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# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE  
FEBRUARY 1986



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# SOLDIER

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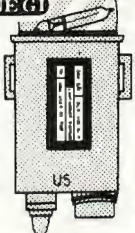
**Commando Sweater**  
This is the famous British Commando Sweater (Woolly Pully) adopted by the US Military. The natural 100% wool fiber content makes the sweater super warm, the long cut and tight knit ribbed design makes it wind proof. Sleeve and shoulder patches provide protection at abrasion points.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

**SUPER SPECIAL!**  
**\$10.00 OFF ANY STROBE LIGHT.**

Offer good for this issue of Soldier of Fortune only!!! To get sale price you MUST mention this issue of SOF. Offer good only thru Dec. 1985.

**Distress Marker GENUINE GI**  
**Rescue Strobe Light**

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



**USAF Flight Jacket**

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

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

**SATISFACTION GUARANTEED**

**Special Forces Green Beret** - Jaunty and daring and classy - like the professional's who wear them. These are official regulation berets of 100% vat dyed wool and meeting all military specs. Made expressly for us by the prime government contractor. Also available: Official headgear for:  
 Airborne Qualified (Maroon)  
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Sizes - 6 7/8 to 7 3/4



(Not sure of head size? Tell us how many inches around your head where you wear your hat. We'll send the right one.) **\$13.75/each**

## THE CAMOUFLAGE TIE

The Basic Wardrobe Accessory for Every Well Dressed Merc. Donchatink?

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

**Ranger Combat Cap - Woodland Camouflage** - latest Army issue.

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



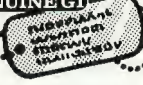
**Watch Cap, 100% Wool** - This is the genuine GI, tightly knit, and all-wool watch cap. Used by commandos and troops alike, this tightly knit cap fits snug on any size head for maximum warmth on extended cold weather operations. Sides can roll down to protect ears. Choose between dark blue/black (Navy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



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

**Regulation GI Dog Tags - GENUINE GI**

set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") ..... **\$3.00/each**  
Want us to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANY THING up to 6 lines and 15 spaces per line.  
Printing ..... only **\$1.00 per tag** (\$2.00 per set)



PLEASE, NO DOG TAG IMPRINTING ORDERS BY TELEPHONE.

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

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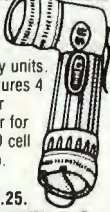


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Genuine military clothing, gear and equipment with an emphasis on camouflage. See details on these and many more related items. **\$2.00/each. Free with order.**

**Angle Head Flashlite** - **GENUINE GI**

This is the heavy duty olive drab plastic flashlight issued to all military units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation; operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box ..... **\$6.50/each; 2 for \$12.25.**



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

**Drill Instructor/Smokey the Bear Hat**

Formally called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt headpiece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or hear abuses, pursue flammers or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wistful self be heard! Sizes: 6-7/8 to 7-3/4 ..... **\$19.75/each.**



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

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

- Specify:**  
 Sage Green or Blue Shell - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL ..... **\$46.75/each.**  
 Black (nylon shell) or Camouflage (50% cotton/50% nylon shell) - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL ..... **\$48.75/each.**

**New for 1985/86 Season!!** Long Lengths in Flight Jackets Add \$6.00 per jacket

**US Navy Cold Weather Deck Jackets**

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



**M-65 Field Jackets**

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



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

**USAF Heavyweight Flight Jacket - Type M2B**

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



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Everything You Need to Know

by Duncan Long

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by Lee Lapin

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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

**S***OLDIER of Fortune* moved faster than I meant it to.

Ten years ago I started a magazine. I was going to float an issue, and see who bought it. A quarterly seemed reasonable for my idea: Good combat reporting was nearly impossible to find then, since Vietnam was down the tubes, and I figured that spacing out guerrilla war coverage with gun reviews would fill pages and amuse our readers.

Tough luck for my plan of a decade of good vacations between dashing off this quarterly. *SOF* took off. And just as the rest of the media had forgotten about Vietnam, weapons, obscure firefights in remote places and conservative politics, *SOF* began to ride the ground-swell of Americans who were not represented by *The Washington Post* and CBS. Civilian journalists may have been surprised by the new-found conservatism of young Americans, but I wasn't. I'd been reading my mail.

If *SOF* had gone according to plan, I would have traveled more, relaxed more, shot more, made less money and *spent* less money. Instead of printing the 100th issue of *SOF*, I'd be preparing the 40th.

Despite the blood, despite the sweat, despite the money, *Soldier of Fortune* really is worth it all, because it's what I would've wanted to read — but couldn't find — when I was running an A-team in 'Nam. I still devour every word of every issue after it's in print. No matter how many times I read the copy or see the photos during editing, a published *SOF* still has the magic of the first issue.

Where else can you read about reporters walking across Angola?

What other correspondents parachute into combat zones? And do you know of another magazine staff that is so expert that foreign armies invite them to train troops?

Adventure is what other magazines write about . . . and what *SOF* reporters *live*. From mountain tops to ocean depths, from assaults on Afghan forts to testing the latest parachutes, *SOF* staff are *doing* it, not just watching it.

Yet military intel coups are what make the CIA, KGB and Mossad read *SOF*. If you missed the last 99 issues of *SOF*, you missed plenty. You missed Soviet body armor, shop-made Argentine terrorist weapons, the Russians' microcali-

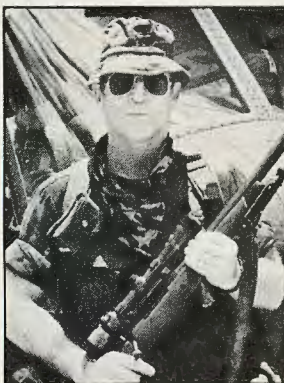
ber assault rifle, how many guns were cached on Grenada and the *real* story on the M16A2.

And where else can you read an honest weapons review? *SOF* is unique in its capacity to tell you what's good *and* bad about a gun. We also provide valuable maintenance and deployment tips from men who have spent their lives under arms.

Armed conflict means going to the field, and *SOF*'s staff are the authorities on outdoor gear. If you like lab tests, try another journal. But if you need expert opinions on the bewildering jungle of today's equipment suppliers, you can't afford to miss *SOF*.

No, there's nothing else like *SOF*. Not for me and not for a quarter of a million readers around the world. That's why the last 100 issues of *SOF* are nearly as important as the next 100.

And was it really worth it to me?  
*Je ne regrette rien.* ☒



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**COVER:** February 1985 marks SOF's 100th issue of combat and weapons reporting. Publisher Robert K. Brown and his staff of correspondents have traveled far and wide to bring the world to our readers. Be with us for the next 100 issues.

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## STAKEOUT SHOTGUN...

Sirs:

I was interested to read "Stakeout Unit" in the November '85 issue. In the article there is a photo of Jim Cirillo with a 12-gauge Wilson Arms Witness Protection shotgun. A State Patrol officer had a Wilson Arms shotgun at a school our department attended. It was a Winchester, 12-inch barrel, 12-gauge pump fitted with Winchokes. It was a joy to shoot. With the Wilson conversion I shot 20 fullhouse rounds and never felt it. And we achieved remarkable accuracy from as far back as 25 yards.

If you could do some kind of short article on this shotgun I know other police officers would appreciate it. After all, we are in combat somewhere daily, and combat weaponcraft concerns us constantly.

Richard W. Zeller  
Deputy Sheriff  
Clarke County,  
Georgia

*This month, SOF Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis reviews Jim Wilson's Witness Protection shotgun. This modified Remington Model 870 fulfills some specialized law enforcement requirements — it's small enough for vehicular employment and functions as an excellent stake-out weapon. See page 50 for details.*



# FLAK



## CENTRAL AMERICAN SUPPORT...

Sirs:

I came from El Salvador three years ago and didn't know anything about SOF until I bought one at a bookstore sale. I found an amazing report from my beloved country. Since then I have become an avid reader. Many thanks for keeping us informed on how our brave Salvadoran army is doing in the combat field. The international media just doesn't tell what's really happening in El Salvador.

Ricardo Zorres  
Salt Lake City, Utah

I don't know how strong groups like Witness for Peace or the National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan people are, but here in West Germany there's a lot of groups who support and finance the communist regime in Nicaragua and the communist movements in El Salvador and Guatemala. I'm from Guatemala and I believe that freedom, equality, justice and democracy are the only ways to solve the political and economic problems in our countries. But as long as there's a communist presence in Central America, we can't find a proper solution. I and other Central American students support President Reagan's policy and the efforts to eradicate the sources of communism.

It's difficult to fight the communist propaganda machinery here. As students of Cologne University, it's frustrating to be weaponless. The only weapon we have is our conviction and belief in God, freedom and democracy.

Mariano Rayo-Muñoz  
Siegburg, West Germany

*You have pointed out something that is the crux of our philosophy here at SOF. We are playing a game with communist sympathizers that has two sets of rules and people like you are stuck with the more complex set. Until the general public understands the extent of the left-wing propaganda machine, the battle against the communists will remain an uphill one.*

## SEAL SAGA...

Sirs:

Congratulations on presenting the superb feature, "SEAL Saga" (SOF, October '85). Although a proud Canadian, I have grown very much interested in the American fighting forces. The Navy SEALs' courage, spirit, daring and the love for their country are truly commendable.

Matthew Smrdelj  
Thornhill, Canada

"SEAL Saga" was an excellent and encompassing article. And the information on the Scouts and Raiders was more than I've ever read. I was one of the handful from the Army's 11th Engineer Combat Battalion that went through the USNATB's S&R School at Fort Pierce, Florida, along with a bunch of sailors and I learned much from the article that the Navy NCOs and officers failed to tell us.

Ira A. Greenberg, Ph.D.  
Los Angeles, California

## IRANIAN CONNECTION...

Sirs:

Congratulations on having the good sense to run David Segal's excellent appraisal of the Iran-Iraq War in your November '85 issue ("Iran's Military Suicide"). His is a perceptive, detailed and scholarly approach to an extremely convoluted conflict. Segal gives the reader the serendipity of his subtle wit.

Peter G. Chronis  
Denver, Colorado

David Segal's "Iranian Connection" (SOF, December '85) demonstrates an in-depth understanding of America's most violent enemy. This clear, concise paper should be required reading for every American citizen.

Michael DiRocco  
Special Forces, Retired  
Pompano Beach, Florida

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*Requests for information must be received by March 31, 1986. Registration deposits must be received by April 31, 1986. Your application is conditional upon a security clearance to be conducted by the Israeli government.*

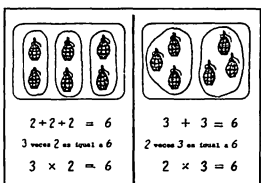
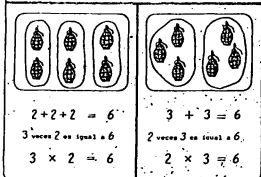
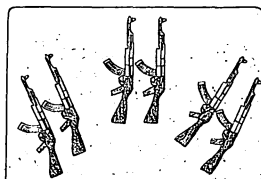
## REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION...

Sirs:

These are examples from elementary textbooks published by the Nicaraguan ministry of education. They are required teaching materials in all public and private schools as part of the Sandinista government reform program. The Sandinistas claim they have reduced illiteracy from over 50 percent in March 1980 to 11 percent in August of the same year. They taught a million individuals to read and write in six months? I'm surprised the Soviet Union or Cuba let Ortega release those preposterous statistics.

Kirk Freeman  
Fultonville, New York

*The Sandinistas have certainly made a big deal about increased literacy in Nicaragua. Too bad their "revolutionary education" has been at the expense of people's freedom.*



## SOVIET CONG...

Sirs:

F.C. Brown's article on Russian advisers in Vietnam ("Soviet Cong," SOF, November '85) was superb. It called to mind an article in *The Los Angeles Times* (between October 1969 and June 1971) that covered the activities of a group of Russian "observers" who toured "liberated" areas of the RVN. The Russians were being had. The VC were taking them on a tour of Potemkin Villages to substantiate claims that they were de facto rulers of certain provinces that were really loyal to Saigon. They were trying to avoid having Moscow shift its support from VC to Hanoi thus writing them out of the picture completely, which the North Vietnamese did anyway in 1975.

Roy C. Hofsneider  
Upland, California

*F.C. Brown's story and your recollection of VC and Soviet collaboration is only the tip of a huge iceberg and, unfortunately, until the Vietnamese communists open their records to historians there is little likelihood that the story will ever be fully understood.*

## MERC SCHOOL...

Sirs:

In reply to your views on merc schools, (*Command Guidance*, October '85) I'd like to add something you failed to mention. Whether Frank Camper is a liar or genuine ex-LRRP is not important. What is important is that his school provides service for several people who want to learn to defend themselves. That Lal Singh studied there to assassinate the Indian president means nothing. I know three mercs who went there that fought in Lebanon and Africa. The schools provide an outlet for people who want to test their skills, and I feel they are necessary. I'd rather have nut cases pretending they're macho at these schools rather than on the streets. I've fought in Africa and Lebanon, but learned better assassination techniques at Merc School. If the government refuses to teach anti-communist freedom fighters how to defend in case of war, then by all means, let's have merc schools.

S. Zeitchyk  
Ottawa, Canada

## THE "OTHER" MERCENARY SCHOOL?...

Sirs:

First Mr. Brown should not compare all the Mercenary Schools to Mr. Campers. As the Director of **COMMANDO SCHOOL** and the "SENIOR STATESMAN OF THE POPULAR MERCENARY BUSINESS OF THE U.S." we do NOT knowingly allow Terrorist or Communist to attend our School. But we do provide an excellent Mercenary Course for all law abiding personal. Not just for the Combat-style handgun competitor, law enforcement and Military personal as Brown stressed the Weapons training if for. But all those are welcome too! The Majority of our Students (men & women) that attend our school are Not Mercs. and do not plan to pursue that field although some do and that is GREAT. Commando School has gained the reputation as the Finest ParaMilitary School in existence. Being located near Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune, we acquire some of the best instructors available, along with active Mercs whenever they are in Country. The active Special Forces, Rangers and Marines that request to be instructors still have to be reTrained by our staff at Commando School. Being in the active Special Forces, Rangers, and Marines does not make You a Professional Merc. Even though we hear it every day over the Phone. In fact, most of the Students from the Elite Military Branches that have completed our courses have stressed how much they learned from the Courses. And that they were not taught those Skills in service or not taught very well.

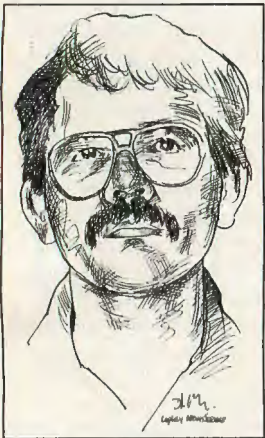
And I must add that Safety is stressed throughout our courses. We use and carry Modern Assault Rifles throughout the training program, not like those other Schools that carry Replica Firearms. So dont compare us with the other amateurs. As Brown Stated, "let the Professionals succeed and the amateurs fail".

Our Confidential Protection System doesn't allow us to record or keep names — But if we had, they would have been enough to fill a small phone book of which included Professional Soldiers, Mercenaries, Marines, and Yes Brown three American Rhodesian Vets, and one Legionaire. Plus all the other Military Branches, but Prior Military experience is Not Required.

*Continued on page 128*

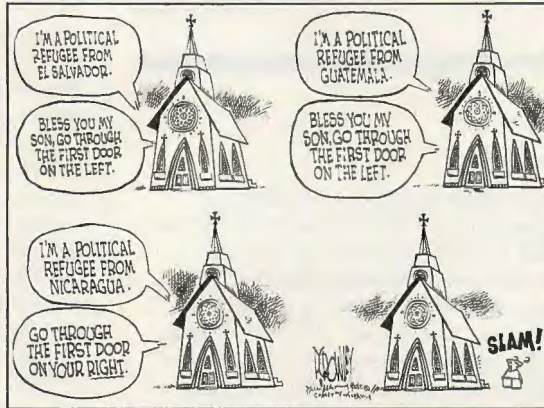
## BLIND TO HYPOCRISY...

"The better to see you with, my dear" may be a good reason to buy new glasses. But apparently Nicaragua's Big Brother is a bourgeois in proletariat's clothing. Just hours after blaming the United States for the woes of Nicaragua's Marxist economy in a speech before the United Nations, President Daniel Ortega Saavedra and his entourage went on a personal buying spree. Among other places, they turned up at an upscale New York optical boutique. Our source tells us dim-eyed Danny bought \$3,500 worth of designer eyeglasses for himself and his fashionably dressed wife. Their purchases were paid for with a Diners Club credit card from Nicaragua's U.N. delegation. It is doubtful that Ortega's new specs will help him see the hypocrisy in this. Maybe someone will come up with an American Express "red card" to cover such apparent philosophical inconsistencies. Communism might make everyone equal. But some people sure as hell seem a lot more equal than others.



Ortega: Some communists are more equal than others.

# BULLETIN BOARD



## KAREN UPDATE...

A Frenchman was killed and an Aussie severely wounded 4 October when Karen freedom fighters were attacked by socialist government troops in Burma, according to an exclusive report in *The Australian*. Martin Donnelly, who left the Australian Special Air Service in June, denied in the report that he was working in Burma as a mercenary. The dead Frenchman was Jean Philippe Maurice Courge Clerq. Donnelly described Clerq as "a good bloke and a bit of a character, being a keen parachutist and professional powder monkey who had only one hand."

Donnelly said he linked up with the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) after reading in *Asia Week Magazine* about Burma's policy of genocide and slave labor for the English-speaking Christian tribe of Karens. He said he went to Burma strictly as "an observer." He identified Clerq as a soldier of fortune who "was inspired by the Karen cause and fought for the sheer satisfaction of it — not for personal gain." The KNLA operate from fortified villages in the rugged Dawna mountains east of Moulmein, Burma near the border with Thailand.

Burmese and Thai officials say there are a number of foreigners with the KNLA who share the same interests as Donnelly, whatever those interests might be. Donnelly was wounded and Clerq killed when a Karen boat in which they were traveling on the Moei River was hit by mortar or artillery rounds fired from a Burmese army position. A battle was already underway at nearby Tikemey, about 8km from the Thai border. Donnelly stoutly maintained he was in Burma only as a concerned citizen whose "spirit of adventure wanted something better than a package tour." *Soldier of Fortune* would like to hear more from Mr. Donnelly about his adventure. Please write: **Jim Pate, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306 U.S.A.**

## ASSOCIATIONS, REUNIONS...

Anyone who served in the U.S. armed forces during the Korean War — between 25 June 1950 and 27 July 1953 — may be interested in contacting others who have already chartered the **Korean War Veterans' Association Inc.** Membership is open to anyone who served in the U.S. military during this period, whether they actually served in Korea or not. The Korean War left 54,236 Americans dead, over 103,000 were wounded in combat and over 7,000 U.S. servicemen were captured. Of those POWs, almost half died in captivity, 3,450 were repatriated and 389 remain unaccounted for. In addition, 8,177 U.S. servicemen who fought in Korea still are listed as missing in action. Those interested in joining the KWVA may call or write the president: **William T. Norris, 302 Middleton Rd., Waterford, NY 12188, (518) 371-7816.**

Listen up, Vietnam vets. A reunion is being organized for the personnel present when a large force of North Vietnam Army regulars and Viet Cong guerrillas clashed on 21 March 1967 with the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fire Support Base Gold near Suoi Tre, South Vietnam (RVN). When the four-hour battle was over, the 2/77th Artillery, 3/22nd Infantry, 2/12th Infantry, 2/22nd Infantry (Mech.) and the 2/34th Armor accounted for 647 enemy KIA. It was the most enemy killed in a similar period of time during the Vietnam War. A 20th anniversary reunion is set for 20-21 March 1987, at Fort Carson, Colo., home of the 4th Infantry Division (Mech.). USA General John W. Vessey Jr. (Ret.), former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and CO of the 2/77th Artillery during the Battle of FSB Gold, will be the honored speaker and guest. Interested parties should call or write: **Larry Moss, P.O. Box 775, Ferriday, LA 71334, (318) 757-8500, or (318) 757-2331.**



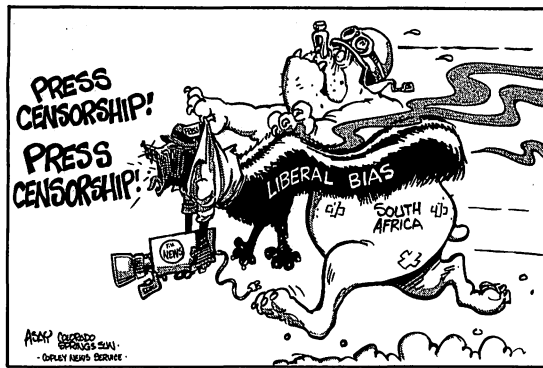
## IVAN IRKS LIBYANS...

The more than 3,000 Russian soldiers and another 500 Soviet "senior specialists" posted in Libya apparently are getting on local military nerves, according to a report in *Al Ahram*. Egypt's leading daily newspaper reported that "Libyan officers have several times refused to obey the foreign officers." Several were punished for disobeying orders, "mostly from the ground and naval forces. Some received death sentences and others jail sentences," the report stated.

One major sore point, an SOF source says, is the use of Libyan airbases by the Soviets to monitor U.S. 6th Fleet and other activities in the Mediterranean. MiGs and other Soviet aircraft use Libya's airfields regularly.

The *Al Ahram* report further stated that a May 1985 naval exercise billed as a joint Soviet-Libyan effort in fact was actually a Russian affair "engaged solely in collecting intelligence about the U.S. Mediterranean Fleet." The only Libyan vessel was one of 34 submarines involved in the maneuvers, it reported.

Meanwhile, the daily newspaper of the Soviet army, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), reported that a Libyan military delegation visited the Soviet Union in July to attend the advanced military-political combined arms school in Minsk. The Libyans held talks with Colonel General A.D. Lizichev, who replaced Marshal A.A. Yepishev as head of the Soviet Armed Forces Chief Political Directorate. They also met with Lizichev's chief deputy, Admiral A.I. Sorokin.



## AFGHANS PULL INSIDE JOB...

*Jane's Defence Weekly* reports that the mid-June destruction of 18 Soviet combat aircraft at Afghanistan's heavily guarded Shindand air base probably should be credited to rebellious Afghan air force officers, not to mujahideen freedom fighters, as was initially reported. Apparently Afghan air force officers sabotaged their own aircraft, according to the *Jane's* article by Yossef Bodansky, who used as a source a recent defector who claimed to have witnessed the explosions.

Shindand is Afghanistan's largest air base, home of the Soviet 10th Army. It also houses Soviet naval aviation, electronic and intelligence facilities, operational centers for the Aviation Front of the Neareastern Area of Operations (TVD) and token units of the Afghan puppet regime's air force. Security is extreme at Shindand, which is surrounded by a wide belt of sensors, minefields and free-fire zones. Soviet soldiers leveled all homes and villages formerly located in the free-fire zone. Civilian movement in the area is forbidden. Soviet helicopter gunships and jets routinely bomb the heights around Shindand which might be used to launch an attack on the base.

Mujahideen members claimed that freedom fighters had penetrated Shindand's legendary security net and knocked out 12 or 15 Afghan air force MiG-17s and MiG-21s. They described a brief rocket and mortar attack similar to the noted 1965 Viet Cong attack on U.S. planes at Bien Hoa. But the Soviets usually mount fierce retaliatory raids after such rebel strikes and none occurred following the Shindand attack. Neither was there any explanation for why more sophisticated aircraft at the base were not targeted.

The defector told *Jane's* that the sabotage was an inside job carried out by 10 Afghan air force officers, including three pilots, all infuriated by reports of Soviet atrocities in their native areas. An SOF source confirmed that the acts of sabotage were coordinated with a mujahideen rocket and mortar attack to divert the attention of security personnel. The Afghan officers decided to sabotage their own aircraft because they were forbidden access to the areas where Soviet aircraft were housed. The officer cell accordingly spiked bomb fuses and put explosives in fuel tanks. The subsequent explosions spread fire along the flight line and caused extensive damage. All suspects were quickly arrested and court-martialed. Five officers — three pilots, one co-pilot and a doctor — were executed within days, the defector reported. Allah Akbar!

## HONOR ROLL...

Refugee Relief International Inc. contributors:

F.A.S.T., Jay & Penny Long.  
El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund:

Cliff Rager, F.A.S.T., Bill Tribfelner, Martin Whited, Luran Hartshorn, John R. Bride, Steve Bernard, David Bernard, Robert Walaszewski, Craig Manness, Dan Swyndro, William Hartig, Richard Vilardo, John Tomich, Sgt. Slack, Richard H. Craig, Tom Hession, Doug Erickson, Kenneth G. Paynter.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund:  
Mark Stein of Moteng International Inc., Clifford R. Rager, Jay & Penny Long, Bob White.

## KNOW THINE ENEMY...

Kremlin-watchers, take note. A new publication is available: *Soviet Presswatch* — A Bi-Weekly Analysis of the Soviet Media. According to Dr. Jack Wheeler of the Freedom Research Foundation, the editors are experienced Soviet analysts who "voraciously read what is published in the USSR in the original Russian, down to obscure journals in the various outlying republics, such as Georgia or Kazakhstan." They are also in touch with dissident sources, Wheeler said. Summaries of the most interesting information is presented in *Soviet Presswatch*. It is available to subscribers in either an electronic or printed form. Subscriptions are \$250 a year. For more information, write: **Presswatch International Inc., 1341 Ocean Avenue, Suite 341, Santa Monica, CA 90401.**

## WRITE AL MAR...

A recent article looking at Al Mar Knives (See "Al Mar — The Green Beret Cutler," SOF, December '85) omitted the address and phone number of the blade designer. If you want to call him or drop him a line: **Al Mar Knives, Dept. SOF, 5755 Southwest Jean Rd., Suite 101, Oswego, OR 97034. Phone (503) 635-9229.** ✕



EDWARD JABLONSKI

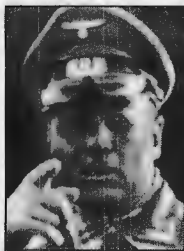
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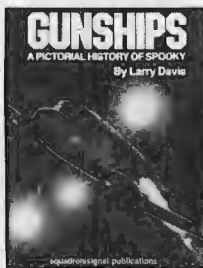
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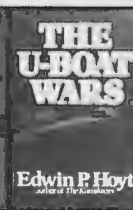
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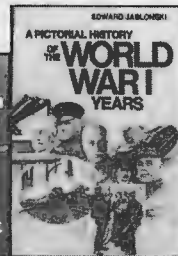


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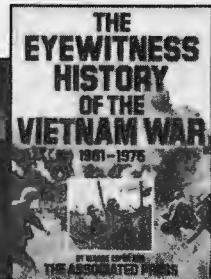
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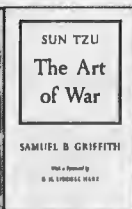
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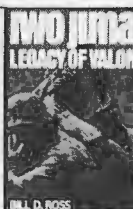
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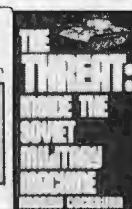
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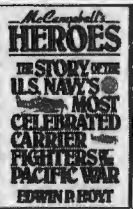
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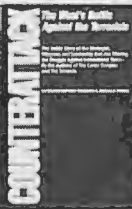
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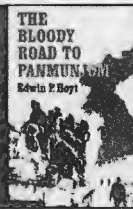
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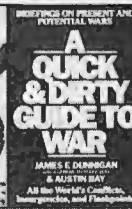
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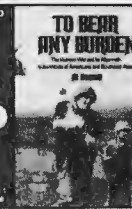
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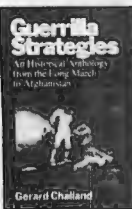
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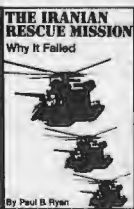
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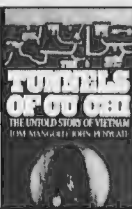
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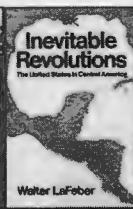
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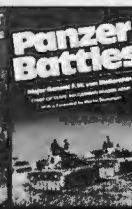
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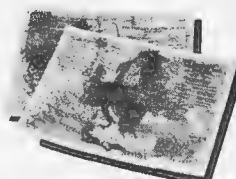
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ONE of mankind's oldest tools in peace and war has been the knife. Early man-the-hunter, armed with a cutting edge, understood that the more blood an animal lost the quicker it expired, and the quicker the clan was fed.

Man-the-warrior had much the same understanding. When he began to hunt other men — the most dangerous animals of all — he immediately discovered that the blood-loss principle went a long way toward saving his own skin. Using that knowledge as a starting point, he began to devote some serious study to the best way to kill with minimal risk to himself.

This bothers some members of our society whose sole contact with cutlery is the bread-and-butter blade. Our squeamishness aside, other societies have shown a keen interest in what to them is practical rather than esoteric information.

A case in point was the Japanese samurai practice of testing finished swords for performance using condemned prisoners as the test medium. During the process they went to the trouble of describing and cataloguing the various cuts, and rated them according to varying degrees of difficulty. What's more, they also worked up a set of drawings of the human anatomy and illustrated these cuts and their application.

Believe me, when a samurai went about the business of taking someone apart with a blade, he knew exactly where he was going and how to get there.

Which brings us to the here and now. Like it or not, the harsh realities of life make it necessary for some of us to know and consider a few of these cutting techniques — both for our own, and our country's, best interests.

If you're going close in, here's some hard information on knife fighting they didn't give you in basic training.

When a man dies as a result of a knife wound, most people think he bleeds to death. True in part, but the actual cause of death from blood loss is suffocation. When there is no longer enough oxygen being circulated through the body to sustain life, the victim suffocates. Bow hunters have known this for years, and they adjust their tactics to allow enough time for the process to occur in their quarry after the hit. They don't expect a game animal to collapse as soon as it's struck by an arrow. You shouldn't expect a man to drop in his tracks as soon as you cut him with your knife, either.

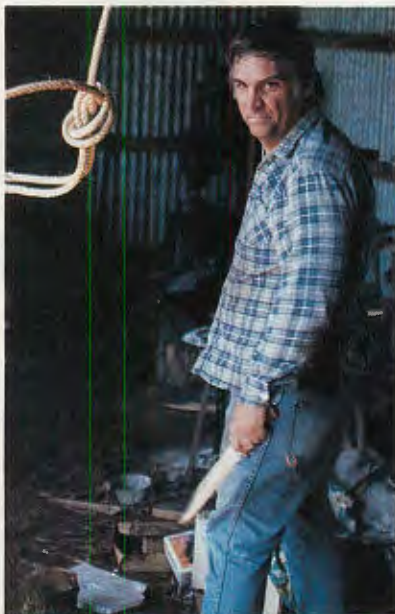
With that in mind, let's consider the two ways to kill a man with a knife. One is by attacking his circulatory system, and the other his nervous system. Neither method is best under all circumstances, so let's examine each and



# BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

## Effective Cuts



**SOF edged weapons editor demonstrates the devastating slashing power of a well-made combat knife.**

see how to employ them.

The most common approach to killing with a knife is an attack on the circulatory system. In other words, you cut the enemy until he bleeds enough to suffocate. The idea is to cause the maximum amount of blood loss in the shortest possible time without exposing *yourself* to any great risk of being cut in the process. A successful stabbing attack to the heart, its surrounding arteries or the kidneys will accomplish the blood loss we are seeking, but the odds of the enemy being able to retaliate or cut you before you make contact are high. A far safer method is to slash the surface blood vessels that are the easiest to reach.

Generally overlooked as prime offensive targets are the veins and arteries of the hands and arms. Especially vulnerable are those vessels in the area of the wrist where they come to the surface and branch out across the back of the hand. A slash to this area, using a good knife with a first-rate cutting ability, is far more lethal than is

generally supposed. And, if you land a telling blow to the back of your opponent's hand you will likely do more than just make him bleed — you will probably disable him as well.

The leaders and ligaments that control both wrist and finger articulation are concentrated in this area and are easily reached and severed. A serious cut to the back of the hand will instantly render that particular hand useless. Further, the hand will require immediate attention in the form of a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. Left unattended, this cut can cause unconsciousness in a minute or less.

While we're talking about attacking your opponent's blood circulation, let's look at another aspect of this business of cutting hands and arms. Have a look at a medical chart of the circulatory system, then look at one of the muscular system. See anything in common? They both run up and down the skeleton, or what I call north and south. In attacking one or both systems — in the interest of causing maximum blood flow or severing muscles and ligaments and disrupting locomotion or function — it should be obvious that your deadliest cuts will be across the direction they run, or east and west.

In other words, a cut that runs from wrist to elbow, or parallel to the blood vessels and muscle bias, will not be as instantly disabling as a cut that runs across the wrist. The same holds true with fingers or legs or whatever. Cuts across muscles slice them in two and they quit working, while cuts that run with muscles split them. While they may bleed, they can continue to function. It's for this reason that I consider cuts across the extremities to be doubly effective and call them "bonus cuts."

Now that we've briefly examined some basic approaches to attacking the circulatory system, what does this mode of offense offer? A slashing attack on the extremities is one of the safest to mount while maintaining a good defense, and there's the added bonus of disabling your opponent. However, this type of attack is also the

*Continued on page 123*

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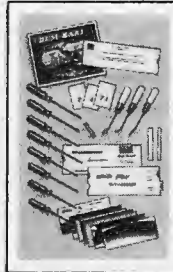
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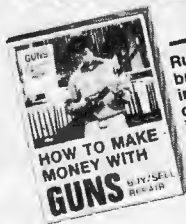
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I was an 18-year-old PFC clerk-typist serving at a small backwater base in Northern California when my orders for Vietnam came. I was terrified. Being blessed with an overactive imagination I knew I was going to my death.

After processing through Oakland Army Terminal and boarding a Flying Tiger Airlines jet, our load of Vietnam-bound human cargo made the uneventful 18-hour flight with the usual scenic stops at Travis AFB, Anchorage, and Yakota AFB in Japan.

Finally, Long Binh crept up on the horizon. I suspect our pilot had read the same *Time* magazine article I had about VC gunners and their cheery little habit of taking pot shots at incoming aircraft. As the plane winged close to the airbase, we plummeted toward the runway like a kamikaze pilot diving into the deck of a carrier.

Once safe on the ground — Charlie must've taken the day off — we taxied over to what at first looked like a giant green snake lying on the concrete. Closer up it turned out to be a tunnel revetted waist-high with sandbags and covered with steel mesh screening, running from the bottom of the aircraft boarding ramp to the door of a waiting 40-passenger Army bus. An NCO met us at the top of the ramp and told us to unass the airplane, move out smartly and get on the bus.

No problems there. I figured they wouldn't have gone to all the trouble of building that tunnel unless there was the chance we might get attacked the minute we got off the plane. I could just see my mother getting a telegram saying her son had died during his first 20 minutes in Vietnam.

Just before we pulled out, a guy got on who I swear was Pancho Villa's cousin. He was armed with a sawed-off pump shotgun and had two bandoleers of shells crisscrossed over his chest. With a shit-eatin' smile he informed us he was "riding shotgun," and promised he would do his damndest to see that we didn't die on the way to the reple-depple.

The windows of the bus were covered with the same wire mesh as the tunnel, and I asked him why. He cocked an eyebrow at my "cherry" question and explained that it was to keep bad people from throwing things like grenades into the bus. My imagination, now pumping in high gear, told me that if it would keep grenades out it would also keep people in. If we got popped, I'd be riding in an Army issue rolling coffin. I started sweating bullets, but we lived through the ride to the replacement depot.

Our load of new guys piled out of the bus in front of a two-story wooden barracks and formed up into a com-



# I WAS THERE

by Bruce E. Klipp

## As Green as They Come

pany formation. The first sergeant came out to talk to us, and the very first thing he asked was if there were any Army Security Agency (ASA) people in the crowd. I was the only one. He motioned me off to the side and muttered something which sounded like "fucking prima donna" although I had no idea of why he was talking about ballet.

When I was clear of the formation the rest of the group were marched off to draw their TA-50 equipment and weapons. Top told me to hang loose for a couple of hours until a bus came for me. Hanging loose is the best order a soldier can get, so I headed for the EM club and a cold beer or two.

Coming back about two hours later I poked my head into the orderly room. Top asked where the hell I'd been and in the same breath told me to get my ass on the bus outside. Being a lowly PFC and brand-new in-country, I hastened to comply. On my way out of the orderly room, I think he mentioned something about that damned ballet again.

Except for the driver, I was the only guy on the bus. I asked him where we were going and he told me that all ASA people go to the St. Georges Hotel in Saigon. Not wanting to seem too much like a newby, I didn't ask any more questions.

We drove for about an hour, and I saw my first rice paddies, water buffalo and Vietnamese. Then we entered Saigon. It was crowded, it was dirty and it smelled bad, but it was oh-so exotic to a boy raised in the white middle-class suburbs of Detroit. We finally arrived at an enormous faded pink and blue stucco building with a big sign over the door that said St. Georges Hotel in English, French and Vietnamese. A smaller sign directed new arrivals to report to the desk clerk.

A bored Spec. 4 assigned me to a room, and since it was already late afternoon, told me to report back the next morning for in-processing. Shit. Here I was in the middle of a war and nobody had given me a gun yet. I mentioned this fact to the clerk and he told me not to worry, papa-san would pro-

tect us. He pointed to what looked like a large brown prune mounted on two toothpicks, armed with an M16 and asleep next to the door. It wasn't the most reassuring of sights.

I trudged up to my room and opened the door. Four-star Hilton luxury it was not. Whitewashed walls, an Army cot and a quartermaster-issue dresser made for rather Spartan living. I dumped my duffle bag, and since it had been a long, hot and exciting day — there had been numerous possibilities for dying — I decided to take a nap.

I don't think I'd been asleep for too long when I slowly eased my eyes open. Bigger than life, clinging to the ceiling in defiance of gravity, and directly over my head was the nastiest-looking lizard I'd ever seen. I was sure that if I made a sudden move it would drop down and bite me with its poison fangs. If I had to die I sure didn't want to do it in a stifling hotel room, bitten to death by a Viet Cong lizard.

Very slowly and carefully I slid off my bunk, then dashed for the door. I stood there staring, doorknob in hand and ready to run, when suddenly something began to push the door open from the other side.

I jumped back into the center of the room, heart pounding, unprepared for this new threat. It was about four feet tall with a shriveled face, and it was cackling insanely to itself. Even worse, it was dressed in black pajamas!

Christ! VC wear black pajamas, my adrenalized brain shrieked as I backed away in terror. The creature, still cackling, shuffled into the room. I was in the final stages of panic when the old crone pushed me over the edge. With a deadly flourish it suddenly whipped out a BROOM!

I fled screaming from the room and dashed downstairs, babbling to the duty Spec. 4 that I had been attacked by a VC in my room. The astonished clerk asked me a couple of quick questions and then glared at me. In a tone reserved specially for syphilitic whores and new guys, he told me to quit being an asshole, that it was just mama-san

*Continued on page 126*

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**S**MALL-arms literature contains few references to the puzzling Yugoslavian M56 submachine gun manufactured by Zavodi Crvena Zastava, Kragujevac. Worse yet, most of these sources are erroneous in one regard or another. They are based on factory specification sheets only, not hands-on experience.

SOF doesn't regurgitate manufacturers' brochures. Instead, I've fired more than 1,000 rounds through my M56. Here are the facts.

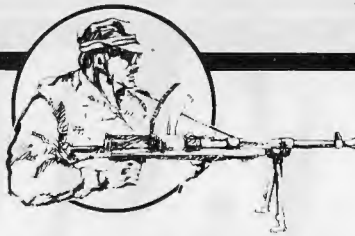
At first glance, it appears to be little more than a slightly modified MP40. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In overall length, the M56 is 34.6 inches with the stock extended and 25.6 inches with the stock folded. It weighs 6.7 pounds, empty, which is about average for a submachine gun of this vintage. Blowback operated, the M56 fires from the open-bolt position.

The M56 is chambered for the ComBloc 7.62x25mm round. This bottleneck cartridge was adopted in 1930 by the Russians for use in the Tokarev Model TT-30/33 pistol series. As with many Soviet "innovations," it's a direct copy of the 7.63mm (.30) Mauser round originally developed for the Borchardt pistol and then increased in power for the Mauser Model 1896 Self-Loading Pistol (the Broomhandle). Until the .357 Magnum popped up in the late 1930s, the Broomhandle was the hottest number in town and high-velocity king of the pistol calibers.

ComBloc loading will step out of the M56 barrel at 1,640 fps. Its 86-grain projectile has a very flat trajectory and offers consistent submachine-gun hit probability out to 200 meters. A so-called Model 65 was reported to be the 9mm Parabellum version of this weapon, but I doubt it existed beyond the pages of a catalog.

Some think the 7.62x25mm cartridge is a flyweight, but it killed thousands of Germans on the Eastern Front. Self-styled experts continually hide behind filing cabinets and issue "selected" police reports which illustrate, in the manner of holy writ, that the human organism cannot be terminated with a pistol cartridge smaller than .451 inches. I don't need a filing cabinet of favorable data to demonstrate that hundreds of thousands were slain by Sten, MP40 and PPSH41 submachine guns, before, during and well after World War II.

The M56's tubular upper receiver body, to which the barrel is threaded, is just over 15 inches long. In addition to the model and serial number, the seamless receiver tube carries the crest of the Yugoslavian communist regime — a wreath made of shafts of wheat crowned by the communist five-pointed star encircling five flaming



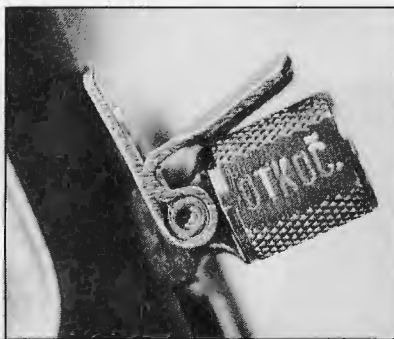
## FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

### Yugoslavian Puzzle Gun



**Yugoslav M56 submachine gun, caliber 7.62x25mm.**



**The M56's retracting handle serves as the weapon's only safety device.**



**Receiver markings commemorate the birth of the Tito regime.**

torches and the date of the Tito government's inception: 29 November 1943.

At 10 inches, the barrel looks overly long and somewhat fragile. Without the usual barrel shroud it's completely exposed, but it is of normal thickness (0.665 inches at the breech end) and quite substantial. Four grooves in the bore turn to the right.

The front sight base is sweated and pinned to the barrel. A removable hood of the 98k type covers a fixed-blade front sight which can be moved in its dovetail to effect windage zero. The sight radius is 17 inches, since the rear sight is mounted on the upper receiver body. The flip-type rear sight has two settings: 100 meters ('10') and 200 meters ('20') with open square-notches. They have no protective ears and are extremely difficult to manipulate.

Three and a half inches to the rear of the front sight is a feature no combat veteran would ever want or expect to find on a submachine-gun barrel: a bayonet lug. Someone once told me this was useful for herding prisoners in a compound. I'll be damned if I'm ever going to let some POW get close enough to me so I can poke him with a knife attached to a two-foot extension.

A stamped, sheet-metal magazine well is welded to the bottom of the upper receiver. The knurled magazine

release latch is at the rear and partially covered by the forearm. It must be pressed forward to drop the magazine, which falls freely away. There are two dime-sized holes on each side of the magazine well that match two corresponding circles on each side of the magazine. As far as I can determine, they serve only as reference marks to visually notify the operator that the magazine is properly seated.

The curved, 35-round magazine is of conventional design, using the modern two-position feed system, and resembles the PPS43 magazine. Of all-steel construction, the components (except for the spring) are sheet-metal pressings. It's exceptionally sturdy and easy to load without the use of a tool except for the last two or three rounds. This weapon will not accept drum magazines.

A leather sling, similar to the MP40's, is attached to slots in front of the magazine well and at the rear of the lower receiver.

The bolt body is cut from bar stock. Because it's over 6.5 inches long the bolt body is heavy. A folded extractor, fabricated from flat-spring stock, is mounted in a cut on top of the bolt and held in place by a cross pin. A fixed firing pin has been milled into the bolt face. The ejector is permanently fixed to the receiver tube, directly in back of the magazine well. Cut into the bottom of the bolt body is a channel that permits this component to override the ejector. Empty cases are expelled through a port in the top of the receiver tube.

A slot on the receiver's left side allows the retracting handle to reciprocate. When the bolt is fully forward and the chamber empty, a spring-loaded lever on the retracting handle engages a small nub on the receiver and prevents the bolt from being withdrawn inadvertently. This lever is lifted off the nub in the act of cocking. The retracting handle may also be rotated clockwise 90 degrees to lock the bolt in either the closed or retracted positions. This is the only safety device on the M56. Safety controls belong on the selector lever, and rotating the retracting handle is clumsy and frustrating under stress.

A disc attached to the front of the recoil spring butts against the retracting handle's shaft and prevents its removal except during disassembly. The large-diameter recoil spring rides in a hollow in the rear of the bolt and over a tubular, sheet-metal guide rod attached to the end cap.

Moving down to the lower receiver, things start to get weird. The folding stock is straight off the MP40. Its latch release button (on the left side) is con-

*Continued on page 126*

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**GERMAN WAR ART 1939-1945.** Edited by William P. Yenne. American Graphic Systems, 576 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94111. 160 pp. 220 paintings and illustrations. 1984. \$19.95. Review by Bill Brooks.

German War Art presents the works of German combat artists during World War II. In 1941 the unofficial activities of soldier-artists serving with units at the front came to Hitler's attention. He was so impressed with the quality of the work that he decided it should be officially supported. Hitler ordered the German Army High Command to establish a staff of selected artists to follow the German military and develop a record of the war in paintings and drawings. These men were attached to front-line military units of all branches of the German armed forces.

For an audience polarized into camps of many Nazi-phobes, a few isolated Nazi-philes, and many more who would just as soon forget the Nazis ever existed, it's important to say that this collection is composed of art. Though propaganda is included in the selection, neither the book itself nor most of the art was an exercise in propaganda, although some examples of that form are included. Rather these works are impressions of a generation of German artists whom history has ignored. **German War Art 1939-1945** further discusses the relationship between Nazi art and war art in general, and how this art is related to 20th century art as a whole.

German war art is easily understood. It was the direct reflection of the 20th century's biggest war in the eyes of the German soldier. Some of those visions were politically colored, but most views were those of ordinary soldiers before and since. German war art — as a subject and as a book — is a personalized reflection of men in combat on the other side of the wire — men who fought and suffered and bled like any other soldier. These works are sympathetically, apolitically represented in Yenne's book.

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**TO BEAR ANY BURDEN.** By Al Santoli. E. P. Dutton Inc., Dept. SOF, 2 Park Ave, New York, NY 10016. 1985. 367 pp. \$18.95. Review by Dale Andrade.

**V**IETNAM War books fill newsstand shelves, but few are worth reading. We suffer endless sloppy fiction that gives a grunt's-eye view of the war, apologies sweated out by men who tailored the war effort, and brazen books with a gift for hindsight that tell

## IN REVIEW



us how it should have been done. When will we get a clear account of the war in real and human terms?

Al Santoli's **To Bear Any Burden** may be that book. His previous work, *Everything We Had*, is an excellent day-in-the-life-of-a-grunt book, but it added little to the war's big picture. This one's different.

Santoli had a mission in mind when he set out on this endeavor. And after reading his book, it's clear that he was not one to accept the inevitability of a communist victory in Southeast Asia. Santoli wanted to bring together evidence of America's losing track record in the words of those who were aware of the tragedy all along. Let the reader decide where the problem lay.

A common thread of reasoning runs throughout Santoli's work. Through personal interviews he shows the reader that the war was not as simple as the press would have liked us to believe. And he paints his picture of the war with the thoughts, feelings and memories of men and women who were caught up in the war, from civilian medics and military masterminds to Montagnard tribesmen and Viet Cong communist cadre. They all saw things through different eyes, but all came to the same conclusion — North Vietnam didn't want to "liberate" South Viet-

nam, they wanted to tyrannize it.

Truong Mealy's story, that of a former Viet Cong agent, illuminates the dark world of communist clandestine operations in the Mekong Delta. He tells what it was really like to work in an organization that cared nothing for human life: "Children were trained by the communists to throw grenades, not only for the terror factor, but so the government or American soldiers would have to shoot them. Then the Americans feel very ashamed. And they blame themselves and call their soldiers war criminals."

Vietnamese communists understood the American public.

Santoli interviewed hundreds of American men and women swept up in the war. And he goes one step further by including the people of Southeast Asia. After all, it was for their hearts and minds that we fought. There's something convincing about hearing the words of Laotian and South Vietnamese peasants telling of communist lies and duplicity than there is about having to hear the same dog-eared excuses by the men who couldn't develop a viable strategy. **To Bear Any Burden** is convincing.

Al Santoli weaves a tapestry of

*Continued on page 124*

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**I**f you've spent a day out at the range doing very little but missing a target, you know how frustrating it can be. Missing targets in combat will hurt more than your feelings. Missing once can get you killed.

Excuses for missing fly as thick as bullets; usually it's something like "I had a bad rifle and the rounds weren't any good." In my 15 years of professional soldiering I have found that the reason for most bad shooting is simply an improperly zeroed weapon. I have zeroed, or helped others zero, hundreds of rifles, pistols and machine guns. The zeroing of weapons is to the weapons instructor as typing is to a secretary — a basic skill.

To send men into battle without zeroed weapons is tantamount to criminal negligence. Without a zeroed weapon the rifleman cannot hit what he aims at, and he knows it. And when an infantryman loses confidence in his ability to win, his aggressiveness declines. The simple process of zeroing can show the soldier that he can hit what he aims at and that will restore his fighting spirit.

Zeroing is the process of aligning the sights with the barrel so that the trajectory of the bullets intersects the line of sight at a given distance, normally 250 meters. This is called "Battle Sights."

Why zero at 250 meters? Because most firefights occur at ranges of 300 meters or less. By zeroing your rifle at 250 meters the trajectory will be a bit above the line of sight at shorter distances and fall below at longer distances. An M16 loaded with milspec ball fires 3½ inches above the line of sight at 150 meters, at 250 meters the weapon is zeroed and at 300 meters impact will be five inches low. From those figures it's clear that 250 meters is the ideal distance at which to zero your battle rifle. That way, combat at any normal distance will require no aiming adjustment.

Current military practice is to zero at a shorter range for a longer one. This is based on the mathematical concept that if the trajectory is known, you can zero along any portion of it. Sounds great, but it can get you into trouble.

According to the trajectory chart, if you zero one inch low at 25 meters, you will hit your target at 250 meters. You can also zero "point of aim, point of impact" at 42 meters or at any distance on the chart for 250 meters. That's all fine, but it stands to reason that the best 250-meter zero is obtained by shooting at 250 meters.

The only time that may not work is when the shooter lacks a range or the ability to hit at that distance. Many shooters can't get good zeroing groups at 250 meters so we are often stuck with 25-meter zeroing. But it has limitations.



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Jack Thompson

## Firefights and Battle Sights



**A zeroed rifle will make all the difference in this Marine's battle performance. Photo: Department of Defense**

I was more fortunate than others. While working with the Salvadoran airborne I came up with a test to see if good shooters with rifles zeroed at 25 meters could obtain hits at 250 meters. The men were sniper-quality shooters and most shot ½-inch groups at 25 meters (½ inch at 25 meters equals four inches at 100 meters).

After zeroing at 25 meters the men were ready and confident to shoot at 250 meters. No wind conditions hindered them and each of the six men fired five rounds slow fire from exactly the same position. When we saw the targets the high spirits quickly sank. Out of 30 shots fired, only 18 found their target. Time to try a different system.

The men were anxious to recapture their self-esteem so we went back and

zeroed at 100 meters. According to the chart we needed to be 2½ inches high. During the zeroing exercise at 100 meters, all shot four inches or less but needed considerable adjusting. We then shot again at 250 meters. Thirty shots fired, 30 hits. All had zeroable groups and we continued to zero at 250 meters for 250 meters. After the completion of the exercise they were confident of their 250-meter zero because we had shot at 250 meters. Knowing you can do it makes all the difference in the world.

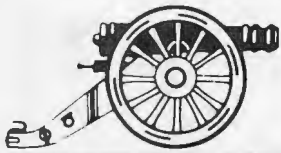
I don't trust the 25-meter range for 250 meters. One hundred meters is the *minimum* range to zero and still get all hits on your target at 250 meters. Nevertheless, I don't like the 100-meter range for 250 meters. I do like the 250-meter range for 250 meters: That system makes sense. Why complicate it with new systems that don't work as well?

Sometimes we have to zero battle rifles at a shorter distance than we would like. At times we just have to accept it. But when you don't have to, get out and zero at the longer ranges. That way, errors in zeroing and individual techniques can be detected more easily. Once detected they can be corrected.

The only people who stand not to benefit from systematic weapons zeroing are the enemy. ✖

### ON THE MARK

Jack Thompson has trained snipers in Africa, El Salvador and the United States. A former Marine, he has worked as a contract soldier and a private security consultant.



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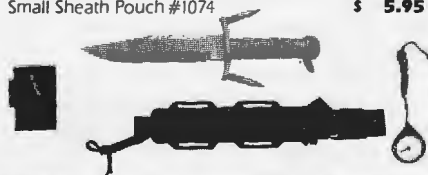
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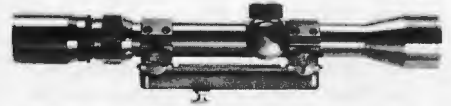
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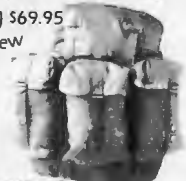


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A flat steel pommel on the knife's butt replaces the Tanto's pointed brass one, but then why would you need a fighting accessory on a hunting knife?

The new Cold Steel Outdoorsman goes for \$129.95 and you can get more information about it by writing to Cold Steel Inc., Dept. SOF, 2128 Unit D, Knoll Dr., Ventura, CA 93003. Phone: (800) 255-4716.



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Everybody remembers those famous Finnish fillet knives. They've been around for a long time. And when something works, why change it? That seems to be the philosophy of the folks at Brunton/Lakota. They took that time-proven design and updated it some.

Their new version, called the Kingfisher IV, sports a non-slip, sure-grip plastic handle with checkering on the top and sides of the hilt for a firm hold in even the slickest conditions. The 440 stainless-steel blade is thin and

flexible in order to get around delicate bones and the entire knife rinses off easily in soap and water.

Unlike its predecessors, the Kingfisher IV's handle is virtually indestructible, but, like most fishing knives, it must be used carefully because of its delicate blade.

If you like traditional design and function combined with updated materials, this knife may prove to be a pleasant surprise, especially since it only costs \$14.40.

Brunton/Lakota, Dept. SOF, 620 E. Monroe Ave., Riverton, WY 82501. Phone: (307) 856-6559.

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There was a time when the average pair of sunglasses was dangerous to wear with flying debris of any mass. Now there's a new generation of eyewear that will protect your valuable eyesight from almost anything that might hit you in the face, from small rocks to ricocheting bullets.

Bollé, a French company long known for its stylish eyewear, has come out with one of the best examples of this new trend. The lenses are made of polycarbonate with Irex 100, a material that blocks 100 percent of the sun's ultraviolet and infrared rays. The Irex 100 absorber was originally developed for use by NASA astronauts.

The lenses, which are one-third lighter than glass, are mounted in nylon frames, which feature



interchangeable/adjustable temple pieces. There's no need to worry about the frame, either. It's as tough — if not tougher — than the lenses. The ear pieces can be bent virtually in half with no sign of stress.

If these glasses sound like the right ticket for you, then get in contact with Brigade Quartermaster. They offer the glasses at the discounted price of \$69.

Brigade Quartermaster Ltd., Dept. SOF, Dept. 60P, 266 Roswell St., Marietta, GA 30060. Phone: (404) 428-1234. ☒

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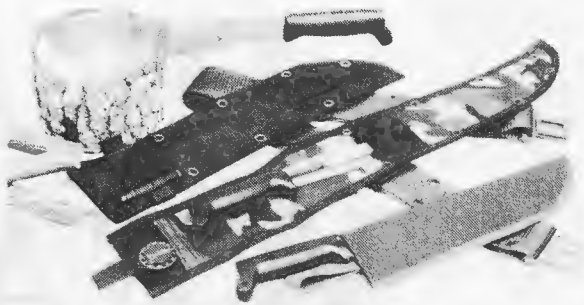
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WP-120, Navy Blue	32-50	WP-131, USAF Blue, w/epaulets	32-50
WP-127, Navy Blue, w/epaulets	36-48	WP-171, US Army Black, w/epaulets & patch	32-50
WP-130, RAF Blue/gray	32-50	WP-176, Black, US Naval Academy	32-50
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# DEADLY WEAPONS

## High-Power Video

by Dana Drenkowski



**R**OCK video may mean one thing to you now, but by the time you watch Alec Jason's *Deadly Weapons* it'll mean something more. Alec Jason makes the world of firearms and firepower rock and roll for the home video viewer.

*Deadly Weapons* also answers some of the burning questions of our time: What happens when a rifle is fired into a half-full auto gas tank? What happens when a tracer is fired into a half-full auto gas tank? What is the effect of a .357 Magnum bullet on an engine block? Or a .357 Magnum KTW armor-piercing bullet on an engine block? How effective are silencers? Why don't silencers work well with modern high-velocity ammunition?

Or have you ever wondered how your

**One hundred rounds of .45 hardball rip through the side of a car door.**

favorite pistol caliber stacked up against the others? Would you like an easy means of settling those endless arguments about what this or that rifle caliber could do to a car, windshield, window or fluid-filled tissue?

And who can resist the awe of a Browning Ma Deuce emptying belts of .50-cal. ammo into a car?

Jason's film educates at the same time it amuses. *Deadly Weapons* effectively debunks "knockdown power" myths by showing armor-clad men being shot with .44 Magnum bullets and .308 NATO rounds. Alec Jason and Richard Davis (of

Second Chance) shoot themselves and each other at close range . . . with little effect.

This isn't just home video, either. Professional production, technical expertise and flashy visuals have attracted government attention and sales. State and federal agencies have used *Deadly Weapons* to familiarize new and special unit recruits with weapons effects. Originally produced for law enforcement, *Deadly Weapons* has now found its way into the civilian market, where it has become the best-selling gun video ever made.

The tape is available in VHS or Beta from The Anite Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 375, Pinole, CA 94564. *Deadly Weapons* is 105 minutes long and costs \$69.95 including postage and handling. ✕

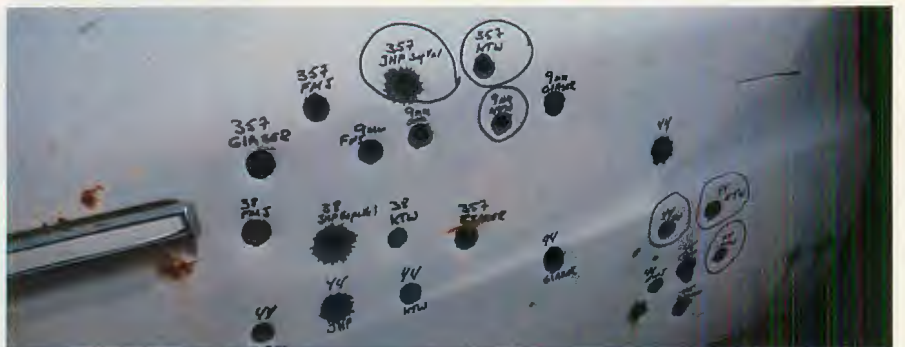


**ABOVE:** Deliberate attempts were made to ignite an auto gas tank with rifle fire. It worked.

**RIGHT:** Penetration tests of handgun ammo on car doors were unscientific, but resulted in some interesting conclusions.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Rifle-fire demo through plate glass is of particular value to SWAT team members.

**BELOW:** One of the highlights of "Deadly Weapons" — the .50-cal. Ma Deuce.



# EDGED WEAPON ARSENAL



# Three Tough Knives Cut It in Combat

by Lynn Thompson



ABOVE: Thompson's universal survival tool — a 12-inch machete.

LEFT: A selection of blades for any purpose: a machete (top), Spyderco Mariner serrated folding knife and the Cold Steel Tanto.

**A**RGUING about the ideal combat knife is pointless. Can you clear trails with a Sykes-Fairbairn? Have you seen the mess a machete makes of a C-rat can? You need more than one blade to cut your way out of trouble. My idea of combat kit includes three knives — a 12- or 18-inch machete, a folding Spyderco Mariner and my Master Tanto.

An 18- or 12-inch machete made of high-carbon steel with a proper spring temper is the most useful tool you can pack into the field. By comparison a bayonet is a heavy tent-peg; your machete will give you a far better value for weight carried. It can hack, chop, slice and dice and will even double as an entrenching tool. The blade usually comes from the factory dull, but a few minutes on a belt grinder will give it a hair-shaving sharp edge.

In the unlikely event you are faced with a bayonet charge and you're out of ammo, your machete will really prove its worth. One way to use it effectively is to taunt your enemy into a committed lunge. As his blade comes stabbing in, take a forward step at a 45-degree angle to avoid the thrust, and slash the closest hand holding the rifle, severing fingers or a hand. Such a blow will incapacitate and panic your enemy giving you the opportunity for a lethal second stroke to the neck.

Brigade Quartermaster carries an 18-inch U.S. Army machete made by Ontario Knife Co. This regulation GI issue machete sells for \$11.95. In addition, they sell the 12-inch Worldwide Survival Tool for \$9.95 which is endorsed by H. Morgan Smith of the U.S. Air Force Tropic Survival School in Panama. Brigade Quartermaster Ltd., Dept. SOF, 266 Roswell St., Marietta, GA 30060. Phone: (404) 428-1234.

My next choice, the Spyderco Mariner, is a small, concealable folder. I know a lot of people think a Swiss Army knife is the ideal utility blade, but I think they stink. I have never had one for more than a month without breaking a blade and they are too bulky to carry in the pocket. The Spyderco Mari-

ner has a tough stainless-steel blade with a serrated edge that will cut like you won't believe. It stays sharp and useful for a long, long time.

Also, I hate to go unarmed and that's the real reason I like the Mariner so much. In the event that my Tanto might raise too many alarms I'd take the Mariner. Since it doesn't have a point most civilian authorities wouldn't give it a second glance but I rest easier knowing it's firmly clipped to my pants. The Spyderco Mariner can be ordered direct from: Spyderco Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 800, Golden, CO 80402. Phone: 1-800-525-7770. Cost is \$49.95.

As far as the fighting knife is concerned, there's only one choice for me — the Master Tanto by Cold Steel. It will defeat all known soft-body armor, sever major muscle groups with one blow and perform camp and field chores without rusting, cracking or breaking. When you consider that I designed the knife you'll understand the bias, but I'd stake my life on my Tanto.

The Tanto's 23-degree convex arc provides just enough curve to dramatically increase cutting power and decrease drag yet not interfere with straight thrusting motion. In addition, its handle construction is designed to give the user every tactical advantage. The flattened oval shape covered with Creton, a tough space-age rubber compound, offers a superior gripping surface.

To round out the Tanto's formidable abilities, it comes equipped with a brass skull-crushing pommel. Many reputed knife experts may scoff at the idea of a skull crusher on a fighting knife. If you're close enough to use it, you are close enough to thrust to cut with the blade, they say. But a knife fight occurs at very short range in a whirlwind of flashing steel. At this distance, speed and ferocity of attack is crucial and a skull crusher can make a real difference because it allows striking with either end of the weapon, increasing the knife arm's economy of movement.

The Tanto retails for \$129.95 (plus \$3 postage and handling) from Cold Steel Inc., Dept. SOF, 2128 Unit D, Knoll Dr., Ventura, CA 93003. Phone: 1-800-255-4716.

That's my three of a kind to beat a bad deal: a bush knife, a compact pocket model and a full-tilt combat blade. They'll give you the edge you need for combat or adventure. ✘

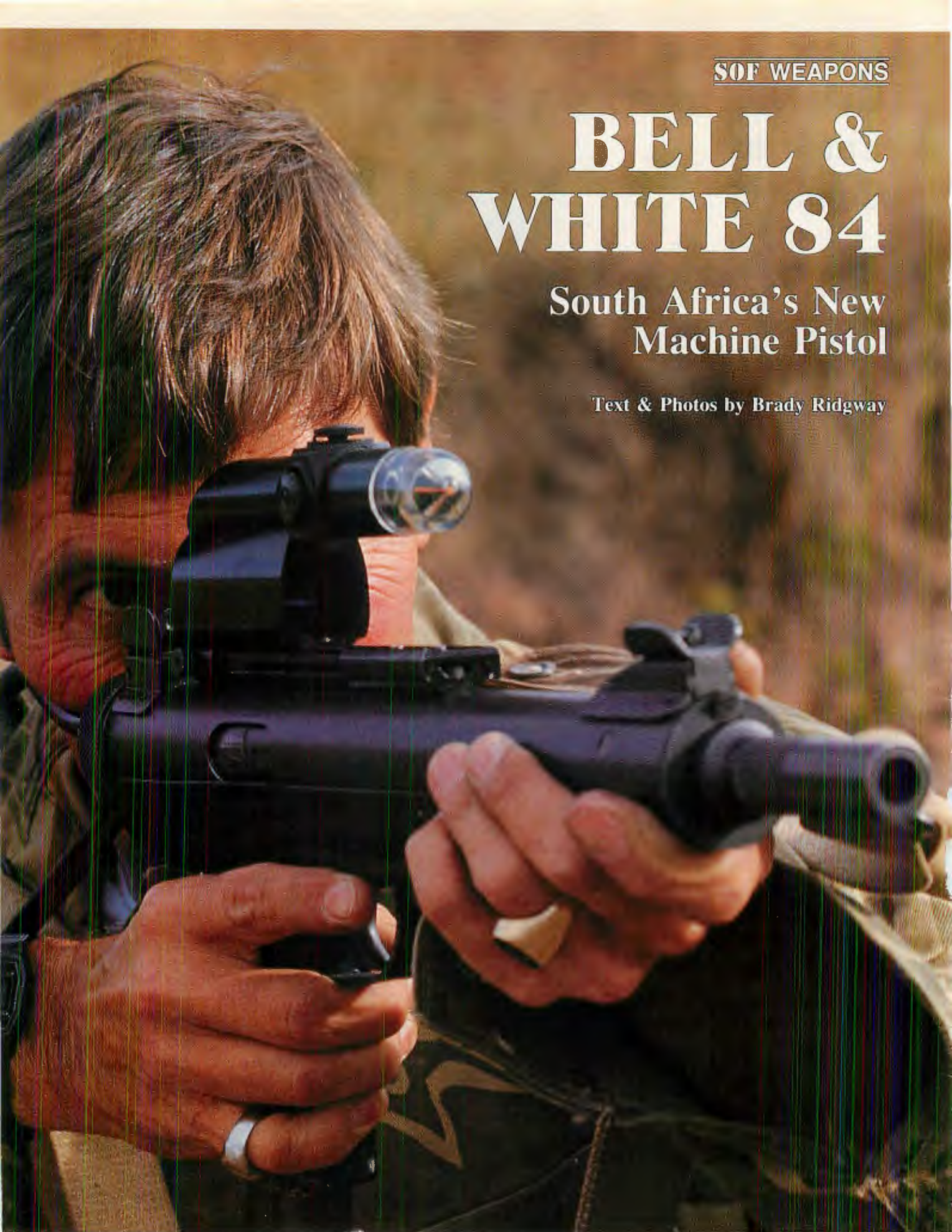




# BELL & WHITE 84

South Africa's New  
Machine Pistol

Text & Photos by Brady Ridgway



**R**HODESIA countered blockades by developing an indigenous arms industry and history is repeating itself while the South Africans thumb their noses at UN interference by raising a generation of firearms innovators. Eric Bell is one of this new breed, and his latest work is the Bell & White 84 machine pistol.

He was nine when he made his first crude gun. The barrel was bored out with a hand-held drill. Bell has been gunsmithing ever since, but his experience is practical as well as technical. He served in the Rhodesian Light Infantry, for instance. Most recently he's been working in his own gunshop, The Gun Hospital. (Dept. SOF, 77 Harrietwood Crescent, Umbilo, Durban, 4001. R.S.A.)

The B&W84 follows the basic design concept of the Czechoslovakian Vz25. The weapons are similar in appearance when disassembled, but differ technically. As one of the first weapons to feature a wraparound bolt, the Vz25 has been the model for many modern submachine guns. One of the recent weapons apparently based on the Vz25 is the American Viking, manufactured by Weapons Systems Inc.

The wraparound bolt made the Vz25 fairly revolutionary in its day. It made the weapon considerably shorter than previous models and also allowed the magazine to be inserted through the pistol grip. This system has been the model for most modern sub-machine guns, including the ubiquitous UZI.

The story of the Vz25 in South Africa began with the importation of a number of these weapons in the early 1970s, reportedly through Rhodesia. Dan Pienaar Enterprises then produced a local version of the Czech gun, which became known as the Sanna 77. The weapon was a failure. Short cuts in development and inherent design failures consigned it to the scrap heap.

Bell's involvement with the Sanna came in the early stages of the weapon's development. Hired to assist on the technical side, he saw the project's shortcomings and left after three weeks.

Although he left that particular project, the Vz's design potential was not lost on Bell. He continued with his own efforts. But it wasn't until early 1984 that development began in earnest. He molded the Czech gun around his own ideas and a little more than a year later he produced two working prototypes.

Because of South African restrictions on the possession of fully automatic weapons, Bell's first gun was designed solely for semiauto civilian sales. The second weapon has fully automatic capability as well and features a more complex actuating mechanism.

Lately the South African Police have been reluctant to issue licenses for semi-automatic weapons to anybody except border farmers. The easy — but illegal — conversion of semiauto weapons is behind this reluctance, some say. Anticipating the potentially adverse impact this might have

**Eric Bell firing with the customized shoulder stock.**



### B&W84 SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Caliber</b> .....	9mm Parabellum
<b>Barrel length</b> .....	11.4 inches
<b>Mass</b> .....	7 pounds
<b>Length</b>	
<b>stock extended</b> .....	27.5 inches
<b>stock folded</b> .....	17.25 inches
<b>Sight radius</b> .....	11.8 inches
<b>Muzzle velocity</b> ..	1,250 fps (approx.)
<b>Cyclic rate</b> .....	750-800 rpm
<b>Status</b> .....	Pre-production (Prototypes only)

on sales, Bell designed the B&W84 so it is extremely difficult to convert to full automatic. Such a conversion would require rebuilding of the entire trigger mechanism.

Unfortunately the fully automatic version was unavailable when I visited Bell in Durban for the test. I doubt if there is much difference between the handling characteristics of the two, but I would have been happier if the full-auto version was available. Nothing shows faults faster than 800 rpm.

Field-stripping the B&W is simple and requires no tools. The pistol grip is removed first by depressing the catch in front of the trigger guard and turning it 90 degrees counterclockwise. The pistol grip and trigger guard slide off over the magazine well. The barrel is then released by pulling up on the spring-loaded catch just in front of the fore sight and removed.

Hammer and sear are separated from the receiver by releasing a retaining catch to their rear. The folding stock is held in place at the rear of the receiver by yet another catch. The catch should be held back and the stock unscrewed. With the stock off the working parts can be slid off the back. These parts comprise the bolt, recoil rod and spring, and the ejector rod. The recoil spring must be slightly compressed before it, the recoil rod and ejector rod can be removed from the bolt. The weapon is then

**Eric White's new machine pistol: the Bell & White 84.**

fully disassembled for cleaning. It is reassembled in the reverse order.

On the weapon that I tested, the pistol grip was not very securely attached to the frame. My immediate thought was that the single attachment point was not strong enough. However, Bell pointed out that the grip on the prototype was a one-off made from fiberglass and polystyrene plastic. The polystyrene, not being very strong, had partially collapsed in places. This caused the looseness. It is planned to make the pistol grip on the production model from glass-fiber reinforced polycarbonate, thus giving it the strength it needs.

The method of attaching and securing the barrel is unique. Bell has applied for a patent. The clip in front of the front sight is attached to an oblong lug that fits into a similarly shaped slot milled into a built-up section of the barrel. When secured, there is no perceptible movement in the barrel, and it can be quickly and easily removed. The barrel support is strong, and long enough to prevent any lateral movement. If necessary the support can be removed from the receiver. It is secured by three pins positioned around the weapon in line with the front sight. These have to be pushed in before the unit can be removed.

From the front, the bore does not look unlike that of a .45. Bell informed me that he has experimented with a number of methods of porting the barrel to reduce muzzle climb. Most worked to a degree, but all produced harsh muzzle blast. He eventually settled for a simple expansion chamber, hence the apparent bore size.

The B&W84's hammer mechanism is another feature for which a patent is being sought. It is compact and features an internal spring.

Some thinking holds that a simple blow-back system is only practical in small-caliber weapons. Bell disagrees. The B&W fires from a closed bolt and has absolutely no retarding mechanism.

I am very much an advocate of the closed-bolt design and the Heckler and Koch MP5 is my idea of a good SMG. A submachine gun that fires from a closed bolt is inherently more accurate. It is also much easier on my nerves when cocked. As much as I like the UZI — which was my personal weapon for some time — I am always hearing horror stories of “spontaneous combustion.” I hasten to add that I have never had or seen an AD on an UZI. On an open-bolt design there is for me a noticeable delay between squeezing the trigger and ignition while the bolt flies forward. It also takes some practice not to have aim upset by momentum and the sudden change in center of gravity.

These problems are eliminated by the closed-bolt design. This design, however, normally requires some form of retarding mechanism, which adds to the complexity and hence the cost of the weapon.

Not so with the B&W.

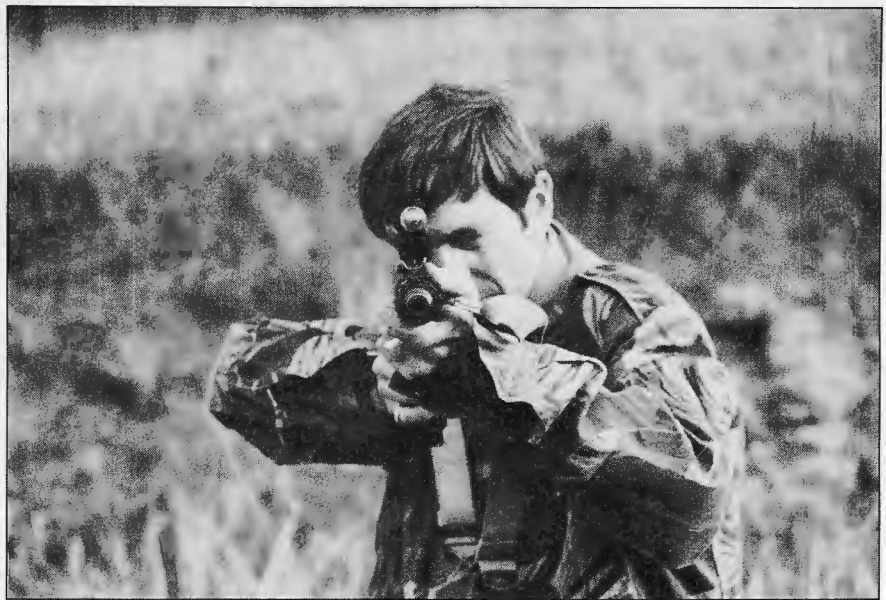
Because it is a wraparound bolt, the bolt lends some support to the barrel and is also in a position to be an effective heat reservoir. It features an inertial firing pin and a claw-type extractor, the cause of problems during testing. More of that later.

On the Vz25, and subsequently the Sanna 77, the ejector rod was about 4mm in diameter. This was one of the weapon’s failings. The rod was unnecessarily strong for its purpose and, because of its size, its opening in the bolt face formed a pocket. This affected the angle of the spent case on extraction, and was the cause of malfunctions. The B&W ejector is about half the diameter and sufficiently strong. Problem solved.

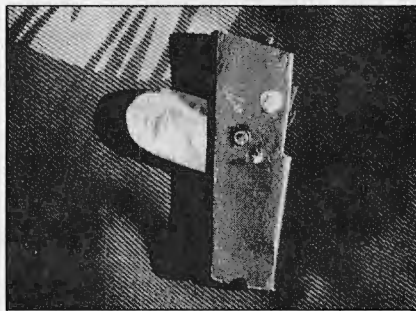
Sights are simple and fairly functional. The rear sight is a peep sight and fixed. No complaints there. An SMG is a close-quarter weapon and more than one range setting only complicates matters unnecessarily. The front sight is adjustable for elevation and windage in large increments. This does not allow for very fine tuning, and the sight post itself is too squat for my liking. I favor a narrower, more defined, post as the squat sight tends to obscure the target. The weapon that I tested was fitted with a Weaver Quickpoint sight. I am not very enamored with this sight. It is far too bulky, especially for an SMG, and the point of aim is not consistent. However, a variety of optical or occluded eye sights can be used on the B&W, since the weapon has been drilled and tapped to accept them.

The standard stock on the B&W can be folded away under the weapon. On the test weapon, however, Bell had fitted a fixed skeleton stock. It was designed to give him a constant cheek position and an unchanging sight picture. As mentioned before, the stock is screwed on. Bell hopes to incorporate a bayonet fitting for later models (for no apparent reason). At the moment the cost of setting up the machining to do this would be too high.

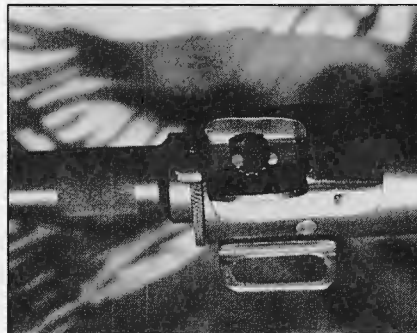
Presently the magazine used is made by Beretta and holds 20 rounds. Browning magazines, with slight modifications, can also be used. Bell intends to produce his



Distance between sight and barrel is apparent in this front view of the weapon.



Eric Bell’s patented hammer.



Adjustable front sight with barrel support retaining studs visible on either side. Sling attachment is above the sight and barrel retaining catch is on the right.



Trigger with disconnector bar over the magazine well. Cocking handle’s groove can be seen in the body above the trigger. Pistol grip has been removed.

own magazines, and will offer 20-, 30- and 40-round versions.

The prototype B&W has no safety. Bell plans to put the selector on the left side of the pistol grip, behind the trigger. It will merely serve to lock the disconnector bar.

The magazine release is of the lever type, and is situated at the rear base of the pistol grip. This is a comfortable position to use and superior, in my opinion, to mag releases found on the side of the grip.

The weapon is finished in a no-nonsense matte black over a baked teflon base. It seems functional and hard-wearing and the weapon that I tested showed few signs of wear.

The differences between the semiauto and full-auto versions are all in the disconnector bar, disconnector and sear. On the semiauto weapon, the disconnector bar is L-shaped. If it were to be deactivated, the hammer would simply ride forward with the bolt. The resultant pressure on the firing pin would not be sufficient to ignite the primer. On the full-auto version the L-shaped bar is hinged, and only releases the hammer when the bolt has returned to battery.

On the semiauto weapon, mode selection is simple. The two positions on the safety lever are for safe and fire. On the full-auto version, however, the selection switch is the same. The weapon is fired in the semiauto mode by exerting a five-pound pressure on the trigger. To fire fully automatic, the pressure must be increased to 10 pounds. I do not like this system. I think it is very difficult to fire accurate three-shot bursts because of the two-stage trigger and the relatively heavy pull. Assuming that a three-position selector could not be fitted, I would rather see the semiauto function scrapped. The weapon would then be capable of firing only on full automatic. If a clean, four-pound trigger pull were then provided, it would be far more effective than the current clumsy system.

When the time came to actually fire the weapon, two minor problems surfaced immediately. The cocking handle is situated on the left side of the receiver. It has a slide to prevent dirt entering the body, and is not attached to the bolt. So far so good. However, the handle itself is hinged, and when not in use lies flush against the receiver. To keep it in position, there is a circular hole just forward of the slot, and a corresponding half-sphere on the face of the handle. When released under the pressure of the recoil spring, the bolt flies forward, taking the handle with it. The sphere returns to its niche, securing the handle. When chambering a round the increased friction stops the cocking handle short and, instead of returning to its position, the sphere stops short and catches in the slot. This results in a half-chambered round.

The weapon is still able to fire in this condition. This would be dangerous, to say the least. Bell assured me that the only result of this was severely belled cases, and the weapon would actually cycle normally. I did not put this to the test. The problem should be easy to rectify, but should be put right as soon as possible.

The second problem was the inordinately heavy trigger pull. I decided to test the accuracy of the weapon first and planned to fire off-hand at about 15 yards to check the point of impact before moving back. Accustomed to a much lighter pull, even on military weapons, I thought the safety must be on when the gun would not fire. No safety! A few shots into the rear wall solved the mystery. Although the trigger has a crisp let-off, it requires the finger of an Olympian to squeeze it. Another little problem that could easily be solved.

Once I had become accustomed to the trigger and a few adjustments had been made to the sight, I settled down to some grouping from 50 yards.

Using a rest, some four-inch groups were printed. Considering the fact that the reticule of the Quickpoint obscured the bull completely, I don't think the results were at all bad. Bell claims that he managed 1½-inch groups using a bench rest. Two of my groups actually had three of the four shots within about two inches, but flyers opened them up. Certainly no complaints in the accuracy department.

The expansion chamber definitely reduced the noise level. As to climb, I can't be sure. Personally I have never had any trouble controlling a 9mm SMG, so I don't think that a compensator is important. The weapon is relatively heavy at seven pounds, and the weight alone helps to absorb recoil and keep the muzzle down.

During the afternoon about 100 rounds were fired. Bar one malfunction — which could be put down to a faulty round — the first 70 went smoothly. After that, however, things started to go wrong. Empty cases were either jamming primer side out in the ejection port, or merely spinning around inside the receiver. Bell was clearly worried and assured me that it was the first time that

he had experienced any such trouble.

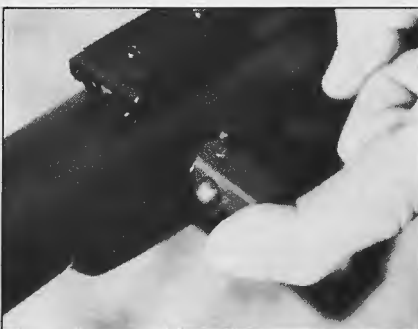
Myself, I'm always relieved when something goes wrong. If everything goes too smoothly, I am always left wondering if the next round might have jammed. Besides, when problems crop up I get the opportunity to examine the weapon more critically.

Bell thought that it might be the extractor that was at fault. I was inclined to agree with him. Earlier we had been testing the extractor, and had found it suitably strong. After the malfunctions, however, the extractor seemed very sloppy. We suspected that the spring needed replacing. The ammunition could also have been partly to blame, since the two lots of 50 rounds were from different manufacturers. I suspect that the second batch was a bit more powerful. That, coupled with the faulty extractor, might have been the cause. Because the weapon operates on the simple blowback principle, it may be a bit ammunition sensitive, particularly with the more powerful rounds.

I contacted Bell at his shop some time after the test, and he informed me that the extractor spring had collapsed. Apparently some locally made springs are of indifferent quality. Bell once had a batch of springs



Magazine release.



Cocking handle showing half-sphere and retaining hole.



Pistol grip retaining catch.



Fixed rear sight with retaining catch to the rear of the sight base. Body is threaded to accept stock.

made to the same specifications. When delivered, almost all had different strengths!

As a submachine gun the B&W has potential. I don't like semiauto-only SMGs, although this one might have a role to fulfill. In my opinion, the modern light assault rifles will one day push the SMG into obscurity. SMGs will only have very limited, specialist functions.

Unfortunately, most assault rifles are still heavier, and more bulky, than the largest SMGs. People who live in low-intensity combat zones soon tire of an unwieldy weapon. The solution is a compact, light, accurate and lethal weapon convenient for continuous carry.

Although SMGs and the so-called semiauto carbines only fire a pistol round, they're still preferable to any handgun. Though less compact, the longer barrel of an SMG yields increased velocity, the greater weight allows greater stability and quicker target reacquisition, and these all make for increased control and accuracy potential over range. Magazine capacity is larger as well. (Although I have seen a pistol with a 32-round magazine, the pistol needed a sling!)

The problem of getting the weapon to the production line, at the moment, is the usual one: lack of capital. South African investors have become used to white elephants, such as the Sanna 77, the Lynx revolver and the Mamba pistol. Bell is finding it nearly impossible to obtain backing.

He can get the orders if he has the manufacturing capability, and can get the manufacturing capability if he has a confirmed order. Catch-22!

Ironically, the B&W would not be expensive to produce. Bell envisages selling them for about \$200 apiece. Therein lies the weapon's strength. With the South African economy in its current state and the government earning about 30 percent of the retail price of any imported weapon, prices are soaring, and imported weapons are fast exceeding anything approaching reasonable prices.

It will take some refinement before I would give the weapon my stamp of approval, though. Once Bell sorts out the gremlins, then he might have a winner. ☒

# UNDER-COVER IN NORTHERN IRELAND

## Brits Battle Bombers

Text by Peter Shell Drake

Photos by Jonas Dovydenas



**I**T was a fine, soft day, Seamus thought as he stood outside the ramshackle farmhouse in County Monaghan, a few miles from the border with Ulster. He scanned the surrounding area carefully, saw nothing out of the ordinary, and returned to the barn in

which he had been working earlier. Seamus was an ordinary-looking young man in dirty jeans and jacket, with a few days' growth of beard softening his hungry-looking face. Some time ago he had been an apprentice in a light engineering works, but now he felt he was doing something more important.

**ABOVE:** Children of war still find time to smile in strife-ridden Northern Ireland.

**RIGHT:** A unique combination in Northern Ireland — Joan Collins stars in *Revenge* while a Brit armored soldier with a "LOVE" tattoo glares menacingly.





He settled himself at his bench and returned to the task at hand. A casual observer would have been puzzled at his selection of tools and materials. Only a few of them would have given most people cause for concern as the majority were common plumber's and builder's supplies. His tools could have been found in any well-equipped home, the only exception being a well-used metalworker's lathe.

Seamus was not, however, idling away hours in some hobby. In the dirty game of Irish freedom all is not as it would appear, and even the name Seamus was only picked as a convenience. The young man busily working alone in his secluded barn was a bomb-maker for the Provisional Irish Republican Army, known to themselves as the Provos and to the Security Forces as PIRA.

In 1974 the Provos had found that an increasing number of their Active Service Units (ASUs — small operational units which work on the cell principle) were appearing on the BBC news with unplanned frequency — a result of what Security Forces rather cynically referred to as the PIRA's "own goals."

Many of their most experienced men were behind the wire of Her Majesty's Prison Maze, otherwise known as "Long Kesh" or the "Lazy K," and they were being forced to rely more and more on half-trained youths. These youngsters had a distressing tendency to connect bomb wiring the wrong way and detonate the device early — with dire consequences.

As a result Northern Command had decided that they would supply their young volunteers with ready-made devices or with hand grenades.

Some of these were put together from the supply of casings that had been discovered in a dump behind a wartime arms factory, but the majority were made by Seamus from components that could easily be bought over the counter at a lumberyard or hardware store.

The body of the grenade on which Seamus was working consisted of two plumber's reduction joints connected at the broad end with a ring. This assembly was then grooved for better fragmentation on the lathe. Next, he brazed a U-shaped piece of metal that he had prepared earlier to the square end of a radiator drain plug which fit the standard thread of the reduction joint. This metal piece carried a slot for the arming lever of the grenade and a pair of holes for the pin. Using the lathe, Seamus then drilled a hole in the plug through which the striker would pass, and to the inside of the plug he brazed a short length of tube. The striker was turned up on the lathe and would be driven by a spring.

The detonation train of the grenade was inserted in another short length of pipe. It consisted of a shotgun primer, available from any gunsmith in England without license,

and a Number 6 plain detonator, both joined together by a short length of safety fuse. The fuse was supposed to burn for five seconds, but the fact they sometimes only burned for two didn't worry Seamus. He had no intention of being within fifty miles of the bloody thing when it exploded.

The filling of the grenade was a few ounces of Frangex, a product of the Irish Chemical Explosives Company, stolen — like the detonator — from a quarry in West Meath while a sympathetic watchman looked the other way. The other end of the grenade was plugged with a second drain plug and the bomb was ready. It was crude by military standards but powerful enough to kill and maim over a considerable radius.

Seamus completed 12 of his homemade bombs which he packed carefully into a Guinness bottle crate. He wrote "North Louth" with a felt marker on the outside of the case and added it to a growing stack near the door. Later that night a taciturn man with an ugly Belfast accent, who curtly refused Seamus' offer of a beer, collected the explosives and disappeared into the darkness.

Seamus now passes from our story and would probably have passed into oblivion unnoticed by the world if he had not died a few weeks later when one of his homemade grenades exploded. The Garda medical examiner said the bomb had been fastened to the back of his head with adhesive tape, but few people read medical reports and most put it down to another "own goal."

However, a tall British captain who wore the beige beret of the Special Air Service laughed and remarked to his second in command, "Paul is getting fancy again."

The case of grenades passed into the hands of the North Louth ASU of the Provos, who are by PIRA standards a fairly professional bunch. Nevertheless, two of them fell into the hands of Daniel Flynn, an eighteen-year-old from an Ulster border town who liked to think of himself as a hard man in the Provos. In fact the real Provos would not touch him with a bargepole, considering him a "bit of a blather" and as leaky as a sieve.

Flynn did have a burning ambition to prove himself, and, rather more importantly, a Sten gun which had belonged to his father. The old man had been a real IRA soldier in the '50s, and had taken part in the

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## UNDERCOVER

Peter Shelldrake comes from an old British army family, and is carrying on in the family tradition.

After a short stint as a trooper in the 10th Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, Shelldrake was commissioned into the Royal Artillery after graduating from the prestigious Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst in the late 1960s.

Soon afterward, he found himself on the streets of Belfast as the troubles in Ulster got underway.

Following a period of attached service with the Sultan of Oman's army during the conflict in Dhofar, he returned to the troubles in Northern Ireland as a member of a certain intelligence organization.

He has since completed five years of intelligence work in Ulster, and further assignments in the Middle East.

**Security means safety in Northern Ireland. British army patrol, armed with SLRs and a tear-gas launcher, pats down what could be an innocent civilian — or an armed IRA terrorist.**



famous raid on Armagh Barracks when the IRA had cleaned out the armory and escaped with a large quantity of British army guns.

Just how Daniel obtained the two grenades is a bit of a mystery, but the fact that the QM (quartermaster) of the North Louth ASU was admitted to County Lough General Hospital suffering from what is known as a "knee job" may not be unrelated. A knee job involves the discharge of a pistol through the knee joint, and — done correctly — will ensure that the victim never walks again without a stick. Knee jobs are often inflicted in the IRA for offenses that in most armies would result in five days CB (confined to barracks, detention). The QM may have supplied young Flynn with the grenades and been found out.

Young Flynn gathered together two of his friends who were convinced that he was a Provo and needed them for an important "Op" the next night. He told them to go steal a car and meet him at a certain spot on a lonely back road the following evening. Flynn then cast around for a suitable target. That's where I come into this story.

I was at this time living the life of Reilly, chasing IRA men around the back lanes crisscrossing the beautiful countryside around the Ulster border. Many of these leads turned out to be shadows, but it was far more exciting than the droll army routine in Germany which had followed a temporary posting to the Sultan of Oman's forces. My undercover job brought me into contact with the Special Branch of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), a solid group of professionals with whom I developed a close working and personal relationship.

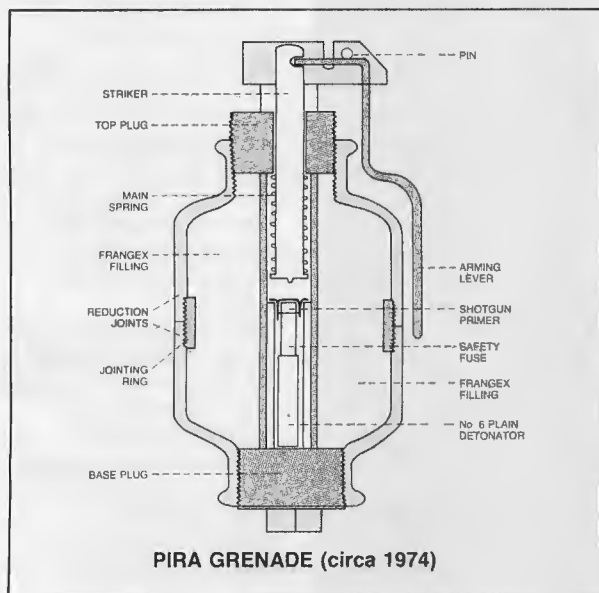


I visited the Special Branch office of an Ulster border town the same morning Flynn met with his friends. The SB were in very good form, planning a party in celebration of the recent promotion of one of their number to the rank of inspector. When we had completed our business, they invited me to join them that night at one of their favorite pubs a few miles outside of town to drink a few "half-uns." Such invitations were not to be refused so I accepted, but knowing that I'd be leaving early to keep a date I'd made with a lovely nurse from Armagh Hospital.

That night while I dressed for the party and later date I considered what weapon I should take with me. I usually carried a Walther PPK

when off duty and in a reasonably safe area. Tonight, as the SB's pub was, if not right in bandit country, at least quite close, I decided to take my full working rig.

My issue weapon was a Browning Hi-Power 9mm automatic which I had modified by removing the magazine safety and enlarging the safety lever. I always carried this gun with a round in the chamber, hammer back and safety on, in what I understood Americans called "condition one" but which the British army terms "bloody unsafe!" The gun lived in a Safariland holster on my right hip with two full magazines in a pouch on my left. I also carried another full magazine in the right side pocket of my jacket. The latter, although not convenient for reloading, served the important function of weighting the side of my jacket so that a sway of



PIRA GRENADE (circa 1974)

**ABOVE: Homemade PIRA grenade supplied to younger, inexperienced "Provos" who tend to blow themselves up with their own bombs.**

**RIGHT: Soldier on patrol casts a wary eye toward a group of Irish "children." In guerrilla warfare, even the young can be deadly foes.**





the hips to the left would clear the holster. It also ensured that a gust of wind would not reveal my weapon to curious eyes.

While I prepared to meet my friends, Flynn's two hirelings were waiting for him at the side of a country road. The type of vehicle they had stolen had almost become the classic IRA car of choice. It was a two-year-old Ford Cortina, and like most of its type could be opened and started by a child. These two, who had been borrowing cars since their teens, had had no problems.

Flynn meanwhile had decided that the best spot for a bit of mayhem was a pub often used by off-duty soldiers of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR). These part-time soldiers were very much in the front line of the Irish terrorist war, but unfortunately their lax personal security — especially in frequenting the same pub — left much to be desired. The habit of routine is one that has killed more people in Ulster than almost any other. And naturally, the pub selected by Flynn for his attack was the one in which I was due to meet my friends of the Special Branch.

The pub was one of those establishments treasured by their customers, and which the breweries are always pulling apart and modernizing. It was full of dark beams and cosy corners with peat fires burning in the grates. SB's party was in full swing when I arrived and parked my car on the other side of the road. As usual, the public bar was full of off-duty UDR soldiers. My friends of the RUC were established in the saloon and well into their third or fourth pint of Harp Lager helped down by a "half-un" of Black Bush.

It was a good party as they mostly were, and as the Irish would say, "the crack was great." As seven o'clock approached, however, I was beginning to feel that I must be on my way or my little nurse would decide that I had stood her up.

While I was making the rounds of my friends and explaining that I had to leave, Flynn and his two accomplices arrived outside. Their plan was simple. Flynn would throw his grenade through the window of the public bar and then empty his Sten's magazine into the wreckage.

They stopped their car in front of mine, and one of them stayed behind the wheel while Flynn walked across to the pub with his other friend who would "keep Dick" (stand guard). As he walked, Sten gun slung on his shoulder, Flynn pulled the pin from his grenade.

At that moment I opened the front door of the pub and stepped out into the night pursued by the good-natured ribaldry of the RUC men. As the door closed I could see two figures in front of me, both wearing knitted balaclava masks, one of whom was carrying a Sten gun. I could not see the grenade. The figure with the Sten started to pull it off his shoulder while the other took to his heels.

At that moment my years of training, hours of practice, and the hundreds of rounds I had

fired at targets more than payed for themselves. Without need for conscious thought I went into the draw I had been taught long ago in a peaceful manor house in Ashford by an SAS sergeant.

A sway of my hips to the left helped clear my jacket from my pistol as my right hand swept inside it and back to the Browning. Grasping the butt I pulled the automatic free from its holster and pushed it forward, left hand coming across to join my right as the pistol reached waist-high in front of me. At the same time I pushed off the safety and placed my forefinger on the trigger.

I consciously sent the two double-tapped rounds flying high as I knew my tendency was to fire too low when in a hurry. This time they went where they were aimed. The first glanced off Flynn's breastbone and exited through the top of his head. The second entered the bottom of his chin as his head was thrown back and exited in the same place. He was dead before his body started to fall.

The primed grenade flew from his hand and rolled across the road under my car. It exploded with a loud "crack," rupturing the petrol tank which in turn ignited with a dull thud. Flynn's wheelman in the blue Cortina roared away, and as I aimed the Browning on its back window, disappeared from sight behind a car coming from the other direction. At the same time I became aware of the roar of a Saracen's engine from behind me and remembered that I had registered, but not reacted to, the sound of a third

**British army sergeant armed with SLR stands uneasy guard while rescue workers aid bomb victims.**





shot as I was firing at Flynn. I quickly put my pistol away, since I had no desire to be shot by an over-excited Tommy who might mistake me for a terrorist.

I learned later that the shot I'd heard had been fired by a Royal Engineers sergeant from atop a moving Saracen. He and his section had been returning to base when they had happened on my encounter with Flynn. The sergeant had fired one round from his Browning at what he thought were two gunmen and had been delighted to see one of them go down. We never did discover where his bullet went, but he was quite sure that he had hit his target.

My unit wasn't too keen on publicity, and I was able to persuade the CID (Criminal Investigation Division) who investigated Daniel Flynn's death to allow him the credit. It made the sergeant's day.

Flynn never became the hardcore IRA fighter he always dreamed of being, but his ambitions were realized in a way. The Provos, always on the lookout for a new martyr, accepted him as a posthumous volunteer in the movement and gave him a hero's funeral later that week.

It will be apparent to most readers, especially those who have lived in the shadowy world of counterterrorist operations, that some of this story has been based on supposition. However, based on the facts we were able to piece together after the event, and my own experience with the IRA, I know I'm not far from the truth.

*The name Daniel Flynn was fictionalized in order to protect the author's identity. Construction of the Provo grenade was also intentionally flawed. The grenade will explode prematurely if put together as described. — The Editors* ✕

# MARSEILLE SWAT

## Special Unit Combats Seaport Crime

by Howard R. Simpson



**B**LASTS rang and echoed through the darkened indoor range as four shooters punched tight groups in silhouettes with Manurhin .357 Magnum revolvers. A whistle from the range monitor signaled cease-fire and the marksmen performed a rapid reload, empties clattering on the floor, as the targets were replaced. At a signal from the monitor the marksmen holstered their weapons, turned their backs on the targets and walked toward the far end of the range. Another whistle and they spun around in a crouch, sending a rapid-fire hail of slugs into the targets just above the outlined ster-

num of the simulated gunmen.  
**Nguyen Van Loc (right) confers with Marseille mayor Gaston Defferre. Photo: Le Provençal, Marseille**

num of the simulated gunmen.

"*Pas mal*," the monitor commented, "Not bad." He examined the hits and signaled the next team to prepare their Heckler & Koch 94s for firing.

Ears ringing, I stepped outside to catch my breath and clear my nostrils. Given the privilege of spending a day with the GIPN (*Groupe d'Intervention Police Nationale*) of Marseille by the Ministry of the Interior, I

was learning the meaning of intensive training. Earlier, I'd watched the same men grunt and slash their way through an hour and a half of judo, karate and basic self-defense techniques. Most of these exercises were aimed at neutralizing an enemy and his weapon. As members of the GIPN playing the role of bad guys were violently slammed to the mat, a black-belted instructor told me, "If that was pavement, he wouldn't be getting up for a while."

I'd chosen the Marseille GIPN because they have a unique task. Their area of responsibility takes in all of Southern France,



including the crime centers of Marseille and Nice, and the Côte d'Azur, a favorite hunting ground for professional gangsters. In addition, their 24-hour alert status can include action against terrorist groups ranging from Near East activists to Basque separatists, from Corsican nationalists to the Left Wing Direct Action.

The 24-man GIPN of Marseille is divided into three teams of seven men each and a three-man headquarters staff. It is led by *Commissaire Divisionnaire* Nguyen Van Loc, a Marseille-born Frenchman of Vietnamese ancestry and *barouder*, or combat

**A tense situation: Strain shows on Nguyen Van Loc's face as he hears the news that gunmen have opened fire on some of his men. Photo: Le Provençal, Marseille**

veteran, who formed the group in 1972 and has led it ever since.

A graduate of law school and a lieutenant in the French commandos during the Algerian War, Loc, a robust 51 years old, can match the physical stamina and skills of his younger subordinates. His role as a leader is obvious as he directs the GIPN's daily operation: bellowing like a sergeant major,

standing up to desk-bound superiors on the telephone or sharing a joke with one of his teams.

It isn't easy to find the GIPN. Their inconspicuous headquarters hides behind the ancient stone walls of the Fort Saint Nicolas, a Foreign Legion recruiting center overlooking Marseille's Vieux Port. After spending some time locating it, I went inside.

Loc received me in his office, removing his Magnum from its hip-holster. Unloading it, he put it aside. I started my prepared questions but soon put them aside because Loc spoke easily of his unit, its work and his



**Nguyen Van Loc (center) and one of his intervention teams at headquarters in Marseille.**

**Before ordering his team to move in, Nguyen Van Loc listens to a passerby's version of the hostage situation. Photo: Le Provençal, Marseille**



particular philosophy. It was obvious that in addition to being a no-nonsense law enforcer, he was also a thinker.

"I choose men with grey matter for this work. We don't want any 'supercops.' We hate such media labels. You can have the best judoka and the best marksman but if they aren't thinking and working as a team their lives and mine are in danger. As it is, we have a waiting list of applicants from all branches of the police."

Loc paused to take a phone call. A foreign VIP was expected to arrive in Marseille and the GIPN had been assigned to provide

personal protection. Loc shouted his orders through the thin wall partition, ordering a fast car and assigning two men to the task. He instructed them to procure a table close to the VIP at the official luncheon for discreet, continual surveillance.

"There are certain things I demand," he continued. "Humility and common sense are essential. Motivation, specialization and quality will develop quickly if a man has the first two attributes."

The commissaire mused over the sad state of the world and this line of thought brought him to the current gang war in

Marseille. He spoke of the 23 dead in the last ten months and painted a bloody tableau of the struggle for gangland supremacy over the local empire of drugs, prostitution, gambling, nightclubs and protection.

A family man and an admirer of the poets Rimbaud and Verlaine, Loc is also a hard-headed realist. His record of success in life-and-death situations is primarily due to an iron rule well-known and understood by his adversaries.

"When hostages are taken," he explained, "I am always ready to talk and use psychology to defuse the situation but I



An alert team of GIPN prepares to move in on some armed gunmen who have seized hostages. Photo: Le Provençal, Marseille

make it clear from the start that the gunmen must respect the life of the hostages — and my men — or else!” Loc doesn’t like to talk about those his group has been forced to kill. When I ask for a figure he shakes his head and murmurs, “professional secret.”

It’s not unknown for Loc and his men to substitute themselves for hostages. This happened in 1975 during a bank holdup in Nice. An unbalanced gunman armed with a revolver and a thermos bottle of nitroglycerine demanded that Loc and a member of his team enter the bank unarmed before he would release two civilian hostages. During the subsequent three-hour ordeal the gunman threatened to kill Loc’s colleague. Loc, a two-chambered .38-caliber derringer tucked under his armpit, replied coolly, “If you do I’ll put two slugs in your skull before you can aim in my direction.” The gunman eventually surrendered.

Earlier this year two young gangsters attempted to hold up a Marseille pharmacy and failed. They fled to a nearby optical shop where they seized hostages and threatened to kill them. Loc and one of his teams, including a sharpshooter with a Steyr-Mannlicher rifle, arrived on the scene with screeching brakes. The commissaire used a bullhorn to get his message across. It was simple. “If anything happens to those hostages,” he told them, “you’re both dead men.”

When the two culprits surrendered they were in tears. Their weapon turned out to be a blank pistol.

For a short time after the event Loc speculated that he might have overreacted, but the results of an APB check on the bandits proved he hadn’t. One of the copious weepers was a contract killer with several hits to

his credit.

“You never know what you’ll be facing,” Loc explained, “and you can’t take chances. You have to strike a reasonable balance. I know — and so do my men — that one of us could very well come back feet first.”

As a squad of Foreign Legion recruits crunched the gravel on their way to an orientation lecture I left Loc’s office for a hands-on briefing in the GIPN’s armory. The weapons had been selected from a number of sources. The basic arm is the hand-tooled Manurhin .357 Magnum revolver. Before the acquisition of this French-made revolver the GIPN depended on its Smith & Wesson counterpart. GIPN issues or approves a number of cartridges including a pinpointed round designed to remain within a body, thus reducing the risk of injury to innocent bystanders, and a heavy metal-piercing slug to penetrate vehicle bodies.

The Steyr-Mannlicher .308 with telescopic sights, night-vision attachment and magazines for six and 10 rounds is the GIPN’s basic sharpshooter’s tool. The Mannlicher is backed up by the .223 Ruger Mini-14 with a laser-lock sight. Demonstrating the pinpoint light of the sight on a far wall, one of Loc’s men explained its advantage. “That luminous circle has a great psychological effect on gunmen. When they see it steadying on their chests they have second thoughts about further mischief.”

A French-made 12-gauge shotgun with a six-shell magazine that can fire rubber stun-

ners, darts or regular shot rested in a padded box next to a container of CS gas canisters, a grenade launcher and a brace of gas masks. For a high rate of fire when the chips are down the GIPN depends on the Heckler & Koch 94 and the Mini-UZI. The latter is preferred for undercover work because its small size makes it easy to conceal. Last but not least is the palm-sized .38-caliber derringer, an added bit of insurance for men who risk their lives on a daily basis.

When I returned to the commissaire’s office he was in communication with one of his mobile patrols moving through a “hot” district of Marseille. His orders and replies were gruff and brief. Finished, he turned back to me and gestured toward the armory. “Remember, my men know their weapons, but they also know when *not* to use them.”

It was finally time to leave the GIPN to their work. I paused on my way to the door to look at a photo of a bemedaled Commissaire Nguyen Van Loc at an official ceremony. Among his decorations I identified the National Order of Merit, the Gold Medal for Courage and Devotion and the Military Medal for Courage.

“The most you can say about those,” Loc commented with a wry smile, “is that they were all earned in action.”

Walking down the hill from the Fort Saint Nicolas with the setting sun behind me I noted that Marseille seemed to be in love with the notion of the romanticized lawman. And Popeye, the hard-drinking detective of the *French Connection*, was not the last cowboy cop to bring a whiff of contemporary Americana to Marseille. The city’s buses all carried panels picturing a .45-toting Eddie Murphy in *Le Flic de Beverly Hills*. ☞



# TRACKED CRUSADERS

## Armor in Lebanon

by Ned Kelley

**B**EURUT bubbled with fear and fanaticism, flavored with a bit of pathos, in the fall of 1983, and I found the place bloody exciting. The U.S. Marines were still under virtual siege at the airport in West Beirut, subject to daily rocket and artillery attacks. Christians were battling it out with the Moslems above the airport in the Shouf mountains, and the Syrians had committed large numbers of their PLO henchmen to the fight.

No one side really had much control of anything, either in ravaged Beirut — once called the Paris of the Middle East — or in the surrounding countryside. So as I ambled along the streets of Christian East Beirut, packed with soldiers and militiamen, refugees and every type of vehicle imaginable, I stopped dead in my tracks when I saw a Soviet-made T-54 tank on the back of a low-loader come rumbling down the street.

My first reaction was to cut and run, thinking that the Syrians had taken the plunge and invaded the Christian heartland while they were heavily committed to fighting in the Shouf. Except for the distant rumbling of rocket and artillery fire in the mountains, the local semicontrolled chaos of East Beirut remained unchanged.

My own private business in Beirut brought me into contact with the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), and I didn't think they were using Soviet gear. In fact, I was fairly sure that all of the LAF's armor was of United States, British or French origin. It was only after my brush with the T-54 that I came to know that the Christians were employing captured Soviet tanks against their enemies.

I was back in Beirut again in late 1984 and early 1985 for about three months. It was then that I got to visit with the Christian Lebanese Force (LF) tankers, and got a closer look at their unit and the hodgepodge of armor with which they fought the war.

The LF armored force runs about regimental strength and is able to deploy two tank battalions. The majority of their vehicles are the veteran Israeli M1 Super Shermans, and Soviet T-54s and T-55s captured from the Syrians and PLO. LF armored units also field a limited number of American M48s, but I was told the Christian tankers preferred the Soviet 100mm gun and its much heavier projectile to the American 90mm and 105mm guns.

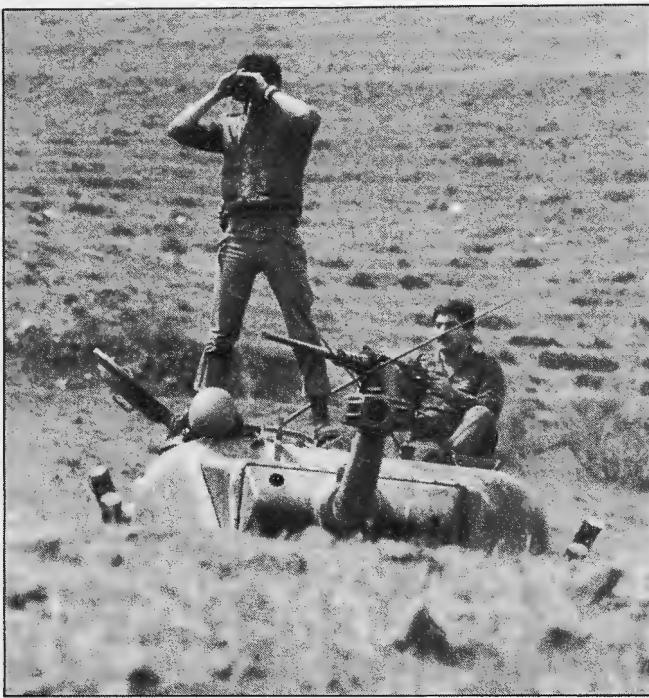
The LF have also purchased a number of T-54 and T-55 tanks from the Israelis at, from what I was told, top-dollar prices. Although no one would give me the actual price list, I heard the Israelis were charging the Christian Lebanese U.S. \$3,000 for one tank crewman's helmet. I shuddered to think what one bloody tank would cost!

Even after selling the Christians the Soviet armor, the Israelis would not show them how to use the gun stabilization equipment. They obviously do not want the Christian tankers to be able to engage targets while on the move. It seems that the Israelis prefer to keep the Christians weak, to ensure they are unable to prevail over the Moslem extremists and so maintain an unstable situation on Israel's northern border.

Regardless, the armored regiment has seen considerable combat and they have conducted themselves well. On a number of occasions they successfully engaged enemy tanks on a limited scale, but for the most part they're deployed in the type of infantry-support/mobile-artillery action which took place in 1983.

At that time the Syrians moved against the Christians in support of Amal, Druze and PLO forces. These attacks by heavy concentrations of brigade-strength Syrian armor, mechanized Special Forces troops and Syrian artillery resulted in bitter fighting and the eventual loss, with heavy Christian casualties, of the mountains in the





**ABOVE LEFT:** Super Sherman in hull-down position, watching and waiting for PLO forces to advance.

**ABOVE:** An unlikely combination. American and Soviet-made armor work in concert against Syrian, PLO and Moslem forces.

**LEFT:** Tanks are never very comfortable, especially in the winter mountains of Lebanon.



Aley-Bhamdoun-Hammana area.

This catastrophic defeat put nearly all of the high ground overlooking Beirut in the hands of Moslem fanatics, and resulted in the unrestricted shelling and rocketing of Christian East Beirut. Further, unimpeded and renewed infiltration of PLO terrorists into the western side of the city put the LF's occupation of East Beirut in jeopardy.

The LF's reaction to this serious turn of events was to mount an amphibious assault south of Beirut in the Khalde-Damour area. The tankers, in support of LF infantry, fought their way off the beaches and then northeast up into the hills overlooking West Beirut. In what was some of the heaviest and most bitter fighting seen in Lebanon to date, they were able to capture the high ground of Kaifoun-Baissour-Fsaqine, and control the area stretching to their outpost at Souq El Gharb with fire. In doing so, the LF closed the PLO's infiltration route into West Beirut.

It was a brilliant victory, and a chest-pocket badge — reminiscent of the World War II German Infantry Assault Badge — was issued to those LF combatants involved in what became known as "The Battle for the Mountains."

The LF handed over the hard-won ground to the LAF's 4th Brigade and then withdrew to the coast. The 4th Brigade was composed of both Christian and Moslem



## T-54 AND T-55 MAIN BATTLE TANKS

### Redesignated the Israeli TI-67

Most captured Soviet tanks have been modified by the Israelis and include upgrades to the electrical, communications, fire control and armament systems.

An air conditioning system was also installed to improve troop comfort — something which does not worry the Soviets.

Crew ..... 4  
 Combat weight ..... 39 tons  
 Max speed ..... 48 km/hr (28 mph)  
 Max range ..... 600 km (360 miles)  
 Main gun ..... 105mm  
 Coaxial machine gun ..... 7.62mm  
 Anti-aircraft ..... 50-caliber  
 M2 HB Browning

Christian T-54 waits in ambush during an action in 1985. Weapons and drive systems are modified in captured Soviet tanks to increase firepower and serviceability.

Lebanese, and seditious Moslem officers on the brigade's staff engineered a situation of confusion and panic. Moslem militiamen advanced on the LAF's positions, and the 4th Brigade disintegrated when the troops abandoned their equipment and deserted their positions.

Moslem troopers fled into West Beirut and Christians to the Christian coastal villages. In the confusion of the rout, the LF was fortunately able to recover some of the

abandoned equipment, thereby preventing it from falling into the hands of Moslem extremists.

More recently, elements of the LF armored regiment operated as part of a combined arms team in early 1985 during the fighting for the Christian enclave of Iklm Kharroub. Along with elements of the 77 Battalion Commandos and tank hunters of the LF's elite Anti-Tank Regiment, the tankers counterattacked Druze and PLO

forces.

But, because of enormous resupply problems — often impossible because heavy seas prevented small ships from running the gauntlet of Moslem artillery and rockets on the coast — the Christians were eventually overwhelmed in Iklm Kharroub by the vastly superior Syrian-supported Moslem militia. (I was told that the Israelis may have also thrown some covert support behind the Druze militia during this engagement. The



## ISHERMAN M51HV SUPER SHERMAN

Basic M4A1E3 and M4A1E8 Sherman models were purchased from France in 1956 and upgraded in the early '60s to counter Soviet IS-3 heavy tanks used by the Egyptians. Subsequent models upgraded the electrical system and drive train, modified the turret and stowage to accommodate the new 105mm gun, and were fitted with a white light/infrared searchlight and smoke dischargers.

Crew ..... 4  
 Combat weight ..... 39 tons  
 Chassis ..... Sherman M4A1  
 Engine ..... Cummins 460 hp diesel  
 Max speed ..... 45 km/hr (28 mph)  
 Max range ..... 270 km (162 miles)  
 Main gun ..... 105mm D1504  
 Ammunition ..... Anti-tank, HE,  
 smoke, practice  
 Anti-aircraft ..... 50-caliber  
 M2 HB Browning

Israeli Sherman tanks, modified from the roadwheels upward, are sold to Christian Lebanese forces for top-dollar prices. This Super Sherman fires down an alley.



Israelis seem to have a vested interest in assisting the Druze in their fight against the Christians as there are large numbers of Druze in Israel who form a significant political lobby.)

LF tankers played a prominent role in delaying the enemy during the withdrawal along with other elite units of the LF forces.

**ABOVE LEFT:** LF 77 Battalion soldier crouches ready with captured Soviet 7.62mm PKM light machine gun.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Trooper from elite LF Anti-Tank/Anti-Aircraft Regiment prepares Soviet Sagger for use against the Moslems. Brown beret is the distinctive mark of all Christian special forces units.

By all accounts they were instrumental in guaranteeing the successful amphibious evacuation of the defending LF units and their equipment.

While they were also able to evacuate many of the defenseless Christian civilians from the enclave, they were unable to prevent the massacre of many of those left by PLO-led Moslem militiamen.

However, in spite of some real successes, the armored regiment has more than its share of problems. The Christian Lebanese have no shortage of fighting men, but I was told they are short of the sort of expertise necessary to employ their armor assets to best effect.

According to my sources, Christian volunteers from the Free World are made very welcome in East Beirut if they are competent armor instructors. The regiment needs training in basic maintenance, driving and gunnery skills, but of particular need is the expertise to prepare and exercise the unit to operate in battalion and regiment strength against sizable enemy tank formations.

I heard the complaint over and over again that the reason for these deficiencies stems from the Israelis' refusal to fully train the LF tankers on the equipment they sold to the Lebanese — and for which such a high price was paid.

My friends in the unit said volunteers most suitable for the task of training the Armored Regiment of the Christian Lebanese Forces militia would be retired U.S. Army personnel who have worked as instructors at Fort Knox, or ex-British Army senior NCOs from the Royal Tank Regiment or the Cavalry. They emphasized the retired aspect because the Christians are hard-pressed for money, and can provide foreign volunteers with little more than accommodation, meals, and perhaps a few dollars for spending money each week.

One thing they do not need are untrained thrill seekers, or dagger-in-teeth crazies wanting to prove they're macho. They already have more than enough problems dealing with Moslems who answer that very same description. ☒



**Crest of the Lebanese Forces — the Christian Militia.**

**Lebanese Force tank regiment crest and shoulder patch badge.**



**Beret badge of the LF armored regiment.**

**Campaign pocket badge for "The Battle of the Mountains."**



# **WITNESS PROTECTION SHOTGUN**

**Two-Foot 12-Gauge Goes Undercover**

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



At only two feet long, the Witness Protection shotgun fulfills a specialized law enforcement application.

**F**IGHTING shotguns. From Doc Holliday's double-barrel 10-gauge to SOG teams' pumps, sometimes the only thing better than a shotgun is a more concealable shotgun. That's where the Witness Protection 12-gauge comes in.

Though limited in combat application, shotguns fill police arms lockers, the U.S. military still issues them and professional soldiers carry them for special missions. But even the pros argue about action, length and load. British studies of COIN combat actions in Malaya indicated that the auto-loading shotgun produced more hits during brief engagements than slide-action guns because of higher rate of fire. But American reaction to self-loaders was less enthusiastic: Semiautos malfunctioned under adverse conditions. A click with no bang in the duck blind means only a lost bird, but in battle it means loss of life.

Reliability makes slide-action shotguns the choice of professionals. Remington's Model 870 has been on top of the heap for 35 years. And that's the chassis on which the Witness Protection scattergun is built.

Remington introduced their first slide-action combat shotgun in 1908. By 1931 they had designed the Model 31 which saw extensive use in World War II alongside the Remington Model 11 autoloader. The Model 31 was one of a family of firearms using as many interchangeable components as possible. The Model 870, which appeared in 1950, continued this concept since it had many parts in common with the Model 11-40 autoloader, introduced the previous year.

Hammerless and side-ejecting, the Model 870 has a tubular magazine and features interchangeable barrels. Both the Model 11 and 870 lock in battery by means of a locking block assembly within the bolt body which engages a recess in the barrel extension. Upon firing, most of the counter-recoiling forces are absorbed by the barrel, locking block assembly and bolt body. Thus, little stress is placed on the receiver and it can be lightweight with no compromise to safety or endurance.

A slide, attached to two steel action bars connected to the forearm, is in turn coupled to the bolt body and locking block assembly by a lug on its upper rear surface that rests in the same bolt recess occupied by the locking block. Cams machined into the locking block rotate the bolt mechanism on a vertical axis with the slide lug's forward and rearward movements to lock or unlock with the barrel extension.

A ring, brazed to the bottom of the barrel, surrounds the tubular magazine. An end cap, threaded to the magazine, holds the barrel securely to the receiver and magazine and permits rapid disassembly and barrel changes. This end cap also permits extension magazines to be threaded onto the standard four-shell magazine without major



## WITNESS PROTECTION SHOTGUN

<b>Caliber</b> .....	12-gauge	<b>Forearm</b> .....	standard walnut or optional Choate
<b>Operation</b> .....	slide-action with locking block assembly that moves vertically upward to lock in the barrel extension's recess.	<b>Safety</b> .....	sliding crossbolt mounted to rear of trigger guard
<b>Weight, empty</b> .....	5¾ pounds	<b>Sights</b> .....	front bead
<b>Length, overall</b> .....	25 inches	<b>Finish</b> .....	blued or phosphate
<b>Barrel length</b> .....	12.5 inches	<b>Magazine</b> .....	four-shell tubular type
<b>Choke</b> .....	modified Mossberg Accu-Choke	<b>Price</b> .....	\$499.95 plus \$5 transfer tax to individuals
<b>Height</b> .....	3.5 inches	<b>Manufacturer:</b>	Wilson Arms Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 504, Brunswick, GA 31521. Phone: (912) 265-0774.
<b>Stock</b> .....	original walnut buttstock cut back and rounded.		

modifications.

The trigger mechanism contains a disconnector which is part of the action bar lock. It's activated when the action bar lock lever, located on the front left side of the alloy trigger guard, is depressed to release the lock so the forearm can be reciprocated with the trigger mechanism cocked (to remove all shells from the chamber and magazine). This disconnector, also operated by the hammer spring plunger after the hammer falls, requires the trigger to be released between each shot before the trigger mechanism will reset and allow another shot to be fired.

I don't like this. Early Ithaca Model 37s, including those manufactured for U.S. military contracts during the Vietnam War, were capable of firing as fast as the forearm was reciprocated with the trigger held back. Despite suggestions that this feature might be unsafe, I know of no instances when it caused an Ithaca Model 37 to fire out of battery.

Jim Wilson (Wilson Arms Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 504, Brunswick, GA 31521, phone: [912] 265-0774) — already known by professionals for sound suppressor designs — has chopped and modified the Remington Model 870 to enhance some

of the combat shotgun's special attributes.

Starting with a standard Model 870, Wilson chops the barrel to 12.5 inches and installs a modified Mossberg Accu-Choke (which only adds ¼ inch). Called the Witness Protection, the gun gets an unorthodox look from its radical buttstock. It's hardly there at all: cut back and rounded until only enough remains to obtain a secure grip. A detachable sling swivel is screwed into the end of what remains of the walnut stock. A 1¼-inch black nylon sling with a quick-release Dot fastener and plastic Fastex buckle is held to the end of the tubular magazine's end cap by an oversize immovable sling swivel that also serves as a stop to keep your hand from sliding in front of the muzzle. A walnut forearm is standard, but mine was equipped with the Pachmayr black rubber forearm.

The shell lifter is slotted and the trigger cleaned up to break crisply at 3.75 pounds. Overall length is 25 inches and weight, empty, reduced to 5.75 pounds. The bead front sight and sliding crossbolt safety (located at the rear of the trigger guard) have been retained.

We end up with a semiconcealable 12-gauge shotgun. It won't fit in your hip pocket, but slung on the shoulder it can be hidden

under a sport jacket. Right-handed shooters should slip the sling over the left shoulder, holding the gun's muzzle down, with the sling forward and the gun to the rear (chamber empty, hammer down and safety off). Grab the forearm with the left hand and simultaneously release the sling's Dot fastener with the right hand. Bring the gun up to eye level with the left hand while rotating the weapon 180 degrees. Clasp what remains of the buttstock with the right hand. Acquire the target, rack the forearm to chamber the shell and fire.

While this weapon certainly has no military application, it fulfills some specialized law enforcement requirements. In addition to use by bodyguards, Wilson's two-foot Model 870 is small enough for vehicular employment. It should also function as an excellent stake-out weapon.

SOF's test specimen first got a non-glare finish from Darrel Reed (Clinton River Gun Service, Dept. SOF, 30016 South River Road, Mount Clemens, MI 48045). Reed claims his hot salt bath process works on any metal surface but aluminum, and he returned the gun in a week with a non-glare finish that is heat-resistant, exceeds standard humidity requirements, will withstand a 72-hour salt-spray test and conforms to military specifications. Featuring a deep rich black texture, Reed's finish improves sight visibility, helps to dissipate heat waves and diminishes position disclosure problems with stainless-steel firearms. It also holds up well to holster wear. (Reed had treated my Randall Curtis LeMay .45 ACP pistol which sees almost constant duty in a Milt Sparks cross-draw rig.) The process costs \$80 for handguns and \$100 for rifles or shotguns. It would be just the ticket on a Ruger stainless-steel Mini-14.

A shotgun case, made of black water-repellent 1050-denier ballistic nylon, is also

available from Wilson. Manufactured by Elevated Urban Operations of Georgia, the case sports a 2.5-inch nylon carrying handle, a two-inch adjustable shoulder strap and a heavy-duty Vislon continuous zipper with dual slides. Closed-cell foam padding is sewn between the layers of nylon. Two pockets with Velcro closures each hold one five-round box of shotshells; retail price is \$49.95.

Fighting shotgun effectiveness is most often compromised by the buckshot sent down its tube. Standard buckshot pellets are composed of soft pure lead (about 2.5 on Mohs Hardness Scale — talc is 1 and diamond is 10), so they deform on the way down a steel bore. By the time they leave the muzzle, most pellets have been flattened so they fly an erratic and unpredictable pattern. Ammunition manufacturers stuff granulated plastic buffer material in buckshot shells to reduce this deformation. The effect, other than leaking bits of styrofoam on the chamber and action of your shotgun, is not easy to determine.

Federal Cartridge Co. (Dept. SOF, 2700 Foshay Tower, Minneapolis, MN 55402) has introduced a shotshell designed to significantly improve buckshot performance. Called Federal Premium Buckshot, these tower-dropped pellets are 97.5-percent pure lead with 2.5-percent antimony for added hardness. Two polishings guarantee sphericity. Copper-plating further increases resistance to deformation during firing. Shot is arranged in a spiral configuration within a long-range shot cup with granulated buffer added to fill the gaps.

SOF tested three loadings of 12-gauge Federal Premium Buckshot through the Witness Protection shotgun, using a Benelli Model 121 M1 Military/Police shotgun (20-inch barrel with cylinder bore choke) as control. They were 2¾-inch 00 buck (nine



**Jim Wilson has created an unorthodox but highly practical chopped-down version of the Remington 870.**



pellets), 2¾-inch Magnum 00 buck (12 pellets) and 2¾-inch No. 4 buck (34 pellets).

Combat shotguns are usually most effective at engagement distances of 10 to 25 yards. To test any extension of this effective range, three target distances were selected: 15, 25 and 35 yards. Throughout the test, the Benelli patterned directly around the point of aim while the Witness Protection consistently impacted about 12 inches high.

At 15 yards the Benelli printed both the nine-pellet standard load and the 12-pellet Magnum 00 buck into an extreme spread of 9 inches. The Witness Protection shotgun opened the nine pellets to 12 inches and the 12 pellets to 15 inches. At this distance the Benelli dumped all 34 No. 4 buckshot into a 16-inch circle while the Wilson gun spread its No. 4 buckshot load out to 24 inches.

When we moved to 25 yards and fired the nine-pellet 00 buck load, both the Benelli and Witness Protection delivered horizontal patterns with an 18-inch spread. The 12-



pellet 00 buck load opened up to 22 inches in the Benelli and 28 inches in the Witness Protection shotgun. Twenty-six No. 4 pellets will reach your opponent's chest at this distance when fired through the Benelli Model 121 M1. While only 20 of the .24-caliber, 20-grain, No. 4 buck struck the kill zone from 25 yards away through the Wilson altered Model 870, this was more than enough to produce a severe migraine.

At 35 yards the Benelli consistently dumped six of the nine-pellet 00 buck into a 15-inch circle and we expected four pellets to hit within this diameter when fired from the Witness Protection shotgun. No more than four of the 12-pellet Magnum buck printed on a 15-inch circle from either gun at this distance. The No. 4 buck produced an average of 16 hits in a 15-inch circle, again from either of the two shotguns.

Federal Premium Buckshot significantly increased the hit potential of the combat shotgun by providing more uniform patterns and more hits on target while extending the effective range by at least another 10 yards. But No. 4 buck, so popular with law enforcement agencies, should be avoided.

**Semiconcealable, the Witness Protection is a smart conversion of a proven fighting shotgun.**



From 20 yards and beyond, its 20-grain pellet is unlikely to provide the energy required to incapacitate your opponent. In addition, as its pattern opens up more quickly than 00 buck, it is far more likely to spray pellets into innocent bystanders — an important consideration in law enforcement applications.

Nor can I recommend the 2¾-inch 12-pellet Magnum 00 buck load. Felt recoil is appreciably greater, especially in the 5¾-pound Witness Protection shotgun, and thus the time required to reacquire a target for the second shot is increased. Nine-pellet 00 Premium Buckshot remains the best choice for almost all law enforcement scenarios.

Although it can be fired from the hip, the Witness Protection shotgun is at its best when used at eye level. Wilson suggests that the hand holding the forearm be thrust forward while the hand holding the abbreviated stock is pulled rearward. This is exactly opposite of the technique taught to pistol shooters firing from the modified Weaver stance, who are instructed to pull rearward

*Continued on page 122*

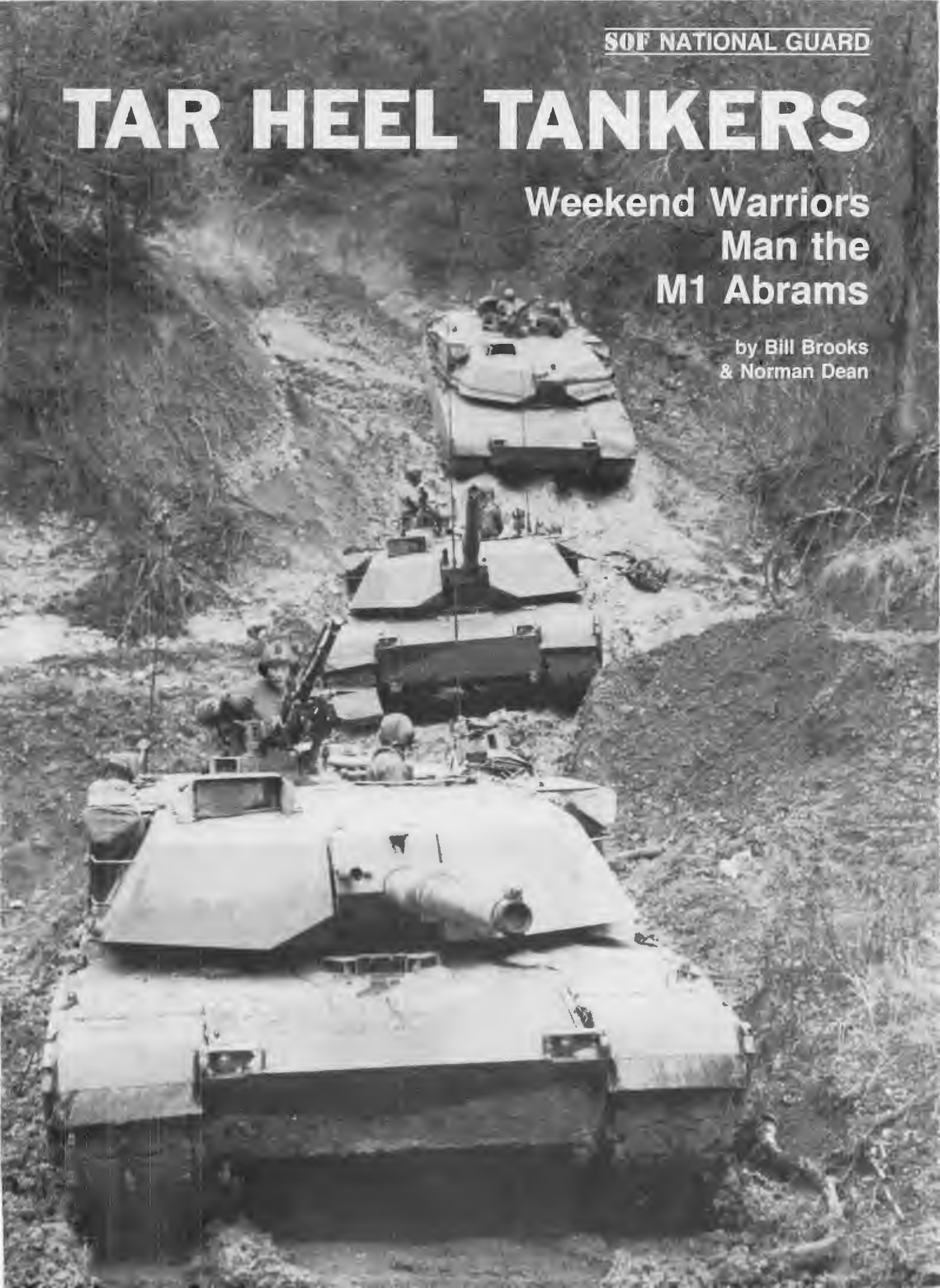


SOF NATIONAL GUARD

# TAR HEEL TANKERS

Weekend Warriors  
Man the  
M1 Abrams

by Bill Brooks  
& Norman Dean



**C**ITIZEN soldiers: Born in the days when a handful of revolutionary militiamen sniped at orderly ranks of Redcoats marching toward Concord, today's National Guard is the stepchild of the founding fathers' ideal soldier. These weekend warriors are no longer pitted against the British, but they still play a key role in the Army's mobilization plan for war. Every state has a National Guard unit and some are better than others. SOF took a look at one of the best.

North Carolina's 2nd Battalion, 252nd Armor is not a typical National Guard outfit. It is a "round-out" unit, assigned to the Army's 2nd "Hell On Wheels" Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. They may sound like just another bunch of southern boys running around in tanks on the weekend, but there's a difference. The 2/252 is equipped with the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank (MBT) and the Bradley M3 Cavalry Fighting Vehicle (CFV). The 252nd is still the only reserve unit to have received the new armor, but two others are on the way toward that capability. The 155th Armored Brigade, Mississippi National Guard and the 108th Armored Battalion, Georgia National Guard are being outfitted with the Abrams and the Bradley. They plan to be operational by July of 1986.

At a recent live-fire Field Training Exercise (FTX) the 2/252 provided SOF with the opportunity to observe the M1 Abrams and Bradley M3 CFV in action and to speak firsthand with the men of the unit.

Our visit was spent with Headquarters & Headquarters Company (HHC) in Raeford and Company C, 2/252, stationed in Southern Pines. Both units are within a few miles of Fort Bragg. Firing was conducted at Range 79 on the Army's vast Fort Bragg reservation.

Ammunition used was Target Practice Discarded Sabot-Tracer (TPDS-T) and High-Explosive Anti-Tank, Target Practice-Tracer (HEAT-TP-T) ammunition, firing with maximum effect at targets 800 to 2,290 meters away. (The effective range of the 105mm M68 gun is 3,300 meters.) The M1 is also capable of using Beehive and High Explosive Plastic (HEP) ammunition.

The much-improved fire-control system includes a laser range finder and a thermal imaging system that allows the tank to engage targets by both day and night. The gun is fully stabilized in both elevation and traverse and can be aimed and fired while moving.

The M1 Abrams MBT carries a total of 55 rounds of 105mm ammunition of which 52 are compartmentalized. Of the latter, 44 rounds are in the turret bustle (22 on each side) and are separated from the crew by hydraulic-operated armored sliding doors. One 7.62mm M240 machine gun is mounted coaxially with the main gun and another is mounted at the loader's hatch.

**M1 Abrams is considered state-of-the-art in armor by U.S. tank jocks.**



## THE LATEST IN ARMOR

Despite all the controversy that surrounds the new M1 Abrams tank, it would be premature to make a decision on it one way or the other. All the data is not yet in. Despite complaints that it is too complex and prone to malfunction, the Abrams does represent a move toward a more advanced armor capability.

The XM1 program was established in December 1971 and the final program was approved in January 1973. Between February and April 1976 the Army tested prototypes before finally giving the nod to Chrysler Corp. to fill the bill for the new tank.

In early 1982 Chrysler sold its tank-building subsidiary to General Dynamics which continues to produce the tank for the Army. By the end of 1988 the Army plans to have 7,058 M1s in its armor ranks.

<b>Height</b> .....	9 feet
<b>Length</b> .....	32 feet, 6 inches
<b>Width</b> .....	12 feet
<b>Weight</b> .....	55 tons
<b>Engine</b> .....	1,500 hp Avco Lycoming turbine
<b>Crew</b> .....	4
<b>Speed</b> .....	.50 mph
<b>Range</b> .....	280 miles
<b>Armament:</b>	
<b>main</b> .....	105mm rifled gun
<b>coaxial</b> .....	7.62mm machine gun
<b>anti-aircraft</b> .....	one 12.7mm and one 7.62mm machine gun
<b>Ammunition:</b>	
<b>main</b> .....	55 rounds
<b>coaxial</b> .....	1,000 rounds
<b>anti-aircraft</b> .....	11,400 rounds

Nothing much happened in the APC field since the M113 came on the scene back in the 1960s. Even when the Army decided to go ahead with plans for something new in 1965, nothing really came of it until December 1978 when the first two prototypes were delivered to the U.S. Army at San Jose, California.

By late 1979 the XM2 officially became the M2; on 20 October 1981 the M2 was dedicated as the Bradley Fighting Vehicle and the Army ordered 100 M2s and its cousin, the M3, to be purchased with FY80 funds. The first battalion was equipped with the M2 at Fort Hood, Texas, in March 1983, and other deliveries went to Europe in December 1983.

The United States has plans to acquire 6,882 M2s and M3s, but it will not replace the M113 on a one-to-one basis. Only units with a specific role for them, such as mechanized infantry, will get it.

<b>Height</b> .....	9 feet, 8 inches
<b>Length</b> .....	21 feet, 3 inches
<b>Width</b> .....	10 feet, 5 inches
<b>Weight</b> .....	24 tons, combat loaded
<b>Engine</b> .....	500 hp Cummins turbocharged four-cycle
<b>Crew</b> .....	3 with 7 soldiers
<b>Speed</b> .....	.41 mph
<b>Range</b> .....	300 miles
<b>Armament:</b>	
<b>main</b> .....	25mm chain gun
<b>coaxial</b> .....	7.62mm machine gun
<b>ATGW</b> ..	Two-tube TOW launcher
<b>Ammunition:</b>	
<b>main</b> .....	300 ready/600 reserve
<b>coaxial</b> ..	800 ready/1,540 reserve
<b>ATGW</b> .....	.2 in launcher/ 5 in reserve/3 stowed





The loader's gun can cover 270 degrees and has no sights. (The gunner adjusts from impact and tracer.)

The tank commander (TC) has access to a Browning .50-cal. M2 HMG that can be traversed 360 degrees and elevated to 65 degrees. Mounted on each side of the turret is a bank of six smoke dischargers. It is expected that 1985-production vehicles will be mounted with the 120mm Rheinmetall smoothbore gun as already used on the West German Leopard II MBT. These later-production vehicles will be designated M1A1 and will have additional armor protection. The 2/252 does not anticipate receiving any of the new M1A1s in the near future.

The M1 Abrams MBT is also the first such tank to be powered by a multifuel engine since one was installed following trials in an M48 tank. The 1,500 hp Avco Lycoming multifuel turbine engine occupies much less space than a diesel and it is easier to service. It does use more fuel,



**ABOVE LEFT:** Crew members check tank track prior to continuing FTX.

**LEFT:** Tank commander checks the .50-cal. M2 heavy machine gun prior to a training exercise.



though, a factor which the West Germans feel negates the space saved in the first place.

The M1 Abrams MBT weighs a hefty 55 tons and carries a crew of four: the TC, the gunner, the loader and the driver. It is 32 feet, six inches in length, 12 feet wide and nine feet high. Maximum road speed is around 50 mph and maximum range is 280 miles without refueling.

Another thoroughly modern addition to the 2/252's inventory is the Bradley Fighting Vehicle (CFV) M3 which they began receiving in September 1983. All CFVs are assigned to the Battalion Scout Platoon which is under direct control of the Headquarters Company. The "Scouts" have six CFVs.

The CFV's sister vehicle, the M2 Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV), and the M3 CFV are the Army's replacements for the long outdated M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC). The Bradley gives ground troops the mobility it needs to keep pace with the fast-moving Abrams. It will also provide the infantry the potential to deliver accurate fire while on the move from inside the M2, and it gives the infantry squad increased armored protection. Just



ABOVE: It happens to the best. 2nd Lt. Holland and Platoon Sgt. Ridzelski inspect a thrown track.

BELOW: Breaking out of a cloud of dust and smoke, these M1s roar over open terrain during practice maneuvers.

as the M1 Abrams is a vast improvement over the M60 MBT, the Bradley makes the M113 look like a Model T. The IFV-CFV's increased battlefield mobility is the result of a combination of engine performance, power train efficiency and improved suspension.

The Cummins four-cycle, 500-horsepower turbocharged engine can power the Bradley from a stop to 30 mph in 19 seconds. The vehicle has a top speed of 41 mph and a cruising range of 300 miles while carrying a combat load of 48,000 pounds. The hydromechanical transmission permits the driver to operate over all types of terrain and three high-performance shock absorbers on each side of the vehicle cushion the blows of high-speed rough-terrain operation.

The swimming capability of the IFV is also much improved over the M113. The secret is a swim curtain — a heavy-duty vinyl-coated nylon sheet that fits around the top of the vehicle. The swim curtain gives the vehicle a greater freeboard.

The firepower system of the IFV-CFV is more advanced than the M113. It has a 25mm Bushmaster chain gun with a range

*Continued on page 118*



**SOF CENTRAL AMERICA**

# **COSTA RICA KICKS BACK**



# Civil Defense Force Faces Piricuacos

Text & Photos by Dale Andradé

**T**HIS is not a war story. But with a little prodding it could easily turn into one.

It involves the desire of one small country to remain neutral in the increasingly volatile cauldron of Central American politics. That country is Costa Rica, an economically stable nation nestled below the southern border of Nicaragua. That's where the trouble begins.

Costa Rica got its present form of government after the 1948 coup which overthrew Teodoro Picado. The constitution that grew out of Costa Rica's desire for democracy prohibited a standing army. Today, there is a tiny contingent of 5,000 men called a Civil Defense Force (CDF). Most of these troops are stationed around the capital city of San José leaving only a token force of 2,000 to watch the unstable border with Nicaragua.

Against a backdrop of 368 Nicaraguan border incursions between January and July 1985, prospects for peace aren't altogether rosy. But the United States holds the wild card and the Costa Ricans (and the Sandinistas) are completely aware of that. An invasion from Nicaragua would bring down the wrath of Washington, presumably in the form of an invasion.

But what about the present situation?

There's bad news and there's good news. On the one hand the Costa Rican Civil Defense Force is outnumbered by hundreds to one everywhere along the rugged border frontier. Then again, Costa Rica's version of *The Military Balance* doesn't tell the whole story: Morale is high, desertions are unheard of and the farmers and ranchers emphatically support the CDF.

CDF's mission is not to stop the Sandinistas from invading — they could never do that. The sparse sprinkling of border outposts can't even halt infiltrations. So just what are they doing and how well are they doing it?

I pondered that question and many others as I sat folded like a parachute in the back seat of the tiny Cessna

**Guard at a remote outpost scans a Sandinista trenchline just over the border.**

single-engine aircraft that was flying me to the border in the extreme northwest corner of Costa Rica. There would be no contras — ARDE had pulled the last of their small force out back in 1982.

The pilot, a volunteer member of the small cadre that passes for an air force in Costa Rica, had the annoying habit of flying through dense clouds. Vultures with the plane's wingspan glided on invisible cushions of rolling air and a collision with one of those monsters could cause us grief. Despite the competition for our aerial niche, we rolled to a bumpy stop on a graded dirt airstrip.

Sure enough, the CDF was waiting. They'd been expecting us for two days. The second in command of the *Comando del Norte*, Major Guevara, climbed down from his jeep and strode over to meet us.

"It's good to see you. We don't get many journalists in this area. They only show up when there's trouble and things here are very peaceful right now." We climbed into the jeep and, as we streaked down the road toward headquarters, he explained the situation to me.

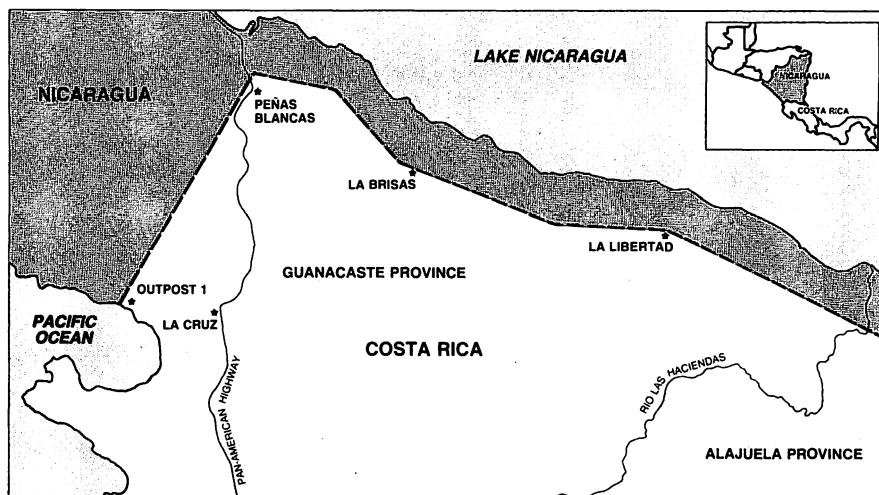
Since the 1948 revolution, Costa Rica decided that the best way to prevent a military takeover was to abolish the armed forces and turn the new civil guard into a scattered organization that was never designed to come together and work as a unit. The system works. Commanders in remote areas have usually spent their lives in that area and have little

contact with their superiors in San José. There isn't much reason to contact the leaders in the capital; they get only the most basic of funds and supplies from them.

Enlistment in the CDF is purely voluntary and it's a wonder that the rural areas get as many recruits as they do. The government gives them only uniforms and a small paycheck of 7,000 *colones* (about \$140) a month. Land for the command post and the little outposts on the border are donated by sympathetic ranchers. Only the main border station of Peña Blancas, located on the Pan-American Highway, is owned by the government.

Although the president of Costa Rica is the commander in chief of all security forces, the civil guard comes under the administrative jurisdiction of the minister of public security. It doesn't stop there, though. Allocation of funds comes from the minister of finance via estimates prepared by the minister of the interior and training comes under control of the minister of the presidency. To say that the system is cumbersome is an understatement, but it clearly shows the lengths that the government is willing to go in order to prevent the military from gaining any kind of hold on the country.

Major Guevara had little concern for the intricacies of big-city politics. Like most of the officers and men in the *Comando del Norte* the major was born in Guanacaste Province and his family still lived there. Protecting the border area from the Sandinistas is their only concern. And they are more than willing to do the job in the face of overwhelming odds. The most obvious challenge facing the 300-man CDF on the northwestern frontier is the presence of some four or five Sandinista militia battalions commanded by Cubans with such expressive nicknames as "The Butcher of Angola." Few regular Sandinista



units are on the Costa Rican border — they are guarding Managua or facing the Honduran border.

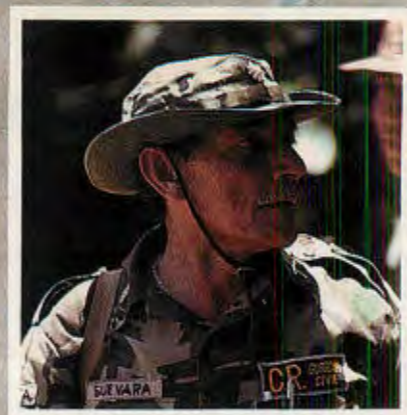
Another challenge that makes life hard for the CDF is one that should be easier to remedy. It's a lack of supplies. At the main barracks outside La Cruz, Major Guevara's hand gestured over the expanse of farmland and buildings that lay before us. "All this was donated by a rancher who doesn't want to see this area turned into a DMZ. We grow all our own food in those fields." And what

food they can't grow is bought with money raised by a *mariachi* band made up of CDF men who play at dances and functions around the area.

Even the building materials for the barracks are donated by the people in the area — none of it comes from the government in San José. And if the soldiers aren't patrolling the wild country along the border, they're helping to put up the buildings at the base.

Basic supplies are taken for granted by military men all over the world. But in Costa Rica they're a luxury.

Everything from ponchos to penicillin is hard to come by — the CDF simply doesn't have anything. I can readily sympathize with anyone stuck out in



Major Guevara, second in command of Costa Rica's northwestern sector, epitomizes this country's morale and determination.



the rain without rain gear so I did the only honorable thing: I gave the major my poncho.

As night dropped onto the quiet landscape, the major asked if I wanted to see the border outposts in the morning. Of course I did, but there hadn't yet been a time to bring it up diplomatically. Memories of the secrecy and bureaucratic red tape in other Central American countries made me leery of coming right out and asking. Major Guevara read my

mind, though. "This is an open country. We have no secrets here."

Morning burst on the horizon with a fury — an unusual occurrence during the rainy season — but I wasn't going to waste time marveling at nature's idiosyncracies. Our jeep sped off to the deep forests along the border.

The first outpost lies on the westernmost point of the coast where the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border begins. It's a lonely concrete hut sitting back from the barren beach and manned by seven men with very few supplies . . . and no binoculars — a dangerous oversight considering the open terrain and close proximity of a Sandinista battalion (don't they operate in units smaller than battalions around here?).

The lieutenant in command of the base explained the situation. "We patrol half the border up to where it angles to the east. One other outpost of six men is located at the other end of our patrol area and they share the duty." Thirteen men is not an overwhelming force to keep a lid on the 15-kilometer-long strip of border.

Using a borrowed pair of binoculars, the lieutenant pointed out to me two Sandinista sentries standing outside of a trenchline about 800 meters in front of us. "They are very careful about keeping on their side of the border, but at night they often infiltrate men into our country."

Two nights before, someone had fired automatic weapons near the house of one of the big landowners. No one was sure who had done it, but the soldiers said the fire sounded like AKs.

An important part of Sandinista strategy along the northwest border involves scaring away as many of the farmers and ranchers in the area as

**Prepatrol planning. Outpost commander hands out weapons.**



## IS IT AN ARMY?

On paper, Costa Rica pared its army down to almost nothing following the 1948 revolution. In reality there wasn't much to whittle in the first place. At the time of its abolition the army consisted of only one infantry company and one field battery — a grand total of 339 soldiers of all ranks. A 33-battalion militia provided back-up for the army, but rarely were they mobilized.

The navy wasn't much better. Between 1892 and 1948 it boasted only 100 vessels for both coasts including a stern-wheel river gunboat.

Both the army and the navy were better off than the air force, though — Costa Rica has never really had one. During the 1948 revolution the constitutional forces had a grand total of three light planes, not enough to do much but ferry around high-ranking officers. Four F-51D fighter-bombers were supplied by the U.S. in 1955 to fight against the insurgents that threatened Costa Rica. Three of the F-51Ds were ruined by the hastily trained civilian pilots and the remaining one was returned to the U.S. at the close of hostilities.

Today, even within the confines of the constitution, the Costa Rican military — called a Civil Defense Force (CDF) — has achieved roughly the same professional status as the official armed force that preceded it. The CDF combines the functions of army, navy, air force and national police with its primary job being that of an internal security force. The initial strength of the CDF was set at 1,200 and it remained there until the mid-1970s. Since then it has increased steadily to a strength of around 5,000. This increase has gone hand in hand with a shift to a more conventional military role.

The CDF is organized along company-sized lines and deploys one of these company-strength units in each of Costa Rica's seven provinces. About 45 percent of its strength is stationed around the capital of San José. This includes the Presidential Guard, an elite battalion charged with protecting the head of state and his ministers. Another battalion consisting of three companies functions as a training unit for the rest of the CDF.

Most of the enlisted men and NCOs in the CDF are trained within Costa Rica, but many of the higher-ranking officers have attended other military schools such as the School of the Americas, operated by the U.S. in Panama, or military installations within the U.S.

The Sandinistas have no intention of leaving Costa Rica alone. They

have sponsored a deliberate program of terror and intimidation on both the government and foreign business interests in Costa Rica. Perhaps the most famous incident occurred two years ago when the Sandinistas kidnaped an Argentine military adviser in San José, spirited him to Managua and forced him to "confess" that he was a CIA operative. Needless to say, he was never again heard from after the "confession." Many other people have been kidnaped or shot down by groups who have been linked to Managua.

Because of this increase in terrorist activities sponsored by the communist government in Nicaragua, the Monge administration decided to invite the U.S. Army Special Forces to train the CDF in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. A dozen or so Green Beret advisers set up shop at Murchielago where they trained about 450 Costa Rican recruits in the finer points of unconventional warfare. Theoretically these graduates will train other troopers with the experience they gained from the Green Berets.

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## No other nation has such an informal group of soldiers faced with such great responsibility.

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Events have always been the barometer that the government in San José has followed. The 1955 border incursion by Nicaragua demonstrated to the government the need for some kind of military force for self-defense. This organization in no way violated the intent of the 1948 constitution and none of the subsequent administrations has interfered much with its existence. Conversely, there has been little attempt on the part of the government to mold the CDF into anything more than a glorified police force. And perhaps the best example of this is Costa Rica's lack of any type of arms industry.

Costa Rica received some \$115,000 in obsolete military equipment from the U.S. between 1950 and 1970. These included M1 Garands, M1 Carbines, BARs, Thompson submachine guns and Browning M1919 .30-cal. machine guns. Since 1980, however, the CDF has replaced most of its obsolete infantry weapons with new assault rifles. Most of the troops stationed on

the Nicaraguan border are armed with Galil and Taiwanese T-65 assault rifles, a welcome change from the ancient Garands and Thompsons.

Artillery, however, continues to be neglected in the CDF's weapon inventory. With the rapid change in the fortunes of Central America's political scene, it is probable that Costa Rica will rely more and more on the U.S. to upgrade its arsenal. The present administration in San José recognizes the need for some type of anti-aircraft weapons as well as at least a few artillery pieces.

That goes for the navy, too, although it might be more accurate to call it a coast guard, since that's half their mission. Until the late 1970s, one 90-foot patrol boat on each coast putted up and down Costa Rica's territorial waters looking for smugglers as well as possible infiltration from Nicaragua. In the last five years Costa Rica has added a 100-ton boat and five 36-ton patrol boats to the inventory. Orders for this small navy come from both the CDF and the various provincial police forces. Needless to say, orders often become confused and the boats tend to be out to sea when someone needs them.

The air force has really gone nowhere since 1948. With the exception of the fighters lent by the United States in 1955, the government has acquired no new military aircraft. Less than 10 light civilian aircraft piloted by volunteers make up the backbone of the air force. A single Bell UH-1B and five Hughes 500 Defenders form the rotor contingent.

While things seem to be moving forward for the CDF, there is one serious stumbling block that prevents them from becoming an efficient fighting unit. Every four years the government holds elections in which the incumbent cannot run — he is limited to one four-year term. When the new government takes office, it disbands most of the CDF and takes on a whole new batch. Only a few of its members are immune to this political turnover. Obviously, this hinders the efficiency and cohesion of the CDF and it fails to present a united front to the Sandinistas.

The Costa Rican military system is unique in Central America. No other nation has such an informal group of soldiers faced with such great responsibility. The constitution may provide for the peaceful intentions of the Costa Rican people, but it has no such effect on the Sandinistas. Only a formidable fighting force will do that. And in a region where militarism is a traditional way of life, peaceful intentions are not always enough.



**Camera-shy Sandinista border guards tried their best to keep their faces out of SOF.**

possible. They do it by sending militiamen disguised as *campesinos* into Costa Rica where they try to get jobs on the ranches. Their mission is to spread lies about an imminent U.S. invasion in hope that the area can be turned into a vast no-man's land.

But the ruse has only been partially successful. A few of the smaller ranchers have sold out at ridiculously low prices and moved to other parts of the country, but most have stayed. It will take more than Sandinista mischief to destroy their morale.

CDF G-2 has proved adept at finding who is a real refugee and who is a troublemaker. Every day they pick up Nicaraguans wandering the roads looking for asylum and a job. G-2 takes them to La Cruz where they undergo two days of interrogation before a decision is made. While I was there, a pair of Nicaraguans went through the process. All I saw the next morning was the two of them in a jeep headed back to the border. Apparently G-2 was convinced they were phonies — they weren't talking though.

The second and third outposts along the *Comando del Norte's* tactical area of responsibility were more remote than the first. No leisurely jeep ride here. What passed for a road was a tattered ribbon of dirt knotted through tangled jungle. During the rainy season, the outposts can expect to be resupplied only by mule — a vehicle has no hope of busting through the quagmire that springs into being with any big rain.

The outpost of La Brisas materialized out of the tangled jungle — a tiny concrete and corrugated iron shack tucked into the corner of a small landowner's ranch. Three tired-looking horses lounged lazily in

the shade as their *campesino* owners whittled wood in the doorway. These men were paid nothing. They received only food and a place to stay, and their job was to help intercept Sandinista infiltrators.

Once again, the lieutenant in command of the outpost strode out to meet us. His six-man squad had just returned from a patrol along the border and his men were too tired to move around much. Until I dragged out my camera for a few photos, that is. Then they all moved like magnets toward whatever subject I chose to photograph.

Major Guevara briefed me on the patrol procedures for the border. "Each squad stays at the outpost for two weeks. Then when the resupply vehicle comes, another team moves in and these men go back to La Cruz for some rest."

Next stop, La Libertad, the last remote outpost along the Nicaraguan border. As our jeep careened along the trail, the major yelled greetings to the children walking along the side. He knew them all. One cluster of children clamored for a ride and we stopped to pick them up. They lived in the little ranch near the end of the road — exactly where we were headed. It was their family who had donated the land for the outpost.

This place was nice. The men's quarters were larger and the field of vision was better than the previous outposts. Only a few miles away, the vast expanse of Lake Nicaragua shimmered for as far as the eye could see. And on its shores we could see tendrils of smoke rising from the Sandinista camp. How many soldiers were camped there? You guessed it: a battalion.

Half of the eight troopers prepared for a routine patrol along the border. One of the men brought out web gear and another rifles and for the first time I saw them up close. Some were

Galils — that was all right, but the majority of them were the Taiwanese Type 65, a Far Eastern rip-off of the M16 (see "Made in Taiwan," SOF, August 1984). Since I was well aware of the poor reputation that had dogged this rifle, I asked what the soldiers thought of it. To a man, they despised it. Most of them complained of its tendency to jam and its inaccuracy. The government must have gotten a good deal on a big batch of them.

Only one more stop on this whirlwind tour — no-man's land along the Pan-American Highway. At least that's what they call it in the trash put out by the "peace" groups. In real life, the area separating Costa Rica from Nicaragua was a strip about 15 meters wide — there wasn't even a gate. The CDF had about 20 men stationed there and the soldier who

*Continued on page 121*

**A grave threat to Sandinista security: this old man stands guard at the border station on the Pan-American Highway.**



**Taiwanese T-65 rip-off of the M16 gets the thumbs-down from Costa Rican troopers.**



# RENAMO

## Winning One in Africa

by Jack Wheeler



**M**Y introduction to the mysterious guerrillas of RENAMO (Resistência Nacional de Moçambicana), the Mozambique National Resistance or MNR, was sobering. It was late in the afternoon of 13 June 1985. I had crossed into Mozambique from a neighboring black African country some hours earlier, secretly paddling in a bark canoe across a muddy river that forms the border. After hiking some 10 miles through the dry bush, my two guides indicated we were approaching a Renamo camp.

Finally, I thought. This was my fourth attempt in two years to get in here and see these people, and at last I was doing it.

When a shot rang out from the trees ahead, I didn't think much of it — probably a sentry notifying others of our arrival. I was wrong. When I walked into the camp, a grisly scene awaited me. An executioner had fired the shot, not a sentry, performing the *coup de grace* upon a captured spy of FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front), the Soviet-backed Marxist insurgency that had gained power upon Mozambique's independence from Portugal in 1975.

The dead spy had just been decapitated with a machete. As the headless corpse was being carried off, a Renamo soldier picked up the head, with the left temple blown

**Renamo patrol moves through the dense Mozambique bush. FPLM troops rarely conduct field operations, but prefer the safety of heavily defended bases.**

away by the executioner's bullet, and held it up to me.

"I do not think," he said with a relaxed smile, "that we will have trouble from Frelimo spies for a while."

The commander of the camp, Commander Fujao, ordered the soldier holding the head to place it on a stake by the nearest road as a warning to any other Frelimo agents who might be in the area.

A table covered with a clean red-and-white checked tablecloth and surrounded with makeshift wooden chairs had been set up. Fujao gestured for me to sit down.

"If President Dhlakama [Afonso Dhlakama, president and chief military commander of Renamo] hears of this, he will be so angry he may want to put my head on a stake," Fujao explained. "The president says above all we must never terrorize the local people, that the local villagers should look at us as their friend and protector from Frelimo tyranny.

"But when we captured this man spying on us, he confessed to being a Frelimo soldier. He was not a local villager, although he was pretending to be one. Since our job is

to kill Frelimo soldiers, we killed him."

Fujao was an impressive-looking man. His skin as sleek and blue-black as gun metal, spikes of Rastafarian dreadlocks made his hair look like a nest of tarantulas, and muscles bulged out of a maroon knit shirt. A captured Soviet pistol hung in a holster around his trim waist. He was 31 years old and had been with Renamo for four years. Before that he had worked in a restaurant in Beira. When his father incurred the wrath of a local Frelimo official and disappeared, he joined the resistance.

He shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "Now . . . welcome to our camp, welcome to Renamo. Would you like something to eat?"

I said yes, and someone brought me a bowl of *nzima*, corn porridge. Fujao continued to talk with my two guides, black Mozambicans who were Renamo agents in the neighboring country. They spoke in Portuguese, the lingua franca between all Mozambican tribes. One of my guides

### A TOUGH ROAD TO WALK

Dr. Jack Wheeler is an adventurer — par excellence. Wanderlust bit the native Californian early: At 14 he climbed the Matterhorn, lived with Amazon headhunters at 16, and hunted a man-eating tiger at the ripe old age of 17.

Along the line he acquired a B.A. in anthropology at UCLA and Ph.D. in philosophy from USC while continuing to explore the wilds of Outer Mongolia, Russian Central Asia, the Sahara, Vietnam, and the jungles of Africa and South America.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Wheeler also tracked cannibals in New Guinea, retraced Hannibal's route over the alps — replete with two elephants — and made the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the most northerly parachute jump at 90 North — the very top of the world.

During 1983 and 1984, he had the opportunity to combine his background in both adventure and philosophy by traveling around the world on a research grant studying anti-Soviet democratic liberation movements.

Wheeler made contact with the FDN contras, Afghan mujahideen, Savimbi's UNITA in Angola, KPNLF guerrillas in Cambodia, Karens in Burma, and resistance leaders in Laos, Ethiopia, and Mozambique — and came away convinced that there is an emerging rejection of Soviet imperialism throughout the Third World.

Wheeler's recent trek into Mozambique to meet with anti-Marxist Renamo forces made him the first American civilian to do so, and helped confirm his thesis that black Africa is getting tired of the Russian bear trampling its bush.

spoke passable English, however, and so was able to translate for me.

As I finished the porridge, my guides said they had to go back across the border. Soon I was alone with Fujao and his men. A guerrilla in a ragged shirt with an AK-47 slung over his back began to sweep the area clean of bloodstains on the ground, using a handful of twigs.

The first time I tried to get into rebel-held Mozambique, I was warned not to do so by the National Security Council at the White House. I was on my initial field research study of anti-Soviet insurgencies in 1983, funded by a grant from the Reason Foundation. Having just returned from going inside Nicaragua with the contras, I was in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on my way to Europe. My goal was Pakistan, a jumping-off point to try and get into Afghanistan with the mujahideen. Next would come Africa. I called up a friend of mine at the White House to let him know what I had seen.

"I have an important message for you," he said. "That place south of Europe [Mozambique] that you're planning to visit after seeing our turbaned friends [the Afghans]. The other side [the Soviets] knows you're coming. Do not go in . . . repeat . . . do not go in."

When I got to Nairobi, where my initial underground Renamo contact was located, I debated whether or not to see him. I had known the man who had given me the warning as a close friend for 17 years, so I knew it was given in good faith. Yet something didn't smell right, and when you are out in the world contacting and living with secret guerrilla armies, the one thing you have to trust is your sense of smell. Besides, I had never been any good at taking orders. I called the Renamo contact.

I ended up getting to know a number of Renamo leaders in three black African countries neighboring Mozambique. They were, however, unable to get me in '83, and again in '84, due to a number of complications, not the least of which was the security problem of white skin. If I were black, they could have slipped me inside easily, but a white man does rather stick out in rural black Africa.

In September of 1984, I spent two weeks along the Mozambique border waiting for a Renamo patrol to come and take me inside. It never came — too much fighting in the area with government troops — and I didn't get in. When I got to Rio de Janeiro I called my White House friend, who told me I was in trouble.

"The president has been given an intelligence report detailing that you entered Mozambique after being warned not to," he said. "The report said you were captured by Frelimo soldiers, who released you because you claimed you were working directly for the White House. What do you have to say?"

I laughed so hard the tears rolled down

**Newest *Soldier of Fortune* camouflage is field-tested by a Renamo soldier.**



my face and I couldn't say anything at all. When I got him to understand that I never stepped across the border although I sure was trying, and that no one with an IQ exceeding 85 could believe such a childish-ly contrived story, it was his turn to laugh. But it was a bitter laugh, for now he knew he had been set up by the Mozambique lobby in the State Department — a lobby desperately seeking support for the communist government of Mozambique and possessing a literally hysterical hostility to Renamo.

This hostility seems bizarre only if one thinks the purpose of the State Department is to diplomatically defend the national interests of the United States and to diplomatically uphold the moral values for which America stands. The mystery vanishes by never forgetting that the State Department is a bureaucracy — and the primary purpose of any bureaucracy is to perpetuate and enhance itself.

State has evidently convinced itself that it will be a wonderfully prestigious feather in its bureaucratic cap for it to “wean away” (State’s own phrase) the communist ruler of Mozambique, Samora Machel, from the Soviets into the “American camp” with its great diplomatic skills and promises of vast foreign aid, bank loans and IMF credits — which is, of course, precisely what we need: another blood-stained dictator on our side.

What I finally was able to do in 1984 was interview Afonso Dhlakama by radio from a neighboring country in southern Africa. When I asked him about this effort of State’s, he called it “a very foolish and naive dream.” Such dreams have become characteristic of State’s outlook toward the world.

Jonas Savimbi [leader of the UNITA guerrillas in Angola] once told me that “It is the Third World that has to give the West the courage to oppose the Soviet Union and stand up for its ideals, not the other way around — to provide a cure for what Solzhenitsyn calls ‘The Western Disease.’” Nowhere is this disease more pervasive and advanced than within the U.S. State Department.

The two most pronounced symptoms of the disease, which the foreign service establishment chronically exhibits when dealing with the Soviet Union and its allies, are terminal naivete and terminal testicular atrophy. And nowhere are these symptoms more fulminant than in State’s policy toward Mozambique and Dhlakama’s Mozambique National Resistance.

The son of a paramount chief of the Changane-Ndau tribe, Afonso Dhlakama was born on New Year’s Day in 1953 at the town of Chiba Bava in Sofala province. At age 17, Afonso was recruited by his uncle Samuel to join Frelimo. It was March of 1972 (Samuel Dhlakama is presently with the ministry of health in Maputo), and Afonso had just deserted from the Portuguese colonial army. He had been conscripted the year before after finishing school at the Zobue Catholic Mission Seminary in Tete province.

Frelimo had been formed by a uniting of



**Losers don't laugh. Author notes that morale among Renamo troops is at an all-time high in light of their military successes against Frelimo.**

three Mozambique nationalist movements, MANU of Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, UDE-NAMO of Adelino Gwambe and Fanuel Mahluza, and UNAMI of the Rev. Urias Simango, in June 1962, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with Mondlane as its leader. An armed campaign against Portuguese colonial rule was initiated in 1964.

Both Mondlane — a U.S.-educated physician and official with the United Nations — and Frelimo’s military commander, Filipe Magaia, were opposed to Marxism, and were particularly suspicious of the Soviets. A rivalry developed between Magaia and Samora Machel, a stridently fanatic Maoist who had joined Frelimo in 1963. In October 1966, Machel had his supporters murder Magaia, whereupon he assumed Magaia’s position. When a pro-Soviet faction of Frelimo led by Marcellino dos Santos assassinated Mondlane on 3 February 1969, Machel switched from Maoist to Soviet Marxist, becoming, with Soviet backing, the overall political and military leader of Frelimo. The liberation movement was transformed into a “Revolutionary Vanguard,” and any leaders still

clinging to Mondlane’s original goals of pluralistic democratic tolerance, and not espousing Soviet Marxism-Leninism, were either killed or expelled.

The Soviet connection was well-hidden from teenage recruits like Dhlakama, who joined Frelimo to fight for an independent and democratic Mozambique, free from Portuguese rule. Afonso received his military training at Nachingwa in southern Tanzania and was sent to Frelimo’s Marrupa Central Base in Niassa province in July 1973. From there he was promoted to company commander at Cuengwere Base, in Niassa. Independence came in June 1975, with the communist government of Vasco Goncalves in Lisbon — having seized power in a coup the previous year — eager to turn Mozambique over to Soviet-sponsored Frelimo. Dhlakama was appointed head of logistics for the Frelimo army in Sofala province, and from his vantage point in Beira for the ensuing two years saw that his country had not gained independence at all, but had merely switched from being a colony of Portugal to being a colony of the Soviet Union.

And being a Soviet colony was unimaginably worse. Machel’s attempt to transform the country into a Soviet Marxist society resulted in a “Reign of Red Terror” that paralleled on a smaller scale the one the

Khmer Rouge was conducting at the same time in Cambodia. The Mozambican people — exhausted and desperate for the peace and freedom Frelimo promised them — discovered that Samora Machel was Africa's answer to Pol Pot.

Shortly after independence, Machel instituted a Campaign Against Prostitution and Banditry. The first wave of arrests netted 15,000 people. One of those arrested was Antonio Isaac of Lourenço Marques (the capital, subsequently renamed by Machel as Maputo).

"In November 1975," he has testified, "on coming out of the cinema, I found Frelimo trucks outside. Near the lorry, soldiers of the people's militia could be seen arresting almost everyone coming out of the cinema. People without any documents were arrested for vagrancy and those with their identification papers were accused of being 'reactionaries.' I did not have papers with me, so I was taken in as a vagrant."

The Mozambican people were told by Machel that he had uncovered countless "enemies of the people" in their midst, entire classes of them in fact. These were, according to Machel, the internal bourgeois, the reactionary, the imperialist, and the colonial agent. In order to correctly "mobilize and organize the masses," Machel told them, these enemies must be ruthlessly rooted out. It was a citizen's "revolutionary duty" to inform the government who enemies were, even if they were members of one's family. Thousands were denounced as former agents of PIDE, the Portuguese colonial secret service.

When jails overflowed, Machel set up a number of "re-education centers" — seven in Niassa province alone. These were concentration camps that Machel called "laboratories for the transformation of man." The camps were run by SNASP (the Popular National Security Service), trained and organized by East Germans, and which also operated the "People's Revolutionary Military Tribunals," responsible for filling up the laboratories with "infiltrados" (fifth-columnists) and "counterrevolutionary parasites."

Antonio Isaac was sent to the Mitelela camp near Lichinga in Niassa province, where he, as all other prisoners, did forced manual labor from 0400 to 1700 every day, with one single meal per day at 1400 consisting of filthy corn porridge and rotten beans (his description is eerily similar to the Khmer Rouge camps). Anyone attempting to escape, seen as lazy or insubordinate, or incurring the displeasure of the camp commanders for any reason was summarily shot.

Most infamous of all the concentration camps set up by Machel were the extermination centers of Chaiamite and Ruarua in Cabo Delgado province. The Rev. Daniel Sithole, Deacon of the Sao Leonardo Catholic Parish at Mussorize, Manica province, was sentenced to Ruarua for protesting the arrest of his parishioners. His portrait of conditions at Ruarua, or "Mozambique D" is chilling.

"Every morning, instead of breakfast, prisoners get six strokes of the cane each. At noon they get 12 and before retiring to cells at night they get 20 strokes of the cane. This is done every day.

"When the security men come to inspect the underground cells, they usually point the muzzles of their guns to the cells and just open fire against anybody they choose to kill. Fellow prisoners are not supposed to remove the body without the order to do so. The body remains in the cell for two to three days when order comes from the command post to remove the dead body. The body is not buried. It is taken and thrown away near the camp. The decomposing flesh is eaten by hyenas and other wild animals at night."

As the Rev. Sithole reports, the skulls and bones of thousands of Machel's victims are today strewn over the plain at Ruarua, bleaching in the African sun. Intelligence estimates state that between 200,000 to 300,000 Mozambicans have been imprisoned in Machel's gulag, in which well over 75,000 have died.

This was not the society Dhlakama fought to achieve. He looked around in horror at Machel's social engineering with its camps and the wholesale attempt to destroy the tribal way of life by forcing villagers into communal farms (similar to Julius Nyerere's failed *Ujamaa* system in Tanzania). He saw the Khmer Rouge policy of forcing thousands of "unemployed parasites" and "marginals" in the cities into completely undeveloped remote countryside, dumping them into an area of straight bush to build a

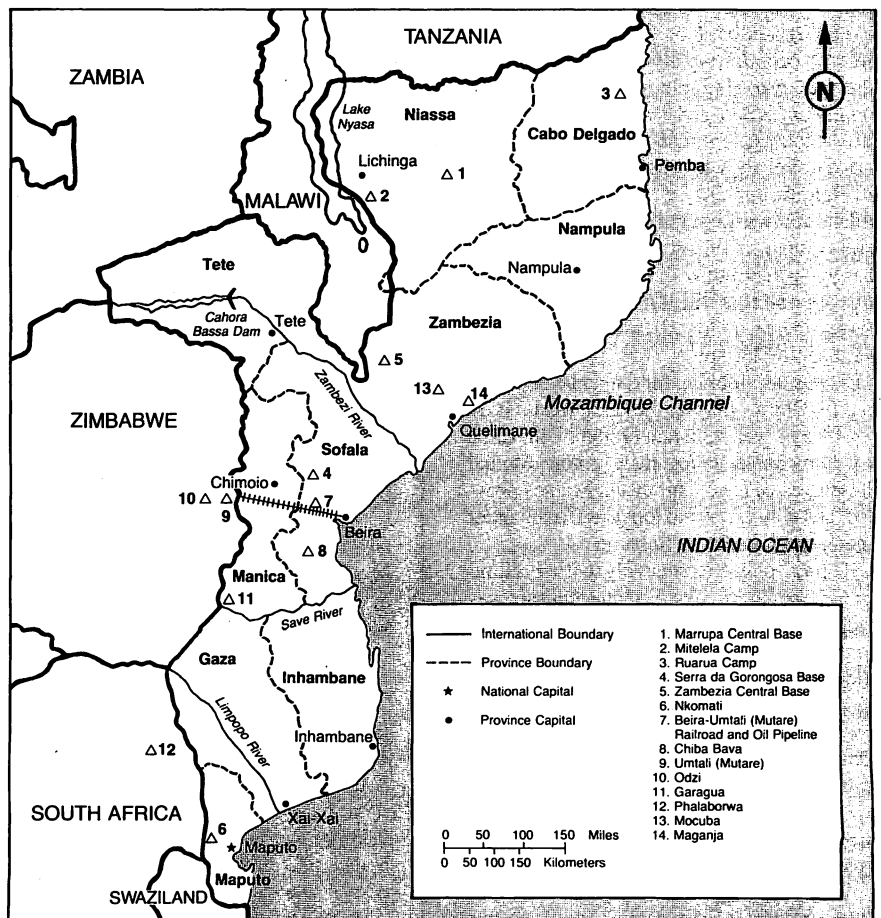
village and farm land from scratch.

Dhlakama was all too well aware of the East German spy and informer network which kept anyone from trusting a fellow citizen, even a brother or a son, and the endless and ubiquitous force-feeding of childish Marxist propaganda. Behind it all, he saw the Soviet Russians running everything, ordering Mozambicans around as chattel — a situation far worse than it ever was under the Portuguese.

Dhlakama decided he had to fight again.

But how and with whom? It was then he decided to find Orlando Cristina, a white Portuguese whose family had been in Mozambique for generations (Portugal first established a colony in Mozambique in 1500). Cristina had been a big game hunter and guide in Niassa province. He joined Frelimo in Tanzania in 1963, as did many white Mozambicans who sympathized with the democratic ideals of Dr. Mondlane (Machel would later accuse him of being a PIDE agent, but a contact of mine who was his personal assistant for many years is sure this is false). Becoming increasingly disaffected from Frelimo after Mondlane's murder, any remaining illusions he had were shattered during the months of transition government prior to independence when Frelimo got its first taste of government power.

Machel's first project was the systematic elimination of the black and white middle class of Mozambique. So many knocks on the door late at night came at the residences of businessmen or property owners — with



the man being told he was an enemy of the people, shot dead on the spot, and his family told his (and their) property now belonged to the government — that Frelimo terrorized 90 percent of the 260,000 Portuguese settlers into a mass exodus from Mozambique back to Portugal.

Of all those whose property was expropriated, perhaps the wealthiest was the industrialist Jorge Jardim, whom Cristina had come to know while acting as his guide on big game hunts. Jardim agreed to finance Christina in setting up a radio station called *Voz da Africa Livre*, the Voice of Free Africa, which started broadcasting from Rhodesia in June 1976. Since Frelimo was giving sanctuary and support to Robert Mugabe's and Joshua Nkomo's guerrillas operating from Mozambique into Rhodesia, Prime Minister Ian Smith was happy to allow Portuguese radio broadcasts from his country denouncing the communist tyranny in Mozambique.

(Smith was, in fact, conducting a border war with Frelimo. His Selous Scouts and SAS troops conducted extensive cross-border anti-terrorist raids, while Angolan-born Colonel Costa Campos led a group of Mozambican refugees called the *Flechas* [Arrows], who were responsible for a number of atrocities upon Mozambican villagers near the Rhodesian border. Campos attempted to recruit Cristina, who subsequently disagreed with his methods, and dissociated himself from Campos.)

After listening to the clandestine broadcasts of Voice of Free Africa, Dhlakama made his decision. Gaining a safe-conduct pass to Maskeponda on the border under the pretense of initiating a plan to stop Frelimo deserters escaping out of the country (a document signed and stamped by Frelimo Party headquarters was necessary for anyone to travel anywhere in Mozambique), he left Beira in June of 1977. Frelimo claimed Dhlakama was caught embezzling army funds and cashiered; totally fabricated charges in keeping with its policy of calling any opponent a thief, robber, counter-revolutionary, colonial fascist, imperialist agent, and CIA spy.)

He was also looking for a man he had once met in Beira, hoping he had made it to Rhodesia as well. Cristina brought Dhlakama to a remarkable young man, André Matadi Matsangaise, from Chirawa in Manica province, and who is revered today as Commander André, the founder of Renamo.

Having fought extensively with Frelimo against the Portuguese, Matsangaise was assigned to the Engineering Corps in Beira upon independence. Shortly thereafter, however, Matsangaise, a charismatic and fiery orator, began denouncing the new regime for bringing a dictatorship instead of democracy to his country. When he tried to organize a protest movement among his fellow soldiers, he was arrested and sent to the Sacuza concentration camp in Sofala province.

When he escaped from Sacuza in October 1976, Matsangaise managed to gather

## REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

Portuguese colonialism in Africa ended on 25 April 1974 when the Lisbon government was overthrown by a socialist military coup. Along with other holdings in Africa — notably Angola — Mozambique was granted full independence the next year.

And everyone lived happily ever after, right? Wrong, as usual.

In the endless, vicious cycle of tribalism, guerrilla war, Marxism, and factional jockeying for power, Mozambique was already headed for trouble well before its independence from Portugal.

In the early 1960s, the fervor of black nationalism caught fire in Mozambique resulting in the formation of three movements dedicated to independence. A meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in June 1962 coalesced the three organizations into FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) under Dr. Eduardo Mondlane.

Mondlane proved to be an adept leader, and in the face of Portuguese refusal to grant full autonomy, he initiated guerrilla warfare in early 1964. His primary base of operations — today a RENAMO stronghold — was the Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique. Cabo Delgado borders Tanzania and Malawi, and was never controlled by the Portuguese.

Frelimo's early ventures against the 60,000 Portuguese army troops stationed in Mozambique were only marginally successful, but enough so to begin to fray the threads of Portuguese control.

And, as is so often the case, internal dissent also nearly unwrapped the fabric which bound Frelimo. Many senior leaders defected to the Portuguese, and jealousy over control broke out into internecine strife. Mondlane, although a fierce black nationalist, was also unwilling to accept Marxism as the philosophy for his new government. He was assassinated by bomb in 1969 in Dar es Salaam by pro-Soviet members of Frelimo, and final control of the organization fell to Samora Moises Machel in 1970.

Machel, a Maoist turned expedient Marxist-Leninist, quickly went to the Soviets for logistical support — which was just as quickly forthcoming. Coupled with the Portuguese government's indecision over Mozambique's future, Portuguese army conscripts — most of whom had no desire to fight in Africa in the first place — rarely went on offensive operations and preferred to laager in defensive bases. This allowed the 7,000-man Frelimo force, in many cases by Portuguese default, to gain control of northern and central Mozambique by the early '70s.

Concurrently, the Rhodesian civil war had spilled over into Mozambique's western common border area. Machel, supporting the Soviet/Red Chinese-backed Patriotic Front (the strange-bedfellows coalition of black Rhodesian nationalists) allowed Robert Mugabe's military wing, ZANLA, to operate from bases inside Mozambique against Rhodesian forces. In return, Mugabe promised to aid Frelimo's fight against the Portuguese.

Just prior to Portugal's divestiture of Mozambique in 1975, it became increasingly hard to tell the players without a score card. Frelimo was receiving logistical support and military advisers from the Soviets, East Germans, Bulgarians and Cubans — as well as from such "neutral" countries as Sweden — and tactical assistance in the form of half-trained ZANLA troops. Arrayed against this force was the crumbling Portuguese colonial army supported in part by Rhodesian security forces, and clandestinely by South Africa. The Rhodesians were more interested in dismantling Mugabe's ZANLA military structure, but Machel's Frelimo often became prime targets when they operated with or supported Rhodesian terrorists.

**Dhlakama's Renamo is gaining momentum throughout Mozambique. A large-scale attack on Renamo headquarters in mid-1985 ended in defeat — for demoralized FPLM and supporting Zimbabwe National Army troops.**



AFONSO DHLAKAMA

Comandante da Resistência Nacional Moçambicana e  
Supremo das forças da RENAMO

The overthrow of the Lisbon government on 25 April rendered this convoluted guerrilla war irrelevant when Machel and his party were eventually installed as the *legitimate* government.

Machel's first order of business was to close the border with Rhodesia, thereby cutting off the desperately needed rail and oil link from Sofala (Beira) to Umtali, and institute his "Revolutionary Guard" policy of purging the colonial Portuguese and native black middle class, as well as sincere nationalists who were opposed to his Marxist policies.

## Nkomati stated that the South Africans would discontinue their support for Renamo...

In response to Machel's reign of terror, André Matsangaisse—Commander André—aided by senior members of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Office (CIO), gathered disaffected black and Portuguese Mozambicans and formed Renamo—*Resistência Nacional de Moçambicana*, or the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR) in early 1977.

Renamo operated against Machel's military arm, the FPLM (Popular Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique), from the farming community of Odzi just inside the Rhodesian border, and were trained and supported by the Rhodesian Special Air Service and CIO.

By early 1979 Renamo forces had grown to nearly 1,000 men. The decision was made to move their headquarters inside Mozambique to the Serra da Gorongoza mountains, the idea being that popular support for the movement could only be gained by working internally with the people.

Renamo's ranks quickly swelled as Machel's harsh political, military and socioeconomic programs drove the country toward ruin. Yet as Renamo began to seriously threaten Marxist domination of their country, Rhodesian support for Renamo ended shortly after Mugabe came to power in March 1980, leaving a temporary gap in the lines of supply. The gap was quickly filled by the South Africans who continued to pump military aid and advisers—many of whom were former Rhodesian SAS—into Renamo camps.

Renamo went from strength to strength in the early 80s under the leadership of Afonso Dhlakama (Commander André had been killed during an attack on a Frelimo camp in late 1979), but suffered a further setback in 1984 with

the signing of the United States-backed Nkomati Accord between Mozambique and South Africa.

In essence, Nkomati stated that the South Africans would discontinue their support for Renamo in return for Machel's pledge that Mozambique would not be used to provide bases for anti-South African ANC terrorist groups. This agreement has been honored to a degree by both sides. ANC activities have been curtailed in Mozambique, and the South Africans deny that they still support Renamo.

Renamo does, however, continue to receive some aid from Middle Eastern and other African sources. With increasing attacks against FPLM forces, Renamo's supply reserve has also been bolstered with a variety of captured equipment, and they continue to receive support from the people of Mozambique.

Dhlakama's Renamo, barring any unforeseen sleight-of-hand from the U.S. State Department, appears to have a good chance of winning their battle against Machel's Marxist dictatorship. Current intelligence estimates put Renamo forces at between 15,000 and 20,000 combat troops versus some 30,000 FPLM and Soviet bloc advisers.

Morale among FPLM troops is at an all-time low, and defections to Renamo have become common. Such is the state of Machel's armed forces that they are unable to defend the huge Cabora Bassa hydroelectric dam in the north (Portugal has offered to send a specially trained security force to protect its investment in the dam), and require the assistance of 20,000 Zimbabwean National Army troops to protect the oil and railroad supply line from Sofala (Beira) in Mozambique to Mutare (Umtali) in Zimbabwe.

Mozambique, as much as South Africa, holds the key to the future of southern Africa. A democratic Mozambique, in concert with an Angola under UNITA's Jonas Savimbi, could control Marxist Zimbabwe's supply lines—forcing Mugabe and his successors to toe a more pro-Western line.

Should this situation occur within the relatively near future—and the potential for it exists—much of the pressure on strategic South Africa would be lifted, giving them the time and border security necessary to formulate a reasonable *internal* settlement.

Renamo is the linchpin to the entire process. Should Machel triumph, Zimbabwe's supply lines to the sea will be secured—as will be the Soviet bloc influence in both Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

If Renamo wins, however, the spreading Red dawn over southern Africa may never extend beyond a wishful glint in the eyes of Soviet policy-makers.

—John Coleman



Bush fighters make do with what they have. Captured ComBloc weapons and expedient rafts still outflank the Soviets' best efforts to subjugate Mozambique.

together a small band of disaffected Frelimo soldiers, leading them on a daring raid against Sacuza camp the following April to free his fellow former prisoners. The raid was successful and the camp overrun, whereupon he asked the liberated inmates to join him in a Second Struggle for National Liberation: "Frelimo has sold out the revolution to the Soviet colonialists. Now we must fight for democracy and the independence of Mozambique all over again. Are you with me?" When they all shouted yes, the Mozambique National Resistance was born.

Matsangaisse went to find the people behind the Voice of Free Africa and ask them for help. "You are doing much talking," he told Cristina when he met him, "and what your radio says is true. But we are willing not just to talk but to fight, to take up arms against Frelimo. Will you help us?" Cristina got Jardim and other wealthy *retornados* (Portuguese Mozambicans who had fled to Portugal) to finance the purchase of arms, supplies, and the setting up of a sanctuary training camp at Odzi, just inside Rhodesia. It was as this was getting underway that Dhlakama arrived. A strong bond quickly developed between Dhlakama and Matsangaisse, and soon he became the latter's second in command.

There are conflicting reports regarding to what extent the fledgling resistance was trained by the Rhodesians. In an error-riddled paper on "The MNR" (prepared for the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown) Africa scholar Colin Legum claims the role to be extensive and the argument is often made that the MNR or Renamo was created and totally controlled by the Rhodesian military. Yet in a book cited by Legum as a source, *The Selous Scouts*, by Colonel Ron Reid-Daly, commander of the Rhodesian Army's elite counterinsurgency Selous Scouts, there is no mention of the "MNR" in the entire text.

Continued on page 117



# STARLIGHT TRAINING CENTER

## Civvies Get Quick Taste of Boot Camp

Text & Photos by James L. Pate



**S**TRAINING his eyes to cut human shape from elusive shadows, Richard squinted in exhaustion, clutching a Colt AR-15 and waiting with his fellow students to ambush another patrol. The next instant he was back at his white collar job, trying to sign papers and buzzing his secretary because his pen wouldn't write. With the buzz in his brain of an imaginary intercom, he shook himself back to the clinging reek of ripped, sweat-soaked cammies. He realized he was fumbling to write in the dirt with a small stick.

Uncontrollably, the ranger course student dozed again, returning to the suburban New York office desk from which he heads data processing for a large, well-known corporation. Reaching for a sheaf of letters to sign, the crackle of dry leaves once again woke him. Filtered through brambles, briars and scrub oaks above, dappled moonlight danced through his fingers as Richard groped in the leafy duff for paperwork that wasn't there.

Six days with little rest — only an hour or

**Claflin demonstrates sentry removal technique.**

two of slumber here and there in the final days — were definitely taking their toll, Richard later admitted as he recalled his semiconscious hallucinations during the home stretch at Starlight Training Center Inc., a private paramilitary school.

When he heard this and other stories of just how far he could push his students before they dropped, Harry Claflin, Starlight's owner and director, stroked his mustache and pointed beard, then gave a devious grin of satisfaction. "What you've got — on that — is this incredible ability for the body to go a lot further and do a lot more than you think it can," he explained. "We push people here to their natural limits, and then try to redefine and expand those limits. This makes a person stronger, more confident. That's our motto here: strength through confidence."

In 15 years of running Starlight, which is

spread over more than a hundred acres of rolling farmland in southwest Missouri, Claflin has heard all the adrenalin rush and total exhaustion tales before. Hell, he's *lived* them all before, during three Vietnam tours in Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance.

Harry and I met in El Salvador. I'd also been out in the jungle with him in Nicaragua. His bushcraft expertise evoked my respect and admiration, besides which it always made me feel a little safer when the bad guys were nearby. But I'd also seen how hard he can push trainees. Harry can be tough.

I'm a career journalist and Harry's a professional soldier, so he didn't trust me at first. But after he got to know me a little bit, I think Harry decided I was a genuine slimeball. So I wasn't exactly elated in August when I called the office from Jacksonville, N.C., where I was on assignment at Camp Lejeune. Executive Editor Bill Guthrie told me I wouldn't be coming straight back to Boulder.

"RKB wants you to stop in Missouri and take Harry Claflin's ranger course. Dr. Death says it'll be good for you," Bill said, referring to our beloved publisher. "Remember: what does not kill you will make you strong. You know. No pain, no gain."

Guthrie laughed, then paused to get serious. "And don't forget. No copy, no paycheck."

Aye aye, sir. Accordingly, before leaving Jacksonville, I dropped by to see Pete Wensil at Saigon Sam's, his surplus store across from 8th Marine headquarters, to pick up some gear I'd need. Pete quickly filled the bill. And I was off to Starlight Training Center, in RKB's mind to make a minimally small downpayment on my military dues.

Harry met me at the Joplin airport. He bears a noticeable resemblance to someone he really doesn't care for, Nicolai Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin. I decided under the circumstances not to mention that to him. But if it's a sin to oppose communism, Harry will be the first to tell you that he's going straight to Hell when he dies. He's fought communist-backed insurgency

*Continued on page 114*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Ranger school is not the only type of instruction offered by Starlight Training Center Inc. Also on the curriculum are courses in basic firearms handling, defensive combat shooting, long-range rifle shooting, survival weapons and their use, survival techniques and military-style basic and advanced parachuting.

For further information on training schedules, programs and their costs, write: Harry Claflin, Director, Starlight Training Center Inc., Rt. 2 Box 68, Liberal, MO 64762



**ABOVE:** Special Forces Major John Sharp, left, teaches demo class to Starlight students.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Author, left, and fellow squad members pose before going on patrol. Photo: Harry Clafin

**BELOW:** Instructor Larry Bozic demonstrates water infiltration technique with an M16A1 carbine.



# CZ 83

## Czech Pistol Checks Out

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



COMMUNIST Czechoslovakia's latest entry in the field of small arms is a so-called pocket pistol: the CZ 83. It was initially introduced in caliber 7.65mm (.32 ACP), but SOF obtained the first specimen imported to the U.S. chambered for the more potent .380 ACP (9mm Kurz) cartridge. Nothing revolutionary here — just your basic PPK with every feature Walther should have added years ago.

Modern Czech arms-making commenced with the formation of Ceskoslovenska Zbrojovka Akciova Spolecnost of Brno in 1922. Owned by the Czech government, Skoda Works and its employees (another Workers' Paradise), their first serious effort was the ZB Model 1926 light machine gun. An application of principles used in weapons such as the Berthier, BAR, Hotchkiss and Chatelleraut, the ZB 26 moved forward to become the basis for the Bren light machine gun. Over the years the Czechs stayed on the front lines with the Vz 23, 24, 25 and 26 submachine guns, Vz 58 assault rifle, BESA (Vz 37) tank machine gun, Vz 52 LMG, Vz 59 GPMG and CZ 75 pistol (See "CZ 75," SOF, May '84).

Double-action in design, the CZ 83 fires

by blowback without a locked breech. The barrel is permanently pinned to the frame, and with the exception of grip panels and several magazine components, construction is all steel. This said, we begin to depart from the Walther PP/PPK series.

Hard beryl (aluminum beryllium silicate) plating covers the ejector, extractor, magazine catch and some components in the trigger mechanism (disconnect and hammer spring plunger) for wear resistance. Exterior surfaces have been polished only moderately and tool marks abound in a manner reminiscent of small arms manufactured in Europe during World War II. All parts, except those beryl-plated, have been salt blued. The top of the slide has been glass beaded to a matte surface.

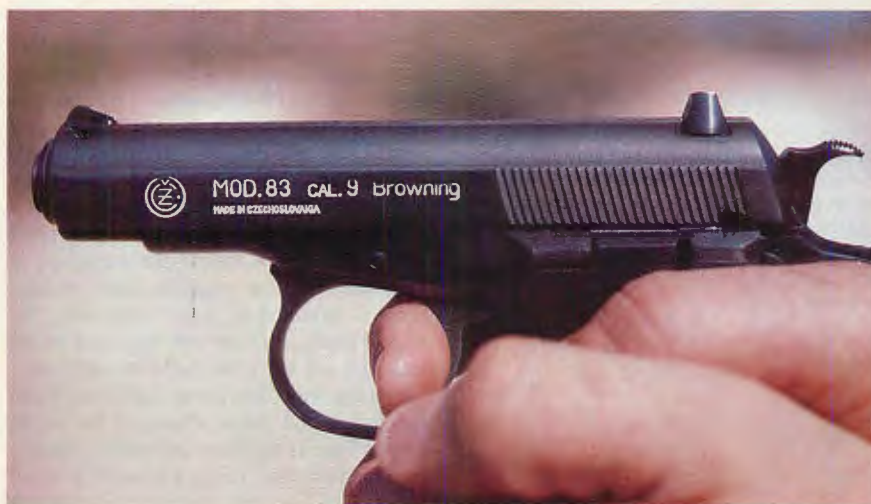
Beware: Future versions may feature a black enamel finish over phosphate. This painted finish now appears on all recently produced CZ 75 pistols — much to the consternation of collectors and shooters alike — and has increased the value of the older blued version by at least \$300.

The immediately obvious difference between the Walther pistols and the CZ 83 is in the grip portion of the frame, which is en-

The CZ 83 is a well-designed, reliable pistol, but is it really a "pocket" pistol?

larged on the CZ to hold a higher-capacity magazine. PPK/S magazines hold seven cartridges in either 7.65mm or 9mm Kurz chamberings. The CZ 83 magazine will carry fifteen 7.65mm rounds or thirteen 9mm Kurz cases. The price we pay is an increase in thickness of 0.125 inches over the PPK/S and a frame which is 0.7 inches longer. With its 3.8-inch six-groove barrel the CZ 83 has an overall length of 6.8 inches (6.1 inches for a PPK/S). Width is 1.4 inches and height five inches. Weight of the CZ 83 with an empty magazine is 26.25 ounces (23 ounces for a stainless-steel PPK/S). When size and weight balloon on pistols of this type, they approach the bulk of the new breed of compact 9mm Parabellum weapons — such as the 12-rd. Smith & Wesson Model 469. Are they really pocket pistols then? (That may depend on the size of your pockets.)

The single-position feed magazine has a steel body and spring accompanied by a plastic follower and an aluminum floorplate which is painted black. The floorplate is



Czechoslovakia's latest advance in the small-arms field is the CZ 83 pistol, shown here in caliber .380 ACP.

0.175 inches thick and serves to extend the front grip area of the frame.

Located where it belongs — to the rear of the trigger guard — the magazine release is ambidextrous: There is a checkered release

button on each side of the trigger guard. This is excellent, except that the grip panels' finger swells rise above the release button and require a grip shift to change magazines. Empty magazines fall cleanly when released.

A slide stop lever, missing on the PP/PPK series, is conveniently located on the left side of the frame where it can be easily

manipulated with the right thumb without altering the grip position. Since the magazine follower is cut for a hold-open, this is a useful device. After a fresh magazine has been inserted into a Walther PP/PPK-series pistol, the slide must be pulled slightly rearward and then released.

Safety mechanisms on the CZ 83 are superb. Spur-shaped, the hammer rebounds to a half-cock position after striking the spring-loaded firing pin. A hammer-block safety has been incorporated; unless the trigger has been pulled completely rearward the hammer cannot move forward to touch the firing pin. A U-shaped, ambidextrous thumb safety wraps around the top of the frame at the rear and pivots on an axis pin through the grip tang. It can be engaged only when the hammer is fully cocked and does not drop the hammer. Thus the CZ 83 can be carried cocked and locked. The manual safety can be disengaged and re-engaged by the thumb without shifting the grip. If desired, the hammer can be carefully lowered to its rebound position and carried in this manner with the first shot fired double-action. Hammer-drop safeties are an abomination and all double-action auto pistols should offer such a cocked-and-locked option.



### CZ 83 SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Caliber</b> .....	9mm Kurz (.380 ACP) or 7.65mm (.32 ACP).
<b>Operation</b> .....	unlocked blowback; semiautomatic only; exposed double-action hammer, can also be carried "cocked and locked" for first-round single-action fire; internal hammer block safety; ambidextrous manual safety and magazine release; slide stop lever; Walther PP/PPK-type disassembly.
<b>Weight, empty</b> .....	26.25 ounces
<b>Length, overall</b> .....	6.8 inches
<b>Barrel length</b> .....	3.8 inches
<b>Height</b> .....	5 inches
<b>Width</b> .....	1.4 inches
<b>Stocks</b> .....	checkered black plastic grip panels with finger swells.
<b>Sights</b> .....	low profile; fixed ramp front with white line; fixed square-notch rear with two white dots.
<b>Finish</b> .....	blued (future versions may be painted).
<b>Magazine</b> .....	staggered box type; single-position feed; 13-rd. capacity in 9mm Kurz, 15-rd. capacity in 7.65mm.
<b>Price</b> .....	approximately \$375 including transportation charges, F.O.B. Toronto, Canada, and U.S. duty.
<b>Manufacturer</b> .....	Agrozet Uhersky Brod, Czechoslovakia.
<b>Distributor</b> .....	Pragotrade, Dept. SOF, 307 Humberline Drive, Rexdale, Ontario M9W 5V1, Canada. Phone: (416) 675-1322.



CZ 83 disassembled. Knockdown is similar to that of the Walther PP/PPK series.

The trigger moves but a modest 0.5 inches between its double- and single-action positions. After removing the slack, the trigger must be drawn through some irritating drag before it lets off in the single-action mode with a final pull weight of four pounds. Double-action pull weight is a remarkably light and consistent 9.5 pounds. The trigger guard is large enough to accommodate the use of gloves.

Black plastic checkered grip panels with finger swells on either side are standard issue. Like the CZ 75, the grip portion of the frame has a slight reverse taper which provides a grip-to-frame angle that enhances the pistol's natural pointing characteristics.

A low-profile, ramped front sight has been roll-pinned to the slide. It contains a non-luminescent white stripe designed to mate with two white dots on the square-notch rear sight, which is fitted to a dovetail in the slide and staked in place after factory zeroing. While luminescent dots might be of some use in subdued light, I have never noticed colored dots while firing under stress in the daylight. In any event, these white marks, as well as the red dots on the frame above the manual safety levers, were applied by a shaky hand. A solid, slightly raised rib has been milled into the top of the slide with ten longitudinal grooves, presumably intended to break up heat mirage, but which certainly are no more than cosmetic value in a firearm of this type. The sight radius is five inches.

The CZ 83 comes from the Agrozet Uhersky Brod factory equipped with two magazines, a nylon bore brush, a steel cleaning rod with a screwdriver tip to disassemble the grip panels, a 25-meter test target and a manual written in quaint English.

"Knockdown" (disassembly) is straightforward and proceeds almost in the manner of the Walther PP/PPK series. First, remove the magazine and clear the pistol. Then pull straight out and down on the trigger guard. It will stay down and does not have to be shifted to either side of the frame as with a Walther pistol. Note that you cannot pivot the trigger guard unless the magazine is removed since the magazine catch mechanism is mounted to, and rotates with, the trigger guard. Pull the slide back and lift the rear end off the guide rails on the frame. Move the slide forward to separate it from the barrel and frame. Remove the recoil spring from its position surrounding the barrel. Depress the firing pin with a small punch and slide down the firing-pin stop just as you would with a Colt M1911A1. Withdraw the firing pin and its spring. Using the screwdriver tip on the end of the "gunstick" (cleaning rod), remove the single retaining screw on each grip panel and lift the grip panels up and off. No further disassembly is required or should be attempted by anyone except a competent pistolsmith. Reassemble in the reverse order, remembering not to insert a magazine until the trigger

## CHRONOGRAPH RESULTS: .380 ACP AMMUNITION

Instrumentation: Oehler Model 33 Chronotach with Skyscreen III detectors positioned five feet from muzzle. Ambient temperature, 80 degrees F. All readings in feet per second (fps). Ten shots per lot. Firearm: CZ 83 with 3.8-inch barrel.

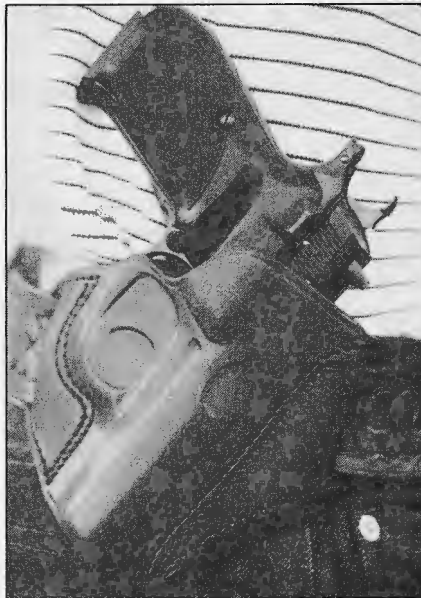
.380 ACP Ammunition	Low Velocity	High Velocity	Extreme Spread	Average	Standard Deviation
Philippine 95-gr. FMJ	951	1,061	110	1,000	30
Winchester 85-gr. Silvertip JHP	1,007	1,066	59	1,036	18
Super Vel 88-gr. JHP	1,064	1,119	55	1,088	16
Smith & Wesson 84-gr. JHP	1,003	1,042	39	1,024	17
Peters 95-gr. FMJ	845	911	66	866	23
Hirtenberg 95-gr. FMJ	971	1,019	48	995	14

guard is back in place. The magazine can be disassembled by depressing the bottom plate attached to the follower spring and sliding off the floorplate.

Designed by John Browning and introduced in 1912 by FN as the 9mm Browning Short, the .380 ACP (Automatic Colt Pistol) cartridge is considered by many to represent the absolute minimum in adequate stopping power for use on human targets. Known in Europe as the 9mm Kurz, "CAL. 9 Browning" is the designation chosen by Agrozet Uhersky Brod to mark the left side of the CZ 83's slide. While acknowledging the origin of the cartridge (unusual for communists, who claim to have invented everything), it's a bit imprecise. In 1903 FN introduced a pistol chambered for the 9mm Browning Long cartridge. It was adopted by Sweden as an official military sidearm. Approximately between the .380 ACP and .38 Colt ACP in power, it was also chambered for pistols manufactured by LeFrancais and Webley & Scott, but never adopted by American manufacturers.

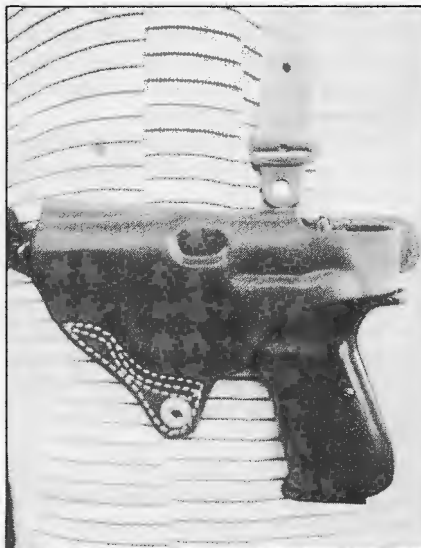
One thousand rounds from six different lots of ammunition were punched through the CZ 83 to evaluate its idiosyncrasies, if any: Philippine Arsenal (SB 85 headstamp) 95-gr. FMJ (full metal jacket); Winchester 85-gr. Silvertip Hollow Point; Super Vel 88-gr. JHP (jacketed hollowpoint); Smith & Wesson 84-gr. JHP; Peters 95-gr. FMJ; and Austrian Hirtenberg 95-gr. FMJ. All of these loadings were chronographed through the CZ 83's 3.8-inch barrel and the results are given in the table above.

The excellent Super Vel loading, unfortunately no longer available, gave the highest average velocity at 1,088 fps. The S&W JHP, nothing more than a full metal jacket projectile with a hole drilled in it (also no longer available), was included merely because this ammunition has caused stoppages in other caliber .380 APC pistols. It did not expand, but fed smoothly through the CZ 83. As expected, the U.S.-manufactured Peters load at 866 fps was almost 130-135 fps slower than either the European Hirtenberg (lowest standard deviation) or Philip-



The CZ 83 remains snug in the open top version of the Alessi Belt Slide holster.

Galco Defender model shoulder rig for the CZ 83 pistol.



pine (highest standard deviation) cartridges. Without doubt, the Winchester Silvertip is your best bet in this caliber. Its serrated aluminum jacket assures dependable expansion and it races out of the CZ 83 barrel at 1,036 fps.

Admirably reliable, the CZ 83 didn't have a single stoppage during the entire 1,000-round test. Balance and handling characteristics are superb. With a full load of 14 cartridges, the CZ 83 weighs more than 30 ounces. As a consequence, felt recoil is mild and the hit potential is high at the expected engagement distances for this type of firearm. With its fixed barrel, the CZ 83 delivered consistent two-inch 10-shot groups at 15 feet from the offhand position with all of the ammunition tested.

Now there are only two holsters available for this pistol and fine ones they are. Lou Alessi's custom concealment holsters are famous for quality and their use by Jerry Ahern's fictional character, John Rourke, in "The Survivalist" series. Lou makes an open top version of his well-known Belt Slide holster for the CZ 83 which sells for \$39. Made from eight-ounce shoulder cowhide and sewn with 200-lb. drop-test nylon cord, all the stress points are double-stitched for strength and endurance. Alessi's holsters are wet-molded and boned by hand (a whalebone or ivory tool is used to highlight the pistol's contours to increase the holster's retention capabilities). Lou's Belt Slide concealment holster is made for all auto pistols, large and small, and is available in either cordovan or black. Belt loops are cut to fit a 1¼-inch heavy leather belt. Alessi believes a rig's ability to hold a pistol snug against the body is a function of a proper belt. Send \$3 to Alessi Custom Concealment Holsters, Dept. SOF, 2465 Niagara Falls Blvd., Tonawanda, NY 14150 for a copy of Lou's catalog.

Galco Gun Leather (formerly Jackass Leather Co.) sells an excellent shoulder holster for the CZ 83. Using premium saddle leather split to eight ounces per square

*Continued on page 112*

# BATS, BUGS & BLISTERS

## Is the Jungle Really Neutral?

by Mick Doyle

**T**ALES of the deep, dark jungle have lured adventurers from the comfort of civilization since before Stanley set out in search of Livingstone. There's something about the jungle that spells adventure. But don't let all the tales of glamour fool you — the jungle is a mean, hard place. You can die in there.

Since the Vietnam War, U.S. soldiers have gotten much of their jungle experience at the Environmental Training Facility (ETF) of the Jungle Operations Training Center (JOTC), affectionately called "the Zoo" by those who know it. Named Fort Sherman, this area has the best zoo in the whole of Panama and within its confines is a huge collection of some of the best samples of flora and fauna the jungle has to offer — like *big cats* and *big snakes*. It's perfect for familiarizing JOTC students with the reality of jungle adventure. And a really first class job it does, too.

Panama is blessed with a climate that

produces buckets of rain (200-plus inches a year), stifling humidity (usually in the 85-percent-plus bracket), and intolerable temperatures (usually 85-plus). All of this can mean only one thing: jungle.

Rivers abound — a natural occurrence considering the constant rain — and it is the unwritten rule of the jungle that wise men treat all rivers as if they were as deep as they are wide. The Chagres River on Fort Sherman's boundary is an average of 100 feet wide and up to 80 feet deep. You see? Wise men speak the truth.

Don't get overconfident and think that if you can see the bottom of a little stream, you can wade across — that would be silly. It might just be a false floor of mud: 15 to 20 feet deep. If you get into that mud, you're gonna sink, and if you stay under, you're gonna drown.

Swamps. There are two types: freshwater swamp and tidal or saltwater swamp, commonly referred to as mangrove swamp. The latter stinks like a sewer and features rotting vegetation and the usual deep mud. Thick vegetation and tangled roots are a serious obstacle to movement.

The Mohinga Swamp near Fort Sherman is the only swamp in the world that glows a bright orange at night — do *not* go into the Mohinga Swamp. In the Mohinga you cannot see your hand in front of your face — and that's during the day. But don't despair, if you are lost near Fort Sherman at night and find yourself in deep mud which has a distinct odor, and everything around you starts to glow orange — then you are *not* lost. You're in the Mohinga Swamp.

God help you.

The golden frog delivers the most deadly and fastest-acting natural poison found anywhere in the world.



ABOVE: Vampire bats don't usually cause great blood loss, but they carry disease, including rabies.

The jungle at Sherman is single, double and triple canopy, very dense vegetation and the terrain is rugged. There are only two kinds — up and down, or down and up. If you ever do find your feet on level ground, don't get too excited: it must be a swamp.

The sum of rugged terrain and heavy rainfall equals massive erosion, deep ravines and recent hill masses that often fail to show up on the map. Since maps for Panama are about 25 years old, what you see on the map is not necessarily what you get on the ground. Remain calm and push on. Good luck.

Just when you thought the terrain was rough, something else comes up. Besides getting from one place to another, you have to worry about staying healthy. Heat stroke presents the most serious threat. The first sign of heat stroke shows up in lack of sweat. Then, if the victim collapses or becomes unconscious, and has symptoms such as headache, dizziness, fast pulse, nausea, vomiting and mental confusion, you can be sure it's heat stroke.

Only fast work and a quick wit will save the life of a buddy with heat stroke. He can't do it himself — his temperature regulators have been damaged and his temperature may rise as high as 108 degrees F. Reduce his body heat immediately. Immerse him in the coldest water available — like the





nearest river. If you can't get him into the water, at least get him into the shade, strip him, pour water over his entire body and cool him by fanning. If you're out of water and none is available, your last course of action is to piss on your buddy, then fan his body. Don't worry, he'll thank you later. Sure, your urine is hot — about 98 — but your buddy could be 108.4. Urine will immediately become air temperature, and then remove heat from the victim's body by evaporation, lowering the chances of brain damage. He may stop breathing, his heart may stop — begin CPR and stay at it till he comes around. Casevac him, fast.

Heat exhaustion is similar to heat stroke, but less severe. Like heat stroke it is caused by excessive loss of water and salt from the body. Treat him by laying him in the coolest shade you can, and loosen his clothes. If he's conscious, have him drink three to five quarts of cool water and eat all the salt in his C-rations with his meal.

Heat cramps. These are painful muscle spasms, usually in the legs, arms and abdomen. Cramps are due directly to the loss of water and salt from the body. Treat as for heat exhaustion.

Prickly heat. In the jungle the temperatures are often as high as 110 so in this environment you can easily suffer from an annoying stinging and itching sensation on the skin caused by a malfunction of the sweat glands and an imbalance of electrolyte levels, again due to a lack of water and salt in your body. Rub Tetracane from the medic's bag on the affected areas of skin, drink plenty of water and eat all your C-ration salt. Next time, be more careful — prickly heat is easy to prevent.

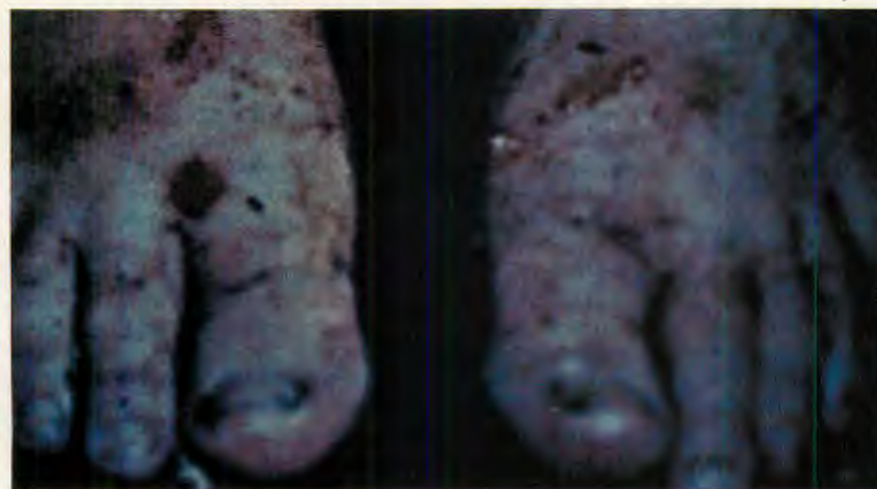
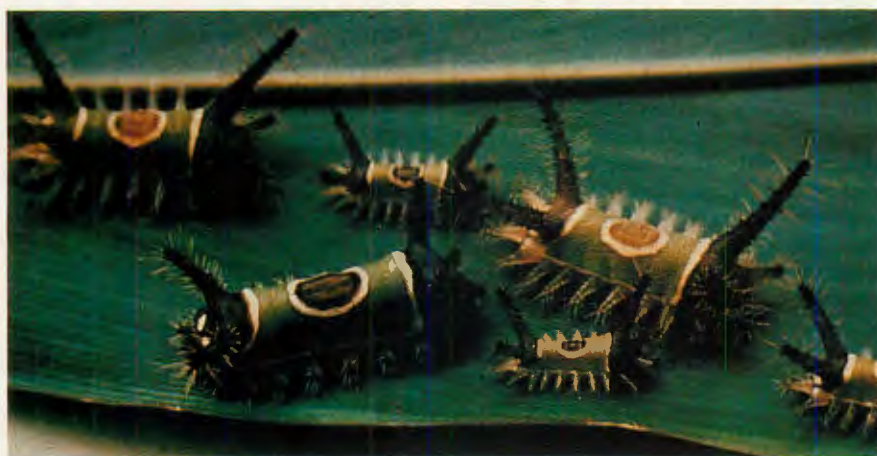
Heat rash is another friend you may meet in Panama. It is caused by wearing tight, wet clothing and tight equipment. The prevention is to wear loose but comfortable clothing, adjust your equipment so that it rides free or fits loose and comfortable and change into a dry uniform whenever possible.

You may have noticed that all the problems mentioned so far are caused by the sun and heat. Down here you don't get the same friendly variety of weather found in Florida or California. Here it's often your worst enemy. With that in mind, I shouldn't have to remind you not to use suntan products — use a sunscreen. Using suntan oil is like stepping under a magnifying glass and, in Panama, you will cook. Sunburn should be punishable under military law since there is no excuse for it if you watch yourself.

In the jungle, water is the key to survival. Plan on drinking between nine and 14 quarts a day. Don't bitch about it weighing too much; if it was beer you'd soon find a place for it. Along with staying out of the sun, water can make life much more bearable down here.

**CENTER LEFT: Saddleback caterpillars are pretty, but poisonous.**

**LEFT: A week of wet feet in the jungle results in immersion foot.**





Now, we *have* said that water is the cure-all for heat disorders. True. But consider all surface water in the jungle to be contaminated. The only water in the jungle that's safe to drink without purification is the water you get from roots or vines. That water has already been cleaned by mother nature. Don't try to store plant water in a canteen because it will spoil. You have to drink it fresh.

Now for some other problems that can make life miserable. Jock itch is prevalent among those idiots who persist in wearing underwear in the jungle. It is a fungal growth and this clothing is a perfect breeding ground for bacteria, virus, and other jungle growth. After all, your underwear has all the prerequisites — it's dark in there, it's moist, it's warm and there's plenty of food for the growth of these irritants. When you urinate a couple of drops will leak out, no matter how much you shake it before you stick it back in your underwear. It's a little menagerie for tropical germs.

When you sneak out from your position at night and defecate, no matter how much you wipe before you pull up your underwear, you're going to acquire a racing stripe on the back of your shorts. More food for the varmint. And that is why soldiers who know what they are doing in the jungle don't wear jocks in the tropics; they pack 'em away until they leave for the States.

I'm sure you've heard of this one: athlete's foot. Nearly everyone in the U.S. has had it at one time or another. Athlete's foot is never that funny, but in the jungle it's worse. Once again the area it infests is dark, moist and warm. Prevention is simple — change into clean, dry socks whenever possible. If you don't have clean, dry socks, take the dirty socks and turn them inside out, exposing them to the sun. That's all it takes to kill that fungus. Whenever possible let your boots air out, expose your feet to the sun, wash, dry and powder your feet, rubbing the powder in with your hands insuring that the powder gets in between your toes. Inspect your feet at least once every 24 hours.

"When you finish your piss, let it run down your leg — just like nature intended it to do. Let it run into your boot and you won't have to worry about athlete's foot," joked the Jungle Warfare Branch instructor. If you think he was serious, then you have a real problem. Keep those feet dry.

Here's another foot problem — immersion foot. In the nasty environment of the deep jungle it doesn't take long before your boots and feet are wet. And I don't mean damp. It's kind of like vegetating in the bathtub or swimming pool for a long time. The skin on your feet becomes soft, wrinkled, white, tender and prune-like. Then the skin cracks because of the irritation of rubbing against wet boots and socks, and the blood begins to ooze out. The prevention for this is exactly the same as athlete's foot — change those socks.

In the jungle personal hygiene has to be good. It is even more important to comb



**Instructor milks the venom from a fer-de-lance as a demonstration for students at JOTC.**

your hair here than it is back in the Big City. Forget looking pretty; you're looking for head lice and other nasty creatures. Brush your teeth and shave every other day when water is available. If you shave every day your skin will dry out, get rough and break open. Water availability will usually depend on the tactical situation. And when water is limited, you'll want to save it for drinking. Still, wash under your armpits, feet and crotch every day.

Check your body for bugs, too. Be careful — use only unscented soap so the insects don't think you are an exotic food source. Don't wear deodorant, cologne or after-shave; you want to stink like the jungle, not like some flowery food source for bugs.

Speaking of bugs, here's a statistic for you. The flies found in U.S. cities carry about 3,500,000 bacteria. The regular old flies you find out in the jungle only carry about 1,500,000 bacteria. Sounds like good odds, right? Wrong. The bacteria in the jungle is much worse than anything you'll find back home.

When you see a fly buzzing around and he lands on your food, he's eating your food. Not only that, he regurgitates. He pukes right on your food. Flies can't shit, so they puke. And included in his puke is a liquid that turns solid matter into a solution so that he can suck it back up. To vomit the bad shit and suck up the good shit takes but a fraction of a second. If you pay him no mind and continue to eat when he lands on your food, you are eating shit — fly shit. Also, because flies like shit and feed off human and animal feces, they carry fecal matter and fecal bacteria to your food sources.

Once you've eaten it, jungle bacteria will

grow in your stomach and turn you into just another casualty. Aside from the flies the whole jungle environment must be considered to be contaminated. Once you open a packet of MREs or a C-ration can, that food should also be considered contaminated. Eat it immediately. The longer you let it sit, the better will be your chance of getting sick. Eat what you are going to eat, do not save any for later.

When you first arrive in Panama you're probably going to get diarrhea. That MRE shit-paper is not enough; you can use six packets and still have to use your fingers. Remember the importance of rinsing your hands after defecating.

You must bury all your shit, and don't forget the MRE paper — some fools like to dig a hole, take their crap and then decorate the outside of the hole with the paper. That's a bad habit. And peacetime habits are hard habits to break in wartime. If the enemy sees your handiwork he'll check it out, and you're telling him the whole story — what direction you're traveling, whether you are healthy or not, whether you have enough food or water, how many people are in your group, and most importantly, you are telling him that yours is not a disciplined force. All this from a simple shit pile. Once you've buried it, camouflage it.

Shit draws flies, but they're just one type of insect in the jungle. And insects do much more than contaminate food — they carry disease. The best defense against bugs in the jungle is loose comfortable clothing. You don't want to wear skintight clothing because the bugs bite straight through to the skin. Use insect repellent — it's always better than nothing.

Let's look at some of the pests you will encounter. Chiggers. The only real defense against these little buggers is to stay the hell out of the jungle. But if you can't, the best thing to do is pour lots and lots of insect repellent at the ankles — inside as well as outside the socks and cuffs — at the waist and at the cuffs of your sleeves. When they get you, remember, don't scratch. Your fingernails are potential carriers of almost every disease in the jungle and they will find their way into your skin. If you must do something, *rub* the itch with the palm of your hand. And make sure it's clean.

Ants. Most jungle ants are one to three inches in length. They either sting, bite or piss, depositing an acid that hurts like hell. A little bitty ant that you can hardly see can put a 200-pound man into real pain for about three or four hours.

Now think bees. The common bee and — you guessed it — the killer bee. These killer bees are much more aggressive than the bees found in the States — don't piss them off. It doesn't take much. All you have to do is be near them. Now let me tell you something I learned during combat with the killer bees. When they are simply traveling from point A to point B they will generally not fight back, but once they have a hive established they will protect it to the last man . . . I mean the last bee.



The best defense against killer bees is to beat feet out of there, fast. There can be anywhere between 50 to 150,000 bees in that one hive. Do not take cover in water. If you jump in the water, you've screwed up. They're gonna wait for you to come back up and when you do, they want your ass. They'll shoot right down your throat, up your nose, into your ears and in your eyes. And they will sting you. If you are attacked in the water, you're probably going to drown. Stay out of water.

When being chased by killer bees, do not run toward your buddy — it may halve the attacking forces — but your buddy won't like it a bit. The best defense is to run through thick brush because dense foliage tends to confuse the little bastards. If you do get stung, remove the stinger using tweezers — if you've got them — gripping the shaft of the stinger. Do not squeeze the sac at the top of the stinger; that will inject you with the full load of poison.

Beware of wasps. Like the bees, they will get pissed off when you go near their hives. Unlike the bees they can sting you more than once. If a single wasp can catch you 15 times, it will sting you 15 times.

The scorpion has been around for some

**TOP:** Fer-de-lance camouflage works — watch closely for it.

**ABOVE:** Human ears are a favorite target of the vampire bat. These wounds heal slowly and there is always the risk of rabies or infection.

430 million years. He's been around for quite awhile. He's one to three inches long and likes to live in dark, moist places — like your rucksack, your ammo pouches, your pockets and your boots. Many scorpion stings feel mild, you'll hardly notice them. These stings are only a little worse than that of a bee and last for three to four hours. A few scorpions have much worse stings, injecting complex venoms and even nerve toxins. Fortunately, the more dangerous scorpions usually live in arid lands. But any sting is one too many. Shake your clothes and bedrolls before use, and carefully empty your boots every morning. A scorpion will only use the stinger when his life is in danger — like when you try to make him

Even a small scratch from a fer-de-lance's poisonous fangs can break down skin tissue and cause irreparable damage.

share your boot with your foot.

Panama is home to both the black and the brown scorpion. The black scorpion is slightly more poisonous than the brown. But don't worry, unless you're very sick, or very old, or very young, the scorpion will not kill you — unless of course you're allergic.

Here's a real winner. The saddleback caterpillar lives in many varieties of banana trees and looks like a cheap can of Panamanian beer with fuzzy earmuffs around the outside. The fuzz contains stingers that will cause a burning pain and swelling on contact. You might get dizzy, you might throw up, you might go into shock; it all depends on how sensitive you are. Untreated, the stinging will continue for three to four hours. To stop the stinging and swelling from any caterpillar sting, sprinkle meat tenderizer on the affected area and the poison will be neutralized. If you have no meat tenderizer, the juice from papaya fruit or the sap of the papaya plant will do the same thing. (Do not get the sap in your eyes — or you're blind.) Papaya juice is the main ingredient in meat tenderizer.

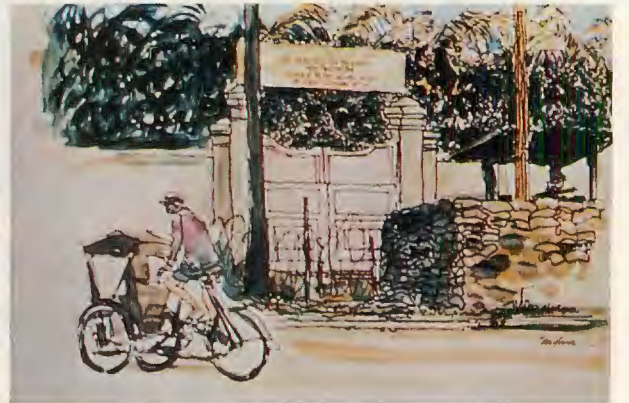
The puss caterpillar lives on broadleaf plants and is covered with hairs that point toward the back of its head. Contact with these hairs causes stinging, swelling and pain. The swelling remains even after you neutralize the pain. If you do get stung you must remove the stingers from your skin. Do not, however, use your fingers or you will contaminate them, too. Scrape them off by brushing a stick or knife across the affected area and treat as for the saddleback caterpillar.

The sardine caterpillar is bright yellow or orange in color and has stingers in groups and rows along his body like little starbursts. You get the usual stinging and swelling from this critter.

The electric caterpillar, or jumping caterpillar as he is commonly called, is black and produces a sting that feels uncannily like an electric shock. If you come into contact with this little fellow, you will do the same sort of dance produced when you touch an electrical wire.

*Continued on page 106*

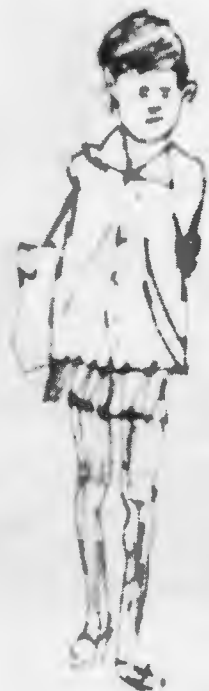




# THE ART OF WAR

## A Marine's Brush with Vietnam

Text by Jack Watford



Photos courtesy USMC

TOP LEFT: M60 tank on the beach in Lebanon.

FAR LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT: Street scene of old Saigon.

LEFT: Combat artist at work in the field, Captain E.M. Condra, USMC.

Marine on liberty in Da Nang.

“**W**HEN he knows an enemy is close and action is imminent, the nervous system of the fighting man becomes supersensitized. Every cracking twig is heard and analyzed. Every movement is noticed and recorded. The feel of the mud around his ankles and the heaviness of the atmosphere are an input to the brain. Even the smell becomes part of the picture. This heightened sense of observation is a vital part of the fighting man. He must learn to observe accurately and report accurately.

“Exactly the same ability is demanded of the artist.”

His 20-year experience as a combat artist, the nine personal awards and the combat “V”s on the colonel’s chest suggested he knew what he was talking about. Even the greatest artist can’t understand combat unless he’s been involved. And Ed feels very close to his work in combat art.

When Ed Condra III graduated from the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, he had already won a top award for artistic excellence and was running a successful art gallery in the city. He had been selling his own paintings since the age of nine. So there could be little doubt which way his career would run. . . . But a life in the U.S. Marine Corps?

The two main influences of Ed’s youth, his grandfather and grandmother, contributed a great deal to his chosen profession. Ed’s grandfather, Bauer, ran away from Germany to be a cabin boy, jumped ship in New York, became a sergeant major in the 7th Cavalry, and rode with the Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War. Bauer’s wife was by contrast an artistic and sensitive woman who opened the first American photographic studio in Manila.

As a kid, Ed spent much of his time between football and baseball, drawing and painting. While his Navy father was serving in Washington, an aunt invited Ed to attend evening classes at the art school where she worked. During class coffee breaks Ed was complimented by the models on the quality of his work. Sadly, his mother did not quite agree when he took the finished nudes home.

His first college education was through a football scholarship at the University of New Mexico, but his Navy father moved to the West, so Ed continued for a year at the Los Angeles Art Center.

Soon the adventurer in Ed asserted itself. He joined the Marines at San Diego and for two years he traveled the Far East on the *USS St. Paul*. He made sergeant, but his artistic side imposed itself and he left after two years to join the art school in

Philadelphia. As an older student he was active, starting an art gallery where students could display their work for nothing, organizing a sports program at his art school, and he was invited to teach art to talented kids in Philadelphia. Art, however, was not enough.

“I missed the outdoor life, the loyalty, comradeship and everything to do with life in the Marines. They put a lot of pressure on me to stay, but I was determined.”

Ed Condra soon found himself at Quantico as a trainee officer in the Marine Corps.

“I see the way of life of the artist and the fighting man as being entirely compatible,” he says. “They demand many of the same qualities. Each must learn the basics of his trade until they are second nature. Both need great self-discipline, an inner drive and the ability to keep going even when things are tough.”

These elements have persisted side by side in Ed throughout his career. After a period in Hawaii, where he was able to spend much of his time on art — “I painted everyone from four star generals to rear-rank privates” — he landed at Chu Lai in 1965 to design and build the camp for Marine Air Group 12 as part of the SATS (Short Airfield Tactical Support) concept. There was no time for art as such during those two years, but his sketchbook was filled with both practical engineering drawings and records of his impressions.

“Photographs can never tell the whole story. The artist, like the fighting man, can absorb a whole scene with all his senses, and then later record all those things on canvas. His finished work brings back not just the appearance of a place, but the feel and smell of it.”

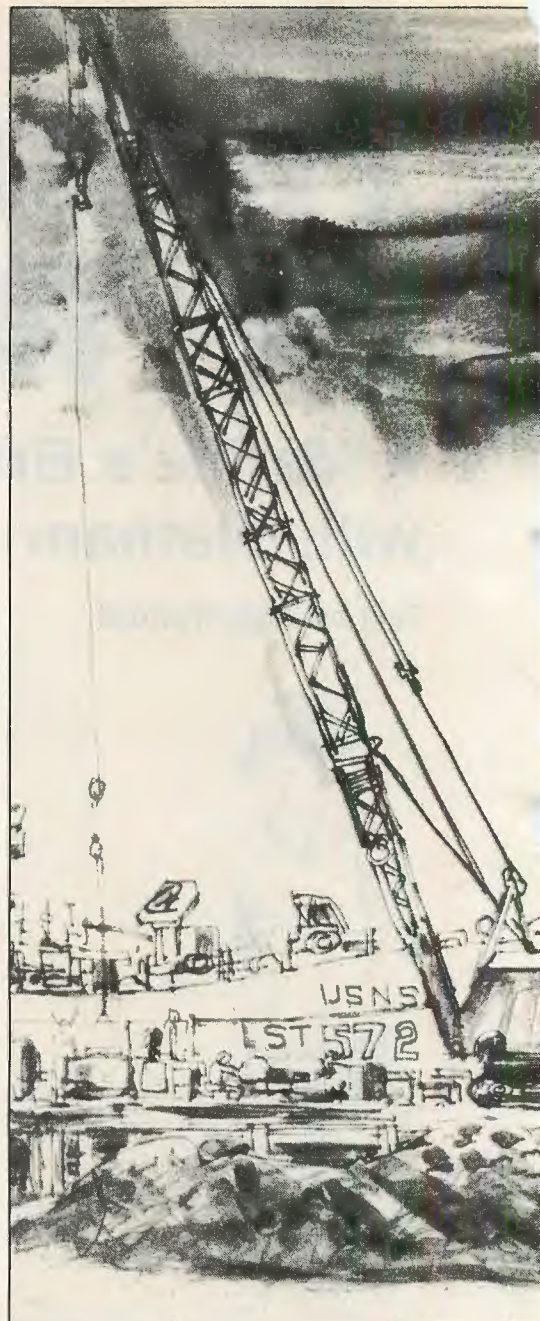
Ed was the only combat artist in Vietnam during those two years, and when the Marines started a combat art program to record the war for the future, he was taken from an engineering course and given eight months to paint. He produced hundreds of paintings during this period which are displayed in museums and Marine bases around the world.

“In fact, I didn’t want to take the time away from the Marines to paint.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** As monsoon rains blacken the sky, LSTs unload at dock ramp on Truong Giang Bay.

**RIGHT:** Popular Forces patrol checks sampan for VC arms along beach near Dong Xuan.

**FAR RIGHT:** Elements of Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) conduct recon patrols in Chu Lai.





You never volunteer for anything 'off the wall.' I am a soldier, and that is all I wanted to do."

Subsequent tours in Vietnam saw Ed involved in war, with no time at all for his sketches.

"As a fighting man, you are constantly observing, and as an artist you can store it all up here, in your head. The actual painting can be done much later. Vietnam played a vital part in the history of our country and in the growing up of thousands of our young men. Now that the vets can hold their heads up with pride again, I think the work of the combat artist should find its place in homes and art galleries where the people can see, remember and be proud."

Ed knows something of the pain of the Vietnam experience, being one of the few artists in history to have been picketed.

"They marched around my paintings with banners, but I had nothing to be ashamed of. The peaceniks don't have a monopoly on truth, and my paintings are part of the truth of Vietnam.

"None of us who were there will forget the experience of fighting a war surrounded by a population. One of our jobs was to clear mines from the road from Chu Lai to the river each morning. Often a local truck or bus would find a mine before we did. Our boys would risk their own lives to help the casualties. This aspect of the war — rarely told by media — is indelibly recorded in my brain, and hopefully will be recorded for history in my paintings."

Like most Marines of his generation, Ed has survived ambushes, mines, booby traps, and the home-grown problems of equipment failure. In spite of it all, one of his main ambitions is to return one day to Vietnam to record yet more of what he regards as an essential part of the history of the United States.

As a full colonel (he's the only combat artist to reach that rank in the regular Marines), Ed has mixed feelings about retirement.

"I shall miss the Marine Corps — the esprit de corps and the search for excellence... But the same qualities will be applied full time to my art. There is a lot about the last 20 years which must be recorded for future generations and painting is my contribution to correcting some of the wrong which the vets of the period have suffered.

"My paintings aim to show both what we were fighting for, and in particular some of the first-class men who did the fighting. An artist I am and always have been, but in my heart I shall always be a combat artist." ✕



## **SOF CAMBODIA**

Cambodian officers learn the ropes on a Soviet-made anti-aircraft gun.

# POL POT SPECTER

## Khmer Rouge Haunt Cambodia's Puppet Regime

Text & Photos by Donald Kirk

**W**HEN we got to Prey Veng, old ladies were selling rice and meat and vegetables in the dim shacks of the marketplace on the main street. An occasional Soviet-built jeep carrying provincial officials roared down the potholed streets. It was a picture of backwater calm, much as I remembered from 15 years before.

The last time I had been through, the war was spreading rapidly over vast stretches of

surrounding rice paddies and forests through which the North Vietnamese had been shipping arms down the Ho Chi Minh Trail into South Vietnam around the Parrot's Beak. It was like old times — an eerie tranquility that made you forget the realities of killing and disease, torture and starvation that were as much a part of the daily lives of these placid people as the glistening river and the hot dust swirling from the road.

It wasn't until we'd dumped off our bags in the spacious rooms of the governor's guest house that our hosts abruptly reminded us of the slaughter they had survived before Vietnamese troops invaded on Christmas Day 1978.

Packing us into a little convoy of Land Rovers and jeeps, they led us to a grassy square surrounded by dilapidated yellow buildings, legacies of the French colonial era. A small crowd gathered curiously around a couple of holes in which two men were digging furiously with shovels. Children looked eagerly into the depths where white chips of bone and pieces of old clothing gradually emerged from the dirt. Occasionally one of the diggers plucked out a skull, a shard of a leg or pelvic bone, a blouse blackened with damp grime, and flung it into a small heap. Flesh and hair still clung to some of the skulls. Most of them were broken — grim evidence that the Khmer Rouge killers had clubbed the victims to death as they knelt before the graves.

One of the diggers, a provincial official named Ok Ear, looked up as we focused our cameras on him.

"We have just found this mass grave. We were digging out a trench for the foundation for an office for provincial authorities, and we hit some bone." Almost all the local populace had vanished during the Khmer Rouge's bloody reign — either to work



driver recognized me from the old days and babbled about his escape from the Khmer Rouge as he drove me through the city. His uncle, son and wife had all died, he said. He alone had made it. The only way out was a trek across country to Vietnam. Life there was tough, too. The Vietnamese didn't kill Cambodians, but they looked on them with contempt. He had driven a cycle in Saigon for a while and then returned to Phnom Penh behind the advancing Vietnamese forces.

Vietnamese troops were everywhere — not in large units but in twos and threes, in speeding jeeps, in dark high-ceilinged ministry offices and in a couple of old buildings across the street from the Monorom. Sometimes the officers wore their insignia, but more often than not they preferred to hide within anonymous, unmarked fatigues or in civilian clothing — even though Cambodians could easily recognize them as Vietnamese by their faces. The low profile was needed not only to avoid offending the Cambodians but also to promote overall policy. Vietnamese leaders in Hanoi persisted in the view that the government of Heng Samrin, a one-time Khmer Rouge officer who had rebelled against his leaders, was really independent. The Vietnamese foreign minister, Nguyen Co Thach, in a conversation with me and other journalists, had promised that Vietnam would withdraw its troops whenever the Khmer Rouge and the non-communist rebel coalitions no longer presented a threat to the present regime.

In any case, Cambodians were still too terrified of the Khmer Rouge to think of rebelling against the regime in Phnom Penh, let alone contesting the Vietnamese. Nightly, crowds gathered outside the railroad station awaiting the train from Battambang. No one was ever quite certain it would arrive. The Khmer Rouge ambushed it occasionally and had long since cut off the railroad to the southern coast.

Passengers spread rumors in furtive conversations with hawkers selling drinks in plastic bags. The guerrillas had hit a Vietnamese unit, knocking out a tank. The guer-

camps and eventual execution, or across the Vietnamese border 20 miles to the east. Those few who had lived in the area said the Khmer Rouge had tied their victims together and led them by ropes to the center of the town. They assumed they'd been executed but weren't sure exactly where.

Ok Ear tugged occasionally at frayed pieces of rope hanging loosely around bones, hair and clothes. So far, he said, he'd found the remains of more than 10 people and guessed about 30 to 50 were in each hole. That was the number the Khmer Rouge usually buried in one grave.

The discovery of the grave must have been the reason that I had gotten the chance to go to Prey Veng in the first place. Yos Son, the director of the press department of the foreign ministry, hadn't given us much choice. The temple complex of Angkor Wat, the Bayonne, Angkor Thom and other wonders of a bygone civilization was open only to groups willing to charter their own aircraft to get there — if the local authorities

approved. And the authorities in Battambang and Kompong Som were "too busy" to receive us. What he didn't say, of course, was that the Khmer Rouge, with about 40,000 Chinese-backed guerrillas, still lurked in camps along the Thai border despite repeated dry-season Vietnamese offensives to dislodge them. They regularly ambushed Vietnamese and Cambodian forces in the western and southern provinces.

Among the broad boulevards of Phnom Penh and in the few restaurants that had reopened to foreigners since the Vietnamese had installed their own Khmer allies in Phnom Penh, the fear of a second coming of the Khmer Rouge was as pervasive as the national hatred of the Vietnamese.

Outside the Monorom hotel — where I had stayed during the many reporting trips to Cambodia before 1975 — an aging cyclo

**Billboard slogans urge people to rebuild Cambodia.**

## PRIZE-WINNER

Don Kirk knows the ropes in Asia: He began his career in 1965 as a free-lance writer in Vietnam and spent the next nine years in Asia, most of it in Indochina, working for various publications and building up a reputation for solid reporting.

Kirk took some press awards home from the war, among them the Overseas Press Club Award in 1973 and the George Polk Award for Foreign Reporting in 1975.

With two books under his belt, *Wider War — The Struggle for Cambodia, Thailand and Laos* and *Tell it to the Dead*, Kirk has returned to the world of foreign reporting as a journalist for *USA Today*.







**Ready on the firing line: Cambodian officer candidates prepare to fire a DShK 38 12.7mm machine gun.**

rillas had overrun a Vietnamese outpost. Vietnam was sending more troops toward the Thai frontier.

Vietnam has about 160,000 troops in the country — four times the number of Khmer Rouge and about four times the size of the Heng Samrin army that Hanoi keeps claiming is waging the war largely on its own. But despite the reassuring rhetoric, the real reason reporters couldn't go west, north or south was obvious: there was no security.

The government was eager, though, to prove its strength was growing. One morning we watched a couple of battalions of officer trainees, decked out in broad-brimmed trainee-style hats, marching and shouting in unison at a training school on the main road south to the airport.

They were "all volunteers," said Mao Sivath, one of the training officers. "They joined the revolution against the Khmer Rouge. Some of them had had families killed by the Khmer Rouge. They kept their anger since then. They will be company commanders."

Some of the trainees leaped behind Soviet anti-aircraft weapons, poised near a signboard listing "design of enemy aircraft" — a galaxy of U.S., British, French and Chinese planes along with the flags of all potential "enemy" countries. Behind the board, in a garage, were a couple of Soviet tanks. And hiding discreetly in their shad-

ows was the inevitable Vietnamese officer, trim in fatigues showing his rank as major. A couple of pens, also signs of rank and power, rested conspicuously in his breast pocket. Clasped tightly in his left hand was a clipboard — yet another symbol of authority.

"We still need Vietnamese assistance in training," said Mao Sivath, acknowledging the presence of five Vietnamese advisers at the school but still maintaining, "You have seen improvement of the army in a short period."

The Vietnamese presence makes Phnom Penh a sanctuary just as the U.S. bombing had guaranteed the safety of the capital and outlying towns until it stopped in the summer of 1973. In those days the Phnom Penh elite, buoyed by U.S. aid, reaped fortunes from bribes and shakedown and the black markets flourished with stolen goodies from the U.S. post exchange system in Vietnam. That all soon changed, though.

When the Khmer Rouge swept into town less than two years later they drove out and then killed most of the local people. Now, 80 percent of the residents of Phnom Penh are refugees from the countryside. Many of them live and cook in markets set up helter-skelter on the streets. They crowd into alternate French-built apartment blocks, sleeping in corridors, ripping out plumbing, tearing up walls and furniture. They are not revolutionaries or radicals. They know nothing of city life; they saw it only as a haven where they could sleep free of the fear of ambushes and killings, hunger and poverty in a land still often barren of crops



**This statue at Neak Loeung is supposed to represent Vietnamese/Cambodian solidarity.**



and the irrigation systems to water them.

Yet the new Phnom Penh is also a center of capitalist enterprise and corruption. One market several miles from the center of town was teeming with everything from modern medicines and tape recorders, to washing machines and clothing from Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan — even the United States and Europe. The goods were smuggled in from Thailand over jungle trails and roads or simply shipped from Hong Kong and Singapore, then past the greased palms of Vietnamese officials.

The market was a labyrinth of counters and sheds spread under a vast array of cloth and plastic and wooden coverings. There were no taxes, no police. Young Russians, members of a 3,000-person advisory force housed in a huge complex on the southern fringe of the city, wandered in search of bargains. Looking like Americans in sport shirts and jeans, they paused to haggle while *nouveau riche* officials drove by in black limousines and Mercedes Benz sedans.

Underneath it all, the memory of suffering and torture intrudes upon the sense of revival. One afternoon, a thin man with silver-speckled hair waved and shouted from the entrance of a garage as my cyclo driver stopped at the corner. He hobbled out, telling me he knew me from the early 1970s. He'd driven me in his taxi down the main roads from Phnom Penh on stories. I

**Cambodian troops practice putting out mines in case of a Khmer Rouge resurgence.**

## CAMBODIA SITREP

The United States government is pumping money into the fighting in Indochina for the first time since the fall of the U.S.-backed regimes in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in 1975. The vehicle for this infusion of funds is an amendment to the foreign aid bill passed by Congress last summer providing for up to \$5 million in non-military aid to non-communist factions in the Cambodian rebel coalition. That means that forces under Son Sann, a former Cambodian prime minister, and Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the chief of state deposed in a pro-American coup in 1970, will get a modicum of training in administrative skills — and nothing more.

The United States, officially at least, is against sending arms or advisers. The funds, says the State Department, will be funneled through the member nations of the anti-communist Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), with Thailand channeling them to the non-communist rebel camps near the Cambodian frontier.

Son Sann, though, hopes for much more. "For me the tap is open," he told me during a quick trip to Washington in September to confer with U.S. officials. "If we can use your first drop to do something different for the liberation of Cambodia, then perhaps the tap will be open more."

He could be right. The Reagan administration views the Cambodian government in Phnom Penh as a Vietnamese

puppet — an extension of the power of Vietnam and the Soviet Union. The problem, however, is that Son Sann and Sihanouk control no more than 20,000 troops between them. The predominant faction is the Khmer Rouge, whose battle-hardened 40,000-man army has survived a series of Vietnamese offensives that destroyed its camps along the Thai border.

The Khmer Rouge apparently want to improve their image. They've "retired" Pol Pot, at least for the record, while promoting Son Sen, formerly third in command, to the post of commander in chief of their forces. The Vietnamese had demanded the resignation of Pol Pot, the bloody-handed Khmer Rouge leader during the era of mass slaughter, as a precondition to negotiations.

Most experts scoff at the significance of the change. Sihanouk doubts if Pol Pot has really lost his job. His greatest difficulties may be chronic malaria and kidney problems, for which he's been treated in China. Son Sann, though, welcomes Pol Pot's "voluntary retirement" as "a good thing" and challenges Vietnam to make good on its avowed desire to talk after his demise.

The program to spruce up the Khmer Rouge image could make them more palatable to the ASEAN countries — and eventually to the United States. But as long as China and the Soviet Union keep supplying arms to the belligerents, western Cambodia is sure to remain a battleground for many years.





**Prey Veng is the site of major construction as the Cambodians struggle to rebuild their country.**

wondered how he had survived the Khmer Rouge. He rolled up a pants leg and showed off the scars from shackles that finally left him lame.

"My family died. I don't know why they left me. I got away when the Vietnamese came. Now I can't drive anymore. I have no money, no car. I can only help in the garage."

Why some lived and some died is a question that people here are just beginning to ask themselves. The nightmares, the sudden screams in the night, the long mourning are wounds only now healing.

"I knew it would be barbarous so I did whatever I was ordered to do," recalled Ban Sang, a teacher who hid his 'elitist' background when he was sent to Prey Veng in a work brigade of farmers. "Seven teachers were with me. They all were killed. Two of my children died. One was killed after refusing to work and claiming the work was too hard. The other died of disease."

Cheam Yeap, chairman of the Prey Veng provincial committee — equivalent to a governor — told of the terror in his area. "We estimate 485,000 people were killed in this province out of a population of more than a million. We suffered more than any other province. We have discovered 1,467 mass graves including the one you saw today."

Later, over glasses of Vietnamese beer in

a French gazebo, Cheam Yeap told us his own story of escape and survival. He'd been strung up from a tree by his Khmer Rouge inquisitors. He'd been dunked into pots of water. He'd been held in leg irons for 15 months. He should have died during those dark days, but he didn't.

"I was on my way to be killed one afternoon, and while they walked me blindfolded to the graveyard I fought with the soldiers and escaped with four others." They got away, he said, when two of their guards left them for a drink of water. His blindfold was slightly loose and he saw only a young boy was guarding him. "We threw him into the river and ran," said Yeap. "We walked three days without food to Vietnam."

Ever since then, Cheam had been allied with Heng Samrin in fighting the Khmer Rouge after the Vietnamese decided in mid-1978 to invade Cambodia.

Cheam's story is a microcosm of the suffering in Cambodia. No foreign visitor leaves Phnom Penh today without seeing two sights raised to the level of national memorials. The first is the "killing field" in Kandal Province, down a potholed road about six miles south of the capital. There, in a placid setting of grass and trees, is a wooden enclosure heaped high with hundreds of skulls and bones dug up from 86 gaping holes in the surrounding field. While birds twitter happily in the branches above, workmen dig haphazardly in search of more skulls still buried in 34 more holes.

A local official pointed at a small pile of bones and pieces of clothing at the top of one of the holes. "This is the last tomb that we've dug up," he said, handing me a pen to sign a "guest book" in which visitors wrote down their impressions. The pages were full of lengthy discourses about "man's inhumanity to man," human evil, etc. I spent a long time thinking about it, wrote, "Seeing is believing," got in my waiting van and left. My escort seemed pleased.

The other memorial is at Tuol Sleng. Once a prestigious high school in a pleasant residential district of the capital, Tuol Sleng was turned into a prison for those perceived as the worst foes of the regime. Guides now show visitors the crude equipment for torture, the cells, the photographs of those imprisoned, tortured and killed. Most of them were dubbed "spies" for the CIA or KGB, or "intellectuals" — engineers, teachers, craftsmen, whatever. In the end only 14 or so escaped as the Vietnamese swept into the city. They fled with their jailers — and then disappeared as the shells exploded around them. Six of them showed up later to tell the story of Tuol Sleng. Curiously, three of them were artists — apparently spared because the prison director needed their talents to make busts of the Khmer Rouge leader, Pol Pot, as part of a grand plan for eventually building a huge statue of the man.

Tuol Sleng today embodies the worst horror stories of Khmer Rouge rule. As testi-



workers, they ignored the most practical precepts, ordering construction of dams and ditches going the wrong way and executing anyone who questioned their wisdom.

"Dams and dikes were broken by the American bombing, but the real damage was caused by Pol Pot," said Sim Man, an agricultural official in Prey Veng. "Under Pol Pot they built the dams in the wrong place and destroyed rice fields." The result: starvation, malnutrition and disease that accounted for more than half the death toll of one million to three million of the country's eight million people.

In the rebuilding process, authorities are torn between the desire for revenge and the need to suppress hatred for national unity.

"You do not know Cambodia any more," mused my old cyclo driver, as I urged him to drive me down back alleys near one of the black markets. "It is not like before when you were here. Police are everywhere. Be careful."

The prime minister, Hun Sen, claimed in an interview that the government followed a policy of forgiveness. "We have no camps like the ones under Pol Pot," said Sen, a

**Khmer Rouge legacy: six years after the ouster of the KR, bones still turn up in mass graves.**

former Khmer Rouge officer like his boss, Heng Samrin. "More than 160,000 people who abandoned Pol Pot are now useful citizens."

Even the hardcore cadres are treated leniently — many are in prison, but they will not be executed. Theoretically only Pol Pot, who supposedly "retired" as Khmer Rouge leader in September 1985, and Ieng Sary, his main ally, face death sentences in the unlikely event that they're captured.

"At first the people were very angry and in some places had to take care of these bad people themselves," Sen said. "But we are educating people about clemency and national unity while fighting to clear the last of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas out of the jungle."

With the Chinese pouring arms into the rebel camps through Thailand, the war can only worsen. Obliquely, Sen acknowledged the truth of the rumors whispered by cyclo drivers and station vendors — the Khmer Rouge might strike again in the capital.

The threat of the continuing Khmer Rouge presence is not enough to deter the Cambodian people, though, and Sen summed up the feeling. "We continue our struggle because of the crimes and barbarism of Pol Pot. He is the obstacle to freedom." ✕

mony to the atrocities there are paintings by survivors of Khmer Rouge soldiers dragging women and children, beating them with poles. There is a group photograph of the Khmer Rouge jailers — tough, smirking men, big-boned and ham-handed — and the Khmer Rouge women, blank-faced, staring dully after cooking the pots of watery soup needed to keep the victims alive until their executions. And there, in cells near the entrance, are photographs of bloodied bodies found chained to metal bunks when the Vietnamese arrived — their stomachs slit open by their captors in the minutes before they fled.

The fanaticism of the Khmer Rouge extended into every walk of life, every corner of the country. The overwhelming drive of the Khmer Rouge hordes, who were mostly village boys driven by cadre, was to rid society of any sign of foreign influence. In outlying towns, schools and hospitals were turned into warehouses and stockrooms, pagodas were burned and statues of Buddha destroyed. Portions of paved roads were ripped up, and banana trees were planted in the potholes. Valuable rubber trees from the Chup plantation, stretching east of the Mekong to Vietnam, were sawed down for kindling wood — or merely neglected.

As the Vietnamese approached Prey Veng, the fleeing Khmer Rouge blew up power generators and dams for channeling water into rice paddies. Most extraordinary of all, even while attempting to "rebuild" through vast projects requiring thousands of



# BACK TO THE BUSH

## Nicaragua's Southern Front Simmers

by Dr. John



**A**CTUALLY, it was easier than I thought. A few phone calls to old contacts in Miami and Los Angeles, a trip to south Florida and a meeting with El Negro, and I was on my way to my old stomping grounds in southern Nicaragua with the contras fighting the Sandinista government. The hardest part of extracting myself from civilian life had been getting clearance. No, not from the CIA or any other initialed agency, but from my wife. I decided humor was the best offense.

"I'll be damned! Look at this." I pointed to an article in the *New York Times*. "There's still injustice and suffering in Central America. Help me pack my duffle bag, I've got to go."

She looked at me with practiced patience and resignation. "Do you mean to tell me you're going to walk out on a \$40,000 a year job on Wall Street and go live in the jungle again?"

I should have waited till after breakfast. She had the coffee pot in her hand. I better come up with something good, I thought.

"Look," I told her. "In a way it's better now. I've talked to Robelo's agents in Miami and Pastora is out. Negro Chamorro is *comandante* of the democratic forces now. And you know I've always gotten along with him and his people. Wall Street will be here when I get back."

After extracting a blood oath that I would return in September, she helped me pack.

Before going into Central America, you need a program to describe the teams as well as the players. Here's a thumbnail rundown on who was who and what was what in contra operations during the summer of 1985:

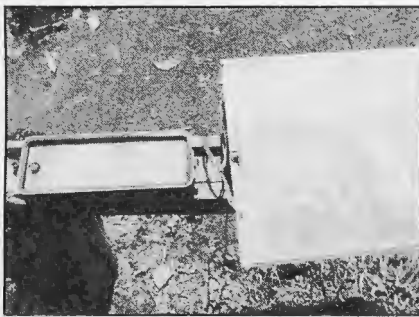
In the north, operating out of camps along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border, is the FDN, *Fuerzas Democrática Nicaraguense*. This outfit receives the major share of funding from the U.S. government. Politically, they range from middle-of-the-road to ultraright.

Also in the north is the MISURA organization, composed of Miskito, Suma and Rama Indians. MISURA, I'm told, has been penetrated by DGI (Cuban Secret Service) agents and its effectiveness as a fighting force severely compromised. On the southern front is MISURASATA, a Sandinista-oriented Indian group, led by Brooklyn Rivera. Rivera had been holding talks with the junta in Managua and few, if any, MISURASATA fighters were operating on the southern front.

Pastora had been active, at least in the newspapers. He still controlled some 700 fighters in his positions along the Rio San Juan, but he had lost a great deal of territory and some lives in the last year or so. I have it from three independent sources that Pastora has been considering a return to the Mana-

**ABOVE LEFT:** Jungle patrol: a guerrilla squad crosses an improvised log bridge.

**LEFT:** Though not exactly the Hilton, jungle accommodations are better than nothing.



Solar-powered charger gives new life to an old radio battery.

## THANKS, WM. E. ANDERSEN

Eden Pastora, the prima donna contra, left ARDE in disarray. His legacy to the southern contras was factionalism, competitiveness and suspicion. Consequently, the Free World governments that had previously showered surplus and captured arms on ARDE have begun lining up behind the U.S. government-backed FDN or have simply backed out of Central American paramilitary politics.

SOF reporters and trainers have seen the arms stacked in FDN camps. The northern contras are well-prepared for gunplay, but socks, gun-cleaning equipment, mosquito repellent and medicines are still in short supply. Reformed ARDE camps are in much worse shape. They lack nearly everything.

Now your few tax dollars dedicated to defeating communist tyranny in Central America largely go to the FDN. It's a good cause, and they should be getting more than they do, but there is another front.

Your donations reach anti-communist resistance in both FDN and ARDE through SOF's El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund. Send material donations with a packing list to 5721 Arapahoe Ave., Boulder, CO 80303. Monetary donations should be sent in the form of check or money order, made out to the El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.

Tax-deductible contributions of money or medical supplies can be made to Refugee Relief International Inc., 1105 Balmora Dr., Lafayette, CO 80026, ATTN Mr. Donald; tax number 74-2255573.

William E. Andersen, your boots were seen on the feet of a Nicaraguan freedom fighter. He sends his personal thanks.

— The Editors

gua government and in *La República*, a San José newspaper, Pastora was quoted as saying that he had not ruled out such a return. So it's still possible that he may suddenly pop up in Managua, once again a member of the communist government.

Alfonso Robelo is still the head of the the MDN, the *Movimiento Democrático Nicaraguense*. Robelo, too, was a member of the Sandinista government until it became obvious to the Marxists that he wasn't going along with their program. Robelo barely escaped with his life to Costa Rica where he has worked tirelessly to regain his country and institute democracy, something Nicaragua has never had.

Robelo's MDN and the FDN were then and are now united in an organization known as UNO, *Unión Nicaraguense en Oposición*, an appropriate acronym meaning "one" and reflecting a desire for unity among the contras. Hopefully, this means that — except for Pastora's contrariness — the Nicaraguan exile groups will now speak with one voice regardless of their band in the political spectrum.

Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro was one of the first Nicaraguans to have rebelled against the Sandinistas. For years he led FARN, *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias Nicaraguense*, a small, but disciplined, commando force that sometimes operated deep inside Nicaragua. Chamorro is now

the military commander for the UNO forces in the south, but unlike Pastora, Chamorro is not afraid to fight. I looked forward to serving under his command.

The first thing I learned when I arrived at the headquarters in San José was that MDN was poor. When American aid dried up, Robelo instituted a severe austerity program and many of the exiled group's salaried employees had been let go. This austerity reflected throughout the entire political organization and the military.

In a way, the result has been good. When I first fought with ARDE (see "American in ARDE," SOF, November '84) troops at the front grumbled about the fat salaries some of the administrative personnel collected and I had noticed that the farther from the front an ARDE member was the more likely he was to have combat boots on his feet. It's not like that anymore. Expenditures are controlled and carefully audited. Books are kept and accountability is the order of the day.

Poverty is also reflected in logistics. I was told that I would have to take a bus up to the base camp — no vehicles were available. No problem, I thought as I swung my duffle bag onto my shoulder and headed to the bus station for the long ride to the frontier.

Arriving cramped and tired at a border

*Continued on page 110*



ABOVE RIGHT: Dr. John (right) goes over operation plans with a couple of ARDE officers.

RIGHT: The Nicaraguan flag goes up every morning with as much pomp as can be expected deep in the jungle.



## SOF CONVENTION

# THE WILD BUNCH RETURNS

by SOF Staff

SOF's demo expert, John Donovan, stands by while Robert K. Brown makes a point during the awards banquet ceremony. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*



Maj. Gen. Ron Reid-Daly, founder and former CO of Selous Scouts in Rhodesia, was the honored guest at the 6th Annual *Soldier of Fortune* Convention. Photo: Bob Hooper

**C**AMMIE-CLAD and propped jauntily against a casino bar rail in the Sahara Hotel, the conventioneer hoisted an elbow and lustily tipped his glass, classic stud suds chugging.

"There was no fucking way that I was gonna miss this year's SOF convention," he declared, slapping a massive knife sheath for emphasis, then wiping the beery foam from his mustache with a sleeve.

"I had the money set aside to go to *el convention numero uno* in Missouri when my wife had an abso-fucking-lute shit hissy," he said, carefully pronouncing the last several syllables. "So I had to can the plan."

Polishing off the swill in a second chug, then belching with satisfaction and scratching his crotch, he explained. "Well, two or three years went by and then I got up another *Soldier of Fortune* Convention kitty. And when I told my second wife, she had a pure-tee fit, too. I missed out again. Hell, I mean I ain't never been no GI Joe or nothin'. But I'm the same age as all these Vietnam vets 'round here. I've hunted and fished all my 'lahf.' I knows lots about guns an' stuff.

"Sides that," he said, slapping the back of the immaculately dressed gentleman standing next to him, "a guy's gotta 'rat' to git out with the boys once't in a while and have some fun. 'Rat,' Frenchie?"

The man's eyes widened as he realized this grits and gumbo Rambo was addressing him. "*Mais bien sur!*" exclaimed the expo tech rep, raising a tiny glass in toast and cautiously sipping his Fuzzy Navel. He wanted to belong, to feel like he fit in. I could see it. But his interpretive ability had hit a brick wall with south Arkansas pulpwood patois.

"But this year, come hell or high

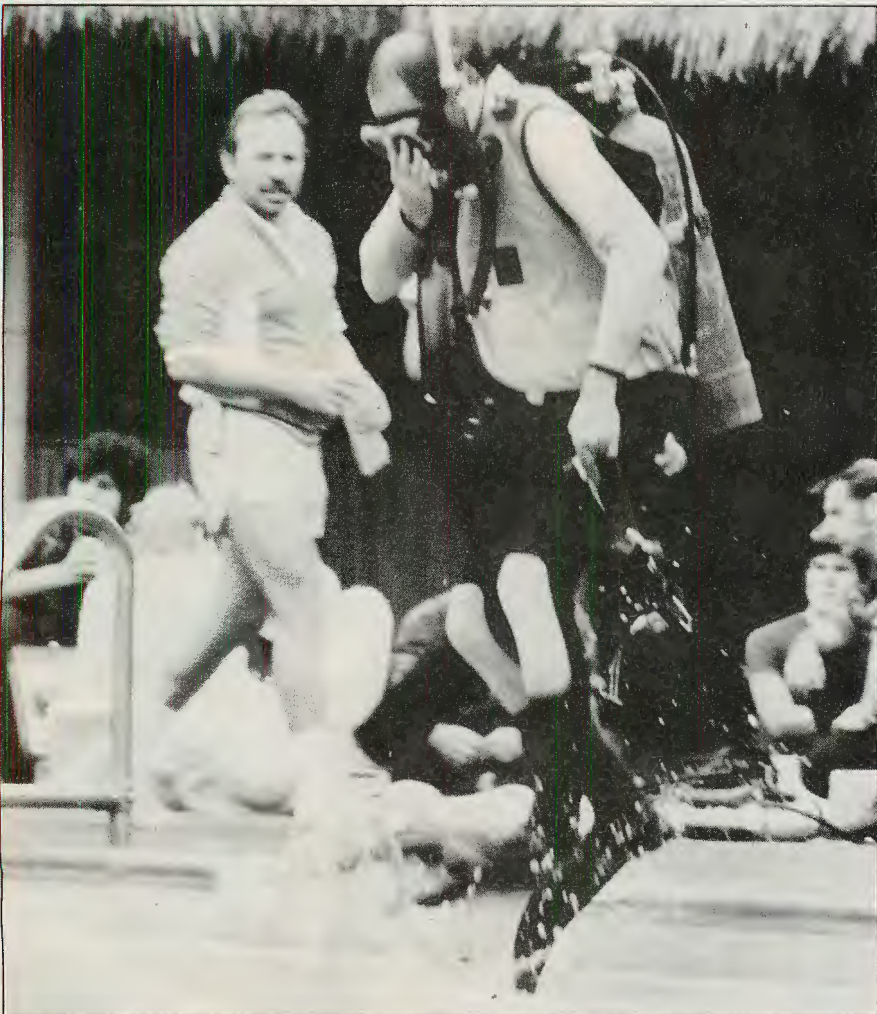
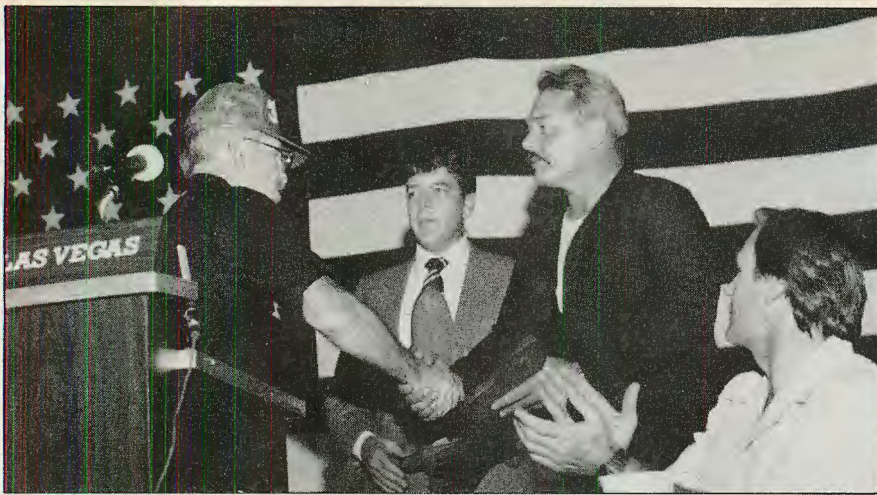
**TOP RIGHT:** Figueiredo Paulo, U.S. representative for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) speaks at the SOF Convention banquet. UNITA currently is one of the most successful anti-Marxist movements in Africa. Photo: Bob Hooper

**CENTER RIGHT:** Mario Calero marshals the banquet crowd to the cause of Nicaraguan independence from Soviet- and Cuban-backed totalitarianism. Mario's brother, Adolfo, is commander in chief of the Fuerza Democrática Nicaraguense (FDN), or Democratic Force of Nicaragua, the nation's largest group of anti-Sandinista freedom fighters. Photo: Bob Hooper

**RIGHT:** Fanuel Mahluza, a U.S. representative for the Mozambique National Resistance (See "RENAMO: Winning One in Africa" on page 64), represented his cause well at the SOF Convention. Photo: Bob Hooper







**TOP LEFT:** SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, in blue hat, congratulates special guests Maj. Mark Smith (Ret.) and SFC Melvin McIntire (Ret.). The two former Green Berets until 1984 ran a covert op in Indochina aimed at freeing U.S. POWs. They have sued the federal government because they allege the DIA pulled the plug on the op. Photo: Bob Hooper

**CENTER LEFT:** Representing the several Afghan groups fighting the Soviet occupation of their country was Habibullah Mayar, who came halfway around the globe to attend the SOF Convention. Photo: Bob Hooper

**LEFT:** Diving classes at poolside drew a lot of stares. But the looks turned to envy as the diving class packed up for underwater ops at nearby Lake Mead. Photo: Dale Andradé



water, I figured I'm gonna go no matter what. And here I am, by God!" he announced, making a grand sweeping gesture with his arm, slopping brew on the bar and the short balding Frenchman.

Trying to look unbothered, a big quick smile forced itself across the Frenchman's face, like heaving a brick bat in a mud puddle. He wiped his suit jacket with a bar napkin as he bellied back up to the bar, politely inquiring, "Well, *mon ami*. What deed your madame say thees year?"

"You know, Frenchie, h'it's a funny thing," he said, pausing. "I ain't married no more."

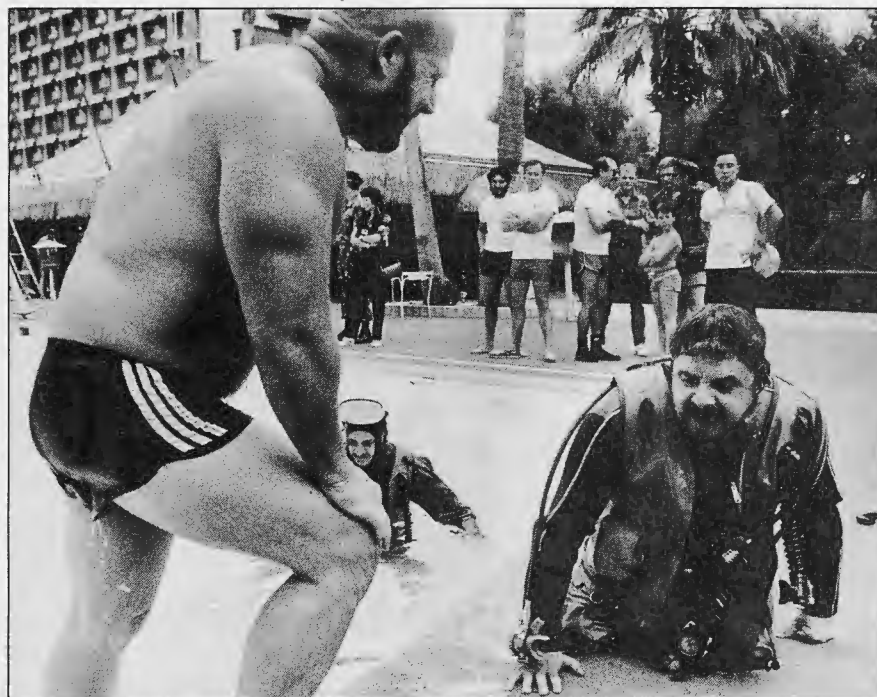
"*Vraiment?* Surely you jest," he said, slipping a sideways wink.

"Shorely I just what?" asked the Southerner, as poker-faced as a stray dog taking a dump at a church picnic. Never mind.

Suffice it to say that the Sixth Annual *Soldier of Fortune* Convention and *Combat Weapons Expo '85* in Las Vegas last September was well-attended by many cultures and nationalities, with many first-timers making it the biggest and best show ever. A few active duty types showed up, along with a very respectable showing of Vietnam and Rhodesian vets, even a couple of former members of the French Foreign Legion. Lawmen also were well-represented, as well as gun enthusiasts, outdoorsmen and the just plain curious. Over 800 official conventioners, 161 competitors for the *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun International Combat Shooting Match, 115 crews to man the expo booths and many special guests — not to mention over 5,000 walk-ins from the casino floor — came from far and wide, plain and exotic places; Australia, Asia, Europe and Africa, even from Fairmont, N.C. One of the Vegas Strip's most unusual annual spectacles had doubled in size in a single year.

*Combat Weapons*, Omega Group's new high-tech military weapons journal, has taken the helm of the annual trade show and, as always, Expo '85 was a big draw. Old-timers noted the gradual shift toward larger and more sophisticated exhibits, plus the presence of a few Pentagon contract companies and international ordnance manufacturers such as GIAT. Still, from snooping to sniping,

**ABOVE LEFT AND LEFT:** Scuba classes taught by SOF Contributing Editor John Donovan were sold out. Here Donovan talks with one of his more courageous students, Mel Tatrow, who doesn't let the fact that he lost both legs in Vietnam stop him from having a good time. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*



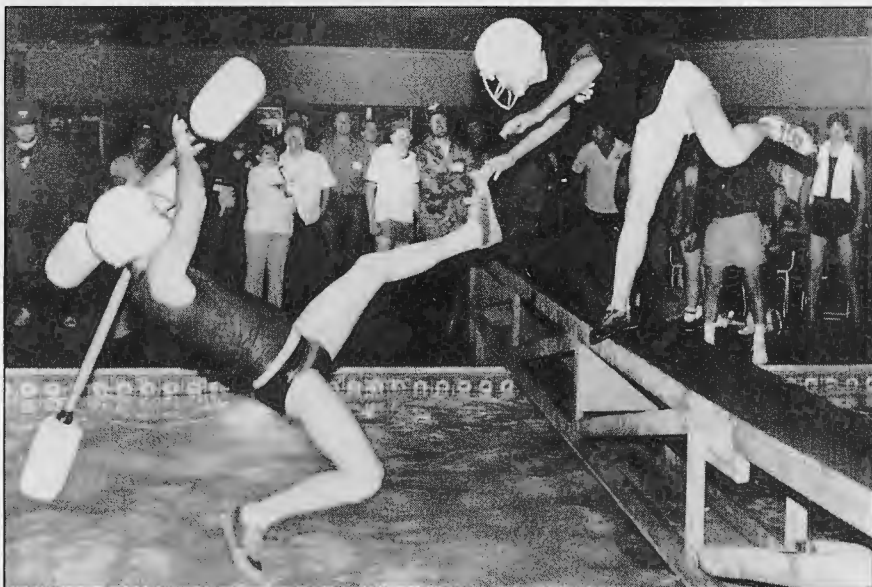
Ninja books, cammied looks and machine-gun nookie posters, Ronbo T-shirts and all manner of lowbrow and high-tech militaria/literature, the expo had it all. Assault sailboards, kayaks, top-of-the-line electronic surveillance equipment, some of the nation's leading manufacturers of firearms and assault rifle accessories. And camouflage. Did I mention camouflage? Everything you'd ever thought of in camouflage — and many things you probably hadn't — were for sale.

The SOF seminars were also quite popular. Topics ranged from Soviet sniping techniques, a session conducted by the magazine's internationally noted Kremlin military analyst, David Isby, to the latest intel on the POW/MIA situation in Indochina by the Special Forces personnel who ran a highly secretive operation aimed at freeing U.S. servicemen still being held (see "POWs vs. Uncle Sam," SOF, January '86). Those who had to pick and choose between seminars and other activities who wish to hear what was said at the seminars may still do so. Call or write for a title listing: On-Site Taping Services, 6942 Cantaloupe Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91405, (213) 786-1941. There are 17 cassette tapes covering seminar presentations. Each tape costs \$7.75 and with every six ordered the seventh is free.

The only somber note at the convention was the accidental death of 30-year-old Carl Nutter of Las Vegas. Nutter, who had signed up for the jump school sponsored and taught by the Phantom Division, died when his parachute failed to open properly.

The knife fighting class sponsored by Cold Steel Inc. proved quite

**TOP RIGHT AND ABOVE RIGHT:** These guys are destined to do it again, until the D.I. gets tired. For the second year, SOF's Pugil Stick Tournament proved very popular, for participants and spectators alike. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*



**BELOW LEFT:** Gerald Johannes of Ordnance Development Corp. looks a bit like the absent-minded professor as he uses his cigarette to light a fuse on this three-inch (roughly) mortar round and prepares to drop it down his homemade tube. Projected range: 10 miles...

**BELOW:** After the range officer corrected Gerald's aim (elevation via screw mount, traversing with Kentucky windage) to avoid the possibility of hitting Las Vegas, it's bombs away. Here the round streaks skyward, off for ...?





popular with conventioners and the news media, especially after actor Robert Duvall signed up. The Academy Award winner tried to keep his presence as low-key as possible, although at times that proved understandably difficult with so many fans of *Apocalypse Now* and *The Great Santini* walking around. Duvall, *Soldier of Fortune* Publisher Robert K. Brown and other magazine staff members did get a few quite minutes together in Brown's Sahara suite to talk about Duvall's upcoming movie in which the actor plays a mercenary hired to free a kidnap victim in South America.

The scuba class taught by John Donovan, SOF's contributing editor for demolitions, also was filled to capacity, including one gritty vet who lost both legs in Vietnam. The qualifying dive on nearby Lake Mead went off without a hitch. Dr. Demo will be teaching an SOF-sponsored scuba class sometime this winter in the Cayman Islands. See January's *Bulletin Board* for details.

Duvall was not the only celebrity to appear this year at the SOF Convention. Major General Ron Reid-Daly, founder of Rhodesia's famed Selous Scouts, came as honored guest. Also prominent on the speaker's podium at press conferences and the banquet was Dr. Jack Wheeler, noted professional adventurer, philosopher, author and champion of anti-communist causes around the world. Wheeler, director of the Freedom Research Foundation, was instrumental in bringing three other dignitaries to Las Vegas; Figueiredo Paulo of Angola, the U.S. representative for UNITA; and Artur

**ABOVE LEFT:** "I don't get no respect!" SOF staffer G.B. Crouse, who served as D.I. for the 1985 Pugil Stick Tournament, got the usual wet treatment from contestants after exhorting them on to the thrill of victory or the agony of defeat. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*

**BELOW:** Short round! Well, not quite the wild blue yonder, just a little shy of the impact area. The round hits the ground and like a good soldier begins rolling off toward the enemy.

**BELOW RIGHT:** Suddenly struck by the realization that it may be back to the drawing board, Gerald decides to call it a day, a decision that makes a relieved range officer's day.





da Fonseca and Fanuel Mahluza of RENAMO, an anti-Marxist group seeking to free Mozambique from Moscow's puppet regime. Nicaragua was represented by Mario Calero, whose brother, Adolfo, is commander in chief of the FDN, Nicaragua's largest anti-Sandinista group. Accompanying Calero were three FDN troopers, 'Charley,' 'Bennie' and 'Sierra III.'

J. Michael Plaxco looted Vegas as first-place winner of the *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun International Combat Shooting Match. He walked away with 10 grand and a trophy. Over \$50,000 in cash and prizes were awarded to winners.

Fritz Borchardt of Stor-Fjeld Ltd. was back in Vegas with his human spiders, performing a simulated terrorist-hostage situation for the benefit of those around the pool. Borchardt & Crew rappelled down the side of the Sahara, forced their way into the terrorists' lair, dispatched the bad guys and scampered down the side of the hotel with the beautiful damsel no longer in distress. All reached the ground safely and the crowd by the pool cheered wildly.

Back by popular demand was the pugil stick tournament, staged not only for the benefit of those conventioners who wanted to act out their aggressive tendencies, but for

**LEFT: A rappelling student (left) of Stor-Fjeld Ltd. gets some pointers from the old master himself, Fritz Borchardt. Fritz said the 1985 classes were more successful than ever; no drop-outs, eh, Fritz? Photo: Dale Andradé**

**BELOW LEFT: F.J. Borchardt of Stor-Fjeld Ltd., right, provides cover as fellow SWAT team member enters Sahara Hotel stairwell during simulated terrorist-hostage rescue, staged for the benefit of those gathered around the pool for the pugil stick tournament. Photo: Dale Andradé**

**BELOW: Fun in the sun, SOF-style. These guys were only a small part of fun and games, at home on the range at the 1985 convention. Photo: Dale Andradé**





the idle amusement (not to mention gambling pleasure) of those who streamed out of the casino to watch this military version of a he-man contest. The fight everyone was talking about was the Holmes-Spinks matchup, but the most exciting clashes were over the Sahara pool. This rather informal contest promises to be a regular event in conventions to come. Perhaps some cash prizes might be in order in the future.

Punctuating the pugil pummeling on the final night were some artillery simulators someone had hidden with time fuses around the pool area. These little pranks really got the Sahara Hotel security people going. And if that wasn't enough, another joker ignited a smoke bomb in the hallway outside Brown's suite during a VIP reception. At least one little old lady who had survived the MGM Grand Hotel fire that killed scores of people was not amused.

Please file under the heading of unconventional — or maybe just Plain Weird — the rather inebriated chap riding up and down the Sahara elevators at 2 a.m., stopping on every floor to loudly blow a metal whistle through an electronic bullhorn and read a few passages from the Book of Isaiah. He was threatening anyone who got near him with a stun gun and seemed to have the elevator car all to himself. There is no truth to the rumor that the maniac in question happened to be one of the magazine's associate editors who has a Southern drawl and was doing his Dr. Gonzo imitation.

But the convention calmed down to a level of respect commensurate with the occasion of the closing night banquet. Patriotic fervor ran high as Brown and his invited guests marshaled the crowd to Free World causes and all that is good and true. The convention concluded in a spirit typifying *Soldier of Fortune*: Death to Tyrants! ☒



**TOP LEFT:** Cammied conventioners come in all ages, shapes and sizes. (Left to right) Debra Kennedy, Emilee, 2, Brittnee, 2 months, and Gil Kennedy take a break during the rappelling demonstration held at the Sahara. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*

**CENTER LEFT:** Sportily dressed SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Academy Award winner Robert Duvall met during the convention to discuss Duvall's new movie project in which he portrays a mercenary. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*

**LEFT:** Three-Gun Match shooter Neil Keegstra, armed with new military 9mm Beretta, sprints up the canyon range during the handgun phase of the competition. Photo: Bob Brown, Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch*



# ANGOLAN REFLECTIONS

## A Mercenary's Road to Hell

by Gary Acker

*My name is Gary Acker. I spent three years in the United States Marine Corps from 1972 to 1975. My specialty training was machine guns — M60s and .50-cal. M2 Brownings — and internal security. On 14 February 1976, after capture by the communist-backed MPLA and their Cuban allies in Angola, I began to serve a seven-and-a-half-year prison term for the "crime" of being a mercenary.*

**I**T all started eleven years ago when I saw an article reprinted from the Sacramento Bee concerning the recruitment of mercenaries for service in Angola. It piqued my interest, since I'd wanted to get into this line of work after being discharged from the Marine Corps.

I wrote, and Bufkin wrote back. In subsequent communication Bufkin told me I would have to pay my own way to Zaire, but I would be reimbursed upon arrival. That

Gary Acker, after his release from prison, poses with Holden Roberto. Photo courtesy Gary Acker



was almost true: I would be paying my way, but I would also pay his. And I never would get paid back . . . unless you consider room and board in an Angolan prison getting paid back.

We arranged to meet at the Fresno airport on 26 December 1975. Bufkin couldn't afford his own ticket, so I paid for both of ours.

We flew to Los Angeles and met up with Frank Mariano and Lobo del Sol, who were planning to go to Angola with us. But things kept getting delayed so we returned to Fresno. Lobo and I waited for weeks between Bufkin's house and the Hilton Hotel. It was on-again, off-again. And I was paying all the bills.

Finally, the FNLA air-serviced stronghold of Carmona (Uige), Angola, fell so we couldn't fly straight in anymore. We waited some more.

During this interlude, Bufkin had started his paper, *Mercenary Forces Group*. Lobo and I had whiled away our empty hours by typing it and organizing the files and categorizing letters. We had letters from all over the world: from a man who had 12 Belgian mercenaries ready to go but needed money, to a man who had been on the *Mayaguez*. I catalogued them all and listed them by specialty and training. I was working for Bufkin, I still hadn't been paid, I had already written off the loan of the price of Bufkin's plane ticket, and the money I'd saved from the Marine Corps was giving out fast.

I finally had an attack of good sense and went home in January 1976. That was when I received a telephone call from the FBI. I told them everything was off.

Soon after, Lobo called and asked me if I was still interested in going to Angola. My only question was, "Who's recruiting?"

"Well, I can't tell you." But I knew who it was. And Bufkin still hadn't repaid the money that he owed me. I decided to go anyway.

I met Lobo at the Sky View Hotel in New York along with Eugene Scalon and Gus Grillo. The next day we met up with the



others at Kennedy airport. Grillo was having some problems with his papers because he was an Argentine citizen. Daniel Gearhart met us at Kennedy, but it wasn't actually until we arrived at Charles de Gaulle that I ever spoke to him. At Charles de Gaulle we changed planes and headed to Kinshasa.

We landed in Kinshasa late on 7 February. No one was there to meet us from the FNLA so we waited at the airport. It didn't take long before we were hassled by the airport security people. They checked our vaccination cards and noticed that I was missing a cholera vaccination and Danny didn't have a vaccination card at all. The airport officials took Danny, me and George Bacon into their medical inspection room with trays full of empty syringes and an empty medicine cabinet.

"Well, gentlemen, you don't have your vaccination? How are we going to resolve this?"

They wanted to be bribed. Danny paid



\$70 for all of us. Then they asked me how much currency I had — \$7 in cash and \$130 in travelers checks. A Zairean official grabbed the \$7 out of my hand.

Then a Zairean army officer took all of our passports, never to be seen again. Someone from the FNLA finally showed up — I believe it was General Garcia. Two taxicabs picked us up and drove us to FNLA headquarters in Kinshasa.

At FNLA headquarters, close-mouthed British mercenaries watched us intently. Then an American, Nick Hall, and the Brits took us to the Palace Restaurant not far from the American Embassy in Kinshasa. On the way, one Brit pointed to the American Embassy.

"If you guys want to go back there's the American Embassy."

While we were having dinner they told stories of what it was like at the border. I wasn't paying much attention, but I did notice that Eugene Scalon didn't have much of an appetite. He said he would wait out-

**FNLA troops fire RPD light machine gun.**  
Photo: Al J. Venter

side for us. Instead he went to the American Embassy and turned himself in. He wanted to go home. Later, Danny and George got a phone call from the American Embassy. They ordered us to report to the American Embassy. If we didn't, they threatened to knock down the doors to get us. I wish they had.

Instead, after dinner we were taken to the Intercontinental in Kinshasa where we stayed three days and two nights. I roomed with Lobo, Danny roomed with Bacon and Bufkin was with Tom Otis. Otis was supposedly a liaison between Holden Roberto and the military. We thought the plot was thickening, finally. Were we ever wrong: The weirdness was just beginning.

When Lobo and I left our room at night we put a small piece of paper in the jam so if anybody opened the door it would fall. When we returned, the paper was on the

floor but the files were in a briefcase. They hadn't been opened, but a bedspread was pulled back. Someone had been in our room, and we never found out who it was.

Colonel Peter MacLeese, ex-British SAS and a colonel with the FNLA, came up the second night we were there and briefed us on the situation at the front. He asked if we were still interested, what our specialties were and told us that we would be lieutenants. If we could accept the situation, that is.

Basically we were losing. Only two white mercenaries were holding the area, though more were expected the following day. It was hopeless, but we were going down to do what we could. Everything around Sao Salvador (Mbanza Congo) had fallen.

It looked grim. Colonel MacLeese told us what had happened with Callan and the massacre that occurred at Mbanza Congo. (See "Mad Dog Callan, A Merc Runs Amuck," *SOF*, Fall 1976.) Callan was on the run in the bush. If we saw Callan, he said, we were to shoot him on sight.



On 9 February we were to link up with some British mercs who were going to be coming in. Then we were to fly to Sao Salvador, but our departure was delayed. Back to the hotels.

Then I heard from Lobo that Bufkin wanted to silence me. Bufkin didn't want anything to get out to the FBI. He hoped I might get killed in the field, and there were hints that bad luck might get some active assistance in my case. I was furious and that's when I mentioned the money that Bufkin still owed me.

But I found I wasn't alone. Bufkin owed a lot of people a lot of money. Bufkin had charged a bill of \$2,500 on Tom Otis' credit cards. He was supposed to have given \$500 to Otis' wife and \$500 to Otis' parents but he didn't.

When we put all of this together, Bufkin's lies came out. Along with the money problems, Bufkin had told me in Fresno that there were 250 mercenaries in Angola — Brits, Americans, French, Germans. He also said there were special commando groups that were fairly well-equipped. It was all lies.

Tom Otis told us that Bufkin was planning to go back to the States with \$76,000 in cash. We went into his room and opened his seabag. Out fell his bright red beret and his deerhunting cammies, followed by an UZI with a magazine pouch and three loaded magazines. He also had a loaded Walther P-38. What was he planning to do with this? Where was he going to go? He couldn't get through U.S. customs with that. We were very curious . . . and getting pissed.

Danny, Gus, Bacon, Lobo, Tom and I got into the elevator in search of Bufkin. And as the elevator door opened, we saw him.

"Get in the elevator, we want to talk to you." It was a good thing for the decor of the lobby that he followed orders.

When we reached our floor, we pushed him ahead of us down the hall and into Nick Hall's room. I pulled out Bufkin's P-38, chambered a round, checked the safety, and stuck it in my back pocket. Danny guarded the door with the UZI. Nobody was getting out.

I wanted to blow Bufkin away right there. Instead, we had a miniature court-martial.

Tom Otis was just as mad as I was. He was ready to let Bufkin and Nick Hall have it. (So far, Nick Hall had done little but run around with a little handbag with about \$10,000 in \$100 bills and a Browning 9mm in it.) As the ranting and raving continued Bufkin made a dumb mistake. He jumped out of his chair to get a cigarette. I didn't know what he was doing; the P-38 came out of my back pocket in a flash and I almost shot him. After that his behavior improved. He didn't move and kept his mouth shut.

We voted on Bufkin's fate and decided to send him to the front as a regular foot soldier — without his money. He was no longer a colonel. That was unanimous and our decision was final.

Finally we prepared to go into the field. We went to Holden Roberto's house which was right across the street from Mobutu's palace. Roberto presented each of us with two sets of Belgian camouflage uniforms.

I had brought all my own equipment so I had no intention of wearing what I was given. Besides, FNLA equipment wasn't known for its ruggedness. When we were out in the field Lobo's wallet fell out of his pants pocket — still enclosed in the pocket. All I took from their stores was Bufkin's UZI and a brand-new Belgian-made Browning 9mm, some extra magazines and a magazine pouch.

We ran into some Brits dressed in civvies. They were anxious to go home. They had arrived 28 January and it was now 9 February. That was all we learned about them before they told us that their orders were not to say anything to us. But we did hear about one guy who couldn't go home yet. He was in a hospital. He had been making a booby trap and it went off.

But we were headed for the border and in pretty good spirits. We stopped along the way for some bread and Simba beer while we waited for a Panhard scout car. It finally arrived followed by a truck carrying ammunition and towing a Chinese howitzer. We headed toward Zaire and the Angolan border.

I was in the scout car with Lobo. The scout car kept losing power, and held us up in what could have been good ambush sites, besides separating us from the other vehicles. We weren't too happy with it. Fortunately, we also had a Land Rover, so we abandoned the brand-new Panhard.

The border was a letdown. No barbwire fences or bunkers, just a bar across the dirt road guarded by a couple of FNLA soldiers. George Bacon spoke a few words in French and they opened up the barricade. We all jumped into the Rover and headed off toward Sao Salvador.

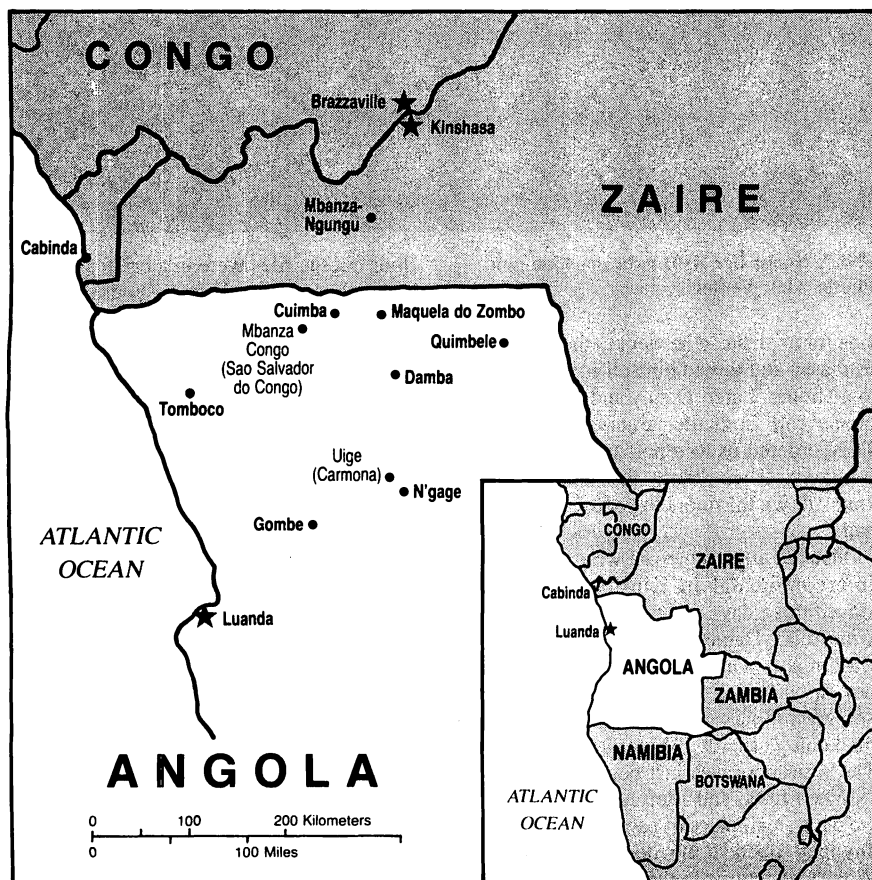
There were a lot of refugees on the road headed toward Zaire. Sao Salvador was pretty much deserted by the time we got there. When the Brits arrived earlier the crowds cheered and waved. They didn't cheer us.

At the governor's house in Sao Salvador we noticed Portuguese manning the tanks and loading shells into the tanks. A vehicle pulled up and dropped off a bunch of weapons which I believe had come up from the Maquela de Zombo area. They were getting ready for an operation.

The first person Lobo and I talked to was MacLeese regarding Col. Bufkin — make that Private Bufkin. He reviewed our informal court-martial and upheld it.

There was no time for rest, though — we headed out on a two-day recce to check avenues of escape around the border. Douglas was there when the first group of British arrived and whether he worked for the CIA or with Canadian Intelligence, I don't know. But there was something special about this guy. My buddy (and eventual cellmate) John Lawlor told me that Callan would tell everyone else what to do, but not Douglas Newbee, or "Canada," as we called him.

We were paid two weeks' advance pay in Kinshasa: \$1,000 in \$100 bills. Actually, it





was \$2,500/month, \$1,000 in the first installment and \$1,500 in the next. Things were looking up.

We found ourselves put up in rooms at the governor's mansion. There were no beds so we slept on the floor. The bathroom was a mess — the bathtub was full of blood, bandages and a combat jacket. Everything was caked in blood. Evidently, they used it as some sort of hospital.

On 11 May 1976, the FNLA decided they needed someone to go back to the States to get more Americans and they planned to send Lobo. Lobo had gone out on a patrol to the west and he and John Nammock had just missed making contact with the enemy. He left that afternoon.

**Mercenaries represented all nationalities: American, Hungarian, British, Argentine and Portuguese. This Portuguese marine-turned-mercenary was attached to an FNLA squadron on Nova Lisboa (Huambo). Photo: Al J. Venter**

I woke on the the 11th at first light and had some canned bully beef, cheese and Zairean bread. MacLeese gave an order to clean the place. Ammo boxes were strewn everywhere. Orders were to shave and shine boots and make morning formation on the 12th.

I didn't do any of this. I wasn't in Angola to shine my shoes or shave and I wasn't in the mood to play games. If MacLeese

wanted to court-martial me I would have shot him. I still had the UZI resting next to the pistol on my holster. Even my friends knew that meant business.

After we'd arrived in Sao Salvador, "Shotgun Charlie" came up to me in the main living room and said, "Did anyone ever call you Babyface before?"

I had my hand right where I always kept it — on the UZI. "Not more than once."

Anybody who was there, or ever read about the Angolan mercenary operation could tell you that Charlie was more than a bubble off. He had already killed way too many people with Callan. But he just walked away and never spoke to me again. He knew I would have shot him on the spot.

I hadn't come to Angola to play games — I wanted to fight.

On the 11th, Gus, George and I scouted the area. I drove the Panhard scout car around the outskirts of town, checking out the houses and vantage points where personnel would be stationed to keep an eye out for enemy troops. We were joined by a couple of black officers and Sergeant Gongga who was MacLeese's interpreter.

Then Gus, Sgt. Gongga and I made the liaison with another FNLA garrison. We took the ammunition, all the old weapons, as much ammunition as we could, brand-new M1 carbines, two or three cases of M33 grenades, one MG34 and some mines. In addition, we took 20 old heavy-barreled Belgian FNs.

Then we took the FNLA comandantes and two crews of 10 to 20 men out for training to a place that looked like a secondary airstrip. The youngest was about 12 years old and he did the best in performance. The kid came into the compound on Friday the 13th, carrying an M1 Carbine and said he had been in five major firefights and that his parents had been killed by FAPLA. We gladly trained him.

Both Gus and I took turns firing at each other, up to three feet away from each other's feet. Afterward we had the FNLA comandantes do it. Most of them developed sudden stomach problems and couldn't go on with it. But the kid did everything. He threw the grenades, he fired the LAWs, he did the fire and movement.

Because I'm a machine-gunner, I checked over the inventory. I immediately grabbed a .30-cal. Browning. Unfortunately that fine machine gun was typical of the poor weapons maintenance we ran into. When we fired it the bezel ring and flash suppressor came off. It would only fire one round at a time and you had to cock it each time.

After firing a few things we hadn't seen

**FNLA crews learn how to fire RPG-7s during training exercise. Photo: Al J. Venter**



before, George and I settled down to an inventory. We had 120mm, 81mm and 60mm mortars, grenades, brand-new LAWs and M79 grenade launchers. There were a couple of crates from Korea marked "Agricultural Equipment," with small British wire-guided anti-tank rockets. There were two T-54 tanks, one Panhard armored car with two mounted GPMGs, one small Panhard, a 60mm mortar, three Land Rovers with 106mm recoilless rifles, mounted, and one Rover with a Soviet 12.7mm HMG. They also had an FN MAG.

On the gate in Sao Salvador they had an honest-to-God World War II German MG34 with a 100-round belt of armor-piercing rounds. After some cleaning it functioned flawlessly. Two more MG34s lay in the back room, one with a completely rusted-out barrel, and a brand-new MG42 which became my baby. That '42 was my machine gun and I carried it everywhere I went. Since I didn't have an A-gunner, I had to carry my own ammo — 200 rounds around my neck and 500 rounds in a can. Of course, I made sure every vehicle I rode in had extra cans of ammunition. I gave my UZI to George Bacon.

We had quite a bit of ammunition, especially for the MG34. They had the non-disintegrating metal-link belts so I had Sgt. Gongga take out the 7.62mm rounds and insert German 7.92mm, then I put the belts together. They had more belts than I knew what to do with. We piled explosives and ammunition right under our window by the back of the house. I finished the inventory and gave it to MacLeese.

There was a conference on the morning of the 11th. Holden Roberto told me that if anybody came near, to shoot on sight. This was Holden Roberto's town and he wanted us to hold it as long as possible.

"What do they think this is," one Brit remarked, "the Alamo?"

They eventually moved beds into our room on the 12th. But I continued to sleep on the floor. I still haven't been able to shake the habit: To this day I sleep on the floor.

The food was improving, though. The quartermaster bought some goats, fresh Zairean bread, Simba beer, fresh small tomatoes, bully beef and noodles bought from the locals.

MacLeese had to go back to Kinshasa on the 13th. But before he left he and his men had tested an 82mm Chinese recoilless rifle in a little valley outside Sao Salvador. I was in the ammunition shed and all I heard was weapons firing and blacks yelling, "FAPLA, FAPLA, FAPLA..." All I saw was an exodus out the front gate. I went up by the flagpole and most of the British were standing by the front door of the big house watching. What was going on? All the blacks were running so the enemy must be around somewhere. But the blacks were going in the opposite direction of where they thought the enemy was.

MacLeese, John Mamick and a Hungarian mercenary pointed their weapons at a

guy who was just about to drive out. MacLeese smashed the window of the truck, grabbed him and pulled him out. That was all the mercs needed. They rounded up all the black soldiers, took away their red berets and lectured them. If we had really been attacked we had decided to head out across the border and all blacks would be considered enemies.

On the 13th, MacLeese went back to Kinshasa and Gus Grillo mounted a patrol in the morning. He left with Mamick, Gearhart, Charlie and a few others ... twelve altogether. He went out in two Rovers and took a Stalin's Organ trailer-mounted multiple rocket launcher. They were supposed to go to Cuimba and slow the advance of the Cuban column. Cubans were moving day and night, so confident of their safety that they drove with their headlights on. We had some unsourced aerial recon photos of the columns moving in the night.

The Cubans were close enough that we'd sent a recon team the night before. We were all hungry for action, so the night patrol had carried a silenced .32 Beretta for sentry removal. They snooped and scurried and brought back nothing but bad news. The closest Cuban column was just the other side of Cuimba. Our force was supposed to block them there, just to buy a little time.

Dave, a British guy who was sleeping in our room, was supposed to have been in charge of a second group, and he wanted me to go along. Having nothing better to do, I took my machine gun and ammunition and I went with Dave. After all, I was supposed to be a mercenary. We were supposed to proceed south by southeast to a fork in the road by Gombe.

It's important to remember that these were symbolic actions. The force manning mud walls at the Alamo had nothing on us. We were surrounded and outnumbered thousands to one. Within days Tomboco fell, Damba fell, Maquela do Zombo fell. Stalin's Organs and MG42s weren't the only things we shared with the Germans on the Eastern Front: We were dead meat. Cubans were closing in, and they were exerting every effort to catch us in Sao Salvador.

So anyway, they sent us out. George and a couple of men were loading up the vehicle and left after us. They were going to prepare to blow two small concrete bridges, just to give another couple of days before the Cubans and FAPLA closed on us from another direction.

We took off with a PRC-25 radio, personal weapons, water and a little food loaded into the GPMG-mounted Panhard and a Rover and drove up to the fork by Gombe. We were barreling down the road for some hours with the abandon of desperate men when one of the Panhard gunners up top yelled that he saw headlights. The driver ran the scout car off the road to await developments.

Too bad for us, the Panhard — like everything else — was badly maintained and the reverse gear didn't work. The driver had pulled off at an angle, headed down the hill

and into heavy bush. He couldn't drive forward to get back on the road and he couldn't back up.

The driver stayed to fool with the Panhard, and the rest of us moved down the edge of the road to survey the situation and to intercept the vehicles coming toward us. But nothing came. The lights had come from campfires, and the bouncing of the vehicles made the fires look like they were moving. We trudged back, disappointed that there was still no action, although just as pleased not to be facing thousands of blacks and Cubans from the cover of a disabled scout car.

We finally left the Panhard. As a one-time Marine machine-gunner, I wanted them to take the MAGs mounted on the Panhard, but I already had my MG42, and nobody else wanted to carry one. Besides, the Rover was too small for all the people we had to pile into it, and the MGs would have complicated things. So we pulled the bolts from the MAGs and left them on the Panhard, loaded into the Rover and took off.

A half-hour later, one of the men saw lights behind us, so we pulled into a village and I set up my MG42 on a mound of dirt. Nothing appeared on the road, again, but a black woman saw us and brought us bananas. That was a nice gesture, but staying there would have exposed the villagers to the Cuban attack, and it would make target identification harder for us.

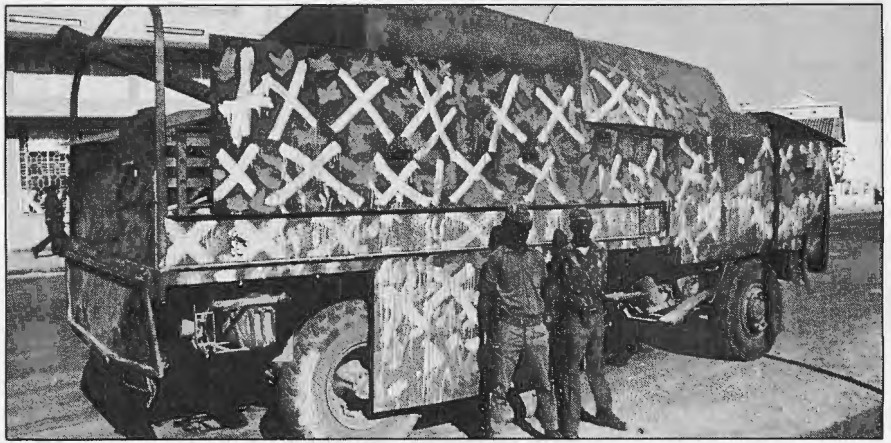
At this point, Dave obviously didn't know what to do, was feeling generally helpless, and had quit issuing orders. I assumed command.

We backtracked up the road to a hut with a little orchard. The grass in and around this orchard was cut to the ground. This was a better place to stop the Cuban column.

I parked the Rover in a ditch where it was covered by long grass, facing back toward Sao Salvador (for our getaway), and mounted my MG42 on the hood. There was a bit of a moon out that night — it wasn't pitch black so we'd be able to see the Cubans come, and they wouldn't see us until it was too late.

Besides, this wasn't a last stand. All we were supposed to do was hold the FAPLA and Cubans on the road until just before first light. In the dark they would have no idea how many of us there were, if we kept fire discipline and moved periodically, and the Angolans wouldn't be anxious to attack in the dark. The Cubans would have their hands full with the Angolans. We were pretty safe, all things considered, and by first light Bacon and the blacks would be ready to blow the bridge as soon as we crossed it.

I set watches, but I stayed by my MG, awake, all night. But the Cubans never came so, reprieved, we headed back to the bridge to link up with Bacon. The plan had been to blow the bridge after we crossed it. But one of his blacks had shot himself in the heel with his M2 Carbine. Then Bacon had decided he was going to leave nothing but craters where the bridge foundations had



**Improvised armored cars were frequently used by white mercenaries in Angola.**  
Photo: Al J. Venter

been. So between patching up the wounded black, and digging enormous amounts of TNT into the dirt around the bridge abutments, they weren't ready.

When Bacon had everything wired I wanted the bridge to come down. But Bacon wanted radio confirmation, and we couldn't reach Sao Salvador from the river valley, so we drove back to the village to find higher ground. But we still couldn't reach Sao Salvador.

While we were messing with the radio, Canada came down the road with a Portuguese driver and two Brits. We briefed him and he told us that the Cubans were slowing down, and our other patrol was in Cuimba. Canada wanted me and George to go with him to link up with the other patrol.

After we sat in the village for a few minutes, talking with the chief and eating peanuts, we headed back to the bridge, packed up Bacon's crew and my patrol and sent them back in the two working vehicles. George and I climbed into the back of Canada's long-wheelbase grey Rover and we took off.

That Rover had a white-painted metal roof, and the side doors were removed. The back door was still intact, and they had loaded the back with ammo and explosives. There were three in the front and two hanging on behind the front doors, standing on the running boards. Getting in and out of the back door with our weapons was a problem. Thinking things had gone too well so far, I told Bacon to get in before me, and I'd sit next to the back door with my machine gun. That way, if we got hit, I'd be out the door first with some firepower. George agreed and crawled in over the pile of munitions.

We went on down the road. The Portuguese driver was making the long, heavily loaded Rover fly on the dirt road and the guys on the sides were too busy hanging on to watch the bush.

"I don't like this, George."

George just shook his head.

After a while we came across a black on the road. The Portuguese slowed and asked him who he was. The black was carrying an AK and had new chest-pouches full of

magazines. He said he was FNLA. The Pork took him at his word and we barreled on down the road.

Fernando, the Portuguese, seemed encouraged by seeing somebody on the road so he started driving faster. Finally his driving got to Canada, and Canada told him to slow down. We were headed for a steep-sided dip with a sharp rise behind it, and nobody but the Pork seemed to be eager to launch the Rover from that ramp.

Canada bought most of us another minute of life.

We went over the rise, just barely under control, and slewed up behind a smoking blue stake-bed truck with our brakes locked up. Everybody was treating this as if it were normal, perhaps because they were glad that we weren't being thrown about the inside of the Rover.

Me, I was furious. We were encircled, we'd just seen a black scout, and this truck didn't belong to us. I twisted around to face the front, and thought about shooting our driver and taking the wheel. I wish I had: lives would have been saved, and I would've stayed out of prison. The first rule in motor travel in combat is to keep moving. The ground around the road was level and grassy with a few trees. We would have made it.

The Portuguese drove us right up under the bumper of the stake-bed and stopped. When I looked around there was a BDRM on the side of the road facing us. We had just become the rearguard of a Cuban column.

The enemy wasn't nearly as surprised as we were. I saw a guy stand up off to the right of the BDRM and start firing. The first bullet went right through the windshield. The show was over. Silence followed the first shot for the space of three beats of my racing heart and then the Rover started coming apart like a beer can blasted by birdshot.

I must have been hit by the first volley, but didn't know it. Aluminum paneling ripped and popped before my eyes and glass flew through the air like leaves in a tornado. I got hit from behind the left calf and the bullet came out through the shin. Then I was hit again in the right boot *but the round* stopped in the hard plastic, leaving a blood blister in my heel. All I heard was gunfire.

*Continued on page 130*

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## BATS, BUGS & BLISTERS

Continued from page 79

Don't mess with the caterpillars.

The two-toed sloth is not one of the pests you have to worry about in the Central American jungle, but it does add to the list of ailments you can pick up. It carries a nasty disease called Leishmaniasis. Enter the sand fly, nicknamed "no-see-um." The sand fly spends all his life from ground level to approximately two feet above the ground and will often bite the two-toed sloth before biting a human like you and me. That makes us the proud new owners of Leishmaniasis. It usually takes anywhere from two weeks to a year to show up, usually in the form of jungle sores or topical ulcers. One variation of this disease is fatal when untreated.

The problem with the disease is that the sores are not painful and it will heal on its own about 70 percent of the time. Of this 70 percent, another 5 percent will have the disease return in its fatal form years later. For the 30 percent that will not heal on their own, it will continue to spread. This disease can be cured at a medical facility with a drug called Penastan.

That scourge of tropical areas the world over, the mosquito, infests the jungles of Central America as well. There are 275 different types of mosquitoes in Panama. They carry dengue, yellow fever, typhus and encephalitis. To protect yourself against these jungle nasties wear loose, comfortable clothing and use plenty of bug spray. The most important thing to remember is that while Uncle Sam has pretty much wiped out malaria in Panama, Uncle Juan has not managed to do so in many of the other Latin countries. In Panama they have a yellow fever epidemic about every seven years and, according to Murphy's Law, it will probably break out again the year you go down to JOTC.

And you have to have spiders in the jungle. Spiders like to live in warm, dark, and moist places — so expect them there and avoid them. The spider is over 300 million years old. The spider used to be an aquatic animal so his food source, insects, evolved wings and left the water. The spider evolved spider webs and became the world's first paratrooper. And there are many types in the jungle.

Tarantula spiders have a mean bite. The pain will last three to four hours, but their poison is mild. If you don't mess with him, he won't mess with you. The black widow and the brown spider live in Panama, and antivenin is available. Fortunately, they are rare so there is little to worry about. Panama also has the brown recluse spider. When this little monster nips you, there is often no pain. However, the area around the bite soon develops gangrene if not treated with antivenin. The only way to save your life may be to amputate the infected area.

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they're not. The vampire is usually very small, often no larger than your extended thumb. The difference between a vampire and a fish bat or a fruit bat — both quite harmless — is first, the small size of the vampire, and second, the lack of a skin membrane between the vampire's rear legs, and thirdly, it carries a large claw at the tip of its wings. The vampire is a nocturnal hunter and has an estimated flight range of about two miles from its roost to its food source.

The little vampire flies around looking for a warm-blooded, non-active food source. He takes off in the early evening looking for a warm, still body. When he finds it, he dives down and crash lands about 15 feet from the body. Then he stops and waits; he's listening to see if the victim is still breathing. He wants to know if you're dead or just sleeping. He only dines on the living. Then he'll low-crawl over to your position and look for an exposed part of your skin. Then he chows down.

Vampires produce two chemicals in their saliva. The first numbs the skin when they lick the exposed area. After he bites in and removes a scoop of skin approximately 3mm wide and 5mm long, the second chemical prevents the blood from clotting. Your blood will then run freely — for up to six or eight hours after he's done eating.

Vampires are the number one carrier of rabies in the jungle and since they drink around five gallons of blood a year from dozens of victims, there's plenty of opportunity for them to catch and spread the disease. Once bitten, you've got to take the rabies serum. You have 10 days to take the shots. Relax, they no longer give the series of shots in the stomach. They now give one in the arm and the remainder in the area of the bite, which I might add is most unpleasant if they have to put all that serum into your ear or your finger tip — two of the most common places for vampire bites.

Even the frogs in the jungle can be dangerous. The marine frog is real ugly and can get as large as eight inches long and approximately one and a half pounds in weight. But he's more than just ugly. He has two poison glands located on the shoulder on either side of the head which secrete a milky poison.

The golden frog is perhaps the most deadly. When injured or threatened, this frog secretes a poison through his skin. It is the most deadly biotoxin known to man and is 200 times more deadly than strychnine. It takes 1/100,000 of an ounce to kill a man and there is no cure or antivenin.

It goes without saying that snakes are an everyday part of the jungle. While most of them are not as deadly as they look, they do have a reputation for scaring the hell out of people. Stay away from all of them, though, — some can kill you.

The bushmaster is one of the most poisonous snakes in the world and his home is right here in Central America. At about eight to 12 feet long with a lance-shaped head and long fangs, he can do you some

real harm. His scales have wart-like bumps on them and the Panamanians call him "the warty one" in Spanish. The bushmaster's venom is hemotoxic and when he strikes he can inject 20 times the amount of poison needed to kill you.

This snake is distinctive — a ridge of little triangular spines runs along its back and its coloring is similar to a boa's. The bushmaster is territorial, but not particularly aggressive — as long as you don't threaten it. It hunts and moves mostly at night, but it mates by day, so watch out. And don't worry, you'll know when it gets pissed off: his tail begins to vibrate and those loose scales on the tail begin to rattle, just like a rattlesnake. Get away.

The coral snake is another legless reptile to watch out for. This 10- to 20-inch-long snake has a neurotoxic venom that can kill you if not treated right away. There are 11 different types of coral snakes in Panama, so expect the color pattern to vary from species to species. The coral snake strikes at a 90-degree angle from the ground and his mouth opens to 90 degrees, so he can inflict a bite anywhere on the body.

Many different vipers lurk in the Central American jungle — all are dangerous. Most deliver a hemotoxic venom and live in trees. Vipers have lance-shaped heads, are yellow, green, or a shade of orange and have a tail like a monkey: they can hang off a limb and strike at anything that walks by.

We haven't gotten to the worst of the legless reptiles yet. The fer-de-lance wins this honor. It's four to five feet long with a hemotoxic venom and is responsible for 98 percent of the poisonous snakebites in Central America. The venom causes the tissue to deteriorate around the bite. This guy is bad and he will chase you. Fer-de-lances are fast and can strike two times in a single second. And the answer to your next question is no: he does not have to be in a coiled position to strike.

A couple of years or so ago Sergeant Hash of JOTC in Panama was milking a fer-de-lance of its venom. When he finished, he threw the snake back into a box. Now, snakes do not like to be thrown. It makes them feel insecure when you do that and, remember, this snake is bad. Well, anyway, the snake still had a residue of venom left on its fangs after being milked and it struck at the sergeant while falling through the air. It missed making a direct hit, but did succeed in scratching him on the finger with a passing fang. Our brave sergeant was treated for snakebite and an antivenin was administered. Unfortunately, one of the other effects of fer-de-lance venom is a breakdown of skin tissue — the skin begins to rot. Within a few days his finger was so decayed that it had to be amputated.

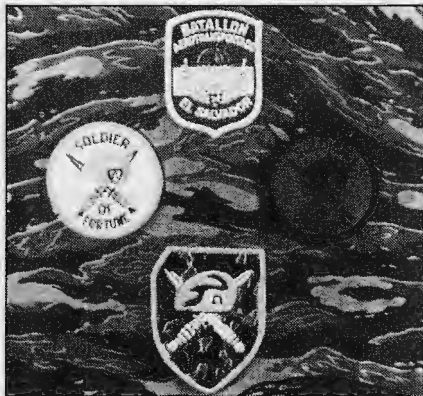
After reading all these horror stories about snakes, you might overestimate the power of their venom. That's better than underestimating it, but the fact remains that most people who die when bitten by a snake die from shock rather than poisoning. The



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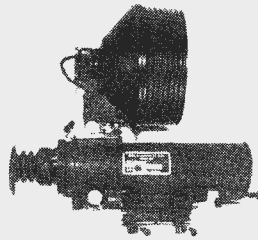
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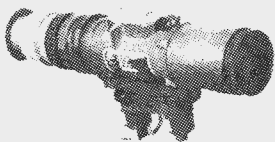
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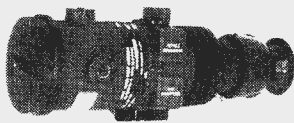
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first thing most people do when bitten by a snake is panic and run through the jungle yelling, "I'm gonna die! I'm gonna die!" You've got to stop that guy or he will die. His heart is beating like a frightened rabbit, forcing the poison to course through his system. Have him sit down and keep the area that was bitten below the level of the heart.

Next, expose the area that was bitten. Look for the fang marks. When you find them, don't you panic. Shouts of, "Oh, damn! You're gonna die!" will not help the victim's composure. Stay cool, keep talking to him and keep his mind off the problem. Keep him calm.

Remove all jewelry and watches from the victim to prevent them from acting as a tourniquet if swelling occurs. If there is swelling and the affected area is constricted, the tissue will die and he may lose a limb.

Select two constrictive bands — a web belt, a sling from a weapon, etc. They need to be one to two inches wide so that the skin will not swell and hide the wound from view. Then, restrict the poison to the area of the bite. Place the first constrictive band between the heart and the bite — approximately two to four inches from the bite, but not on a joint. Tie them tight, but loose enough that you can push one finger under the band. An indicator that the band is tied correctly is that the veins will pop up on the back of the hand. The pulse at the wrist should still be detectable, though. What you have done is build a dam, slowing — not stopping — the flow of blood into the area that was bitten and almost stopping the flow of blood with the poison back to the heart. The heart pumps the blood out to the limbs at 130 psi, but the blood returns to the heart at only 70 psi.

Next, place the second constrictive band two to four inches below the bite, tying the same way as the first band. Do not move or remove these bands. Keep the patient calm and call for immediate evacuation, priority: urgent. The remainder of the patrol should split up into groups of two and search a 50-meter circle around the place where your pal got nipped, capturing all snakes in the area. Get yourself a big stick — don't be cheap about it — something about eight to 12 feet should do.

When you find it, take your machete and cut the body in half at least six inches behind the head. Do not damage the head or the poison glands which are located within the first six inches behind the head. Put the snake in something safe and give it to the crew chief of the dustoff chopper (do not throw it on the pilot's lap). The doctor will need to be able to identify the snake, the size of the poison gland and the amount of venom remaining in the poison sac.

This long tale of jungle terrors only begins to scratch the surface. While I don't want to discourage you from setting foot in the jungle, I do want you to understand that can go down if you don't practice a little common sense. Watch yourself and, above all, know what awaits you in the jungle.

And now that you know, have fun. ☘

## BACK TO THE BUSH

*Continued from page 91*

town, I was met by some MDN members. As always, profuse hospitality was extended and we were made comfortable for the night. I was quartered in the private home of a collaborator and began to reorient myself to Central America.

The next day a vehicle arrived driven by Papi, an old comrade in arms from my days with ARDE, M3, and the Surinam caper (see "Merc Rip-off in Surinam," SOF, August '84). Papi is a veteran of the Korean War (U.S. Army) and speaks excellent English. He briefed me on the political and military events that had transpired since I had last seen him 18 months before.

Many of my old friends were dead. Ryan, a Vietnam vet and Nicaraguan patriot, had died when the *piricuacos* attacked Camp Tango. They had bombed the place first and then brought in special forces and a heli-borne assault. Ryan was on the radio. He described the battle over the air as they fought to the last man against the attacking Sandinistas. Ryan looked around and saw that he was the last man and dove into the Rio San Juan trying to escape. The weight of his gear took him to the bottom. What was left of him didn't float for five days.

Ryan and I were close. He was the one who christened me *Soldato sin Fortuna* (soldier without fortune). I've been paid in counterfeit French francs, stolen Dutch guilders, forged travelers checks and occasionally, American greenbacks. But I've never gotten rich fighting on behalf of freedom and probably never will. So the *Soldato sin Fortuna* label that Ryan gave me seemed appropriate.

My old friend Surdo, who had almost gotten me killed when we were operating out of *Luna Roja*, had lost four fingers to a single AK round. He was retired. Tonio and Todeo, two of Pastora's *comandantes*, had also retired. They had bought ranches in Costa Rica and were living the life of gentlemen farmers. The generally accepted explanation for their new-found status was that they had stolen the money by diverting supplies from their camps into the black market.

I thought of the weeks with nothing to eat but rice and beans because we were short of supplies.

Patufo, a 12-year-old Miskito boy who had fought with us, never made it to his 13th birthday. Many others were dead, wounded or just went home, tired and disgusted from fighting a war with not much more than their bare hands. Others had gone to the United States but found that they could not bear life as an exile and had returned to rejoin the struggle, more determined than ever.

When we arrived at the base camp, just across the border into Nicaragua, I met a half-dozen former comrades in arms among the 50 guerrillas stationed there. I also met several more who had known my wife when she was a nurse for ARDE back in '83. She had been very popular with the wounded

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men who were extremely gratified that a *gringa* cared enough about them to come to Central America and tend to their wounds. What a switch. She's usually known as Mrs. Dr. John and here I was known as *el esposo de compañera Sasha*.

Our first order of business at this camp was inventory, first of personnel, second of equipment. Half of the men had combat experience, some as much as eight years of fighting against Somoza and then fighting against the Sandinistas. There were two Cubans with Angolan military service. The men were healthy, physically fit and their morale was extremely high.

Equipment, however, was another story. FDN had recently purchased 5,000 G3 rifles. Fifty of these were dropped to El Negro's forces, 25 at this camp and 25 at another camp deeper in Indian country. We had one BAR, two RPDs, and an assortment of AKs, FALs and a few civilian-version semiautomatic 5.56mms. We had an RPG-7 with a couple dozen rockets, ammunition for the M79 grenade launcher and the .50-cal. machine gun. Sadly, we had neither M79 nor an M2 .50. There were two 60mm mortars and crews that had been trained by SOF's Captain Dale Dye (see "ARDE Aims for Action South of the Lake," SOF, June '85).

Commo equipment was straight from Radio Shack. Uniforms and boots consisted almost exclusively of donations from the readers of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. At

least half of the medicine had come from the bathroom cabinets of American veterans who had responded to El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund and Refugee Relief International pleas. Whoever William E. Anderson is, I'm sure the contra wearing your boots appreciates your generosity. More is needed.

El Negro currently had 100 men under arms in the mountains of Nicaragua. They were faced by two battalions of Sandinistas backed up by patrol boats and two Mi-24 helicopters. El Negro's plans, unlike those of Pastora, were not to ambush a few Sandinista patrols and make grandiose pronouncements from a safe villa somewhere in Costa Rica. El Negro still plans to strike at the heart of the Marxist government — and soon. But he needs help and right now we're wondering where this help is going to come from.

I've talked to the wimps in Congress and their Ivy League staffers and I've talked to the arrogant civil service types from the initialed agencies and I still don't see much help.

I'm back in the fight because I can't enjoy my freedom when my friends in Nicaragua don't have theirs. But I sure would like to see some help from the guys who can really afford it — like the U.S. government. After all, the contras' fight is in their interest. ✂

### SOF ADS GET RESPONSE!

## CZ 83

Continued from page 75

foot, this horizontal rig is lock-stitched with #207 polydacron thread. Also wet-molded and hand-boned, the Galco Defender model costs \$44.95 and features a half-harness (no provision for opposing side magazine pouches or handcuff cases) for maximum concealment. A Dot fastener on the holster body will accept an optional belt tie-down. The thumb-break strap has an internal polypropylene reinforcement and its fastener is countersunk to prevent scuffing the pistol. After the leather safety strap has been split, its fastener is attached and the strap cemented so the fastener does not touch the firearm. Rivets holding the nylon hangers onto the holster are also countersunk. The shoulder harness itself is fabricated from 4½-ounce chrome-tanned cowhide. The countersupport strap is made of polyelastic. Further information on this hand-rubbed oil-finish shoulder holster can be obtained from Galco Gun Leather, Dept. SOF, 4311 W. Van Buren, Phoenix, AZ 85043.

And exactly how can you obtain a CZ 83 to stuff into one of these holsters? The process, although tedious, is far from complicated. Czech firearms are imported into Canada by Pragotrade (Dept. SOF, 307 Humberline Drive, Rexdale, Ontario, M9W 5V1, Canada). Their price for the CZ

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83 is \$210 (U.S.). But since Czechoslovakia has an Unfavorable Nation status with the United States, the pistol is subject to a 65-percent duty.

To purchase a CZ 83 from Pragotrade, licensed firearms dealers must write to the BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Washington, D.C. 20226) and obtain ATF Form 6, which is an Application and Permit for Importation of Firearms, Ammunition and Implements of War. All the form's questions are self-evident, except that paragraph 8g (the weapon's serial number), should be answered "to be submitted on Form 6A." It takes about eight weeks for Form 6 to be processed and approved after return to the BATF.

When it has been approved, Form 6 will be returned to the dealer with two copies of ATF Form 6A. Photocopy the approved Form 6 and send it along with your payment to Pragotrade. The pistol will be shipped (by air freight, F.O.B. Toronto) to your local U.S. Customs Branch. The dealer must then clear U.S. Customs by properly executing the Form 6As and paying duty. He then sends his copy of Form 6A back to the BATF and that's the end of the matter. The total cost will come to approximately \$375 including duty and freight charges.

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## STARLIGHT CENTER

*Continued from page 70*

movements on three continents, for the government and private sector.

But Harry doesn't bother to grind any political or religious axes with his students, one sign in any paramilitary school of a professional program. Like any government-run basic military training regimen, Starlight's ranger course — one of several Starlight courses that include parachuting, outdoor survival and basic firearms instruction — stresses safety, discipline and get-up-and-go. And go. And go.

A spreading conservatism in general, and a renewed respect for and interest in the military in particular, have resulted in a still-growing popular fascination with military weapons, tactics and training. More and more people, many of them vacationing business professionals like Richard, want exposure to the subject matter without having to enlist for six weeks of real boot camp and a four-year hitch. They opt instead for short, intensive private training programs.

As a result, well-established and respected schools like Starlight. Jeff Cooper's Gunsite in Arizona and a few others are becoming more widely known.

The growing public demand for this type of training unfortunately also has spawned a proliferation of many Johnny-Come-Lately camps across the country, many of them unqualified to provide at a professional level the type of instruction they claim to offer. Some boldly advertise themselves as "mercenary academies" or "commando schools." Many equate to professional military training in the same way as greasy spoons to four-star restaurants.

A good example of this hucksterism is The Mercenary School and its owner, Frank Camper Jr. Public interest turned to public concern after Camper's fantastic, misguided and uninformed claims hit the press. This prompted an ongoing investigation by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism into all private paramilitary schools, good and bad.

Prompted by Camper's self-serving, ill-advised grandstanding, the press focused on two areas of concern about private paramilitary schools. One is that they are being used to train mercenaries, a misconception resulting from Camper's egomaniacal drivel to reporters. The other, also a result of Camper's irresponsibility, is that such training facilitates the instruction of foreign terrorists inside the United States.

SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, Claflyn and other recognized experts discount the first worry. Professional soldiers of fortune do not acquire their skills in such quick-fix camps, they said, but attain them through long, hard years in such regular military organizations as Marine Corps Recon, U.S. Army Special Forces, the French Foreign Legion and others. If there are any schools used by mercenaries to learn their craft, Brown points out, they are at Parris Island, Fort Bragg, Fort Benning, Camp Lejeune, Sandhurst and West Point.

Secondly, the training of foreigners at Camper's or any other paramilitary school in the United States is an exception rather than the rule.

A preventative measure was taken in January 1985, when the U.S. State Department amended the International Trafficking in Arms Regulations — promulgated under the Munitions Control Act — to require the submission to and prior approval of the federal government of any contract to train foreigners in military tactics or weaponry, whether or not that training takes place inside U.S. borders.

Further refuting this misconception by the press that foreign terrorists are flocking to U.S.-based schools for training are numerous volumes of public records directly connecting the Soviet Union, Cuba and Libya to terrorist training camps around the globe, compiled by the same Senate panel investigating paramilitary training camps. These Marxist-backed terrorism schools are staffed by well-indoctrinated professional subversives and last for many months. Why

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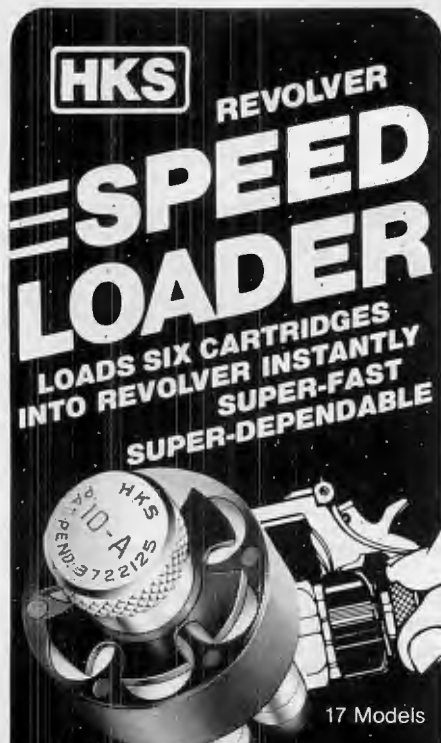
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should a seriously interested terrorist want to pay for less comprehensive training in the United States when he can go to the masters of this black art and get it for free?

The Senate hearings, chaired by U.S. Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., are taking a more realistic approach than that of the popular press. Denton survived almost eight years as a POW in North Vietnam and understands terrorism from a victim's perspective. He is concerned that paramilitary training associated with radical political movements and fundamentalist religious sects — or unqualified and irresponsible trainers like Camper — might pose a public menace.

"I am concerned that the FBI may not be as informed as it ought to with respect to the proliferation of not only the legitimate schools, but those which may serve a more sinister purpose," Sen. Denton said. "I feel that at the conclusion of these hearings I will be in a much better position to decide what legislation — if any — is necessary to rectify the situation."

Although the senator said he takes some comfort in the fact that the International Trafficking in Arms Regulations were amended in an attempt to control the training of foreigners in the use of military weapons and demolitions, Denton noted that not a single instructor up until the time his subcommittee held its first hearing 1 October had submitted such a contract for State Department approval.

Part of the problem is that most people don't know the regulations have been changed. Certainly the owners and operators of schools like Starlight should have been notified. The amendment affects them directly. But there is no complete listing of this type of business. One list compiled by the FBI on Denton's subcommittee was woefully lacking, being neither comprehensive nor in every instance accurate, as was noted by the senator.

Two foreigners completed Clafin's ranger course, which ran 1-6 September. It is hard to imagine that either would have been denied State Department approval, however. One was a wiry blond who served in the British Parachute Regiment for six years before joining the police force in Bermuda, and was selected by Starlight instructors as the most outstanding student in a class of 12. The other foreigner was a West German who served in his country's army before starting his own security consulting firm. Like the U.S. military reservists and law enforcement personnel that attend Harry's school, the two foreigners were seeking job-related supplemental training. And Clafin's application procedures weed out potentially sinister or unstable persons.

Of the remaining 10 men in my class, there was one other journalist besides myself, a free-lancer from Texas who, like me, has clocked some bush time in Central America. Among the others were a California paint contractor, a loading dock supervisor from Chicago, a New England jeweler, a CPA from Arizona, an electrician from

Ohio and my tent mate, Richard.

Richard, who now has grandchildren, served a hitch in the peacetime Army about 25 years ago. A couple of years ago Rich looked around at the suburban lifestyle to which he had grown accustomed and began to suspect that a lot of excitement had gone out of his life. Overweight, he became concerned about his long-term health prospects. So Rich gave up drinking, cut down on his smoking, began jogging and looking for ways to spice up his life. He started reading *Soldier of Fortune*, for one thing. And he heard about Harry Clafin and Starlight Training Center.

"When I told my wife that I was going to go through Starlight's basic jump school, she didn't know what I was talking about," Rich said. "When I told her I was going to become parachute qualified, she thought I'd flipped. She wouldn't speak to me for quite a while. But after I'd done it, we were at a party together and another woman came over to my wife and remarked on how exciting it was that I'd done such a thing. My wife smiled and sort of glowed. Her pride was obvious. I had done something that a lot of other people hadn't. It was worth a million bucks."

But jump school only honed Richard's interest for more. So he signed up to come back and take the Starlight ranger course. Having successfully completed that (our squad was selected by instructors as the best in the course) he and I sat down to talk, both exhausted. We agreed that having gotten in the groove of snooping and pooping in the woods, another week of instruction definitely would be beneficial for better retention of what we had learned. But we admitted that we were glad to be going home to hot showers and soft beds. It would be nice not having to worry about what obscene hour Harry would come growling for us to roll out of the rack, gear up and hit the trail, or slither through some slime pit until Harry got tired. "You know," Rich told me, "I think this course will satisfy my yearning for adventure for a while."

Sure, much of what Harry put us through was unpleasant, though not unexciting. And sticking it out until the end gave us pride. It was a small taste of boot camp and a little more. We were exposed to topics recruit trainees don't hear about until much later in their military careers. Our instructors were careful to qualify everything — from demolitions to first aid. They stressed that we were getting a quick but comprehensive exposure to basics, a solid groundwork for further study and practice. Further study and practice, they emphasized, was absolutely necessary if we wanted to attain any proficiency, let alone expertise, in the areas of study.

U.S. Army Special Forces Major John L. Sharp, who completed an active-duty tour just prior to our class, was especially careful to emphasize this in the six hours he spent instructing us on demolitions.

And what else did we study? Among other things, first aid, basic marksmanship,

two scored live-fire courses — one wooded and the other an urban environment — reconnaissance, outdoor survival, patrol procedures and techniques, river crossing expedients. Then there were rock climbing and rappelling techniques, small-boat ops, infiltration tactics, hand-to-hand combat, raids and ambushes, perimeter defense, land navigation and stellar navigation.

If it sounds like a lot to cover in six days, it is. The physical stress was tough, but not any worse than the mental demands. It's hard to think straight when you're practically a walking slumber case. Or you're so exhausted by the wooded live-fire course — as I was — that you fall down and puke. There was some small comfort in that even after that, I still managed to hit my final target. I redeemed myself by tying for first place in target acquisition on the urban combat course.

Teamwork becomes essential. And because it's essential it develops in most groups, no matter what kind of would-be junior Rambo you might have in your unit. Peer pressure and the humbling effect of screwing up takes care of these guys.

Like all basic military training, humbling experiences prove helpful in your reorientation to military life. My first one was tripping a booby trap simulator while walking point on a night reconnaissance of a railroad trestle. I felt like an idiot. Finding three

more booby traps around the trestle and disarming them made me feel better, admittedly a little cocky and overconfident. That lasted about 30 minutes. Leaving the area, I led our patrol right into an ambush set by instructors. If that wasn't bad enough, when I tried to unass the AO, I charged straight up a hill and into an M60 machine-gun nest skillfully set up by Larry Bozic, a Starlight instructor and licensed automatic weapons owner who served in Army Signal Intelligence. Our patrol immediately degenerated into chaos, a classic escape and evasion. I bolted saucer-eyed for a good hide and spent the night shivering in wet grass under an instructor's vehicle. A good learning experience, not much for morale. The instructors, on the other hand, seemed to have a great deal of fun.

But that was only our first patrol. We got better with practice. Starlight gives its students plenty of that. I even began to like walking point. At least then I felt reasonably confident that our patrol wouldn't get lost on night ops. There were other things Harry taught us that I didn't particularly like doing. But we did them, and we learned to do them well and without hesitation. Hesitation at the wrong time in the bush can be fatal.

Another instructor, Jim Henderson, probably summed it up best. He's an Army veteran of Vietnam who credits Boy Scouts

of America training — among other things — with saving his life more than once in Vietnam. He was teaching us emergency first aid at the time, but what he said figured in on the bottom line of all aspects of sound military and paramilitary training. "War is a fact of life," he told his civilian charges. "It's life and death. There's a lot of things that you don't like or don't want to do that must be done. In the end, there's only two outcomes. You're either alive or dead."

Starlight provided a great opportunity for the civilian to understand just what Jim Henderson was talking about. ✖

## RENAMEO

*Continued from page 69*

[Editor's note: Selous Scouts rarely worked with the MNR. The task of training and operating with that resistance movement fell to the Rhodesian Special Air Service. This operation is chronicled in Barbara Cole's book, *The Elite: The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service.*]

A guerrilla insurgency, in order to be effective or survive at all, requires sanctuary in a neighboring country, to where recruits can flee and be trained, and from where it can be resupplied. For the Nicaraguan contras, it is Honduras. For the Af-

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ghan mujahideen, it is Pakistan. For the Eritreans and Tigreans in Ethiopia, it is Sudan. Not even Jonas Savimbi's UNITA is entirely self-contained in Angola, but is resupplied with gasoline and diesel fuel from South Africa, and other material aid from several black African states.

The fledgling Renamo was able to set up in and initially operate out of Rhodesia — but it was no more created by and the puppet of Rhodesia than the Afghan mujahideen were by Pakistan. This misconception springs from a confusion of the *Flechas*, which were entirely controlled by the Rhodesian military (and which did commit many acts of terror and brutality), with the initial and separate efforts of Renamo.

With Cristina providing finances and supplies, Matsangaisse was able to gather around him an ever-growing number of escapees from Machel's gulag, and disaffected Frelimo soldiers who had fought the Portuguese and needed no training from the Rhodesians in guerrilla warfare. Renamo teams began operating throughout Manica, Tete south of the Zambezi, and northern Gaza, conducting raids and ambushes upon Frelimo garrisons and convoys, and targeting the transportation infrastructure at key points, such as bridges. Over the next two years, the exploits of "Commander André," personally commanding his men in arms against Frelimo tyranny, became known throughout all of Mozambique. By August of 1979, two base

camps had been established in-country, at Garagua and in the Sitatonga mountains in southern Manica, both in daily radio contact with Cristina at Odzi.

Then, on 17 October 1979, leading an assault upon a Frelimo army encampment in Sofala province, André Matsangaisse was killed. As Dhlakama assumed command of the now demoralized and stunned guerrillas, the situation for the insurgency suddenly looked very bleak. For Rhodesia was soon to be transformed into Zimbabwe, with Robert Mugabe taking the reins of power from Ian Smith. Once that happened, Mugabe, a friend of Samora Machel's and fellow Marxist, would immediately close the border on Renamo. A new sanctuary was needed, and quickly. There was only one option really viable, and for a Black African it was not pleasant. But it was necessary: Dhlakama asked Cristina to contact the South Africans.

Through Rhodesian friends, Cristina was soon in touch with SAMI ("Sammy"): South African Military Intelligence. In April 1980, a few days before Mugabe took over, Cristina and his staff left Odzi to set up camp and the Voice of Free Africa radios at Phalaborwa in the northern Transvaal of South Africa, just outside Kruger National Park which borders on Mozambique's Gaza province. Working with a SAMI liaison officer named Colonel van Niekerk (code-named "Col. Charlie"), Cristina organized regular airdrops of medical supplies and

Soviet arms captured in SADF (South African Defence Forces) raids on SWAPO camps in Angola to Dhlakama at the Garagua Base in southern Manica.

*Next month, Wheeler continues his history of the building resistance against the oppressive Mozambican government. But that's not all of the story. Various Western businesses and governments follow a twisted path to back the communist regime in its bid to crush pro-Western insurgents belonging to Renamo. — The Editors* ✕

## TARHEEL TANKERS

*Continued from page 57*

of over 2,500 meters that fires both armor-piercing (AP) and high-explosive (HP) ammunition. TOW missiles are fired from a dual-tube, two-position launcher attached to the turret weapon station. The TOW missile can destroy an enemy tank from as far away as 3,000 meters. It also mounts the 7.62mm M240 machine gun which has a maximum effective range of 1,200 meters.

Six periscopes and firing ports within the IFV allow the squad to see from the vehicle and use the firing ports to fire their M16s. These ports are located on the sides and rear of the vehicle. The vehicle commander (VC) and the gunner have thermal-sensitive sights that allow them to find and destroy targets in all types of weather as well as at night.

The two-man turret has separate control handles for the VC and the gunner with the VC having an override capability. The turret is powered by an all-electric drive system that permits the 7.62mm coaxial machine gun and 25mm chain gun to be fired accurately by either crewman while on the move. The same power and control system is used for the TOW missiles, but the vehicle must be stationary to fire the TOW.

A Halon fire extinguisher system is located in the engine and crew compartments which increases crew survivability in case of onboard flash fire.

But all is not as it should be. The Bradley IFV-CFV has come under attack from critics who say that the vehicle is too large and the silhouette too high. The IFV gives little space for infantry. The biggest problem, the critics say, is with the armor: it contains an aluminum alloy which they believe does not provide enough protection for the occupants. The vehicle also has no laser warning device. Despite this, the men of the 2/252 seem pleased with the Bradley CFV M3.

"When compared to the M113 APC the CFV is *big*, it is not supposed to be an assault vehicle or an anti-tank weapon," remarked Master Sergeant William Stone, the battalion master gunner. "The mission of the CFV is reconnaissance and for the CFV and IFV to keep pace with the fast-moving M1 Abrams. I've heard the complaints, but the Bradley does the job, it is 10 times the vehicle the old M113 was."

"The only real problem I see is fire con-

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trol," added 1st Lieutenant Michael Mills, HQ Co. executive officer. "You really have to watch your ammunition consumption during firing; if you don't you will be out of ammo in three to four minutes. We are still working with the Bradley so we don't really have any complaints. We're pleased with it; it makes the old APC hunt a hole."

The M1 Abrams MBT, a \$2 million monster, named after the late General Creighton W. Abrams, has also received a lot of publicity, especially over its cost. But these Tar Heel Guardsmen could not be more pleased.

"We ran the hell out of it and couldn't hurt it."

"It rides like a Cadillac."

"It'll do 25 mph on terrain the old M60 would have to crawl over."

"I don't care what anyone says about the Abrams, it is still 10 times the tank the M60 is."

These were only some of the comments we heard from M1 crew members. Enthusiasm shows.

The 2/252 trains one weekend per month, straight through.

"We form up at the armory at 0600 Saturday and move out to Bragg. We train all day and most of the night. We try to get back by 1800 Sunday. We have a lot to learn and time is a big factor. It makes for a hell of a long weekend, and for those in leadership positions it's two and three times a month and we have been doing this for two years.

Don't forget our annual training sessions are three weeks long, not two," commented Captain Steve Sloan, the Battalion S-3/Air.

Like children showing off Christmas toys, the tankers proudly explained the M1 Abrams' computerized fire control system and computerized driving station. Other features of the tank which drew praise from the crew members included improved ammunition storage compartments, an automatic fire extinguishing system, improved communications and the tank commander's remote control grip which gives him faster access to the tank's M2 machine gun.

The changeover from the M60 to the M1 has required an intense training transition. Mechanics were required to undergo 26 days of training before being qualified to work on the Abrams. Drivers training takes 17 days and one night.

Captain Sloan put it in perspective. "This ambitious retraining effort has put the pressure on 2/252. We have sent, and are still sending, personnel to Fort Knox and Fort Hood to take courses. All this takes time. We have the same requirements to meet as the regular Army and this makes time important — we just don't seem to have enough time. We have been going full blast since October 1982."

Considering all the trouble, members of the 2/252 couldn't be happier. The officers and NCOs we spoke to are proud of the honor the new tank brings. "They didn't

just pick our unit out of a hat," said Major John Atkinson, Battalion S-3. "The DOA studied the problem very carefully and they picked us. Now that is an honor. Time and retention are our problems. We have lost some good people because they couldn't be away from their jobs for the additional training time, but morale in the 2/252 couldn't be better. It is an honor to be in the 2/252."

The Department of the Army honored the 2/252 for its proficiency as a National Guard unit with the issue of 63 M1 Abrams MBTs and seven Bradley M3 CFVs. That's a major statement about the ability of these Tar Heel Guardsmen to do their job.

A full test of the unit's ability to perform in battlefield situations will come in 1987 when the entire battalion is scheduled to participate in NATO exercises with regular Army units.

They're sure to make the grade.

## TANK TALK

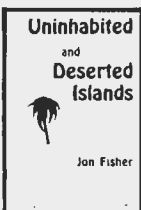
*Lieutenant Colonel George T. Paris was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1940. He joined the North Carolina National Guard in 1957 and was commissioned in 1965. After graduating from the Armor Officers Basic Course in 1966 he went on to complete the Advanced Armor Course in 1973. In 1978 he completed the Command & General Staff Officers Course and became com-*

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manding officer of the 2/252 in 1981. George Paris is the mayor of Red Springs, North Carolina, where he now resides with his wife and two children.

**SOF:** With the introduction of the M1 Abrams and Bradley AFV, the Army has re-evaluated its entire concept of armored and armored infantry warfare. How does this new philosophy affect your battalion?

**Lt. Col. Paris:** Well, what DOA had done is take units out of the active components and replaced them with units from the reserve components. They are providing the equipment and resources to make certain the reserves can perform the same mission as the active Army units. DOD/DOA is trying to make this new concept work, it is not just talk. Of course, for us, this means that the 2/252 is training in the field every drill weekend. But we feel honored, we have a lot of esprit de corps. The greatest impact is in mobility and firepower. We move much faster and consume a lot more fuel than we did in the past.

One point I would like to make is that it wasn't too long ago when the old M48 tank series consumed about the same amount of fuel but moved at a snail's pace compared to the Abrams. With the Abrams and the Bradley we cover terrain much faster than we did three years ago. This has significantly influenced this battalion's role, and the emphasis placed on the battalion; instead of getting a hand-me-down, as in the past, we have received something straight off the assembly line. A lot of people at DOA have been concerned about that and concerned about the time we have to train, how we maintain this new equipment, and generally what we do during drills. It has turned a lot of eyes toward this battalion.

**What is a round-out unit?**

What round-out means is that this battalion, upon mobilization, will become an integral part of the 2nd Armored Division. Round-out specifically aligns you to one regular Army outfit, whereas in the past, you may have been a part of a reserve unit but you had no idea with whom you would become organic to upon mobilization. Now we know with whom we will go and we work with these people. For example, I am responsible to the 1st Brigade commander under whom I will serve if we become mobilized.

**What are the problems you have encountered now that you are a round-out unit with all this new, expensive equipment?**

Time is the biggest problem in our unit. The training requirements for us are no different than they are for an active Army unit. We have to do the same things, we may not do them as often, but we have to do the same things to maintain our readiness. For example, we have to do individual weapons qualifica-

tion, we have to do crew-served weapons qualification, we have to do tank crew qualifications.

We have to do all this just like the regular Army, plus tactical training, and all the administrative work. All this has to be done within the context of 12 weekends and the three-week training session we have each year. The only thing the active units do more of is gunnery and tactical training, but we do the same things they do. Now time becomes very critical for us.

**Do you have any shortfalls in materiel?**

In receiving the M1 Abrams we have received shortfalls in some equipment, but it is not a problem unique to us. The regular components have the same problems. For example, our fuel-carrying capabilities could not sustain us for any period of time, it is a problem Army-wide, and one that DOA is aware of. The new armored forward area rearmament vehicle and the new armored tracked refueler soon are due out, we hope. In this interim period, we are having trouble getting parts for the old carrier, which is what we are using now. I believe we are even cannibalizing parts because the old vehicles are out of production.

**Would fuel logistics be a problem if you were mobilized?**

Yes it would. You see, it is going to take another year before we are where we ought to be materiel-wise. We are still short a lot of equipment. For example, we are short five-ton trucks; it is not that DOA is discriminating against 2/252, the fact is the Army in general is short five-ton trucks. There is an Army-wide shortage in night-vision goggles, a very high-dollar item, but we are getting them at the same rate the regular components are, as well as other items. We receive enough representative items to train with, and in theory, if fielded, we will receive the required amount of materiel.

**How quickly can the 2/252 be fielded?**

I attended the meeting at the Pentagon when Defense Secretary Weinberger stated that the round-out units were to be fielded within the same time frame as active units. Well, this statement shocked everyone there. But this was an indication to me that there is a concerted effort on the part of DOD/DOA to make the round-out concept work. We can to be ready to go in hours.

**How is morale in 2/252?**

Well, you know I never imagined in my wildest dreams that we would ever receive the M1 Abrams tank. The most I ever expected was the M60A1. When the decision was made it floored everyone. This proved to me, once again, that DOA was dedicated to the total force concept.

**Do you have any problems with per-**

**sonnel?**

There is a lot of pressure to be 100 percent when you are a round-out unit. So personnel is always a problem, and there is a lot of competition from other units in this area which makes it a bigger problem. These other units usually do eight-to-five field-training drills, so we have only our esprit de corps to sell. We are looking for hard-chargers, and once we get one we have another problem because we have to send this gung ho kid to basic training where his drill instructor, 1st Sgt. and company commander talk to him for weeks on end about going regular Army. Recruitment and retention are always a problem. The reserve components are responsible for getting their own men, and as the economy improves the number of volunteers drop off, as do reenlistments.

**Are you at 100 percent strength now?**

No. Any time you make a big transition, as we have done, you are going to lose people. When we reorganized we automatically became 100 men under strength, and that hurt. But I believe we will be 100 percent by the end of 1985.

If you had told me three years ago that a National Guard unit was going to receive all this new, multimillion dollar, state-of-the-art materiel I'd have called you a liar. This is a real boost to the new total force concept and something every American should be proud of. ✕

**COSTA RICA**

*Continued from page 63*

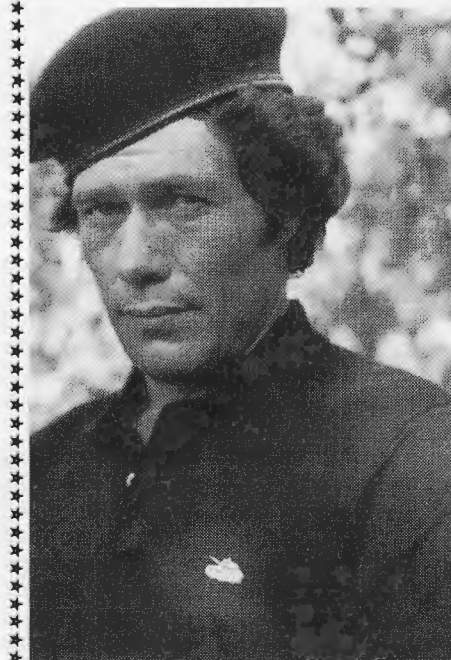
manned the post directly on the border was 60 years old; a real threat to Nicaraguan security.

On the communist side was a small concrete bunker. Peering from the windows were three Sandinista militiamen — they were obviously not excited about having their pictures crop up in *Soldier of Fortune*. Not suprisingly, all the traffic on the highway was headed out of Nicaragua — only a lone European youth with a backpack and sandals headed toward the Sandinista side.

Back around the last bend in the road before the border was stationed the most unique contingent of the CDF — a cavalry squad of about 10 men. Their mission was to perform fast patrols along the Pan-American Highway in search of the ever-present infiltrators. It was in this area that most of the Sandinistas made their move and the horsemen hoped to use their speed to head them off.

As the last horse splashed around the bend in the shallow creek, we prepared to leave this neglected corner of the Central American conflict. Although the contras pick up most of the press, there are still small pockets of quiet resistance to the

\*\*\*\*\*



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Sandinistas' drive to export revolution to the rest of Central America. The Costa Rican Civil Defense Force occupies one of them. And they've been bloodied before by the Sandinistas.

In July of 1985 Sandinista troops moved against an ARDE detachment in the central border area to the east of *Comando del Norte*. Sweeping over the border, they caught a CDF outpost by surprise, killing two and wounding nine. The government in San José awakened to the fact that it would take more than 5,000 men to hold the line against Managua and training began on a reserve force to bolster the overworked CDF regulars.

A crash program to train 2,000 reservists began in August and at press time, over 500 were attending night and weekend classes at an impromptu class in Murchielago. These weekend warriors are unpaid — they receive only food and arms during the time when they are on duty, a sure sign of the Costa Rican people's determination to remain free.

The Costa Rican CDF may not be big and strong, it may not be aggressive, but it represents the desire of this democratic nation to determine its own course of events. Although the Costa Rican constitution makes clear their intent to remain neutral and peaceful, they don't intend to be bullied by the *piricuacos*.

The United States has done much worse in picking other Latin American allies. ✖

## WITNESS PROTECTION

*Continued from page 53*

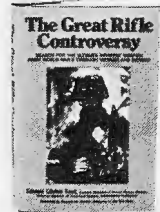
with the support hand and push outward with the firing hand.

Under stress, we usually do what we are trained to do. The firing stance must be automatic, instinctive, without alternatives. I have serious reservations about Wilson's technique.

At first sight, it appears felt recoil and muzzle climb will be fearsome. In 1974 the LAPD SWAT Team adopted a Remington Model 870P which was fitted with the pistol grip from a Remington folding stock assembly — an unfortunate decision, with no regard for the laws of physics, since the firing hand is placed far below the bore's axis and the counterrecoiling forces. The muzzle whip is ferocious as is the torque applied to the shooter's wrist. By retaining the front portion of the original buttstock, Wilson allows the arm to remain in line with the bore's axis, reducing felt recoil.

Latest versions of the Witness Protection shotgun carry barrels with chambers reamed to accept 12-gauge three-inch Magnum

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shells as well as the standard 2¾-inch (70mm) round. Remington has modified the 870's shell lifter and bolt assembly so the bolt can be retracted if a round slips over the shell latch like the Smith & Wesson 3000 series. Remington (Dept. SOF, Arms Service Division, Iliion, NY 13357) offers a retrofit kit for about \$18 to modify existing Model 870s. Until this system has been proven in the field, Wilson intends to continue slotting the shell lifter. Suggested retail price of the Witness Protection shotgun is \$499.95. A Choate forearm will cost you \$15 extra.

The National Firearms Act of 1934 stipulates that cutting a shotgun's barrel shorter than 18 inches requires it to be classified as a Title II firearm subject to a \$200 transfer tax. However, Wilson now obtains the Model 870 receiver only from Remington and installs all the other components himself. This permits the Witness Protection shotgun to be classified and registered by the BATF as "any other weapon" which means that it can be transferred not only to a Class 3 dealer on an ATF Form 3 or police department on an ATF Form 5, but to a private citizen on an ATF Form 4 for a transfer tax of only \$5 as is the case with shotguns like the Marble Game Getter and Ithaca Auto and Burglar Gun.

Jim Wilson's Witness Protection shotgun is a well-executed conversion of a proven fighting shotgun. It is admittedly highly specialized, but deserves consideration from those with a mission essential need — for the pros who require the power of a shotgun, but can't afford the bulk of the Remington Model 870. ❧

## BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 14

slowest to kill. Be prepared to stay a while since your target is not going to collapse immediately. On the other hand, a hit to the heart or kidneys is a fairly quick killer as is a severed jugular vein or carotid artery. These strikes will kill faster than the attack to the extremities, but they are far riskier to administer, especially in a face-to-face encounter.

A successful attack to the nervous system is by far the quickest killer, and entails disruption of brain function or the spinal cord's synapse traffic pattern. It can be the safest attack of all in some circumstances, such as a rear attack on a sentry. Simply and bluntly described, you either split the enemy's skull to the sinuses, decapitate him, or stab him in the base of the skull ranging upward from the point of attachment of the neck.

The first two of these approaches are not widely practiced or taught in this country. Quite frankly, most Americans don't believe that a knife exists which will split a man's skull or sever

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his spinal cord with one blow. Anyone who has seen a Gurkha do his thing with a kukri will tell you up front that just because we don't have a military issue knife that will make these cuts doesn't mean that they can't be made.

Actually, either a kukri or a bowie knife will kill a man instantly with one blow to the head or neck, but the blade should be a minimum of 8½ inches long, and nine inches is even better. This length is necessary to generate the leverage and power needed to make such an incapacitating strike. You wouldn't want to try this one with your K-BAR or Buckmaster because one is too small and light and the other is so poorly balanced. In either case, this type of cut is out of reach.

If you've only got an ordinary knife, the bottom line means you had better confine your attempts at attacking the nervous system to stabbing the spinal cord at the base of the skull. A failed attempt at splitting an enemy's skull is absolutely guaranteed to draw his attention, and his subsequent displeasure could ruin your day.

If you've got the right knife, though, head and spinal cord cuts are feasible and possible. They are also instantly lethal and result in a near-silent kill. Just ask the Gurkhas.

If survival on the street is your problem and you have to go one-on-one with a knife, your best bet is probably a slashing attack on the circulatory system via the extremities. You might even get lucky enough to disable the other guy to the extent that he quits before the two of you kill each other.

If I got caught in a combat situation where I had to use a knife, it would be a case of absolute last resort or sentry removal. Either way, I would use the method that would minimize my chances of injury.

And if I had to be in a knife fight, what would I want more than a bowie or kukri? That's easy. I'd want a 12-gauge pump shotgun. ☒

**IN REVIEW**

*Continued from page 20*

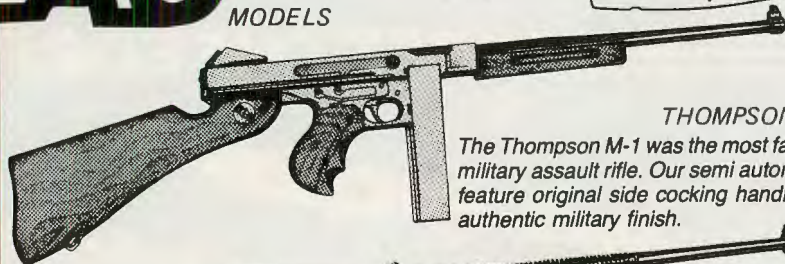
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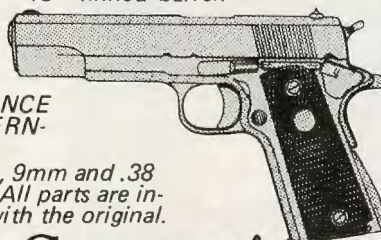


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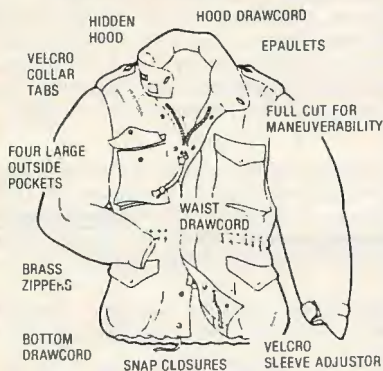
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Press, Annapolis, Maryland.  
1982. 327 pp. \$21.95. Review by Robert Lawson.

**E**ARLY 1942 was not the best of times for Allied naval forces trying to block Japanese Vice Admiral Kondo's southern drive into the Netherlands East Indies (now Indonesia). Out-gunned and outclassed by superior ships, the small American-British-Dutch-Australian (ABDA) command of 16 vessels took on 85 Japanese ships during the battle of the Java Sea — and lost all but two.

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Winslow served as an aviator aboard the heavy cruiser *Houston* (CA-30), one of the two surviving ships of the ABDA command's last battle. *Houston's* death knell, however, sounded a few days later when her brief but gallant combat career was ended at the battle of Sunda Strait by the deadly "long lance" torpedos of Imperial Japanese destroyers.

This book is an irreplaceable record of forgotten men and ships painstakingly compiled from extensive interviews with Allied survivors as well as from official United States, British, Australian and Dutch records.

**The Fleet the Gods Forgot** is not the usual dull account of naval warfare. Rather, it's a tightly written, fast-paced narrative, crackling with authenticity and tinted neatly in places with the humor which, in the oppressively conservative "black shoe" battleship-navy era, helped Navy and Marine pilots keep their sanity. ✎

## I WAS THERE

Continued from page 16

cleaning the rooms. Greatly relieved, I sat down in the lobby to calm my nerves after my brush with death.

It was my stomach that reminded me that I still occupied the land of the living. I asked the clerk where the mess hall was, and he pointed to a side door and said it was about a hundred yards

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down the alley. I looked out the door and stopped dead.

You have never seen a more sinister-looking alley in your life. It was dark, cluttered and dirty, with lots of recessed doorways perfect for an ambush of unarmed guys like me headed for chow. Hunger finally won out over caution, and I carefully plotted my route down the street.

There were some trash cans a few yards from the door, some more farther on, and a lamp post almost across from the mess hall door. I ran from the doorway to the first set of trash cans and took cover. Zigzagging wildly, I sprinted from the first set of cans to the second. John Wayne would have been proud of how I was using cover and concealment. A short leap took me to the safety of the lamp post and a quick pause to regain my breath and courage for the dash to the mess hall.

Taking a deep breath I shot toward the entrance. I blasted through the screen door and slammed right into the headcount's table, knocking him and it ass-over-teakettle and sending his paperwork fluttering to the four winds. A highly pissed-off corporal picked himself up off the floor, righted his table and chair, recovered his paperwork, sat down, looked me straight in the eye, and in a voice dripping with contempt snarled, "fucking new guy."

After chow I made it back to the safety of my hotel room and collapsed on the bed. I knew my first day in Vietnam was not going to mark the high point of my military career, but what the hell. I was only a new guy, and probably just about as green as they come. ✕

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Continued from page 19

trolled by an overly strong spring. Sometimes you can depress it and sometimes you can't. Moral: the M56 stock should be retracted by the operator well before he anticipates shit hitting the fan. Aside from that reservation, the stock and the pistol grip's configuration (also MP40) need no comment or explanation.

Down in the trigger mechanism things get weirder still. A pressed sheet-metal trigger is attached to a long, six-inch trigger bar which is fixed to a small spring at the rear, and attached, in turn, to a pin across the trigger housing assembly. The front of the trigger bar is mounted to the sear which pivots up or down when the trigger is released or pulled. A cross-bar selector is inconveniently located well forward of the trigger guard and cannot be manipulated by the shooting hand. When pushed to the left for full-auto fire

(marked 'RAFAL'), the selector bar pushes a ring-shaped disconnecter attached to the trigger bar to the left out of the bolt's path of travel. Firing will continue as long as the trigger is pulled back because the sear will stay down until the trigger is released.

When the selector is pushed to the right for semiautomatic fire ('JEO. '), the disconnecter is moved into the bolt's path of travel. On its rearward stroke the bolt drives the disconnecter down, forcing the sear to rotate upward and prevent the bolt's return. Ingenious and simple, but the selector bar is located too far forward.

The lower receiver's main body is fabricated from high-impact, glossy black plastic. To this is attached a sheet-metal subassembly which holds the trigger mechanism, serves as the pistol grip and retains the upper receiver's end cap. Up in the forearm area is a wood insert to which is mounted a steel bar that hooks onto the upper receiver in back of the magazine well. This bar is held to the wood insert by means of three bolts whose flat heads protrude to engage three holes in the bottom of the upper receiver tube and further secure it to the lower receiver assembly.

Once studied, disassembly procedures were self-evident. Remove the magazine and clear the weapon. Grasp the knurled end cap and rotate it clockwise until it stops. Then depress the spring-loaded pin (located on the trigger housing subassembly directly to the rear of the end cap) from the left side. Continue to rotate the end cap until its white reference mark is aligned with the white line on top of the receiver tube. You will then be able to press the end cap forward at which time you can separate the upper and lower receiver assemblies. Withdraw the end cap, guide rod and recoil spring. Pull back the bolt until the retracting handle matches the second hole in the receiver slot. Pull out on the retracting handle while rotating it 45 degrees counterclockwise. It can now be withdrawn from the bolt body, which can then be dropped out the rear of the receiver. No further disassembly is required. Reassemble in the reverse order.

Using ammunition manufactured in the Soviet Union in 1948 (manufacturer's code '539') which is packaged and marketed under the Interarms logo, I have never experienced a stoppage in this well-made submachine gun. It's accurate out to 200 meters and features high hit probability. The cyclic rate is a very proper 600 rpm and short bursts are easy to master with the first magazine fired through the weapon. Due to the bolt's considerable mass the felt recoil impulse is quite low. It handles and balances very much like a carbine. This is fine, but the M56 is too

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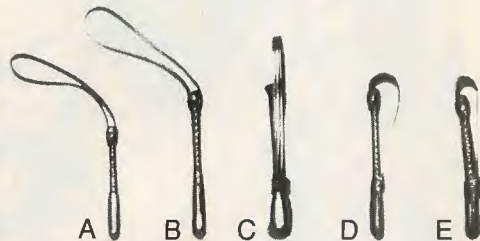
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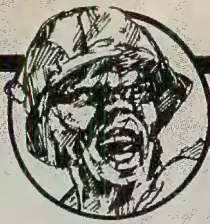


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# INCOMING



March's edition of *Soldier of Fortune* reports on:

- **ON THE GROUND AT DIEN BIEN PHU:** A riveting first-person account by the first American at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Howard Sochurek witnessed the debacle and recounts his experiences to SOF's readers. The photos are unforgettable.
- **PEACE MEMORIAL AWARDS:** SOF's editors chose the best of a selection of our readers' imaginative suggestions for Tom Hayden's proposed Vietnam War peace memorial. We're sure you won't be disappointed.
- **PUFFINEL SALVADOR:** In order to conform to U.S. calls for a less indiscriminate air force weapon than the A-37 Dragonfly, the government of El Salvador purchased seven of the eerily accurate AC-47 gunships. SOF's Peter Kokalis takes a look at what they'll do in this exclusive story. But are they worth the money?
- **SAS ON THE FALKLANDS:** SOF's Argentine source tells about the Brits' secret plans to attack the Argentine mainland. This story also sheds light on

See Dien Bien Phu from the inside. An airborne correspondent drops SOF readers inside the wire. Photo: Howard Sochurek — *Time/Life*

what it was like in the Argentine intelligence business.

- **ISLAMIC SPECIAL FORCES:** The best and the worst of the Islamic elite units in the Middle East. If the U.S. military is ever forced to go up against them, how might they fare? Find out next month.
- **CIVIL DEFENSE IN EL SALVADOR:** As in the Vietnam War, protecting the civilian population from communist depredations is an important part of winning hearts and minds. SOF's foreign correspondent spends some time with one of the most successful of El Salvador's new civil defense units.
- **COCKLESHELL HEROES:** Rhodesian SAS canoe-borne commandos lay low on Lake Cabora Bassa during the day, but at night they raided terrorist staging areas and training camps. SOF brings you the inside story. ✕

bulky and cumbersome for a sub-machine gun by today's standards.

Nevertheless, select specimens of the M56 are available to law enforcement agencies and Class 3 dealers who can justify the acquisition to the satisfaction of the BATF Import Branch for only \$425 from ARMEX International (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 252, Broderick, CA 95605). ✕

## FLAK

*Continued from page 7*

Yes, I served in Rhodesia too! Rhodesian Cattleman's Union, Rhodesian Light Inf., 52 S. African Para Reg., and 2½ tours in Nam with the 3rd Force Recon.

Hope this has cleared-up the misunderstanding about the OTHER Mercenary School. Everyone Please support South Africa.

Col. Patton  
Director  
Commando School

*We've reprinted Patton's rebuttal to RKB's October '85 Command Guidance exactly as it was received.*

*A cursory examination of Patton's claims to African service showed that the "52 S. African Para Reg." never existed. And since he didn't return our calls — the answering machine stated, "The officer in charge is temporarily out" — we couldn't verify his tour with the Rhodesian Light Infantry or affiliation with any Rhodesian cattlemen's group. Our RLI contacts, however, have never heard of him or his school.*

*Marine 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company served in Vietnam from April 1967 to August 1970. So with his 2½ tours (32 months in-country), Patton seems to be the longest serving Marine with 3rd Force Recon in Vietnam. And since he supplied only his last name, there's no way we can check his record. — The Editors*

## VIETNAM TOMAHAWK...

Sirs:

Just 20 years ago, upon my initial enlistment, I was presented with a Gerber Mk I and an American Tomahawk Company 'hawk, so it was a pleasure to see the article in the November '84 SOF ("Vietnam Tomahawk"). The designer and manufacturer was Pete LaGana. With his death some years ago the company closed, which is why it can no longer be found.

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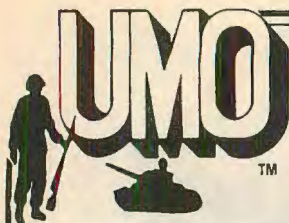
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Features included the pointed pick end which was designed to penetrate mild protection such as pith helmets and some light steel helmets and the lower front edge of the blade was sharpened to allow a hooking type of cut such as might be delivered with a sickle. Pete didn't recommend throwing the 'hawk, but for those of us that couldn't resist the temptation, a supply of replacement handles were available. I still have the Gerber and the tomahawk and they have weathered the 20 years better than I have. The 'hawk just spent a month in the Egyptian desert opening crates and MRE cartons and neither of us are ready to retire yet.

R.L. Doboek  
New Orleans, Louisiana

## CONGRATS FROM ST. CYR...

Sirs:

As a future French officer (maybe), I think SOF is a must for all fighting people around the world who want to push back communism. Your articles keep us aware of Russia's new weapons and war tactics. Your Vietnam stories are great. And we are proud when you speak of La Légion Etrangere. Congratulations for all your super issues.

Pascal Bollon  
College Militaire de St. Cyr  
St. Cyr, France

## ANGOLAN REFLECTIONS

Continued from page 105

Bacon was still thinking, though, and he reached back to open the door. I wasn't asleep, either, and I dived like a halfback for the opening, cradling my MG42 like the ball. I felt George push me through the door as I moved, and he fell on me when I hit the ground.

I crawled into the grass to the right of the Rover toward where I thought the enemy was. I didn't know that Cubans and FAPLA were behind me and off to the side. They'd heard us coming and were all under cover at the side of the road. You couldn't see anyone.

Our guys had gone straight out the doors and were cut down. I was running on reflex, if I'd stopped to think I would have known I was dead. But I was crawling to cover, weapon cradled in my arms, grazing weapons fire overhead: just like boot camp. Then I was crawling but not going anywhere. I scrambled for the short grass in the ditch and only made a few inches. Fire now

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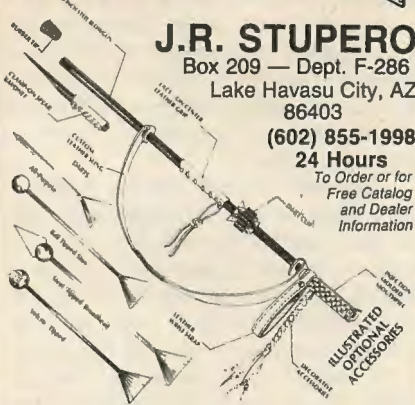
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to.

A Cuban medic came over, took my boot and sock off, cut my trousers off, washed the wound, put a bandage on it and asked if I had been hit anywhere else. I pointed to my other foot because it was aching too. He cut the boot off, but there was nothing except the blood blister.

They threw me into a Soviet truck with an Angolan who was wounded — probably by their own fire, since I don't think any of us fired a shot. They tied my hands in front of me with my own web belt and took off for Cuimba.

Then I saw the Cuban column: a BDRM, a bulldozer, a T-54, and trucks, and trucks, and trucks. They had two 75mm anti-tank cannon and another T-54 at the end of it. The column went on forever. At this point, I thought of escaping. I could've untied the belt, but the pain in my leg was severe and all I was wearing was undershorts, an OD jacket and a T-shirt. And I had FAPLA next to me. I just figured I'd ride it out and see what was going to happen.

When we arrived at Cuimba my wound was rechecked and bandaged. They put me on the veranda with Canada. He seemed to be in less pain, but there may have been shock. They kept us there for awhile and then transported us that day to Damba.

Ironically, it was St. Valentine's Day and there were seven killed in that ambush — our version of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. They took the prisoners and bodies in the truck to Damba. There were three of us in the front of the truck — FAPLA, Canada, myself — and they had a poncho pulled across to hide the bodies of our dead. It was a rough road and the wounded all started hemorrhaging. At least I could lift my leg up when we hit a bump. But Canada couldn't do anything.

In Damba another Cuban doctor checked my leg. He put me on a table and put his hands around my calf and squeezed to see if either of the bones was broken in half. The bones weren't completely broken, but they were chipped.

After that they wanted me to identify the bodies. I told them I only knew one guy — George Bacon. The photo in the book *Firepower* was taken at Damba where the bodies were unloaded. The Cubans filmed it all. I've seen film on Angolan TV of myself and Canada lying on the ground where we were ambushed.

We spent the night in Damba and the next day they put us in an ambulance for Mgashe. In Mgashe I saw Gus and Mamick. I didn't know that Gearhart and Satch (Cecil Fortuin) were in another room. I still had dysentery at the time and I was forever hopping on my good leg into the bathroom. They had a window at the end of the bathroom and there was no door on the stall so a Cuban would sit there with a gun pointed at me.

We stayed there for about three days. There were no cells, just a room with no door and plenty of guards. The whole place was covered with Cubans. Then they trans-

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Canada died on the second night in Luanda. They operated, but he just didn't make it. They took Gus and me in an ambulance to a hospital where they x-rayed my leg. The Cubans just stood there with the x-ray and I finally grabbed it right out of their hands and held it up to the light so I could see just how bad my leg was. There was a bit of shrapnel still inside and there was a chunk an inch away from the fibula. I got hit by a bullet, but where the shrapnel came from, I don't know. It's still there.

After taking the x-ray back from me, they took us to a military hospital in Luanda and they put us in a cell with UNITA and FAPLA prisoners. One of my hands was handcuffed to the bed for six of the 13 days we were there. Sometimes the guard would take the handcuffs off so I could eat, sometimes not. I was the only person who was handcuffed. There were about 30 others in the cell, four of them whites — myself, Gus, Mamick, and Andrew Gordon McKenzie.

Andy's leg was pretty badly shot up and he had been hit in the back and stomach. They cut his leg off the next day. He had done a John Wayne. He got hit about 10 times.

The day Andy came back to the cell his bandage came off just after lunch. He asked me to come over and rebandage it for him. The handcuffs were off me by this time. I bandaged his leg and was able to see what they had done in surgery. When they cut his leg off they had left the bone sticking out about an inch and a half so all the raw meat was exposed, like a ham at a butcher. And threads came out where they had tied off the arteries. Gangrene eventually set in, but in the end it didn't matter — Andy was excused.

The stench was incredible at the trial. Mamick, who was shot through the femur and under the armpit, got maggots in his leg. They didn't put his leg in a cast right away and it was never recast. As a result, his leg was about an inch and a half shorter. Of course, it screwed up his back — he got severe arthritis in his knee, hip and shoulder. You could hear it grinding sometimes.

All my wound ever got was Mercurochrome. They'd come by, rip the bandage off, and if there was a scab forming and it was stuck to the bandage, they'd just rip it off, put some Mercurochrome on it and bandage it back up again. The broken bone just grew back by itself.

Finally, a Cuban comandante came and asked me if I'd like to go to his prison. I suppose I didn't really have a choice in the matter. The prison was next to the airport in the capital of Luanda. When I arrived they took the pajamas, clean sheets, soap, and towel that I'd received. Instead, they gave me mechanic's coveralls with the arms and legs cut off.

Then the interrogations began.

Next month, Acker continues his account of interrogation and imprisonment for the "crime" of mercenarism. ✕

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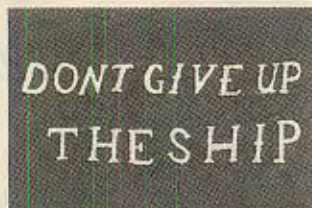
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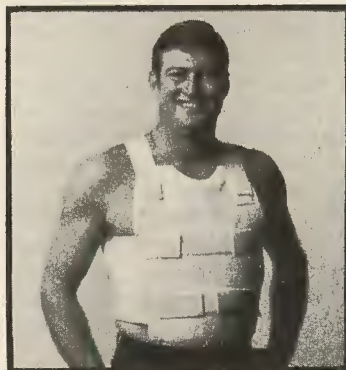


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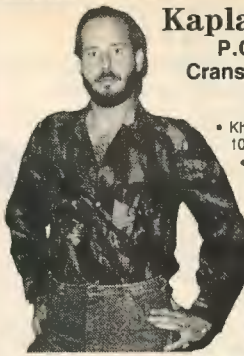
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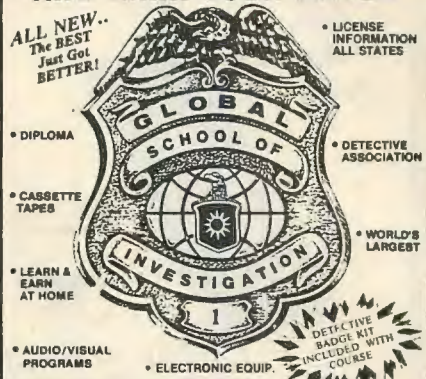
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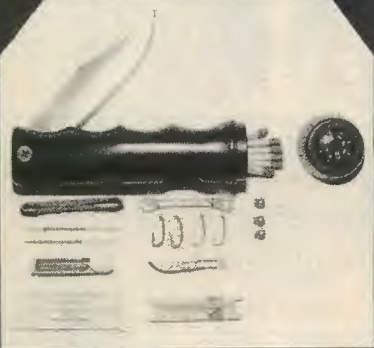
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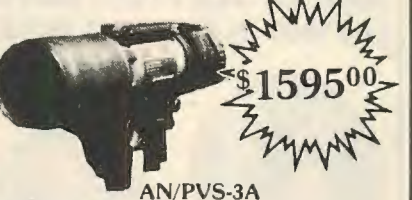
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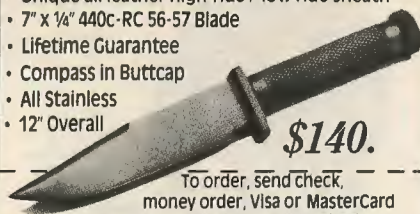
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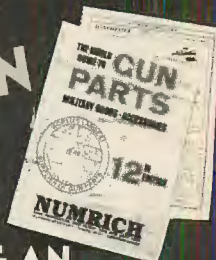
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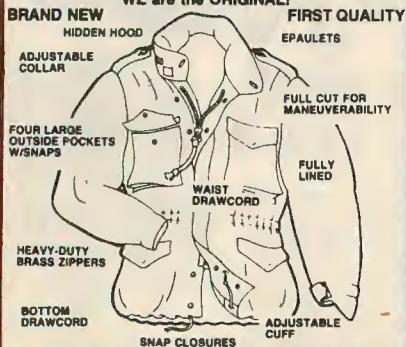
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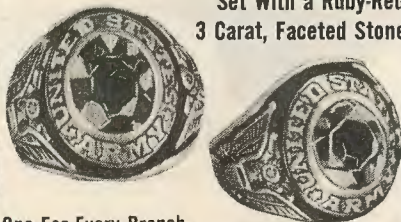
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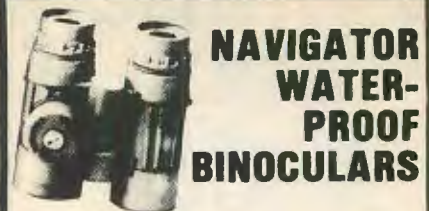
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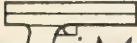



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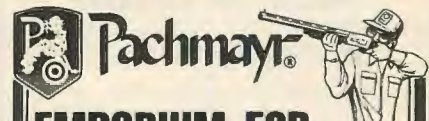
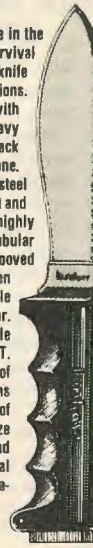
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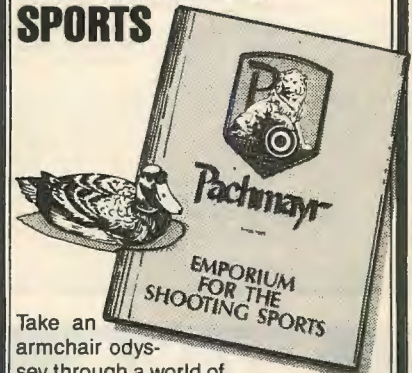
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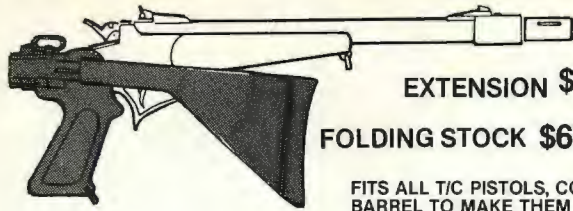
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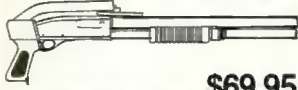
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7-SHOT 18" BRL. 8 SHOT 20" BRL.  
 REM 870/1100  
 BROWNING A5 **\$22**  
 WIN 1200 · S&W 3000



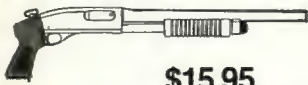
**FOLDING STOCK FOR  
 MINI-14 · .30 CARBINE · 10/22**

NITEX FOLDER  
 FOR STAINLESS MINI  
**\$79.95**

CARBINE STOCK FITS GI,  
 IVER JOHNSON, OR UNIVERSAL  
**\$67.95**

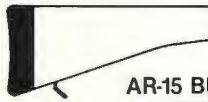
SPECIFY WHICH FIREARM

**SHOTGUN PISTOL GRIP**



**\$15.95**

REM 870 · ITHACA 37 · WIN 1200  
 RANGER 120 · MOSS 500  
 HI-STANDARD



**NEW!**

**AR-15 BUTTSTOCK  
 EXTENSION**

**\$15**

REPLACES FACTORY  
 BUTTPLATE AND ADDS  
 ONE INCH TO LENGTH

MINI-14\* SHOWN



**ONE PIECE PISTOL GRIP  
 STOCK**

**\$44.95**

MADE WITH UNBREAKABLE  
 DU PONT® ZYTEL

AVAILABLE FOR MINI-14\*  
 10/22\*  
 .30 CARBINE  
 (G.I. OR UNIVERSAL)

MINI-14 30 RD MAGS BLUED \$14.95 STAINLESS \$16.95

**SIDE FOLDING STOCK KIT**



**\$74**

WITH RUBBER RECOIL PAD  
 FOR WIN 1200 · RANGER 120  
 REM 870 · S&W 3000 · MOSS 500  
 COMES WITH FOREND  
 (PLEASE SPECIFY)



AR-15 / M16  
 BUTT STOCK

OFFHAND NOTCH 3/4" LONGER **\$30**  
 ROUND HANDGUARD \$24.95

NEW CANADIAN ARMY 30-RD ZYTEL MAG \$12.95  
 TELESCOPING ZYTEL MAG STORE LOADED 20 YEARS  
 OR EXPAND TO 45 RDS. \$24.95

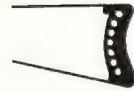
**VENTILATED HANDGUARD**



BLACK PLASTIC

MINI-14 **\$8**  
 10/22 **\$8**  
 CARBINE STEEL **\$8**

**BLACK NON-SLIP RUBBER**



EXTENDED  
 BUTT PLATE  
**\$15**

FITS MINI-14 1/2" #3 10/22 AND 44 MAG RIFLE ADDS 1 INCH TO LENGTH

1100 SHOWN

**PLASTIC PISTOL GRIP STOCKS FOR SHOTGUNS**



**\$45**

FORENDS FOR SHOTGUNS **\$9.95**

WIN 1200 · RANGER 120 · MOSS 500-600  
 ITHACA 37 · REM 870

BENELLI \$  
 AND SPAS **45**  
 STOCKS  
 NO FORENDS

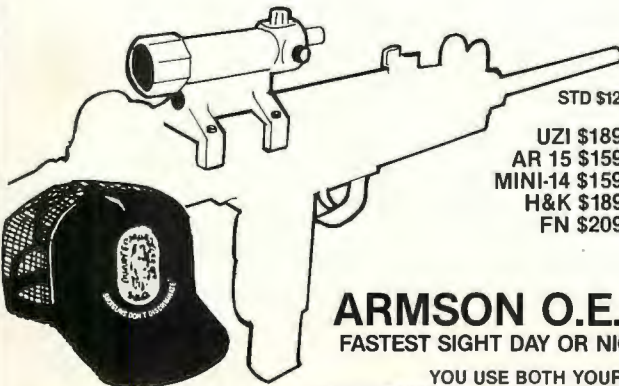
BLACK PLASTIC FORENDS—MORE CONTROL—NON SLIP  
 REM 1100 FOREND-\$20



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**\$69.95 Unit WITH FREE NYLON CASE**



STD \$129.90

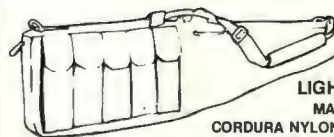
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 RIFLES · HANDGUNS  
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 SPECIFY WHICH RIFLE OR STOCK



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