsford and his staff proceeding at a walk toward Isandlwana.

Colonel Pulleine, aware that his command was finished, summoned his adjutant, Lieutenant Melvill. Tradition allowed for the saving of the Queen's Colour, the Union Jack with regimental designation, when defeat seems imminent and Melvill was given that task. Although exhausted from battle, Melvill secured the Colour and rode out of camp, following the line of refugees heading through the gap between the Zulu horns to the west.

It was at this time, around 1315, that the camp fell apart. Left and right flanks had been overrun and men in the center formed resistance groups which lunged into the Zulu masses with bayonets and flailing rifle butts. Zulu attackers buzzed like great swarms of bees, loosed their "*Usuthu!*" war cry and poured into the remaining defenders. At this stage those who tried to escape through the gap in the west were cut down by Zulu rifle fire, or were chased to ground and killed by fleet-footed warriors.

With all hope gone, the 24th stood and fought with what survivors could be mustered. Young officers gathered their troops and took positions among the rocks of Isandlwana. Captain Reginald Younghus-



band stood off countless Zulus with a few men, firing from caves and niches in the rocks until their ammunition ran out, and then fought with bayonet and rifle butt until the end around 1330.

Lieutenants Godwin-Austen and Charlie Pope, according to Zulu accounts, were the last to die. Firing pistols from atop ox wagons, the officers killed a number of Zulus before one was hit by a Zulu bullet. The other continued to fire, wounding an attacking *induna* three times before the leader threw his assegai into the officer's chest. With great effort the officer nearly extracted the spear but the *induna* seized the moment to drive home a second stabbing spear, killing him. As Godwin-Austen's tunic does not show an assegai stab in the chest, it appears that Lt. Charlie Pope was the last man to fall at Isandlwana.

Meanwhile, Lt. Melvill was driving hard through the Zulu lines west of Isandlwana, still carrying the regimental colors and heading for the relative safety of the Buffalo River about four miles away. He was joined by Lieutenant Coghill, Col. Glyn's ADC, who reported that Col. Pulleine had been shot. The two officers and a scattering of other survivors evaded Zulu assegais and bullets and reached the fast-running Buffalo River, some 280 feet wide, and were joined by another officer, Lieutenant Higginson of the NNC.

Higginson tried to get his horse to swim the river but was thrown in, eventually grabbing onto a boulder to free himself from the current. Melvill and Coghill also entered the river and Melvill too was unhorsed, yelling for Higginson to grab the flag pole. The officer lunged for the pole and was washed off his rock, the Queen's Colour vanishing into the river.

Although they were under Zulu rifle fire, Melvill, Coghill and Higginson managed to emerge unscathed from the river albeit without the regimental colors. About 100 yards from the river while climbing up its steep bank, the party saw two Zulus following them and dispatched them with pistol fire. Six hundred yards farther on, Melvill and Coghill could take no more. The heat, battle, swim and climb in wet wool serge had exhausted their reserves. Higginson parted company and headed for a hilltop occupied by four of Col. Durnford's mounted Busutos holding spare horses. He never saw the

Isandlwana battlefield months after the action. Abandoned wagons serve as the only surviving monuments of the Zulu attack. Dismounted troops can be seen on line extending from the center to the right. Photo: South Wales Borderers Museum

two officers again until he returned to bury them later.

Back at the Isandlwana camp, 1,360 out of 1,777 British combatants lay dead, mutilated and stripped by the victorious Zulus. One band boy, perhaps 11 years old, was lashed upside-down on the back of a wagon, his throat slashed from ear to ear. Only a total of six men from both battalions of the 24th Foot managed to escape the slaughter. Zulus enthusiastically searched the surrounding areas for NNC troops, many of whom tried to disguise themselves as Zulu warriors, and wagon drivers, killing them when they were found.

No accurate records were established concerning the number of Zulus killed or wounded in the battle although Zulu accounts state that ox wagons spent many days removing their dead from the battlefield. As one account has it, "The country ran rivers of tears, almost every family bemoaning some near relative." Estimates of Zulu dead range from 1,800 to over 3,000. Nearly as many may have been wounded, and many would have died from their wounds later on.

The Zulu army walked away from Isandlwana with 1,000 rifles, tens of thousands of rounds, two artillery pieces, uniforms, and a vast assortment of other gear. The camp had fallen, the worst defeat of a modern army by native forces in the history of the British Empire.

Isandlwana's final chapter was written about a week later when a search party returned, looking for the lost Queen's Colour. Both Melvill and Coghill's bodies were found, killed by multiple assegai stab wounds but not mutilated. On 4 February the lost Colour was recovered from the river beginning with the discovery of the case, the lion and crown crest, and finally the Colour itself.

With the Colour in hand, the search party returned to Rorke's Drift to the cheers of the garrison — a final, fitting tribute to the bravery of the 24th Regiment (Foot) at Isandlwana. ❧

POWs vs. UNCLE SAM

A Sad Saga of Forgotten Heroes

by Jim Coyne

When he was working as a Soldier of Fortune foreign correspondent four years ago in Thailand, Jim Coyne uncovered an ongoing operation by a small, highly secretive Special Forces unit tasked with locating, identifying and possibly rescuing U.S. POWs still held captive in Southeast Asia. Rather than running out to file copy on what surely would have been — and may yet be — the story of the decade, Coyne realized the vital importance of maintaining security in hopes the mission would succeed. Coyne took a vow of silence until the key players let him know it was time to tell their story.

That time has come.

Coyne's and SOF's interest in this sad saga is only a small part of the time and money Robert K. Brown and the magazine have spent in hopes of rescuing live POWs now languishing in jungle camps. Since 1981, SOF has spent in excess of \$250,000 to build, equip and man Liberty City, a secret outpost in communist-controlled Laos, aimed at collecting intelligence on U.S. POWs (See "Liberty City," SOF, Aug. '85).

In reading Coyne's story, it is hard not to think of Mission: MIA, a fictional book by J.C. Pollock, or the movie Uncommon Valor. Other films come to mind, such as Rambo: First Blood, Part II. While the Rambo genre is unrealistic in many respects, at least it too has served to keep the issue of U.S. POWs in Southeast Asia in the forefront of American public thought.

But the following account is not taken from a novel or some celluloid Hollywood fantasy. It is about real people in real life. As you read it's hard to escape the old adage: truth is stranger than fiction. Coyne

kept his vow of silence. Now the key players have gone public. In this way we all hope to compel our government to uphold the virtues it so loudly proclaims.

— The Editors

LIKE other Green Berets, retired Major Mark Smith likes to keep a low profile. He wasn't used to a press pack dogging his heels. Although he is cool under fire — a well-seasoned, highly decorated combat veteran who was held by the North Vietnamese as a prisoner of war in Cambodia — Smith plainly was nervous about suddenly becoming media prey. The newspaper reporters and local television camera crews swarmed around the Sheraton Hotel near Fort Bragg after Smith mysteriously failed to appear for a September press conference.

Smith's attorney, Mark Waple, showed up to make a startling announcement on behalf of Smith and others. Not only has the U.S. government known for several years that live U.S. POWs remain in Southeast Asia, Waple said his clients have proof that U.S. officials passed up an opportunity to

rescue them and has engaged in a cover-up aimed at discrediting — and possibly eliminating — Smith and other would-be rescuers.

Skeptical because of Smith's absence, but picking up the scent for a good story anyway, the press think they have Smith treed somewhere in the Fayetteville hotel just around the corner from the once-notorious 500 block of Hay Street. Aggressive surveillance is the order of the day. They are looking for anybody who knows Smith, or anybody who thinks they know him.

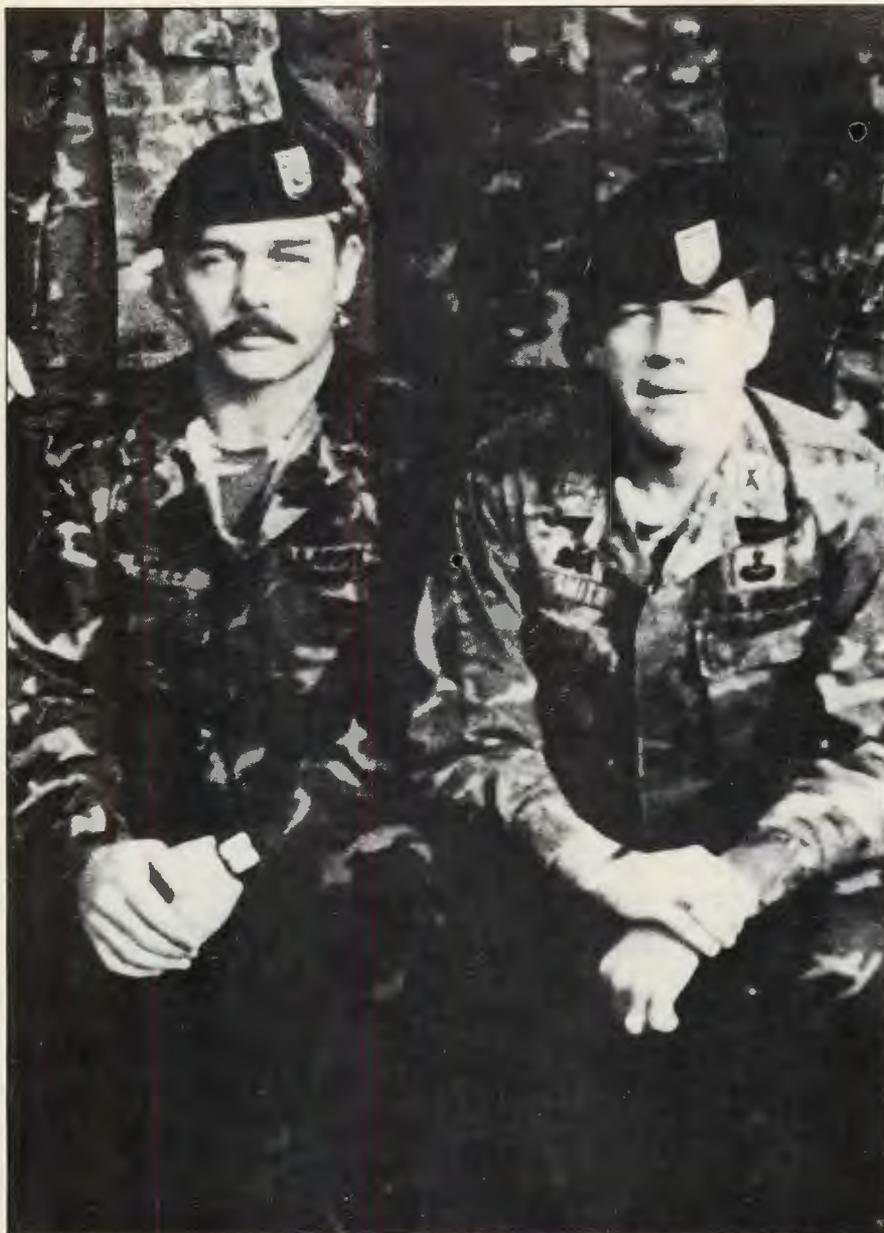
Journalists traditionally have made professional soldiers ill at ease. Most of the Fourth Estate's pencil-necked geeks ask uninformed questions that display an annoying ignorance of military people. Their attention span is brief and often out of focus. This has been especially true of the U.S. media in pursuing sporadic reports that U.S. POWs are being held in Southeast Asia. No wonder guys in uniform are antsy about talking to reporters. Then, when photographers aim and fire shutters in tandem with flashes of light almost as blinding as white phosphorus, the poor soldier can't even shoot back. He's at their mercy.

If the clamorous confusion at the Sheraton weren't enough to rattle a camera-shy Green Beret down to the soles of his jump boots, Smith missed the news conference because he was being grilled under hot lights by Ed Bradley of CBS News' "60 Minutes." If Mark Smith had been an amateur at media relations, like it or not he was on a crash course destined for Name-in-the-News Nirvana.

Backed by friends and associates from Special Forces, Smith & Company had put their professional integrity — and their lives

SOF VET

Jim Coyne, a 39-year-old free-lancer, is a former foreign correspondent for *Soldier of Fortune*. He has been on assignment for the magazine in Central America, Afghanistan, South America and Southeast Asia. A Vietnam veteran who served as an airborne infantryman, he now lives with his wife and son in the nation's capital, where he is writing an adventure novel about Vietnam.



— on the front line of the U.S. news media to play a sport much loved by journalists. It's called Blow The Whistle.

And no wonder the press — from the in-the-trenches, no-nonsense journalistic lifers at *The Fayetteville Observer*, all the way up to the Ivory Tower of CBS News in New York — was eager to watch. It isn't every day that a Special Forces officer, a former POW forced into early retirement by Pentagon politics and his own conscience, sues his commander in chief — the president of the United States — and charges him with failure to enforce the law of the land.

"Don't get me wrong," Smith explained after the interview with Bradley. "I like Ronald Reagan. But he is the commander in chief. And this is a matter of honor."

The lawsuit, which was filed by Smith and SF Sergeant First Class Melvin "Mac" McIntire — both assigned to a top secret mission in Thailand aimed at gathering intelligence on whether living U.S. POWs were still being held in Southeast Asia — raises profoundly disturbing questions. In its haste to disengage from the longest, most divisive and frustrating foreign war in its history, did the U.S. government leave some of its own men behind as prisoners of war in Southeast Asia? And once our government learned of the existence and precise location of U.S. POWs, did it seek to cover up that information by discrediting the would-be rescuers and even trying to have them captured and possibly killed by communist troops in Laos?

Smith and McIntire say, "Yes."

Their class action suit seeks to force the U.S. government's hand on behalf of "living American prisoners of the Vietnam war." It states that while the two Vietnam veterans worked with others on a very secretive intelligence gathering mission from 1981 to mid-1984, they "became intimately familiar with the subject of American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia, and in particular living American prisoners of war in Laos."

Using reliable sources developed over years during the war in Vietnam, and others developed since 1980 — informants ranging from opium and heroin dealers, gunrunners and gold smugglers, all the way up to the highest military echelons in Thailand — Smith and McIntire "received intelligence . . . [on] living American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia." This information was passed up the chains of command in appropriate U.S. military and intelligence channels, the suit states, "ultimately leading to the preparation of an intelligence report in the spring of 1984." As the report neared completion, intelligence sources re-

ABOVE LEFT: McIntire, left, and Smith while assigned to SFD-K and their secret mission to rescue POWs still held in Southeast Asia. Photo: U.S. Army

LEFT: SFC McIntire, in uniform, and Mark Smith after a press conference near Fort Bragg. Photo: Jason Brady



OTHER PLAYERS

Mark Smith and Mac McIntire aren't the only ones butting heads with Uncle Sam over the alleged suppression of information that U.S. servicemen are still being held captive in Southeast Asia. Along with Mrs. Dorothy Shelton, whose husband, Air Force Colonel Charles E. Shelton, is the last Vietnam War veteran still officially listed as an unreturned POW, some MIA relatives have joined the legal battle.

Spearheading the courthouse assault is their attorney, Mark Waple of Fayetteville, N.C. Waple is no stranger to taking controversial cases that end up in the news. The national military recruiting scandal five years ago is one example. The West Point graduate also knows the military from the inside out, both in the field and the courtroom. He served as an infantry officer for three years and for four years in the Judge Advocate General's office before entering private practice.

Waple confirmed that he is handling the case out of his own pocket until sufficient funds can be raised. The investigation has been expensive, requiring round-trip air fares to points as far away as Thailand and West Germany, and many potential witnesses from all over the United States have had to be flown to Fayetteville to be interviewed and make sworn depositions. **Those wishing to contribute to the case should send their donations to: The Mark Smith Litigation Trust, P.O. Box 650, Fayetteville, NC 28302.**

Listed with Smith and McIntire as plaintiffs in the action are Mrs. Shelton, Kathryn Fanning, Anne Hart and Jerry Dennis. Their stories follow:

COL. CHARLES E. SHELTON — Then an Air Force captain, Shelton was shot down over the mountains of Laos on 29 April 1965. Shelton was seen to parachute from his aircraft and radio contact

McIntire, Smith and Waple, seated, go over evidence for their suit against the U.S. government. Photo: Jason Brady

was made with him once he was on the ground. He reported that he was uninjured and was in good condition. Before rescuers could reach him, however, he was captured by the Pathet Lao, according to a villager who said he witnessed the capture. Shelton was known to be in various POW camps after his capture, but was not repatriated in "Operation Homecoming." He is the last Vietnamese serviceman still officially listed as a POW.

MARK DENNIS — Dennis was a U.S. Navy corpsman flying with 15 others aboard a Marine Corps helicopter shot down 15 July 1966. He was listed as MIA and later as missing and presumed dead. His brother, Jerry, joined the suit contending that the U.S. government is deliberately trying to mislead MIA families by returning remains — not necessarily the correct ones — in order to mark off names from the lengthy MIA list. Remains identified by the Joint Casualty Resolution Center in Hawaii as those of Mark Dennis were returned to Jerry. Jerry Dennis had the remains examined by civilian pathologists and anthropologists, who concluded that they belonged to an individual about 5'5" in height. Mark Dennis was 5 feet 11 inches to 6 feet tall, Jerry says, arguing that the remains returned to him are not those of his brother.

CAPT. HUGH FANNING — The Marine officer's A6 Intruder was shot down 31 October 1967 over Vietnam. His status as an MIA was changed 24 September 1976 to KIA. His purported remains were returned to his wife on 17 July 1984. Mrs. Fanning, suspicious that the remains were not those of her husband, requested and was granted a year later an exhumation order. After extensive examination of the remains,

Dr. Michael Charney and Dr. Clyde Snow concluded that while the bones definitely were human, they were not complete enough to be positively identified as any particular individual. Subsequent to that finding Mrs. Fanning obtained documentation concerning the remains purported to be those of her husband. The documentation, which came from the Armed Services Graves Registration Office, stated specifically that the remains given to Mrs. Fanning could not positively be identified. Yet the government turned them over to her as those of her husband without providing this finding by ASGRO.

LT. COL. THOMAS T. HART III — Hart was a navigator aboard an AC-130 shot down over Laos on 21 December 1972. Shortly afterward Mrs. Hart was told by the government that her husband, then a captain, was missing. Later she was told her husband probably had perished in the crash, although the government continued providing her with reports. "Frequently one report would contradict another report. . . . I have been either intentionally or negligently misinformed," her affidavit states. His status was changed in July 1978 to KIA.

However, Mrs. Hart learned that U.S. intelligence agencies knew — but never told her — that five open parachutes were found near the crash site, suggesting that aircraft personnel did escape. Also, two piles of bloody bandages were found near the crash site. "These reports were given the highest reliability rating by the U.S. government," she said. Later someone with access to U.S. intelligence documents provided Mrs. Hart with a copy of a 1975 intelligence report. That report states that soon after her husband's crash "an evader symbol was seen in Laos. The symbol was in the form of the numbers '1973,' followed by the letters 'TH.' It was believed that the numbers could be the year . . . while the letters could indicate a person's initials. This was thought to be Capt. Hart."

If this was not enough evidence of deliberate deception by the government, remains were given to Mrs. Hart by the U.S. government, which claimed that they were those of her husband. Dr. Michael Charney examined the remains, however, and said that while they are definitely human remains, they were not complete enough to allow positive identification as any particular individual.

DR. MICHAEL CHARNEY — Although not a plaintiff, Charney filed an affidavit supporting various claims in the case. Charney has been a forensic anthropologist for 47 years and presently serves as professor emeritus at Colorado State University. He also serves as director for both the Center of Human Identification and the Forensic Science Laboratory at the university.



Col. Charles E. Shelton, still listed as a POW. Photo: U.S. Air Force

ported — and Smith, McIntire and others confirmed — “it was feasible to obtain the release of living American prisoners of war through clandestine operations.”

At this point, “without explanation . . . their activities were suddenly curtailed,” the two Green Berets state in the suit.

Among other documents supporting their claims, Smith and McIntire’s suit has attached sworn affidavits signed by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Lewis Howard, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, and Robert Garwood, a former enlisted Marine who was convicted of collaborating with the enemy during his 14 years behind enemy lines after being captured in Vietnam’s I Corps.

Based on numerous detailed personal sightings of other captured U.S. personnel after 1973, Garwood’s statement supports in general the suit’s contention that POWs are still alive in Southeast Asia.

The affidavit by Lt. Col. Howard — the Army’s most decorated soldier and still on active duty as this issue went to press — is based on personal knowledge and participation in the Thailand-based operations. He supports in particular the suit’s claim that the U.S. government failed to act on specific information and then tried to discredit and even eliminate those involved in obtaining that information.

Other affidavits contend that the U.S. government has deliberately misled families of the missing in action by failing to turn over all available information and by “identify-

ing” remains that forensic experts say cannot be positively identified. A bag of bones is turned over to a family so another name can be marked off the government’s list as “resolved.”

The basis for the suit is that President Ronald Reagan, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Defense Intelligence Agency Director General James A. Williams, and those persons who have preceded these men in their posts since the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, have failed to enforce a provision of Title 22, United States Code. Section 1732 of Title 22 U.S.C. stipulates that “whenever it is made known to the President that any citizen of the United States has been unjustly deprived of his liberty by or under the authority of any foreign government, it shall be the duty of the President

forthwith to . . . use such means, not amounting to acts of war, as he may think necessary and proper to obtain . . . release . . .”

The legal instrument by which the suit seeks freedom for any POWs still being held in Southeast Asia is a *mandamus*, a writ issued by a superior court ordering a public official to perform a specified duty outlined by law. Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1361, grants “original jurisdiction of any action in the nature of *mandamus*” to the United States District Court.

After the Paris Peace Accords were signed (you remember: “Peace with honor”) supposedly *all* of the U.S. POWs in North Vietnam and Laos were released. The first U.S. Army POW to walk to freedom was Mark Smith. The winner of the Distinguished Ser-

UNCLE SAM SAYS

The government has declined to specifically address allegations raised in the lawsuit filed by Major Mark Smith and Sergeant First Class Melvin McIntire; charges that the Defense Intelligence Agency has known for years of the existence of live U.S. POWs in Southeast Asia, and has even passed up opportunities to rescue them. Only a brief general statement was issued saying that President Ronald Reagan has “made resolution of the problem one of highest national priority.”

According to Smith and McIntire, “the problem” for the DIA has been how to suppress, discredit and even eliminate people like themselves who have firsthand knowledge about the existence of POWs and want to act on that knowledge.

Soldier of Fortune Magazine has obtained a copy of a 17 September letter written by Richard T. Childress, the National Security Council staff member responsible for POW/MIA issues. “The conclusions drawn by the two individuals who filed the suit . . . are false,” Childress wrote. “The hearsay information they heard while in Thailand was already in our possession and had been investigated previously. The whole idea of a cover-up by this administration is ludicrous.”

Although Smith and McIntire have acknowledged that it is possible and even probable that their intelligence work was not shown to the President or Secretary of Defense, Childress states in his letter that Reagan “is fully cognizant of the facts on this issue and assertions to the contrary by others are false. . . . We are to a great extent dependent upon the cooperation of the Indochinese governments.”

Of course these governments negotiate in good faith, right? We all remember “Peace With Honor.”

Smith and McIntire contend that they were able to confirm sightings of live POWs in Laos. Bobby Garwood, who

was held by the Vietnamese for 14 years, swears under oath that he personally witnessed U.S. POWs in Vietnam after 1973, the date when all prisoners supposedly were returned.

Yet Childress states in his September letter that the government’s official position is that “we have not been able to confirm such reports.” Although the suit claims that the DIA shut down the operation as soon as it appeared that live POWs might actually be extracted and returned to the United States, Childress claims that “we have . . . greatly raised our intelligence priorities to confirm reports of Americans still held in captivity. . . . This question is consistently raised in our negotiations.”

According to a Pentagon spokesman, over 4,000 sightings of supposed U.S. POWs have been reported since 1975, primarily by Indochinese refugees. Of these more than 4,000 incidents, 791 were determined to be firsthand live sightings. Of the 791 firsthand live sightings, 502 were “resolved,” the spokesman said, either by learning the person had come home, remains were returned or it was discovered that the person in question was not a U.S. serviceman. Of the remaining 37 percent, 14 percent — 111 cases — remain open and under investigation. The other 23 percent of the 791 firsthand live sightings are classified as “known or suspected fabrications.”

“No one here doubts the integrity of Smith or McIntire,” said the Pentagon press spokesman, Army Colonel Keith Schneider. “We appreciate that they really believe what they are saying. But we stand by our position that their information was assessed and it did not check out. . . . Be that as it may, we come to work here every day and work under the assumption that there are still live U.S. servicemen being held against their will in Southeast Asia. We just don’t have any proof yet.”

vice Cross, a Silver Star, nine Bronze Stars, four Purple Hearts and other awards, Smith had been held in Cambodia as a POW after a multidivisional NVA force of infantry and tanks overran Loc Ninh, where Smith served as CO.

But less than six months after "Operation Homecoming," the first official report came in indicating that the communists in Vietnam had not negotiated in good faith.

The Army's 500th Military Intelligence Group issued a report on 4 May 1973, outlining information obtained from an infiltrated meeting of Viet Cong leaders. "Subject: Unreleased U.S. and ARVN Prisoners of War." The VC command in Military Region III around Saigon "convened a conference of district committee representatives of Cau Mau, Chuong Thien and Kien Giang Provinces to discuss future struggle policy," according to a copy of the intelligence report filed with the Clerk of U.S. District Court in Raleigh, N.C.

"At the meeting, it was made known that only a third of ARVN personnel held prisoner by the Communists have been released," the IR states. "Like an undisclosed number of unreleased U.S. POWs, they were detained as hostages. All efforts were to be concentrated on a general attack. Should that attack fail, these POWs could be used as a bargaining tool at future peace talks, participants at the [VC] meeting were told."

Under "Field Comments" on the IR, it is stated that "the above information was provided by a friendly foreign intelligence agency. . . . The agency considers information regarding planned attacks as consistent with other reports." Events over the next two years in Vietnam would bear out these attack predictions by "a friendly foreign intelligence agency," most probably Tinh Bao Quan Doi, or ARVN MI.

Finally, the IR notes in conclusion — almost as an afterthought — "This is the first report concerning the retention of US/ARVN prisoners of war."

Twelve years have passed. The reports continue to come in.

Many of those intelligence reports between 1981 and August 1984 were generated by the work of Smith and McIntire. Recently they were told, however, that much of their intelligence work went into a Pentagon paper shredder. Like Smith, McIntire was intimately familiar with Southeast Asia as an AO during the Vietnam War. Besides reading and writing Korean, McIntire speaks two dialects of that language, as well as two dialects of Thai and some Laotian. McIntire won three Bronze Stars, a Distinguished Flying Cross and two Air Medals for valor during Vietnam. He was on terminal leave from Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th SFG, 1st Special Operations Command at Bragg's Smoke Bomb Hill complex when the suit was filed 4 September.

Major Smith — who received a battlefield commission from General William Westmoreland in 1968 — and SFC McIntire were both assigned in 1981-82 to the Special



Capt. Mark Smith, left, after receiving the Distinguished Service Cross following his release from a POW camp in Cambodia. Photo: U.S. Army

Forces Detachment-Korea (SFD-K), Smith as CO. As McIntire's affidavit states, "The general and unclassified mission of this assignment was to serve as liaison with the Special Forces Units in the Army of the Republic of Korea." But typical of SFers, one assignment serves as a cover for other, more interesting activities. Then of course you must have a cover for your cover.

For McIntire, this included "liaison to a Special Mission Battalion which dealt with counterterrorism. In addition, I was assigned to a compartment which had a mission to identify, locate and possibly rescue American Prisoners of War known to be held in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. . . . At the direction of my commander [Smith] and the Defense Intelligence Agency, I traveled to Southeast Asia to establish an agent net on trips which used other operations as a cover. On the average, I made these trips every 60 to 90 days and each trip lasted on the average approximately 10 days."

McIntire's affidavit specifies that he would "recruit agents from all spectrums of . . . society. . . . My initial objective was to renew contacts with individuals that I had [known] during my prior tour in Southeast Asia, as well as to establish new sources of information." These drug dealers, gunrunners and gold smugglers — Laotians, free Vietnamese, the Pathet Lao and Thais — are hardbitten souls who laugh at the law, cross borders at will and go where most men would fear to tread. Bangkok became the nerve center of a U.S. intelligence network of more than 50 operatives, ranging from the highest echelons of Thailand's military establishment to the world's murkiest netherworld of criminal elite.

As reports on living POWs still being held captive began to accumulate, McIntire and Smith began cross-checking information on similar sightings from unconnected sources who had no knowledge of each other, "in order to provide corroboration for individual reports without cross-fertilization," McIntire said.

Smith and McIntire compiled more and more information on live sightings of U.S. POWs in various areas. Other interesting



Bobby Garwood, who spent 14 years in the hands of the enemy in Vietnam, swears many live U.S. POWs were left behind. Photo: Barry Thomas



Capt. Smith in Vietnam in 1970 with folding-stock AK. Photo: Courtesy of Mark Smith

information began to develop from their sources, some of whom McIntire said he has known for over a decade. Some of the sources told McIntire "that they did not trust the Defense Intelligence Agency nor

the Central Intelligence Agency in matters relating to American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. They also complained of corruption in the refugee program and the Joint Casualty Resolution Center [JCRC],"

then headquartered in Bangkok, now located in Hawaii.

Smith also recalls that as their POW in-

Continued on page 117

WE WAIT

(The name of the person in the following interview, a California resident, has been changed.)

Are the MIAs, the American servicemen missing in action, forgotten people?

"Yes and no, depending on the age group," said Sara, a slender, self-contained woman. There were fine lines around her eyes and her restless fingers trembled slightly as she made temporary pleats in her blue denim skirt.

She smiled. "Last week, I had it brought to me pretty forcibly that servicemen of the Vietnam War are forgotten. I was in a car wash and a young boy, maybe 16 years old, was wiping down my car. He examined curiously the shabby blue and white MIA metal plate.

"Are these your initials?" he asked.

"No," I replied. "It means Missing in Action."

"Where's the action?" he grinned.

Quickly I explained. His young face sobered, his blue eyes looked into mine with true regret.

"Jeese, lady, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be a smarty. I just didn't know."

"Why should he? He was maybe 5 years old during the Vietnam war."

Sara West continued, "Forgotten? No. Those of us who live in a state of emotional limbo are never for one moment forgotten or allowed to forget. Ours is a yo-yo existence. Hope at one end of the string and despair at the other."

"Don't you ever give up and accept the finality, as those in civilian life do after a seven-year period when those missing are declared dead?"

"No, not ever." There was latent sadness in Sara's eyes. "My husband was shot down over North Vietnam in 1973." She moved restlessly.

Her soft voice trembled. "Another member of his squadron said that Bob was alive on the ground and when he saw him last he was being helped from the flaming plane by either a friendly group of villagers or being captured. That was 11 years ago — long, arid years — but always with a measure of hope.

"Wouldn't you like a cup of tea or a coke?" Sara asked. "This may take some time. I want to answer all your questions. Maybe I just want to talk."

"It's easier for me than for some of the other women who are not able to adjust to the fact that they are neither wives nor widows. We who are the wives of pilots have lived all of our lives with uncertainty. We know that disaster can strike at any moment of the day or

night, whether it's war or just practice runs. In a way we are prepared for the finality of death." She hesitated.

"But not this. Not this abysmal despair one day and exhilarated hope the next. With the return of the body from Vietnam of the Unknown Soldier and our president's pledge to use every means in his power to find out if and where there are survivors, there has been a great renewal and a much-needed lift to our hopes. It's a change from the great void when there was not much being done, or so we thought."

Sara looked out at her garden, alive with color.

"It turns the knife in my heart to think that my husband is being used as a slave laborer or starving in some hot, steamy jungle prison camp. But I know that if anyone can survive, it will be Bob."

A teacup rattled faintly in Sara's hand.

"Ours was a good marriage. The times when Bob was at home were days of enchantment. Days to cherish during his absence."

The door opened and a tall blond young man said, "Hi, Mom. What's going on?"

Sara introduced her son. "This is Robert West Jr.," she said in a formal voice. "Our oldest son."

"Nice to meet you," muttered the boy, then excused himself with, "Got to study." And he was gone.

"Do your children remember their father?"

"Bob Jr. does. He was almost 7 years old when he last saw him. He remembers our life when we were stationed in Texas and the joys of waiting for Daddy to come home. Chris, our other son, was too young to have any memory of his father except through family pictures."

She fingered her shabby MIA bracelet. "The boys outgrew theirs. Small wrists soon became big wrists." She smiled. "I don't need mine to remind me of my husband. I have a daily reminder in my sons. Bob Jr. walks exactly like his father did. And Chris reflects the gaiety and sweetness of his father's smile."

She looked around the sunny, plant-filled living room.

"We live comfortably, our sons and I. Bob Jr. will enter college this fall and Chris — he's 14 — is in high school. Their education is assured. My husband's salary and dependent benefits are mine to administer.

"What else can I tell you?" Sara asked, an eager light in her eyes.

When you think that there are 250

MIAs just in California, and 2,489, including some civilians, nationwide; surely, eventually some valid information will leak out.

Sara leaned forward to arrange a magazine on the coffee table. Her brown hair, lightly touched with gray, veiled her face. "I've talked a lot, but it's just this sort of thing that keeps our situation in the eyes of a busy public, a public that, I hope, will not forget.

"We want publicity, but not from the personal standpoint. Because over the years many of us have been subjected to hate letters and telephone calls. Some time ago, a man telephoned and said he was Vietnamese. He spoke with an accent.

"He went on to tell me that he had seen my husband and that he was well and happy, living in a small village with his Vietnamese wife and children.

"I went through the emotional gamut of being glad that Bob was alive and the searing thought that someone else had supplanted me in his heart.

"When reason returned, I knew that this was another cruel hoax. All communications are screened when possible, but few of these sick people leave any trace of themselves.

"Life is not all gloom and doom. I am active in the MIA group here. It's a support group. There are some who can't cope and some who can. Many women succumb to despair and some form alliances with a man. A man, probably a fine one, who can give them the security and love without the commitment of marriage. For some, it's the only solution, and no one blames them."

She paused. "Yes, I too have given way to loneliness. There have been interludes, but nothing permanent." Her tone held a note of defiance. "I'm human, too.

"I'll be 40 years old before too long. A supposed turning point in every woman's life. Have the years been wasted? No, not at all. I have been useful to the MIA movement and have had great joy in my children, who inherited their father's courage and honesty. That has made it easier for me in the role of a single parent." She paused. "Except that I am not single."

Courage showed in every gesture of Sara West as she said goodbye.

She smiled. "I expect that dreaded birthday will come along and I'll be doing just what I'm doing today. Waiting as I've done for 12 years. Waiting and dreading. Waiting and praying."

— Marian Hodgkinson

MAD MIKE'S OWN STORY

Col. Hoare on War and Peace

by Chris Hoare

Photos courtesy Mike Hoare



General Mobutu (now president) poses after 5 Commando inspection. Hoare's mercenaries were required to be soldiers first and give the right image — clean-shaven every day, no camouflage, no fatigue caps.

“MAD Mike” Hoare: a living definition of a professional adventurer and the most famous mercenary of the Congo and of our time. Was he a madman or merely one of the few sane people in the Congo?

According to Robin Griffin, sergeant in 5 Commando, journalist and one-time parliamentary correspondent for the *Daily News* in South Africa, the colonel was a natural-born leader, not only of men in the field but of politicians in parliament. He led from the front, he led by example. He inspired a terrific amount of loyalty and instilled the right sort of pride in 5 Commando. And he certainly wasn't mad.

“He was very much the colonel. Occasionally he would show off to keep up his image. Once the front of our column — not a 100 yards ahead — was ambushed and we all leaped into ditches on the side of the road and kept our heads down. The colonel ordered an officer up to the front to sort out the nonsense and then ordered his driver to get his map table and chair out and set them up in the middle of the road. He then sat down and started studying his maps as we sheepishly crawled out of the ditches.

“Pure ham on his part, but, by God, it was impressive — and excellent for morale.

“Command depended on personality, and the colonel certainly had it. On one occasion we refused to go on parade because we hadn't gotten paid. There were 250 of us against him and RSM Sam Cassidy. He said he wouldn't talk to us till we went on parade. So we sat around for a few hours and then decided to go on parade.

“He went through his inspection routine, crapped on some of us about haircuts and not shaving, then he gathered us around informally and told us he couldn't guarantee we would get paid, but he would do everything in his power to see we were. Those who wanted to fight on that basis could stay, the rest could go back to Johannesburg with no bad feelings. About 20 men left, the rest of us gave the colonel three cheers and got on with the job. Later, we got our money.

“The Congo was an evil place. The Simbas and Belgian mercenaries used to shoot prisoners. We even saw evidence of prisoners having been eaten. There were no Western standards at all. It was one huge steaming jungle and we felt horrible a lot of the time. But the old boy insisted that what we were doing was right and good.

“He was a stickler for bullshit. We had to shave every day and couldn't wear camouflage uniforms — it was ridiculous. He even sent guys home for wearing the wrong color berets. But in a place where you could become a cannibal yourself in three months if you let yourself go, he was right.”

How does Colonel Mike Hoare view his time spent in the Congo? And what are his secrets on leading men? In this exclusive interview, “Mad Mike” shares his thoughts on soldiering, madness and the nature of war.

Q: In the Congo the Americans used to refer to you behind your back as a Boy Scout



TOP: Mike Hoare (right) recovers the abandoned jeep of two of his men who were tortured and killed in Kalamata, Katanga, in 1961.

ABOVE: Left to right, Pipe-Major Sandy King, Mike Hoare and RSM Jack Carton-Barber at a 1975 reunion of the Wild Geese in Johannesburg.

soldier. Why do you think this was?

A: (laughter) It's the first time I've ever heard that, but I understand it. My views on soldiering aren't radical, but I'm a great believer in the maintenance of morale, particularly in action. Morale suffers with awful conditions, fright, irregular meals and when you're living in a foxhole. You've got to do something to maintain morale because a man can go downhill so rapidly. It's best to keep up your personal appearance by shaving and washing every day even though it's very difficult to do with limited water. But having made the effort to clean yourself up, you feel better straight-away. So I had an inflexible rule that my men had to shave every day.

Another reason was that the Belgian mercenaries in the Congo — those not under my command — were ill-disciplined, unkempt,

and delighted in heavy beards. They had the name *Les Affreux*, The Frightful Ones, and they rejoiced in that image. Now that's unsoldierly. You don't want to look like a bloody thug, it doesn't give the right image. I remember some of these blokes very well in Katanga in 1961 with their heavy beards, bandoleers, grenade stuck in the belt, rolled-down socks, and invariably those shorts — you know, the ones that were so short that their balls were hanging out. My God, can you imagine such a thing? That was my idea of hell and I never wanted that in my units. So I outlawed fancy dress. For me, fancy dress means a camouflage jacket and trousers.

Now the average mercenary loves dressing up, he loves the grenades, the beard, the whole business, but it's not part of soldiering, really. The fatigue cap was the thing I loathed more than anything else. My men had to be properly dressed at all times, and I suppose that's what gave rise to this peculiar image.

Q: According to the legend you are an exceptional leader of men. What are your secrets?

A: I don't know about exceptional. I base my practice in leadership on one observation, and it is this: A worthy commander must care for his men. The real leader today

gives an example his men can follow. If you are going to be worth following, your own life must be of a very high standard. The really great leaders are puritanical, like Montgomery. He never had all the comforts and denied them to his men.

But talk about caring, and Nelson is the supreme example. Nelson gained his vast reputation in the Royal Navy as a young captain in the days when he made sure the men's food was edible. Now that's what I call caring for men. Unless you put the men first what are you? You are nothing.

The average officer and NCO never studies how to lead, he feels you're either a born leader or you are not. But you can be taught.

These are some pointers:

Every man is different, and you've got to take an interest in him. Until you can address a man by his name he always feels he's just a number.

Early on I learned a very impressive trick with troops. I'd come on parade and say "When I come opposite you, shout out your name." We'd do this and I'd remember the unusual names and I'd address them later. That had an immediate effect. Eventually when I had had enough practice at this I'd go down the ranks calling out their names. Of course I got a few wrong, but the practice always caused a stir.

Be regimental. That is, be the same to the

men yesterday, today and tomorrow. Don't be soft one day and hard another. If you are always the same it breeds confidence.

Keep your relationship formal. Men don't expect you to be a buddy. Private soldiers want to look up to their leaders but are very disappointed when they find you've got feet of clay. You need lots of self-discipline. As a leader, you have privileges and you must use them.

You have to be sure you want to be a leader. As a leader you have to eschew popularity. You can't go around drinking with the boys. You can't be with them in the pub one night and order them around the next day. So you have to decide before you



COLONEL HOARE AT HOME

"Goon," he laughed. "The word fairly springs to the lips!"

Irish whiskey in a crockery bottle had been passed the second time and we sat in Hoare's study, talking about 25-year-old Vietnam veterans, the million men who say they served in the British SAS and other mythical animals. Colonel Mike Hoare — the grand old man of 20th century contract soldiering had been released from South African prison a week before — moistened his lips with whiskey and regaled me with another adventure.

Hoare had paddled wild South African rivers and the Okavango swamp, traversed the mountainous plateau of Lesotho on horseback, sought the Lost City of the Kalahari, sailed the Indian Ocean and played the latter-day Lawrence across the Congo. I had devoured *Mercenary* in my teens, and was awed by the length of the time line joining his adventures, but I'd expected to meet someone different. Maybe I'd expected to meet a goon.

Of course, Hoare shouldn't have proved a swaggering, drunken, foul-mouthed, cammie-clad, comic-opera commando. He's lived too long for that. But he could've been a humorless, cold-blooded, strutting martinet. Printed photos from two decades ago are unsym-

Col. Hoare, recently released from South African prison, permitted only one press interview, granted to SOF. Photo: Chris Hoare

pathetic, since they are always taken on public occasions. They make him look like a toned-down Montgomery. And a televised confrontation with the snide and simpering Dick Cavett didn't contribute to an accurate characterization of Mad Mike.

My imaginary Col. Hoare would be a little stiff. The creases in his tropical uniform would be too sharp. He would be organized, but not clever or unusually intelligent. And he would be vain enough to hire the wrong ghost writer.

Hoare's account of the war in the Congo is all wrong for a "hired killer." Certainly *Mercenary* could not have been written by the most famous mercenary of the 20th century. It was too structured, literate, precise, delicate in its expression and broad in its vision: At an ungenerous guess, the hired soldier had scholarly pretense.

I hadn't come to Hilton to get Hoare's story. His son, Chris, a free-lancer from Durban, had been retained to write the Colonel's biography for *Soldier of Fortune*. Dale Dye, SOF's last executive editor, had sent me to South Africa to find Hoare, convince him to talk to me, and get a briefing on what to expect and what questions to ask as I researched the Seychelles operation. (Watch for the

accounts of coup force officers Bernard Carey and Aubrey Brooks in a future issue of SOF.) All we knew of Hoare's relations with the press was that Hoare didn't like reporters. Dye decided I had one advantage over other correspondents for this task: At least I wasn't a formally trained journalist.

That counted with Hoare. He had been harassed and slandered before prison and indignant headlines had pronounced a 10-year sentence levied on a soldier in his 60s a "wrist-slap." Much of this was caused by ignorance of the development and function of mercenary troops, and a naive reliance on communist revisions of history.

We were both surprised. Hoare hadn't expected a scholar and I hadn't expected a renaissance man. I also learned that he was the unquestionable author of his books: Hoare speaks exactly as he writes, right down to paragraphing and quotations.

Over the course of a week, we discussed religious writers, Greek history, medieval English drama, kayaking, sailing, motorcycling across Africa, the writings of Mohandas K. Ghandi and, of course, mercenary soldiering. But the best time was a long South African winter afternoon spent in the sunlit study while Hoare told what he had done in the Seychelles. Then he brought out a bottle and we drank and talked about — believe it or not — early English language and Christopher Marlowe's poetry. Hoare had memorized long tracts of Marlowe's verse, and spoke professionally and eloquently of Renaissance poets. He quoted freely from criticism and scholarship. Had Col. Hoare been Dr. Hoare, he would have been the best drama professor I'd met.

I don't expect that recommendation to have much impact on most SOF readers. But if you stop and think about the breadth of the man's experience, the depth of his learning, his fame and (in certain quarters) his infamy, Mike Hoare can't be the man described by detractors.

He's certainly not a goon.

— William Guthrie

become a leader if you would be happier in the ranks with the camaraderie of strong men, which is a wonderful feeling.

As a leader you have other compensations.

Another thing you seldom read about is the ability to communicate. Kitchener is on record as never having spoken to anyone below the rank of major, and wasn't it Wellington who said at Badajoz, Spain, "Dogs, do you want to live forever?"

Communication is essential because in warfare the men must be fully informed as to what it is you're trying to do. That's harder to do than you imagine. The man who is vitally important is the trooper who usually knows nothing. So one of the things I always used to do in action was to go around and pick a man at random and ask what our intention was. If he didn't know I'd reprimand his sergeant.

Q: Your methods of training men are unconventional. What are your priorities?

A: Mercenary soldiering is vastly different from regular army soldiering. You don't need the degree of spit and polish and ceremony, but you do need some of it because the people who are paying you want to see that you are soldierly. You must be able to put on a guard of honor and drill extremely well.

Mercenary soldiers must look like soldiers. But the keynote to all training is physical fitness. In the Congo I had over 3,000 men. As soon as I discovered one was an alcoholic or a drug addict, they had to go. I'm not an evangelist, I can't change their life, and I certainly can't make them physically fit in a short time. In Africa you are not training mercenaries for war so much as you are training them to stay alive.

You get men fit by ordinary PT and sport. The best is football [soccer] and boxing. I was a great believer in route marching, but it seems to have gone out of fashion a bit. Ah, the discipline of route marching. And then when you've done a route march you've got this magnificent feeling of having conquered something and you've all done it together which has a tremendous effect on morale.

Next is a thorough knowledge of all small arms so that a man would be completely interchangeable with any man in another unit who was specializing in one weapon. A mercenary must know all weapons. A mercenary by definition has no fixed establishment. You use whatever you can get a hold of so training in a wide variety of weapons is essential.

The third important point in training a fighting man is his ability to dig. When you get into action the earth is your greatest protection. There are great lines in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* where he talks about the affinity for earth. I can remember at Kohima seeing a man dig for his life with a spoon.

There's an art in digging. You don't dig with a shovel or spade. You pick with a pick and remove with a shovel. It sounds so simple, but men need to be trained in it at length.

Q: You've said that mercenary troops should be used only under certain circumstances. What are they?

A: As a result of my experiences in Katanga and in the Congo, where we were used as an extension of an existing army, I'm convinced that this is the proper way for mercenary troops to be used: fulfilling a specialist role either as a strike force or in doing something that the regular army can't do for some reason.

I honestly thought that Katanga in '61 and in the Congo in '64-'65 was going to be the golden age of mercenary soldiering in Africa. All the little countries were becoming independent, the colonial power was withdrawing and in some cases they were left naked and undefended. They had their own armies but they were untrained. People who had been lance corporals and corporals were now commanders with no background at all. They could have used mercenary soldiers. But for a number of reasons my dream never came true.

Unfortunately, some of the reasons have nothing to do with the countries but with the mercenaries themselves. They behaved badly, they were undisciplined and in some cases they committed atrocities, destroying any possibilities they might have had.

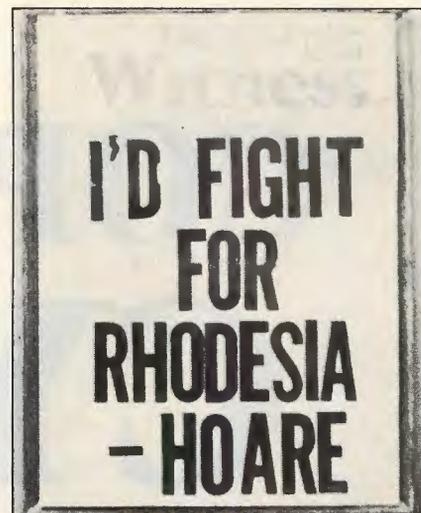
Q: What sort of man makes a good mercenary?

A: The basic requirement is a sense of adventure. We've all grown up with the thought that soldiering, action and fighting an enemy is adventure. It is not. It has no relationship to adventure but you don't discover that till very late on. It's a well-held myth that warfare and adventure are one and the same thing.

Strangely enough, the best soldiers are adventurers. They are prepared to face danger, the unknown, and risk their life. In addition, there has to be some form of motivation. I used to tell chaps: if you've come for the money and only the money, you won't last. Even though the money for privates was good, at three in the morning in a foxhole you'll say to yourself, 'I can earn money easier than this.' So you had to be motivated by something else. In those days it was too much to expect a highly developed anti-communist sense — that has developed since then.

A chap has to want to do mercenary soldiering basically for the love of soldiering itself, and that calls for self-discipline. The one who can administer his own discipline is the type who makes a good mercenary.

Certain nationalities made good mercenaries. Germans of the old stock were soldiers of the first order. They were extremely brave unlike the other type of German from the "hair-net brigade." Australians make good mercenaries because they are almost by definition independent and "cussed." They don't take well to formalized training. South Africans and Rhodesians were good. But their predilection for drinking is an absolute curse. According to the Congolese, the South Africans and Rhodesians were always drinking, the Germans always



TOP: A December 1965 bill of a South African newspaper.

ABOVE: Mike Hoare addresses a reunion of the Wild Geese in Johannesburg in 1975.

eating and the Belgians were always chasing girls.

Q: How do you maintain discipline in a mercenary outfit when there is no Army Act or equivalent to back you up?

A: This is one of the big differences between mercenaries and the regular army. The most potent means of maintaining discipline, and one which I didn't like to revert to but which I did occasionally, is stoppage of pay. Stopping a soldier's works in most cases as a disciplinary measure, but it leaves a residue of ill-feeling.

At the lower levels, sergeants or section leaders would be chosen very carefully as men of character and great ability, and nearly all of them were very useful with their hands. They maintained discipline at some time or another by instilling it with their fists.

Continued on page 144

COPPERS ON CYPRUS

U.N. Peacekeepers with a Badge

by Michael R. Doyle

PERHAPS the most unusual police force in the world today operates on the island of Cyprus. The United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) of the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) holds this distinction because it's the only *actual* police force the United Nations deploys (although all U.N.-force operations are supposed to be "police actions"), and because of its multinational composition.

UNFICYP's inception was directly related to events which started in December 1963 when Greek and Turkish Cypriots again rose against each other in intercommunal conflict — the second time in a decade the island was engulfed in strife. Three months later, in March 1964, the United Nations established a multinational peace-keeping force on the island with full agree-

ment of the Cypriot government, Greece, Turkey and Great Britain, to keep peace and allow the United Nations to help the two communities reach an understanding. UNFICYP was composed of troops from Austria, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and Great Britain, each assigned a sector along the line of demarcation between the two Cypriot communities. Their primary task was to monitor military activities of each faction to ensure the status quo; police operations, especially within the buffer zone, remained a thorny issue.

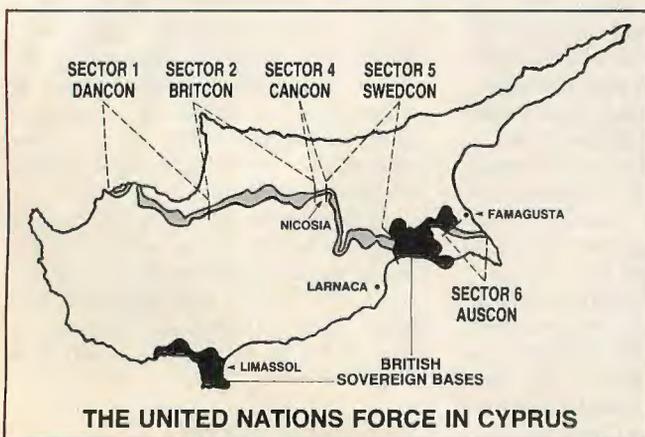
Since 1964 policing the island has been a problem because Turkish Cypriots did not trust the Greek-controlled Cyprus police, and the Greek Cypriots didn't trust any Turkish Cypriot policeman. (At that time there were actually more Turkish than Greek Cypriot policemen although the population balance favored the Greek community by nearly 80 percent). This situation created a major problem and in order to resolve it, UNFICYP decided to raise a multinational civilian police component — a novel and

experimental departure from usual practice.

In previous U.N. operations police duties of all kinds had been carried out by the military provost. However, it was considered a diplomatic and constructive step to introduce civilian police into the U.N. peace-keeping effort. When it came to the point of settling disputes and complaints typical in civil law the world over, it would be easier for a U.N. civil policeman to be accepted by Greek and Turk alike than it would be for a U.N. soldier.

For a succession of 20 years policemen from Australia, Austria, Denmark, New Zealand and Sweden have carried out their duties in Cyprus with patience and perseverance. Their responsibility to observe, advise and negotiate is conducted without any executive authority or direct powers of

Map indicates sectors of control of U.N. forces along the buffer zone between Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Swedish and Australian police contingent handle civilian legal disputes within the zone itself.



Special Platoon members of MIAU are chosen from the best in the unit. They train continuously in anti-terrorist operations such as live-fire, anti-ambush confrontations. Photo: Michael R. Doyle



TOP: Beret badge of Cypriot MIAU (Mobile Immediate Action Unit). Police is spelled out in both Turkish and Greek.

ABOVE: Shoulder tab and patch of MIAU. Police is spelled out in both Greek and English.

LEFT: Ever-present threat of terrorist attacks against sensitive targets, including United States and Israeli embassies, keep elite MIAU members on guard.

Photos: Michael R. Doyle

MOBILE IMMEDIATE ACTION UNIT

During my stay in Cyprus I was surprised to learn this 400-strong group of Greek Cypriot policemen are trained and equipped as commandos.

Members of this paramilitary wing of the Cyprus Police have all completed their six-month basic police training course and all have had street experience as uniformed police officers. Upon acceptance into the MIAU, new members undergo a three-month commando training course. The course lays the groundwork for further special operations training and readies MIAU members for their role as elite troops in support of the Greek Cypriot government in any actions against an invading Turkish Army.

MIAU consists of five duty companies and a special task force platoon of 50 men. Special task force platoon members are selected from among the best of the unit and train continuously in SAS-type anti-terrorist techniques. Training includes anti-hijack operations, hostage rescue, VIP protection, shooting full auto from speeding cars, shooting full auto at speeding cars, rock climbing, combat pistol shooting, sniper training,



Unarmed combat is only one phase of intensive training required of all Greek Cypriot MIAU candidates. Photo: Michael R. Doyle

unarmed combat and other commando infantry skills.

The remaining five companies rotate duties: four remain in the field while one stays in continuous training. Policemen normally serve in MIAU for three to four years before returning to routine police duties.

The day-to-day duties of MIAU include a reaction team on standby for emergency deployment in case of civil

disturbance or terrorist incident, natural disaster, or enemy invasion. They are also on duty at sensitive installations, such as the Israeli and American embassies, and monitor public gatherings where a security threat might exist.

The commander of MIAU is Chief Superintendent Costas Papacostas, a former National Guard colonel who was transferred to the Cyprus Police to raise and train MIAU. His responsibilities also include maintaining a close liaison with leading European paramilitary police and military anti-terrorist units.

MIAU members wear National Guard commando camouflage fatigues similar to those worn by the French in the Algerian campaign of the early 1960s. Their distinctive yellow and black MIAU tab and patch is positioned on the left shoulder, and headgear consists of a black beret with the Cyprus Police badge. They are usually seen armed with Egyptian Maadi AKMs although the unit does have a full range of specialist weapons available.

My impression of the MIAU force was highly favorable. They are a tough and professional group of soldier-policemen, perhaps some of the best I've encountered. My advice to anyone planning on tangling with MIAU? Put succinctly, *don't*.



arrest, search, or interrogation; they go about their duties on Cyprus unarmed although in most cases it's normal practice in their own countries to carry side arms. The Cypriots notice this courtesy and appreciate the adherence to the principle of peaceful intervention by this small band of foreign policemen.

At its inception the force strength of UN-CIVPOL was relatively small. It comprised only 174 men: 40 each from Australia, Denmark and Sweden, 34 from Austria and 20 from New Zealand.

Australian and Austrian detachments each increased by 10 when New Zealand withdrew its 20-man detachment in June 1968. Due to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, further reductions in UNCIVPOL strength were made when the Danish Civilian Police withdrew, followed by the Austrian Civilian Police in July 1977. Today UNCIVPOL is composed of only Australian and Swedish policemen.

Prior to 1974 the Australian Civilian Police Contingent (AUSTCIVPOL) was deployed islandwide and consisted of up to 50 policemen drawn from the various states of

LEFT: Obstacle course is only one phase of MIAU training. Candidates must be fully versed in combat shooting and sniper employment, rock climbing, hostage rescue, and other commando infantry skills.

BELOW LEFT: MIAU live-firing exercise as unit members protect a VIP against an assassination attempt.

BELOW: MIAU candidates, already experienced police officers, must undergo a three-month commando training course prior to acceptance into the unit.

Photos: Michael R. Doyle



Australia, and from its Federal Force. The withdrawal of the states' police contingent left only the Australian Federal Police to provide the current membership.

Today their activities are concentrated in the buffer zone separating the Greek and Turkish Cypriot areas of control, principally the three western sectors (1, 2 and 4; Sector 3 was incorporated into the surrounding sectors). AUSTCIVPOL currently numbers some 20 officers and men, each serving

a 12-month tour of duty. Approximately 600 Australian policemen have served with UNFICYP since 1964.

Continued on page 114

Author greets Greek Cypriot Minister for the Interior and Defense during minister's first interview with a foreign journalist.

Photo: Maj. R.I.M. MacArthur, R.E., UNFICYP



THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

For centuries Cyprus has been occupied by every power which happened to be throwing its weight around the eastern Mediterranean. Egyptians, Phoenicians, Persians and Assyrians have all occupied the island. Since 1500 B.C. its contact with Greece has greatly influenced Cypriot civilization.

In 58 B.C. the Romans annexed Cyprus; it later became part of the Byzantine Empire, and eventually came under the control of the English Crusader King, Richard I. Richard bestowed Cyprus on one of his Crusaders, and the Lusignan Dynasty ruled for several generations until the island became part of the Venetian empire in the 15th century. After a brief return to Egyptian rule in 1426, Cyprus again became a Venetian possession until its conquest by Ottoman Turks in 1570-71.

Sovereign Turkish rule lasted until 1878. The Ottoman empire was crumbling and Russia was jockeying to invade Turkey. Great Britain promised to back Turkey against any aggression by Russia, and to provide major loans in return for control of Cyprus.

The British ruled Cyprus through the existing Turkish administration until November 1914 when Turkey chose to back the wrong side in World War I. Cyprus was annexed to the British Crown, offered to Greece 12 months later (they declined the "gift") and eventually became a Crown Colony in 1925.

Following the war there was a marked increase of Greek nationalism on Cyprus and the Greek Cypriot dream of *enosis* — a union of Cyprus with Greece — became stronger than ever. World War II interrupted this nationalistic fervor and Cypriot units were raised to fight the Axis powers.

This military experience was brought to bear in 1955 when the EOKA, a nationalist movement led by General George Grivas, fought as terrorist insurgents against British troops occupying Cyprus. The British won, as they usually do. In 1960 an agreement was reached between Britain, Greece, Turkey and the two Cypriot communities that Cyprus, rather than becoming part of Greece,



Station Sergeant of the Australian Civilian Police (AUSCIVPOL) represents the United Nations Civilian Police on strife-torn Cyprus. Today only Australian and Swedish policemen "keep the peace" in the buffer zone between Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Photo: Maj. R.I.M. MacArthur, R.E., UNFICYP

would be an independent, non-aligned country with a power-sharing constitution.

This constitution also ceded the British military bases at Akrotiri and Dhekelia to Great Britain. British troops withdrew to these bases and a few other sites they held around the island by treaty agreement. (The British military bases are British Crown Territory, really a part of England, in the same manner as Gibraltar and the Falklands.)

After only three years of independence, Archbishop Makarios III, the Greek president of Cyprus, demanded the constitution be changed to a majority-vote system instead of the power-sharing government agreed upon for independence. The Turks walked out of the government saying they would not be dominated by Greeks.

Turkish Cypriots fortified their villages and refused to recognize the authority of the Cyprus government over them. The government tried to impose its control over the Turkish enclaves and heavy fighting broke out — to include the use of artillery and other heavy weapons.

British troops moved out around the island to separate the two communities.

The situation rapidly internationalized, and in 1964 a U.N. peace-keeping force, the United Nations Force in Cyprus, was established.

In spite of the U.N. presence, attacks by Turkish and Greek Cypriots on each other continued.

In 1974 the EOKA and Cypriot National Guard (the Greek Cypriot army), in collusion with the military junta ruling Greece, launched a coup against Makarios and replaced him with *enosis*-leaning Nikos Sampson. This new president ordered the National Guard to "clean up" a few of the fortified Turkish Cypriot enclaves. The National Guard attacked three undefended villages north of Famagusta and there was heavy loss of life in those villages.

This particular incident, along with the failure of Britain and Greece to fulfill their obligation as guarantors of the 1960 constitution, led directly to the Turkish invasion of the island on 20 July 1974 on the pretext of restoring law and order and protecting the Turkish Cypriot minority. (However, Turkey had long hoped for this opportunity to neutralize the "Greek dagger pointing at the belly of Turkey," and their humanitarian considerations were probably just an excuse.)

Turkey landed airborne and amphibious troops who quickly occupied the northern 40 percent of the island despite bitter fighting by the greatly outnumbered National Guard. After U.N. intervention Turkish forces stabilized along its so-called "Attila Line" and have declared the occupied area the Turkish Federated State of Kibris (Cyprus).

UNFICYP redeployed from its island-wide positions at the end of the fighting to a buffer zone between the Turkish Army and the newly formed Cyprus Liberation Army — an amalgamation of the EOKA and National Guard. (The C.L.A. has since been reformed as the National Guard for political reasons.)

There have been numerous U.N.-sponsored talks between the two Cypriot communities in the hope of reunifying the island, but the basic conflict remains: The Greek community demands a Turkish withdrawal and the Turks demand guarantees of continued autonomy.

Talks continue to this day, but so far they have come to naught.

South Africa's 40mm Six-Pack

by Brady Ridgway

SUPER BLOOPER

SPECIFICATIONS	
Caliber	40mm
Weight (empty)	11.68 lbs
Weight (loaded)	14.99 lbs
Length	
(butt extended)	31.8 inches
(butt folded)	22.64 inches
Barrel length	12.20 inches
Muzzle	
velocity	250 feet per second
Maximum range	425 meters
Minimum	
range	30 meters (combat)
Maximum effective	
range	375 meters (area targets); 150 meters (point targets)
Manufacturer:	Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd., Private Bag X337, Pretoria 0001, South Africa



FAR LEFT: Six-shot grenade launcher stands to replace single-shot versions already in use throughout the operational areas. Photo: Armscor

LEFT: Metal stock can be folded over to provide more maneuverability within confined spaces while the two pistol grips still provide a stable firing platform. Photo: Armscor

NCESSITY has always bred invention. South Africa, now in its ninth year of the United Nations-initiated arms embargo, seems to be reaffirming this axiom with a vengeance. One of the newest weapons to roll off the government-sponsored Armscor (Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd.) production line is the 40mm multishot grenade launcher (MGL) — a small-unit support weapon designed to give troops in the bush more bang for the buck.

Until now the South African Defense Force (SADF) has relied on the American-made M79 grenade launcher as its infantry small-arm support weapon, although Armscor has made its own version of a single-shot, break-open, breech-loaded grenade launcher. Relatively few of these bloopers are seen in SADF although the need for such a small-unit support weapon exists.

The 40mm MGL seems to rely heavily upon the Striker (see "Striker — South Africa's Revolving Scattergun," *SOF*, August '85) design concept, and this isn't too surprising. Many locally produced South African weapons, including the Striker shotgun, trace their lineage to the Rhodesian war

where a home-grown arsenal developed during their arms embargo. At war's end, both designers and designs found their way into South Africa's armament industry.

The new launcher is a semiautomatic, shoulder-fired weapon with a six-shot capacity. It's equipped with a folding stock which adjusts to three positions. The metal stock is fully extended along the axis of the barrel for normal use, slightly elevated for long-range firing, and folded over and locked along the top of the barrel for maneuverability in confined spaces. The MGL consists of a steel barrel rifled with a progressive right-hand twist, spring-actuated revolving cylinder machined from light alloy, and a two-part steel frame — all coated with an anti-corrosive treatment and covered with dry film lubricant.

The forward part of the frame holds the barrel with attached pistol grip and includes the main beam, front shield with cylinder drive spring, gas cylinder and piston. The rear group consists of the rear shield, pistol grip and trigger mechanism; these are suspended on the main beam and can be hinged to the right.

The package also includes an Armson

OEG (occluded eye gunsight) assembly which is secured to the main beam by two screws. The adjustable OEG sight works on the single-point sight aiming theory, and is also found on the Striker shotgun. The firer sights with both eyes open, one directed into the OEG. The effect is to see the aiming spot superimposed on the target, and the collimating sight assembly also includes a radio-luminous lamp for spot contrast.

This system of aiming is more accurate and less prone to damage than the conventional ladder-type sight found on the M79. A graduated scale allows the sight to be set at any range from 50-375 meters at intervals of 25 meters, and the sight is cammed to the left to automatically compensate for drift. To further the launcher's aiming capability, it is also fitted with an artificial bore sight used to either zero the OEG or act as an iron sight in an emergency.

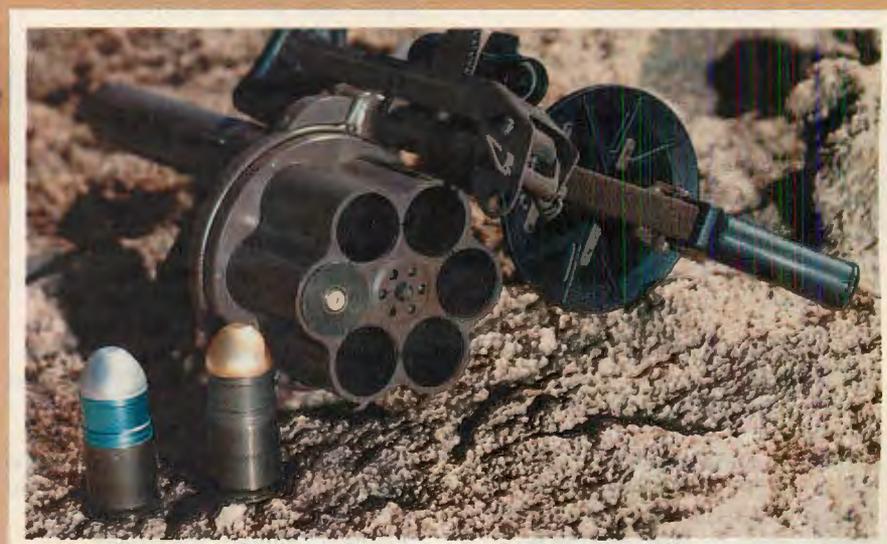
Operation of the weapon is fairly simple and quite safe. It is equipped with a lever-type, thumb-operated ambidextrous safety located just above and in front of the rear pistol grip. To load the launcher, the safety

Continued on page 114



ABOVE: South Africa's 40mm multishot grenade launcher. Photo: Armscor

RIGHT: MGL loads like a swing-open revolver and can fire HE, smoke, gas, illumination, and anti-riot 40mm rounds. Photo: Armscor



MAC ATTACK

Poor Boy's SMG has Indigestion

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

COWBOYS nailed villains and fence posts with the Colt .45 Peacemaker. FBI agents will forever be connected to Colonel Thompson's submachine gun. And, although Hollywood heroes have destroyed evil from *McQ* through the *Raid on Entebbe* with the MAC 10, in the real world, such as the streets of Miami, it rests today in \$500 alligator briefcases next to bags of cocaine and dirty money. The poor boy's submachine gun refuses to die.

Gordon B. Ingram has been designing submachine guns since shortly after World War II. At that time the M3/A1 Grease Gun was the standard issue U.S. SMG. Allowing for a possible M4, Ingram started his design nomenclature at M5, and came up with a thoroughly conventional weapon with a wooden buttstock, tubular receiver and barrel casing and adapted to the Reising 12-round magazine. It was never put in production.

The Model 6 — in external configuration more than a little like the Thompson — was manufactured by the Police Ordnance Company of Los Angeles and was purchased by the Cuban Navy (Batista regime), the Peruvian Army and the U.S. Constabulary in Puerto Rico. A prototype Model 7 was developed, identical to the M6, except that it fired from the closed-bolt position. Another modified version of the M6, called the M8, was produced in very small numbers in Thailand in 1954. Ingram again modified the M6 in

1959, adding a retractable M3-type stock and other improvements and calling it the Model 9. Ingram Model 6 submachine guns are still occasionally seen in U.S. collector circles. They sell for \$600 to \$800.

Ingram began work on the M10 in 1964. The first prototype was chambered for the 9mm Parabellum cartridge and used Sten magazines. In 1966 the U.S. Army obtained prototype number two and tests were conducted at Frankford Arsenal. While on his way to Vietnam to demonstrate counterinsurgency weapons manufactured by his firm, the Sionics Company, Mitchell L. Werbell III contacted Ingram to obtain M10 9mm number three and a .45 ACP version with sound suppressor. Shortly thereafter, Sionics obtained the manufacturing rights to both the M10 and the new M11, chambered for the .380 ACP cartridge. Ingram became chief engineer at Sionics in 1969. Early guns are marked with the plant's location at that time, Powder Springs, Ga. A very few MAC M11s escaped from this factory marked "9MM AUTO" (for 9mm Kurz = .380 ACP) and into the hands of collectors. Most MAC M11 lower receiver bodies were altered by a shallow mill cut over the "9MM" and restamped ".380."

In 1970 a group of New York investors obtained controlling interest and moved the manufacturing facility to Marietta, Ga. The company was renamed "Military Armament

Corporation" (MAC) and both Werbell and Ingram were shunted aside. The MAC M10 was hyped as the replacement for the U.S. Government's Colt M1911A1 .45 ACP pistol. This was not to be. Thank God.

Without Werbell to tout the weapon by firing suppressed versions into phone books in the offices of Manhattan investment-banking firms, MAC declared bankruptcy under Chapter 11 receivership in 1975. In 1976 the inventory was auctioned off to pay corporate debts. It included 2,500 M10/9mm SMGs, 6,400 M10/.45 ACP SMGs, 175 M11/.380 ACP SMGs, 1,000 M10/9mm suppressors, 875 M10/.45 ACP suppressors and 50 M11/.380 ACP suppressors. In the late 1970s so-called "pre-auction" MAC M10 submachine guns in both 9mm Parabellum and .45 ACP could be purchased from Class 3 dealers for about \$85, having been sold at the auction for less than \$20 each.

By 1978 the MAC was back in production by RPB Industries, Inc. of Atlanta, Ga. While M10 and M11 submachine guns were manufactured, RPB focused on the domestic market and great emphasis was placed on semiautomatic-only pistol and carbine versions. Conversion to full-auto proved simple and became popular with drug pushers and pimps from Florida to California. The BATF shut down the RPB operation several years ago.

There was another auction. Now



Class 3 dealers, their "expertise" purchased each year with a \$200 license fee, hawk "pre-auction" RPBs at local gun shows for \$400 to \$600. Hilarious.

Leatherwood Enterprises, now operating under the name Military Armament Corp. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Drawer 111, Lingleville, TX 76461-0111) currently manufactures a semiauto-only .45 ACP/9mm Parabellum pistol version called the MAC M10A1. They filed for bankruptcy a year ago. Modified versions of the MAC M10/M11 are now manufactured by S.W.D., Inc. (Dept. SOF, 1872 Marietta Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30318). One of them, the M11/9mm submachine gun, is the subject of this column's test and evaluation.

More than 20 countries purchased the original MAC M10/11 Ingram-series submachine gun, mostly in very small quantities (50 to 1,000), for use by special operations groups

Firing the MAC M11, caliber .380 ACP. Five- to six-round bursts are the norm due to the high cyclic rate — over 1,200 rpm.

and assassination teams. Among them were: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. What exactly were they buying?

Blowback operated, both the M10 and M11 fire from the open-bolt position. Their single most salient feature is compactness, achieved by means of a rectangular telescoping bolt copied from the early Czech designs. With the stock removed, the M10's overall length is 10.5 inches and that of the M11 but 8.75 inches. The barrel lengths are 5.75 and 5.06 inches, respectively, and all barrels are externally threaded to accept the Sionics-type sound suppressor. The M10 weighs 6.25 pounds, empty, and

the M11 only 3.5 pounds.

The wrap-around bolt's firing pin and face are located far back to permit the greater part of the bolt body to envelop the barrel. A spring-loaded extractor is held in place with a roll-pin — impossible to remove without a punch which usually destroys the pin in the attempt.

The recoil spring and guide rod travel through a hole drilled the length of the bolt body. And guess what? They're retained by yet another roll-pin. The ejector, a steel rod, moves through a parallel channel and projects through the bolt face during the recoil momentum. Both the ejector and guide rod are attached to a steel backplate covered by a synthetic rubber buffer.

Protruding through the top of the upper receiver is the retracting knob. Like the Thompson M1921/28 series, a U-notch has been cut in the cocking knob to clear the line of

sight. When the bolt is closed, the retracting knob can be rotated 90 degrees in either direction to lock the bolt. Don't ask me why. I've been told this feature prevents an opponent who has grabbed the weapon from shooting you. But, such a scenario is little more than a novice's fevered nightmare.

Both upper and lower receivers are fabricated from stamped sheet metal and are substantial. They are phosphate finished. The barrels are permanently attached to the upper receiver body by another roll-pin.

A hand strap is attached to the barrel just in front of the upper receiver by a pivoting sling swivel. It's supposed to counter muzzle climb and prevent the support hand from sliding forward in front of the muzzle. In use, it's noisy and almost impossible to insert two fingers into the strap's loop under the time constraints of a stress environment. In any event, the strap is usually disregarded, as these weapons are commonly fired with the Sionics sound suppressor in place, which serves as a forearm when equipped with a neoprene or Nomex cover.

The front sight's protective ears, a single U-shaped pressing, is welded to the upper receiver. On the MAC M10, the front sight itself is nothing more than a bent strip from the bottom of the protective ears' stamping. A bit more elaborate on the MAC M11, the round front sight post is adjustable for elevation zero by 180-degree movements and held in place by an allen-head screw.

The upper and lower receivers are connected by a pin at the muzzle end. Nothing prevents this pin from falling out on the MAC M10. A spring-loaded receiver pin catch was added to the MAC M11 to prevent this misfortune. The lower receiver body contains the serial number (hence the unrestricted sale of MAC upper receivers), trigger mechanism and magazine well. A hole in the extended portion of the backplate (welded to the end of the lower receiver) serves as a rear sight aperture.

The magazine well is located in the pistol grip and the housing is welded to the lower receiver. While this provides a solid support for the magazines and permits them to be changed rapidly, even in the dark, it requires a grip-to-frame angle of 90 degrees, far more awkward than that found on submachine guns like the Sterling or Beretta Model 12S. A plastic grip extender is screwed to the rear of the magazine well. The magazine catch release is located in an undesirable position at the bottom of the pistol grip.



ABOVE: MAC M11, caliber .380 ACP magazine loader with Cobray logo.

After analysis by high-speed photography it was determined that the feed angle on the MAC M10/9mm was incorrect. The angle was altered on the MAC M10/.45 ACP, but production proceeded on the 9mm version without modification and this model is subject to unreliable feeding. *Caveat emptor.* The feed ramp on

BELOW: Trigger mechanism of the M11/9mm submachine gun.



BELOW: S.W.D., Inc. M11/9mm submachine gun field-stripped.



MAC M10

Caliber.....	9mm Parabellum
Operation.....	Unlocked blowback. Fires from the open-bolt position. Selective-fire: semiautomatic or full-auto modes.
Cyclic rate.....	1,200 rpm
Feed mechanism....	32-rd. staggered box; single-position feed. Zytel construction.
Weight, empty.....	3.75 pounds
Length	
stock retracted....	13 inches
stock extended....	23 inches
Barrel length.....	5.25 inches
Sights.....	Protected, fixed front post; fixed aperture rear set for 100 meters.
Accessories.....	Complete with cleaning rod, wrist strap, magazine loader and one magazine.
Price.....	\$218 to Class 3 dealers
Manufacturer.....	S.W.D., Inc., Dept. SOF, 1872 Marietta Blvd., Atlanta, GA 30318.

these submachine guns is nothing more than a bent piece of sheet metal spot welded to the lower receiver.

The MAC M10/.45 ACP uses the M3 Grease Gun magazine, which is altered to mate with the three points of contact in the magazine well. This single-position-feed, 30-round magazine is, without doubt, one of the worst submachine gun magazines ever designed and produced. But it was cheap and available. The MAC M10/9mm accepts a slightly modified Walther MPL 32-round magazine. This wedge-shaped, two-position feed magazine is excellent. MAC M11/.380 ACP magazines are of two capacities: 16 and 32 rounds, both single-position feed. A standard M3 magazine loader (stamped as were the magazines with the Cobray logo) was available for the MAC M10/.45 ACP. A scaled-down version was made for the MAC M11/.380 ACP.

The trigger mechanism is housed within the lower receiver. The trigger itself is L-shaped. When the trigger is pulled with the selector set to full-auto, the long portion of the L, an extension bar, drops and a spring-loaded catch mounted to the front of the bar holds down the sear until the trigger is released. When the selector is set to semiautomatic, a shaft, connected to the selector, rotates and cams back a tripping lever under the sear catch. The head of the tripping lever lifts up at the same time. As the bolt moves forward it strikes against the tripping head and drives it forward and down. The end under the sear catch forces the catch back off the sear and the sear rises to stop the bolt. The trigger must be released to move the sear catch back over the sear. The safety moves a bar under the sear to prevent its rotation downward.

The selector lever is located in an inept position on the left side of the lower receiver, forward of the trigger guard, and can be rotated continuously in either direction. On the MAC M10 the lever is detented in two positions: "SEMI" and "FULL." There are no detents on the MAC M11 and you must visually inspect the selector lever's position. The safety is located on the right side of the lower receiver directly above the trigger guard and the rearmost position is marked "SAFE." Slide the catch forward to "FIRE."

One could live with all of the MAC's minor idiosyncrasies were it not for its major flaw: The cyclic rate in every version is close to 1,200 rpm. Submachine guns should ideally fire between 500-600 rpm. A bullet hose serves only the ends defined by movie producers. Only the most highly trained operators can muster the



ABOVE: Firing the S.W.D., Inc. M11/9mm submachine gun, caliber 9mm Parabellum.

RIGHT: MAC lineup: Original Ingram's M10 in .45 ACP (top), S.W.D., Inc. M11 in 9mm Parabellum (center) and a rare example of the M11 in .380 ACP (bottom). Note that it is stamped 9MM AUTO rather than .380 ACP.

BELOW: Capt. Robert K. Brown demonstrates the MAC M10 to reporters. Photo: Robert K. Brown collection



ABOVE: Robert Brown wears the military holster for the MAC. In the early '60s there was talk of making the MAC the official military side arm. Photo: Robert K. Brown collection



trigger discipline required to produce consistent two-to-three-shot bursts with a MAC submachine gun. Hit probability decreases as the length of the burst increases.

The new M11/9mm submachine gun is the same breed of cat with some different spots. At 11.25 inches without the stock, it's actually 3/4-inch longer than the MAC M10. But, at 3.75 pounds, empty, it's only 1/4-pound heavier than a MAC M11. The maximum width is 1.36 inches, identical to that of the MAC M11.

There are other differences. The firing pin is no longer milled into the bolt face, except on the earliest specimens. A sheet-metal stamping, it now rocks back and forth on a steel pin and can be easily removed. While the cocking knob can no longer be rotated 90 degrees to lock the action in the closed position, doing so with the bolt retracted, just past fully cocked, will lock the action in the open position. There is now a receiver pin lock within a hollow receiver pin — in the manner of the M60's top

Continued on page 108

Swift Boats Off Central America

HONDURAN NAVY

WHEN you land at Amapala Naval Base on Tiger Island you are struck with two things: tremendous thirst and the feeling that you have been there before. Thirst never leaves, but deja vu dwindles: after a while you realize that you're on a dead volcano and everyone speaks Spanish ... this can't be Parris Island.

In my many journeys to Central America I've rarely been impressed by military bases

Text & Photos by Francisco Carberry

A sailor mans the .50-cal. as a Piranha cuts the water off the coast of Honduras.



or units. I find a lot to criticize about Central American armed forces. Sloppiness, poor or non-existent discipline, low or no morale, piss-poor training and a general lack of professionalism are the norm.

Not so at Amapala Naval Base, the home of *Esquadron Naval del Pacifico*, the Honduran Pacific Naval Squadron. I started to feel the shock upon boarding the 45-foot patrol boat that ferried me to the island. I noticed, right away, that the young Honduran sailors and marines on the boat were squared away. Hair was close-cut, uniforms were neat, boots were shined, all guns were oiled (an almost unheard-of event in Central America) and the gunners manning the three .50-caliber Browning machine guns were on alert. As we slowly made our way toward the island I spied my first Piranha. The two-ton gray 25-foot Boston whaler blasted across our port quarter at 40 knots and was soon out of sight. I was sorely tempted to whip out a camera, but reconsidered since I was a guest and had not yet been given any ground rules. (I later learned that the only ground rules laid down for me were that I wear a life vest at all times on patrol.)

For the last two years I had read in the daily fish wrappers that Tiger Island was a top secret base that housed three platoons of U.S. Marines guarding a giant CIA radar installation. But at that point I didn't want to upset anyone by catching spooks in action. I never did see any spooks, nor did I see evidence of any supersophisticated radar installation. In fact, the only radar I saw was the 16-mile-range radar on the Piranhas and the radar out on the end of the dock.

Amapala has been used as a naval base for decades, but since the Sandinistas increased their aid to the Marxist Salvadoran guerrillas in about 1980, the base has become more important. It controls a strategic corner of the Gulf of Fonseca which has become increasingly important in the fight to interdict weapons and supplies going to the Salvadoran guerrillas. In the early '80s it was no hard task for the Sandinistas to resupply the guerrillas by running large *pan-gas* (motorized dugout canoes) out of Potosi on the Nicaraguan Gulf coast and meet reception teams on the Salvadoran side. In those days there was little worry that the shipment would be intercepted.

All that soon changed. As guerrilla activity increased, so did the importance of Tiger Island. In 1983 construction of the Amapala Base began. The base was completed and dedicated in the summer of 1984. A naval contingent mans six *tiburones*, 60-foot aluminum fast-attack boats, each sporting a 20mm cannon, two .50-cal. machine guns and one trigger-fired 81mm mortar. Unfortunately the *tiburones* are restricted to areas where the water is deep enough for them to operate. They have to steer clear of the coastal areas — after all, there is no greater target than a grounded patrol boat.

A contingent of tough Honduran Marines provides base security, weapons training and a small assault force in the event that the Sandinistas should foolishly attempt to take



TOP: Crewmen check out the .50-cal. machine gun. This weapon serves in both the anti-aircraft and flat trajectory role.

ABOVE: A few practice rounds from a .30-cal. hit a deserted shoreline.

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any of the small islands that dot the Gulf.

When the Piranha concept was first developed, old, slow fishing boats were used, with little success. The favored gunrunning vessel, the *panga*, could actually outrun the fishing boats — if the fishing boat could even manage to spot them. Hand-hewn from large mahogany logs, long and narrow, a *panga* with a 35-hp outboard can zip along the Gulf carrying 15 to 20 armed men or close to a ton and a half of supplies at a speed of about 18-20 knots.

U.S. Navy SEAL teams aided the Honduran Navy in developing a system to thwart the communist gunrunners. Both boat development and training have been watched over by the SEALs. Today, the Piranhas have become one of the most successful Honduran military units. All enlisted men are volunteers and there is a long waiting list from other branches of the Honduran military to join the Piranhas. The Tiger Island base at Amapala is a recruit training base and enlistees must have one year of service in the regular navy before their application for the five-week Piranha course will be considered.

The course is exceptionally tough and the schedule leaves little time to relax. Reveille is at 0500, roll call at 0515 followed by one hour of PT. All troops must be clean-shaven, boots shined, at attention in the chow line at 0645. Classes start at 0730 and continue all day, with an hour for chow at 1200. From 1300 to 1645 more classes, and half of the recruits are posted to guard duty at night with the marines.

To complete the course Piranha recruits must demonstrate complete knowledge of all weapons used, seamanship, navigation (both coastal and celestial) and they must be prepared to tear down and reassemble in working order the engines and radios used. Along with this rigorous training a recruit is sent on many patrols, both day and night, and is expected to keep up with all class work. Upon graduation recruits receive a brass emblem and baseball cap emblazoned with the word, *Piraña*.

The course had been so successful that all naval officer candidates, upon graduation from officers' school, must take and pass the Piranha course before they can be posted to their regular duty station.

I had always been a fan of the Boston whaler . . . at moderate speeds. On my initial patrol that afternoon blasting through the rough water of the Gulf at speeds over 40 knots, it dawned on me what the executive officer had told me that afternoon about the need for a permanent orthopedic physician to be detailed to the base.

Looking like a bunch of drenched pirates, we tried to outrun a ferocious electrical storm. Try as we might, our helmsman, Lieutenant Arguetta, could not keep us from landing smack in the middle of the rolling seas and lightning strikes. Arguetta, 30, a mustang who enlisted in the regular army at 15, is typical of the boat captains who patrol the Gulf. He transferred into the marines five years after enlistment, made master sergeant and was selected for officers' school. With men like him at the helm of this small navy, the Hondurans have little to worry about.

The tough little loco seemed to enjoy alternately tunneling and flying through 10-foot seas. The rest of the crew — myself included — were not so gung ho as we were thrown from port to starboard, from bow to stern. I was holding on for dear life.

Screw the photographs.

"What plans do you have for tonight?" laughed Amapala Naval Base executive officer, naval Lieutenant Rolando Gonzalez. What plans could I have, except to meet with the bed offered in the officers' quarters? That was the only offer that I found impossible to resist. We were the last patrol boat to return to base and I was whipped, but Arguetta had duty that night and was scheduled for a pre-dawn patrol the following morning. Inflating my chest in the best *Soldier of Fortune* fashion, I lied: "I have no plans, do you have anything scheduled?"

Two hours later I was filled with regret. After an afternoon patrol that crisscrossed the Gulf, stopping and checking at least 15 pangas and getting the hell beat out of me by the fierce storm, I was

ready to hit the rack. Luckily, I faked it and told the base executive I was ready to go out on the night patrol. "After all," I added, "I can catch a snooze on the Piranha."

The executive, a fine man and excellent leader, looked at me with a smirk and said, "You may be a seasoned combat reporter, but tonight you are not going to close your eyes. You'll probably come closer to soiling your pants more than once out there in the dark." He was right.

At night all cats are gray: Moonless nights on the Gulf are spooky and everything appears gray and obscure. The drone of the two highly tuned 150-hp outboards anesthetizes; the slow turn of the 16-mile-range radar mesmerizes. But the crew never leave their stations. Guilt kept me awake.

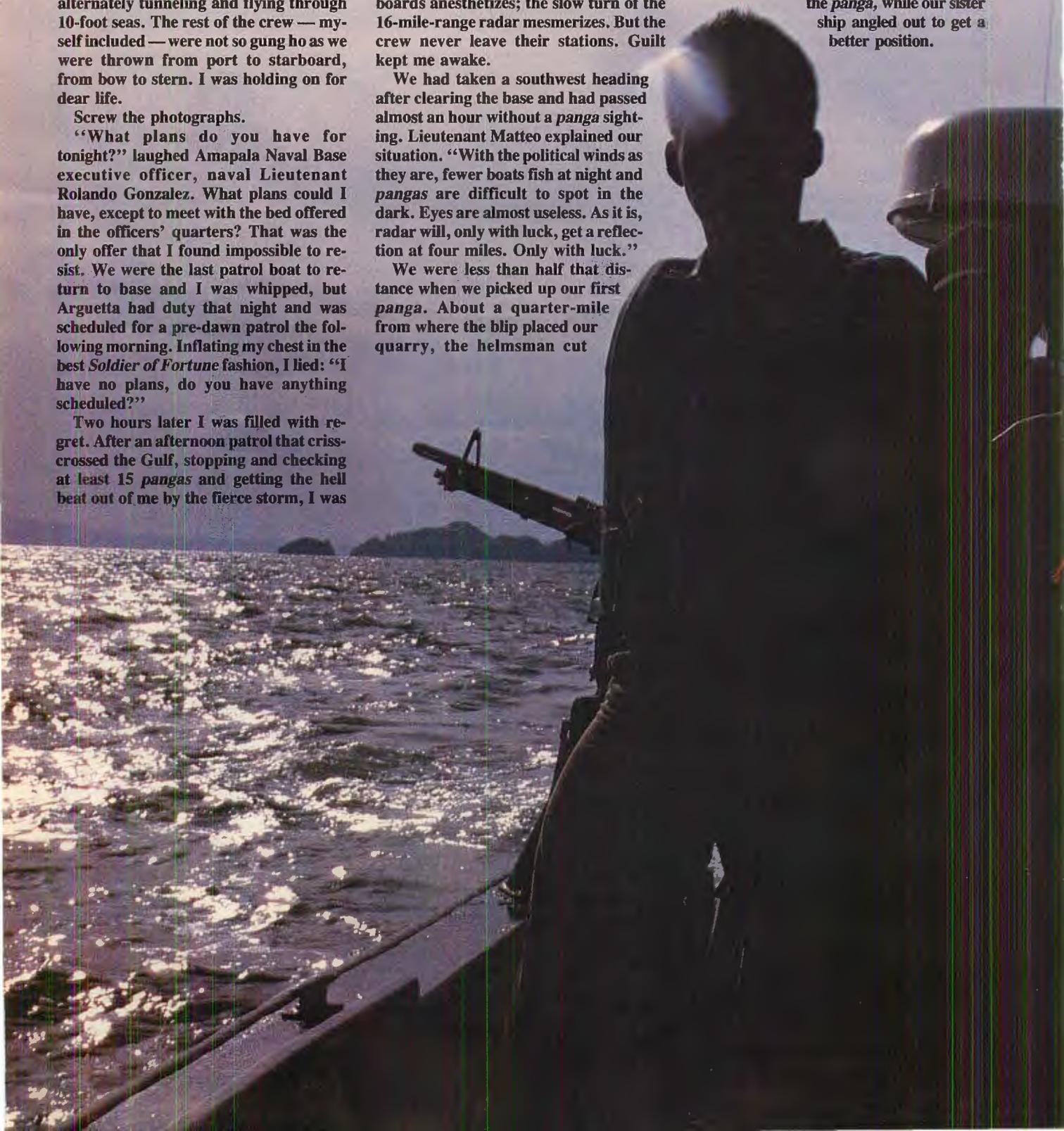
We had taken a southwest heading after clearing the base and had passed almost an hour without a panga sighting. Lieutenant Matteo explained our situation. "With the political winds as they are, fewer boats fish at night and pangas are difficult to spot in the dark. Eyes are almost useless. As it is, radar will, only with luck, get a reflection at four miles. Only with luck."

We were less than half that distance when we picked up our first panga. About a quarter-mile from where the blip placed our quarry, the helmsman cut

power and we glided through quiet waters. The lieutenant swung the hand-held spotlight in an arc and waited. Another arc and a small light appeared 200 yards forward. Five seconds later it was gone.

"Fósforos (wooden matches)," whispered the lieutenant and we eased slowly forward. As we stealthily approached the panga, I glanced to the side and felt my throat tighten. Out of the rain and gloom I spied a gray boat with a .50 on the bow. That .50 looked like it could easily have been targeting the fat gringo. I grabbed the lieutenant's arm and pulled, hard.

"Ours," he said, glancing at our ghostly sister Piranha. He returned all attention to the panga, while our sister ship angled out to get a better position.

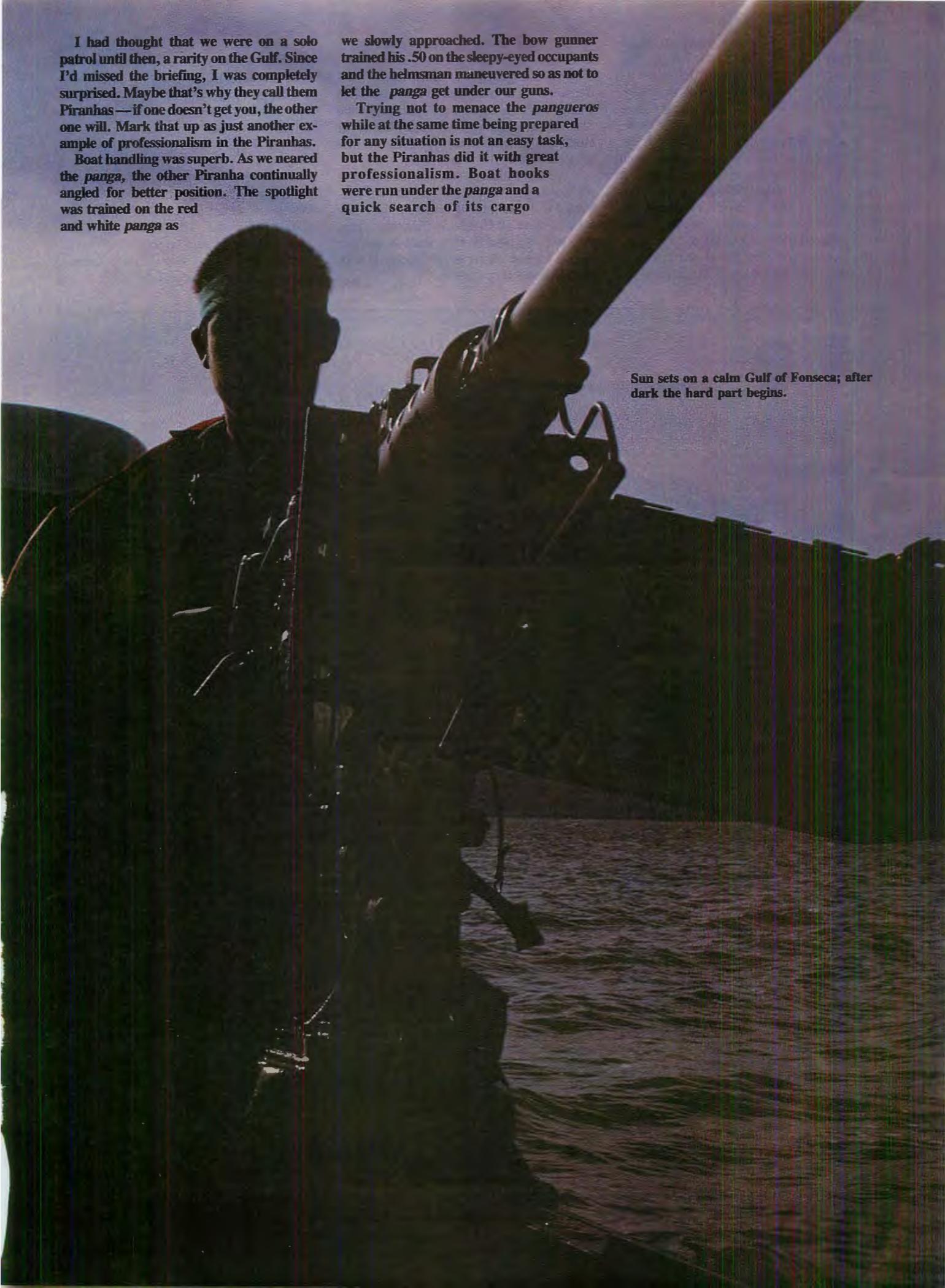


I had thought that we were on a solo patrol until then, a rarity on the Gulf. Since I'd missed the briefing, I was completely surprised. Maybe that's why they call them Piranhas—if one doesn't get you, the other one will. Mark that up as just another example of professionalism in the Piranhas.

Boat handling was superb. As we neared the *panga*, the other Piranha continually angled for better position. The spotlight was trained on the red and white *panga* as

we slowly approached. The bow gunner trained his .50 on the sleepy-eyed occupants and the helmsman maneuvered so as not to let the *panga* get under our guns.

Trying not to menace the *pangueros* while at the same time being prepared for any situation is not an easy task, but the Piranhas did it with great professionalism. Boat hooks were run under the *panga* and a quick search of its cargo



Sun sets on a calm Gulf of Fonseca; after dark the hard part begins.

proved that the *panga* was clean. A quick check of boat documents and IDs and we were off looking for our next intruder.

The second *panga* was also clean. It was boat number three — the boat with no name — that had me looking for the Preparation H.

I had heard the two-year-old story of the lone Piranha that had chased a fleeing *panga* at night. The Piranha easily ran it down, in fact overran it to the point that its bow gun was useless. The oversight had been rewarded with two magazines of AK bullets as two Sandinistas jumped up and let loose. The bow gunner was hit in the arm and shoulder. The starboard M60 gunner re-

sponded and made a pile of mahogany toothpicks out of the *panga*.

"We changed tactics since then," was the story I had been told. I had also been briefed about a large *panga* operated by the Sandinistas which was reportedly harassing Honduran fishermen, taking their catch and sometimes their lives and boats.

"We want them," said the executive at my briefing. "We are not sure of their motives for doing this. It could be that they want to drive all Honduran fishermen from the Gulf. It could be they want to use our *pangas* for operations as the Cubans do with Florida boats they capture."

Since the new tactic of using tandem Piranhas to patrol the Gulf had been put to use, the Sandinistas had only risen to the challenge once, and that was 18 months ago. We had the radar on eight-mile range for a while, checking to see if the Sandinistas would come out. The last time they did, they lost.

The lieutenant remembered the incident well. Two Piranhas were jumped by two larger and better-armed aluminum Sandinista patrol boats. The Piranhas held their own until they could be joined by two 65-foot *tiburones*. The result? One Sandinista patrol boat was sunk and the other limped



THE FÓSFORO FISHING FLEET

The word *panga* appears in few dictionaries. Modern high-tech words, such as sat-navigation, radar, side-scanning sonar and depth sounders have a much higher chance of being included. But few people aside from those who make their living with the *panga* or U.S. intelligence agents who curse the wooden stone-age relics are aware that these prehistoric vessels play one of the most important roles in the Central American conflict.

Their grandfathers made them and the grandfathers of their grandfathers made them. *Pangas* were used centuries before Columbus arrived and there is no reason why these simple, efficient boats will not continue to be used by peasant fishermen until something better comes along. The only modern additions that have changed these hand-hewn mahogany logs is a small outboard motor. With a lot of sweat, a 40-foot mahogany log will make a seaworthy fishing craft or, as is often the case in Central America, a shallow-draft 40-foot gunrunner.

The bigger the tree, the bigger the *panga*. Inshore *pangas* that ply the many bays and estuaries are usually propelled by small sails and back muscles that man the oars. *Pangas* that venture farther out into the Gulf are usually powered by 15-hp Yamaha outboard motors.

Pangueros carry no charts as they

A fisherman explains why he didn't acknowledge a warning call — he was afraid.

usually know that a heading toward a certain star will carry them close to their village. A box of wooden matches acts as an ID beacon. The light produced by a single wooden match can be seen up to 15 miles on a dark night. They also use them to keep from being blown out of the water by suspicious Piranhas on patrol. I saw that system in operation one night before I left Tiger Island.

Darkness had settled over the harbor and a cool breeze sprang up. I sat on the veranda sipping Cokes and taking in the night air. The bustling activity of a prepatrol rundown kept the crew of a Piranha busy in the distance. As the guns were mounted on the boats and adjusted, the base commander explained to me how they tested out the guns to see if they were accurate. Usually, the headspacing on the guns is fine-tuned in the armory. If there is no time for this a small deserted island near the base serves as the target while the gunners adjust the guns to make them sing. The whole point is to keep the noise down so as not to scare the fishermen or alert the Sandinistas that the Piranhas are about to sail forth.

The base commander seemed to forget the procedure as he pulled a Browning .380 out of his shoulder holster. He was unhappy with the Browning, which held 13 rounds of .380 and

was too bulky to conceal when he went to town. In his other hand was a new Colt .380 which he was fondly caressing.

"It's slim, it fits in the palm of my hand and it doesn't bulge clothes. I'm going to give it a try." Turning to the executive who never went anywhere without his hand-held radio, he ordered all posts alerted that he was going to test-fire the Colt. Five minutes later we saw the commander saunter down to the edge of the main dock, raise his right hand and crank off seven rounds. Even from a distance of 200 yards and in dim light we could see a smile envelop the commander's face. The Colt was just what he wanted.

Some sleepy marines hadn't gotten the word — they dashed from the barracks carrying cartridge belts and M16s to man defense positions before they were told to go back to bed. Within a few minutes we saw the other result of the commander's shooting spree.

Lieutenant Gonzalez jumped up and looked out over the bay. "They can't be that stupid. We've been expecting the Sandinistas to hit us; but look at all those signal lights in the Gulf — we'll tear those assholes up. Barkeep, give me a beer," said the executive as he grabbed his radio and ordered the standby Piranhas out to investigate the flickering signal matches that played over the bay.

"Do you know what those signal lights are?" he mirthfully asked. "When the *pangueros* heard the commander firing the .380 they got scared and are out there burning up all their matches. I'll bet you some of them will go over the side and hang onto the nets until daybreak."

The executive ordered the extra patrols to load up with cases of Coke and candy bars to give out to the scared fishermen. "They are our eyes and ears, they give us information and we help them in storms and when they break down. We need each other."

As an afterthought before the Piranhas moved out to reassure the frightened fishermen, the exec rustled up three cases of wooden matches to distribute to the *pangueros*.



Shotgun-toting sailor surveys the placid waters of the Gulf of Fonseca.

back to port, dragging its tail and its bloody crew.

"I wish they would get some balls and come out again," sneered the lieutenant as he moved over to the helm and dropped the radar back from eight miles to the four-mile range. A big target glowed on the screen about three miles dead ahead. The reflection was good, better than most.

"It doesn't look like a *panga*," said the boat captain. "We must be alert."

At 100 yards the lieutenant was signaling with the lamp. At 30 yards there was still no response, but we finally saw the dim outline of a large *panga*. A little closer and we could see that the *panga* was at anchor. It looked strange. Larger than most other boats and with a 35-hp Johnson instead of the usual 15-hp Yamaha pulled up over the stern, this boat had no paint, no name and no visible crew. While the gunners trained their weapons on the bobbing *panga* the lieutenant continued to splash light over the boat. His calls to the unseen crew of the *panga* went unanswered.

"Back off," was the only break in radio silence that night as the lieutenant slid the helmsman over, grabbed the wheel and threw the throttles forward.

We jumped into the air and did a 360 around the anchored *panga*, throwing it high atop our wake. The *panga* rolled and almost tipped over, but still no movement. We again slowly approached.

"Lopez, I'm going in by the bow," the lieutenant said to the .50 bow gunner. "If there is any suspicious movement, blast away."

We were within 10 feet of the nameless *panga* and had just stopped when we saw a body wrapped in clear plastic move a little. As the head slowly raised the lieutenant shouted, "Get up, stand up, hands up, hands up." At the second "hands up," Roberto Rodriguez, 15, was on his feet shivering, either from fear or the cool night—but most likely from the .50 staring down his throat. In the near end of the boat which

Continued on page 113



REBELLION IN BURMA

The Unknown War Drags On

Text & Photos by Mark Johnson

MY Karen guide, Charlie, briefed me about my upcoming interview with Colonel Htin Mao, the commander of the Karen National Liberation Army's (KNLA) 7th Brigade.

"Colonel Htin Mao very hated by enemy. The Burmese put their best troops against him. They offer much money for his death. When he go on operations they always try to trap and kill him, but they cannot do. The Burmese are very afraid of the 7th Brigade."

The KNLA, an anti-communist guerrilla force of the Karen ethnic minority in eastern Burma, has fought for autonomy against the socialist Burmese for 37 years. In 1983 the military dictator of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, Ne Win, ordered his army to "destroy the Karen at all costs," yet despite an unprecedented offensive involving two divisions of Burmese troops the Karen fight on. The Burmese Army penetrated the Karen heartland in 1984, razed their villages, burned their sawmills and closed the smuggling routes that finance the Karen war effort. The Karen claim that over 3,000 Burmese troops have been killed in the two-year offensive, but the Burmese Army keeps attacking aggressively. The Karen still hold

most of their Thai border strongholds and have guerrilla columns attacking the Burmese supply lines, but dwindling supplies make for long odds in this uneven war.

While I waited in the shade for the interview, the sound of fighting to the west increased in intensity. A cacophony of weapons ripped the still evening air — a short burst of heavy machine guns, the quick successive explosions of recoilless rifles, the



ABOVE: Karen .50-cal. chatters away at a Burmese position.

LEFT: Karen trooper scans a Burmese trenchline. The 75mm recoilless helps keep them under control.

RIGHT: Burmese dawn lights a Karen column moving out to reinforce a position on the front.

crump of mortars, and the staccato of small-arms fire. I glanced over at some Karen soldiers cooking supper on low fires.

No sweat, no one seemed in the least bit concerned. Taking my cue from the locals I propped my pack against a large tree, stretched out to rest my tired legs, fired up a Karen cigar and thought back on the trek from Thailand that brought me here.

I had come across the border after linking up with my guide in a Thai border town. The first leg was traveled in a Toyota pickup barreling down a Thai highway at 115kph. Leaving the blacktop after 95 clicks of white-knuckle driving, we bounced along a dirt track stopping to overload the pickup with 30 passengers



headed for a Karen refugee camp. Straddling the gearshift, holding a Karen infant in my lap, I watched the driver try to coax more power from the five-speed diesel.

At the end of the track we brushed the dust out of our hair, strapped on our packs and humped to a Karen refugee camp set in the bush near the border. But there was no time to rest — we were off at first light.

We followed a narrow trail flanking a rushing stream until we came to the Burmese border. Late that afternoon, serenaded by chirping insects, we forded the Moei River to a land the world calls Burma, but the Karen people call Katoolie.

Charlie cut in on my thoughts. "Colonel Mao will see you now." I left my boots at the step and entered the 7th Brigade TOC; a bamboo and leaf hootch, shading a deep bunker — and sat cross-legged on a split bamboo floor facing three KNLA officers. They watched me impassively as Charlie, speaking Karen, introduced me. As my eyes adjusted to the dark interior, I noted several RPGs and AKs propped up against the wall. Colonel Mao leaned forward and expertly spit a red stream of betel nut juice through a crack in the floor.

Speaking excellent English, he broke the silence. "So, you want to take pictures of Karen soldiers fighting on the front lines. We will let you walk point so you can get many good pictures."

The joke wasn't lost on anyone — me included. "My pictures will be no good if a bullet hits my camera." Two short bursts from a heavy machine gun in the distance accented my gallows humor.

"Point Five," noted Charlie unemotionally. Two quick explosions followed. "Seventy-five recoiless." Still no emotion, only the cold reasoning of someone used to combat.

The Colonel's adjutant, a one-eyed officer with a deep scar gouging his face from his right eye diagonally across his forehead to his hairline, spoke rapid Karen into a Japanese CB radio, its antenna fastened to a bamboo rafter. The distant crump of mortars played in the distance.

"Eighty-ones." Again the unemotional identification.

Another burst from the HMG.

The sound of fighting subsided. Colonel Mao launched another stream of betel nut juice through the crack in the floor and returned his attention to me.

"I was hoping you would bring me 1,000 81mm mortars. With one thousand 81s and five hundred 60s I could drive the Burmese back across the Salween. You cannot fight a war





with magazines."

I explained to him that if Americans knew of his struggle many would offer support, perhaps even financial support. "The Karen are mostly Christian, staunchly anti-communist, and do not allow opium. You fight against the socialist dictator Ne Win. You would get much sympathy in America if this was known."

The colonel grabbed a kerosene lamp made from a 60mm mortar with 120mm fins and lit the wick jutting out the top with his cigarette lighter in the fading light. A giant praying mantis danced frantically around the light.

"We like your sympathy. We like your mortars more." His reasoning was unassailable.

The next morning, after a meal of rice and hot tea, we linked up with a Karen column headed west. In dawn coolness we set off at a brisk pace — down through bamboo thickets and out of the forest, we crossed a low ridge to a fortified trench line. There had been plenty of action here. Large hardwood trees were splintered to toothpicks, their limbs stripped off by Burmese artillery. Charlie explained that this part of the Karen line was taken by the Burmese. Later they lost it in a fierce Karen counterattack.

The trail descended into a draw where more signs of the battle's fierceness were in evidence; punji

ABOVE LEFT: Many Karen youth have known nothing but war. To this soldier, it's just a way of life.

ABOVE CENTER: U.S. M79 40mm grenade launchers add punch to the Karen's small-arms arsenal.

ABOVE RIGHT: Although only 11 years old, this young Karen boy knows how to handle an M2 carbine.

BELOW: These young Karen train for the day when they too will fight the Burmese.



stakes, fuses, shell casings, old mine placements and mortar pits.

Onward toward the battle. The sounds of an HMG and explosions from a recoilless got closer in the heavy air. The dry-season heat of another Burmese afternoon drained our energy as we climbed up a rugged knife-edge ridge. My clothes were soaked; large drops of sweat rolled off my face and splashed onto the dusty trail. Drowning in the heavy heat I grabbed saplings to pull myself up the steep trail through parched underbrush. Topping the ridge the trail finally leveled off. Charlie pointed to a caved-in trench in the Burmese fortifications.

"We bury a Burmese captain here. Seven Burmese soldiers die when we take this hill. Here is our sign of victory." He pointed to 7.62 brass casings hammered into a shrapnel-gouged tree to form the Burmese symbols for nineteen. "The Karen 19th Battalion took this hill," he explained.

Dropping out of the column I unslung my camera and mechanically clicked some photos. My shaking hand seemed unable to steady the camera. It was more than just the heat. I had become a casualty of that inescapable enemy of everyone — the malaria mosquito. My heat-fogged brain barely functioning, I followed the

column past Karen mortar pits where outgoing 81mm rounds kept Burmese heads behind cover on the next ridge.

We stopped at the old Burmese TOC overrun by the Karen several days earlier. It was about time. Inside the heavily fortified bunker the commander of the 19th KNLA Battalion — with Charlie translating — told of the previous week's attack on Burmese positions. He claimed that his forces overran the Burmese positions killing over 30 Burmese troops. But the Karen had to withdraw from the ridge because they didn't have enough men or ammo to hold it. He said the Karen must defend these fixed positions to protect the other strongholds, but preferred to fight using guerrilla tactics.

After a short rest we left the bunker and walked in the trenches along a scarred ridge. Everyone was keeping their heads down.

"The Burmese have very good snipers," Charlie cautioned. The powerful explosion of an outgoing recoilless came from up the trench line, the power and shock of the nearby explosion making me flinch and drop to my knees in the dusty trench. The thought of cold beer and bikini-clad European women at the Thai beach I had left two weeks before flashed in my mind. Why did I ever leave? No time for hindsight now.

Cautiously, we approached the recoilless. The Karen gunner peered at the Burmese position with binoculars. He proudly pointed out that he had just destroyed a Burmese bunker where several enemy soldiers had taken shelter. Charlie looked at me with a concerned expression.

"The Burmese will be mad and will attack soon. We must leave quickly." I snapped some quick photos, nervously leaving the relative safety of the trench for a better shot, and cursing the streams of sweat that cut through the clay dust on my face and fogged my viewfinder.

Charlie impatiently signaled for me to follow; I was his responsibility and he wanted me off the exposed ridge. But keeping my head down and following my agile guide was hardly an easy task. Karen trenches were not designed for six-foot foreign correspondents with backpacks. My pack hung up on roots and pulled loose dirt into the trench. My camera, slung around my neck, was constantly in the way. Hell, what's the hurry? We just got here. Suddenly I got my answer.

As if electrified, several Karen troopers dived for shelter. Following their example, Charlie, myself and a young trooper hunkered down in the trench trying to get as low as



ABOVE: Karen artillery is made up mostly of mortars. This young trooper prepares to drop a round down the tube.

BELOW: Young Karen soldier poses with an RPG-2.



possible. I didn't hear them leave the tubes, but seconds later half a dozen incoming mortar rounds bracketed the ridge sending hot steel scything over our heads. We checked for casualties and then it was *di di mao* (unass quickly).

Retracing our steps, we left the trenchline along the back side of the ridge and followed a faint trail, slipping and sliding down a leaf-covered slope to an old wash overgrown with giant bamboo. Clouds of mosquitos swarmed up from stagnant pools as we climbed out of the bamboo into another zigzag trenchline which

followed yet another ridge where two Browning .50-cals were proudly displayed by the Karen defenders.

I really felt bad now — chills dashed up and down my spine and I puked breakfast in the dirt. Charlie pegged it immediately.

"No problem, only malaria. It will pass. Malaria is a Karen disease. For the Karen no problem. For the Burmese it is a big problem."

"I am not Karen," I reminded him. "Let's get the hell out of here."

We walked half a klick behind the lines and bedded down near a Karen mortar placement. It was a long night. Delirious with high fever, wracked by intermittent chills, my bones constantly aching, it was impossible to sleep. The next day felt like a hangover from a binge with Thailand's Mekong Whiskey, but at least my fever had fled. A Karen medic gave me some pills for the malaria.

As I walked away from the fighting toward the Thai border, I found that I was disappointed that the stay wasn't longer, yet thankful that I was still able to leave. In five days I would be in Chiang Mai drinking cold beer. But the Karen soldiers will continue their 37-year war with the Burmese.

After two days of trekking we returned to a refugee camp inside Thailand where the camp leader gave me a sendoff supper. He claimed that Karen refugees who fled Burma constantly tell of brutal concentration camps where they are terrorized by the Burmese political police. He said many are worked to death as porters for the Burmese Army, and others are used as human mine detectors.

"The Karen government must buy rice for our refugees in Thailand and buy weapons for our soldiers to fight the Burmese. The Burmese have many soldiers and many weapons. Ne Win begs for aid from everybody. He receives hundreds of millions of dollars from many foreign countries. We fight the Burmese with no outside help."

He paused to light a cheroot with the kerosene lamp. The light reflected off a poster of Jesus prominently located on the wall behind him.

"This is one of the problems with being a minority," I remarked. "The Burmese majority has the power to oppress you."

"A minority?" He sounded incredulous. "The Karen with God are a majority."

Maybe so, but if they don't get some help soon — divine or otherwise — the situation will become grim. But don't write off the Karen yet. They have fought for their freedom for 37 years and are not about to quit. The outcome remains to be seen. ☘

.44 SPECIAL BACK-UP

Bulldog Barks and Bites

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

PPOTENT, reliable, light, small and concealable: that spells back-up gun. It will be carried often and — contrary to the opinions of many — must be practiced with frequently to maximize hit probability. There are any number of small, relatively lightweight handguns on the market. Some of them are reliable. But few possess adequate stopping power since reduced muzzle energy is the usual price for compactness.

Then, can we have it all?

I think so. Charter Arms Corp. (Dept. SOF, 430 Sniffens Lane, Stratford, CT 06497) has a good start on the proper makings with their well-known .44 Special Bulldog revolver. Its five-shot cylinder rotates (to the right in the Colt manner) in a frame of strong chrome-moly steel. There is no side-plate. That's fine. We'll take all the structural support we can get in a light revolver to absorb the pounding of the .44 Special cartridge.

Only the trigger guard is fabricated from an aluminum alloy. A coil-type mainspring provides maximum strength and longevity, but under no circumstances should it be chopped by an amateur. An almost unbreakable beryllium copper firing pin can be dry-fired into infinity.

When the hammer is cocked, firing either single- or double-action, a small steel bar moves up between the firing pin and the hammer. Continued pressure on the trigger holds this

ABOVE RIGHT: Felt recoil on the .44 Special Bulldog is not excessive considering its small size.

RIGHT: Chopped and honed Bulldog in Galco International's Model 42A ankle holster.

FAR RIGHT: Modified Charter Arms .44 Special Bulldog now sports 1¾-inch barrel, factory-bobbed hammer, small walnut grip panels and Tyler T-grip.



BULLDOG SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber.....	.44 Special
Model.....	344251PB
Operation.....	Five-shot revolver. Single- and double-action. Internal transfer bar safety; beryllium copper firing pin; bobbed hammer.
Weight, empty.....	19 oz. (modified to 17 oz.)
Length, overall.....	Six inches (after modification)
Barrel length.....	2½-inch bull barrel (modified to 1¾ inches)
Stocks.....	Oversize checkered walnut standard; small uncheckered A17 grip panels with Charter Arms escutcheons \$10.50 extra.
Sights.....	Ramp front with fixed square notch rear
Finish.....	Blued
Price.....	\$210
Manufacturer.....	Charter Arms Corp., Dept. SOF, 430 Sniffens Lane, Stratford, CT 06497.



steel bar in its raised position. The falling hammer then strikes the steel bar, which in turn strikes the firing pin, discharging a cartridge. The bar is not raised unless the hammer is cocked and the trigger is pulled completely to the rear. If the finger is removed from the trigger while the hammer is falling forward, the bar will drop downward and ignition will not take place. Product liability lawsuits have forced transfer-bar safeties like this on almost all modern revolvers.

An even more compact version of the Bulldog has recently appeared that brings us yet another step closer to our goal. The original three-inch barrel has been replaced with a 2½-inch bull barrel. A fixed square-notch rear sight remains as before, but the front sight is now fully ramped and virtually snag-proof. The case-hardened hammer has been bobbed and left with five deep serrations to facilitate cocking for single-action firing. Called the Model 34425PB, its suggested list price is a modest \$210. We're close, but still a little short of the ideal.

Sitting around the cracker barrel sipping bourbon and branch water with Gunsite pistolero Mark Yuen, a final consensus was reached on the modifications required to optimize the Bulldog to make it the ultimate belly gun.

The "Chubby Checkers" grips had to go. They were replaced with Charter Arms A17 unchecked walnut grip panels for \$10.50. Complete with Charter Arms escutcheons, they approximate the configuration found on S&W's J-frame series. To this I added a cast aluminum, black anodized Tyler T-Grip (size No. 1) for \$6. Melvin Tyler (Dept. SOF, 1326 West Britton Road, Oklahoma City, OK 73114) has been making this fine little accessory ever since 1940 and it has improved the qualification scores of many thousands of police officers during the last 45 years.

All the "heavy metal" modifications were performed by one of the Southwest's premier pistolsmiths, Burke C. Hill Jr. The 2½-inch bull barrel was cut back to 1¾ inches (some experts insist a three-inch barrel is as easy to conceal as a two-inch: true only if it's carried on the waist). This work was done from the rear of the barrel. The muzzle crown remained unaltered and although the front sight was not moved, its ramp angle was changed and reserrated. After the barrel was rethreaded, the forcing cone angle was recut to maintain a cylinder-to-forcing cone gap of 0.005

Continued on page 111



**TABLE I — CHRONOGRAPH RESULTS:
.44 Special Ammunition**

Instrumentation: Oehler Model 33 Chronotach with Skyscreen III detectors positioned five feet from muzzle. Ambient temperature: 97 degrees. All readings in feet per second. Firearm: Charter Arms Bulldog with 1¾-inch barrel.

.44 Special Ammunition	Low Velocity	High Velocity	Extreme Spread	Average	Standard Deviation
Winchester 200-gr. Silvertip HP	634	678	44	659	13
Winchester-Western 246-gr. RN	608	622	14	616	4
Reload: Lyman 215-gr. SWCw/6.5-gr. Unique	617	665	48	636	14



Infantrymen take up back-deck positions as Delta Company breaks through the jungle.

SOF VIETNAM

“FIND THE BASTARDS THEN PILE ON”

Cav Rumbles in the Jungle

Text & Photos by Timothy D. Kerns

THE first volley of RPGs slammed into us. Rounds came blasting out of the bamboo to our front and my tank rocked violently as one round blasted into the ground beside the track. Another round, intended for my turret, ricocheted and detonated in a blinding flash after hitting one of the grunts on my back deck. The others were thrown violently to the ground. AK rounds raked the tanks. Infantrymen were diving off the other tanks and trying to find cover from the shower of steel.

At the sound of the first explosion, the voice of Captain Ronald C. “Jug” Wyse cracked in my VC (Vehicular Communications): “What the hell’s going on up there?”

“We’re being hit,” I blurted into the mike. I dropped my hand to the override

trigger and popped a cap. The powerful 90mm canister round erupted and shredded the bamboo in front of me.

I had to remember two basics — return fire and move — or become a 52-ton target not easy to miss at 20 or 30 meters with an RPG. I spotted a slit in one of the enemy bunkers at the base of the bamboo and fired another quick canister at the hole. I told my driver, SP/5 Ed Morrow, to move up fast to the bunker before they popped out again. Morrow gunned the engine in low and surged the big M48 on top of the bunker. I leaned out of the cupola and flipped a grenade into the firing slot.

Once on top, Morrow knew what to do. Most well-constructed fighting positions can support the weight of a tank. What a fighting bunker can’t stand

is all 52 tons corkscrewing while in neutral — steering and turning from one side to another. We call it jitterbugging. Morrow jerked the tank back and forth three or four times, and the roof of the bunker collapsed, crushing the occupants.

“Find the bastards — then pile on!” Such was the informal motto of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), known as the Blackhorse Regiment — which by early 1969 epitomized the capabilities of armor in Vietnam. At that time I was the platoon leader of the 1st Platoon, D Company, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

We had a record of failure in Vietnam to contend with. From the end of WWII until 1954, the French had been unsuccessful in their use of armor in Indochina. This unfortunate experience had a profound influence on the strategies of American military planners during the escalation of the war. However, once American armor units were introduced and used in Vietnam, innovative armor commanders and courageous crewmen forged a new chapter in the history of armored warfare.

General Donn A. Starry summed up the role of armor in Vietnam in his preface to the Department of the Army monograph, *Mounted Combat in Vietnam*: “After eight years of fighting over land on which tanks were once thought to be incapable of moving, in weather that was supposed to prohibit armored operations, and dealing with an elusive enemy against whom armored units were thought to be at a considerable disadvantage, armored forces emerged as powerful, flexible and essential battle forces.”

Soon after arriving in-country, I had learned that it was usually a good idea to disregard the conventional armor doctrine dispensed at Ft. Knox — that a tank crew normally consisted of a driver, loader, gunner and tank commander.

In Vietnam, at least in III Corps, we didn’t use gunners. The tank commander did all the firing, using the trigger on the commander’s override handle. The gunner’s seat was removed and extra 7.62mm ammo was piled there for the M73 coaxial machine gun located in the turret to the left of the main gun. The gunner’s telescope was usually removed, and anything that could shoot was stuck in the hole. My first tank, a gas-burning M48A2, had an old .30-caliber wedged in there.

The .50-caliber mounted in the commander’s cupola was either removed altogether or simply used as a spare gun for the one mounted topside, generally on a welded tripod. After a few months, I discarded the .50-caliber because tank commanders had a tendency to rely too much on the topside .50-caliber and

Captain Ronald C. "Jug" Wyse takes a breather.

when a stoppage occurred, far too much precious flesh had to be exposed to clear the gun. I opted for an M60 that could be easily jerked out of the mount and fired along the tracks. It could also be removed and stored in the turret when the tank was busting heavy bamboo or an area thick with vines.

If we were fortunate enough to have a fourth man on the crew, he had the dubious honor of being put in what was called the back-deck gunner position. He perched on the bustle rack at the back of the turret and was armed with either an M79 grenade launcher or an M60 machine gun. Vietnam cav and infantry troops alike were well-aware of the enemy's propensity to let them pass and then fire an AK or RPG from behind. The back-deck gunner was added insurance.

Maneuvering ahead of each attacking tank company was a "pink team" from the regimental air cavalry troop. An OH-6 Cayuse helicopter, or "white element," functioned as a scout and it was his job to detect any enemy activity as well as to provide directions so the lead tanks could stay on course. The "red element" was the Huey Cobra gunship which pounced on any enemy troops foolish enough to fire at the scout.

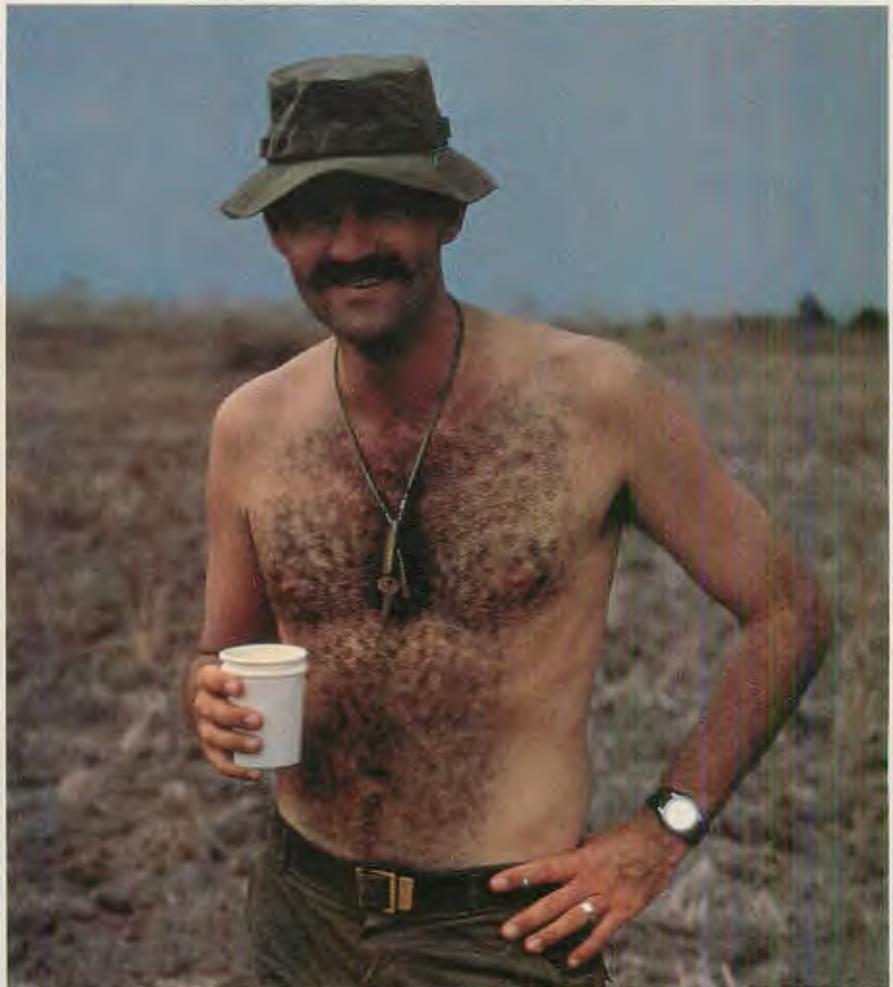
Although the Blackhorse motto would consistently disconcert USARV information officers when it appeared on the masthead of the regimental newspaper, it nevertheless characterized the 11th Cavalry's expertise as its troopers stormed into the jungles of III Corps. This expertise was brought into play during Operation Twinkle Toes in March 1969 by a tanker with a famous name, regimental commander Colonel George S. Patton III.

Not a large-scale operation by Vietnam standards, Twinkle Toes represented a composite of jungle firefights fought by the 11th Cavalry and other armor units in Vietnam.

Since late 1968, the 1st Squadron of the 11th Cavalry had been conducting reconnaissance-in-force (RIF) and route-security operations north of Bien Hoa under the operational control of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division — The Big Red One. The area of operations was a rough triangle stretching from Tan Uyen in the south, to Lai Khe in the west, and as far north as the First Cavalry Division base at Phuoc Vinh.

1st Squadron Blackhorse elements were strategically located along one of the main infiltration routes into the Saigon military district to prevent NVA activity in the "rocket belt" around the large bases at Bien Hoa and Long Binh.

Author poses atop the turret of his M48.



CAVALRY SERVICE

Timothy D. Kerns graduated with distinction from Armor OCS training school at Ft. Knox, Ky., in December 1967. In November 1968, he volunteered and was assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment as platoon leader, 1st Platoon, Delta Company, 1st Squadron, 11th ACR, until June 1969. During his tour of duty in Vietnam, Kerns was awarded two Bronze Stars for

valor and a Purple Heart.

Kerns is also a graduate of the Military Police Officer Advanced Course and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

Presently a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserve, Kerns commands the 160th MP Battalion. He is now vice chairman of the Commission on Veteran Affairs.



In addition, the regiment was undertaking an extensive pacification program along Highway 16 from Tan Uyen to Phuoc Hoa. That particular stretch of highway was invariably mined, but gradually civilians began pointing out mines and leading us to ammunition and weapon caches. We were obviously winning some hearts and minds.

Early March 1969 saw a substantial decrease in NVA movement and activity in the Blackhorse AO (Area of Operations). This was due primarily to stepped-up operations by 11th Cavalry units which repeatedly attacked and destroyed enemy rest-and-staging areas in the Heartshaped Woods and the Catcher's Mitt along the Don Nai River. However, one primary area of dense jungle remained untouched — the area south of Phuoc Vinh whose southern border was the Song Be River. The river switched back dramatically four times and appeared on the map as two short legs with

dancing feet — thus the official operation name, Twinkle Toes. After one look by the cavalry troopers, the area got a new name — “The Testicles.” Intelligence reports indicated that the heavy jungle was populated by a substantial number of NVA troops.

D Company, 1st Squadron (the squadron tank company) was alerted on the afternoon of 13 March 1969 at fire support base Harpers Ferry, located adjacent to the village of Ben Me on Hwy. 16. Captain Wyse briefed me (1st platoon) and 1st Lieutenant Bob Murphy, the 2nd platoon leader, on the mission that was to kick off at dawn the following morning.

At first light, 12 of our big M48A3s were poised along Hwy. 16 and at the command “Move out,” they plunged southeast into “The Testicles.” The concept of the operation, conceived by Col. Patton, was to make a three-pronged attack, using the tank companies of the regiment to burst

through the dense jungle and drive the NVA back up along the river. Each of the tank companies — D, H and M — were augmented by a platoon of ACAVs (Armored Cavalry Assault Vehicles) from the cav troops, and a platoon of 1st Division infantrymen.

An NVA base camp had been spotted a few days before during a visual reconnaissance in the eastern “testicle.” B-52s had hit it early on the morning of the 14th, coinciding with the operation's starting time. The going was tough, and lead tanks were rotated almost hourly by Capt. Wyse. A Santa Barbara attorney-turned-tanker, Wyse knew only too well the physical and psychological impact of breaking heavy jungle. Crewmen were in constant danger of being seriously hurt or killed by falling branches and crashing trees. It also meant plowing down trees which were often covered with ant nests and what seemed like every conceivable bug in Vietnam.



Within a few hours, indicators of enemy activity became frequent — well-used trails and empty salmon cans were sure signs.

By noon we had almost reached the base camp; the target of the earlier B-52 strike. The regiment's aero rifle platoon (ARP) had been inserted and Col. Patton was determined to join them as soon as he could. We were diverted to a small clearing where he had landed his command-and-control chopper. Once there, he climbed on the back deck of one of my tanks and crashed through the remaining 200 meters with us.

The ARPs had met only light resistance — the B-52s had done their job. Three or four NVA soldiers remained standing in a daze as they surveyed their bomb-pitted base camp and scattered bits and pieces of their comrades.

After a short break, D Company crashed back into the jungle, still heading south. Radio traffic indicated

that the other two companies had not yet made contact. We saw more indicators of enemy presence in the form of a ChiCom Claymore that miraculously failed to detonate and some anti-personnel mines, but still no resistance.

To an armored-cavalry trooper, enemy resistance in the jungle seemed to come in one of two ways: None or all-out. It's no secret that it is impossible to surprise anyone in heavy jungle with 10 or 15 M48s. Charlie either leaves an area before you arrive, or thinks he can defeat you so he stays and fights.

The afternoon of 14 March 1969 was one of the days he stayed.

At about 1530 hours, Capt. Wyse radioed the scout pilot overhead and suggested he look for a good spot for a night defensive perimeter (NDP) for us. The pilot radioed back a few minutes later to report an adequate clearing about 1,200 meters east of our location.

My platoon was leading, with Platoon Sergeant Bill Brock commanding the lead tank. He was serving his second term with D Company and was an invaluable leader and a source of life-saving information. His handlebar mustache and close-cropped hair made him look like a Prussian field marshal.

As we shifted to the east, I had my driver pull abreast of Sgt. Brock's tank to form a two-tank front to tackle the heavy bamboo curtain that lay ahead. I radioed Brock that it looked like he had an unhappy passenger sitting on his back deck in the form of SP/4 Ron Yaeger, our company radio mechanic, who was wearing a nervous frown. Yaeger normally would not have been involved in our jungle foray, but he had been flown out that morning to replace a faulty radio and had missed his chopper ride back. I told Brock to tell Yaeger that

Continued on page 109

BREND'S BLADES



Knives Cut Muster at Ft. Bragg

Text & Photos
by Pete Weizenegger

WALTER Brend knows the business of the cutting edge from both ends. He's a professional user and maker who combines knowledge of steels with understanding of what makes a successful blade. Brend offers a broad line of combat, survival, field and utility knives to those who take edged tools and weapons seriously.

Brend's Model Two is owned and used by members of all branches of the U.S. armed forces, including Special Forces and airborne units. And it's become a favorite with special units at Fort Bragg.

Harry and Willy Grafinger operate the Black Dragon Survival Knife and Martial Arts Supply in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and equip many of the boys from Bragg with edged tools. Once they see the Brend, Willy says, they can't go back to anything else.

"A fella came in this morning to pick up a knife he had on layaway, and he saw the Brend knife and traded the other on it. He took the Brend knife home with him.

"I got four of Walter's knives in just the other day and sold two yesterday and two this morning. That's some price and those things don't break."

In a recent letter, a Marine sergeant recounted his experience with his Brend Model Two on survival exercises in the harsh Utah high country. His Two was the only blade in the outfit that survived chopping through to much-needed water on an ice-covered lake.

Have you ever tried chopping ice with a knife? Hardened blades generally break and tempered steel curls.

The Brend Model Two is available in three sized blades: 7½-inch, nine-inch and 12-inch, with proportioned handles and guards. The two larger versions are crafted from ⅜-¹⁶-inch stock (the 7½-inch model in ¼-inch) of A2 high carbon steel or 440C, 154CM, or ATS-34 stainless. Of the stainless steels, Brend favors the ATS-34 (when available), a Japanese import with the superior edge-holding characteristics of 154CM that is at the same time somewhat easier to work and gives a more consistent temper.

Brend's personal choice is A2 tool steel and he recommends it as the optimum metal for the Model Two. A2 is a tough steel, it holds an edge very well when properly heat-treated and is superior to stainless for field-expedient sharpening even with less-than-ideal honing tools.

At 17 inches and two pounds, the Model Two is a fistful of keen-edged malevolence.

10-YEAR HITCH

Pete Weizenegger has been a photo-journalist and writer in the firearms field for over 10 years. He specializes in small arms and edged tools and weapons and has written for firearms and survival magazines.

BREND MODEL TWO

Blade length . . . 7½, 9 and 12 inches
Overall length . . 12, 14 and 17 inches
Weight 16 oz., 24 oz.
 and 32 oz.

Blade material A2 high-carbon tool steel; 440C, 154CM, ATS-34 stainless

Handle Black Micarta (other materials available on request)

Finish Non-glare brushed for stainless, phosphate acid-etched black for tool steel

Crossguard Mild steel

Sheath Nylon in black, woodland camo or desert camo, leg straps and stone, or leather military-type sheath.

Price \$310, \$435, \$800; add \$25 for stainless.

Manufacturer: Walter Brend, Dept. SOF, 351 Pine Ave., Walterboro, SC 29488. (803) 538-8256.

The saw that adorns the Brend Model Two is more than just trendy teeth.



Brend's A2 steel knives are phosphate acid etched (dipped) to a black matte finish that protects the blade from corrosion to some extent as well as providing a subdued tone to the knife. They require more care than stainless, but offer superior general performance characteristics.

The Model Two's blade is deeply hollow-ground with a full-thickness flat extending almost to the point. The top edge is sharpened back to a row of deep, sharp, offset serrations which run to the center of the spine. These teeth are as useful as those on any sawback blade, capable of performing most of the tasks (except, of course, sawing through solid wood or other tough, resilient materials) that can be expected of such devices.

Brend's saw design is certainly better than some of the merely cosmetic saws.

Brend sawteeth cut light metal, wood or plastic sheet and paneling, natural or synthetic ropes and cables, heavy fabric and belting, and for scoring solid wood and plastics. Even though the primary cutting edge is capable of handling most of this rough trade, it is better reserved for duty that demands a sharp, clean edge. Save the sawteeth for the dirty deeds.

The Model Two is a tapered, full-tang design. Contoured, black Micarta scales and massive double guards fill the hand for a comfortable, secure grip. Hollow, 303 stainless-steel tubing is pressure fit to pin the handle slabs to the tang, and serve as a means of attaching a wrist thong or other lashings.

This knife is built to last. The full-tang design is inherently stronger than other types and, except for the sawteeth, there is not a sharp corner or angle ground into any part of the blade or tang that might weaken the knife.

Care is given to the heat-treating of each blade. A2 blades are subquenched in the heat-treating process, an extra step that compacts the steel molecules to provide greater durability as well as eliminating brittleness. Brend guarantees his blades against breakage, even if they are used as pry bars. The A2, ATS-34, and 154CM blades are hardened to RC 59-60 and the 440C to RC 56-58.

Mass and leverage are well forward in the basic design and proportions of the handle to each blade size preserve that blade-heaviness. Accordingly, the Model Two excels in hacking, chopping and splitting. Its point is directly in line with the axis of the handle. The sharpened top edge enhances the slashing capabilities of the blade.

The cutting edge curves continuously from the cutout ahead of the guard to the point, with no straight lines that might cause heavy tissue or tendons to roll under pressure or bunch up under an irregularity and impede a cut. For those who want a long, heavy blade for fighting, the Model Two offers hacking and slashing capabilities as well as penetration seldom found in a blade of such great size.

The 12-inch Model Two is an imposing blade at 17 inches long overall and a hefty two pounds. Brend's scaled-down 7½-inch version possesses many of the same qualities and sophistication as the larger models in a handier, more concealable package.

My Model Two is the 9-inch configuration. It's more useful in the field than the 7½-inch version but more practical than the foot-long for carry.

Whatever the size, I'm confident the Brend Two will take me anywhere I want to go. And back. ✂

RECCE COMMANDO

by Stephan Terblanche



Miss with Cabinda, Hit with Guns of Gaborone

DEADLY men who operate silently and efficiently, equally at home on land, in the air and at sea, have in recent years run numerous long-range, behind-the-lines missions with devastating success. Right now some of these men are stalking their prey in the Southern African bush on top secret missions. They are members of one of the world's toughest fighting forces: South Africa's Special Forces Reconnaissance Commandos — better known as the Recces.

In May 1985 the unthinkable happened as this publicity-shy elite force hit world headlines. A small group of nine Recces were ambushed during a covert operation in

Obstacle crossing is an integral part of training. Recces must be able to maneuver through all types of terrain — or they might end up dead. Photo: Al Venter



the oil-rich Cabinda Province of Angola — more than 1,300 kilometers inside enemy territory. In the ensuing firefight two of the South Africans were killed; their leader, Captain Wynand Du Toit, captured, while the other six men managed to escape and make their way back to South Africa. Several Angolans were also killed or wounded in the battle.

Some reports claim they had been betrayed by the American CIA who knew of their mission. Others speculate that members of the local Angolan population detected them and alerted FAPLA, the Angolan army, who laid an ambush. Whatever happened, the nine trapped men offered fierce resistance against overwhelming numbers in an area riddled with FAPLA bases.

The Cabinda raid started on 18 May when a vessel of the South African Navy left the port of Saldanha Bay and reached a destination 160 kilometers off the coast of Cabinda near the Zaire border. According to Captain Du Toit — who is now being held as a POW in Luanda, Angola — the vessel brought them close to the coast on the night of the 19th. The Recce team launched small dinghies and silently paddled toward the coastline while the mother ship returned to sea.

After beaching, their rubber boats were hidden and a rendezvous point established. It's normal Recce procedure to bombshell, or scatter, in case of contact with the enemy when on an intelligence gathering mission and regroup later at prearranged locations.

The team then started their trek south to the target area. According to Chief of the South African Defence Force (SADF) General Constand Viljoen, their orders were to confirm the existence of ANC (African National Congress) and SWAPO (Southwest African People's Organization) bases situated in the vicinity of the town of Cabinda, observe them and gather whatever intelligence could be obtained. The South Africans had previously learned that this was a major ANC training base from which terrorist insurgents were sent via Botswana to South Africa to wage their Soviet-backed campaign of terror.

In the area, however, are the Malongo oil storage installations run jointly by Angola's Sonangol and America's Gulf Oil Company. Afterwards the Angolans were to claim that the South Africans had come to blow up these tanks in order to deprive the country of much-needed revenue; oil exports vital to the economy of Angola.

Because of the oil complex in Cabinda Province, there are numerous FAPLA bases and posts dotted throughout the area designed to protect it. Unconfirmed reports maintain there are also American Vietnam vets and British ex-SAS men guarding the installations.

With this vital intelligence in mind the reconnaissance team moved stealthily through the first two nights, taking great care to avoid contact with locals or FAPLA patrols as they traversed the sparsely vegetated area. During the day they dug into temporary bases carefully concealed from prying eyes.

On the second day, 21 May, as the team was nearing the target area, shots suddenly rang out, almost hitting the group. The Recces scrambled for cover and waited. Then they saw them: two white men with hunting rifles.

Judging from their accents they were Americans, probably Gulf Oil employees on an innocent hunting trip. Those two Americans will never know how close they came to feeling the cold touch of sharp steel against their throats. Had they accidentally discovered the Recces lying in wait, it would have been vital for the survival of the commando that the Americans be silenced.

For the rest of the day the men set up a temporary base and waited for the cover of darkness. About 1600 they checked their rifles and kit bags, ready to move out. Then all hell broke loose.

This time there was no mistaking it — the heavy fire was



Rece candidates disembark from a South African Puma to begin final five-day forced march. They carry gasoline-soaked biscuits for food, and have the ever-present log for company. Photo: Al Venter

aimed directly at them. There was shouting and confusion. The team knew they had been attacked by an Angolan force of unknown size. The Recces immediately returned fire, then Capt. Du Toit ordered his men to split up in three groups of three men each. Outnumbered by the enemy and far from home, the best tactic would be to bombshell and regroup later.

One group managed to slip away, then the second. But Capt. Du Toit's group, pinned down by heavy fire, was trapped. Du Toit watched as his two remaining comrades, Rowland Liebenberg and Louis van Breda, were fatally hit. Du Toit himself was hit in the neck, shoulder and arm. Helpless and in pain he heard the firing subside, and soon dozens of FAPLA soldiers were swarming around him. For them the capture of a lone South African soldier was a major victory.

What they didn't yet realize was that they had one of the SADF's elite — a Recce. The propaganda value of his capture had not yet dawned on them.

This was to have been Capt. Du Toit's last clandestine operation. He had been on several previous such missions inside Angola, and in 1983 he was a member of yet another Recce group that infiltrated Mozambique, the other former Portuguese colony turned Marxist state which borders South Africa in the east. That time the group had gone to Maputo, capitol of Mozambique, where they destroyed several ANC offices.

The Angolans casevacked him to the capital of Luanda where he was taken to a hospital. In the meantime the other six Recce team members had managed to escape to the north, away from the FAPLA troops. They regrouped and made contact with the waiting South African Navy vessel, and subsequently returned to friendlier South African territory.

Then the propaganda war started. South African authorities maintained that the Recce group had been in the area purely on an intelligence gathering mission. The Angolans, on the other hand, claimed the Recces were there to blow up the jointly owned oil refineries, and this made the Americans hopping mad. But the South Africans still maintain it would have been absurd for them to blow up installations partly belonging to their American allies.

SADF spokesmen publicly warned that the Angolans would use every technique known to them to make Capt. Du Toit admit to a demolition raid at an international press conference held in Luanda several days later. And at the press conference he parroted the Angolans' claims.

In Pretoria combat psychologists and military strategists who studied a video recording of Du Toit's "confessions" at the press conference were unanimous in their verdict that Du Toit had been subjected to extreme psychological torture

before his public appearance. They picked up telltale signs in his speech, mannerisms, appearance and action.

"It is clear that Captain Du Toit had been subjected to extreme deprivation and threats during interrogation as well as that badly needed medical attention was probably withheld until he was ready to cooperate," said Piet de la Rey, a professor at Pretoria University who has made an intensive study of psychological interrogation.

Others agreed that it is unlikely the Angolans themselves had interrogated Du Toit. They believe the dirty work would have been performed by their Cuban, East German and Russian advisers who are masters of such techniques.

In the meantime Du Toit has been declared a POW. Negotiations concerning his return and those of the two Recces killed during the mission have broken down. Unless talks re-commence, Du Toit could find himself spending the next few years in an Angolan prison.

In the meantime SADF — by the admission of Gen. Viljoen at the time of the Cabinda affair — continued to gather intelligence on SWAPO and the ANC in Angola, and is probably still doing so. The obvious choice for the job would be the men of the Recce Commandos.

However, Recces haven't confined their operations solely to Angola. On 14 June, less than a month after Cabinda, all hell broke loose in Gaborone, Botswana, located only kilometers from the South African border. South African commandos swooped into the city in the early hours of the morning, blasting 10 ANC terrorist targets and killing several top ANC commanders before returning across the border with a treasure of intelligence documents. All indications are that the Special Forces executed this operation, since known as the "Guns of Gaborone" raid.

No information is ever officially given about Special Forces activities, but if it had been the Recces who hit Gaborone, they certainly restored their reputation after Cabinda by showing their nerve and steel in the highly successful raid on the ANC bases in Botswana.

For years South African intelligence agents have infiltrated and observed ANC activities all over Southern Africa, including Botswana. Once Mozambique had signed the Nkomati Accord — a sort of peace pact — with South Africa, the ANC was denied a convenient launching pad for its terrorist incursions into South Africa. They now had to find another host country from which they could cross the border into South Africa. Botswana, close to Johannesburg and the industrial heart of the Reef, seemed the obvious choice.

In Gaborone, South African agents infiltrated the ANC, observed their known haunts, took photographs, made detailed sketch plans of targets, and gathered other vital

Although their primary mission is deep reconnaissance, the Recces can be used against selected targets unsuited for more conventional strikes. Photo: Al Venter





Selection course for the Reconnaissance Commandos is one of the world's toughest — only 40 out of 700 will pass. Armed with full kit and 66-pound sandbags, these troops waded through the water orientation course. Photo: Al Venter

evidence which would justify a cross-border raid.

In the meantime South African politicians tried to defuse the diplomatic time bomb by warning the Botswana government that ANC operatives were actively organizing armed incursions from that country. In every case Botswana replied that the people in Gaborone were merely innocent refugees sympathetic to the ANC. On several occasions South Africa supplied Botswana with evidence to the contrary — in at least one case this led to Botswana police uncovering a large ANC arms cache. But Botswana still preferred to maintain that the terrorists were merely refugees.

In one instance Botswana's President Quett Masire summoned ANC president Oliver Tambo to Gaborone, just to be assured in public by Tambo that the ANC would not use Botswana territory for the launching of terror actions against South Africa. Then, in a behind-the-scenes move, Tambo instructed his cadres in Botswana to ignore his public statements and to continue with their terror campaign as planned. South African agents intercepted this message from Tambo and informed the Botswana government that ANC terrorists in Gaborone were not merely "innocent refugees," but the latter again chose to ignore the evidence.

Meanwhile terrorist activities in South Africa, for which the ANC claimed responsibility, were mounting. Black town councilors — accused by the ANC, the United Democratic Front and other left-wing radical elements of being government collaborators and sellouts — were being slaughtered in the townships. In one case a councilor and his son were stoned and hacked with *pangas* (machetes), set alight, and then eaten by a mob of black youths.

In another instance, an elderly white couple were gunned down in their remote northern Transvaal farm shop, after

which the band of ANC attackers burned the shop down and fled across the border to Botswana.

Russian-made limpet mines also exploded in several places across the country, killing and injuring innocent people. Policemen were attacked in their homes with hand grenades, and police found several arms caches belonging to ANC insurgents.

Counterinsurgency measures taken by South African police resulted in 33 ANC terrorists arrested, and several others were shot and killed. The ANC, however, continued sending its so-called "suicide squads" on terrorist missions into South Africa. This is where the ANC nerve center in Gaborone came into the picture.

Intelligence agents had identified 34 ANC targets in Gaborone. Typical of Marxist-revolutionary method, the ANC bases were hidden in ordinary civilian houses nestled in suburbs crowded with innocent civilians. They knew this strategy would make it extremely difficult for anyone, including the South Africans, to neutralize them because the civilian casualties would be too horrifying. South Africa would not dare inflict such damage on the civilians of a neighboring state. For this reason South African intelligence and military planners narrowed their list of ANC targets first from 34 to 18, and finally to 10. The intelligence dossier built up on the ten targets finally read like this:

Target One: A safe-house used for hiding terrorists in transit; for conducting weekend crash-course training in the handling of hand grenades; training ANC terrorist recruits; and for organizing suicide-squad missions into South Africa. The house was situated in the Tlokweng suburb of Gaborone and run by two women terrorists of the ANC, Sadi Pule and Lucy Mashile, both trained in Cuba and Moscow.

Target Two: Another house in Tlokweng suburb used since 1980 as a base for terrorists en route from Zambia via Botswana to South Africa, and for crash courses for suicide squads. From here the murder of the elderly couple in their farm shop was planned.

Target Three: Two houses in Tlokweng suburb occupied



by an Indian man named George, responsible for ANC leadership logistics.

Target Four: A house in the Broadhurst suburb of Gaborone occupied by Duke Machobane, responsible for ANC military training and supplying safe-houses for ANC operatives of *UmKhonto We Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) — the ANC military wing. (Much of the planning of *UmKhonto We Sizwe* is done by Joe Slovo, an exiled former Johannesburg attorney who is the number two man in the military wing and identified as a colonel in the Russian KGB).

Target Five: Another house in Broadhurst occupied by Nkukwane Mkhulu, ANC logistics expert since June 1981. The house was also used as a transit safe-house.

Target Six: A house in Pudulogo Close, Gaborone, occupied by Uriel Abrahamse and South African draft dodger Mike Hamlyn. They were responsible for accommodation and transportation of terrorists to and from South Africa, and also trained suicide squads. Intelligence also indicated that a PLO official lived here and that the PLO was involved in training ANC cadres.

Target Seven: The offices of the Solidarity News Service in central Gaborone. Posing as a news agency, these offices were actually the intelligence gathering headquarters of the ANC.

Target Eight: ANC offices in the Bonteng suburb of Gaborone which served as a storage facility for arms, food and clothing.

Target Nine: A house in the Broadhurst suburb occupied by Tim Williams who underwent military training in a PAC (Pan-African Congress — rivals to the ANC) camp in Libya, had since joined the ANC, and who was responsible for training, courier services, political indoctrination and underground accommodation.

Target Ten: A house in Broadhurst occupied by George and Lindy Phale who both trained terrorists, handled ANC finances, and used their bus company for the transport of terrorists. George Phale had also been directly responsible for the bomb explosion in Johannesburg's Carlton Center at Christmas 1975 which killed and injured scores of innocent shoppers.

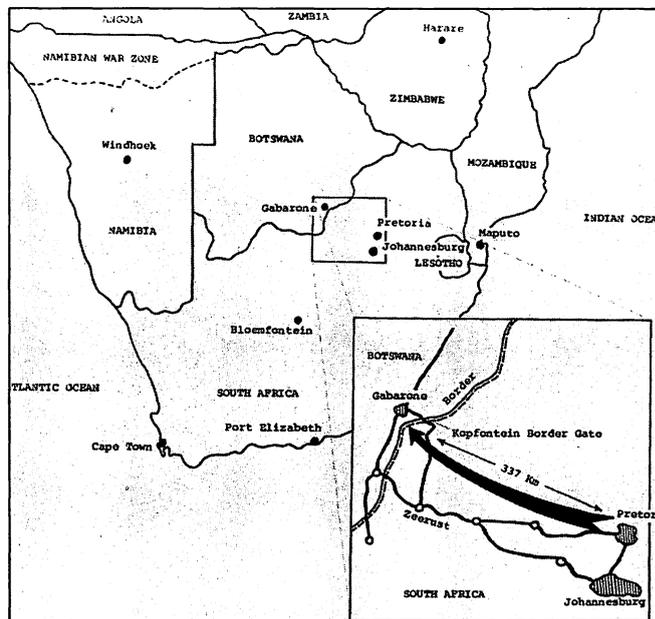
Such was the picture that emerged from the files of the Security Branch of the South African Police on Monday 10 June. There was ample reason to launch a major strike against these targets, but still South Africa held back. Negotiations with Botswana over the ANC presence continued, but then intelligence surfaced that the ANC was to launch a stepped-up terror campaign in South Africa lasting two weeks, the attacks to coincide with the ANC's national conference in Lusaka, Zambia.

Further intelligence was received that ANC suicide squads had been briefed to hit non-white political leaders in South Africa who participated in the new constitutional system of the country which had a year ago extended the vote to Coloreds (the South African legal division of mixed-race citizens) and Indians. Black community councilors, sponsored by the government, were also to be eliminated by these squads.

On 11 June ANC suicide squads struck in Cape Town during a night attack with hand grenades, seriously injuring the newly appointed Colored member of President P.W. Botha's Cabinet, Mr. Luwellyn Landers, and another prominent Colored Member of Parliament.

In an emergency meeting between senior members of government, Defence Force commanders and intelligence chiefs, it was decided that the time had come to hit Gaborone and eliminate the ANC.

Though official sources were unwilling to reveal much after the raid, a clear picture could be pieced together from both official and eyewitness accounts. Sources in Botswana believe the South African commandos — most likely made up once again from elements of the Special Forces due to



Map showing "Guns of Gaborone" raid carried out by South African Special Forces against selected ANC targets in Botswana. The raid nipped in the bud a planned two-week ANC suicide-squad offensive against South African targets.

the nature of the clandestine raid — crossed the border in small groups at Kopfontein Border Gate, dressed in civilian clothes, driving civilian vehicles and going through the normal customs checks.

Once inside the country the commandos probably split up and booked into various hotels spread across Gaborone, waiting for the moment they would go into action. After the attack, several hotels reported that South Africans who had been staying in the hotels disappeared only a few hours before the raid.

Then came D-Day — Friday, 14 June. At precisely 0100 a power failure blackened parts of the city. At 0115 the first shots and explosions ripped through the sleeping city.

Commandos, operating in small teams, were hitting the 10 targets simultaneously. Teams would draw up outside a target, kick open doors, locate and identify wanted ANC men on their "hit list," eliminate them, and then remove weapons, documentation and other material from the buildings.

Once this had been accomplished, explosives or hand grenades were used to destroy the buildings and the commandos would leave the scene — minutes after first striking a target.

On several occasions Botswana Police patrols were encountered in the city. According to the Gen. Viljoen, these patrols were informed by the raiders that South Africans were attacking ANC targets, and that the patrols were to keep out of the fighting. In all cases the Botswana Police complied and returned to the Central Police Station till the raid had been completed. Only in a few instances did the South Africans meet with resistance from the ANC, and one South African soldier was lightly wounded.

Gaborone residents reported after the raid that the South Africans had cut all telephone links between the city, the border post, and the main Botswana Defence Force barracks, the Sir Seretse Khama Barracks several kilometers outside town. Some reports also claimed that tire-puncturing spikes were strewn outside the barracks preventing the Botswana Defence Force from taking any action.

One commando team manned a strategic roadblock on the Tlokweg road which leads to the border post, securing the escape route for the commandos once the raid finished. It was here that the heaviest resistance was met.



ONLY THE FIT NEED APPLY

A military convoy of Soviet-made trucks, bearing the markings of FAPLA, the Angolan army, rumbles down the sandy dirt track through the African bush. The sun glints off the barrels of several LMGs mounted on the vehicles, and 56 men dressed in tattered camouflage battle dress similar to East German issue sit idly on the trucks holding their AK-47s. The convoy slowly grinds past and eventually disappears around a bend at the bottom of the track.

Two shadows silently rise from the small undergrowth alongside the track. One is wearing brown battle-dress pants, green canvas boots, a dirty brown T-shirt and a brown bush hat, while the other is dressed in black shorts, brown sneakers and camouflaged T-shirt. The faces, arms and legs of the two white men have been blackened, and both carry knives, R4 folding-butt rifles, 9mm pistols, and a small shortwave radio.

For several seconds they stare after the convoy, then slip unseen into the bush. They are 1,000 kilometers from the nearest friendly base, but that's their job. The two men are members of 1 Reconnaissance Commando, Special Forces, of the South African Army.

Super-fit, fearless and deadly, the Recces are the unknown factor in the South African war machine since SADF will say little about the unit. Recent unwanted publicity has made it clear that the Recces' mission includes deep reconnaissance behind enemy lines as well as lightning-strike attacks against selected targets.

1 Reconnaissance Commando, the first Special Forces

An eight-kilometer race with log tests endurance, teamwork, and leadership ability. A log is used because it's tactically valueless — a psychological burden Recce candidates must overcome. Photo: Al Venter

unit in the South African Defence Force (SADF), came into being on 1 October 1972 in response to South Africa's need for an SAS-type commando unit. Few people knew of the event.

Because of its stunning success in operations throughout southern Africa, additional Recces have been formed to include a Citizen Force Reconnaissance Commando.

One does not simply knock on the recruiter's door, sign up, and become a Recce — special operations units just don't work that way. Candidates must pass a grueling series of physical and psychological tests before they're even considered for training. They live under a microscope designed to detect the slightest flaw in character, leadership and intellect throughout the selection process.

No roughnecks or trigger-happy cowboys make the grade, and it's little wonder that only some 40 out of a select group of 700 applicants are accepted into the unit annually.

Before the aspiring Recce even begins the pre-selection program, he's faced with a back-breaking PT test designed to weed out the unfit. The test begins with a six-hour, 15-kilometer route march with normal kit, rifle and 30 kg (66-lb) sandbag. Then follows a 45-minute, eight-kilometer run in long trousers and boots, with rifle; a 20-minute, five-kilometer cross-country run; eight non-stop pull-ups; 80 sit-ups in two minutes; 50 non-stop press-ups; a 45-meter free-

style swim; 40 shuttle runs of seven meters each in 90 seconds; 85 shuttle kicks in two minutes; and a 200-meter fireman's carry in one minute. And that's just the beginning.

If the candidate can convince the selection board that he has something to offer the unit, and he can pass stringent medical and psychological tests, he's then ready to begin the three-week preselection course.

This program consists of two weeks of strenuous PT eight hours a day, every day, and is followed by a one-week water orientation program in the bush and swamps of Zululand. Recruits are taught boating, swimming and survival skills, and are rated on adaptability, ability to work under stress, resistance to cold and claustrophobia, coordination and fitness. The course also includes an eight-kilometer race — two men to a heavy pole intended for four-man exercise — over sand dunes to test endurance, teamwork and leadership. Rations are gradually reduced to a bare minimum during this last week's water orientation test. Some 40 percent of the applicants normally drop out during the three-week course.

If the candidate survives this test, he's now ready for the next phase of selection: a one-week orientation and survival course inside the Namibian war zone — the operational area. Basic bush survival skills are emphasized during this phase, rations are again reduced, and water limited to five liters per man per day. Still under the microscope, candidates are rated for bush adaptability, weapons care, water and rations discipline, navigation, observation and memory, and especially the ability to work with others under stress. Even more men give up the ghost at this stage and drop out.

Then follows a psychological test designed to rate will power. Troops are given coordinates for a 40-kilometer route march with little water and no food. Halfway through they're met by officers who allow them to fill their water bottles — while the officers stand around sipping iced soft drinks and eating. On arrival at the rendezvous point the men are given a few inedible dog biscuits which have been soaked in gasoline — while the officers enjoy a barbecue. The starving men are invited to take some food; those who submit to temptation are summarily kicked off the course.

The final phase of selection sends candidates out to the bush on yet another route march lasting five days, this time armed only with one-half a 24-hour ration pack, eight gas-soaked biscuits and a tin of condensed milk. As the survivors straggle into the rendezvous point, they're told they have another 30 kilometers left to travel. Those with the will to carry on usually find their instructors waiting behind a tree a short distance away; selection is over.

Training now begins in earnest. After successful completion of the parachute course, troops are accepted into the ranks of the Recces to start 42 weeks of intensive training which includes tracking, weapons, bush survival, unconventional warfare, mountaineering, demolition skills, guerrilla tactics and equipment, and all-conditions navigation. New men can then specialize in a particular skill — medical, signals, demolitions, tracking — and will be assigned to a Recce team.

In 1981 I met some Recces on Operation Daisy deep inside Angola. They wore an assortment of uniforms ranging from standard Army issue "browns" to items of clothing formerly belonging to SWAPO terrorists. In a land with very little water, they adhered strictly to the philosophy that water is for drinking only. One man told me he had been "tramping around Angola on and off for nine months," sleeping in louse-infested bunkers vacated by SWAPO, living off the land, watching enemy movements and always remaining concealed.

He had no complaints, though. After the man-eating Recce selection process, he was one man who could take anything the African bush, or SWAPO, would care to throw at him.

An unidentified vehicle suddenly came rushing out of the dark, its emergency lights flashing, on a collision course with the roadblock. People inside the vehicle opened fire on the South Africans who immediately retaliated, leaving two men in the vehicle dead.

Within 20 minutes the raid was over. The commandos regrouped and drove across the border back into South Africa. They left behind 10 devastated ANC targets and 12 dead bodies of whom nine were key ANC terrorists. They brought back with them a variety of intelligence and administrative documents, hand grenades, and Soviet-supplied weaponry.

The prize find for the South Africans was a new Russian high-tech sniper's silencer fitted to an AK-47 — only the second to be found in Africa and the third to be found outside the Soviet Union. Intelligence experts believe this assassination weapon was to be used for the killing of moderate politicians in South Africa.

Intelligence officers who sifted through documents seized in Gaborone established that the ANC bases had been used for hiding arms caches, housing a sophisticated intelligence network, hiding terrorists in transit between Zambia and South Africa, running a logistical back-up operation for the ANC, and for providing 24-hour training courses for members of the suicide squads. These courses, given to men who made weekend trips from South Africa to Gaborone posing as ordinary tourists or as visiting relatives, consisted mainly of rudimentary instruction in the use of hand grenades, small arms and limpet mines. Intelligence sources in Pretoria believe it is because of this poor and hasty training that so many ANC terrorists have blown themselves up in South Africa en route to their targets.

After the successful Gaborone raid, Gen. Viljoen told a press conference that SADF had wanted the operation to be clean and clinical with minimum loss of civilian life or damage to property — and that is exactly the way it went.

Since the raid several key ANC personnel — believing they might be future targets — have fled from Botswana to Zambia, and one operator is now in London, working at the ANC office in that city. The Botswana government, finally realizing the risks of harboring ANC terrorists, has also deported several members of the ANC and its rival Black-liberation movement, the Pan-African Congress.

The Recces have since slipped back into obscurity — the natural haven for clandestine, special operations units. Their record, however, speaks for itself, for the Special Forces of South Africa have proven on numerous occasions what a formidable war machine the country has at its disposal. In recent years Special Forces covert operations in Southern Africa have included:

- A commando raid into neighboring Mozambique on 30 January 1981 in which three ANC targets were attacked less than 15 kilometers from the Mozambican capital of Maputo. Several top ANC personnel were taken out and the South Africans lost one man.

- Another raid on several ANC targets in Maseru, the capital of neighboring Lesotho, on 2 December 1982. Maseru claimed 42 people had died in the attack.

- Yet another raid on 17 October 1983, this time into the heart of Maputo where an ANC planning center was destroyed.

In the meantime small teams of Recces continue their prime function of long-range intelligence gathering behind enemy lines — unperturbed at the presence of well-trained and equipped Cuban, East German and Russian forces as well as the home forces in the country of operation. These clandestine operations repeatedly come under heavy attack by the Left in the political halls of the world, but they are strategic operations of vital necessity to the South African fight for survival. Without them, and the Recces who carry them out, the South African war machine could become a blind lion. ❧

Slow but Sure, Low but Lethal

COIN AIR

by Dana Drenkowski

BLACKNESS of pre-dawn fades into the new light of morning. All that is visible under the pale quarter moon are the scurrying shadows of men feverishly unloading supplies of ammunition, guns and food from a truck. Daylight is fast approaching and with it will inevitably come small reconnaissance planes which seem to spot all that moves. And close on their tails come the jet fighters.

Sweating in the clinging dark amid the clatter of unloading boxes, the guerrillas don't hear the growling drone of propellers high above them. They have nothing to worry about. After all, they had been told that the night belongs to the guerrillas.

But not on this night. Above the silent shadows of the working men circles a platform carrying tons of cluster bomb munitions, television-guided rockets and wicked white phosphorus bombs that scatter scalding metal fragments everywhere. And it can back up that deadly payload with a hail of 20mm and 30mm cannon rounds pouring down at a rate of 6,000 rounds per minute from a six-barrel Gatling gun.

In a bright flash of white light, one of the trucks is ripped apart. With it go dozens of men, blown into oblivion without a clue where the killing blast came from. A blazing sheet of 40mm cannon shells pounds into the remaining trucks. Nearly every shell hits a target with unearthly accuracy. Under the rolling wall of explosions, the few dazed and bewildered survivors race into the trees and brush. They can run but they can't hide.

Brilliant flashes and roaring explosions ruin night vision and deafen ears. Guerrillas can't hear the AC-130 as it circles lower, like a great metal vulture seeking prey with its darkness-penetrating electronic eyes. The three 20mm Gatling cannons are armed. Human hunters know that enemy survivors are still within a few hundred yards of the burning wrecks that were once trucks. The hunt begins.

Though the infrared eyes are somewhat blinded by the heat from the fires, other non-human eyes pick up small spots where it is likely the survivors have gone. Except for the "civilians" unloading the trucks, there were no non-combatants in the area so the aircraft mission

Spectre can really tear up the turf, but only in countries that can afford to own it. At \$100 million a copy, that rules out most of the Third World. Photo: AP/Wide World Photos

commander orders the 20mm cannon to fire on the entire area within a few hundred yards of the trucks. Three guns, their six barrels rotating in a blur, spew over 18,000 rounds a minute into the area. That's at least one 20mm round in every square foot of turf the size of two football fields. It's not likely that many Gs got away from that one.

Hell's fire rains down from a four-engine AC-130 circling slowly from 7,000 feet above the guerrillas. In that plane high overhead, several navigators and computer operators coordinate information received from high-tech

instruments that pinpoint targets with uncanny accuracy. The guns rarely miss. They prove that again as the supplies for two guerrilla battalions disappear in red-orange balls of fire.

This drama reopens at a communist camp miles away. Two guerrilla battalions, planning a massive Final Offensive for the fourth time, are informed that there are no supplies to fuel it. It gets worse.

Dozens of men from each battalion had been assigned to assist the unloading — now they are missing and presumed dead. Without a shot fired by the guerrillas, the offensive has collapsed.

The battalions retreat farther into the forest and pillage local peasants for food and supplies.



Sound a bit idealistic? You're right, but that's the scenario the United States Air Force plans foist on any country that wants U.S. military aid to squelch a guerrilla insurgency. There are some very big holes in this blanket solution.

Third World countries can't afford AC-130 gunships. The U.S. Congress usually restricts military aid to revolution-wracked countries. Since one Spectre gunship costs over \$100 million without the costs of personnel, ammunition and maintenance thrown in, it is obvious that the AC-130 is not the answer to most guerrilla wars in which the United States has an interest. Still, that's all Uncle Sam seems to be willing to offer. It wasn't always that way, though.

Until the Vietnam War, the United States had a large Air Commando contingent, whose job included going to countries in need — as El Salvador is today — and providing that country with the military training and equipment necessary to win the war. To accomplish that mission, the Air

Commando Wing was authorized to draw upon the stocks of mothballed World War II prop aircraft. Delivered to the affected countries, these aircraft cost pennies on the dollar for planes that cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 new in WWII.

And those planes could get the job done. The Air Commandos used C-46s, C-47s and some C-123s to make up the bulk of their supply carriers. Fighters and fighter-bombers include piston-engined T-28 and A-1 Skyraiders, both single-engine fighters with astonishing bomb-carrying and loiter capabilities. The twin-engined piston-driven A-26 is also a WWII veteran.

Make no mistake, WWII planes have what it takes to fight a COIN war.

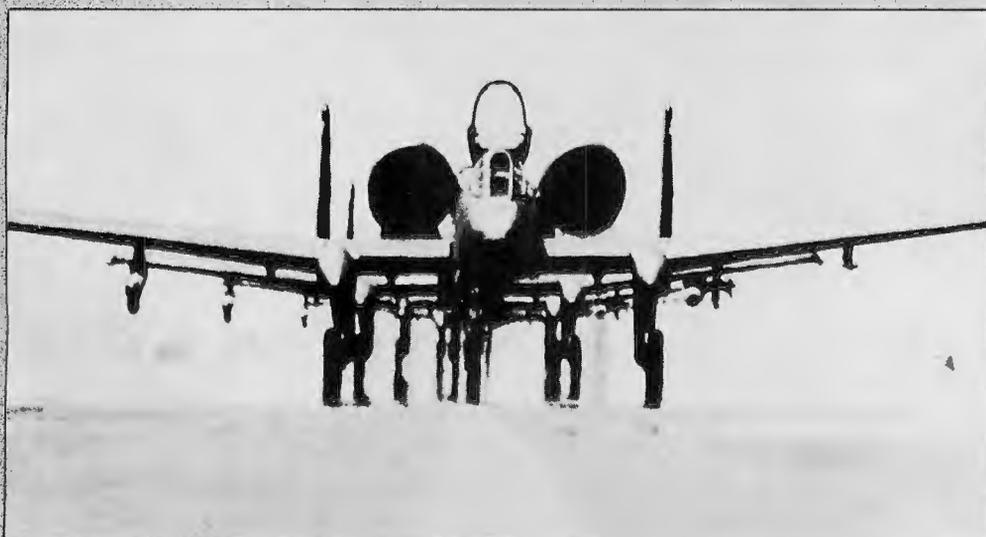
Another vital piece in any air arsenal is the observation plane. The Air Commandos used mostly Cessna O-1 Birddogs and O-2 Skymasters. The former was a slow,

single-engine, tail-dragging aircraft used as a liaison vehicle by the U.S. Army while the latter was a modified version of a commercial aircraft which had one piston engine mounted in the front, one in the rear and a twin boom tail.

Before the Vietnam War, cheap transports were beefed up into gunships by modifying C-47s and C-119 Flying Boxcars with side-firing machine guns. These aircraft were up to the job of countering Soviet-controlled guerrilla movements designed to surround the United States with unfriendly nations. But Washington's perception of security threats has changed since then.

After the Vietnam War, the United States Air Force

Although many Third World air forces would give anything to have some F-15 Eagles or F-16 Fighting Falcons they don't need them. Slower, lower-flying aircraft are the answer for COIN warfare. Photo: AP/Wide World Photos



The A-10 Warthog was designed as a COIN aircraft but its \$15 million-plus price tag puts it out of reach of most Third World countries. Photo: AP/Wide World Photos

concentrated its efforts on developing high-technology aircraft to counter a direct Soviet threat in a major European conflict. That threat has been extant for four decades and the United States has seen the Soviet war machine as the primary problem in the defense arena. Bordering on paranoia, this preoccupation has led to advances in space technology and other sophisticated weapons.

That's well and good, but this technology, pursued

single-mindedly, cost us our COIN capacity. Low-intensity insurgencies have plagued our friends and allies since the 1940s, but the needs of America's small allies could be met by rounding up a few WWII- and Korean

War-vintage fighters and transport planes. Though not specifically designed for COIN, these relics were cheap, simple to operate



and carried adequate loads for the task at hand. We didn't seem to be threatened directly, so we could continue to build modern monsters for ourselves, while we gave away supposedly outdated aircraft. We didn't need the little stuff.

Now, countries like Honduras, El Salvador or Peru continue fighting Marxist insurgents. They only get what we can supply, and we don't have anything they can afford, even if they could use an AC-130. And like their teachers in the U.S. Air Force, these embattled nations have been equipped and trained (sometimes by us) to fight a threat that rarely materializes: an outside invasion by conventional forces.

That leaves our smaller, poorer allies in a bind. They often have neither the equipment nor the training to fight communist insurgencies. They must turn outside their borders for help.

That aid invariably comes from the United States with its pool of resources and experience. And if Washington chooses not to commit its own manpower and equipment to the fray, as in El Salvador, then it provides limited funds for the purchase of equipment.

But what equipment can America offer its allies? Those pools of cheap, unemployed WWII aircraft are gone. And while we worked on automated dinosaurs for direct confrontation, United States planners ignored the need for small, cheap guerrilla-busting aircraft. Instead, they sell AC-130 Spectre gunships (\$100 million each), A-10 Warthog air-to-ground

fighters (\$15 million to \$20 million), F-15 Eagle jet fighters (\$26 million-plus) and F-16 jet fighters (\$22 million-plus). And they are designed to fight conventional, big-bucks wars. *None* of these space-age heavyweights can put up a winning performance in the COIN game.

The United States has not had to fight a war in Europe in four decades, thanks to the deterrent effect of these megabuck war machines. But brush-fire wars still rage out of control all over the world. Those fast-flying bomb platforms have only fueled those flames.

Do they cause more harm than good? A lot of COIN warfare experts think so. They say that you can't win hearts and minds if you're blowing civilians out of their homes with indiscriminate bombs dropped from fast-flying planes. That's a valid gripe. Farmers will never take kindly to being killed by government troops.

They didn't in Vietnam and they won't in El Salvador.

But even after 40 years of operations in low-intensity warfare — with equipment designed for global confrontations — the current U.S. Air Force brass doesn't seem to realize that Washington will continue to require the Air Force to support allies involved in guerrilla wars. No plans are currently in effect to re-equip the Air Commandos with new, cheap aircraft suitable for use by a beleaguered ally. There has been at least one step in the right direction though. The U.S. Air Force has equipped seven C-47s with the machine guns



necessary to pour accurate fire onto concentrations of guerrilla soldiers. It was an easy task and the Salvadoran air force will have no trouble maintaining these simple machines.

Understand: We've been in El Salvador for four years. And the need to fight the Gs with superior mobility from the air isn't a new mission requirement for successful prosecution of that war.

The problem is obvious. The United States needs a counterinsurgency Air Force unit to aid its allies with training and equipment, or as skilled COIN combat pilots ready to fight if Congress so decides. Although the USAF's Air Commandos once filled that need, they are now wedded to a high-tech conventional war scenario with only the AC-130 gunship as a tool. That won't go very far in most modern guerrilla wars.

Air Commandos also have several MC-130 aircraft and some long-range helicopters for insertion and extraction of troops on operations like the Iranian rescue attempt. The MC-130 is an unarmed, specially modified aircraft used for navigation, command and control. It would be of no use to a Third World nation torn by insurgency. The helicopters are useful, but the Air Force has given them up. Because of the emphasis on Star Wars technology, they turned most of their helicopter fleet over to the Army. One more piece of their COIN capability down the drain.

Bottom line? The Air Force needs at least one new piece of equipment before it can get back into the guerrilla war business. If they build some cheap, simple aircraft, the COIN task will become a whole lot easier. Simple transport planes, small

fighter-bombers (piston or turbine engine), light recon planes, cheap and mass-produced helicopters and simple gunships mounting a bank of Gatling-style machine guns or cannons firing out the side are just the ticket. Remember, keep it cheap, simple and easy to maintain.

Special equipment takes special care and since the USAF has neglected this part of modern warfare, a new unit of qualified, dedicated airmen who can train and equip Third World air forces in the skills needed to fight guerrilla wars will need to be formed. That shouldn't be too hard. Just pattern them after the old Air Commandos.

Rebuilding unconventional fighting forces will help our allies in the Third World but it will also help in the global context. If the Soviet Union sees that the U.S. is serious about fighting communist brush fires, they may be more careful when playing with matches. ✕



FAST



BREAK

TIMES are changing, even in police departments. Some time ago we examined front-break police duty holsters (see "Front-Break Holsters," SOF, October '81) which have long been available for a variety of revolvers but few were available for semiauto pistols. With the gradual shift in departmental attitudes, however, many U.S. police are switching to self-loaders. Not long after the front-break article was printed, even my department adopted a semiauto pistol, the S&W Model 459. My mission: search for a new front-break holster.

Much of my time was spent contacting virtually every major holster maker in the country (and many minor ones). Files of correspondence grew as possibilities narrowed. I even submitted designs.

Understandably, there were marketability and liability concerns and — in some cases — lack of interest. But as more and more police change to semiauto duty pistols many holster companies have moved in to take advantage of a growing market.

Responding to this increase in the market, J.M. Bucheimer Company has developed a front-break holster for many of the semiauto pistols now in service with the military and police departments across the country. The new Bucheimer comes in a variety of models. Model 1 will accommodate S&W 39, 59, and 469 semiauto pistols and the Colt Commander. Model 2 will fit the Colt Government Model .45, Model 92 Beretta, Llama, Browning Hi-Power 9mm and Steyr GB 9mm. The two most recent models in the Bucheimer front-break line fit the SIG-Sauer P226 and the U.S. Armed Forces' newly adopted service pistol — the Beretta 92SB-F. All holsters retail for between \$39 and \$49.

The Bucheimer front-break fills the need for a fast-draw but snatch-proof holster for law enforcement and military applications.

RAP SHEET

Sergeant Gary Paul Johnston is an old SOFer: a gentleman, scholar, fine judge of firearms and a cop.

After abandoning his studies in theoretical philosophy at Cleveland's Fenn College, Johnston went back to his home town, Los Angeles, to study applied philosophy as a policeman. After three years of service he returned to Cleveland and joined the Shaker Heights Police Department.

Sergeant Johnston has fired and studied all kinds of firearms since childhood, and this is his sixteenth article for *Soldier of Fortune*.

Grab-Resistant Holster Scores with Experts



Bucheimer's prototype was immediately impressive because it did what a holster is supposed to do: It holds the pistol securely. And for a duty officer, security of the weapon while grappling with a suspect is one of its two most important functions. But when you need a pistol, you have to be able to draw the weapon.

Unfortunately, no holster you can get a pistol out of is snatch-proof. Yet the Bucheimer front-break is as close to being snatch-proof as any usable holster. Smith & Wesson's M-459 cannot be taken from the new Bucheimer holster by pulling it up or from the rear, and it would not fall out during running or jumping. That's security.

These new front-breaks are made of leather and are similar to the front-draw holster Bucheimer has made for many years. A Bucheimer hallmark, a long U-shaped spring, runs vertically up the front, providing tension. In the center of the new front-break lies a tough plastic stud that protrudes from the inner side into the pistol pocket. When the pistol is inserted, the trigger guard slips over the curved top surface of the stud. This protrusion then snaps into the guard, locking the gun to prevent unauthorized vertical or rear removal. The tension spring keeps the gun from moving forward until it is pulled in that direction, then the trigger guard slides past the rear of the stud until it is free. The system is simple and it works.

After use one problem with the prototype became evident: There was no safety strap. That was soon corrected. The original Berns-Martin front-break has a strap that comes around the front of the holster to snap on the side when an officer needs extra security for his weapon. For ordinary use, the strap would be unsnapped and left hanging to give a quicker draw.

The test holster was returned to Bucheimer's executive vice president, Gene Whipp, with my suggestions. A few weeks later I was surprised to receive another holster that incorporated these recommendations exactly as described.

Bucheimer is the first holster maker to introduce a front-break holster for a variety of military and police semiauto pistols in an attempt to meet an urgent need. If you carry a semiauto pistol on duty, you would do well to examine this new holster. I've got mine.

For details contact J.M. Bucheimer Co. Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 280, Frederick, MD 21701 or call 1-800-638-9608. ✉

Bucheimer's breakthrough: a front-break holster with safety strap for autos. Photo: Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston

by Sgt. Gary Paul Johnston

KNOCKDOWN NONSENSE

It Only Happens in Movies

by B.R. Hughes



THERE'S probably more misinformation being tossed around about the relative power of handguns than any other gun-related topic. On the one hand, there are those who favor big, heavy bullets because of their "knockdown power." On the other, there are enthusiasts who fancy fast, expanding slugs because of the "shock power."

The big question is, "Who's right?"

Vocal big-bore devotees claim to have proof on their side in the way of the grisly Thompson-LaGarde study conducted in 1904 — or so they believe.

Advocates of high velocity have, among other things, the results of Department of Justice analysis from the mid-1970s to document their views.

Let's consider the term knockdown power. Right off the bat, it must be understood that there are *no* handgun cartridges in existence which will knock a person off his feet.

LEFT: Knockdown power may exist in handgun form, but you'd have to go to one of J.D. Jones' handcannons made on the T/C Contender model to find it. Photo courtesy Michaels of Oregon

One proponent of big-bores believed that there is a greater impact from .44 Magnum than from .308. And his hard-body armor test supported the assumption that the .44 possessed more knockdown power. Obviously, what he felt was the result of the mass of the projectile.

As any first-year physics student knows, mass times velocity gives you momentum. This is the same formula used by the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) to determine which loads will be judged major. Any given load must achieve the level of 170,000 when the weight in

grains is multiplied by the velocity in feet per second. If there is indeed any such thing as knockdown as applied to handguns, this should be a reliable yardstick.

Imagine a 240-grain .44 Magnum bullet traveling at 1,400 fps. On the IPSC scale, this would go 336,000 — definitely a major load. Now conjure up a mental image of a 16-pound bowling ball moving at a very leisurely rate of one foot per second. To give some idea of just how slow this is, if a baseball player on a regulation diamond threw the ball from pitcher's mound to home plate at a rate of one foot per second, it would require about one minute for the ball to reach home.

So in terms of momentum, using the same formula employed by IPSC, that bowling ball just barely moving at one foot per second would score an incredible 1,792,000, which is more than five times as much as that developed by the .44 Magnum.

A regulation baseball thrown at 30 mph will easily make IPSC major classification, but the .25 ACP doesn't. Which would you rather get hit with? Photo: B.R. Hughes

BLACKPOWDER BUFF

An avid muzzleloading enthusiast, B.R. Hughes is one of SOF's original knife and gun writers. He has been on the editorial staff of *Muzzleloader* magazine, and in 1976 he went on the first modern blackpowder hunt permitted by the Rhodesian game department. He is presently arms editor at *Warriors*, the magazine of all the fighting arts.



Now, let's take that regulation baseball, but this time let's throw it at a rate of 30 miles per hour, which can easily be achieved by virtually any little-league pitcher. On the IPSC momentum scale that baseball will generate a rating of 1,540,000, or more than nine times than is required to make IPSC major.

Back in blackpowder days, kinetic energy may have been generally accepted as an accurate gauge of the relative power of handguns. If you examine the ballistics of a few handgun cartridges of the 1870-1895 era — the period dominated by metallic cartridges containing black powder — you will be struck by the similarity of the hulls. Due to the nature of black powder, it was possible to propel a big, heavy bullet at about the same speed as a smaller, lighter bullet. Thus, it should have surprised no one when the bigger, heavier slugs proved to be better stoppers. Let's take a quick look at the ballistics of a few cartridges of that era:

Cartridge	Bullet Weight, grains	Velocity, fps	Energy, fpe
.38 S&W	145	730	173
.41 Long Colt	200	730	231
.44 American	205	682	212
.45 Colt	255	810	273

In terms of momentum, the .45 Colt scores 206,550. It also turned in the highest energy figure. The cartridge scoring lowest in energy, the .38 S&W, also scored the lowest in momentum with 105,850. I would be perfectly willing to wager that the ballisticians of the period, even those favoring big-bores, had no trouble accepting energy figures, since everything seemed to fit very nicely. Note the marked superiority of the .45 Colt. Is it any wonder that it created such a reputation for itself? It was a giant among midgets.

When smokeless powder came along, it brought with it such cartridges as the .30

Luger, .30 Mauser, 9mm Luger and .38 ACP, featuring relatively small, light bullets propelled at relatively high velocities. When this occurred, the fanciers of the big-bores did a double take, because the energy figures of these fast-steppers was higher than those generated by the .41 Long Colt and .44 American, if not the .45 Colt.

It is a bit tough accepting the concept that the .30 Luger, firing a 93-gr. bullet at a velocity of 1,220 and developing 307 foot-pounds of energy is more powerful than the .41 Long Colt, firing a 200-gr. bullet at 730 fps which is good for only 231 fpe.

Is bigger and heavier better than faster? To be quite honest, I don't know and neither does anyone else. But that doesn't keep a lot of people from throwing around opinions as though they were proven facts, etched in solid steel.

A couple of the big-bore's favorite cartridges are the .41 Magnum and the .44 Special. The latter's ballistics show a 246-



gr. bullet measuring .429-inch in diameter as opposed to the .41's 210-gr. bullet that measures .410 inches in diameter. Which is the better stopper? The .41 is superior because it has a much higher velocity.

In truth, when you apply the term stopping power to handguns, you really should substitute the words killing power, since it is all but impossible to separate them. The advocates of big bullets emphasize that there is no need to kill an enemy, only to stop him, and they use Hatcher's formula of relative stopping power to prove this point. Hatcher based some of his assumptions — and that's all they were — on reports of the Thompson-LaGarde study which were published several years after the study was conducted. LaGarde wrote: "The animals invariably dropped to the ground when shot three to five times with the larger caliber Colt's bullets..."

What actually happened in 1904, when one of the cattle selected for testing was shot at a range of three feet with a .455, firing a 218-gr. bullet at a velocity of 801 fps? The animal was initially shot through the lungs. One minute later the creature was again shot through the lungs. Two minutes after the first shot, the beast was shot through the intestines. Approximately a minute later, the poor animal was shot again through the intestines. Finally, after four minutes and 15 seconds with "no particular manifestation of pain or shock," the animal was killed with a hammer.

Another animal was shot through the lungs with a .45 Colt, firing a 250-gr. bullet, slightly flattened at the point. One minute later, it was again shot through the lungs. Still another minute later, it was shot a third time through the lungs. After two minutes and 35 seconds, it was shot through the abdomen and fell, but 10 seconds later, when it was shot a fifth time, it struggled to its feet. Then it fell again, but was trying to regain its feet when it was killed with a hammer.

In the same study, another animal was shot through the lungs with a 92.5-gr. full-jacketed bullet from the .30 Luger. Thirty seconds later, it dropped dead. The bullet completely penetrated the animal and could not be recovered.

These are selected examples, but they seem to be representative. Only 13 animals were shot during the tests, and eight of them were shot with the .455, the .476 and the .45 Colt. Only one was shot with the 9mm Luger, yet the 9mm has been judged a "poor stopper" largely as a result of these tests.

The fabled Thompson-LaGarde study was inexact, unscientific, inconclusive, and

inaccurately reported in later years. But a cult has risen from the reports of that carnage, praising the stopping power of the big-bores. Today such an effort would be laughed off the firing range.

Perhaps the bottom line on the Thompson-LaGarde study was Thompson and LaGarde's recommendations when they wrote the War Department in 1904 suggesting: "...the Board is of the opinion that soldiers armed with pistols and revolvers should be drilled unremittingly in the accuracy of fire, and that the vital parts of the body, their location and distribution in the organism, should be intelligently explained... The Board has been prompted to refer to this point because of the prime importance of decisive shooting at close quarters, and of the large amount of the target area of the human body which offers no hope of stopping an adversary by shock or other immediate results when hit."

Simply, these men had found that no handgun projectile was very effective in terms of stopping power unless a vital area was hit. Thus, accurate shot placement was the key to stopping power.

Every handgun cartridge has, at one time or another, failed to do its job. Nevertheless, I would be interested in learning of documented instances where an individual

not wearing body armor was struck in the torso with a 125-gr. jacketed hollowpoint fired from a .357 Magnum and still returned fire. Virtually every shred of evidence available indicates that this load is about as effective as anyone could rightfully expect from a handgun.

There is a great deal of misinformation being passed off to handgunners today and labeled as factual. There isn't a great deal of credible data available concerning the relative power of handguns. You can, however, chalk up the following as being accurate: (1) There is no such thing as knockdown power as it applies to handguns; (2) accurate bullet placement is the key to stopping power; and (3) momentum is something that Dandy Don talks about on Monday Night Football. ✖

BELOW: If you buy the momentum theory of stopping power you'll probably agree that the old .303 British round is better than the .308 Winchester, for which the FAL is chambered. Photo: B.R. Hughes

BOTTOM: In IPSC competition the customized Colt .45 ACP may be the gun for you. In terms of real-life survival, the choice isn't so clear-cut. Photo: B.R. Hughes



ABOVE LEFT: The Smith & Wesson .44 Magnum is the most powerful handgun readily available today, but it has on occasion failed to stop a determined enemy. Photo courtesy Smith & Wesson

LEFT: Is the 9mm a better stopper than the .44 Special? No one really knows for sure. Photo: B.R. Hughes

NGUYEN CAO KY

Vietnam's Flamboyant Air Marshal Tells His Side of the Story

by Larry Englemann

Controversy has followed Nguyen Cao Ky into retirement as it shadowed his military and political career from the beginning over 30 years ago in Vietnam. A French-trained fighter pilot, the flamboyant, pro-Western Ky became CO of the Vietnamese Air Force after Diem's regime came to an abrupt end in 1963. Riding the tide of Thieu's 1965 military coup, Ky was installed as premier and then elected vice president on Thieu's ticket in 1967. Eclipsed by more adroit politicians, Ky was still a powerful figure when South Vietnam fell.

Ky's fortunes did not improve in the United States. He vainly sought to cast himself as a national figurehead for Vietnamese refugees and dabbled unsuccessfully in small business and real estate in California. However, he did succeed in attracting the attention of syndicated columnist Jack Anderson who accused Ky of spiriting \$8 million to \$10 million in currency and valuables from Saigon in 1975, and characterized him as "a Vietnamese godfather." Unusually vocal among Southeast Asian refugees, Ky has previously spoken to reporters on his political shortcomings, America's part in the communist takeover of Southeast Asia and Anderson's accusations.

SOF presents its readers with Nguyen Cao Ky's thoughts on Vietnam, America, communism and war after a decade of exile.

— The Editors

"It is so very difficult, after ten years, to look back at the history of the Vietnam War and wonder if we could have altered the course of history if we had done things differently. That's difficult to say. Even Richard Nixon couldn't say for sure that, were he president of the United States in 1975, he could have saved South Vietnam. All he could tell me was, 'Well, maybe the situation would have been different.'

"All I can say is that we didn't do the right thing. Suppose we *had* done the right thing at that time. Maybe then the outcome would have been different, maybe not.

"The right thing seemed to be so very simple at the time. That's what made me mad. All of us knew the communists were going to attack Ban Me Thuot in early March, including President Thieu. We knew that they were coming down the Ho Chi Minh trail and were massing for an attack.

"I had a farm about 50 miles south of Ban Me Thuot. One day the province chief came to me and told me that he didn't have enough troops to get rid of the communists, free the district and send supplies along Highway 21. He had one company. And I said, 'And you cannot kick out the communists with one company? What is wrong with you?'

"So I flew back to Saigon to see General Cao Van Vien, the chairman of the Joint General Staff. And I said to him, 'Now this is the situation. What are you going to do?' And he said, 'I don't know. It is up to President Thieu.'

"I said, 'Suppose you give me 20 tanks and two battalions and augment that force with firepower and air support. If you can give me that, I will be in the first tank and I will go to Ban Me Thuot and take it back from the communists. I can take it back. Do you think I can free Ban Me Thuot?'

"Yes, you can do it, Ky.'

"Then let's do it. Right now.'

"But General Vien said he had no power to make decisions like that. He had to ask Mr. Thieu.

"OK. Go and ask him,' I said. 'Tell him that Ky volunteered to lead the attack on Ban Me Thuot.'

"Vien came back to me with an answer. 'Thieu thanks you and he will think about it.'

"President Thieu was afraid. He knew I could do it. And he also knew that if I retook

Ban Me Thuot I would become a hero for the Vietnamese people. Thieu was afraid: not so much of a coup, but of somebody becoming a popular leader. He feared that more than anything else.

"Even before that time, I asked him to give me command of something. Anything. I knew I could command troops. And I knew I could go to the front line and stand there and the troops would stand with me. They would stand and fight with a good leader. But Thieu wouldn't give me command of anything. I was a man without an office. The country was crumbling and I was just a private citizen. Thieu couldn't face me being a leader.

"I moved from my farm to Saigon. As people saw the military situation worsening, they came to me for help. Military and civilian, Catholic and Buddhist, politician and citizen — they all came to me and asked me to do something to reverse the situation, to save the country. But there was nothing I could do.

"Ambassador Graham Martin was watching me very closely. Every time I met with commanding generals or with officers, someone from the U.S. Embassy would visit them afterward and advise them not to listen to me. 'And if anything happens,' they said, 'we'll take care of you and your family. If things don't work out we'll bring you to the United States and we'll provide for you. That is, if you don't listen to him.' They were very precise in their warnings . . . and they warned everyone.

"Well, things didn't work out. And all those people weren't brought to the United

Though Ky admits he had domestic and foreign political weaknesses, charisma and personal addresses of troops — like this 25 June 1967 speech to the politically divided ARVN 1st Division — were instrumental in keeping the peace within the factionalized Vietnamese military. Photo: AP/Wide World





States or taken care of. Now many of those officers look to me for leadership. But it's too late. They realize they should have listened to me and that the promises of Graham Martin were empty.

"Our problems didn't start at Ban Me Thuot, of course. They started long before then. Many of them started with the Paris agreement of 1973 which I was against. Henry Kissinger kept putting pressure on us to make concessions to the communists. Finally, I said, 'All right. We're ready to make concessions. If you can get just one thing for us we'll do everything you want, free elections, new presidential elections, a coalition government, sharing power — everything. But in exchange for all of that we want a total withdrawal of the North Vietnamese Army from our country. Leave the so-called National Liberation Front to us. We can deal with them politically and militarily. We just want the North Vietnamese Army out of our country.'

"And Kissinger said to me, 'Yes, yes,

Ky made a better impression on the press than most Vietnamese leaders, and although he was criticized as a politician, he was respected as a military leader. Ky's wife, Mai, stands behind him as the vice president shows reporters a Soviet-made 14.5mm ZPU-1. Photo: AP/Wide World

yes, of course.' But the NVA got to him and he agreed to let them stay. Why? Because by that time the American people were thinking, 'Well, who cares about the South Vietnamese? All we want is to have an agreement and to get our signature on a piece of paper and to get our prisoners back.'

"The Paris agreement was a sellout — a death sentence. But it was also partly our fault. If we had a really strong popular leader, we could have done what was necessary. But we didn't. We had Thieu.

"Right after the Paris agreement was signed I knew that if nothing changed in South Vietnam and if Mr. Thieu stayed in

power with no new leadership in the military, the North Vietnamese would launch a new offensive in two years. *Newsweek* magazine published an interview with me at that time in which I predicted that the communists would attack.

"But the Americans didn't believe me. They thought I was jealous of Thieu who was number one with them at that time. They pointed out that South Vietnam had one million men in the armed forces who would be strong enough to stand up to the communists. But even then I knew that the leadership of the government and the armed forces was rotten. You can have a million men in the armed forces, two million even, but they are not good without good leaders. An army of that size needs five or ten good commanders. If we had five generals like Patton, MacArthur or myself, then we would never have lost in Vietnam. Never.

"The Americans did so many things wrong. I told them from the start that to win the war in Vietnam they would have to bring

it home to the North. I told President Johnson in 1965 and 1966 to bomb the dikes around Hanoi during the rainy season. Don't ask me why he didn't listen to me. At the Guam Conference in 1967 I proposed to Johnson that I would resign from the government, form an invasion force and lead it into North Vietnam. The force would be 100 percent Vietnamese — no Americans whatsoever. 'Just let me go North with two crack divisions. All I need is your supply and your fire support. At the same time you must mine and blockade Haiphong. Bomb the dikes, too.' In that way we could have destroyed the will of the North to fight.

"Johnson was afraid of what the Chinese might do. All of the Americans seemed worried about the Chinese. Dean Rusk was obsessed with them. It was always, 'What will the Chinese do? What will the Chinese do?' The Chinese wouldn't do anything. Vietnam was never going to be like Korea. The Vietnamese hate the Chinese. The Vietnamese communists would not have asked the Chinese to send men to help them. What happened after the North Vietnamese victory of 1975? They went to war with China! That shows that I was right. There was always great friction between the Chinese communists and the Vietnamese communists. But the Americans didn't believe that. They didn't listen.

"If we had invaded the North we could have won the war in two months. Late in the war the Americans thought they could win by destroying the Ho Chi Minh trail. But they were wrong. You cannot destroy it, even by bombing it 24 hours a day. There were a thousand Ho Chi Minh trails in the thick of the jungle. There was just one way to stop the North; to invade them and go directly to the source of the problem. We lost the war because we didn't fight it the way we should have.

"Vietnam was a military war first. What are the communists without armed forces? Their political cadres could do absolutely nothing without their armies. Look at El Salvador today. Without the military forces using terrorism and murder, they could never get any power. After all, what can communism promise anyone? Nothing. They must always win militarily. Oh, the communists talk about 'liberation' and they say they fight a 'war of liberation,' but what does that mean? That they seek to kill their enemies! Then we have to contend with them with guns, not with politics. You cannot fight guns with politics. A war with the communists is a military struggle first. You should never forget that.

"We could have fought the communists forever in Binh Dinh province or in the Delta unless we went to the source of their power in the North. If we just could have invaded the North and destroyed their desire to defeat us, we might have safely built a free democratic society in the South. But how could we build a free democratic society when they were trying to overthrow us all the time with their armies? When someone is trying to kill you every day, how can you



TOP: Although Ky hated all communists he realized the political advantages of using former Viet Cong as propaganda to further South Vietnam's cause. Ky (right) gives a pep talk to a new batch of VC deserters. Photo: AP/Wide World

ABOVE: The war is over and Ky's side lost. But he hasn't lost interest in the conflict that forced him to flee his country. Ky now lives in California where he spends much of his time reliving the days when he was vice president of South Vietnam. Photo: AP/Wide World

build a free society?

"If American politicians who came to Vietnam had listened to us, then perhaps the war might have been won. But what did American politicians ever really know about Vietnam? They came to us for three days or so, and spent most of their time drinking and chatting in a hotel room.

"The American journalists were fair to us most of the time. They saw what the Americans were doing in Vietnam and they wrote

about that. But when they saw the Americans taking charge of the war, they saw us as puppets of the American government and their reports became propaganda for the communists. To the press we were not nationalists or anti-communists. We were just working for the Americans and our identity was lost.

"On 21 April I watched President Thieu resign on television but I didn't feel sad for him. I remember sitting with my friends and watching him cry. We all laughed at him. He blamed what was happening on everyone but himself, but we all knew that it was his fault. After he resigned, we didn't want him to leave the country and we planned on arresting him if he tried. We watched for him at the airport, but we missed him. He got away.

"Then Vice President Huong became president for a couple of days. As soon as he was sworn in I flew my helicopter to the presidential palace to ask him to name me as chief of staff. Not only had Thieu resigned and run away but so had the members of the



joint general staff. I told him what the situation was and I asked him to let me lead the military forces. He had someone who could lead, but he refused me. It was that simple. I don't know why. All I knew for sure is that no one was in charge. It was probably too late for anything then. Too late even for me and I couldn't stage a coup and take over the government since that would only cause more confusion. It was a mess inside and outside the government.

"Huong only lasted as president a few days. Then General Minh took over and I became concerned for the safety of myself and my family. I suspected he would try to arrest me and anyone close to me. I told my wife she had to go because I was more afraid of General Minh than the communists. I was afraid of him because he was acceptable to the communists. He was their man in Saigon. Our president was acceptable to the enemy and worked for the communists now. He was really their president. He even had a brother who was a high-ranking offi-

Near the top, but already on the way down, Vice President Ky dons tiger-skin-adorned helmet during 1969 acceptance ceremony for U.S. A-37s turned over to Vietnamese Air Force. Friction between Ky and President Thieu would cause Ky to begin opposition campaign for 1971 elections.
Photo: AP/Wide World

cer in the North Vietnamese Army.

"I had a problem getting my wife and family to safety because no plans were made for them to leave. On the morning of 28 April we went to Tansonnhut to see if we could get them on an airplane. Fortunately, the guards recognized us and my family flew out that morning.

"I stayed, planning to fight on. I wanted to turn Saigon into another Stalingrad. It was a realistic plan. I would try to reorganize the forces that remained defending Saigon, get out all the women and children, and then fight for every inch of ground in the city. But we needed supplies from our

American friends. I asked Erich von Marbod, an assistant secretary from the U.S. Defense Department in Saigon, if we could depend on the Americans to give us military supplies to continue to fight in Vietnam. All I got was a sharp 'No!'

"When the NVA finally entered Saigon and our soldiers saw them they were disappointed that we had run away without a fight. Everyone knew that if we had supplies we could have fought for Saigon—we could have stabilized a front and done far better than the Cambodians did in Phnom Penh.

"People thought that the NVA beat us because they were highly motivated and tactically brilliant. That's absurd. If I am Muhammed Ali and you are a little guy, is it brilliant tactics if I beat up on you? Of course not. They beat us in the end because they were bigger, stronger and better supplied. Their friends were more faithful than our friends. When they came up against Thieu and his military cronies they were



coming up against small guys and anyone could have beat them. But the Americans never saw that. American politicians liked Thieu. When they came to Vietnam they all wanted to hear bright and beautiful things about how the war was going. They got that from Mr. Thieu. Someone once asked Ellsworth Bunker what he thought about me. He said he felt more comfortable with Thieu. All they wanted was someone who could make them feel comfortable, not uncomfortable. 'Comfortable' is the central word for understanding their view of Vietnamese politics.

"So, to a large degree, the American support of Thieu kept me from coming to power in Vietnam. In Mr. Thieu the Americans got the leader they wanted. He wasn't a leader, he was a tool. If I had been in power I would have made them feel uncomfortable until we won the war.

"What happened was a sort of mutual praise between American military advisers who came to Vietnam, not to win, but 'to

get some combat experience' and the Vietnamese military men they worked with to get that experience. Every American officer had to make a report on a weekly or a monthly basis about the progress that was being made in the war against the communists. And when he made that report, the American officer would praise an outfit as being the number one outfit of all the Vietnamese forces and its commanding general 'the tiger of the Vietnamese Army.' I heard that a hundred times. He was usually no tiger, but a coward. As a result, the Vietnamese general was rewarded and he, in turn, decorated the American adviser with the highest Vietnamese decoration possible. The American government thought that they had tiger generals in the field. They didn't.

"When I was commander of the Air Force, General William Westmoreland came to see me at my headquarters. He asked me how the Vietnamese armed forces could be improved. And I told him that we

should get rid of all the corrupt and old generals and let the younger generals command. But I could see that Westmoreland couldn't understand what I was talking about. I think I made him uncomfortable.

"My problem as a military leader was that I was never a good politician and not like Thieu's favorites. I treated my men like equals, like comrades in arms. Any branch of the service could tell you that. All of the soldiers said, 'Ky is our number one man.' I was the only general who really knew what was in the minds of the soldiers. I knew the commanding officers, the strong and the weak, the corrupt and the honest, the tigers and the cowards. I knew that no matter how many men you have in arms, if you do not have good generals and leaders, you cannot win.

"If the Americans could have guaranteed us supplies, we could have stood and fought at the end and the soldiers would have stood with me. But all we had were our bare hands. If we had stood they would have suffered for their victories. It would have taken five or six fighting divisions for them to enter Saigon but we could have stopped them. We could have stopped them at Xuan Loc, outside the city. But we didn't.

"By 29 April most of the military commanders had left the country. I was at Tansonnhut with some of my friends trying to see if there was anything we could do. But there was not. We were in the big empty military compound and my comrades finally told me it was time to go. 'If they capture you they will kill you.' We left the next morning.

"The problem was deciding *where* to go. We had made no plans to leave. All we had was a helicopter with a short range. We certainly couldn't go to Thailand. But we knew if we stayed we would be killed for sure. So we took off and headed south toward the sea. Then on the emergency radio frequency we called for help. We set out our SOS. The radio operator on the Midway caught our signal and he called us and told us to come to the Midway. But before that second we did not know where to go. We just headed for the sea. I had never planned to leave Vietnam.

"As we flew out to the Midway I felt an emptiness. A profound emptiness. There was no conversation on the way out.

"When we landed on the Midway they didn't know it was me. And just before we landed — as we were approaching, I took off my pistol and put it on the seat. All of my aides and officers then did the same thing. We had fought side by side with the Americans for so many years — so many lives had been lost — and I did not want them, in this sad end, to have to disarm me. So we left our weapons in the helicopter.

"We were only on the Midway for about 15 minutes. Then they put us on another helicopter and flew us to the Blue Ridge. When we landed on the Blue Ridge a young guy on the deck was not aware of who we

Continued on page 116



CONTRACT IN OMAN

Seconded to the Sultan

by Peter Shelldrake

“RIGHT, Gentlemen,” said the commanding officer of the Muscat Regiment as he stepped up onto the dais beside the blanket-covered mapboard, under a hand-lettered sign reading “Op Diana” in English and Arabic. “Settle down and I’ll fill you in.”

The intelligence officer removed the blanket to reveal a large-scale map of a stretch of desert mountains called *jebel*. He rapidly ran through the main features of the ground it covered. It was an area at the foot of the *jebel* escarpment above the town of Salalah in the Dhofar province of Oman. Dominating the map was the gash of the Wadi Jarsis and above that a series of ridges culminating in a large feature marked only as Point 880.

“That’s good,” Kadra Bux, the company commander of A company, to which I was attached, whispered in my ear. “We know that area like our own backsides.”

“Orders,” said the CO in a formal voice. “Situation: Now that the *khareef* [monsoon] has lifted the GOC [general officer commanding] intends that the *jaysh* [army] goes back up onto the *jebel* and stays there. We are going to seize Point 880 and establish a platoon base. This base will not be withdrawn when the *khareef* returns, but will be manned and used as a jumping-off point for offensive operations.”

A buzz of excitement ran around the room in the regiment’s operational base at Um al Guarif. This was the news these soldiers of the Sultanate of Oman had been waiting to hear.

For some years now the southern province of the Sultanate, Dhofar, had been in the grip of a communist revolt backed with unusual impartiality by both Peking and Moscow. The rebels — known to themselves as the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG, now called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman or PFLO) and to the Omanis simply as the Adoo — had enjoyed initial

Jebali headman parades through Salalah.



OMAN SITREP

Students of contract soldiering know Oman because the sultan still hires a few foreign soldiers to train, advise and even command his troops. Otherwise, it is a little-known corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

Oman has largely been cut off from the rest of the Arab world, since it is physically separated from the centers of Middle Eastern power and culture by the sterile desert of the Empty Quarter. More accessible by ancient Indian Ocean sea routes than most of the Arab world, Oman is more closely related historically and economically to Africa and South Asia than it is to the center of the Moslem world. Such physical isolation from its religious brothers has been exacerbated by political problems.

Monarchic, friendly to the West, closely allied to prerevolutionary Iran and a backer of Sadat’s peace with Israel, Sultan Qaboos bin Said has been publicly marked as an enemy of the Islamic Revolution movement and denounced by most

A 25-pounder gunpit on the *jebel*. Verdant surroundings are typical of period just after the *khareef*.

radical Arab governments at one time or another. Despite the friction between Oman and the rest of the Arab world, Britain and the United States will probably maintain aid levels appropriate to Omani security. The sultan has been a reliable friend, and Oman still holds an exclave peninsula that dominates the strategic Straits of Hormuz.

Although Oman has received substantial aid from other nations, its balance of trade has been favorable. The economy depends on exports of oil, fruit, fish and tobacco.

Guerrilla activity of a Marxist-Leninist turn has been a problem since the 1960s, but a 16,000-man volunteer army and over 3,000 tribal militia (*Firqat*) have turned the tide. U.S. aid to artillery units and British Army Training Teams have contributed to the Omani victory, but low-intensity guerrilla activity continues in remote areas.

successes. They had forced the Sultan's troops off the *jebel* and established a measure of control over the indigenous people of the area, the Jebalis.

The Jebalis, speaking an almost unknown language and subsisting by raising cattle, were pretty well helpless in the face of these ruthless men who were able to move at will about the *jebel*, worried only by the few jets of the Sultan's Air Force. During the *khareef* season the *jebel* was covered by a thick blanket of mist and even this threat disappeared. The army had never felt strong enough to maintain a presence on the *jebel* during the *khareef*, but now the general at last was prepared to give the go-ahead.

The Sultan's little army, consisting of a weak infantry brigade supported by some antiquated artillery, was in good heart. It was well-led by local officers supported by some contract and loan service British soldiers, and a number of Baluch officers and men. The former were not nearly as many as the well-oiled propaganda machine of the Left would have the world believe. Their numbers amounted to perhaps three or four to a battalion, with a rather higher proportion in the artillery and on the staff. Baluch, of whom Kadra Bux was one, were recruited from the warlike people of Baluchistan which had until recently belonged to Oman.

The army was now well-equipped, although supplies were never available in vast quantities, and morale was high. The new young Sultan, Qaboos bin Said, had ousted his reactionary father in a nearly bloodless coup in 1970. He now had the unswerving loyalty of his people and was determined to rid Oman of the scourge of communism.

An increasing number of the Adoo were prepared to come over to the army's side, and these were now being turned against their former comrades under the leadership of a handful of SAS troops known as the BATT (British Army Training Team) or more irreverently as Batmen.

I was at this time a young subaltern in the Royal Artillery and had volunteered for service in Oman because I was bored with training recruits, and the Sultan's army offered the chance of active service and promotion, even if only to acting rank. I was employed as a forward observation officer (FO) in B battery of the Oman artillery which was commanded by a contract officer called John Williams, and equipped with old British 25-pounder guns. Operation Diana was to be my first real taste of action.

"Enemy Forces:" continued the CO, "The Int boys tell us that at the moment the local Adoo are dispersed among the Bayts and the area is only held by a few militiamen. However, we've heard that one before, and I think it's a safe bet that they can regroup within about two hours

of detecting us in the area. This group is known to have a pair of 82mm mortars and a 75mm recoilless. They have also used a Shpagin [DShK-38] recently to support a raid on the airfield.

"Own Forces, Atts and Dets: Attached we have a group of guides from the Firqat Salahadin with two Batmen. In direct support we have B battery, and in reserve, A and C batteries. B battery is being reinforced with a troop of 5.5-inch guns. In addition the air force will put up jets at first light. There are no detachments.

"Mission: The Muscat Regiment will seize Point 880 and establish a firm base.

"Execution, General Outline: A company will secure HLZ (helicopter landing zone) on the summit of Point 880. They will be reinforced by B and C companies with battalion HQ and the mortar platoon as soon as the HLZ is secure.

"Tasks, A company: A company will make a forced march up Wadi Jarsis tonight, and seize the summit of Point 880 at first light tomorrow. You will RV with the Firqat guides at Ayn Jarsis at 2100 tonight. They will guide you past the Jebali *bayts* [dwellings] in the wadi. Once you have the HLZ secure B and C companies will be flown in."

The CO then went on to detail the rest of the battalion's tasks, but my mind was running over the task of providing artillery fire support for the company's attack. Some of the details sank through my thoughts; the approach march would be on light equipment, and the remainder of our kit would be brought up by the mortar platoon. The rest of the details did not affect me directly.

After the O (orders) group broke up I had a brief word with John during which he told me that I could use our own battery and A battery, but that he intended to use C battery as part of the brigade deception plan in a fireplan away to the east. Of course if we ran into problems they could rapidly be switched back to support our task. He would join us on Point 880 with battalion HQ and the other FO of the battery would come up with B company. He then wished me luck and departed to talk to the CO of the artillery regiment and let him know what we were up to.

Kadra Bux was in a buoyant mood. He was an experienced soldier who wore the medals of Britain, Pakistan and Oman on his chest and who filled the young soldiers of his company with quiet confidence. He had much the same effect on me. We discussed the night's activities and decided that I would prepare a fireplan for the march in, and for the attack at first light.

The support for the approach march would be silent, that is to say that the guns would follow up the targets but would not fire unless we hit trouble. In this way we could expect fire on the

ground within seconds of calling for it. The attack would be noisy, that is, the guns would fire on a timed schedule from H hour. We then selected the targets from the map and gave them nicknames that were easily said in both English and Arabic so that junior officers and NCOs could easily call for fire on them.

The only problem with all this was that the relationship of the map to the ground could only be called optimistic. However, we were both agreed that the most important thing to do in the event of trouble was to get rounds on the ground and then adjust them as needed. Having agreed on the targets I then passed them on to the three gun batteries.

RIGHT: Party in full swing. Soldiers use empty jerrycans as improvised drums.

BELOW: The sultan's army on the *jebel* during the *khareef* (monsoon). Restricted visibility makes maneuvers quite difficult.





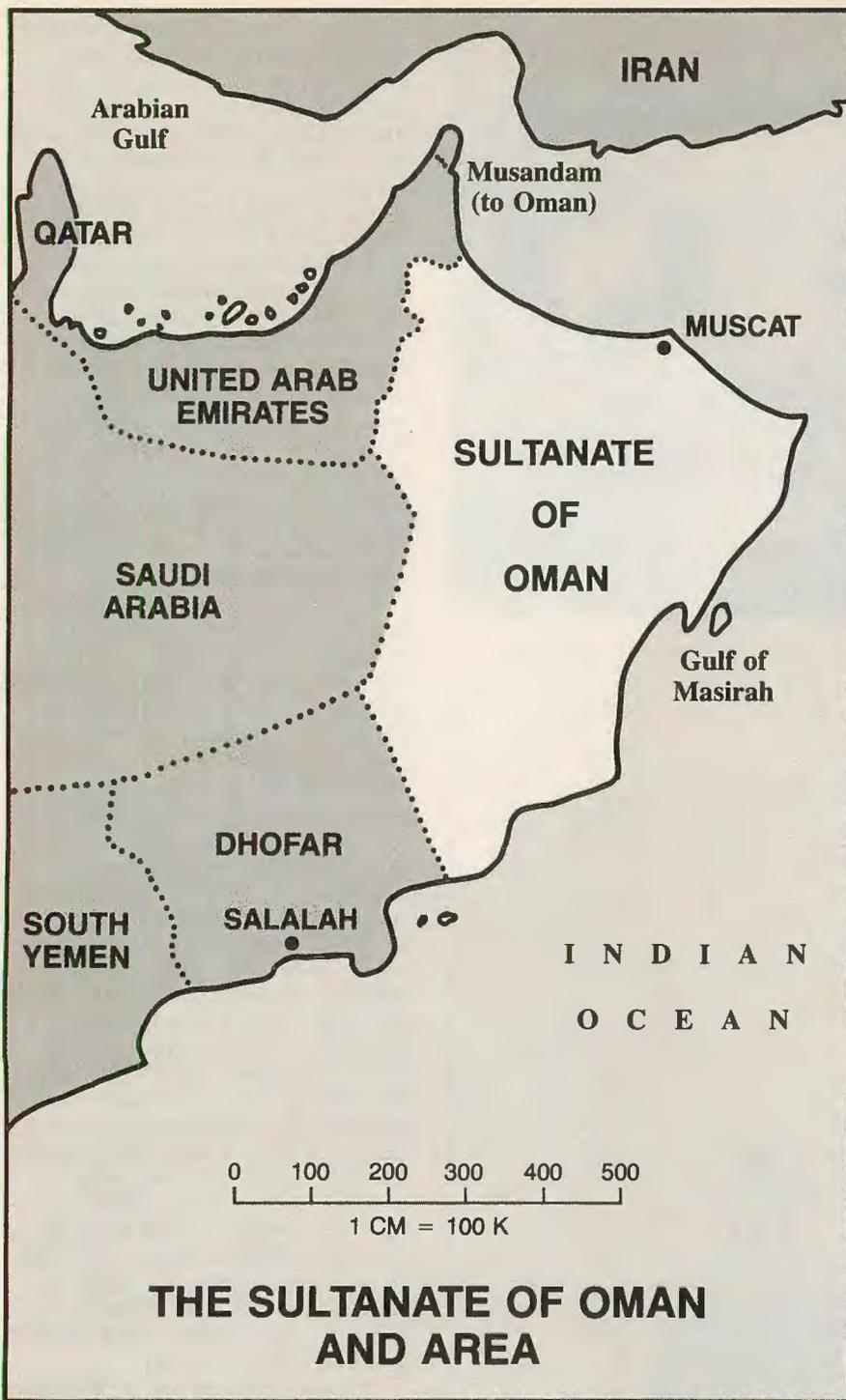
After the company O group, at which Kadra Bux stressed to his platoon commanders the importance of briefing their men well and the vital role that absolute silence would play in the night's work, I returned to my *sangar* on the edge of the company position to talk to my OP party and check my kit. My OP party consisted of two Arab soldiers — my assistant, an *areef* (corporal), whose job it was to help with the observation of fire, and a *jundi* radio operator who carried and operated the set on the battery net. Communications with the company commander were either by word of mouth or on a small hand-held walkie-talkie. These two were less than happy at the prospect of a seven-kilometer walk in the dark coupled with a climb of nearly 900 meters, but otherwise pleased to escape the cramped conditions of the base.

Checking my own kit took rather less time than it would in a more lavishly equipped army. I would be wearing the standard uniform of the *jaysh*: khaki shirt and slacks blotched with a random pattern of self-applied green dye, a dark green headcloth called a *shamarg* wrapped around my head in turban fashion, and soft suede desert boots. My personal equipment consisted of a pair of binoculars slung around my neck and tucked into my shirt, a prismatic compass in a pouch on my belt and a map. Also on my belt I carried two metal water bottles, an old denim Denison smock strapped to the back, and a Sarbe radio to talk to the jets. In my pockets were a flashlight, a swiss army knife and my watch. My weapon was a 7.62mm FN FAL rifle, for which I carried five full magazines of 20 rounds, one in the rifle and four in a pouch on my belt. Taped to the cord of my ID discs were four morphine syrettes. The remainder of my kit, which consisted of little more than a clean shirt and underclothes, my shaving kit and a sleeping bag, was packed into my Bergen and left with Mohammed Zahir, the mortar officer, with a plea that he not let it out of his sight.

Last light that night was at 1930. Just after that the company set out from Hedgehog Bravo at the foot of the *jebel* near the point where the wadi debouched onto the flat Salalah plain. We had been in the habit during the *khareef* of taking our vehicles up to Bravo during the afternoon and patrolling the wire that ran around Salalah. The Adoo watchers in the hills no doubt thought that we were about to do the same again.

First platoon in the lead crossed the two kilometers of open plain into the scrub around the spring at Ayn Jarsis in arrowhead formation without incident and secured the area. The platoon commander reported on the walkie-talkie that there was no sign of the Firqat. Kadra Bux and I with our operators and a section of 2 platoon moved up to join him. At 2100





we decided that we would have to move in, and duly received the shock of a lifetime when a bearded Batman loomed out of the darkness just at the point when we had decided that we were going to have to find our own way up the *jebel*.

The Batman, who simply introduced himself as "Bill," told us that he had just walked down from near Point 880 and that there was no sign of movement from either the Adoo or the Jebalis. We then set off at a brisk walk up the narrow track that wound its way up the side of the wadi. On either side the thick scrub that had flourished during the *khareef* hemmed us in. It was impossible to deploy off the track, and we were dependent on the ex-Adoo who were our guides.

A number of army patrols had come to grief on these steep tracks before and to say that we were all nervous would be an understatement. However, if we were to be in position by first light we had to keep up a rapid pace and we had to trust to surprise and the Firqat to take us through. Our strongest ally was the Adoos' belief that we would not try anything like this.

Twice during the night we passed near Jebali villages, little circles of domed wicker, grass and cloth huts more reminiscent of Africa than Arabia. On both occasions the tension mounted until, with a sigh, Kadra Bux heard the two clicks from the walkie-talkie that indicated that the last platoon was past without incident, and I could relax my fingers from their death grip on the handset on which I was ready to call for artillery fire to extricate them.

At last the company came out onto the rolling grasslands that formed the plateau above the Salalah plain. Here Kadra Bux called a halt for the first time since we had left the valley. Two and a half hours had passed and we were all dripping with sweat despite the cool night air. The platoons spread themselves out into all-round defense and lay down for a glorious fifteen-minute pause. Bill, Kadra Bux and I checked our compasses and maps. Bill told us that the last stage of the approach would not take more than another two hours. Cautiously we continued across the plain. The grass was almost waist-high in places and fragrant with flowers. The platoons moved out into company arrowhead and in the moonlight the soldiers stood out like figures on a sand table. It seemed impossible that no one would see us and raise the alarm, but the rest of the march also passed without incident.

An hour before first light we were spread out in dead ground below the objective. Kadra Bux had gone around his platoons and placed the sections in their attack formations himself. As he returned I could see the gleam of his teeth in the dark as he



Muscat Regiment picket waits near Diana 2 during the dry season.

grinned at me and whispered, "This time we catch the bastards with their pants down, eh?" I devoutly hoped so. Four years of training at the Royal School of Artillery in Larkhill, England, and on the dank plains of West Germany were about to be tested for the first time. Funnily enough, the terrain was very similar to Salisbury Plain on which the ranges of the school stand.

H hour was at 0500. I checked my watch 50 times in the next hour but the hands never seemed to move. My two soldiers appeared to have gone to sleep. At 0450 I checked for the 100th time that the radio was on the correct frequency. At 0455 I shook the two dozing Omanis awake. They grinned and stretched like cats. With a minute to go we stood up as the radio came to life with a preliminary crackle: "Hello, 21, this is two. Shoot on Quebec 247, 37, over." The first rounds were on their way and would land in 37 seconds, the moment of truth for our navigation. Overhead came the familiar screech of the shells, rather closer than Larkhill would have approved of, I thought. Four hundred meters in front of us the last darkness was torn away and immediately replaced by the blackness of high explosive smoke.

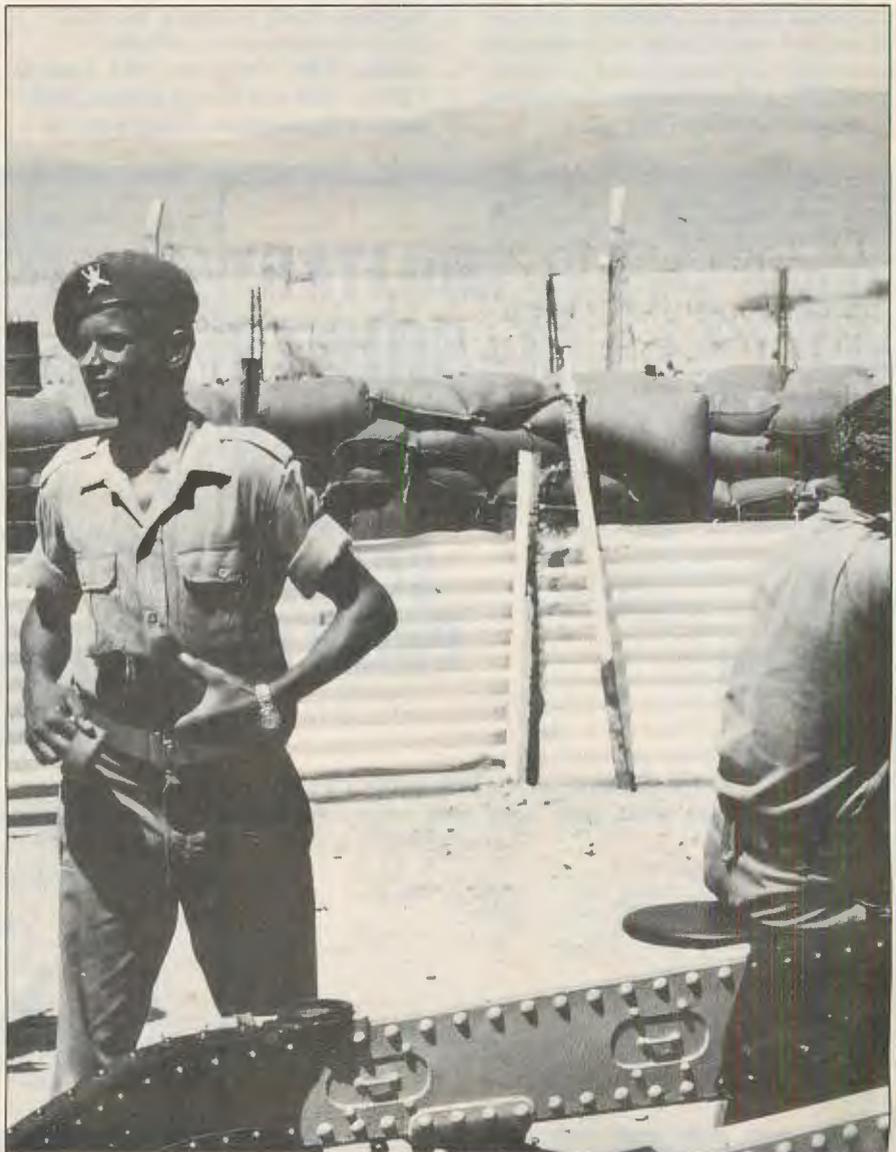
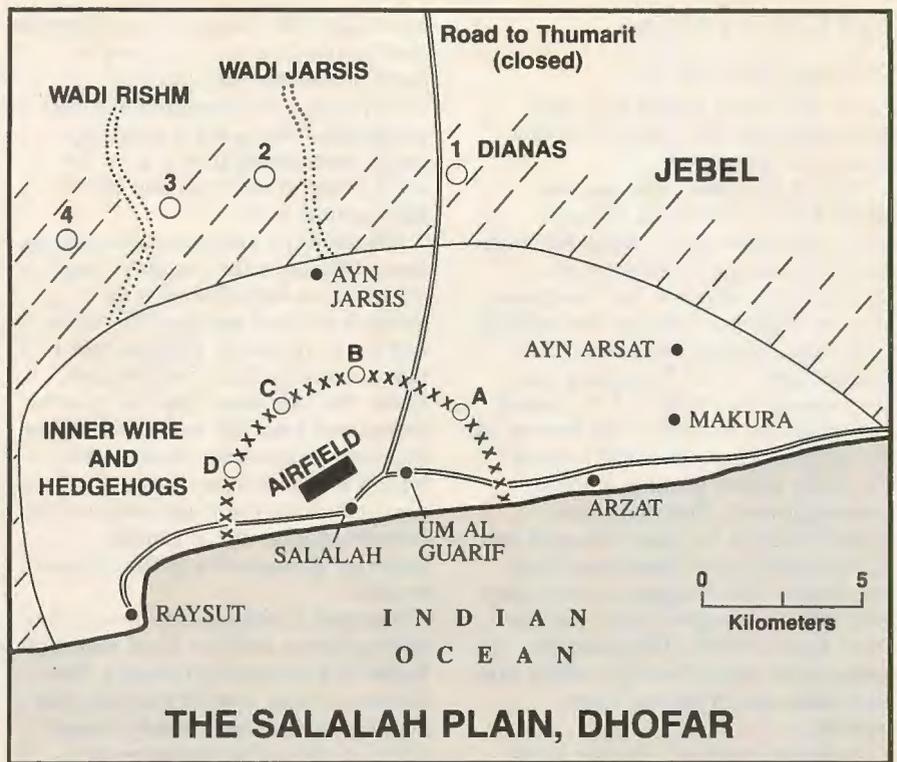
On both sides of me the Omani soldiers were on their feet and walking forward. Shells continued to land on the crest of the hill in front of us, 250 meters away now. I ordered the guns to: "Add 100" again. Still no sign of movement on the crest. Perhaps there was nobody here.

Suddenly the crack of a single shot followed immediately the rattle of an AK-47. The right-hand lead platoon checked and a GPMG came into action on the flank. Two sections of riflemen ran forward. There was a cry of "Qunbula [grenade]!" followed by a sharp crack. The AK fell silent.

Kadra Bux set off toward the scene followed by me and our operators. As we ran the platoon commander waved to us. The resistance on Point 880 was over. I ordered "check firing" to the guns. Our casualties were one soldier wounded. Two Adoo lay in a small *sangar* looking very small and deflated in death; a teenage Jebali boy crouched clutching his torn shoulder and wondering what we would do to him. Two of Bill's Firqat were quietly reassuring him.

Twenty minutes later the first of the helicopters clattered onto the reverse slope of the hill and the soldiers of B company joined ours. "Diana Two" had been established. It would not be abandoned now until the war was over. That would take some time, but the first steps had been taken. The Adoo now knew that they were not inviolate in their mountain fastness, but most importantly, so did the Jebalis. ✕

Soldiers of the Oman Artillery practice gun drill on a British 25-pounder field gun.



MAC ATTACK

Continued from page 57

cover. The hand strap's loop has been enlarged and a less noisy Dot fastener is employed.

Most of the other changes are found down in the lower receiver group. The sear catch spring has been altered to another configuration. Positive stops dimpled into the lower receiver body now prevent the selector lever from rotating more than 180 degrees. The "FULL" marking has been changed to "SMG." A U-shaped loop has been welded to the bottom of the butt, which can now be rotated out of the closed position without pressing inward. The magazine release catch is no longer knurled and is more difficult to manipulate than ever before. The magazine well is now welded to the trigger guard, not the lower receiver body. Dropping the weapon will surely bend the pistol grip assembly away from the lower receiver.

The most dramatic change is the adoption of a Zytel nylon 32-round magazine body and follower. Zytel is glass-reinforced plastic, impervious to water and petroleum-based products. It should be ideal for this application. However, the design has gone

backward. The Walther's two-position feed system has been dropped in favor of a single-position feed configuration that resulted in many stoppages. That's not a surprising result considering that it does the same thing in the Sten and MP40 submachine guns.

Disassembly procedures remain as before. Remove the magazine and clear the weapon. Remove the receiver pin and separate the upper and lower receivers. Pull the bolt to the rear and pull out the cocking knob. The bolt assembly can then be withdrawn from the rear of the upper receiver. Depress the stock latch button and withdraw the stock assembly from the lower receiver. No further disassembly is usually required. Reassemble in the reverse order.

We fired 1,500 rounds through our test specimen and the Zytel magazine began to fail after 800 rounds. The magazine body started to bulge, the feed lips spread and rounds began popping out of the magazine at inappropriate moments. The magazine body is simply too thin. The test ammunition included reloads, PMC 115-grain FMJ, Federal 115-gr. JHP and Czech military ball surplus ammunition. There were no

other stoppages except those attributable to the magazine.

But after 1,200 rounds the bolt's sear notch and its corresponding contact surface on the sear are peened severely, as is the feed ramp where it is overridden by the bolt. None of these components have been properly heat-treated. A runaway gun was the final result. Now you just insert a fresh magazine, pull the trigger and wait for all 32 rounds to cycle through the weapon. In addition, the buttstock now collapses in your face with each burst sequence and the receiver pin lock usually drops to the ground.

The cyclic rate and all other handling characteristics remain the same. If you like to throw lead all over the scenery and listen to sounds akin to Hitler's Zipper (the MG42 GPMG), then be my guest. Class 3 dealers can purchase an M11/9mm SMG for \$218 complete with one magazine, loader, hand strap and cleaning rod. As for me, these ghastly little guns hold no allure. In my opinion, they have already done far too much to blacken the image of full-auto weapons collecting to ever receive any praise from me.

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also available from S.W.D., Inc. It uses the same 32-rd. Zytel magazine and the cyclic rate is reported to be considerably lower. It was not tested. ✕

CAV IN THE JUNGLE

Continued from page 73

everything was okay, that we were headed for an NDP and he could return with the back haul that evening.

As I finished transmitting, the first RPGs hit to our front. Our 52-ton tank was a sitting duck for an RPG at 20 meters. *Return fire and move.* Morrow did the moving, and as soon as the enemy bunker was below us, the M48 jitterbugged down hard.

As we settled into the bunker, I turned and saw to my horror that we were the only tank to have moved forward. Sgt. Brock had started to move with me, but when the tank behind him moved to his right, it jerked back to the left and climbed up the right side of Brock's tank, tearing the fender and sponson boxes. Brock yelled and screamed every profanity he could think of.

I quickly backed up and got the remainder of my platoon on line and began to move forward gradually. RPG fire slackened, with most of the rounds hitting the ground in front of the tanks. The NVA began to bolt and run, but AK fire was still heavy and spattering off the turret and hull. A burst cut the air by my head, and I spun in the cupola in time to see an infantryman pitch violently backward — a hole through the front of his helmet.

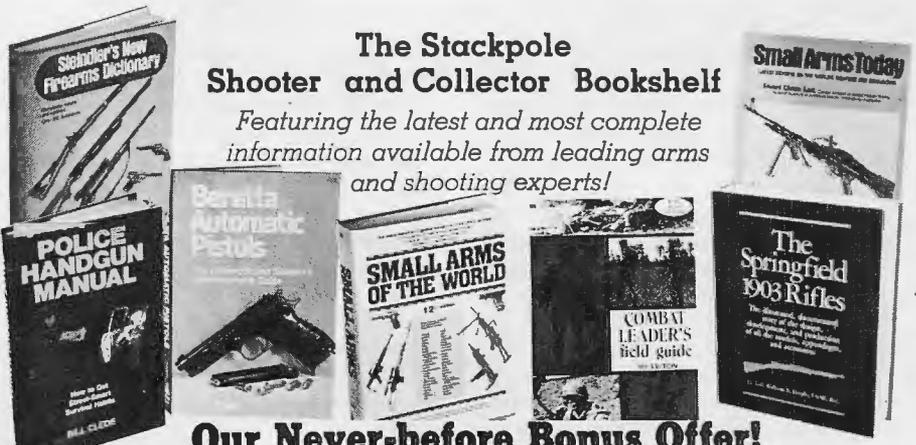
While my first platoon was assaulting on line, Capt. Wyse and 2nd platoon leader, 1st Lt. Bob Murphy, were attacking from the left with Murphy's four tanks in an effort to force retreating NVA across a small clearing southeast of the base camp. Within minutes after the initial contact, Major John C. Bahnsen, the air cav troop commander, was on station over us on the company frequency, helping both our tanks on the ground and his gunship pilots find targets. He directed me to have two of my vehicles cut a swath to the south and east of the base camp area in an attempt to isolate it.

This swath-cutting tactic, developed in the 11th Cav, was one that I questioned. It took too long to execute, and tanks frequently threw tracks and were left isolated. Nevertheless we started.

Meanwhile, Murphy and his tanks kept up their attack. As we pressed the assault, Bahnsen and the air cav troop pilots reported that several NVA were fleeing to the southeast and were being engaged by the Cobras. Infantrymen fired a few last rounds into surviving bunkers.

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We took no prisoners. By 1630, it was over.

The area had been cleared of all trees and bamboo. Intermingled with the broken branches were bodies of NVA soldiers clad in their gray-green uniforms and Ho Chi Minh sandals. Accurate body counts were impossible; we could count only those we could see. We never had any way of knowing how many were buried in their bunkers after they had been jitterbugged by the M48s.

Delta Company had been lucky — only three men wounded. One of them was Yaeger, the radio mechanic, who had been slashed across the back by a jagged RPG fragment that cut all the way through his flak jacket. The infantry platoon had not been as fortunate; four of their men had been killed and several wounded. Almost all of the casualties occurred during the first furious seconds of the ambush when we were hit by the anti-tank rockets. I never again kidded any of the grunts about making a good RPG stand-off when they sat around the turret.

It was still light when choppers came in to pick up the wounded and the poncho-wrapped bodies. Hot chow was hooked in and we settled into our perimeter. Our position was still populated by a half-dozen NVA dead.

As darkness fell, we tightened the perimeter by backing the tanks and

ACAVs into a circle until they almost touched — an iron-clad night position about 75 meters in diameter.

I was sitting on the back deck of my tank talking to Capt. Wyse and rehashing the events of the day. His tank was next to mine. Neither of us was taking much interest in the flashlight-illuminated activities around an enemy tunnel entrance thought to be abandoned, but suddenly a blinding flash and explosion ripped the air, and the rattle of AK fire punctuated the peaceful evening.

A voice yelled, "They're coming out!"

I dove for the flares laid out on top of the turret and slammed the detonator down hard. It seemed forever before it burst. The dim, flickering flare light overhead shrouded everything with an amber hue that seemed to end abruptly at the dark outer reaches of the perimeter. Men were running in all directions, yelling and firing. Other flares burst overhead within seconds. I looked over at Capt. Wyse's tank. An NVA soldier was trying to climb up its rear track. Jug saw him just in time to empty an entire magazine into him from his CAR-15. The perimeter opened up with machine-gun fire to the outside to discourage a coordinated attack.

Second Platoon medic, Glenn "Doc" Clark, was one of the frozen figures caught in the light of the first flare. He

became a character in one of the mini-dramas within the perimeter. When the flare exploded, he was almost face to face with an NVA soldier armed with an AK. Only when his hand hit empty leather did he remember he had loaned his .45 to someone that afternoon. Before the enemy could fire, Sgt. Brock saved the medic by putting a round in the enemy's chest. The battle within the perimeter was over in a few minutes.

The three NVA soldiers were miraculously gunned down inside our perimeter. Our only casualty came from the grenade blast — a leg wound sustained by one of the Big Red One troopers. Most of us knew he would never walk on two legs again. We radioed for a Medevac but, once overhead, he refused to land in the small clearing. An air cav troop pilot braved the darkness and trees to take out the wounded man. As the chopper struggled clear in the darkness, the rotor blades twanged against the branches.

They made it.

Everyone was exhausted, but no one slept. The next morning we placed a cratering charge in the tunnel and Delta Company moved on. A short time later, the powerful charge erupted, and we turned in our turrets to see the smoke and dust drift over the jungle treetops punctuating the end of another firefight. Of the three companies involved in

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Operation Twinkle Toes, only ours made contact. This short but intense firefight scenario was to be replayed time and time again by the men of the 11th Cav.

We found the bastards, and we piled on. ✘

.44 SPECIAL BACK-UP

Continued from page 69

inch (0.003-0.008 inch is the permitted gap range).

All of the action parts were polished to reduce "loading" at the end of the double-action stroke, just before the break. The double-action pull weight was reduced from 12 pounds to a smooth nine pounds. Originally at a somewhat scratchy four pounds, the single-action pull weight was changed to a crisp 3¼ pounds. The six-groove trigger was left unmodified, although some prefer smooth triggers for double-action work.

These alterations dropped the weight of the revolver from 19 ounces, empty, to a mere 17 ounces (just three ounces more than an Airweight S&W Chiefs Special) at a cost of about \$100. Those wishing to contact Hill about custom pistolsmithing can do so through me

(Burke C. Hill Jr., c/o Peter G. Kokalis, SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306).

With this kind of concealable piece, it's only natural that you need a good rig to carry it. But what kind? Shoulder or belt holsters must be concealed by a jacket. Some inside-the-pants rigs can be effectively hidden by a loose shirt hanging out over the pants. But in warm climates an ankle holster provides the only viable alternative to your pants pocket. Ankle holsters have come on strong in the last five years and there are now dozens. They run the gamut from \$90 custom leather affairs to \$20 nylon tote bags.

Galco International, formerly Jackass Leather Co., (Dept. SOF, 4311 West Van Buren, Phoenix, AZ 85043) sells a state-of-the-art ankle holster for just \$24.50. Called the model #42A, this black cuff-type rig features a detachable calf strap. An outside shell of Cordura nylon covers a ½-inch foam padding with a 400-Denier ripstop lining. The outer thumb strap and inside front channel of the holster body have been lined with Porvair, a tough but flexible synthetic, to protect the webbing from excessive wear by the hammer and front sight. It also provides a more positive thumb action. The thumb

snap itself is black oxidized metal while the outer thumb strap is adjusted by hook-and-pile fasteners to accommodate different revolvers. Polydacron thread (which will not rot like cotton thread) is used throughout.

Most ankle holsters now incorporate calf straps. The vertical riser on Galco's calf strap is not only adjustable, it can be used to remove the calf strap entirely. Pistols are held in the holster with the barrel parallel to the leg — a good compromise between forward and rearward rake positions. Available for small- and medium-frame revolvers and auto pistols, the sample provided fit our chopped Bulldog like a nylon gauntlet with the trigger guard almost completely enclosed. Workmanship is of the highest quality with no loose threads and straight seams throughout. With the holster's cuff and calf straps both adjusted by Velcro, this is, without doubt, the most comfortable ankle holster I have ever worn.

Ankle holsters should be carried on the inside calf of the leg opposing the shooter's strong side (the left leg for right-handed pistoleros). There are three basic techniques — with individual modifications — for drawing a handgun from an ankle holster.

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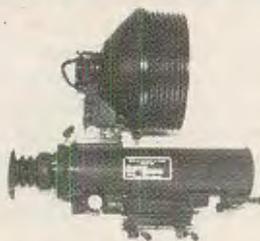
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If you are Bruce Lee, you can balance yourself on one leg and draw the other leg and holster up to almost waist level for a draw from the standing position. Having no background as a high-wire artist, I find this too precarious.

More commonly, dropping to one knee and lifting the pants cuff with one hand while drawing with the other will permit you to fire from the kneeling position. This compromises your mobility, which may be of some consequence if you are engaging multiple targets.

The final, and preferred, alternative is to raise the leg at the knee and grab the pants cuff with both hands. Then step back down, continue to hold the pants with the weak hand, bend over slightly, draw and resume the standing modified-Weaver stance. This method permits you to keep your eyes on the target at all times, is relatively fast and can be comfortably employed by even those of my advanced age.

Let's keep in mind that all of this is part of our attempt to place the .44 Special in a lightweight, compact and concealable package. With the arrival of smokeless powder, the .44 Russian case proved too small for efficient use of the bulkier new propellents. Introduced in 1907, the .44 Special (actual bore size is .429 inches) case was 0.2-inch longer, but still used the 246-grain projectile of the older .44 Russian. The subject of much experimentation by the late Elmer Keith, it eventually led to its synthesis, the .44 Remington Magnum. Accurate and powerful, the .44 Special nevertheless languished in the .44 Magnum's shadow. There has been a justified rebirth of interest in this fine cartridge during the last decade, with Charter Arms and its Bulldog leading the way.

Three loads were tested in our modified Bulldog: Winchester-Western's original factory loading, with its 246-grain lead roundnose (RN) bullet; a reload using the Lyman #429215 cast (linotype metal) gas-check 215-grain SWC (semi-wadcutter) projectile in front of 6.5 grains of Unique; and the Winchester 200-grain Silvertip hollowpoint (HP). They were first chronographed with an Oehler Model 33 Chronotach and Skyscreen III detectors set five feet from the muzzle. The results are summarized in Table I.

The Silvertip's aluminum-jacketed bullet lost about 90 fps in muzzle velocity coming out of our 1¾-inch tube. It averaged 659 fps and will do almost 750 fps out of a three-inch Bulldog. The reloaded ammunition and original factory roundnose

averaged somewhat less at 636 and 616, respectively. Even at these reduced velocities, I'll take the .44 Special over the .38 Special (fired from a comparable two-inch revolver) any day.

Accuracy testing was conducted at a distance of 10 yards from a B-27 silhouette target. Ninety percent of all deadly encounters with a handgun of this type will be conducted at ranges under this distance. All three loads shot directly to the point of aim from a rigid Weaver stance. Relaxing the grip invariably shifted the center of impact five inches to the left — an expected phenomenon in such a lightweight revolver. At this distance our mini-Bulldog will consistently shoot ragged one-inch holes out of the center of the X-ring with any of the three loads — in the hands of an experienced shooter. There was no evidence of sideways keyholing with any of the loads tested.

My personal choices are the Silvertip for business purposes and the Lyman/Unique reloads for practice. Another fine choice is the Federal 200-grain SWC-HP (semi-wadcutter hollowpoint), but I had none on hand for our test. Although the kinetic energy level out of our 1¾-inch barrel was only 193 foot-pounds, this still beats most .38 Special factory loads (non plus-P) from a two-inch barrel by a considerable margin (only 126 foot-pounds for the Western Super-X 158-grain Lubaloy-coated bullet). Furthermore, the Silvertip's hollowpoint design will expand consistently, even at this velocity, and most of this energy will be dumped into the target.

Felt recoil was moderate: no greater than most .38 Special snubbies, less than most firing .38 Special plus-P ammunition and far less than any of the clumsy, large-framed 2½-inch .357 Magnums I have fired. That's an important consideration to remember in bullet placement. A .22LR bullet in the chest will always outperform a .44 Magnum in the big toe. As the laws of Newtonian physics still apply, regardless of efforts by some to dismiss them, the heavier 246-grain RN factory load naturally produced the sharpest felt recoil impulse.

And so we achieved everything we were seeking: light weight, compactness, reliability, controllability, accuracy, adequate stopping power with enhanced hit probability, and all at moderate cost. It's the ultimate belly gun. ✕

HONDURAN NAVY

Continued from page 63

was shaded from direct view, a hand raised, then two, and Roberto's father, Juan, 41, stood up in a drunken stupor.

Facing a wall of weapons formed by the .50, two M60s, a 12-gauge shotgun, an M16 and a Browning 9mm, the Rodriguezes could not get their story out fast enough. They were Hondurans and they had left their small fishing village near Condega at dusk. After setting their nets, they had polished off a bottle of *guaro*, a particularly potent native rum, and gone to sleep. When they were roused by the Piranha, they thought it was the *piricuacos* after them.

After checking the boat (which was clean) and their papers (which were in order), the lieutenant gave the *pangueros* a lecture on the dangers of demon rum as it pertains to drinking and fishing in the Gulf. "If we were the Sandinista *panga*, you would be dead."

As we pulled away from the *panga* they started lighting matches. A small glow for a few seconds, then darkness, followed by a small glow. "They are so scared, they will probably burn up all their matches in an hour," said the lieutenant.

We checked two more *pangas* (both from the village of Condega, whose occupants told of no strange crafts in the area) and the

perimeter of a small island before we headed in closer to the Nicaraguan coast. We were within three miles of Potosi, but all was clear.

At my previous briefing, the executive had spoken of Potosi. It was a known re-supply base for the Salvo guerrillas and was used to refuel *pangas* that made the dash across the Gulf into Salvadoran waters to unload their cargos of arms and ammunition. Things weren't so easy for the communists now, though. After two raids by contra commandos and increased patrolling by Piranhas the base had become more and more unusable. The Piranhas made the trip across the Gulf to El Salvador a grave risk and the Sandinistas had changed tactics.

"We know that a route change has been made. From a base in Corinto, they use the larger boats [70-80 feet] of the Nicaraguan fishing fleet to hit blue water off the Salvadoran coast. From there they use small fast boats to run guns."

We ran back along the Nicaraguan coast for a five miles hoping to goad the Sandinistas into action — no luck. Instead, our boats checked out a small island. Our sister ship went in as close to the shoal water as possible while we covered. At all times, the gunners were alert and ready. The boat played its searchlight along the beach and into hidden inlets looking for signs of activity. Everything clear, we set off on the third leg of our triangular course.

I was ready to nod off more than once, but seeing the troopers, who had spent the previous day either on guard duty, running other water patrols or attending classes, I sat up and stayed awake. The third leg was uneventful and finally at 2400 hours we pulled into the fuel docks. I said to the lieutenant, "A million thanks."

His quizzical look at me was followed by the dreaded words, "We are only refueling, we're going back out to the Farallones."

I reclaimed my gratitude by saying, "Well, then half-a-million thanks." Two more exhausting hours were to follow. We ran out to the Farallones — a group of small islands that demarcate Honduran, Nicaraguan and Salvadoran waters — with no unusual results. At 0215 we arrived back at base and I was very glad that I was just a guest and was not expected to join the boat washdown.

The Piranha's professionalism held together even after a grueling night of patrolling. As we tied up to the dock, a jeep pulled down the ramp carrying two mechanics who immediately pulled the engine covers and brought the engines back to 100 percent. The gunners stripped the guns and took them directly to the armory for cleaning and service. The radar was also pulled and sent to the electronics shop.

As I slowly trudged off to the officers quarters longing to drop into my rack I heard the lieutenant say, "In less than an hour

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these boats will be brought up to 100 percent and ready to go again." At that point I didn't care and was hoping I would not run into the executive who might again ask me, "What are your plans?"

The following day, after a morning patrol back into the fetid bays, I got the grand tour of the base. No one was lying around. Three contingents at Amapala were all at work. The marines not manning security posts were either drilling, running gun drill with the M60s or in class. The naval group was running drills on the larger *tiburones*. And the Piranhas were either out on patrol or giving classes to new recruits. A punishment detail, packs filled with rocks, was executing close-order drill supervised by a leather-voiced marine *cabo* (corporal) who would have made his mark at Parris Island. Between classes, recruits were mustered on the parade field and rifle range to execute the Honduran equivalent of police duty. All small stones, pieces of paper and cigarette butts quickly disappeared into the eager hands of the recruits. A pass through the barracks revealed that all racks were in a straight line, sheets were tucked hospital style and rifle racks held well-oiled, rustless and dustless M16s.

After three days on Tiger Island I sadly informed the base commander and the executive that I had run way over the time that SOF had given me to get the story. I really hated to leave. Not only had I been treated as one of them, but I was so impressed that I would have liked to wait it out in the even-

tuality that the Sandinistas should finally get some balls and challenge the Piranhas.

"You might as well go," said Lt. Gonzalez. "We cut their balls off the last time and it will be a long time before they grow them back — maybe never." ✕

COPPERS ON CYPRUS

Continued from page 51

The first Swedish civilian police also arrived in Cyprus in 1964. They were originally stationed in Nicosia, moved to the Paphos district and later the Larnaca/Famagusta areas (sectors 5 and 6). The Swedes field 14 officers today, and 800 Swedish policemen have served a tour in Cyprus.

Between 1964 and 1974 UNCIVPOL was deployed throughout the island and played a major role in the peace-keeping effort by visiting all villages on a monthly or as-required basis to deal with intercommunal complaints. After the Turkish invasion of 1974, UNCIVPOL's role changed to handling police matters inside the buffer zone where many Cypriot villages are still located.

UNCIVPOL is now charged with investigating all crimes committed inside the buffer zone. If there's a need to prosecute someone, the guilty party is turned over to the appropriate authorities — Greeks to the Greek Cypriot Police, Turks to the Turkish

Cypriot Police.

However, Cyprus is not as ethnically divided as the buffer zone would have it appear. Most Turkish Cypriots live north of the zone and most Greek Cypriots live south, but there are still some enclaves of minority groups who were left on the "wrong" side of the buffer zone when the cease-fire was effected. The majority were elderly people who had established permanent roots and had no desire to move because of political or military changes to the map. Death of a spouse often causes the surviving partner to move across the buffer zone to live with relatives.

It is the responsibility of the U.N. policemen in that part of the buffer zone nearest these minorities to check on their welfare. They escort people crossing the zone to live with their families, see they are getting their mail and pensions delivered, escort sick or injured people to specialized medical facilities outside the buffer zone, and generally ensure those living inside the zone are not caught in the Greek and Turkish Cypriot political crossfire.

During the 20 years UNCIVPOL has been a part of UNFICYP, they have continued to investigate a wide variety of criminal and civil matters including cross-border theft and smuggling as well as maintaining liaison with police on both sides.

In light of present relations between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, there would appear to be no impending change in the role of UNCIVPOL. ✕

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SUPER BLOOPER

Continued from page 53

is applied and the cylinder axis pin located in front of the shield and directly under the barrel is disengaged. The frame is swung away from the cylinder in order to expose the chambers, and the cylinder is then fully wound against its driving spring. With the front pistol grip grasped in the left hand and the barrel pointing downward the chambers are loaded individually. The frame is then closed, axis pin re-engaged, and the launcher is ready for operation.

Firing is initiated when a standard double-action trigger mechanism is pulled. The firing pin is cocked and released, and the 40mm grenade is fired. If the operation is successful, the vertical, gas-operated piston is driven upward unlocking the cylinder and allowing the spring to rotate it forward until the next round is aligned with the firing pin. This system, along with the double-action trigger mechanism, prevents accidental discharges which could be deadly with this type weapon.

If the grenade fails to fire due to a misfire or hangfire, that chamber remains in place allowing the firer further opportunities to shoot the round. This of course is a necessary safety precaution: A hangfire igniting out of synchronization would have dis-

astrous consequences for the firer and personnel in the immediate area. If the shooter chooses to advance the cylinder to a new round, a release button on the side of the weapon allows the cylinder to rotate.

After the rounds have been fired, the unloading process is similar to that of a standard six-shot revolver. The barrel is pointed up and the axis pin disengaged to release the frame which is then swung aside. Empty casings should simply fall out; an ejector rod effectively ejects the spent casings if they don't.

Perhaps the three most important features of this weapon are its ability to deliver a high rate of fire, high volume of fire, and accuracy gained from the sighting system. The 40mm MGL cycles in approximately 0.3 seconds and the chambers can be fired at a rate of one per second; the practical sustained rate of fire is given at 12 rounds per minute. Having six rounds to fire instead of the old norm of one also presents an enormous boost in terms of indigenous squad firepower.

Those who have ever worked with the single-round M79 are very aware of this inherent disadvantage. Good bloopermen could fire, reload and fire again in seconds, but aim and effective suppressive fire suffered in consequence. Six well-aimed rounds fired in quick succession, however, are guaranteed to keep an enemy's head down long enough to reload and repeat the process.

The OEG system mounted on this launcher helps make this weapon particularly effective against point targets at 150 meters and area targets at 375 meters, and rapid-fire capability increases the MGL's deadly utility. Coupled with the single-point aiming system, the MGL allows the firer to immediately acquire and engage the target with one or more rounds, quickly shift to another predetermined target or target of opportunity, then re-engage the original target if necessary — without sacrificing accuracy or wasting ammunition.

The six-shot capability has another advantage for troops in the bush or urban environments. With the variety of rounds available to this weapon — low-velocity HE fragmentation, tear gas, multiple projectile (pellet), illumination, anti-riot baton (rubber bullets), smoke — the load can be adjusted to meet varying situations. A grenadier walking slack position in a bush patrol may opt to charge the weapon with two anti-personnel pellet rounds — for anti-ambush or chance encounter purposes — followed by four HE frag rounds to either walk-on to retreating enemy forces or cover the withdrawal of friendly troops. In a house-to-house clearing op the load may be mixed irritant gas and shot. Anti-riot loads may consist of gas and baton rounds. Flexibility of load makes this weapon exceptionally valuable to small-unit operations.

Three problems associated with this weapon — and they are relatively small in

comparison with its advantages — are its weight when fully loaded, the potential to misemploy it, and the depletion of the squad's small-arms fire capability.

The 40mm MGL weighs in at approximately 15 pounds when fully loaded — nine pounds more than a loaded M79 and about four over a loaded, mounted M203. Considering the MGL weighs nine pounds less than a standard 7.62mm MAG, however, its function as the second squad-support weapon obviates the weight problem.

But great power and flexibility increase potential for misuse. The classic example is the M16's controllability in fully automatic fire: The U.S. military finally had to correct the soldier's inclination to spray by replacing full-auto with a three-shot burst. It's a fact of combat that when the shit hits, troops expend ammo and other ordnance at a frightening rate. The 40mm MGL grenadier, unless he has the strictest sense of fire control, will be no exception. Six rounds downrange, a quick reload, six more rounds fired — in the space of one contact 90 percent of the weapon's basic load could be fired where 10 percent could have effectively done the job. Unless the grenadier and his squad are willing to hump two to three times the necessary amount of rounds, training and fire control discipline must answer this problem.

The third problem this weapon poses is that of altering the basic firepower structure of a squad-sized unit. U.S. military forces,

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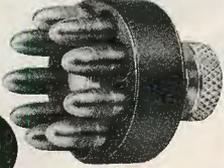
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after introducing the M79 launcher, quickly realized the weapon wasn't suitable for all contact situations; the squad unit effectively lost one rifleman when the launcher couldn't be employed. The XM203 (over-under, rifle-launcher) was developed, proved its worth, and was integrated into combat line units as the M203.

SADF faces the same problem with the introduction of the MGL. In this case, however, there's no practical way to incorporate another weapon into the launcher's design. The grenadier, then, is left with only a side arm — always of doubtful value in combat — thus depleting the squad's firepower assets by one rifle. It's a tradeoff between increased support-weapon firepower and the extra rifle, and SADF has chosen the former. Time and operational employment of the launcher will provide the best critical analysis of their decision.

One argument supporting SADF's decision is that the MGL might fill the gap left between a hand-thrown grenade and 60mm commando (patrol) mortar. Unfortunately, this is not entirely true. An M406-type 40mm HE round arms itself after traveling 14 to 28 meters; 30 meters is the working minimum effective range, unless the firer is satisfied with a 40mm bullet. Combat mortarmen, firing with charge primary only, can walk their HE rounds into danger-close bursting radius if necessary.

Obviously, the range gap between the hand grenade and the 60mm patrol mortar practically doesn't exist. Yet there is a gap in reaction time. And when immediate reaction to a threat is needed, then the MGL fills the bill.

Armcor's MGL performs well on the range, but only combat can provide a true test of its use as a weapon. Its utility and its faults will be exposed quickly in the SADF's operational areas. The 40mm MGL will definitely bring a few smiles to the faces of troops operating in Southwest Africa. With a bit of luck, it will also strike fear into more than one SWAPO terrorist. ☒

NGUYEN CAO KY

Continued from page 101

were. And when we landed he shouted, 'Everyone come down here.' He had a small table and there was a sergeant behind it to write down all the information on who we were and where we were coming from. The officer asked us to stand in front of his table. Then someone came to him and whispered something in his ear. I believe he told him who I was. His voice was suddenly very soft and more polite. He asked if I was General Ky. And I said, 'I think so.' And he asked if I was coming from Saigon. Once again I said, 'I think so.' After that I was assigned to a cabin and was treated well. They placed six other soldiers outside my room to guard me.

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week. During that time I had a feeling of complete emptiness. Walking the deck I remember looking down into the waters of the South China Sea and feeling that I should jump and let go of everything. Day after day I looked into the sea and wondered what would happen to Vietnam, to the Vietnamese people, to me.

"One day I heard the voice of the chaplain of the *Blue Ridge* on the PA system. 'Men, you have delivered these latest children of Israel. Now I want you to pray for Vietnam, and then I want you all to relax and have a little fun.' For the Americans, the war was over. Time for fun. For the Vietnamese, it wasn't over yet.

"I decided to live. I decided that my eyes would see Saigon again. We lost in 1975 because we were young and inexperienced in world politics. A lot of Vietnamese blamed Americans for their poor knowledge of people outside America. But I think we also committed the same error. We had no real knowledge of America and the Americans. There was a great misunderstanding both on the part of the Americans and on the part of the Vietnamese.

"Today I am older. And with my knowledge of America I could be a better leader and promote a better understanding between the two countries. I can better explain now why we were fighting and in that way I could get more support from America.

"What Americans *must* understand is that we are not so different from other people. We have the same hopes and dreams. But we did not have strong experienced leaders in Vietnam. We came out from under 80 years of French colonial rule and were handed our independence. Right after that we were at war with the Japanese, the French, and then with the communists. If you look at our history, we never had a transition time. We did not have time to be educated and form a generation of leaders for a democratic government. We just needed some time. The North Vietnamese did not need time. They had dictators and terrorism to make their government work. But to build a democracy you need more time.

"I was so young then. I was only 34 when I first came to power and I did many things wrong. Today, I am older and wiser. There are many Vietnamese people who think of me as one of the men who can do something about freeing Vietnam. For many people I am the hope for a free Vietnam.

"Last fall I went to Dallas for a gathering of ex-military men from Vietnam that occurs every two years. Everyone came to the meeting with different ideas and there was bickering and arguing. I spoke to them. And after I finished everyone stood up and applauded. Many of them were crying. We are just now getting the momentum and the forces of the free world together to defend freedom. I will be a leader in that fight.

"But in the long struggle ahead — the struggle for freedom — it will not be the Vietnamese in the United States who will spearhead the fight against communism in

Vietnam. It will be the people still in Vietnam who must lead. We Vietnamese exiles can help them with political and military support, but they must carry on the fight first. The people in Vietnam who have been under communist rule for a decade and who have spent time in the so-called re-education camps know the real face of communism. They know that it is not liberation. It is slavery. Because of their knowledge, they will lead the fight in Vietnam. And when they win, we will all see Saigon again — a free Saigon.

"Many Americans and Vietnamese do not want to talk about Vietnam. But deep inside they still think about Vietnam, dream about Vietnam. They are still trying to find a complete answer to their sacrifice and commitment. Vietnam is still with them. When they talk about El Salvador and about Nicaragua, they also talk about Vietnam. Vietnam is still a deep wound for America and one that will not heal. You cannot forget Vietnam. And neither can we.

"I believe in fate. I might have died many times in Vietnam. I could have been like so many of my countrymen buried there. But I did not die, I survived. I survived for a reason. I have a special destiny. If I have to die for freedom for Vietnam some day, then I am ready to die. Perhaps that is my destiny. There is no better cause to die for than for freedom — freedom for one's country." ✂

USG vs. POW

Continued from page 43

telligence gathering mission became more and more successful, the reaction by military and DIA hierarchy grew more and more peculiar. The major was in Lop Buri cross-training with Thai Special Forces in July 1981 when "the subject of American POWs first came up.

"I was approached by a Thai general officer who was concerned about Lieutenant Colonel 'Bo' Gritz. He said that Gritz's information supported or corroborated information that his own intelligence had obtained. I was introduced to this Thai officer by a man who himself was a Thai prisoner of war for many years. I was introduced as an American [former] POW and that is the contextual setting [in which] we talked. These officers assumed that since Bo Gritz was in the country at the same time . . . that I was somehow involved with the support and the POW rescue operation," Smith's affidavit states. "At the time, that was not a correct assumption." Smith later told *Soldier of Fortune* that he now believes Gritz was correct in his assertions that Gritz's efforts to find and free U.S. POWs were undertaken at the behest of the U.S. government.

When Smith at first expressed skepticism that U.S. POWs might still be alive anywhere in Southeast Asia, the Thai general called in his intelligence officer, who laid

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out for Smith the findings of numerous deep-penetration missions by Thai reconnaissance teams. The SF major's disbelief began to fade as he heard more and more specific, detailed information: times, dates, places, grid coordinates and names of the imprisoned. The Thai general said he could possibly produce "identification such as photographs and fingerprints and similar evidentiary matters," Smith said.

Thai officers said they would provide Smith with full access to their intelligence about U.S. POWs in the region, but they expressed grave concern about the danger of compromising their sources. They stressed to the Green Beret major that his channel of communication to Washington must bypass the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, CINCPAC and the JCRC. There is no doubt that security risks existed. For instance, one of the U.S. Embassy officials with whom they frequently had to deal in Bangkok was married to a woman from North Vietnam.

Smith returned to Seoul and contacted the DIA's military liaison for Korea, someone he already knew through his assignment as CO of SFD-K. A message was drafted to DIA headquarters in Washington and the Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) headquarters at Fort Meade, Md., stating that if no sources were compromised that the Thais could provide information "on the location and identities of United States Prisoners of War in Laos."

Five days later the major was advised that no one in the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok would be told of these sources or their purpose. After Smith was debriefed by the DIA and told to develop all the information he could on POWs and MIAs in Southeast Asia, the message went out through DIA channels in August 1981.

As the operation developed and expanded, Smith said it "all . . . was reported and sanctioned by . . . DIA operatives in Korea [who] were receiving their instructions from INSCOM at Fort Meade. . . . On three different occasions I briefed a man whose title was either a lieutenant colonel or a GS-15."

Then things began to get weird.

"There was a major compromise of one Laos agent who was reported to have been shot by the Vietnamese and compromised my contact with senior Thai officers," Smith said. "I talked to an individual in the United States Embassy in Seoul to try and set up another channel that would allow me to bypass American military intelligence channels because of the constant compromises. I provided all the information that I had by that time to the Chief of Research unit, United States Embassy, Seoul."

Then POW/MIA intelligence gathering operations in Southeast Asia were temporarily stopped. Smith was told his assignment had to hold because it might inadvertently cross wires with an ongoing operation that was too secret to disclose to Smith. Six months went by before the major learned that the "ongoing operation" that his assignment might compromise was his own.

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And things got weirder still.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Howard, Chief of the Combat Support Coordination Team for SFD-K, also had been in Thailand with Smith and McIntire and was familiar with the operation. He was impressed by the detail and precision of their intel reports. "I was convinced that we had live Americans in captivity in Laos and possibly North and South Vietnam." They believe between 100 and 200 such live POWs are still in captivity.

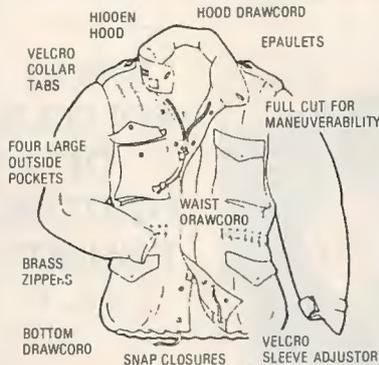
At Lop Buri in January 1984, some senior Thai officers played host for a luncheon to meet and honor Howard because of his extensive battlefield experience. Also present, according to Howard, were the commanding general of Thai Special Forces; four colonels of the Thai Special Warfare Command; Lieutenant Colonel Paul Mather of the JCRC; the military attache at the U.S Embassy in Bangkok, named Colonel Alpern; Major Smith and SFC McIntire.

"It was on this occasion that I witnessed the compromise of a source of information by Lt. Col. Mather and Col. Alpern concerning the working relationship" between the SFD-K members and the Thai general officers, "specifically . . . that the Thai general officer had been providing information concerning living American prisoners."

In his affidavit filed on behalf of Smith and McIntire's suit, Howard said the luncheon incident was "a blatant security violation by a senior U.S. military officer . . . an

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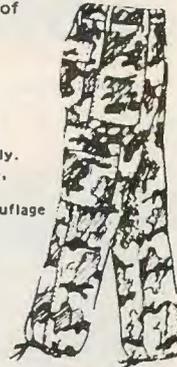
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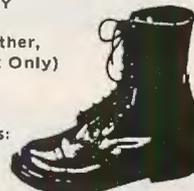
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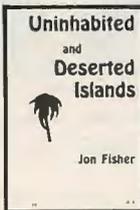
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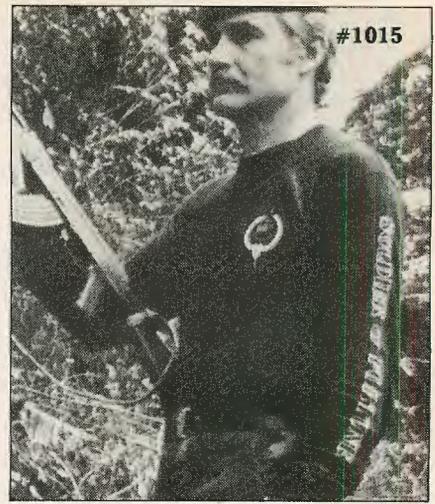
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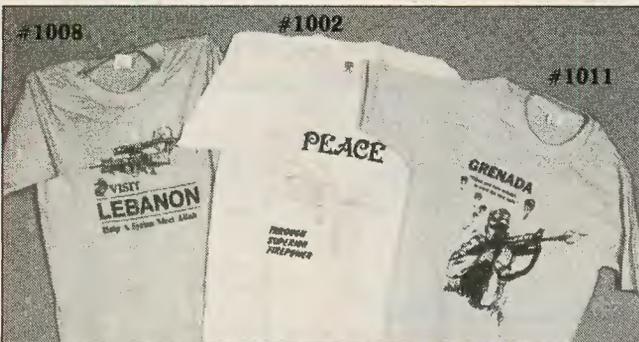


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effort to undermine the successful intelligence gathering activity" aimed at locating and rescuing U.S. POWs in the region.

It soon became apparent to Smith, McIntire and Howard that perhaps there were people somewhere that wanted them not only discredited on the issue of live POWs in Southeast Asia, but completely eliminated. All three men began looking over their shoulders after an incident in which they were supposed to cross-train with Thai Special Forces on a survival problem.

Lieutenant Colonel Howard said it was "a training exercise which I now believe was designed and intended to discredit the intelligence gathering activity of Special Forces Detachment-Korea. In general, a training mission occurred which, if completed as planned, could have resulted in the killing or capture of myself, Maj. Smith, SFC McIntire and others by a hostile force. . . . Fortunately this mission did not take place. It was terminated due to the suspicions of SFC McIntire that it would have constituted an illegal mission into a communist country," specifically Laos.

Smith recalls the incident this way: "The purpose of the training officially was to conduct high altitude, high opening [HAHO] parachute infiltration of an aggressor force followed by an airfield assault by [an MC-130] aircraft [inside Thai borders]. If the mission had been flown along the intended route and the individuals had actually exited the aircraft with the prevailing winds, a landing would have occurred approximately 20 miles inside Laos."

SFC McIntire had worked as an instructor in unconventional warfare for eight years at the JFK Center at Fort Bragg. He immediately sensed that something was wrong as they began to board the aircraft for the "exercise." As Smith later said, McIntire noticed that the "Thai troops who were participating in the exercise had been issued a full combat load of ammunition [and] rations and had every appearance of going into an unfriendly area."

As McIntire, mission jumbaster, discussed the routes and drop points with a navigator, it became clear that they were referring to two different sets of coordinates. The navigator remarked to McIntire that it had seemed a little strange to him, too. While the navigators usually worked out their own sets of coordinates with people assigned to the mission, their regular aircraft had been sidelined for unscheduled repairs. Another aircraft furnished out of the Philippines had come with its own set of navigational instructions.

Then one of the senior Thai officers aboard asked McIntire about the helicopters. "What helicopters?" McIntire asked, feeling all the more uneasy.

The Thai officer told McIntire that four specially outfitted Blackhawk helicopters were stationed and ready to deploy from a point in the Gulf of Thailand. "I assumed that they must be working in conjunction with this mission and that you must be aware of it." The Thai officer then told

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McIntire that he had been given sealed orders just before boarding that were not to be opened until the men were on the ground.

McIntire knew there were no operational Blackhawks in the Pacific. If any were in the area they must have come from Fort Bragg or Fort Campbell. Possibly the top secret Delta unit or Task Force 122? A red flag went up in McIntire's mind. Something mighty strange was going on. The staff NCO told the Air Force personnel to kill their engines, that he was canceling the mission.

Lieutenant Colonel Howard and Maj. Smith came forward, screaming for McIntire and asking what in the name of God was going on. Why had the mission been canceled?

Smith immediately called McIntire and others on the carpet to explain. "All factors clearly indicated that someone somewhere had given a green light for an operation into Laos, that the Thai military who were along were prepared for just that, that the U.S. Air Force had received some instructions from somewhere to fly a certain flight path. The [substitute] aircraft which had been provided was a stealth-type aircraft clearly intended to facilitate the infiltration into Laos in a clandestine manner without informing either myself, SFC McIntire or Lt. Col. Howard. When the air crew was questioned by me as to why they changed the flight plan, I was told they had received a new flight plan from the command center at Clark Air Force Base representing the 13th Air Force."

If Smith and McIntire were surprised, that was nothing to what Lt. Col. Howard was when he got back to Korea. The powers-that-be there apparently had not heard that the mission had been scrubbed at the last minute. Interestingly enough, Howard was formally charged with conducting an unauthorized cross-border operation — an operation that would have gone off had McIntire not been on his toes. Smith and McIntire also were later charged.

Howard obviously denied the charges, but advised his superiors that there was good evidence that live U.S. POWs were being held in Laos at a known location and could be rescued. "My impression was that there was no interest," Howard's affidavit states. "I was shocked because I felt we had a moral obligation to responsibly pursue this matter. . . . There is an ongoing effort by the Defense Intelligence Agency to ignore" reports of live U.S. POWs.

Now nervous about who they could trust, Smith and McIntire continued their intelligence gathering assignment with tentative caution. Smith began preparing a comprehensive intelligence report for Major General Kenneth C. Leuer. Then he received a coded message from a Thai general that three live U.S. POWs were "available to be taken out of Laos on 11 May 1984." The Pathet Lao who had agreed to deliver the U.S. POWs only wanted asylum in the United States, Smith said later.

"When this information was passed to [Leuer] and the 501st MI Group and to the

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CIA station in Seoul, all SFD-K operations to Thailand or anywhere in Southeast Asia were declared unauthorized and terminated" three and a half years after they had begun. Smith said he has learned that one of the American prisoners to be freed has since died. He declined to provide their names in consideration of the families.

Two weeks after the major gave the two star general a briefing folder detailing current intel on live POWs, Smith said that Leuer told him "that if I wanted to be a lieutenant colonel in the Army that I should forget about the POW/MIA information. I was told in no uncertain terms that I should forget the matter."

Smith's affidavit states that after he delivered this briefing report to Leuer and the general officer read the two attached cover letters, Leuer "turned white, handed the briefing back to me and said, 'This is too hot for me to handle, big guy.' . . . I was told that if I was smart I would put the briefing through a shredder and forget the entire matter.

"I demanded authorization to go to Washington and see another general in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operation," Smith said. "I was given a direct order not to have any more contact with that officer in Washington."

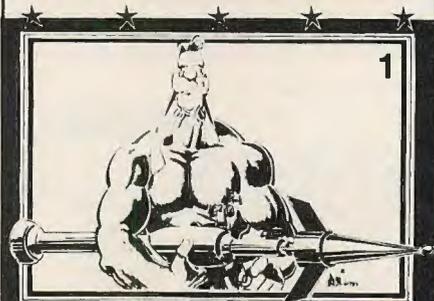
As for McIntire, once he also mentioned to the 501st MI Group that three POWs were positioned for extraction in May 1984, he was forbidden from returning to Thailand and like Smith sent home from his Korea tour six months early. Before he left Korea, however, a buddy stopped him outside the PX to "congratulate" McIntire. The buddy had heard a rumor that McIntire and others from SFD-K had gone into Laos to extract U.S. POWs and had killed 350 Vietnamese in the process. McIntire could only shake his head in wonder.

The intel net remained intact and functional, however, and McIntire continued to get reports in the United States of live U.S. POWs in Southeast Asia. "I no longer knew who to report to or who to trust, so I elected not to report to anyone with the exception of" Smith. Before his departure from Korea, he had been told to destroy all his materials on the topic and "I was told that the intelligence reports which we had presented had in fact been destroyed."

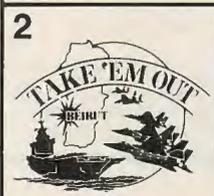
McIntire, acting as a private individual, turned over information to three appropriate U.S. agencies on returning to the United States, including the DIA. Nothing happened. He continued to collect intelligence indirectly.

In July 1985, traveling as a private citizen, McIntire returned to Thailand with Smith "in an effort to prevent these sources from drying up. I learned of more information about living Americans in Southeast Asia and that there were two Americans in the hands of Laotian troops who were en route to Thailand. I spoke with other individuals who were involved in the resupplying of a camp where 14 U.S. POWs were being held."

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Smith — by now forced into retirement — and McIntire returned to Washington. Prior to deciding to file a suit, they offered the U.S. government yet another opportunity to discreetly clear the air. They offered to pass along this most recent intelligence to the DIA in Washington, the agency that originally told them to set up their operation. Smith and McIntire expected that the DIA would want to debrief them about this most recent trip. They waited for a reply.

And in that respect Smith and McIntire are much like the wretched compatriots they had hopes of rescuing. They are still waiting. ✕

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 18

activate an electrical blasting cap. The wooden pressure and base plates can be cut to any size or configuration. Two metal contacts on the insides of the wooden plates are kept apart by sponges or springs until pressure is applied, then the two contacts touch, completing the circuit . . . BOOM . . . No more patrol.

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BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 14

enemy kills him. The blade that kills in this manner does so with such speed that the enemy is dead before he becomes alarmed. The Gurkha doesn't have to worry about whether he is big

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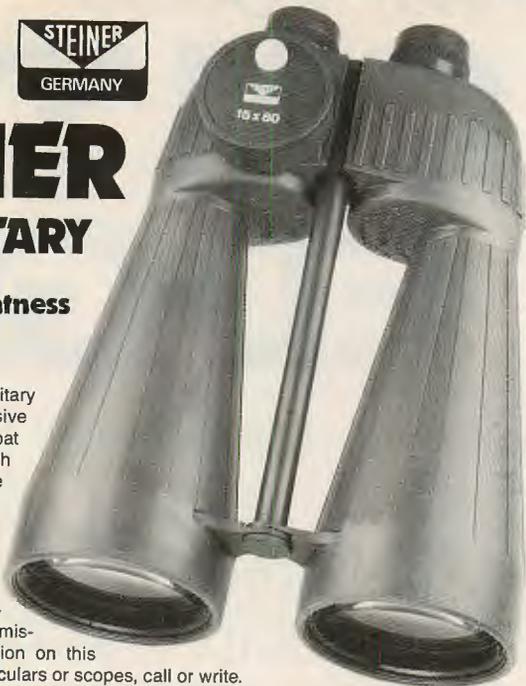
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enough or strong enough to hold his adversary in place while he cuts or stabs. Most Gurkhas are small men by Western standards, and it is applied common sense on their part to avoid grappling with any opponent. Frankly, the fact that we do the opposite strikes me as being, well, stupid.

There is a little more to the Gurkha technique than meets the eye. In the first place, their knife is a part of their culture, and these people know how to use it to maximum effect. Moreover, its design possesses one great advantage: It has a tremendous amount of leverage and chopping power. It will split a skull or sever a spinal cord with one blow.

Most American knives are whittlers by contrast. Our military issue knives are frail and impotent by comparison. Our guys cannot employ a superior and safer technique because of an equipment limitation that has cost American lives.

Knives are not outmoded in modern combat as some modern theorists suppose. The Gurkhas are feared and respected today as soldiers and their use and skill at arms with a knife is one of the cornerstones upon which this respect is built. Any enemy force which awakens in the morning to find all of its sentries lying by their duty stations with their heads sitting in their laps is in for a very unpleasant jolt. That's guaranteed to have a detrimental effect on anyone's morale.

There have been sentries as long as there has been war, and there will be sentries in the war of the future. We are not as good at removing them as we think we are because of technique and equipment. We need to re-evaluate both. ✕

IN REVIEW

Continued from page 13

heady food for thought for friend and foe alike.

South African War Machine is not a political book nor was it meant to be. Rather, it's a fairly comprehensive study of a heretofore little-known subject. Whether you're a serious student of South African affairs or just a casual observer, the **South African War Machine** will do much toward increasing your understanding of Africa's best trained and equipped military force. ✕

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I WAS THERE

Continued from page 20

asked with a distinct edge to his voice. The newbie nodded while the rest of the team shook their heads in disgust, rolled their eyes or swore under their breath. With one last glare at the "cherry" they turned their attention away from the trail and back to their rest.

"You got commo?" Renfro asked the ATL who nodded assent. "Well tell 'em it was nothing. Tell 'em..."

"But I heard something, sarge!" the new guy broke in. "It's gotta be gooks..."

The team leader cut him off. "What you heard was a 'Fuck You' lizard," he explained with strained patience. "It's a small reptile that makes a sound some people think sounds like someone else yelling 'Fuck You.' They..."

"But what kind of lizard says fuck you?" the newbie persisted.

"If you'd quit interrupting maybe I can..."

"A lizard, really?"

"YEAH!" yelled the team leader. "A small, greenish-brown sonofabitch that nobody but stupid FNGs wake a tired team up for."

"Look, 'cruit, I'm hot, tired and hard-pressed to tell the company that we're not almost in contact but instead about to blow away a lizard because our team cherry doesn't like its mouth!"

"But sarge... a lizard, no kidding?"

The exasperated LRRP team leader slouched back against his ruck. "Fuck you!" he shot back at the still amazed new guy, then pulled his boonie cap over his face for protection against the warm Vietnamese afternoon. ☒

BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 6

government repulsive, hold onto your blood pressure. Under a policy typical of the State Department's duplicitous double standards, the United States is providing the Machel regime with military aid, which he can use to kill RENAMO patriots struggling to establish a pluralistic democracy in Mozambique. If that doesn't qualify as ridiculous, Portugal — which once ruled Mozambique as a colony — has offered to send Machel a specially trained security force to protect the Cabora Bassa hydroelectric dam complex in northern Mozambique, a frequent RENAMO target. Portugal's misguided ministers and Foggy

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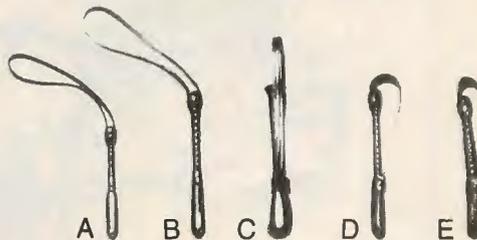


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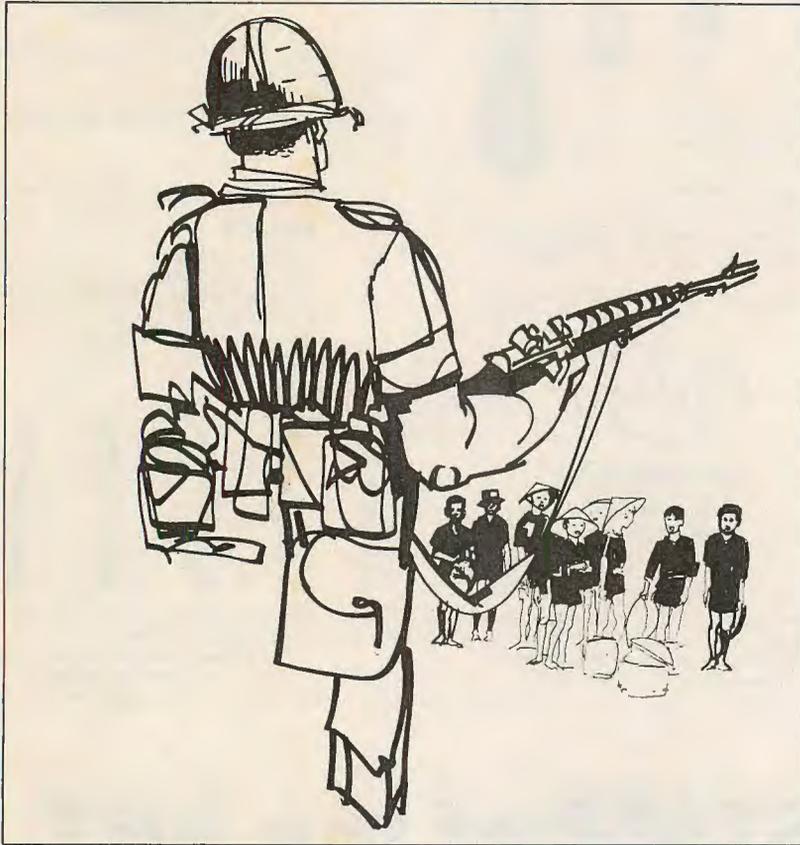
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Bottom Bozos better beware if the Fool Killer ever gets wind of this madness. In the meantime, it is obvious that — despite the U.S./Portuguese idiocy — RENAMO is gaining ground in its struggle for a free Mozambique.

GETTING IT TOGETHER...

A military reunion is more than just a chance to slug back a few beers and tell war stories. It's a time to reforge friendships made under fire and reaffirm the commitment to freedom to which so many gave their lives. SOF continues its editorial policy of publishing reunion notices, but certain guidelines must be met before we can spread the word. All copy must reach us at least four months prior to the event and include a description of the reunion, dates it will be held, and a point of contact with address and telephone number. Post this information to associate editor John Coleman at SOF.

FLAK

Continued from page 10

COMBAT SHOOTER COMMENDS SOF...

Sirs:

Thanks for your support of combat shooting. The tremendous effort put forth by Robert K. Brown and the SOF staff needs to be commended. The *Soldier of Fortune Match* is the best combat match in the country. I have attended the last three held in Las Vegas and can honestly say I had a better time at those than any I have ever attended, and I have been a competitive shooter for 35 years. And the convention adds even more to an already enjoyable trip.

L. Harrison
Missouri — IPSC Section
Coordinator
Hannibal, Missouri

SHURIKEN SHORTCOMINGS...

Sirs:

Congratulations on a decade of action-oriented journalism. I find it uncharacteristically troubling,

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however, that SOF has fallen for the new ninja hype.

The ninja throwing star may indeed be a toy to Bill Bagwell or any other experienced soldier, but is it something you want a nine-year-old to play with? Mail-order martial arts weapons routinely fall into the hands of naive children. This problem has become so widespread that Senators Kennedy and Thurmond have filed legislation to prevent circumvention of state law by mail.

I have no problem with weapons as long as they are handled by experienced adults. Allowing children easy access to dangerous weapons is completely irresponsible and sets a hair-trigger trap leading to tragedy.

Larry Kelley
 Amherst, Massachusetts

SOF is by no means falling for ninja hype, and Bagwell's column should show that. We were merely reporting on the current legislation against mail-order sale of martial arts weapons (see Bulletin Board, October '85). Larry Kelley was the martial arts instructor who mailed a shuriken to each member of the U.S. Senate. We seem to have misunderstood his motive — it was in support of the Martial Arts Weapons Bill.

SOF still disagrees with unnecessary weapons laws, of which the Martial Arts Weapons Bill is certainly an example. — The Editors

I agree that shuriken are not the greatest weapon in the world, but it should be pointed out that they were not intended to be. They were intended to be used as a distraction to give one time to do something else, like escape or attack. If they did damage to your assailant, great. If not, damage was a secondary consideration.

In any case, I wouldn't recommend shuriken for soldiers — leave the stars to assassins and thieves.

T.A. Lancard
 Pine Bluff, Arizona

BEELINE FOR THE BREN TEN...

Sirs:
 SOF readers have noticed that *Miami Vice's* Don Johnson is showing the world the wonders of the Bren Ten. Every Friday night Sonny Crockett (Johnson) blows away South Florida's

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less-than-saintly with Chairman Jeff's Wonder Weapon.

Some lucky Bren Ten consignees now have their pistol, but without a magazine. But Sonny Crockett has three. Neither Johnson nor the show's producers know the value of the much-coveted Bren Ten mags. On a recent *Miami Vice* episode, Detective Crockett did a quick reload, discarded the empty magazine and loaded a full one. Florida's quick-eyed Bren Ten owners didn't miss a lick.

Determining the scene's locale, a horde of hungry magazine hunters descended upon Dade County's docks and the search was on. No rat pile was left unturned. Dade County sheriff deputies reported the magazine was found by unemployed IPSC shooter Orville Mecker. The find was so valuable, in fact, that he was chased by a mob of magazine maniacs all the way to the Trailways Station.

Bill Brooks
Wilmington, North Carolina

SOF's contributing editor and convention director has imaginatively constructed a drama based on a real event. Bren Ten buyers are generally furious that the legendary — nearly mythical — Bren Ten magazine is readily available to movie stars, but not to paying customers whose money has been held for months by Dornaus & Dixon.

SOF IN SRI LANKA...

Sirs:

It was heartening to read in the August Anniversary Issue that SOF staffers were down in Sri Lanka to cover the ongoing battle between government troops and Tamil guerrillas. Given the track record of Tamil separatist fighters, I would not hesitate to call them terrorists. I look forward to a piece that cuts through all propaganda and disinformation which all too commonly shroud problems such as Sri Lanka's and brings the reader an objective in-depth look, which many of us have come to appreciate as well as expect from SOF articles.

R. de Silva
College Park, Maryland

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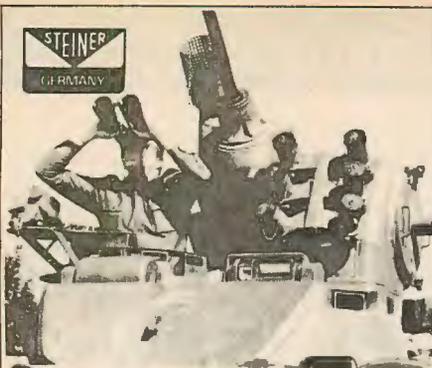
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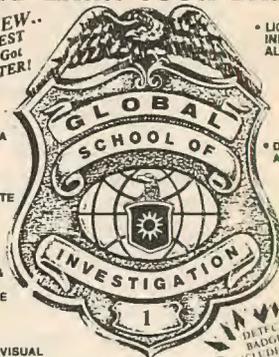
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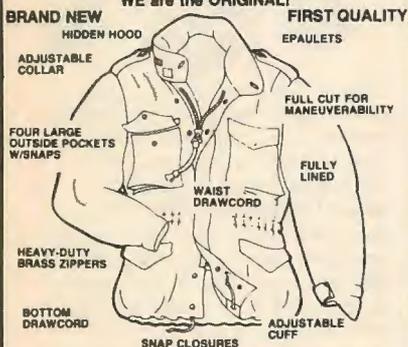
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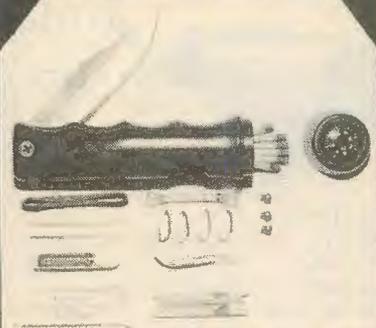
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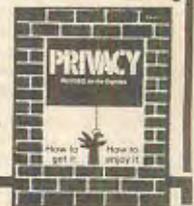
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Advertiser	Page	Advertiser	Page	Advertiser	Page
Alpine Military Sales	119	L.L. Baston	25	American Pistol Institute	136
Amazing Concepts	133	Loompanics	119	Cameo Enterprises	135
Assault Systems	110	Lowe-Alpine	16	Cold Steel	134, 137
Behlert Precision Arms	132	Marauder's Surplus	123	Creative Horizons	134
Brigade Quartermasters	17	Max & Jax	124	Devil's Brigade	135
CCS Communications	128	Midwest Sports Distributing, Inc.	122	Dickson Knives	135
Collector's Armoury	117	National Veterans Review	129	Eden Press	135
Combat Weapons Subscriptions	131	North American School of Firearms	23	Ferde Grofe Films	137
Command T-Shirts	113	Paladin Press	5	Global School of Investigation	134
Contra Cross	116	Parellex Corporation	11	Green Military Distributors	135
Delta Press	27	Pioneer & Company	126	Guaranteed Distributors	137
Doubleday Military Book Club	15	Quartermaster Sales	Cover 3	Gun South	136
Dutchman, The	20-21	Rambo Surplus	118	Jimmy Lile Knives	136
Edge Company, The	123	RJS, Inc.	108	K-9's Unlimited	138
Ek Commando Knife Co.	12-13	Safariland Hunting	132	Lancer Militaria	135
Excalibur Company	112	Sherwood International	8-9	Lansky Sharpeners	137
Forest Mountaineering	27	Silent Partner	118	Lifeknife	135
Gerber Legendary Blades	18	SOF Action Series	125	Livingston	134
Great Lakes Distributing	133	SOF Exchange	120, 121, 130	LRRP Enterprises	134
Guaranteed Distributors	115	SOF Subscriptions	129	Matthews Police Supply	134
HKS, Inc.	116	Special Veterans Excursions	22	Modern Schools of America	138
House of Weapons	126	Stackpole Books	109	Nam Graphics	134
INCO	132	Steel Mill, The	1	Nurmich Arms	136
International Historic Films	130	Survival Books	133	Ordnance Depot, The	137
Jones Ballistic Eyewear	121	Survival Store	114	RP Knives	137
KG & HG	130	Taurus USA	19	Running River Supply Company	138
Kaufman's West	Cover 2	Tech '80	116	Special Action Commando School	136
Knifeco	Cover 4	U.S. Cavalry	7	S.T.A.N.O. Components	136
Larc International	127	Valley Surplus	133	Ultimate Game, The	136
Law Enforcement Associates	122	Valor Sports	127	Universal Electronics	137
Liber-Tees	132	Wells Fargo	111	Westbury Sales	138
		Wichita Arms	130		

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MAD MIKE HOARE

Continued from page 47

There were other methods. At one time we had a hole in the ground we'd put men in. We also had a totally enclosed chamber we called The Memling (a five-star hotel in Leopoldville). It's very civilian in approach. I must say I preferred the harder ways, particularly when they relied on personality. Strange thing, you'd get a sergeant who would knock a man about in order to maintain discipline, and they'd become firm friends after that. That's human nature.

Q: What is your attitude on looting?

A: It progressed from a typical regular army officers' attitude that looting is despicable and unsoldierly and to be prohibited at all costs. I'm on record as having given such an order, which is ridiculous. It could be held that loot is a legitimate part of a mercenary's wages.

Now I don't hold that. But one has to examine the circumstances.

Take Stanleyville: When we entered Stan unexpectedly the jewelry shops were full. It's a mercenary's dream to have trays of gold rings waiting to be stolen. I had a rule at that time against looting. Then my officers came to me and said: It won't work because the ANC (Armee Nationale Congolaise) are looting and we'll be blamed. It was no excuse to make looters out of our men. But they insisted if they were going to get the blame they might as well have some of the benefits. I softened, and my men looted. But loot amounts to very little gain in warfare.

Q: Do you place great emphasis by automatic weapons?

A: That's a tactical consideration. In defense, the ability to open automatic fire is paramount, particularly in Africa. One of the great advantages of automatic fire, particularly against an African enemy, is the noise factor. To this extent I believe in it. But from a commander's point of view I was against automatic fire to conserve ammunition. The logistics become impossible otherwise. In Katanga and the Congo there developed a tactic known as "reconnaissance by fire" — you'd spray a bush to see if anyone was there.

This is an extreme way of soldiering, but then this is Africa.

Q: Do you see a place for medals in a mercenary outfit?

A: No. I've always been anti-medal. The wrong people get OBEs (Order of the British Empire) and it gives rise to a hell of a lot of discontent. The Americans have a system whereby they give medals almost for merit. You soon get a chestful, it's very nice, part of your dress and it's an acknowledgement of your prowess as a soldier. But as a mercenary you are not fighting for honor but, by definition, for money. So it's ludicrous.

Q: You say in your book *Congo Mercenary* that sympathy can be overdone. What did you mean?

A: When you've got a severely wounded man you can tell if he thinks he is going to die and if he has given up. If a man is wounded and you see he still has the power to fight for his life, the worst thing you can do is to give him sympathy. What you want to do is encourage him to fight so he will react to his benefit. Sometimes this doesn't apply, particularly in Africa where a man may suffer a minor gunshot wound, within four hours it has gone gangrenous, within 12 hours he's in a coma, and within 24 hours he is dead.

Q: What are your rules for battle?

A: 1. Pray God daily.

2. Make a fetish of personal cleanliness. Take pride in your appearance, even in the midst of battle and shave every day without fail.

3. Clean and protect your weapons always. They must be bright, clean and slightly oiled. Examine your ammunition frequently. Check and clean your magazine springs and clips.

4. Soldier in pairs. Look after each other, be faithful to your mate, be loyal to your leaders.

5. Tell no lies in battle. All information must be accurate or your unit will suffer. Exaggerate to your girlfriends later, but never in battle.

6. Be ready to move at a moment's notice. Mark all your equipment. Keep it handy at all times. At night develop a routine for finding it.

7. Look after your vehicle. Fill it with petrol before resting. Clean it. Do not overload unnecessarily.

8. Take no unnecessary risks.

9. Stand-to at dawn and dusk. At night have confidence in your sentries. Post as few as the situation demands.

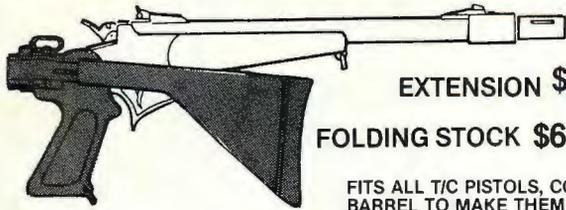
10. Be aggressive in action, chivalrous in victory, stubborn in defense.

Q: You say your first rule for battle is "pray God daily." Why?

A: I see a Sunday paper in Britain called me a religious freak, which is an absurdity. A belief in God or some form of religion is essential for the soldier. He is not necessarily irreligious or foul-mouthed. The majority of soldiers I have known have been very fine, upright and decent men who have reacted very, very well to the command "pray God daily," particularly when going into action. When you see your friends killed it's another dimension, and you think in different terms thereafter. If you had any doubt that there is a God or destiny, in warfare you get an opportunity to rethink life, particularly when on watch in the middle of the night.

It's a form of protection.

I've found that being a yachtsman, the same thing applies at sea. You discover you are a very small entity in the greater scheme of things. ☘



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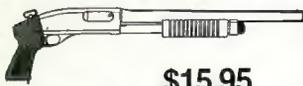


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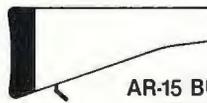


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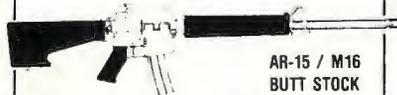


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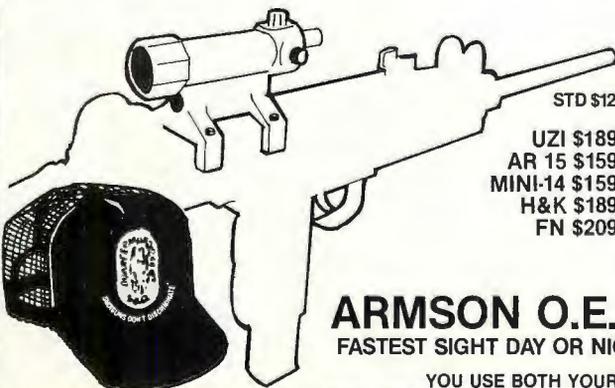
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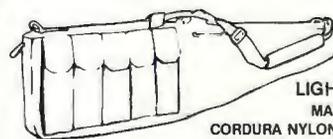


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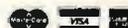
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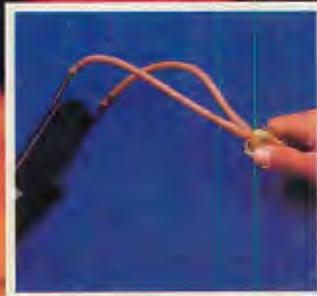


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