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# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Journal of **War** Correspondents

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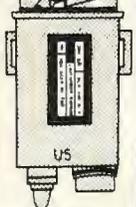
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XS, S, M, L, XL ..... \$47.75/each; XL ..... \$50.75/each; XXL ..... \$62.75/each. Specify Olive Drab (OD) Green or Woodland Camo Shell.

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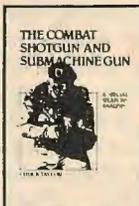
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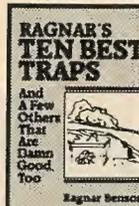
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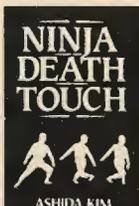
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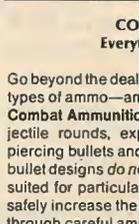
Enter the world of the samurai and attain true sword perfection. Endorsed by the All-Japan Seibukan Martial Arts and Ways Association and the American Society of Japanese Swordsmen, this comprehensive guide takes you through *ken-jutsu*, sword fighting, and *iai-jutsu*, sword drawing. 8 1/2 x 11, hardcover, 262 photos, illus., 144 pp. **\$20.00**



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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

**T**IME travel. Demonstrators marched solemnly, as if they were supporting the entire moral weight of their cause upon their very own shoulders. It must have been an awesome burden. The demonstrators certainly thought it was. They shuffled along with an empty coffin — ragged throwbacks to Vietnam War protest marches, none with anything better to do than stand in front of our offices and chant.

Boulder-based communist-backed "peace" groups have pilloried SOF in a nationwide campaign to stop private sector aid to non-communist groups in Central America. Why? Because the communists aren't winning. And SOF and its readers are contributing to their defeat.

The fracas started with a local ballot initiative that would call on citizens and businesses of Boulder to stop sending private sector aid to the government of El Salvador and the contras in Nicaragua (no mention of the guerrillas or the Sandinistas, of course). Sounds ominous, doesn't it? It would be if there were any legal muscle behind it. Of course Boulder's referendum doesn't do anything. It does, however, illustrate the importance that "peace" groups attach to SOF's efforts.

Yet even that impotent expression is limited. With a population of about 83,800 and an economy based on the university, boutiques, real estate and tourism, Boulder is hardly a barometer of national public opinion. In fact, such antics don't represent Colorado, which consistently votes Republican in national presidential elections. The referendum's framers admitted

that if it had been placed before the entire county, the outcome would have been different.

Anyone familiar with the People's Republic of Boulder will immediately understand how such a referendum could worm its way onto the ballot during a local election. Boulder has come to regard itself as the foreign policy guru of the Western U.S., a sort of weak sister of East Coast intellectuals. But it's the spearhead of this movement that needs a long look.

They call themselves Witness for Peace, an ironic title for a group that supports the repressive and aggressive regime that squats in Managua. But like the leaders of the communist movement after which Witness for Peace patterns itself, they know propaganda. They have cultivated an image of moral indignation. They publicize ties with naive clergy. They try to gather people of a range of ages for small demonstrations in public places. And they woo the uncommitted press.



In the eyes of the general public, being viewed as a grassroots movement lends specious credibility to a cause. But a little digging reveals a complex web of deep connections. It is probably no surprise to most readers of SOF that the soapbox for peace in Central America is being hammered together by unsavory characters, most notably the Sandinistas.

Watch for these groups and watch for SOF's first exposé of the communist-controlled anti-American network in April's *Soldier of Fortune*. Meanwhile, sit back and enjoy SOF's tribute to the "peace" movement, beginning on page 28 of this issue. ✕

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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE (ISSN 0145-6784/USPS 120-510) is published monthly by SOLDIER OF FORTUNE Magazine, Inc., Boulder, Colorado. Second Class Postage Paid at Boulder, CO. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SOLDIER OF FORTUNE, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 348, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. Subscription rates for twelve monthly issues: \$26.00 — U.S.A., Canada, Mexico. All other countries, \$33.00. Special domestic and foreign rates on request. U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Single-Issue Price — U.S., \$3.00; United Kingdom, 2.40; Canada, \$3.50.

CONTRIBUTORS: Manuscripts, photographs, drawings are submitted at the contributor's own risk. Material should be mailed to Articles Editor, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

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 Mozambique **74**

**ANGOLAN  
 REFLECTIONS  
 PART II**

**Gary Acker**  
 Life in an Angolan prison  
**78**



Page 38

**COVER:** The battle of Dien Bien Phu decisively ended the First Indochina War and with it the last remnants of France's Asian empire. The French army's last stand took place near the Laotian border some 180 miles from the nearest French post. Major Marcel Bigeard, commander of the 6th Colonial Battalion, led the first group of soldiers that jumped into Dien Bien Phu, but it was all to no avail. Sixty thousand Viet Minh overran the outpost in a set-piece battle that was supposed to be won by superior French firepower. SOF takes a look back at that historic battle with Howard Sochurek, the only American on the battlefield during the first days of the siege. Photo: Howard Sochurek, Life Magazine © Time Inc.

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## MRS. & MR. FONDA...

Sirs:

The November '85 issue of Bulletin Board had a short piece entitled, "See Tom and Jane Run." I was surprised to see that Tom Hayden and his wife have a staff to scan SOF for comments. And Tom Hayden's comment, "the anti-war movement deserves a monument as well" made me sick. Isn't it a shame that so many brave servicemen gave the ultimate sacrifice for a traitor to live in a such a great nation as ours.

Dean Scott  
Perrysburg, Ohio

*The memory of Fonda and Hayden will be their monument. And the infamy that has accrued to their kind is memorialized in "Monumental Cowards" which begins on page 28 of this issue.*

## MILITARY BIAS...

Sirs:

Several months ago I picked up my first copy of SOF and have been unable to put it down. I have been looking for an outlet that promotes the honor and dignity that professionals strive to uphold. In today's world of bias and half-truths, it is good to be able to turn to SOF and read honest, professional, and informative journalism on subjects that others won't report or don't have the guts to report.

William R. Schulz  
Houston, Texas



## FLAK



## SHORT MEMORIES...

Sirs:

There has been a lot of publicity regarding our country's memorial to the Vietnam veterans. It's a good memorial, but incomplete. I served with the U.S. Navy in Vietnamese waters, and I feel the Navy and Air Force did their part also. My question is about the memorial's MIAs, since there are no statues of a sailor or airman. When I take my son to see this memorial, I do not want him to ask the same question. I do not want people to forget the men of these two services who gave their all in that war.

Robert Hiatt  
Lawton, Oklahoma

*As powerful as its various statements may be, and as affective as most vets find it, the Vietnam War Memorial represents a patchwork solution to a problem caused by bad planning and administrative callousness. SOF joins you in regretting that the 'Nam vets' monument did not adequately reflect the willing and unselfish sacrifices of most American men and women of all services.*



## BLADE BIGOT?...

Sirs:

Bill Bagwell is obviously articulate, intelligent, and knows more about knife making than I ever could, but he is biased. Every month he goes on about how great Damascus is, how everyone needs a knife made of it, and how he and only a "handful" of other makers can forge and use it correctly.

I know Damascus is a great steel. I wish I could afford it, and I wish anyone I know could afford it. I never see any articles on new knives, different designs, different uses, concealment knives, or city knives instead of battle blades. When you announced this series I was hoping for fair, impartial knife news similar to Full Auto or Combat Weaponcraft.

I'm still hoping. Other good writers have left SOF columns, perhaps it's time for Mr. Bagwell to move on.

Derek Guerasio  
Brooklyn, New York

*Take a closer look at Bill's Battle Blades columns. He does address the issue of what materials constitute the best knife, but he's also dealt with knife throwing, ninja-style shurikens, knife sharpening techniques, daggers, hollow-handled knives, and other subjects not related to forging — all found in 1985 SOF issues. If you read last month's column, you'll see that Bill took a look at "Effective Cuts" — just where to best immobilize an opponent during a knife fight. He carries on with the theme with "Choice Cuts" in this issue. For those who are looking for a moderate priced, benchmade, stainless-steel knife, check Bagwell's article on Pat Crawford, beginning on page 30. We think Bill's the best in the business, and we hope to keep him around for at least the next 10 years.*

## NOT FORGOTTEN...

Sirs:

Recently while at Fort Bragg for reserve training, I purchased an MIA/POW bracelet from the J.F.K. Museum. I would like very much to find out more about this man. I feel that more should be done to make an accounting of all the MIAs, and I pray that if I were to be sent somewhere, that my government doesn't turn its back and forget me.

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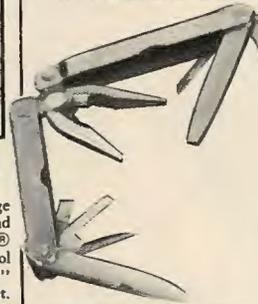
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*Requests for information must be received by March 31, 1986. Registration deposits must be received by April 31, 1986.*

*Your application is conditional upon a security clearance to be conducted by the Israeli government.*

If any of your readers have any information on Major Samuel K. Toomey Sr., U.S. Army Special Forces, reported missing in Laos on 30 November 1968, I would like to receive it.

Dick Trace  
4 North 32nd Street  
Battle Creek, Michigan 49015

The debacle over the handling of the MIA/POW issue by the U.S. government remains a sore point with SOF and with most of our readers. We've taken a hard look at the current situation (see SOF, "POWs vs. Uncle Sam," January 1986) and will do so until a full accounting is made. More information on the POW/MIA issue can be obtained by writing the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia, ATTN: Executive Director, 1608 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006.

## PISTOLEROS' PLAUDITS...

Sirs:

I attended the SOF Three-Gun Match this year. I would very much like to compliment you on your choice of match directors. As section coordinator for USPSA/IPSC in Northern California, I have seen a lot of matches put on but none run so smoothly as by Mike Home. I would also like to congratulate Mike and his staff for their ingenious work on match design, course of fire and utilization of the rough desert terrain in Nevada.

Deby Christofides  
USPSA/IPSC Section  
Coordinator  
Northern California

Turn to page 62 for the full coverage of SOF's Three-Gun Match, "Running and Gunning for \$60 Grand."

## S.E.A.L. OF APPROVAL...

Sirs:

First off I would like to commend you, not only for the obvious quality of your magazine, but also for the story about the U.S. Navy SEALs (See "SEAL Saga," October 1985). Most of the stuff you find on special forces just says something like "... the training is long and hard. Only

the best make it."

Well gee, no kidding.

What I've been searching for high and low is something to tell me exactly what is involved in the training. That's just what Mr. Dwyer did.

David Lee  
Corvallis, Oregon

## DOWN-UNDER OVERVIEW...

Sirs:

I want you to know how some people out here feel about your publication and your views: They're great! I'm proud to be an American, and believe me, there are many people here in Australia who feel the way you do about our mates in the Kremlin. My anti-communist feeling has gotten me into vast amounts of trouble because I'm not afraid to voice my opinion. Once they find out I'm an American, they're all over me. However, I'm proud and happy to read your magazine whenever I can get it over here, and I want you to keep up the good work.

James P. Murdock  
Launceston, Tasmania

## TO FORGIVE, DIVINE...

Sirs:

I enjoyed reading part one of "Mad Mike's Own Story" (November 1985, SOF), but in giving the background of the significance of the name "Wild Geese," you stated that the Battle of the Boyne was between James II and Cromwell. Actually, Cromwell was long dead before the family/religious spat — which led to the Battle of the Boyne — even began. The Battle of the Boyne was between the forces of James II and those of his brother-in-law, William of Orange.

John Craig Carpenter  
Jacksonville, Illinois

Nice catch. The Battle of the Boyne was fought on 1 July 1690 during the War of English Succession. ✕

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## SEEKING STATS...

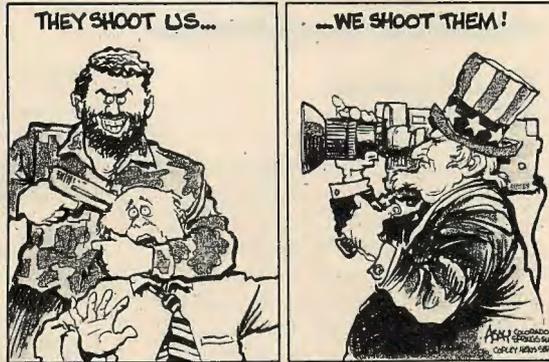
An NRA task force is seeking information and statistics to present as evidence at the Volkmer-McClure hearings in the U.S. House of Representatives aimed at more reasonable gun laws. Specifically needed are figures on crime rates and crime incidence involving Title II (automatic) weapons, especially those which might compare Title II-related crime incidence before and after 1934. Also needed are crime statistics pertaining to the use of automatic weapons in Sweden and Switzerland. Information should be sent to: **Mr. Fitzhugh MacCrae, Dept. SOF, 5-12 Strawberry Bank Rd., Nashua, NH 03062.**

## TIP TO AUSTRALIA...

Many Aussies write complaining about how hard it is to bag a copy of *Soldier of Fortune* in their country. Well, SOF's circulation department has passed along a tip on where Down Under to corner this elusive prey. **Frank Mathias News Agency, 715 George St., Sydney**, carries the complete line of Omega Group Ltd. publications: *Soldier of Fortune*, *Combat Weapons* and the SOF Action Series.

While the editors appreciate Frank's service, Mr. Mathias isn't exactly excited by his business on our behalf. "I think it's a piece of trash," he said in a telephone interview. "I only sell it because I have to." Thanks, just the same.

# BULLETIN BOARD



## MOZAMBIQUE GETS U.S. \$\$...

Once again the State Department gets the Idiot Award for saying one thing and doing another in foreign policy. The bottom line is aid and comfort to an enemy.

State's Agency for International Development is sending \$2 million of your taxes to assist "in the development of... technical assistance contracts for the government of the People's Republic of Mozambique." Among other projects aimed at propping up President Samora Machel's shaky Marxist regime, the money will pay contractors for "emergency railway track repair."

Mozambique's anti-Marxist, pro-U.S. freedom fighters — known as Renamo — get a big "Oooh-rah!" from SOF. They keep blowing up the communist government's railroads.

AID's pro-Marxist financing is being handled through the U.S. Mission to Swaziland on behalf of the U.S. Aid Affairs Office in Mozambique. The program includes the recruitment of businesses from socialist Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) to assist Mozambique.

So the State Department is paying businesses in one pro-Soviet country to fix railway lines in another Marxist country. Once repaired, these tracks will be used to transport Mozambique's Soviet-supplied and trained FPLM troops — and ComBloc advisers — around the countryside in order to kill pro-Western freedom fighters. This makes as much sense as State's policy of bestowing upon Afghanistan's Soviet puppet regime a "most favored nation" trading status while also spending millions to overthrow the same government. So much for Foggy Bottom thinking.

## HONOR ROLL...

Refugee Relief International Inc. contributors:

A donation in memory of Dana Parker and Jim Powell; Siegfried J. Pinchut, Robert Hall, Karl D. Matthews, J.W. Nicholas.

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund:

Mike McPike, Michael Pluetz, Karl D. Matthews, Robert G. Wheaton, Marcia L. DiZenzo, Lawrence Stier, Donald E. Raulerson Jr.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund:

In memory of Sgt. Gray, 173rd Airborne Brigade; Donald E. Raulerson Jr., Siegfried J. Pinchut, Harold Pavey Jr., Marcia L. DiZenzo, Jack & Harriet Nicholas, Rolfe L. Hillman III, Hilan Ashby.

## GOING LEFT MEANS NO RIGHTS...

Nicaragua's Marxist government must be red-faced. It revoked so many civil rights recently that when citizens asked for a list of suspended legal provisions to make sure they followed the new letter of the law, such a list was banned by the ruling Sandinista Party.

Earlier, President Daniel Ortega Saavedra suspended most civil rights under emergency decree — rights such as free expression and peaceable assembly, *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum*, down to and including mail and telephone privacy. These rights had been restored as world attention focused on national elections in November 1984. But they were suspended again 15 October 1985 under another totalitarian decree.

The editors at *La Prensa*, the Managua newspaper which has opposed every Nicaraguan government in the last half-century, probably have felt more keenly than any others the brunt of Ortega's recent crackdown on civil rights. In the year prior to the October crackdown, 20 to 40 percent of the daily's copy was cut by Sandinista censors, according to one editor, Carlos Ramirez. Since 15 October, "it's up to 80 percent and more," Ramirez said. For instance, Ortega's trip to New York to speak at the United Nations, as well as other events, were reported in the pro-Sandinista press. But *La Prensa* was censored from mentioning them. Very few of its stories now touch on anything referring to politics or the government. As Nicaragua's most respected newspaper, it ironically has become

# VIETNAM'S BIGGEST POW SNAFU?



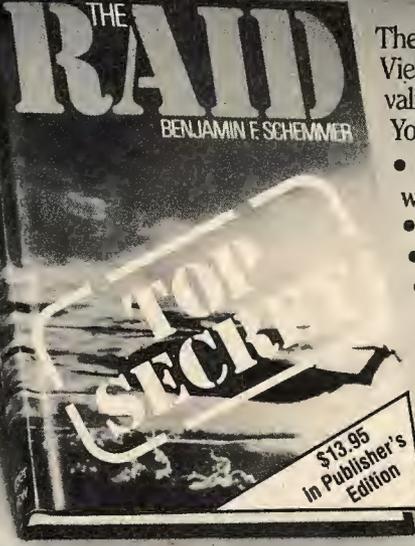
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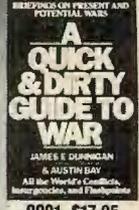
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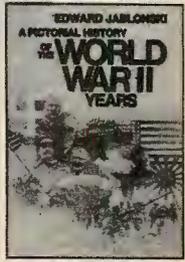
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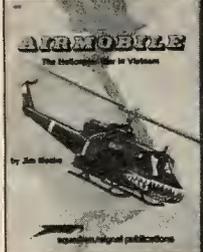
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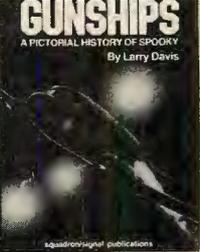
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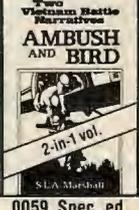
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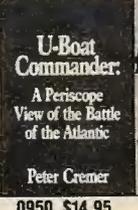
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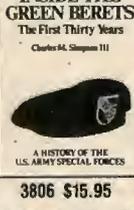
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a newspaper that says very little about Nicaragua.

Others are feeling government pressure, however. Lenin Cerna (who takes his name from the founder of the Soviet Union's communist government) is Nicaragua's State Security Chief and a principal deputy of Interior Minister Tomás Borge. Since the latest decree suspending rights, Cerna called on the carpet three leaders of the Democratic Coordinator, a small coalition of anti-Sandinista political groups. He accused them of stirring up discontent against the government. Two days later they called a press conference to accuse the government of violating human rights.

In the United States a group announced the formation of Concerned Catholics for Religious Freedom in Nicaragua to monitor Sandinista oppression of organized religion. Funny how the popular press calls these folks "an ultraright church group" while those who aid the communist tyrants are benignly referred to as "Christian peace activists." Those interested in helping the good guys should write:

**Concerned Catholics for Religious Freedom in Nicaragua, P.O. Box 76089, Washington, D.C. 20013**

### KHOMEINI RUSHES THE BOMB...

The Ayatollah Khomeini apparently is pushing Iran's nuclear bomb project into high gear. One indication has been noted in the Tehran government's newspaper, *Kayhan*. The air-mail edition, *Kayhan Hava'i*, also written in Farsi, is widely read by pro-Khomeini Iranians living abroad, especially students, academics and technicians. Recent issues have carried strong appeals for expatriate physicists, postgraduate physics students and nuclear technicians to return to Iran to exchange views on nuclear energy at a special seminar set for 14-17 March in Bushehr.

This confirms other reports by SOF's Middle Eastern sources who say Khomeini's fundamentalist Shi'ite Moslem regime has made attainment of nuclear weapons capability a top priority. Certainly it is no coincidence that Iran's long-stalled nuclear power plant project is located in — you guessed it — Bushehr. No doubt a good location for a bomb project. Among topics on the seminar agenda are

"nuclear power plant security" and "the manufacture and machining of uranium and plutonium fuel." It should prove a very interesting get-together, particularly if the Iraqis drop in uninvited with fighter jets.

If Iraq does bomb the meeting site, it could provide a few chuckles for Israel, which was bitterly denounced by much of the supposedly civilized world for bombing Iraq's nuclear reactor near Baghdad. Israel could plant its tongue firmly in cheek and solemnly condemn Iraq's unprovoked attack on Iran's atomic toy.

The only mystery in all this is why the Iranians aren't being more careful about letting the word get out. Maybe they are worried about a possible Soviet invasion, or the fact that Iran is slowly losing its bloody war with Iraq.

### PLASTIC PISTOL...

One of the finest 9mm pistols in the world was in danger of being banned from the U.S. because of its largely plastic frame. It seems that the Austrian-made Glock 17 didn't fit the standards set by the BATF (see SOF, October 1984).

Glock apparently wants American business, though, and with a few changes, the BATF will allow the pistol into the country. Because the slide is one of the few large metal pieces on the gun, Glock put the serial number there, a real no-no as far as the BATF is concerned. Glock agreed to put the serial number on a metal plate placed on the frame for those guns that will be exported to the U.S. An adjustable rear sight is also required, but a fixed sight will be included in the box.

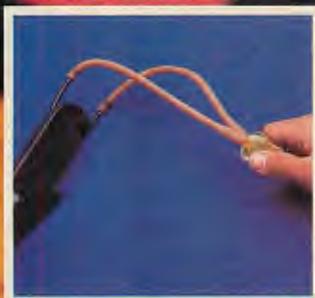
The Glock 17, two magazines, a magazine loader and a plastic storage box will go for well under \$400. For further information contact Glock Inc., Dept. SOF, 500 Highlands Parkway, Suite 190, Smyrna, GA 30080. ☒

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**A** properly filled, stored and maintained magazine is the MRE of any military rifle. In battle, rifles have a voracious appetite that can only be satisfied by a good magazine. Most digestive problems in battle rifles can be traced to the ammunition container — the magazine. Your magazine is a prepackaged ammo meal for your rifle. With proper care and use you can make sure that that rifle never goes hungry — or gets indigestion — in battle.

What is a magazine? A magazine is the spring-loaded storage container that holds the rounds for a rifle. They come in all shapes and sizes, either a spring-loaded box, drum, clip (like the M1 Garand) or belt box like those used in most machine guns. Magazines can be part of the weapon (like the Soviet SKS) or, like in most modern automatic rifles, a detachable box.

Magazines are made of steel, aluminum alloy or plastic and all have both advantages and disadvantages. Steel magazines are virtually indestructible, but they are heavy. And who wants to carry more weight into battle than he has to? Alloy magazines are light, but they are easily dented. The new plastic magazines may be the best of both worlds. They are light, yet able to take a tremendous amount of punishment. They are also nice because you can see how many rounds are left in the magazine.

Proper loading of the magazine will go a long way toward keeping your rifle happy. When loading by hand, place the magazine on a firm surface — the ground if you are in the prone position. Otherwise your leg will do nicely in the kneeling position. Place the first round on the magazine follower, making sure that the round is facing in the right direction. Press down until the round fits underneath the feed lips. Continue the process until the magazine is full. Remember, do not exceed the prescribed number of rounds — even if you can manage to cram just one more in there.

I have seen soldiers exceed the maximum limit of rounds on many occasions, but don't you do it. In El Salvador I once ran into a trooper who had loaded every one of his 15 mags with 31 rounds. The result? Each and every mag had at least one malfunction when firing.

Magazines can also be filled by using stripper clips. Place the loader on the magazine, slide the clip into the loader, then press the cartridges into the magazine. Remove the stripper clip and loader when the magazine is full. Loading magazines with a mag loader from bandoleers is a neglected skill which should be practiced regularly and diligently — especially at night. Bandoleers for the M16 come with loader, safety pin and



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Jack Thompson

## Magazine: Military Rifle's MREs



**Even the best rifle is useless if its magazine fails to feed. This soldier looks good with a mag stuck in his helmet, but the debris that can gather may make him sorry he put it there. Photo: Dept. of Defense**

140 rounds in 10-round stripper clips. Keep practicing.

Cartridge capacity for combat magazines varies, but most use the 20- or 30-round variety. Magazines which hold anywhere from five to 50 rounds exist — there's even a 75-round drum mag for the M16. How many rounds should be loaded into a magazine? That depends. Usually it should be filled to capacity minus two rounds. That way the spring will be able to take the tension for a longer period of time. If field conditions are really bad, or you are going to store a loaded weapon for a long time, then back out five rounds from maximum capacity. Only if you are going to be cranking out rounds on a fairly regular basis should you load the magazine to full capacity.

That about does it for the magazine in your rifle. But what about the spares that ride around in ammo pouches all day? First, they should be carried in a

pouch that protects them from the elements and any grime that may be lurking about. If possible, mags should be carried with the bullets perpendicular to the body — that keeps the magazines from getting dented, but it tends to be less comfortable. M16 magazine pouches work that way. The old M14 pouch and the Israeli Galil pouch carry the magazines parallel to the body. It's a more comfortable system, but the mags are more susceptible to damage. But then again, neither of those steel specimens are very easy to dent.

Basic training teaches soldiers to respect their rifles. That includes the magazine. After operations, the magazine should be emptied, disassembled and thoroughly cleaned — just like your rifle. Check all magazines for cracks and dents in the body. I usually stretch each magazine spring a little so as to keep it flexible.

I also number each magazine and test them periodically to check for three things. First, the magazine must fit correctly in the weapon and click cleanly in and out. Second, I shoot all the magazines after loading them to capacity in order to see if the last five rounds feed properly. It's the last five that often cause the most trouble. Lastly, I make sure that the hold-open device engages after the last round.

Any soldier who cares for his magazines as well as he does his rifle will have very few problems in the field. After all, your magazine is part of your rifle; it only makes sense to treat it as such. ✕

### VETERAN TRAINER

Jack Thompson has spent his adult life as a professional soldier. He fought in Vietnam and Africa and has trained troops in Central America.

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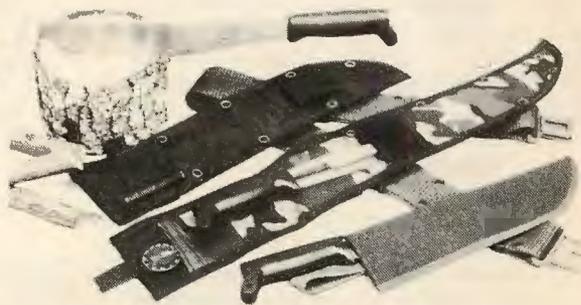
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A quarter of a century ago, they used to tell me on the machine-gun range that the ringing in my ears would go away. What they didn't tell me was that my hearing would go away as well — permanently. But the old brown-shoe Army wasn't concerned with such trivia. When I was discharged, a medical officer told me he would be happy to process my disability claim, but that I'd have to hold over at the repple depple (Fort Sheridan) for at least another 30 days. Instead of waiting, I signed the medical waiver form and was released the next morning.

We've come a long way from sticking cotton or 9mm cases in our ears. I have been testing Wolf Ears, a hearing protector that is the stuff science fiction is made of. Manufactured by Gentex and available from Armor of New Hampshire (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 122, Concord, NH 03301), the Model 1030 Binaural Active Hearing Protector contains an electronic system with the ability to sense and attenuate either continuous or intermittent noise that exceeds 90 dBA sound pressure level.

When the ambient noise level is less than 90 dBA sound pressure, the Model 1030 functions as a sound amplifier allowing the user to hear sounds that might not be normally perceivable. Twigs snapping 20 feet to the rear sound like Chinese firecrackers going off. As the device is binaural and has separate receiving, amplifying and reproducing elements in each ear, you can sense the direction of the sound. But when automatic weapons were fired I discovered that directional perception was somewhat impaired.

The system has been fabricated within a conventional passive hearing protector which has normal attenuating characteristics when the circuitry is turned off. Powered by a single hearing aid battery with a 40-hour service life, the Model 1030 will set you back \$255, postpaid. Expensive? I would have paid 10 times that amount to have a set of Wolf Ears 25 years ago. Hearing aids cost over \$1,000. My only criticism is that the slightest breeze sounds like a gale force wind.

#### Swedish Earmuffs

There are some occasions when Wolf Ears may prove to be a bit too bulky. Peltor Inc. (Dept. SOF, 63 Commercial Way, East Providence, RI 02914) has developed a nifty little passive hearing protector that folds up into a compact ball. Developed for the Swedish army, the Bull's-Eye Stow-A-Way is now standard for most of the European armed forces. The Bull's-Eye Stow-A-Way 6 by Peltor and Earsaf™ is distributed by Brigade Quartermaster (Dept. SOF, 266 Roswell Street, Marietta, GA 30060), and available in olive drab. They are the



# FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

## Shooter's Sights and Sounds



**Left to right: Wolf Ears, Dapkus exploding targets, Combat Glasses, Vortex Flash Suppressor and Peltor earmuffs over Duelatron combat target. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis**

world's lightest at only 6.5 ounces. The adjustable stainless-steel padded-wire headband is incredibly thin and comfortable. The low-profile domes feature a noise reduction rating of 21 decibels. Cost is \$12.95 and Brigade can also provide a camo, olive drab or black belt pouch for \$6.95. I never leave for El Salvador without them.

#### Combat Glasses

Don't forget your eyes, either. When working down south, I use the unique MAG I Combat Frame. Contoured to match your facial features for comfort and air circulation, the tough nylon frames are available from Brigade Quartermaster for \$24.95 without lenses or \$29.95 with a dark non-prescription lens. They are available with prescription single-vision photo-gray plastic lenses from the manufacturer (Combat Glasses, Dept. SOF, 1710 South Hillside, Wichita, KS 67211) for \$49.95. Self-adjusting black neoprene straps, manufactured by U.S. Divers Co., hold the frame securely on the face. They have been designed to fit under the U.S. Army M17 gas mask and scuba masks without affecting the seal. MAG I Combat Frames are also compatible with protective headgear such as the new U.S. Army "Fritz" helmet. I only wish they had built-in windshield wipers for the humid jungles of Central America.

#### Vortex Flash Suppressor

One thing I don't ever care to see, with or without glasses, is a huge fireball erupting out of the muzzle of my M16 during a night operation. Muzzle devices on assault rifles usually address themselves to one or more of three problems: flash, muzzle blast or muzzle climb. They seldom succeed in more than one area.

With the Free World's armies all moving to the 5.56x45mm NATO cartridge — many with rifles containing three-shot burst devices — the question of muzzle climb becomes a moot point. And if barrel lengths are kept to 16 inches or more, muzzle blast in this caliber is not an overriding consideration.

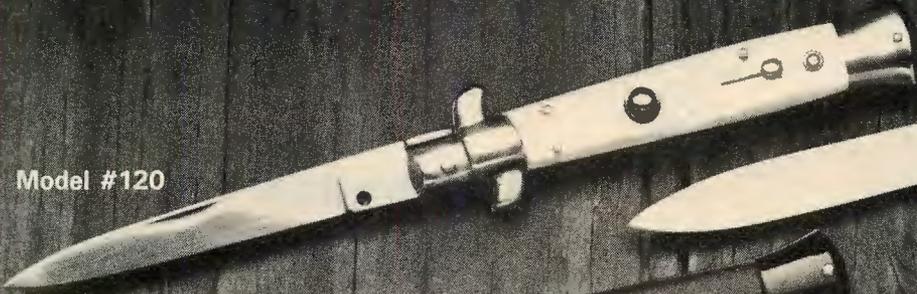
Flash suppression, and its often fatal effect on position disclosure, looms as the user's most important requirement. There is far more cause for concern over muzzle flash just inches from your precious bod than a modern tracer round which commences with dim or dark ignition 10 meters from your position.

Smith Enterprises Ltd. (Dept. SOF, 325 S. Westwood #1, Mesa, AZ 85202) has designed the Vortex Flash Suppressor to diminish the M16's flash signature to the degree that it is almost undetectable. An open, four-prong device, just 3/4-inch longer than the standard M16 birdcage, the Vortex will accommodate the M7 bayonet for those of you who like to charge screaming up the hill. I fitted the Vortex

*Continued on page 100*

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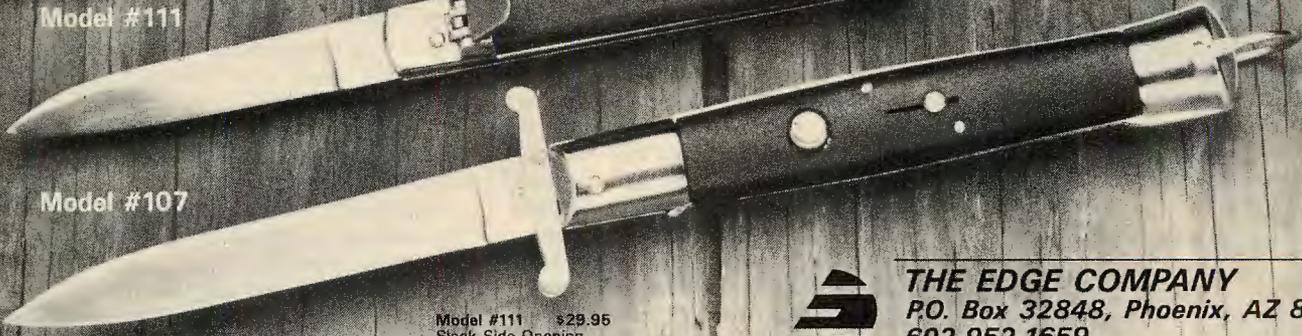
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# I WAS THERE

by Richard W. Fairfield

## Ain't Nothin' Friendly 'bout Friendly Fire



Being under fire is never pleasant, but it's worse when the bullets come from your own side. Photo: Dept. of Defense

**H**OT was the word for the day. Every man was drinking in the shade of the palm trees just outside the small village of Bong Son. Delta Company of the 2nd, 503rd Infantry, was taking it easy for the rest of the day—a luxury rarely afforded to anyone in the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

We were well into our ninth day of a seven-day resupply mission. When the call had come to move down to the flat land at the base of the mountain and wait for resupply, we went. It didn't take much convincing—the valley was full of cool shade and we would link up with choppers loaded with clean clothes, mail and maybe even a hot meal. I can remember thinking to myself that this was the type of war a guy could learn to live with.

It had to look like we were on the job so we sent a couple of rifle squads to search out the ville. A hedgerow stood about 25 to 30 meters to our front separating us from view of a platoon of 4th Division tanks sitting on the far side of a rice paddy.

I was kicked back writing a letter home when the first small-arms report sounded. Everybody grabbed dirt. A second, third and fourth round cracked before I realized that nobody was shooting at us, it was the tanks that the sniper was after. It didn't take long before they were flat fed up with that sniper. And little did we know, but they had no idea we were even in the area.

They called for log stats on any friendlies in the area and their headquarters informed them that we were still up on top of that mountain to our rear. They also gave them the go ahead to roll over and flatten that ville.

They advanced toward us, firing both HE and beehive rounds—straight at our position. Every RTO (myself included) in the company started switching nets as fast as our fingers would allow and bellowing the single command, "Tanks Check-Fire!"

They just kept coming. Trees toppled under the deadly hail of fléchettes and the air was filled with deafening blasts of the HE. The tankers closed to

within 100 meters of our puny hedgerow and it looked like it was curtains for us poor infantrymen.

Like an angel from heaven, a slick flew over our position and dipped down, landing directly in the path of the oncoming tanks. They stopped in their tracks. I'm happy to report that we suffered no dead and only a few wounded from this incident, but it was only by the grace of God and a helicopter that it turned out that way.

Later that night, after my nerves had stopped quivering, I went to check the compass that I carried fastened to the button over my left breast pocket and found that it wouldn't open. Swearing as only a paratrooper can, I discovered a fléchette buried in it. That compass had hung directly over my heart, and I murmured a prayer for its lucky location.

I never found out who that helicopter jockey was, but this happened about mid-July 1968, and buddy, if you're out there and reading this, I'd like to take this opportunity to say "Tanx Bro!" That Huey saved us from a lot more than the dozen or so wounded we had.

I'm not one to push my luck, but I wish he'd gotten there sooner. My rucksack was riddled with tiny holes from those infernal fléchettes. I lost my air mattress and that last can of peaches. ☒

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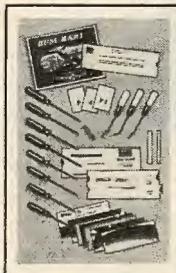
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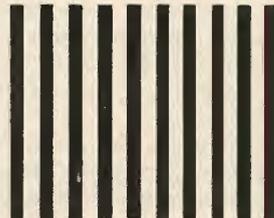
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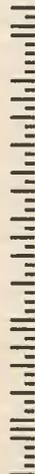
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**THE ADVISORS.** By Curt Rich. Kensington Publishing Corp., Dept. SOF, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. \$3.95. Review by John Coleman.



**E**VERY successful novelist skillfully blends the three essential ingredients of plot, character and setting into a tight mosaic of action — one that will grab the reader and make him a part of the story. If one of these elements is weak and the others strong, you can still end up with a taut read. If two elements are weak — well, you end up with a weak book.

Unfortunately, this is the case with SOF contributor Curt Rich's **The Advisors**. His main character of Jerry Harris, a young lieutenant assigned as a MACV adviser to ARVN armor units during 1969-70, evokes almost no emotional response from the reader. The reason? Harris is first, last and always a smartass, and it's hard to feel anything save indifference for a smartass. Even when he's blown off a couple of APCs and a Navy PBR — and runs afoul of the NVA — your response is: "So what? He probably deserved it."

The same type of emotional sterility exists for Rich's Vietnam. Lush and brutal Southeast Asia becomes a passive backdrop under Rich's pen — a sort of stereotyped version of a war zone. There are occasional flashes of the grit and smell which pulls 1970 Vietnam to the here and now, but they are few and too far between.

In fairness, though, **The Advisors** is a pretty good combat story. Rich's ear for dialogue and his grasp of Vietnam-era militarese are solid, and he writes with a sense of continuity rare in most first-time novelists. Some vets may

cringe at Rich's Vietnam, but most SOF readers will enjoy this fast-paced look at MACV advisers.

**INSIDE THE COMMANDOS: A PICTORIAL HISTORY FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE PRESENT.** By James D. Ladd. Naval Institute Press, Dept. SOF, 2062 Generals Hwy., Annapolis, MD 21402. 1984. 350pp. 410 illus. \$17.95. Review by Bill Brooks.

**T**HE British Commandos were born on 8 June 1940 when Winston Churchill approved a proposal for the establishment of Section MO9 within the War Office. MO9 was to raise and provision a Special Service Brigade of 5,000 men to raid the coast of German-occupied Europe. Thus began a painful series of courageous exploits where experience proved to be the teacher for development of future instruction.

Commandos, generally known as the Special Forces, began to expand. Volunteers were accepted from all branches of the armed forces and were selected for their intelligence, health, military skills and self-discipline. Commandos were not the disobedient, "dirty-dozen" types portrayed in the movies and press. Their officers were allowed extra leave time provided they returned to their units with a number of suitable recruits: an unorthodox but effective method, since many of the new volunteers needed assistance from an on-the-spot officer to persuade reluctant commanders to release them.

Commandos received no extra pay, and promotions — as in all small units — were slow. But prospects for action and freedom from barracks routine were attraction enough for many. Initially commandos had to provide their own billets, finding a home or hotel near the unit. Ladd states that it was not until 1943 that the War Office began to supply barracks.

Because of the fast pace of the war and Britain's extending commitments, it was only natural that complications in the status of commando units and what constituted Special Forces (as opposed to Special Services Brigade) should arise. By 1944 there were

many units carrying out small raids who did not wear the green berets, yet their roles were those that could be regarded as "commando."

These units' commanders vied with one another for operations: They begged, bribed, borrowed and stole operations wherever they could find them. These units were the Royal Marine Boom Patrol Detachment (RMBPD), created for anti-shipping raids; the Navy's Sea Reconnaissance Unit — Long Range (SRU), the semi-secret Small-Scale Raiding Force (SSRF), Naval Detachment 385, the Combined Operations (Assault) Pilotage Parties, the Army's SBS (Special Boat Squadron) teams, who were capable of a variety of roles to include demolition and sabotage and the short-lived canoeist Troop 101.

In November 1944 these units were officially known as Special Forces, and the Special Service Brigades were re-named Commando Brigades.

In Britain since the 1960s the term Special Forces has been reserved for the British Army's Commando Unit, the SAS (Special Air Service), and the Royal Marine SBS. Today these two units cover between them all activities that were the toast of the small-raiding units of World War II fame. (For more on the SAS see *SAS Dares and Wins*, SOF, September '80; *SAS At War in Malaya*, April '81; and *SAS Today*, December '82.) In November 1945 all Army commando units were ordered disbanded; henceforth the commandos would find their troops from the ranks of the Royal Marines. Nine existing Royal Marine Commandos were also ordered dissolved. But subsequently units were raised for specific needs, such as the 300-strong, U.S.-equipped, 41 (Independent) Commando that was sent to Korea. Since 1945 the Royal Marine Commandos have seen action and death in Hong Kong, Palestine, Cyprus, Korea, Suez, Malaya, Borneo, South Arabia, Northern Ireland and the Falklands. Commandos all take pride in their inherited mystique and hard-won reputation, and in what Churchill described as the corps' "rough tough history."

**Inside the Commandos** is a well-written and well-illustrated work. British military buffs will be pleased, for the photos alone are worth the moderate price of the book. ❧

## IN REVIEW



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**S**OME blows kill and some blows don't: It's that simple. Yet instant death of an opponent should only be one guarded goal of the knife fighter. Instant incapacitation and depriving your opponent of the will to fight are usually more realistic aims. Naturally, certain cuts are better for specific jobs than others, and my choice of cuts may surprise you.

The thrust has always been the choice of the fencer, and his practice follows from the duel the fencer's ancestors practiced. Unless the duel ended with first blood, a killing stroke was often necessary. With a long, light, straight, pointed blade that wasn't weighted toward the tip, slashes and chops would have been ineffective. Combine the things a light straight blade won't do with its straight-ahead build, and you get the fencer's primary tactic: the thrusting or stabbing attack. Also, given the weapon's strengths and weaknesses, the quickest way to damage your opponent with that kind of sword was to put a little leak in his torso.

A knife won't do that near as well as a sword, but some knives try. That's where daggers come in. The dagger was developed and utilized in its most elemental form as a means of breaching the armor of medieval Europe. When it became necessary to reach the enemy who was encased in armor and thus safe from a slashing attack, the dagger was a logical means to reach inside the cracks and crevices and kill him.

Daggers may be graceful and appealing to the eye in a way that is both sinister and sublime, but they are a weapon that is designed for stabbing above all else. This is good or bad depending on your perspective and your purpose. In a knife fight you're in good shape if you are on the receiving end; you're in trouble if you are trying to deliver such an attack. The stab or thrust is a fine attack against the internal organs, the blood vessels that feed them, or at the base of the skull where the brain or spinal column are the target. If you see one of these coming, they are usually easy to evade and counter. Delivery of a stabbing stroke to its best targets also means that you have to get very close to your opponent, and in so doing you make it easier for him to land one on you.

Actually, the stabbing attack with a knife is fairly common for a couple of reasons, both of which I find to be out of step with common sense. One is that the stabbing stroke is the first offensive move that a completely unsophisticated person will usually make if they try to kill someone with a knife. The other is that in this day and age, people in this country are extremely fond of



# BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

## Choice Cuts



**This knife stroke requires too much stealth, too much strength and leaves absolutely no defensive perimeter. This isn't the choice cut.**

double-edged daggers.

Generally more useful than the thrust or stab, the chopping attack offers terrific lethality with a powerful knife. Chopping strokes cleave things in two (such as skulls) or cut things off (such as hands and fingers). A properly applied chopping stroke is devastating and deadly, and under ideal conditions this stroke has more immediate killing and incapacitating power than any other. Its immediate power to create trauma, shock and spectacular wounds is of great utility in ending a fight. Just ask a Gurkha.

Yet chopping has the disadvantage of being relatively easy to evade or counter in a face-to-face fight. This technique requires committed weight, balance and motion. Once such a concerted effort is started it is difficult to recover one's blade from its arc. If you initiate a chopping stroke and miss, expect an immediate and likely effec-

tive counter from your opponent.

The queen of the knife-fighter's chessboard is the slashing stroke. It can be applied more different ways, more different directions, to more targets, with greater effect and with less chance of counter than any other stroke. Slashing — in balance, in control, employing a minimum range of motion — provides offense and defense without exposure. It requires little commitment, and is instantly applicable to any opportunity.

That means if your opponent thrusts, you slash down, up or sideways, using his momentum to cut him with your edge. If he presents an exaggerated fighting stance, just slash the exposed part of his body, and then slash at his counterattacking limb whether he thrusts, cuts, punches or kicks. It is the most common knife-fighting technique because it is simply easier to slash a man in a face-to-face confrontation than it is to stab him, and it's a great deal safer as well. Also, in its capacity to open up vulnerable tissues on extremities, you can inflict great and demoralizing damage with minimum

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effort or danger. This was recognized very early in armed combat, and European armor was quickly developed that actually rendered a man fairly safe from a slashing attack. Then, to go back to the beginning, enters the dagger. But men don't wear hard armor anymore, unless they're on an EOD squad, so you can slash away.

In a nutshell, the strokes stack up something like this: The slashing stroke is always effective, easier to connect with consistently than the others, can address more targets more quickly and is by far the best stroke to use when you are interested in maintaining your own defensive perimeter. It can kill quickly, but rarely do its effects kill instantly.

The chopping stroke is deadly as *hell*, but only when applied with a knife that really has good power. Don't use your K-BAR, Gerber or Sykes-Fairbairn with any expectation of real success on a chopping stroke. All of these knives are seriously lacking in the power department and will not get the job done with a chopping attack.

The chopping attack is especially well-suited for sentry removal or a rear attack where the target is caught unaware. A good bowie or kukri will split a man's skull or decapitate him if the blow is delivered properly. A major caution is in order with the chopping stroke, however. Its delivery doesn't allow you a good defense, and the momentum generated by this stroke ensures that you be off balance while you recover your blade if you miss. This can easily get you killed in a frontal attack.

The stabbing attack suffers from some of the same problems as the chopping attack. To deliver it, you sometimes have to be off balance, and you *always* have to be close to your opponent for it to be effective. This is a stroke that must be delivered to the torso, neck or throat to inflict meaningful damage, and if you're that close to him, he can reach you, too. The stabbing stroke also has the disadvantage of doing minimal damage unless it is placed with near-surgical precision. Patching up a puncture in soft tissue is tough, and the chances of infection are high, since it's hard to clean, so in that way, the stab is deadly. But that kind of wound placed outside a vital area doesn't usually drop your enemy.

Each of the three basic strokes have their applications. And situations and circumstances will dictate which you should employ. You should be proficient in the delivery of all three, and if you plan to use them, you should have a knife that will give the type of performance that each stroke requires. Find out the capabilities of both you and your blade beforehand. A knife fight is the wrong time to learn. ✘

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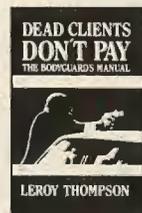
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# ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



## **M**EDIEVAL WEAPONS — TODAY'S ANSWER

A weapon projected over a distance is always preferable to one that pits warrior against warrior in a face-to-face confrontation. Since around 3500 B.C. man has used the crossbow for just that reason.

When armored knights rode over Europe during the Middle Ages, both the crossbow and the longbow played an important role in their demise. It just doesn't make any sense to wear 60 pounds or so of armor plating when a projectile can slice through it like silk.

The crossbow soon found itself surpassed by the longbow because it could shoot faster than its counterpart. Because of the leverage gained from the longer limbs, the longbow could also boast more power with less draw weight than a crossbow.

Despite its inadequacies, the crossbow lives on today. There's a certain exotic charm about the crossbow that lures both weapons enthusiasts and Hollywood movie producers to its use. A number of companies offer upgraded versions of the European crossbow, most of them designed for sporting use, and

a few are powerful enough for hunting.

Technological strides in the field of archery have not been lost on crossbow manufacturers. The hottest creation yet has to be the compound bow, a series of strings and pulleys that lessen muscle strain on the bowman at a given draw weight. That same system applies to crossbows — only it has more advantages.

In order to be powerful enough for big game hunting, a crossbow must have a draw weight in the 175- to 200-pound range. That puts a lot of strain on the trigger mechanism and the string. In fact, many powerful crossbows have a string life of only 30 or 40 shots. That's where the compound crossbow comes in. By slacking off the pressure at full draw, the compound system takes the strain off the string until it has been released and is one-quarter of the way through its firing stroke.

Barnett International, a long-time manufacturer of quality crossbows, has entered the compound crossbow market with one of the best compound units to date. Although Barnett makes many models of crossbows, their new Thunderbolt is

certainly the cream of the crop.

Barnett's compound system works. After firing 70 bolts out of the Barnett, there was little sign of string wear. This weapon should easily shoot 200 bolts without a string change.

There are problems with firing this crossbow, however. It's almost impossible to find a suitable target — and we tried everything. Standard hay bales are useless: The bolt doesn't even slow down as it slices through the opposite side and continues on into the distance. Then we tried something different. We set up an old gas tank in front of the bales and shot a bolt through it. It didn't go all the way through this time — both sides were pierced, but there was another problem. The bolt was entombed in the target forever. No amount of swearing and pulling could get the bolt back. We had found a strong enough target, but it was expensive — bolts aren't cheap.

After finally settling on a dirt pile, we paced off 30 meters in order to zero the crossbow. The sights may present a problem for riflemen, but they will certainly be old hat for archers. Two horizontal ball-tipped brass pins make up the front sight with each one set for a different range. That's a good idea when using any type of bow because of the limited range and arched trajectory. The rear sight is pretty standard, though. It's an elevation adjustable notch unit that can be moved along the top bar in order to give the shooter an optimum sight picture.

Cocking the Thunderbolt is simple. A T-bar cocking stirrup slides out of the front of the crossbow. Place it on the ground, stand on it, and draw the string back until it catches in the trigger mechanism. It will take two hands.

Bolt groups with the Thunderbolt averaged about nine inches at 30 meters — more than acceptable for target shooting or hunting. Moving back to 70 meters opened up the group considerably. About the best that can be expected at this range is two-foot groups because of the trajectory arc.

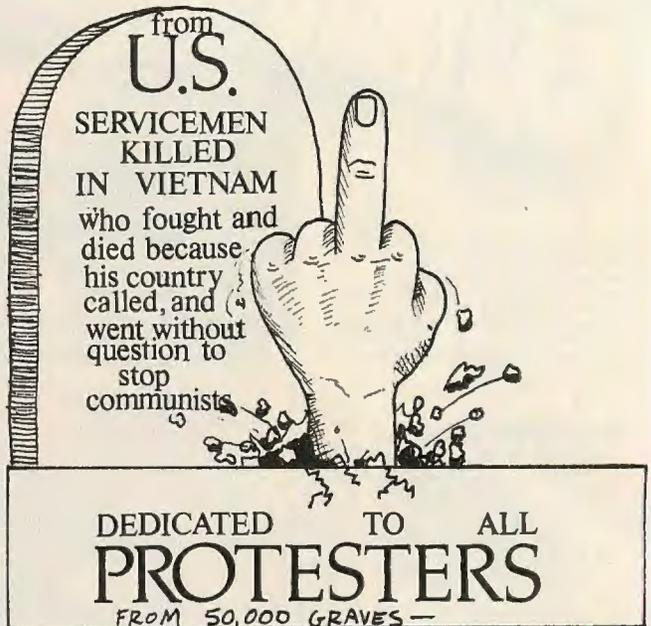
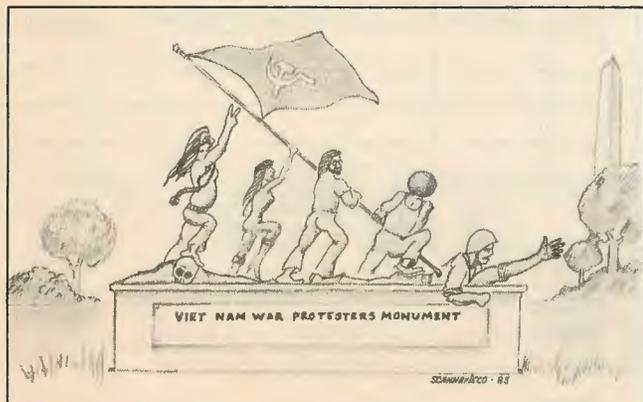
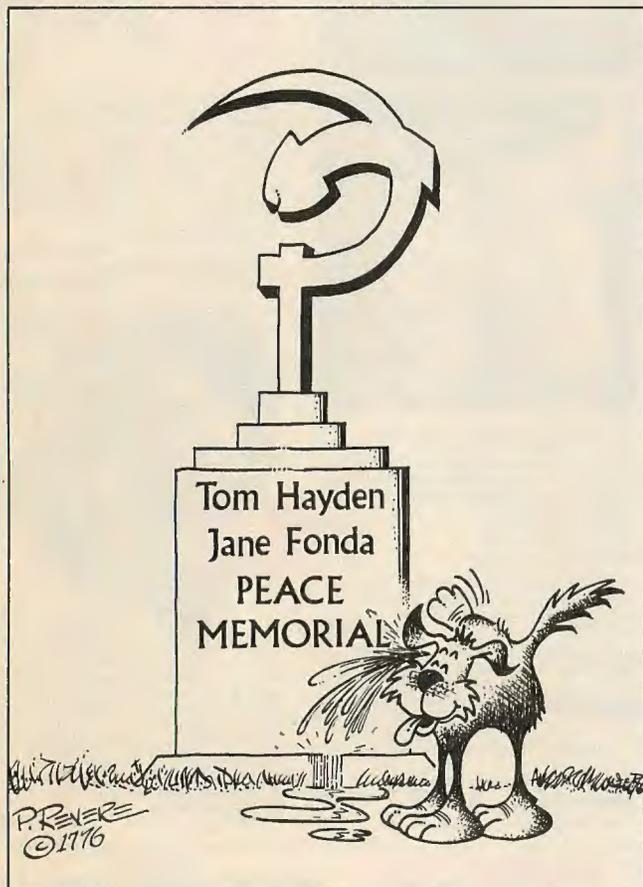
The Thunderbolt is everything it's cracked up to be. It's not cheap though. At \$331 this unit may not be the right crossbow for the beginner. Barnett does make other models for everyone from the novice to the expert. The Thunderbolt probably falls in the latter category. If you send \$2 to Barnett International, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 934, Odessa, FL 33556, they'll send you a catalog of their entire line. ✕



# MONUMENTAL COWARDS

## The Track of the Great American Chicken

by SOF Staff



ABOVE: SECOND PRIZE: "A soldier at Fort Hood" may claim his or her prize by notifying the magazine with proof of entry. It is dedicated "for all the vets who died and can't express an opinion to all those sorry draft-card-burning, run-to-Canada scum."

LEFT: FIRST PRIZE: The team that submitted this entry must contact Jim Pate at SOF to claim their prize. It was submitted by H. Thomas of Concord, Calif., and drawn by an anonymous cartoonist. Thomas identifies himself as a WWII and Korea vet "with no love for Fonda and her commie husband."

BELOW LEFT: NITWITS FOR PEACE AWARD: Peter Scannapieco of Philadelphia demonstrates in his work on Vietnam peace marchers the same back-stabbing betrayal of democratic ideals that is at work against peace and freedom in Central America.



**S***OLDIER of Fortune's* editors are proud to bring SOF readers the best and the brightest results of a recent contest. We wanted to generate ideas on the best way to immortalize people who sided with the likes of Jane Fonda in opposing U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. Thanks, readers, for your overwhelming response. We wish that space limitations — and good taste — did not prevent us from printing all of the submissions. But here are the best.

The first-place winner will receive a one-year subscription to all Omega Group publications and second place a year's subscription to *Soldier of Fortune* and *Combat Weapons*. All others included here will receive a year's subscription to SOF.

And now, for those readers who are unaware, here is the story behind the story.

A person who signs his correspondence "South Phoenix Soviet" is working to build a monument in the Arizona desert to commemorate those who died protesting U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. The name of this monument is the Vietnam Victory Memorial. He wanted to include Jane Fonda's name. She declined through her attorney. But the idea of a memorial to Vietnam peace protestors was initially endorsed by Fonda's fawning hubbie, former peace puke Tom Hayden. Hayden has used the millions generated by Jane's workout tapes to buy his way into a California State Assembly seat, where he has accomplished little except the embarrassment of the state Democratic Party, of which he is a member.

The peace memorial organizer's real name, although he apparently doesn't have the guts to use it when answering his mail, is Terry Choate, owner of a Phoenix taxi company. As a member of the Tempe Peace Center and a radio talk show host on KRDS during the early 1970s, Choate earned the nickname of "Red Menace of the Air" for his radical left-wing views. Now Choate has optioned an acre of land at 183rd Drive and Moreland in Perryville, Ariz., just off the Perryville exit of Interstate 10, to build his peace memorial.

If Choate gets his way, drivers and passengers along I-10 will be able to see a 30-foot-high marble shaft (how appropriate) with a large peace symbol on top. Inscribed on plaques at the base will be the names of people who died protesting the war. Names Choate has mentioned include Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the four students killed by National Guardsmen during riots at Kent State University, two students killed at Jackson State and the name of an old woman who set fire to herself in protest of the war.

Choate says he received a lot of mail from SOF readers after we printed his address (P.O. Box 9364, Phoenix, AZ 85026).

**LEFT: HONORABLE MENTION:** "Let freedom run as long as it doesn't come back" is the title of this submission by Warren R. Wannamaker of New Jersey, who says he was never in Vietnam but served a hitch in the Army anyway.

"About half of the letters are coming from vets who said I shouldn't put all my money into building the memorial — that I should save some to rebuild it." Choate should also remember that his proposed building site is directly in the flight path of fighter jet pilots from Luke Air Force Base.

If the reader is curious about why so many vets are angry, perhaps a couple of choice excerpts from the "South Phoenix Soviet's" correspondence would shed some light.

"Unlike the memorial for war criminals in Washington, [my] memorial will honor the true American patriots who died fighting the fascistic imperialist war-mongers of the right wing . . . to remind the conservatives who won the Vietnam War and who is going to win in Central America. . . . Too much time is wasted on MIA war criminals and not enough on bringing Vietnam vets to international war crimes tribunals. If the MIA are dead, good riddance [sic], if they are still alive they are paying their debt to society and the Vietnamese people. Many German Nazis are still missing . . . because the Soviet Union knows how to deal with anti-communist scum."

Well, Terry, we know these ideas aren't what you had in mind, but here's what we suggest. And *sin loi*. ☒

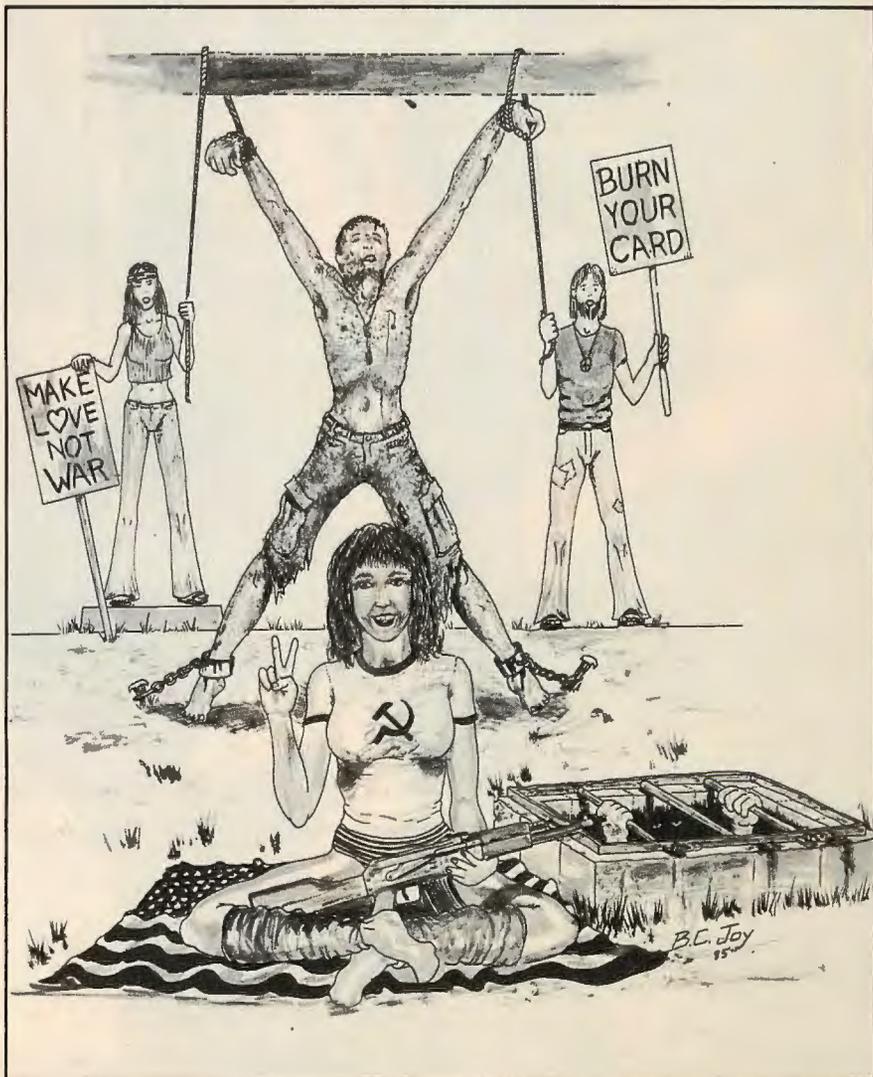


**ABOVE: SMOKE BOMB HILL FERTILE MINDS AWARD:** This work would look nice in a Fort Bragg latrine.

Congratulations to: J. Malmen of Cayucos, Calif., for "Hell No, We Won't Go."

**BELOW: JANE FONDA'S COMMUNISM SERVICE AWARD:** What better display for Jane Fonda Hero of the Nation Park?

"Dedicated to Those Who Protested, Resisted, or Just Ran — From Those Who Didn't." Artist B.C. Joy should contact SOF in writing to provide his correct address.



# CRAWFORD'S KNIVES

## Full-Time Cutler's Polished Performance

by Bill Bagwell

**S**IX hundred Americans call themselves professional knifemakers. Pat Crawford is one of the minority who lays honest claim to the title.

Pat not only earns his living by making knives, he has done so for ten years. This in itself tells you something about the man and his work, for knifemaking is extremely competitive and while making knives as a hobby is one thing, making knives for a living is quite another. Testimony to this is borne out by the fact that of the previously mentioned 600 practitioners of the knifemaker's craft, fewer than 25 earn their entire livelihood from knifemaking. More illuminating still is the fact that less than half of these self-proclaimed "professionals" have been making knives for five years or more. True honest-to-God professional knifemakers are few in number, and Pat Crawford is one of the better ones.

Crawford and his knives hail from West Memphis, Arkansas, and since 1973 Pat has been grinding blades. And grind he does, for Pat not only grinds a blade that is pleasing to the untrained eye, his grinding skill is envied by many of his knifemaking peers. His contours and symmetry are first-rate, and the skill and care of the man are evident when you look at his work.

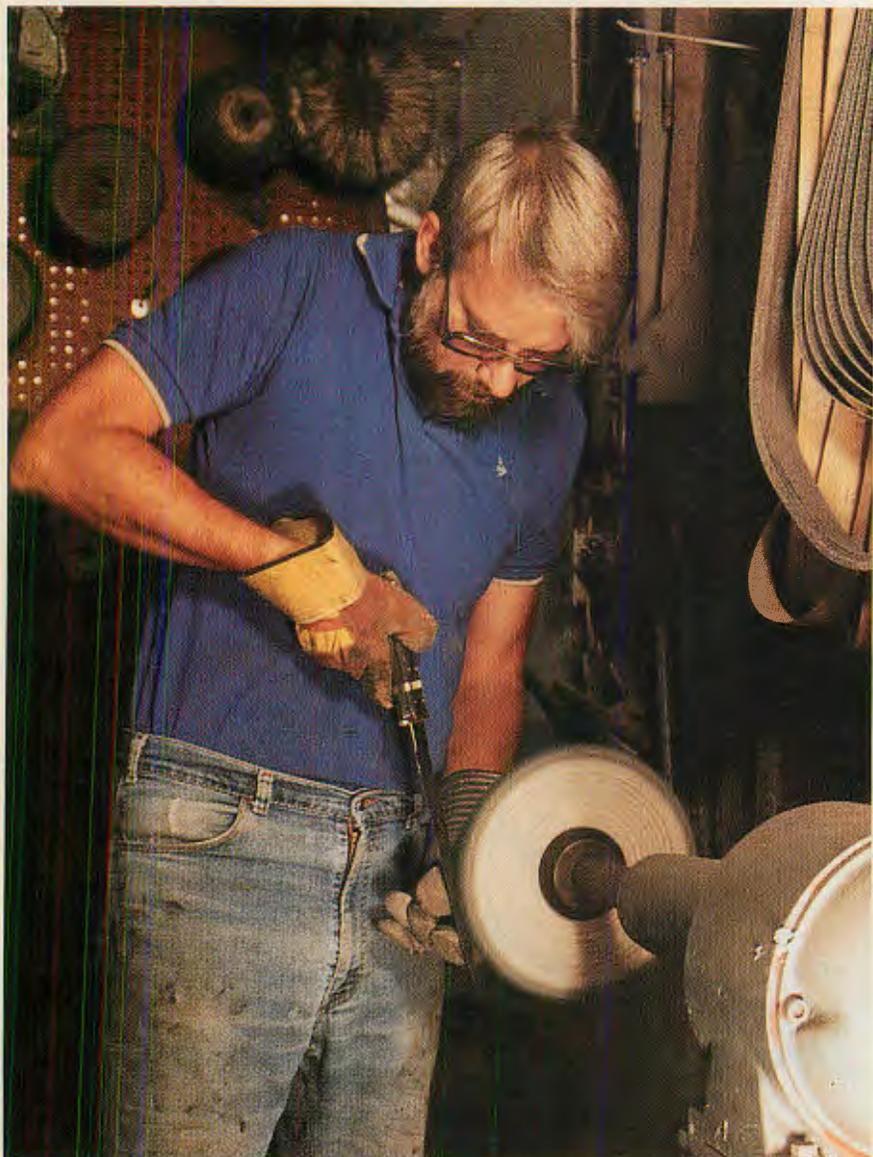
There is another part of knifemaking that is overlooked by many makers, and that is the segment that deals with customer relations and ethics. Crawford, like the rest of us who truly make knives for a living, doesn't want any dissatisfied customers. The true professional can't afford to have them and Pat says that the only dissatisfied customer that he has is one that he doesn't know about. Talking to Crawford makes one believe and understand that. Pat is soft-spoken, candid and sincere, and when he says that he makes every knife the best way he knows how, you see how he and his knives are reflections of each other.

Pat is from the contemporary school of knifemaking known as stock removal. Crawford's blades are ground from bar stock, and the steels favored by Pat are 440C, A2 and D2. Pat has recently begun to grind a number of his blades from 01 tool steel and to apply a Parkerized finish. He reports that the results are more than satisfactory.

Crawford's knives are well-crafted in every respect, and after 10 years in the business, Pat is still adding new models, still experimenting and is ever the innovator. Want a folding Tanto? Pat makes one. How about a Devil's Dart sleeve knife, a push dagger, a Flim Flam folder or a combat boot knife? Pat's got you covered. He makes a nice classic bowie knife and a whole array of daggers and hunting knives, and he does it all in a straightforward and businesslike fashion.

Like many soft-spoken men with a laid-back manner, Crawford has a twinkle of humor about him that runs just under the surface and if you study the guy for a few

Pat Crawford puts the finishing touches on one of his knives.





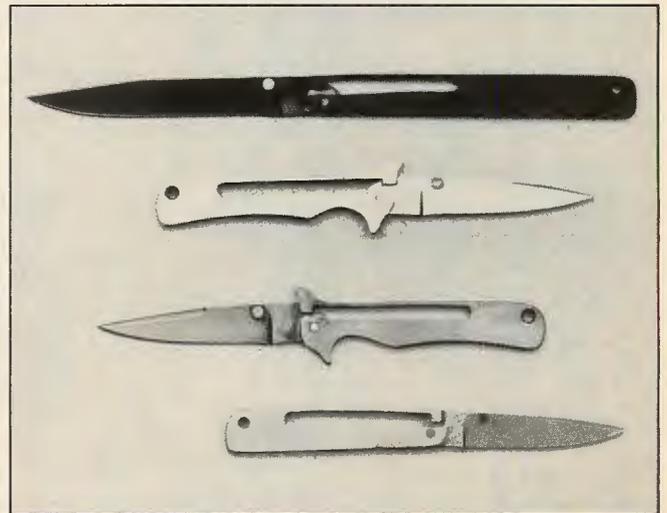
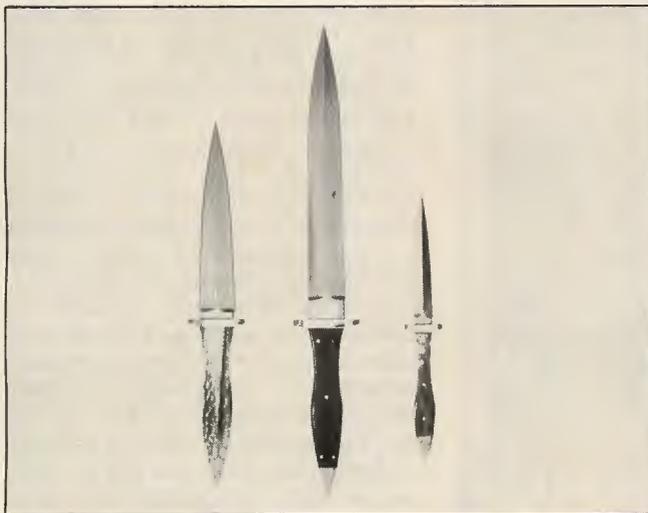
days you begin to think that maybe, just maybe, he would enjoy a practical joke. Pat and I attended a custom knife show in New York City in November of 1979, and as luck would have it, we were assigned tables that were adjacent to each other. Crawford had a nice dagger for sale that had a handle made from a human femur — sort of unusual material — and after the show told me that he

**LEFT:** Crawford combat knives fit any soldier's arsenal. This military-style fighter runs \$275 with a stag handle.

**BELOW LEFT:** Classic, precision-ground double-edged daggers range from \$175 to \$300.

**BELOW:** These skeleton folding knives are known for their durability and are competitively priced from \$125.

**BOTTOM:** A few knives hang among steel blanks in the workshop.





# INCOMING



- **DIM LIGHT SHOOTING:** Most situations that require a defensive response occur at close range and in semi-darkness. SOF shows how to handle those life-or-death moments and come out alive.
- **ARMOR IN AFRICA:** SOF takes a look at Soviet tanks churning up the bush in Angola. Anti-communist guerrillas there have come up against plenty of armor in their fight to oust the MPLA. SOF is there to tell the story.
- **STAR WARS IN VIETNAM:** The height of the Vietnam War saw the U.S. government scrambling to develop new high-tech gadgets to aid the grunts on the ground. Find out the pros and cons of Project Agile next month.
- **GERBER'S NEW BLADE:** Gerber enters the Rambo knife market and SOF gives you the first look.
- **BATTLE IN BURMA:** Despite savage setbacks, the Karens' fight for independence goes on in high gear. SOF goes to the jungle to bring back the latest from this unheralded hotspot.

- **PEACE CREEP PRATTLE:** Groups like Witness for Peace profess a desire for an end to the violence in Central America, but the reality behind their platform is not so benign. SOF dug around to give you the hidden agenda behind these groups.
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really didn't expect to sell the knife at that particular show, but that he had brought it because it tended to stimulate conversation. It did that and then some, and although Pat generally managed to keep a straight face, that knife certainly added flair to the show that would otherwise have been lacking.

All this is well and good, but how does it relate to the man who needs a knife to use, and how do Crawford's knives stack up in this department? It is my belief that the man who wants a knife made of one of the modern stainless steels can look far and wide, examine a lot of knives and knifemakers and still find that Pat is at or near the top of the heap. When you add up his considerable skill, his desire to make a *good* knife, his approach to customer satisfaction, his attitude about himself and his work, and a whole host of other factors, you begin to see that there are a lot of good reasons to consider having Pat Crawford make your next knife. When a man has made a living satisfying other people's cutlery needs for 10 years it follows that he must be doing something right. Pat is not going to be here today and gone tomorrow, and a knife purchased from him will have service to back it up.

There is something more that sets Pat Crawford apart from the run-of-the-mill knifemaker. Pat does all of his own work. It is not generally known, but many of the big names in knifemaking have full- or part-time employees that do most if not all of some of the knifemaking operations. The dedicated craftsman who *cares* about his knives does not let someone else fit guards, polish blades or do his handle work. Pat is dedicated to turning out the best knife that *he* is capable of, and by doing it all himself is able to maintain an iron grip on quality control. This is a far greater benefit to the consumer than many realize, for when one man makes a knife from start to finish, that man's skill and personality are reflected in the knife. Making knives is a lot like cooking — too many cooks spoil the broth.

Many stock knifemakers tend to be squeamish about the fact that their knives may be called upon to draw blood, and seem uncomfortable with the idea of someone getting cut with one of their blades. Not Crawford. Pat is hardly the sort of fellow that would collect ears or drink blood, but if you press him he will tell you that the good guys need knives, too, and they might as well have good ones. Crawford feels that if you are going into combat it is only prudent that you be well-equipped.

You can contact Pat at Crawford Knives, Dept. SOF, 205 N. Center, West Memphis, AR 72301, or call him at (501) 735-4632. He has the knowledge, expertise and desire to make good knives at fair prices. He has invested in the equipment over the years that enables him to do first-rate work, and he stands behind what he makes. One thing is for sure — if there is a stainless-steel knife in your future and it is not listed in Pat Crawford's catalog, he can make it for you.

The man is a professional knifemaker. ✂

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# VIP PROTECTION

## Keeping 'em Alive in the Corporate Jungle

Text & Photos by Leroy Thompson



**T**ERRORISM is a growing concern for corporate America. So there has been a corresponding growth in demand for services to stem this threat. Not surprisingly, a shortage of qualified personnel to provide this highly specialized service developed as quickly.

In the rush to provide qualified executive protection to meet this new demand in the blue chip marketplace, too many of the training courses came to be taught by self-proclaimed experts or Rand Corporation-type theorists. One unfortunate training extreme focuses more on the psychology of the terrorist and the bloody trail of statistics he typically leaves in his wake rather than on training hard men in how to interdict the op before it gets off the ground. At the other extreme are courses geared strictly to the physical activities, such as shooting, martial arts and driving.

All of these physical skills are important.

**Punch and draw drills during close combat training.**

But they are reactive techniques. Ideal training would teach a mixture of theory and practice designed to prevent crises as well as deal with disasters in progress.

Recently, in England, I participated in the kind of executive protection training course corporations and contract security *should* get when they pay for training. This VIP protection course was exemplary partly because of the consistently high caliber of students. Too often training is unsophisticated because poorly prepared students can't absorb such specialized techniques and concepts. Students who had recently served in Her Majesty's Royal Marine Commandos and British paras as well as active members of the London Metropolitan Police armed units attended the course set up by Dennis Martin of C.Q.B. Services.

This June 1985 course in southern England was a welcome exception.

Dennis Martin headed the list of instructors. As a martial artist who is one of Europe's top close protection specialists, he has worked on royal protective units and was in charge of up-close protection for the Miss World Pageant. Two trainers formerly belonged to the 22nd Special Air Service Regiment. They had worked closely in SAS anti-terrorist and close protection training. Myself and another guest trainer, a former Selous Scout skilled in explosive recce and anti-booby-trap training, rounded out the cadre.

The five-day session was held at the Eurosports Centre at Ipswich on the southeast coast of England. Located at a former Royal Naval Officer Cadet training complex, the Eurosports Centre offers a selection of shooting ranges. Numerous buildings provided variety for search training

scenarios. And the area's narrow, winding lanes made for interesting and realistic anti-ambush drills.

On-site dormitories to house students and the training cadre provided a full-time training environment that quickly built a feeling of teamwork. Because eating and sleeping accommodations were close at hand, classes could be extended when necessary. Living together provided better opportunity to discuss what they had learned after daily instruction was completed.

The Eurosports Centre did have one drawback: a Norwegian women's volleyball team, which was there to train. As distracting as they were, the beautiful Nordic volleyballers did serve a good purpose. They illustrated the absolute necessity for an executive protection professional to ignore distractions and concentrate on the paying client. Concentration is essential in close protection.

Of course, being the hard-nosed professionals that we are, training cadre were not fazed as two gorgeous blondes sashayed by with coy smiles and scanty practice uniforms. This had nothing to do with the fact that my foot was almost crushed under the wheel of an "escort car" during a drill as the pair came along.

But these same two women provided us as much amusement as we must have provided them. They had walked past us during a practice break, on their way to explore the grounds of the Eurosports Centre. We had switched to another training problem — an anti-ambush exercise — when they wandered by again, this time through a deserted section of barracks and lanes where we had set up. As the young Norwegian women rounded a corner, they bumped into the head instructor, Dennis Martin, who had a .45 in his hand and looked like Liverpool's answer to Khadaffi. They must have wondered what sport he played.

Knowing that the cars containing the "VIP" and his "Protective Team" would come roaring by at any moment, Dennis responded like any casual diplomat would under the circumstances. "Girls, you'd better move; we're getting ready to kill some guys!"

Their English apparently wasn't all that good and they hesitated. But they got the idea real quick when the VIP car and chase car roared around a corner in the next instant and the hard-looking ambush team went into action. Guns speak a universal language and their natural instincts took over as the girls dove into a doorway. The ambush team burst out of concealment throwing



**TOP RIGHT:** Bodyguard trainee practices protecting a client from thrown objects while engaging a target.

**CENTER RIGHT:** Medical instructor demonstrates the medical kit for use by a close protection team.

**RIGHT:** Use of masks affords protection to the principals and bodyguards during gas, smoke or fire situations.



“grenades” and dry-popping weapons. The bodyguard students immediately reacted with an anti-ambush drill and dry-fired back.

As the shooting stopped and it was apparent no one was really being killed, the girls emerged from cover. We tried explaining that this was a course to train bodyguards, but something was lost in translation. They seemed a bit skeptical. I picked out “cinema” from the excited chattering of one girl and decided they thought for a moment that we were making a movie. But they declined the offer to play two of the “VIP wives” for the next exercise. As they hurried away with careful, sidelong glances our way, however, they also may have thought we were on an outing from some asylum.

Lighter moments were rare, however. The course was intensive since skills were many and time was short. Classroom lectures and demonstrations supplemented exercises and drills. Learning by doing was stressed in every phase.

Experiential instruction was especially important in weapons training. Although the class included a certain number of combat-competition shooters or those who had military or police firearms training, some members had little prior weapons training. As a result, a lot of time was devoted to mastering the firearms techniques necessary in close protection.

Students were drilled in basic pistol drawing and firing, and engaging multiple targets. Malfunction drills, one-handed shooting practice, immediate action drills and instruction in shielding the principal while engaging targets filled hours. Shooting in hostage situations was rehearsed again and again.

Besides these live-fire drills, students were armed constantly during the course

**Trainees draw weapons and engage targets during practice session.**

with unloaded weapons. They were expected to draw and level their weapons at any time day or night when confronted with certain situations. (It’s an old training technique used by the former Office of Strategic Services and its British counterpart, Special Operations Executive.) This would drive the average range master up the wall, but in training people to go up against real terrorists who shoot real bullets, training has to be as realistic as possible.

Weapons techniques were combined with martial arts methods for certain scenarios. One has the bodyguard strike an opponent a weak-hand blow while drawing with the strong hand. Students learned methods for pushing aside bystanders to clear the way for a shot at an attacker. Additional martial arts techniques were designed for situations likely to be encountered by the bodyguard. These included quickly immobilizing an unarmed attacker, shielding the principal while handling a threat and ways to move rapidly through a hostile crowd.

Foot escort combines these skills and is one of the most difficult tasks performed by the bodyguard. Aside from arms and preparation, students must be taught to watch for any threat. That’s hard to remember in a crowd, and we struggled to train student escort teams to constantly check the roofs of buildings. But by the end of the week most students had foot escort well under control.

Included in this segment of training were methods for entering and exiting buildings and vehicles, and how to deal with hostiles while moving through non-life-threatening crowds. It always has to be stressed that the team keep the principal moving and not get

distracted by the crowd. Verbal abuse, for example, should not cause the bodyguard to stop or engage in argument. A new bodyguard has a lot to learn.

Flying objects are an obvious threat to a bodyguard’s client, so our trainees spent hours deflecting thrown missiles by hand. At the same time the foot escort team must remember to close up around the principal. We also provided instruction in an important — but frequently overlooked — skill: how to project a calming influence on a hostile crowd by remaining calm.

Realistic training problems were a hallmark of this course, and ambush drills were no exception. Exercises reminded students that no matter what’s going on, the protective team must keep looking in all directions. One drill confronted the foot escort with a hostile crowd. As trainees tried to deal with verbal threats and heckling, an attack would be launched from the opposite side. Drills included techniques for closing up around the principal while removing him from danger. Students learned to deal with grenade attacks and drilled repeatedly in getting to ground with the principal. Of course, the bodyguard shields the principal with his body. That’s part of the job.

Four- to five-man protective teams — a standard-size unit in the business — is the basic tactical unit for which exercises are designed. During drills, students took turns as “Chief Protective Officer” (team leader) and designations were prominently marked on vests worn by each team member so instructors could quickly identify them. Like military small-unit, special assignment detachments, students’ individual assignments were shuffled around so everyone could learn everyone else’s job.

The next step after foot escort drill is vehicle exercise. Time was too short for a full-scale driving course for VIP drivers, but instruction taught trainees the basics. Classroom instruction included route planning so the students would know how to formulate the safest route to and from a VIP’s destination. Students learned to vary routes to avoid a pattern, to avoid traffic jams or road construction where ambushes might take place and to scout for blind corners and other dangers.

Vehicle entry and exit is a special study, teaching bodyguards where to position themselves for best observation and shielding. Team members assigned to escort cars also had to learn the drill for shepherding charges into and out of vehicles. The key to these techniques is “hustle.” Before removing the principal from his vehicle the escort team has to jump from their vehicles and set up a security perimeter around the client car. And after getting their boss into his car, they must quickly break the perimeter and mount up in their vehicles.

Vehicle anti-ambush drills included road-block contingencies and use of the escort car to block or ambush while the VIP car escapes. Winding lanes at the Eurosports Centre allowed many possibilities, including decoy attacks to bleed off the escort

vehicle while launching the main attack against the principal's vehicle.

An important part of a bodyguard's vehicle training is explosive recce, and these lectures and demonstrations were excellent. After students received classroom instruction in search techniques, they got hands-on training by searching vehicles rigged with mock booby traps. Interestingly enough, the most consistently missed booby trap was one of the most simple: the spark plug wire pulled and placed in the carburetor where the spark could start a fire.

Additional explosive recce techniques included the recognition of common booby traps and detection of letter bombs, both of which are important skills. The ex-Selous Scout who taught this part of the course knows his way around booby traps from both sides of the fence and the students got their money's worth.

The medical portion of the course was taught by a former SAS "bush doctor" and emphasized emergency stabilization techniques. Special needs were discussed in putting together a custom medical kit for the protective team. Demonstrations included a kit developed by the SAS specifically for protective teams. Once again, though, prevention was emphasized and the aspects of preparing medical pro formas on the VIP, his family and the protective team were covered as well.

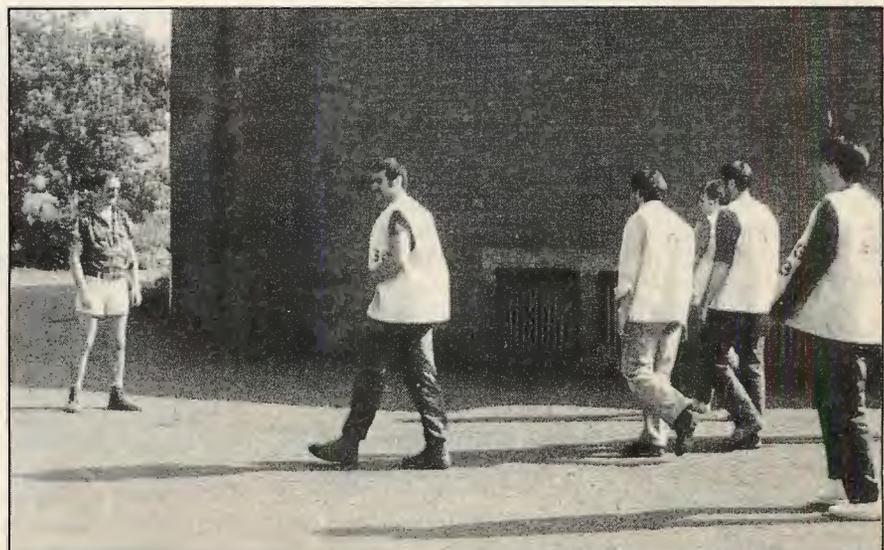
Overall, the course provided a short-term opportunity for intensive executive protection training. High-caliber students and instructors, and an appropriate training facility made the course worthwhile and efficient. Physical training and practical applications were balanced well against necessary mental skills, classroom work and theory. Students were fully briefed on route planning, role of the advance man, duties of the team leader, residential and office security, and other techniques which enable the pro to keep his charge alive. (Just remember: There's no way to turn someone into a highly proficient close protection professional in a week.)

Generally, students who attend courses in such skills find their new abilities difficult to market without contacts. But at this course run by C.Q.B. Services, the students had the great advantage of being trained by men who are in a position to hire students for their own teams they lead or to recommend new bodyguards to clients. Graduates of this course were good enough that some of them are now on line as part of protective teams. That's probably the best recommendation of all for the course. ✕

**TOP RIGHT:** Team practices getting a principal into a car quickly.

**CENTER RIGHT:** Trainees practice vehicle cover and movement tactics during an anti-ambush drill.

**RIGHT:** Instructor Dennis Martin monitors the formation during "body protection" foot drills.



# SALVADOR'S MAGIC DRAGON

## SOF Armorer Gets Puff's Guns Back on Line

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

**H**URRY up and wait. A combat pilot's life is filled with hours of interminable boredom interspersed with brief moments of action and terror. He's at the whim of enemy action — there's nothing to do until the guerrillas show. Then everything is rock 'n' roll. We were about to begin one of those exciting moments.

Racing across Ilopango's concrete pad we scrambled aboard the ancient AC-47. As soon as our feet touched the metal floor of the aircraft the six-man crew went to work. Pilot, co-pilot and crew chief went through the ritual that breathed life into the metal beast while the three machine-gun mechanics began hastily mounting three AN-M3 .50-cal. Browning machine guns in the two windows adjacent to the left cargo door. Three spare MGs and our ammo were stowed behind us. We were all set so we sat back while the pilot throttled the engines for an eternity.

Once aloft, we loaded each gun with a 100-rd. belt, linked four armor piercing to one tracer, and kicked back for the long ride to Indian Country at the northern tip of Chalatenango Province, near the border with Honduras. We were gunning for Gs and before the five-hour fire mission ended we would have plenty of targets.

While only recently assigned to the war in El Salvador, the fixed-wing gunship concept is not new. During World War II, Major Paul I. "Pappy" Gunn mounted four .50-cal. Brownings in the nose of some A-20 Havoc light bombers. They were used with great effect in March 1943 at the Battle of the Bismarck Sea where they destroyed an entire Japanese convoy. During the Korean War Douglas A-26 Invaders were armed with eight .50s in the nose and another six in the wings — it was a plane to be feared by communist troops on the ground.

There are disadvantages, though. Aircraft fitted with forward-firing guns often lose contact with the target between the time of sighting and the strafing run. Stationary or slow-moving ground targets are best engaged by aircraft equipped with side-firing weapons. The basic maneuver involves a so-called "pylon turn" (derived from the racing era and the pylons pilots flew around) in which the aircraft is placed into a left bank and flown in a circular path around the target. In this manner, low-flying, slow-speed prop planes can keep their guns continuously on target.

The side-firing system was first combat tested in 1964 by Captain Ron Terry when he mounted three GE 7.62mm NATO minigun pods in the cargo compartment of a C-47 flying mail runs out of Nha Trang. The aircraft was originally designated FC-47 (Fighter/Cargo-47), but the name was changed to AC-47 (Attack/Cargo-47). But whatever name it went by, this airborne killer often proved devastating.

After being replaced by the more sophisticated AC-130 Specter gunship, the AC-47's deadly days seemed to be over. But with the post-WWII crop of Third World insurgencies, the AC-47 again flies unfriendly skies seeking out guerrillas, this time over the jungles of El Salvador. Fifty-caliber machine guns were selected by the Salvo air force and U.S. advisers instead of 7.62 miniguns for four reasons. They provide a greater stand-off distance from guerrilla small-arms fire; miniguns have not been manufactured for years; .50s are cheaper and require far less maintenance than miniguns; twenty and 40mm cannon systems were rejected because of cost of ammo.

The Salvos were sold seven AC-47s at a cost of \$800,000 each. When they arrived at Ilopango air base only two of the aircraft were equipped with gun mounts. The Salvadorans are in the process of building mounts for two more AC-47s. Why didn't the U.S. government see to it that all the AC-47s had gun mounts? For \$800,000 it only seems fair. But this is as much a political as a military war, therefore political considerations often override military logic. Our sources in the Pentagon and in El Salvador indicated there was a dogfight between Department of Defense and the "Human Rights" faction in the State Department over the introduction and employment of AC-47s. A compromise was finally reached in which the Salvos would be allowed seven AC-47s but only two would have gun mounts.

Now, there is nothing whatever wrong with the Browning .50-cal. aircraft machine gun. It was the outstanding aircraft gun of World War II. Short recoil operated, air cooled and belt fed (from either the right or left), it evolved from a ground gun. Parts were changed and lightened and the cyclic rate increased.

Initially developed by John M. Browning at Winchester and finalized at the Colt plant, the .50-cal. Browning aircraft machine gun was standardized as the M1921 (indicating year



**ABOVE:** Three M3 .50-cal. Browning aircraft machine guns mounted in windows adjacent to left-side cargo door of AC-47.

**BELOW:** Crew chief and gun mechanics man their posts during AC-47 fire mission over Chalatenango.



**M3 .50-calibers point groundward in search of guerrillas.**

of adoption). Firing at almost twice the cyclic rate of the M2 HB ground version — 850 to 900 rpm — the World War II AN-M2 was derived from the so-called Basic M2, which permitted the manufacture of one receiver to be used for seven different configurations. This culminated in the adoption of the T25E3 as the AN-M3 in April 1945.

Although the AN-M3 is similar in appearance and functioning to the AN-M2, nearly every component differs in some way from those of the AN-M2. The AN-M3 was improved in 26 major areas and its components are not interchangeable with those of the AN-M2. A most important modification was substitution of the AN-M2's oil buffer with a barrel buffer assembly which contains Belleville spring washers (saucer-shaped) utilizing air as a buffer. This increases the return of energy to the bolt group and speeds counterrecoil. When this powerful buffer releases its strain energy, the surge throws the recoiling parts forward with a velocity only slightly less than the rearward velocity they possessed upon striking the buffer. "Hard" buffers of this type are required for the successful functioning of machine guns at extremely high cyclic rates.

In its final form the AN-M3 Browning .50-cal. aircraft machine gun is every bit as reliable as the M2 HB infantry version. These guns should be capable of firing four thousand mean rounds between failures. More than 200,000 rounds have often been fired through Browning aircraft .50s with not even a dozen stoppages recorded.

Not so with our guns. We expended no more than 2,300 rounds on our fire mission into Chalatenango and Cincuera (Cabañas Province) and before we finished all three original guns had failed and we were forced to call upon the spares. The extractor broke on the first gun, the second gun went down when the bolt group self-destructed and I had no time to examine the third gun because we were too busy hosing Gs. The mean rounds between failure was less than 700. There were also more than one dozen feed stoppages — cleared almost immediately by manual cocking. But why all the problems?

After the fire mission I spent a day in the air force armory inspecting maintenance, repair and calibration techniques used on these weapons. Salvadoran armorers are true professionals in every sense of the word. Working with minimum tools, they service AN-M3s with a degree of skill and competence that exceeds many U.S. counterparts by a considerable margin. As well they should, since they also serve as gun mechanics on the fire missions.

Many hours are spent after each mission in detail stripping and cleaning every single component. Every component is carefully examined for defects, replaced if necessary, and lubricated. And therein lies a significant portion of the problem.

Not instructed otherwise, the Salvadoran armorers submerged the back plate assembly, without disassembly, into the cleaning solvent. Solvent seeped into the buffer housing and got trapped between the Belleville washers which then acted as a solid wall during the gun's recoil cycle, robbing the system of all buffering action. The consequent stress overload on the reciprocating components caused parts to break with alarming frequency. The immediate fix was to disassemble the back plate with the correct spanner, remove the solvent, dry and lubricate the washers and reciprocating parts in bolt and feed assemblies with PARR All Weather Weapons Lube (PARR Inc., Dept. SOF, 18400 Syracuse Ave., Cleveland, OH 44110; I provided this to the Salvos). This should reduce the number of failures considerably.

After reassembly, headspace and timing were precisely adjusted and firing solenoids tested. Their field-expedient innovations are brilliant, and I was amazed at a handmade articulated link chute far superior to the inflexible aluminum casting they had been issued.

While the ammunition I examined carried World War II headstamps (mostly Des Moines Ordnance Plant, 1944), it appeared to be of recent vintage fabricated with older cases.

No problem here.

I had been told that the pilots stressed the guns by lack of fire discipline. Yet every burst we fired was no more than 20-25 rounds in length with a three- or four-second interval between bursts. Most often we fired but two of the three guns. All the belts consisted of no more than 100 rounds.

I examined only one example of abuse. One barrel I inspected in the armory had overheated during a fire mission and slumped, causing an armor piercing projectile to slice through both the barrel and jacket. However, based upon the number of rounds they have fired to date, barrel life is just slightly below MilSpec.

Every gun I looked at was manufactured by either Springfield Armory or High Standard between 1952-53. While the receivers and barrel jackets remain sound, the other components are exhausted and one part or another will continue to fail with increasing regularity, even with altered maintenance procedures applied to the buffer assembly.

Passing the large manmade lake, Embalse Cerrón Grande, we reached our first target area. The co-pilot spotted his quarry far below and banked into his turn. Flying parallel to the target until it passed between the left prop hub and the very top of the engine cowl (about 100 degrees aft of our forward position), the pilot computed our "slant range" to be 3,000 feet. This required a 25- to 30-degree bank and in short order we were blazing away. Our engagement angle was also a function of the air speed and the guns' recoil (since when they are fired the aft fuselage swings to the right). A trigger button mounted on the pilot's control wheel fires all three guns simultaneously or individually, unless one or more have been switched off by the machine-gun mechanics.

In the early days of fixed-wing gunships, a chalk mark on the left cockpit window served as a gunsight. During the Vietnam War, a Mk 20 Mod 4 taken from the A-1E Skyraider fighter-bomber was mounted in the left window. An even more sophisticated gunsight is now employed and it works. Our hit probability was high — very high.

As we moved from target to target I concentrated on blasting the guerrilla strongholds. At first we worked alone, but shortly we picked up on our teammates: two UH-1Ms and a Hughes 500M-D. The Hughes 500M-D pilot had located some Gs and shot the roof off their hooch with his 7.62mm Miniguns just before we arrived.

Our other companions also moved in for the kill. The UH-1M, or so-called Mike Model, is a beefed-up UH-1C which carries launchers for 2.75-inch folding fin aircraft rockets and a 7.62mm Gatling gun on each side.

One of the Mike Models, skimming the tree tops far below us, spotted another guerrilla encampment and fired rockets, breaking off quickly so we could spray the area with our M3s. We had yet to receive ground fire from the Gs.

We moved to Cabañas where we rendezvoused with an A-37 Dragonfly who had just dumped his load on a guerrilla encampment nestled under some trees at the edge of a stream.

Our crew chief spotted for us out the left cargo door with 7x50 military binoculars. A week before, he had watched three guerrillas fly into pieces when they were caught in the open climbing a volcanic slope. If our luck was good, more targets would present themselves and that meant more AP and tracer down the tubes. And, hopefully, more Gs sent to meet Karl Marx.

We climbed above the helicopters until they looked like armored water bugs flitting across the surface of a deep green pond. They would act as our eyes and ears. Recon aircraft usually work the intended target area before the AC-47s arrive in the hope that their prop noise will cover up the approach of the lumbering beasts. But the gunships are best employed when the Salvadoran army is in contact with the terrorists. For this reason, the Salvadoran air force works closely with its Airborne Battalion and the immediate reaction battalions on combat operations. That way it's harder for the enemy to evade the gunship.



**ABOVE:** Rain and mist welcome Salvadoran AC-47 crewmen as they return to Ilopango Air Base after a fire mission.

**BELOW:** High over Chalatenango on the way to a fire mission.





The average AC-47 fire mission lasts 2½ hours. But it was five hours in the air before we landed at Ilopango with only a 25-minute fuel reserve. It was still raining. It always rains in El Salvador — even during the dry season. I walked away from the gray monster through the drizzle and mist with high admiration for the proficiency and dedication of the entire crew.

The fire mission is over, but the droning props and chattering M3s are still ringing in my ears. Is this aerial machine-gun platform the right weapon for El Salvador? AC-47s are a significant step away from relatively ineffective area bombing and they are an effective back-up for troops on the ground, which has seriously impeded the Gs' capability to mass for battalion-sized attacks against strategic targets.

One of the most interesting aspects of this prospect is the political infighting, compromises and tradeoffs that preceded the AC-47s arriving on station. We're researching this can of worms and hope to be able to name names in a future issue. It is apparent that some individuals in the State Department do not or don't want to understand what it takes to win in El Salvador. ☒



**ABOVE:** Gun mechanic works on jammed M3 during fire mission.

**BELOW:** AC-47 crew chief acts as spotter during fire missions.



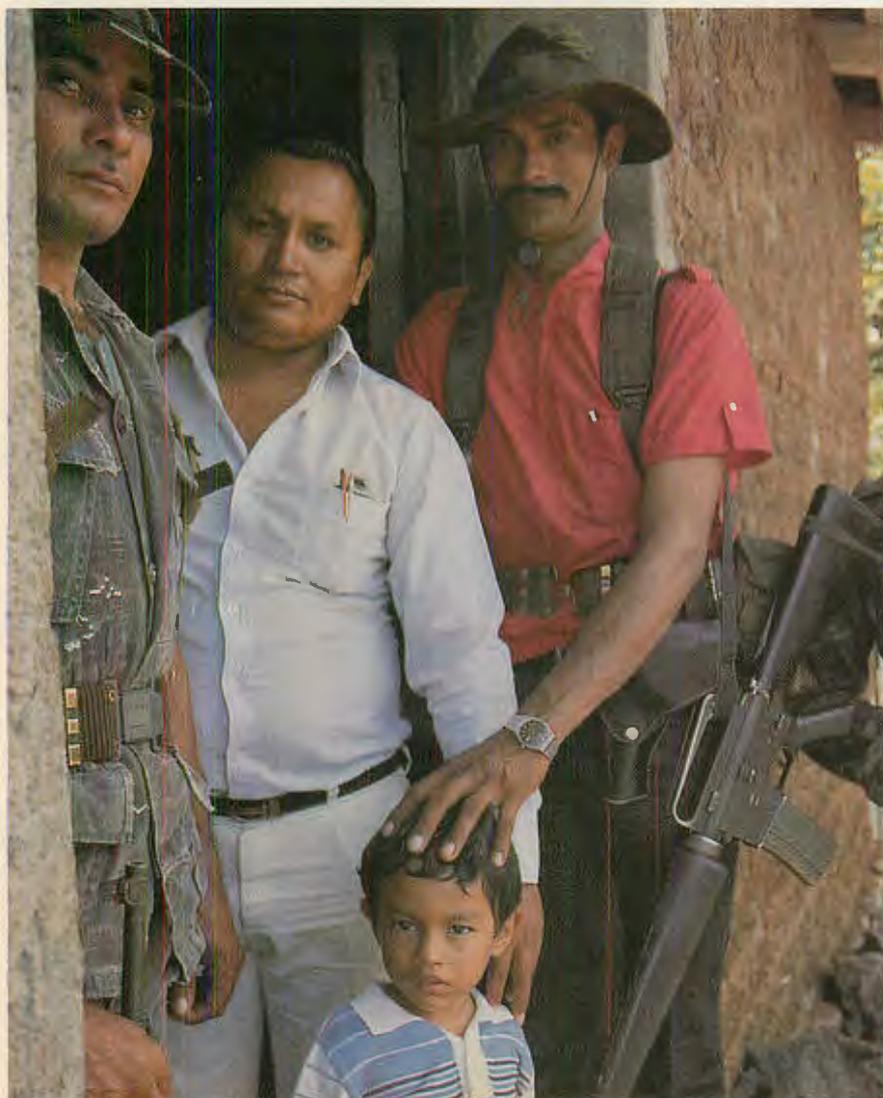
**ABOVE & BELOW:** M3 .50-cal. Browning aircraft machine gun fired until overheated. When barrel slumped an armor piercing projectile sliced through the barrel and jacket.



# CAMPESINO HEARTS AND MINDS

## To Provide for the Common Defense

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury



**T**HE U.S. military was on the right track when it sent the Green Berets into South Vietnam to teach villagers to defend themselves against marauding communists. But somewhere along the way things got mixed up. Conventional warfare took precedence over unconventional warfare and the concept of civil defense was lost in the shuffle.

It's been 10 years since the fall of South Vietnam and the U.S. military has had plenty of time to sort out the problems of continuing brushfire wars in the Third World. One of the test grounds for a new U.S. plan to combat communist insurgencies is the struggling republic of El Salvador. The lessons learned over the years are being put to the test by American advisers teaching the ropes of counterinsurgency to the Salvadoran military. And as it was in Vietnam, one of the lesser-known phases of this training has been the formation of civil defense units in many of the key villages that dot the Salvadoran countryside. In the final analysis it may be the success or failure of the civil defense program that determines the outcome of the war.

Salvadoran government officials are well aware of the problem of civil defense so they drew up the National Plan, a strategy to re-establish and bolster local governments' authority in towns and villages constantly harassed by the guerrillas. The National Plan counts on civic action, civil defense and psy-ops as well as military might. It calls for the armed forces to pacify areas of rebel persistence, then the central government would help local authorities restore

Sgt. Zavala (in red shirt) takes time out in his village of Quelepa.

necessary public services and promote development in the newly secured communities. The National Plan made its debut in San Vicente province in June 1983, and has been extended to 10 other provinces since.

Perhaps the most critical feature of this strategy is organizing villagers into a credible self-defense force capable of holding off a guerrilla attack until the armed forces arrive. This was understood in the fall of 1983 when the guerrillas launched a ferocious Eastern Zone offensive. Army units protecting the plan's gains in San Vicente and Usulután (the only two departments where the National Plan was operating at that time) were withdrawn to fight the Gs elsewhere and the civil defense program, stalled by lack of planning and resources, was no match for the guerrilla onslaught. The guerrillas overran several lightly defended villages and the National Plan suffered a setback.

"The key to beating guerrillas is civil defense," said Jack Thompson, SOF's counterinsurgency expert who has fought communist insurgents from Southeast Asia and Africa to Central America. "If you keep the guerrillas out of the villages, they can't collect war taxes, they can't get food, they can't draft recruits and their movement is restricted."

But during the first five years since the war began in 1979, civil defense was neglected. Not because no one recognized its importance, but because the U.S. Congress was appropriating just enough security assistance funds to El Salvador's government to stave off a guerrilla takeover. Almost every precious dollar was spent on a crash program to upgrade the Salvadoran armed forces fighting capacity. Due to a lack of resources and planning, villagers were loosely organized into civil defense units, issued guns (usually without a check to see if they had a criminal background) and told to patrol their villages with virtually no training or discipline. The result was that some elements of the civil defense, in their zeal to fight communism or just for their own criminal purposes, committed abuses of authority, causing many peasants to join the Gs.

"I bet half the people who are with the guerrillas are there because of past abuses by the civil defense," said an American adviser. The vast majority of civil defense members have been patriotic Salvadorans who want to defend their homes, but the bad apples gave civil defense a bad name. In 1979, a nationwide civil defense program called ORDEN was stopped because of its reputation for abusing the people it was supposed to protect.

"Whenever we find out about abuses, we take the offender to trial," said Colonel Alejandro Cisneiros, who was named national coordinator for civil defense in February 1985. But in the early 1980s the military — less than half its present size — lacked the means to constantly supervise every remote village. Thus, U.S. Congress' niggardliness in providing security assistance to El Salvador, aimed at forcing the



**On Mendez Island, anyone able to carry a rifle helps defend the community.**

Salvadoran government to improve its human rights record, ironically allowed abuses in the case of civil defense.

Guerrillas capitalized on civil defense's excesses to recruit victimized peasants and ostensibly justify a high-priority campaign to annihilate civil defense units. But the principal reason why the guerrillas have wanted to wipe out civil defense is masked by the rebels' propaganda of giving "revolutionary justice to war criminals," which much of the Western media once believed. It is because, said Lieutenant Daniel Portillo, the liaison officer for civil defense in Usulután, "The guerrillas know if we implement a functioning civil defense, they lose."

Given the Salvadoran civil defense's history of generally being undertrained and poorly equipped, the Gs have carried out their ruthless handiwork in many villages. In late February 1982, guerrillas feigning to be soldiers gunned down a dozen unarmed civil defense members in the northeastern village of Yamabal, then looted stores and painted revolutionary slogans on crumbling adobe houses.

María Lydia Solís will never forget the rainy night of 7 May 1983 when hundreds of guerrillas attacked the small detachment of soldiers and civil defense members defending her village of Cinquera, 80 kilometers north of San Salvador.

"Oh, God, almost everyone was killed: soldiers, young men, old men, pregnant women, children," said the squat 45-year-

old woman who now is one of the thousands of displaced people living on the outskirts of San Salvador. "Instead of staying in their houses like I did, the people ran into the streets in panic and died in the shooting. The guerrillas entered in the morning. They forced the captured soldiers and civil defense members to lie face down on the cement, then took them to a trench and shot them. The water in the trench was red with blood. We begged the guerrillas to spare them. But the guerrillas said, 'There's no pardon for them. Nothing more. They have to pay.' Afterward, they robbed us of everything. Nothing was left in the village."

"They also killed the mayor and his secretary," added Mrs. Solís' husband who was the local commander of Cinquera's civil defense until he severely damaged his foot stepping on a guerrilla mine just two months prior to the massacre. He was rehabilitating in San Salvador when the slaughter took place. The guerrillas occupied Cinquera for four days. The day after they left, María Lydia Solís and almost all the other survivors abandoned Cinquera for good. Cinquera has been a ghost town ever since.

The guerrillas continued their merciless tradition on 8 April 1985 when they overran and burned the village of Santa Cruz Loma, 35 miles southeast of San Salvador. The rebels slaughtered some 20 villagers in the attack. At least 12 of the dead were unarmed civilians, including four children and their 67-year-old grandfather. The Gs summarily executed six unarmed members of the local civil defense as well.

More recently, on 14 September, FMLN



terrorists exploded two mines under a pickup truck loaded with unarmed civilians and three civil defensemen in the western department of Santa Ana, then sprayed the passengers with gunfire. Two civilians, including a 60-year-old hospital worker, and the three defensemen were killed. Nine civilians were wounded.

The FMLN's massacres in Yamabal, Cinquera, Santa Cruz Loma and many other villages send an intimidating message to Salvadorans: You die if you join civil defense. Many Salvadoran towns and villages do not have civil defense because of this threat.

"It's sometimes hard to get the people to participate in self-defense," said Lieutenant Oscar Alberto Flores Mendez, using another term for civil defense, of which he is the liaison officer in the department of San Miguel. "If we commit ourselves to self-defense, they say, 'we will be a target for the guerrillas and they'll kill us. Better not to be a part of civil defense and not be a target.' You can't blame them considering what's happened in the past."

However, there has been a marked improvement in civil defense over the last year and a half and, if this trend continues, the days when the guerrillas can overrun villages are numbered. Fiscal year 1984 brought \$196.5 million of U.S. security assistance to El Salvador, up from \$81.3 million in FY 1983, according to figures provided by the U.S. embassy in San Salvador. And \$126 million of U.S. security assistance has been budgeted for El Salvador in FY 1985.

The greater generosity of a wiser U.S. Congress has allowed the Salvadoran armed forces to strengthen and expand its civil defense effort. In March 1984 a national civil defense training center was opened in San Vicente and was moved three months later to the better facilities in San Juan Opico in western El Salvador. There, American and Salvadoran instructors run specially selected soldiers through a six-week civil defense instructor course. Local commanders of civil defense units from every department of El

Sgt. Majano (center front) and the Mendez Island civil defense force.

Salvador run through a 15-day course that teaches the basics of village defense, first aid, logistics, sanitation as well as community restoration and development.

"Civil defense is not only to protect the population, but to help it overcome the consequences of public disasters and calamities," emphasized Col. Cisneiros during an interview last September in his office in the National Palace.

The training does not stop in San Juan Opico. The army's civil defense instructors go in small groups of two to a half-dozen men to secured villages and train the local civil defense in shooting (civil defense units are issued M1 carbines and G3 automatic rifles), gun maintenance, defensive positions, first aid, intelligence and other basics. Respect for the population is emphasized throughout training, which can last for months. The training schedule is flexible so as not to interfere with the villagers' work.

"An important aspect of self-defense is that the people are unpaid volunteers," said Colonel Miguel Antonio Mendez, the commander of the 3rd Infantry Brigade, headquartered in San Miguel. "There's a consciousness among the people that they have to pull together to defend themselves and their possessions. If you want electricity and progress, you have to defend your town."

This awareness is shown by the fact that civil defense is unofficially called the People's Patriotic Self-Defense in much of El Salvador. While civil defense members do not receive salaries (except for the local commanders who are automatically members of the Territorial Service, the Salvadoran active reserve), it is common for towns and villages to provide modest donations to their civil defense unit for food, clothing, and so on.

"Everyone has his place in civil defense," said Col. Cisneiros. "Women can cook. Children can run errands. Old men can keep an eye on things. But there are

requirements: One must be a Salvadoran, preferably with his origins in the village, and not have a criminal history."

To be a local commander one has to fulfill another requirement: leadership. In general, local commanders are selected from the Territorial Service. But in many cases a respected community leader is elected local commander by his fellow citizens, and then accepted by the Territorial Service.

The local commander not only leads his men in the defense of the community against guerrilla attacks and crime, but mobilizes them in the village's restoration and development. Civil defense helps considerably in the distribution of civic action aid.

"Self-defense has been enormously helpful to us in distributing our clothing to El Salvador's poor," said Dr. Kenneth Dale Wells, a confidant of the late President Dwight D. Eisenhower and now the president of The Family Foundation of America, which has distributed clothing, school supplies and other necessities to thousands of Salvadorans. "Self-defense is essential or civic action cannot be carried out. It provides stability, hope and the beginning of normalcy to Salvadorans. Self-defense is a critical one-third for liberty in El Salvador. The second third is civic action. The final third is a military with 100 percent competence and a willingness to assist their fellow citizens in sanitation, public improvement and health operations. When Salvadorans are fighting for their liberty, they're fighting for us Americans because all communist guns are pointing north."

Civil defense is crucial to victory in El Salvador. But civil defense can only be viable with the full support of the Salvadoran armed forces. That means that government troops are detached in a town until the civil defense is strong enough to hold its own.

Never too young: An 11-year-old militiaman does a man's share of the work.



"An error in the past was that the self-defense was left alone when it wasn't ready," said Col. Mendez. "Now the armed forces have made a commitment to detach troops in the towns that have self-defense or where self-defense is being organized. Self-defense is flexible. Every town has its own style. However, there are basic phases for its establishment to avoid a strong terrorist blow: We secure a town, then our social workers, officers in general, motivate the people to participate in its defense. Our instructors then train them. We go about selecting the towns (where to establish civil defense) very carefully. We have to back them up and respond quickly to a guerrilla attack; because if we don't and the self-defense is overrun, the program will suffer a setback. The people are responding well. They are tired of the terrorists coming to rob, kidnap and murder them. They are tired of suffering. And rather than abandon their villages to become displaced persons, they are taking up arms to defend themselves."

That has been the case in San Jorge, a village 100 kilometers east of San Salvador in San Miguel province. On 23 September 1983 the guerrillas overran the 15-man civil defense force defending San Jorge. The rebels killed six civil defense men in combat and summarily executed the five others they captured.

"Five members of the civil defense ran into a house, stashed their guns, took off their uniforms and hid under the bed," said a 24-year-old *campesino* in front of the bullet-pocked building which was the civil defense command post that tragic day. "But the guerrillas made the house's owner open the door and they dragged the civil defense men out, beating and kicking them, to a hole behind the command post where they shot them and dumped their bodies along with the other civil defense dead. The guerrillas then shot the mayor, too. Maybe a couple years ago people would join the guerrillas, but not now. Nobody wants to be with those assholes, especially seeing what happened here." The guerrillas let the corpses rot in the open air while they plundered the village before fleeing under the pressure of an army counterattack three days later.

"They [the guerrillas] wouldn't let us give them a decent burial," complained the teary-eyed sister of a slain civil defense man. For almost two years after the incident there was no civil defense or army detachment in San Jorge and the guerrillas could enter the village at will. During that time the Gs press-ganged young men into their ranks and killed government collaborators, including the new woman mayor who was elected last March. However, in mid-August of last year the army moved into San Jorge to stay and now 70 village men are learning how to shoot M1 Carbines and operate PRC-77 radios in the new civil defense force. "We want to be free!" said one old-timer, stripping his carbine.

"The people were reluctant to join the self-defense until they saw we were going to stay and support them," said Lieutenant



**TOP:** Civil defense members slither through the obstacle course on Mendez Island.

**ABOVE:** Civil defense instructor teaches his men the basics of the M1 carbine.

Flores Mendez, sitting on a stone wall in front of San Jorge's new command post.

The new civil defense effort has been showing success. "Since 1984 we have organized civil defense in about 100 villages," said Col. Cisneiros. "The terrorists have only been able to penetrate one. By the end of this year we will have civil defense in 60 percent of the country. And at the end of 1986 we hope to have civil defense in almost every village."

"If you really want to see where civil defense is working well," suggested an American adviser, "go to Isla de Mendez. It's impressive, maybe the best in the country."

On the morning of 20 August I followed the adviser's lead and caught a chopper with two Salvadoran officers for Mendez Island, which is really a village of a little over 2,000 inhabitants on a coastal peninsula in Usulután province. We had flown over coconut groves, sugar cane fields and mangroves along the coast when the small fishing village of straw huts, mud hovels and adobe houses appeared on the blue Bay of Jiquilisco. As we circled the village, I could see dozens of villagers running from as far as a

half-klick away to welcome us at the worn soccer field where we would land.

Mendez Island is about as remote a place as you can find in El Salvador and it is not very often that helicopters arrive there. When they do, they often bring supplies for civic action. The villagers were curious about what goodies might be coming. We touched down and were warmly greeted by Sergeant Manuel Celauro Majano, the local civil defense commander. He was happy with what his superiors brought him.

The small 43-year-old sergeant looked like a Boy Scout leader with his black curly hair, mustache and horn-rimmed glasses. But there is no one else I would rather be with if bullets started flying. This gregarious local commander has the combination of qualities essential for civil defense to be successful: strong leadership, courage and a deep sense of duty to promote as well as protect the well-being of his community.

Our host immediately took us on a tour of the village's defensive positions. Within a matter of minutes I knew my American adviser friend was right; the civil defense program at Mendez Island was impressive indeed. Trenches and foxholes were not only dug in strategic locations, but in houses as well. "If the guerrillas attack, all you

*Continued on page 84*



by Mick Doyle

**P**ANAMA lies about nine degrees north of the equator, which means it's hot, humid and about 130 inches of rain-per-year wet. Its rivers, lakes and adjoining Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea are full of sharks, barracuda and crocodiles, and there are enough crabs, snakes and spiders inland to make any man's skin crawl. The nights are pitch-black — when you can see the sky through the dense tropical jungle — and the typical deep, muddy-sided gully can be a back-breaker if you slip.

In other words, it's the perfect place for the U.S. Army's Jungle Operations Training Center (JOTC) at Fort Sherman, Canal Zone.

My El Salvadoran TACA International flight set down at Omar Torrijos Airport in Panama City, and the burst of hot, stinking

air nearly knocked me down when I walked through the cabin door. I'd already figured I was in for a long couple of weeks running through the swamps with the jungle warfare instructors and students, but the menacing thunderheads that darkened the sky told me my visit would *seem* a lot longer.

The trip to Fort Sherman, located on the Caribbean side of Panama and on the north-west tip of Limon Bay, took about 90 minutes by truck. All along the route were flocks of large black vultures flapping about on the jungle-hemmed road, too gorged to fly from feasting on freshly killed coatimundi. It was an unnerving sight, and must have filled new arrivals to the school with foreboding.

Anyway, the circling vultures bothered *me*. The ride to Sherman was not made any more reassuring by the gangs of little land

crabs that scuttled out of the towering wall of jungle — the unexpectedly noisy, incredibly dark and green and soaking jungle still shrouded in places with wraiths of early morning mist — at the road's edge. They swarmed out in droves to play chicken with traffic and smelled foul when squished. Foul too are the prehistoric swamps and fermenting mangroves that surround the approaches to Fort Sherman. Their stink not only offends the nose, but fills the newcomer with a sense of doom.

But the biggest danger to life and limb at present-day Fort Sherman is not airborne scavengers or overripe crab meat, but the bloody airstrip. There is absolutely no air traffic control, even though it's a popular refueling point for the military flyboys. Crossing it is a definite short cut between

JOTC headquarters and the Jungle Warfare Branch (JWB), but an inbound aircraft will not abort its landing for short-cutters. It will, however, leave skid marks on your back.

My body managed to arrive safely at Fort Sherman, although my mind was still somewhere back along the road contemplating the smell of rotting carrion and crunched crabs. Sherman is located among what was once a system of coastal artillery batteries defending the Caribbean/ Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal and is home to JOTC, the Jungle Warfare Branch, the 193rd Infantry Brigade's NCO Academy, 3/7th Special Forces Airborne School, the Waterborne Operations Committee (WOC), the Tropical Test Center (TTC), and the occasional home of the boat people of the 1097th ("River Raiders") Transport Company's LCMs (Landing Craft Mechanized).

However, JOTC and JWB are the main activities. Many SOF readers will have received their "Banana Boat" school patch — a galleon sailing on the seas — during the days of Vietnam when the school was attended primarily on an individual basis.

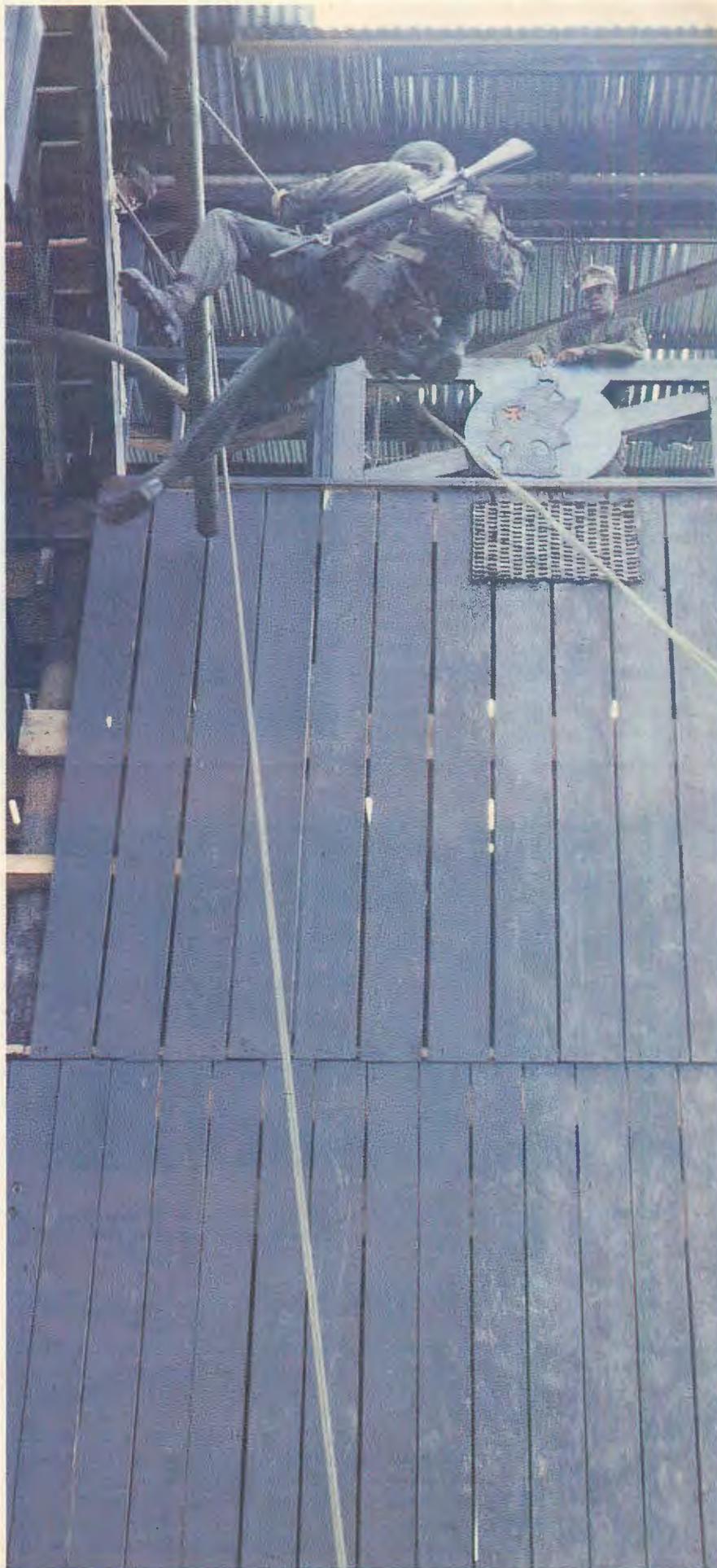
These days, however, JOTC processes battalion-sized units from America's front-line units: Rangers (each of the three battalions attend annually), 82nd Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division, 7th Light Infantry Division, units from the U.S. Marines, and the Florida and Puerto Rico National Guards which will round out the 193rd Infantry Brigade in time of war. Selected individuals can still attend; regardless, everyone goes through the same three-week course.

JOTC had its beginnings in 1951 when it was given the mission of "keeping the art of jungle warfare alive in the Army." Over the years the center has been under control of the 33rd Infantry Regiment, 20th Infantry Regiment, U.S. Army Caribbean, U.S. Army School of the Americas, 8th Special Forces Group, and most recently the 193rd Infantry Brigade.

Their mission, simply put, is to train soldiers to fight and survive in the jungle. All phases of the school have minimum standards which must be met before the students can earn the Jungle Expert pocket patch, and all training emphasizes teamwork to simulate combat conditions in the jungle. During the second week of training it's possible for whole squads, and even platoons, to wash out for failing to get a "go" on any one of the various requirements of this ball-busting course.

It's the NCO instructors of the Jungle Warfare Branch of JOTC who run the show, and it's they who decide who gets a go and who doesn't. And their word is law. Most of the instructors have worked in the jungles of Panama for three years, some as long as five, and it's they, not the three-week

**Tower rappelling also includes a simulated hop from Huey skids. Only special platoons use the real thing due to other operational chopper commitments.**



graduates, who are the true jungle experts.

Fort Sherman was long ago named "Fantasy Island" by the JOTC staff for a variety of reasons. It's surrounded by damned noisy jungle, the shark-infested Atlantic Ocean/Caribbean Sea on the northwest, barracuda-infested Limon Bay on the east, and by the crocodile-infested Chagres River on the southwest. (Jacques Cousteau, in a TV special on sharks, said the mouth of this river was the most heavily infested place on earth). A few years ago a Special Forces soldier was taken on the edge of Lake Gatún — the source of the Chagres River. All that was heard was a loud splash and he was gone. Torn and bloody clothing were later recovered after an extensive search.

The main reason, though, for the flippant nickname is the fact that battalions leave Sherman after only three weeks with fantasies about being jungle experts.

Before any battalion ever arrives at Fantasy Island, it will have been given a training program tailored to meet the specific requirements of that unit. The old man will contact JOTC, which will then give him the core POI (Program of Instruction) — the basic skills necessary to fight in the big bad "J," as we call the jungle in the Aussie army — plus a choice of up to 40 other subjects that may benefit the unit depending on its mission.

A few of the core subjects include basic jungle living and plants and food, medical



## JUNGLE MAN ... GREYSTOKE LIVES

This grueling competition for the title "Jungle Man" was designed by JOTC for all members of the U.S. Panama garrison. It is designed to test competitors' endurance during water and land movements, and their ability to navigate in the jungle and perform other jungle-related tasks.

The competition was first run in August 1984 when 17 two-man teams competed for the coveted title of "Jungle Man," and it is intended to be an annual event.

**Hip-over crossing on the Green Hell obstacle course, also called the "ball-buster" by participants.**

At 0640, as the sunlight began to glimmer across Gatún Lake, 34 apprehensive soldiers dove off the LCM (Landing Craft Mechanized) and began a 2,000-meter swim to the faintly visible shore.

The leaders hit shore in 41 minutes, donned jungle fatigues and heavy rucksacks, and ran nearly a mile to the start of the very demanding 18-kilometer land navigation course through jungle and swamp. More than six hours and 24

quarts of water later, two exhausted men exultantly emerged from the jungle after locating the required four checkpoints.

A 6.2-mile run back to Fort Sherman through a smothering tropical downpour followed this short stroll through the jungle, and then, almost as a breather, came the knot-tying test.

Each team member was required to tie four prescribed knots. An incorrectly tied knot resulted in a 15-minute penalty added to overall time.

With darkness beginning to creep over JOTC, the two leading men began the Australian poncho raft operation, building a raft which would float 70 pounds of equipment across a 1,000-foot lagoon. Sinking the raft would mean disqualification. Twenty minutes later the two men pulled their raft into the far shore and headed for their last event — the "Green Hell" jungle obstacle course.

The driving tropical rain did not even slow up the two leaders as they raced through JOTC's infamous obstacle course. The winning team, with a time of 10 hours and 43 minutes, were both instructors at JOTC.

One of the winners had an unmistakable British accent, and someone at JOTC was obviously an Edgar Rice Burroughs aficionado. Along with the title of "Jungle Man," the instructor won the nickname "Greystoke."



training, waterborne ops, rappelling and a land navigation refresher — a *must* in the swamps and jungles of Panama.

Advanced subjects are covered under the modular POI which can be tailored to fit unit requirements, and include: mines and booby traps, adjustment of artillery by sound, airmobile ops, leader's seminar, patrolling and recon missions, ambushing and raids, aerial resupply, and evasion and escape — all designed specifically for jungle application.

It is a requirement that all students complete the jungle living and plants-and-foods phases of training before venturing out into the J. They learn about jungle diseases, insects, snakes, vampire bats, edible vegetation and wildlife, hygiene and medicine treatment including heat casualty treatment and water purification methods, field expedient shelters (very necessary in wet, tropical areas), and hints about clothing and gear that will last longest and be most comfortable in the jungle.

Field training begins after students receive their refresher class on land navigation. As a warm-up, troops spend half a day in the jungle on short-leg navigation exercises followed by a 24-hour jungle navigation problem and recon mission.

My "nature walk" began in the wee

**Waterborne training is an integral part of the JOTC course.**



**JOTC's "Banana Boat" patch. Three weeks of tough and wet training are all it takes to earn it.**

hours, the high-pitched humming of thousands of insects still mingling with the croaking of frogs and cries of a nightjar. I could hear a cock crowing in the distance and the discordant voice of a hornbill which had wakened me several times during the night.

The outing was complete with tropical downpours, black palm spikes in my hands, and mad dashes through the deep, dark J with killer bees in hot pursuit. The stink of dead things and tangle of wait-a-minute vines did nothing to make my introduction

## FORGET YOUR CHUTE?

Helocasting: the fine art of leaping, fully loaded, from Hueys, Black Hawks and Chinooks, flying at up to 30 knots and 30 feet above the water, without killing oneself. Training visiting units in helocasting is the job of JOTC's Waterborne Committee.

Instructors also teach squads how to prepare, lash and load an RB-15 rubber boat inside a Chinook helicopter, then drop it as a "boat of operations" once they're in the water. A fully loaded boat on jungle waterways allows for more freedom of movement throughout the assigned area of operations, and provides a floating supply base for extended ops. To prepare for the helocast, the RB-15 is loaded with the squad's ALICE packs, radio, crew-served weapons and other heavy gear. Load and paddles are securely lashed to the boat.

Two lengths of rollers are attached and installed in the center of the Chinook's ramp, with about six inches of rollers extending over the end. To prevent them from becoming a hazard to the "jumpers," the rollers are secured to the ramp with cargo tie-downs. When loading the RB-15 — bow first — the squad must raise the Chinook's two rearmost seats to get it to fit inside the chopper.

The helocasting squad dresses as for water training: jungle utilities — un-



**Helocasting from the ramp of a CH-47. Troops and their equipment can successfully deploy when no other LZs are available.**

bloused boots, shirts untucked, sleeves down, top button fastened — load-bearing equipment, and a work vest (individual flotation device). Each trooper ties his weapon to his LBE with a cord in such a manner that it can still be raised overhead.

The castmaster has communications with the pilot, and when the casting site is reached the procedure is the same as for a paratroop jump:

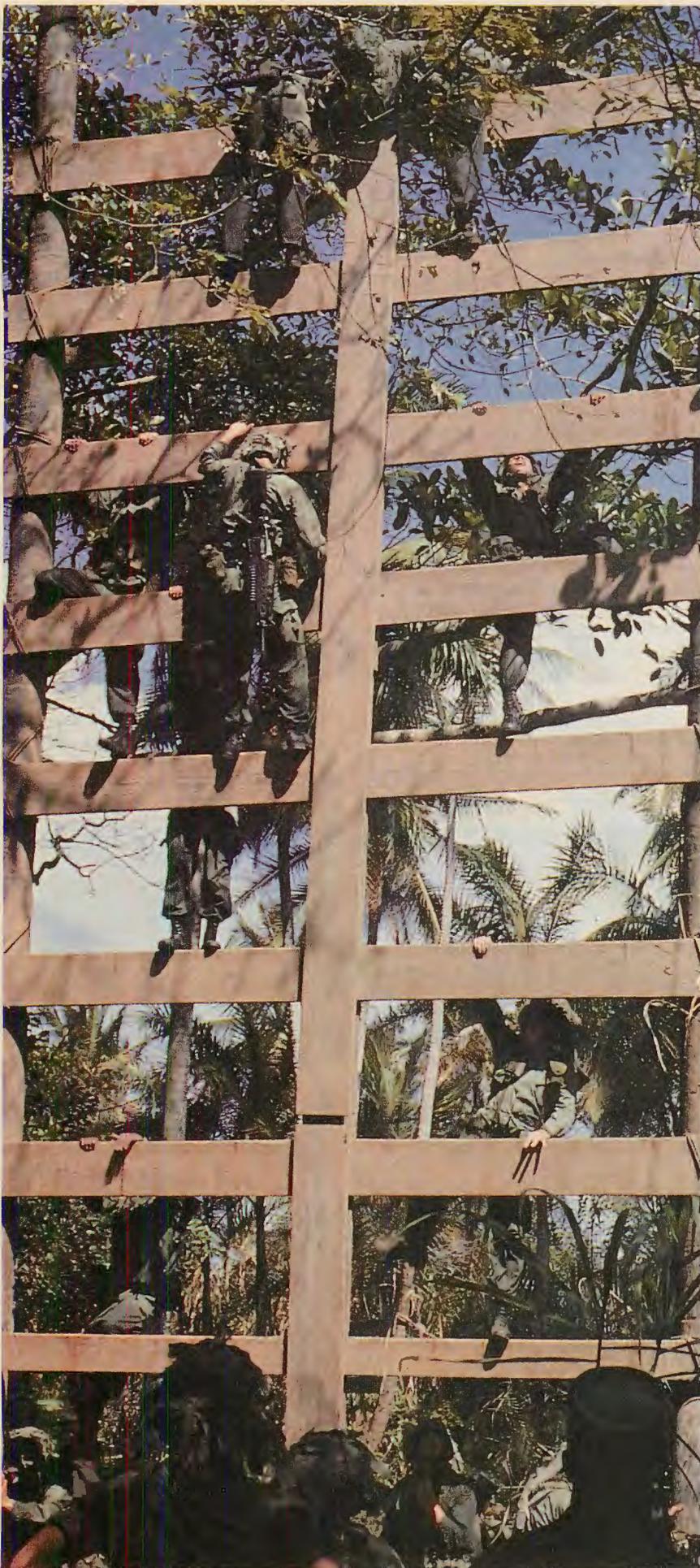
"Red light on!"  
 "Green light on!"  
 "Go!"

The rubber boat is pushed out by the castmaster and coxswain, or command-

er, of the RB-15. Once the boat is in the water the squad follows in two columns off the tail ramp. The first grunt to the RB-15 makes a quick inspection for damage, and then checks to see if the equipment is still secure. He then frees the paddles and starts paddling the boat toward the rest of the squad. If the boat capsizes they quickly right it using the crew drills rehearsed before each such mission.

JOTC instructors recommend 25 feet as the maximum height for helocasting, and the water should be at least 15 feet deep. During training the water should have as little current as possible, and be free of all obstacles including kelp, seaweed and stumps. Combat conditions, of course, may preclude all of the above.

Sounds like fun, huh?



to jungle navigation any more bloody pleasant, either.

"New chums" quickly learn that the jungle is *not* neutral to people who are not mentally and physically prepared for it. But once they've come to accept their strange new environment, confidence grows and they are able to cope.

One observation I made of American soldiers new to the jungle was that they have a preoccupation with swinging their machetes at *any* vegetation, obstacle or not. They're so noisy a deaf man could hear them, and they leave a trail so clear the blind could track them. However, once they learn to duck under or push their way through obstacles, and realize that their arms become lead-filled after ten minutes of continual hacking, the novelty soon wears off.

Once students acclimatize to everyday ops in the jungle, they are given specialized training in making do with what they have. To increase the range of radio communications in the dense foliage, high humidity, and abundant rainfall of Panama — among what is obviously some of the most difficult terrain in the world — construction of the 292 jungle-expedient antennae is taught and practiced by all.

Using the JOTC method, a squad gathers three pieces of bamboo or wood easily found in the jungle, some WD-1 wire, and four plastic MRE spoons to be used as insulators. The antenna is then hung overhead in tree branches and hooked to their already waterproofed radio. Troops are required to prove that it works by establishing comms and authenticating with the instructor — all in 20 minutes. And it does work.

On the physical side, standard rappelling training includes a wall and helicopter rappel, both done off the rappelling tower. (Helicopters in Panama are at a premium because of operational commitments.) The tower has a set of Huey skids to add to the realism. While I was there the crazy fuckers from JWB were teaching the Australian Rappel — going down face first so that one's weapon can be fired during the descent — for helicopter use as well as the conventional method of backing your way down.

Troops are taught not only how to aerially unass choppers in the jungle, but the air-assault POI includes instruction and practice on how to use all types of helicopters in the Army's inventory as well. Students learn how to construct and mark — by day and night — landing and pickup zones, and hand and arm signals for controlling a chopper during landing and takeoff. They're also taught the JOTC radio procedure for talk-ons, and for controlling aircraft operations and personnel on and around the LZ.

During their waterborne instruction fledgling jungle fighters learn how to rig and lash RB-15 and Zodiac Mark V rubber

Slippery 34-foot jungle ladder at the end of Green Hell obstacle course tests upper body strength, endurance — and the will to go on.

boats, and how to build an Australian poncho raft and cross a water obstacle with all their gear — while keeping it dry in the process. They also learn to construct a one-rope bridge and perform a water crossing as a squad team. Crew drills are again emphasized as squads operating/paddling their boats across Shelter Cove over a circuit course within the time allowed. (Young troops also learn here that the Army issue green waterproof watches are only waterproof until you put 'em in the water.)

Instructors hammer home the point that the jungle abounds with water courses, and they are often the best form of fast, easy transport and infiltration.

Jungle combat techniques are probably the most important POI troops will learn in their three weeks at JOTC. Instruction includes classes and practice in jungle movement technique, the wire and triangle perimeter, and the linear jungle ambush. To simulate a common counterinsurgency operation, troops also carry out a raid exercise followed by an extraction. These techniques are reinforced during exercise breaks by JWB staff who accompany subunits of the battalion to assess their progress and performance, and are tested day and night against JOTC aggressor forces.

A day and night live-fire ambush is often included in this phase of training, with a system of "enemy" dummies moving across the unit's killing ground. Claymores are widely used as are all the common U.S.

Army light infantry weapons — M16s, M60s, SAWs (Squad Automatic Weapons) and the M203 over-under M16/40mm grenade launcher.

As any vet of counterinsurgency ops can tell you, mines and booby traps lie uppermost in every grunt's mind as he walks through the bush. Practically all visiting battalions do this block of instruction, and it's a loud class as training is punctuated by detonations. Troops receive basic teaching on priming blocks of TNT, and get instruction on booby traps Juan is most likely to use. ("Charlie" is no longer the generic enemy of JOTC training, since the nearest American military involvement is Central America. Now the troops' fictional enemy is "Juan.")

Juan, as an aggressor encountered by JOTC students (and not far from the real thing), usually travels in groups of three to five and wears a mixture of civilian and military clothing. He carries a small amount of explosives, and a rifle with a few rounds of ammunition.

Small groups like Juan's can be brought together for larger operations and then dispersed, although he prefers small groups for security and support considerations. The fewer people who can identify members of a guerrilla gang, the better the chances are that they will survive. Guerrilla groups like Juan's must live off the land, and small groups are easier to feed. His more nefarious activities include mining, sniping and



JOTC's motto spells out up front what students can expect during their three weeks of jungle training.

booby-trapping.

JOTC students are taught that Juan must construct his booby traps out of materials extracted from the jungle or from materials discarded by our forces. There is no limitation of location or type of trap he'll use, and any area Juan knows or suspects U.S. troops will use — paths, trails, stream fording sites, buildings or huts, or areas around base camps — will assuredly be booby-trapped.

It would take much longer than three weeks for the entire course to provide comprehensive training in *all* types of booby traps, so students are familiarized with their employment. JOTC does not teach how to build these booby traps, but rather how to defend against them: Nice guys don't use booby traps, according to the Geneva Con-

*Continued on page 88*

## JUNGLE SURVIVAL

Jungle Warfare Branch of JOTC runs survival, escape and evasion courses for pilots who operate in a jungle environment. Courses vary in length and composition depending on the requirements of the students' parent unit, but generally a week of familiarization is the rule. The primary purpose is to make pilots jungle conscious and prepare them mentally for this harsh environment should they ever prang their kites in the jungle.

During their time at JOTC flyboys are instructed by trainers from the Zoo in the very basics: expedient shelters, building fires in a wet environment, traps and snares, food preparation, making tools and weapons from natural materials, jungle navigation and other skills that will be important to a downed pilot trying to E&E.

Before pilots are thrown to the tender mercies of the jungle, they are frisked and all goodies — such as candy bars — are confiscated. They are, however, allotted one *live* chicken, one pineapple, one ocre root, and three green bananas for each team of three to five men. Also, the JWB instructors are careful to ensure that they take only what survival equipment they are likely to carry in their chopper — helmet, survival vest, flying suit and boots. (You can always tell



Chopper pilots attending survival training learn what it's like to hang on the other end of a vertical extraction.

which army aviators in Panama have done the survival school because their choppers are the only ones equipped with such items as water bottles, machetes and ponchos.)

After being suitably disoriented, the pilots are dropped off in three- or four-man groups into the jungle by boat at some bend on the Chagres River. They are given a time limit to E&E to certain release points where they will link up

with friendly "partisans" and be vertically extracted by chopper.

Most aviators, once they are immersed in an environment so different from their sterile, above-ground cockpit, discover the horror of biting insects — especially when the insects bite straight through their thin mesh survival hammocks. One pilot had over 200 bites on his back alone after his first night in the "J".

One of the instructors from the Zoo marveled at the changes that overcome some of these previously refined and aloof gentlemen-of-the-air. Many emerge from their jungle ordeal with knuckles dragging, neanderthallike, in the mud. What's more, these young pilots are also apt to fight their friends over such delicacies as fresh coatimundi, boa constrictor, water rat — and their pet chicken.

Those who survive the survival course — there have been no MIAs so far — are then choppered out, cleaned up and presented with their certificates. They do not receive a Jungle Expert patch, but they do pick up a damned good understanding of what it's like to operate in the jungle.

If nothing else, they sure walk away with a better appreciation of just what grunts on the ground live through.

# SOME DARED; SOME DIDN'T

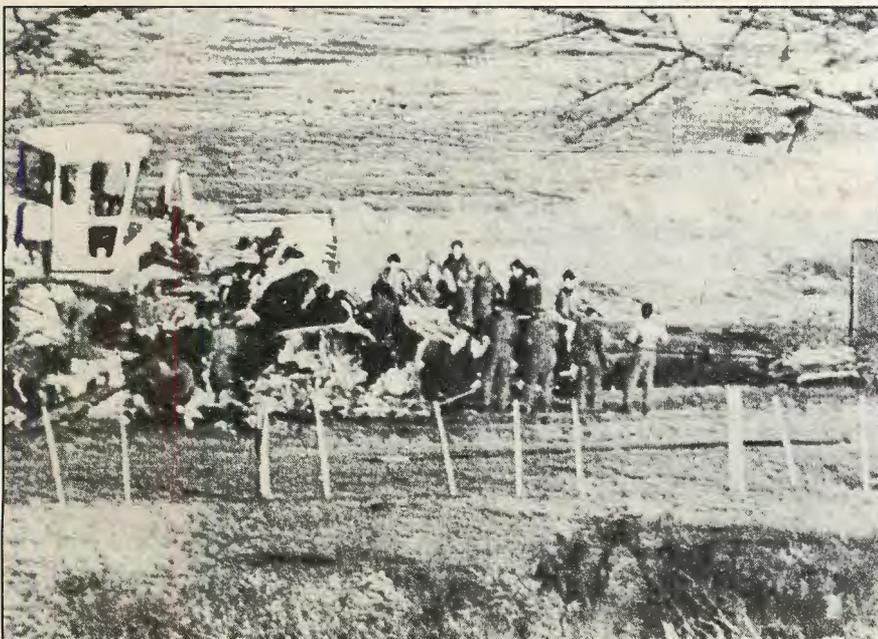
## Argentine Intel vs. Brit Special Ops

by Capt. Javier Aristu

**RIGHT:** British special ops planning focused on Argentine air capabilities. This fighter pilot prepares for a mission against British forces on the Malvinas. Photo: Gente Magazine

**BELOW:** Argentine Pucará attack aircraft prepare for the next mission. Photo: Javier Aristu collection

**BOTTOM:** War on the mainland: Soldiers examine the remains of a British Sea King helicopter near Punta Arenas. Photo: Gente Magazine



*This is an article about the other side of the Falklands conflict: the losers' side, the one not often told in the U.S. press. While facts have been verified when possible, our concern is less with objectivity than with presenting a primary document for the study of the battle for the Falklands: the observations of an Argentine officer who fought in the war. — The Editors*

**T**HE war in the South Atlantic over possession of the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands splashed across world headlines during April and May of 1982, but part of the war never made the papers. Although the British operated in and around the islands, the homeland of their enemy, the Argentines, was only 700 kilometers away from the battleground. Did the British have special forces operations planned that would spill over onto the South American continent?

Yes, they did. Now that three years have passed we are able to match new data with old information obtained during the conflict. Surveillance teams operated in the mainland and detailed reces were made for a raid that was never attempted.

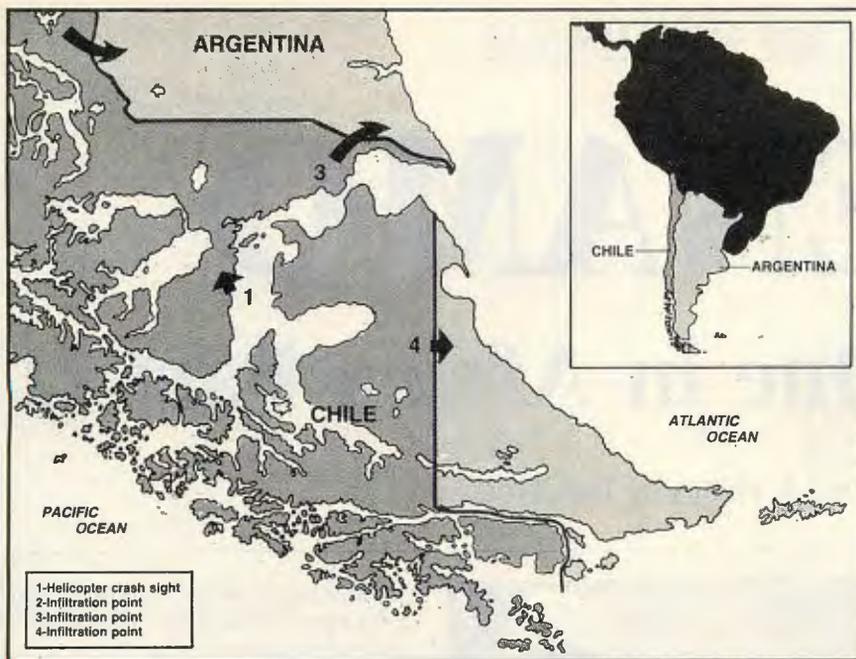
There was a desperate need for reliable intelligence on both sides and the fact that this was a limited conflict with important political pressures and restrictions made intelligence gathering difficult.

The British placed a high priority on intelligence regarding Argentine air power. They felt that arm of the Argentine military would prove to be the greatest threat. (Those fears were confirmed when the Type 42 Frigate *HMS Sheffield* was sunk on 4 May by a radar-guided air-sea Exocet missile launched from a Super Etendard fighter-bomber based at the Rio Grande naval air force base.)

The ramifications of the *Sheffield's* loss were not lost on the British command. Would the conflict's outcome have been different if the carriers had been sunk? If they had been, the task force's air cover would disappear and the fleet would face disaster in a matter of hours.

Argentine intelligence was concerned with more basic problems — like British SBS and SAS capabilities to recce, infiltrate and raid important objectives. Although the Argentines knew that recapture of the Malvinas was the paramount objective for the British, the Argentines also had to consider the possibility of attacks on air bases on the continent. These were located at Comodoro Rivadavia, Rio Gallegos, San Julián, Santa Cruz and Rio Grande.

British intelligence often relied on local Argentine agents to report military aircraft movement. Most of the time, though, they were off the mark because the Argentines kept attack jets flying between bases before the real raid took off. As flight time to the targets was 30 or 40 minutes this strategem proved successful because the British set off a red alert every time combat loaded (sometimes with dummy bomb loads) Argentine



jets took off. The only time the Brits weren't scurrying into bomb shelters was when "their men on the mainland" radioed that the jets were grounded — a rare occurrence.

Considering the situation, the British government decided to prepare a card to play in case the worst happened. If all else failed they would lift the restriction of operating within the TEZ (Total Exclusion Zone) and execute raids on the continent's air bases. Two factors lent themselves to an SAS/SBS-type operation. First, Argentina had a century-long border delimitation conflict with Chile and the Argentines could not count on Chile's sympathy even though, in diplomatic circles, they had stated that they "... would cover Argentina's back."

The area surrounding most of the major Argentine military bases is home to a significant Chilean immigrant population. And that's not all. Most of the ranchers in the area are of British descent and many of them have combat backgrounds from World War II. Lionel Pikerling, a sheep rancher living near San Julián air base fought in Arnhem with the "Red Devils" and he has not taken his red beret off since. Since these ranchers would be the most likely contacts for any British sabotage teams, they were kept under close undercover surveillance by Argentine counterintelligence agents. Since a raid was considered a strong possibility, every force stationed in the area was ordered to camp inside or near the airfields providing a tight 360-degree security ring.

The first evidence of a possible attack came when agents in Punta Arenas, a Chilean town 100 kilometers from the border, reported that they had seen helicopters flying at night "with no identification marks at all." This was not taken very seriously at first, but on 20 May at 1830 the duty NCO in the San Julián air base control tower saw a helicopter about four clicks out, flying very low and following the terrain contour. Naturally, there was no signature on the radar screen. It landed on the shad-



owed side of a low hill, four men jumped off, bundles were unloaded and it took off again returning the same way it had come. The startled NCO sounded the alarm, but neither the ground patrols nor the Pucará close support aircraft could find any trace of the helicopter or the patrol.

More evidence came in that same day from Punta Arenas when a burned and abandoned Sea King helicopter was found 11 clicks south of the town. Its crew was missing, but a few days later they appeared with the ridiculous story of "having gotten lost."

This at last sounded the general alarm on the entire Atlantic coast. The enemy's probable target priority was evaluated by the 11th Mechanized Infantry Brigade intelligence staff, the unit charged with responsibility for the southern part of Santa Cruz province. Rio Gallegos was given highest priority because it had several vulnerabilities. Despite heavy security — nearly two brigades were stationed in or around the air base — the pilots lived in the comfortable Hotel Santa Cruz downtown. They were transported every morning on a lightly escorted bus to the base and they returned to

town in time for dinner. Only an interceptor fighter watch remained on duty at the base.

The hotel's bar had turned into something very similar to Rick's in *Casablanca*. Army officers shared tables with air force and navy pilots, journalists, young women, intelligence agents, businessmen and the locals who had always been there. Needless to say, those responsible for security were progressively sinking into paranoia.

One night a romantic army lieutenant tried to impress a clever female journalist by telling her that his unit had captured some unlucky British commandos who had landed the night before. Next day the news was plastered across Buenos Aires newspapers and General Galtieri was eagerly asking everybody in his staff whom he had to congratulate. When the captured commandos were not found the general's mood changed and he looked around for heads to lop off. A colonel responsible for press censorship in the Rio Gallegos area was promptly relieved from his post.

Security consciousness became frenzied when, on 1 June, intelligence reported that "British special forces were operating near the Argentine-Chilean border, some 60 kilometers south of Rio Gallegos and had crossed the borderline at least two times to monitor Argentine air activity."

Patrolling was doubled and security stiffened. As commando-trained personnel in the Argentine army may serve in any army unit, those casually stationed in the area were called in and a 20-man platoon was organized with a captain in command. They immediately began patrolling the area both openly and undercover with the realization that they were likely to run into the SAS or SBS.

Coordinating with the commandos, some fifty intelligence agents were deployed under imaginative cover stories among the British and Chilean ranches and at any other establishments where support might fall in behind the British. One of the biggest security risks was a ranch known as El Condor. It was controlled by the British government — the ranch's major shareholder. Its manager, John Blake, was believed to be the head of British intelligence in the zone. In fact, contacts between this area and British diplomats in Buenos Aires had stopped only a few days before the entire British diplomatic delegation was deported.

The senior army commander, General Guerrero, was under pressure from his intelligence staff to give the green light to clandestine operations that would gather evidence on the British infiltration patrols before it was too late. He insisted on absolute adherence to the laws of war and unarmed civilians, national or foreign.

On 4 June, in Rio Turbio, a small mining village on the border, two backpack-toting tourists were detained after being detected under suspicious circumstances in Rio Gallegos as they were about to cross the border to Chile. One was arrested, but the other

*Continued on page 101*

# RENAMO

## Winning One in Africa Part II

Text & Photos by Jack Wheeler

Last month, SOF began adventurer/political philosopher Jack Wheeler's account of his recent visit with Renamo freedom fighters in Mozambique.

In the convoluted sphere of southern Africa, Renamo has continued to make startling gains against the Soviet-backed regime — even in the face of powerful political and economic interests determined to keep Samora Machel in power. SOF concludes Wheeler's exposé of the international double-dealings which have tried, and failed, to sound Renamo's death knell.

— The Editors

**R**ENAMO was back in business. And business was improving. Dhlakama's position as president and supreme military commander of Renamo was unquestioned. Cristina was designated Renamo's secretary-general as he was proving to be quite talented as a guerrilla leader.

Establishing a string of small bases spreading throughout the country, Renamo began attracting thousands of volunteers. A large portion of support came from the *requelos*, traditional rural village chiefs, upon whom Machel was waging war in his crazed effort to create "a new socialist man" in Mozambique.

Dhlakama found most everyone in the rural countryside agreeing with him when he and his men told them, "Frelimo is worse than the Portuguese ever were. The colonials exploited us, but at least the Portuguese did not try and destroy our traditions and our traditional way of life because we are 'reactionary.'"

The Renamo message was primarily one of Mozambican nationalism versus Soviet colonialism, and it necessarily had to come out of the barrel of a gun in order to provide a convincing manifesto. Renamo targeted the economy and Frelimo's capacity to govern, with primary attack points being the railway and oil lines from Maputo and Sofala (Beira) to Mutare (Umtali) in Zimbabwe, and the main paved roads throughout the country. Power lines from Cabora Bassa dam on the Zambezi, which supply South



Author and Renamo soldier deep inside Mozambique. Dr. Wheeler is one of the few Americans to ever work internally with Renamo forces.

Africa with 7 percent of its electricity, also fell to Renamo explosives, with the lines first cut in November 1980 and twice in 1981. Then Zamco, the South African company which operates Cabora Bassa, made a deal with the guerrillas for an undisclosed amount of money and the attacks ceased.

No deal was possible, however, with Machel. His response to Dhlakama's offer to negotiate a democratization of Mozambique was to daily denounce the insurgents as "armed bandits" and "creatures of racist South Africa," and to increase the fascist controls and East German surveillance over the people.

Throughout 1982 Renamo continued to expand while Frelimo's successes against it dwindled. Vast portions of Sofala and Manica, northern Gaza and southern Tete were effectively removed from Frelimo control. By June, Dhlakama's forces had crossed the Limpopo into southern Gaza and in August they had crossed the Zambezi into Zambia.

Things were now looking bleak for Frelimo. Just how bleak was revealed when Jorge da Costa, director of SNASP, the

Frelimo Secret Police, defected to South Africa on 6 June 1982. The picture he painted was grim.

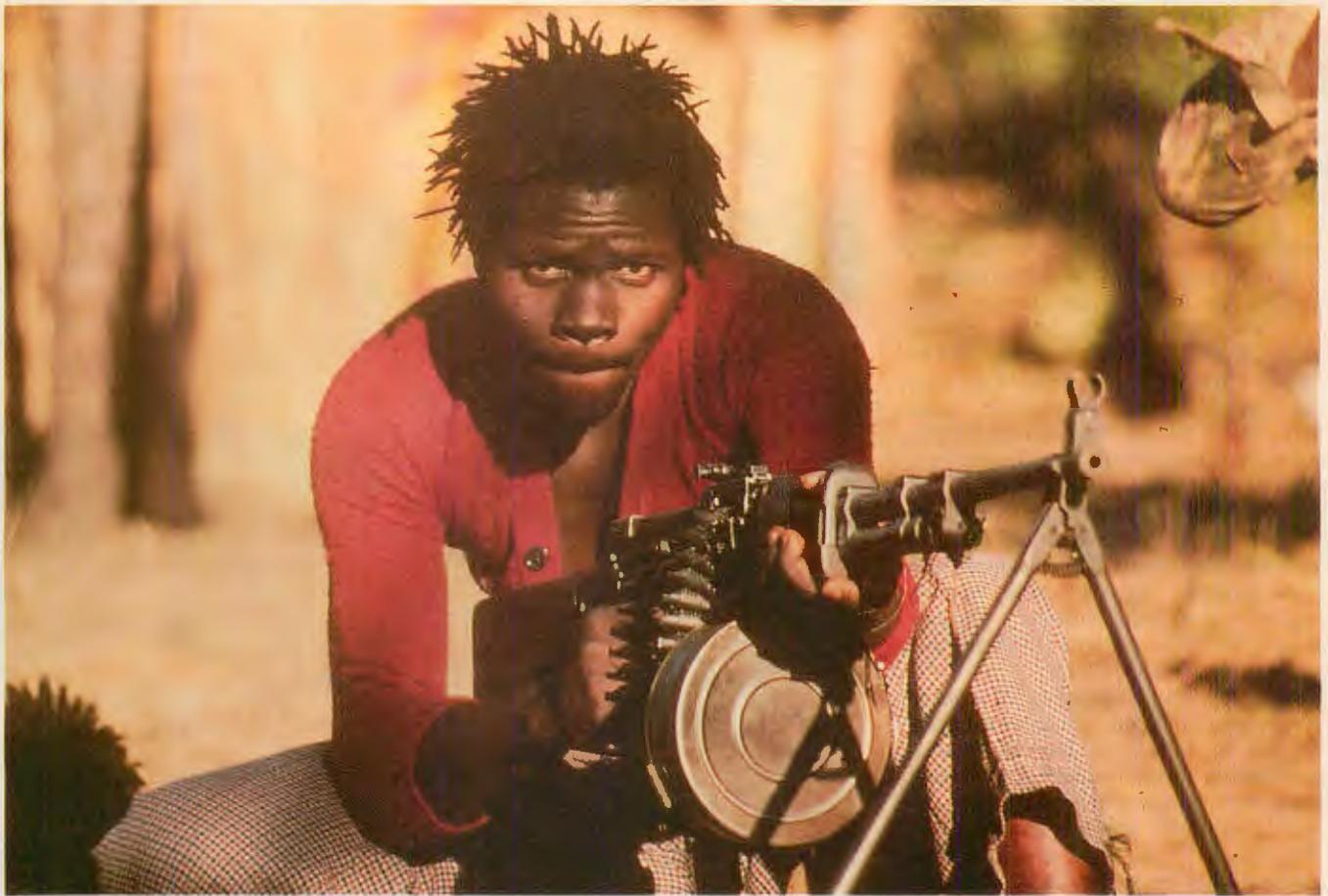
He described Samora Machel as a man insane with power. Machel would hide for hours under the stairs at a hospital taking notes on staff activities, then spring out and berate them for laziness. He would throw tantrums if a stewardess on Air Mozambique did not have a tall glass for a drink of Scotch, and one afternoon he ordered anyone wearing striped clothing on the streets of Maputo arrested, beat up and jailed — then withdrew the order the next day.

Da Costa told how the Soviets and their allies were "raping Mozambique . . . it is wholesale exploitation on a scale the Portuguese never even dreamed of."

"Mozambique has one of the finest fishing grounds in the world. The Russians are using large suction pipes which suck up tons of coral, fish and shellfish to be sorted onboard the ships with the refuse tipped back overboard. This method destroys vast areas of the seabed and divers have told me that at places along the coast it is like a desert under the water — not a sign of life for kilometers. Every fish caught off the coast is exported, mainly to Russia and Rumania, and is payment [by Frelimo] for military support and equipment. Fish sold in Mozambique are grade-four leftovers — exported back from Russia!"

Da Costa's files list the Soviet presence in Mozambique as between 4,000 to 5,000 men, mostly military, and under the command of KGB Colonel Anatoli Shadrin. They list about 1,000 East Germans headed by General Gunter Weinrich of the East German Security Police, and some 4,000 Cubans, again mostly military, under Colonel Haras Sanchez of Castro's DGI (Cuban Secret Police).

Renamo's expansion continued through 1983, even with the setback of Orlando Cristina's death at the hands of an unknown assailant at his farm outside Pretoria in April. By the end of the year, Renamo had spread across all of Zambia and into both Nampula and Iassa (liberating in the process several of Machel's concentration camps),



**Rastafarian locks and captured Soviet RPD light machine gun.**

northern Tete, much of Inhambane, and was starting to push toward Maputo itself. Without Angola's oil revenues to pay for black-skinned Cuban mercenaries Machel began turning to the West for help, claiming he was "disillusioned" with Marxism and the Soviets.

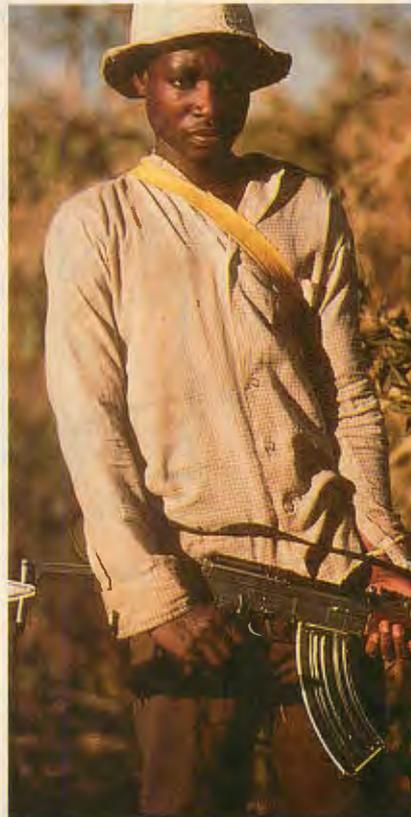
His desperation to keep his political power reached such a pitch that he even contacted the South Africans. Would they sell out Renamo if he would sell out the African National Congress? (ANC is an urban terrorist movement headquartered in Maputo, guided by a Soviet Lithuanian KGB agent named Joe Slovo.)

Pik Botha, the South African foreign minister, leaped at the offer. Botha (no relation to South African President P.W. Botha) was part of a faction in the South African government which thought it more in South Africa's interest to have impoverished and emasculated pro-Soviet Marxist states for neighbors than reinvigorated free-market black democracies.

Besides, the world press filming the leader of Soviet Mozambique smiling and shaking hands with the president of South Africa as they jointly signed a mutual non-aggression treaty would be a major public relations coup. And that's what happened at the train crossing of Nkomati on the South African side of the border on 16 March 1984.

Both sides kept to the bargain of the Nkomati Accord. The ANC was forced to move their headquarters to Lusaka, Zambia. Renamo's supply base at Phalaborwa was

**Samora Machel's repressive Marxist policies have driven thousands of Mozambicans into Renamo ranks.**



closed down and airdrops to Gorongosa ceased — but not before SAMI (South African Military Intelligence), infuriated at Pik Botha's sellout of Renamo, was able to organize a massive resupply of military equipment before the accord was signed. Now Dhlakama was entirely on his own.

And life was bad for most of the Mozambican people. In many parts of the country no rain had fallen for three years. Much of the famine aid sent by the United States and international relief agencies went to feed the Frelimo army, just as in Ethiopia. By mid-1984, international relief officials estimated that 170,000 Mozambicans had died of starvation and disease since the drought began.

There was no evidence of starvation, however, in the areas controlled by Renamo through which I passed. There was not an overabundance of food — my lunch on the trail was usually a piece of raw cassava called "Fernando's bone" — but rarely did I see children with distended bellies or other indications of chronic malnutrition. At a fishing village on a marsh near the border, I asked two villagers who spoke some English about their life under Renamo.

"Things are much better with Renamo controlling the border and this entire area," they told me. "Now, many people come from [a neighboring country] to buy and trade for our fish. Frelimo tried to control everything, nobody could have private business. With Renamo, we have freedom . . . confidence . . . Renamo likes us to have private business . . . Oh, yes, things are better now!"

Even among anti-Soviet guerrillas I have never met any more explicitly pro-capitalist than those of Renamo. A good example was Conrad who was assigned to me by Comandante Fujao on my trek through Renamo territory. He worked years ago for a white couple in Rhodesia and remembered a little English.

"I don't like communism here because communism is no good," he let me know with frustration in his voice. "Very impossible, that one. I like capitalism because I take my money from my job and buy shirt, or shoes, or bicycle, whatever I want. But he [Samora Machel] say no! Frelimo say must have five to 10 people to buy bicycle, cannot buy yourself. But it is my money! Frelimo has no right to tell me how spend my money. Yes, communism very terrible."

"Who chose Samora Machel to be leader of Mozambique?" asked Manuel, the leader of a Renamo patrol I accompanied. "He chose himself — he is a dictator, he gives orders, everyone else must obey. Renamo wants *democracia*, where people can choose the leader they want."

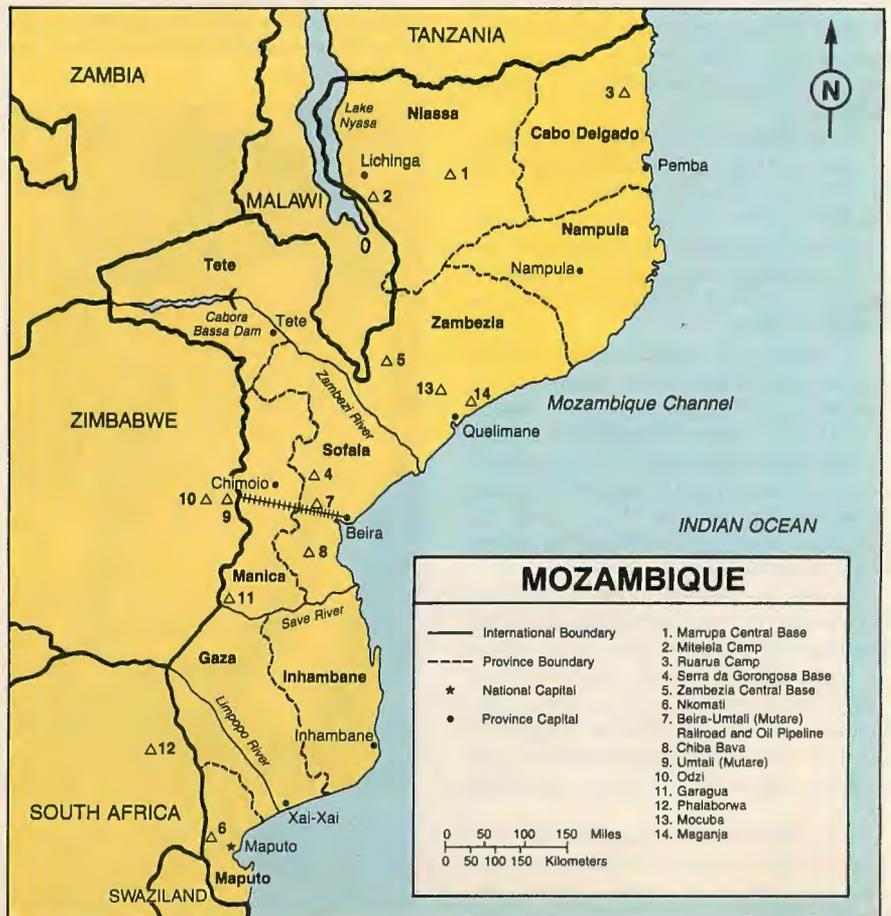
The myth that the guerrillas of Renamo were puppets of South Africa caused many to think they would evaporate after Nkomati. When the opposite occurred, most commentators expressed puzzlement — wondering where help was coming from, either secretly from South Africa, or from Oman via the Comoro Islands — rather than conceding that Renamo was an indigenous movement supported by the Mozambican people.

In April 1984, within a month of Nkomati, Renamo had moved into Cabo Delgado province, whose Makonde inhabitants had formed the backbone of the Frelimo army. Disaffected toward Machel, they began assisting and joining Dhlakama's men in droves. Renamo was now operating effectively in all 10 provinces of the country.

The situation in Zambezia province in mid-1985 is typical. Each province has a central headquarters which remains in daily radio contact with all of the main bases within that province. These in turn are in radio or runner contact with smaller bases. Zambezia has 15 main and 58 small bases, with 2,480 armed fighters. Frelimo has two brigades of 4,400 men each, mostly garrisoned in the provincial capital of Quelimane, and at Mocuba.

Virtually the entire countryside of Zambezia is under Renamo control, with only the district capitals and the provincial capital run by Frelimo. Renamo's strategy is to eventually halt all road traffic inside and between the provinces, isolate the district capitals, then begin a program of internal sabotage.

The airport at Quelimane was badly damaged in raids in January and again in March 1985. The roads from Zambezia to Sofala have been closed since 1983. By June the main activity was directed toward the Mocuba-Nampula road. There is no offensive strategy of Frelimo anywhere in the province, just static defense of garrisons





Renamo troops on parade. Not the Coldstream Guards, but they're beating Frelimo on every front.

Mozambique — one of the few places in the world where anti-communist freedom fighters are winning their battle.

and convoys.

Renamo claims that all weapons and ammunition are captured in ambushes. Zambezia central base has several Soviet 82mm mortar emplacements on its perimeter and its defensive detachment has 100 RPG-7 rocket launchers, 40-50 RPD light machine guns, a "few" 12.7mm heavy machine guns, and "some" SAM-7 shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles — all captured Soviet weapons. MiGs were reportedly not a problem — just a few and scared of the SAMs — and helicopters are only for transport. The guerrillas claim to have shot down two MiGs with SAM-7s near Maganja in April.

Supporting the claim that Frelimo is riddled by "countless" Renamo informers in Zambezia and elsewhere, a recent intelligence estimate reported that "many MNR [Renamo] commanders are former Frelimo cadres who still have well-placed friends in Frelimo. The MNR consistently obtains information about personnel, arms and food movements throughout the country. The ambush and sabotage success rate is high."

The situation today in Mozambique is in

many places rapidly becoming anarchic and chaotic. Frelimo has withdrawn from the countryside, and Renamo does not have the manpower to effect administrative control. In several areas, deserting Frelimo soldiers have formed marauding gangs and starving young male villagers have resorted to banditry. Frelimo assassination teams disguised as Renamo soldiers have taken to indiscriminately killing villagers (particularly those suspected of being Renamo sympathizers) — the same technique used by the Sandinistas in Nicaragua to smear the contras — all of which are reported by Maputo as "Renamo atrocities."

By the end of August 1985, Johannesburg newspapers were reporting an "avalanche" of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Mozambique into South Africa, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. The stories portrayed Mozambique as a land "torn apart by war and starvation," a country of "panic and chaos . . . on its knees." Accompanying the reports were pathetic pictures of decaying corpses killed by Soviet land mines which the Mozambique government had ordered strewn along the border to staunch the flow of refugees out of the country.

"Frelimo says we must stay in Mozambique so that we can all die together," one story quoted refugee Daniel Mahanuki. "If we return to Mozambique, Frelimo will put us in jail. They also shoot us."

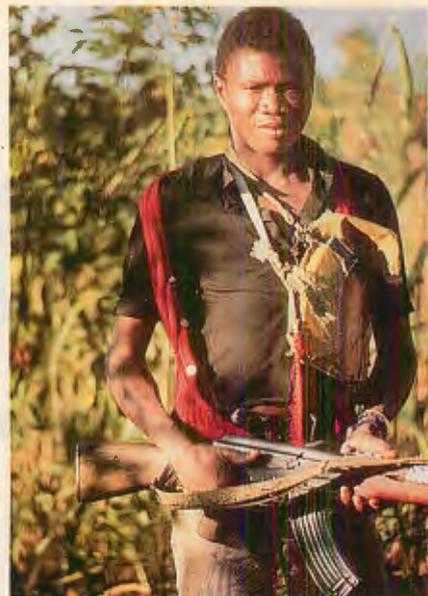
Morale in the Frelimo army was reported as at "an all-time low . . . with starving Frelimo soldiers crossing into South Africa and offering their weapons in exchange for food." Renamo, on the other hand, had stepped up its activities, with Maputo under a virtual state of siege.

"Sources closely connected with Mozambique," concluded one article, "indicate that if it were not for the 20,000 foreign troops in Mozambique — mainly Zimbabweans — the rebels could overthrow the government of President Samora Machel."

For the first time in history, a democratic liberation movement is well within striking distance of overthrowing a Soviet-backed Marxist-Leninist dictatorship. That this startling turn of events is looked upon with horror by most Western governments, including the Reagan administration, is one of the most Kafkaesque and revealing geopolitical facts of our day.

A weird conspiracy of United States, British and South African diplomats, businessmen and bankers has emerged, desperate to support Samora Machel.

British officers are now training Frelimo soldiers in counterinsurgency operations in Zimbabwe. South African soldiers are reportedly guarding Frelimo installations in civilian garb. Tiny Rowlands, the British millionaire whose Lonrho Company has extensive holdings in southern Africa, is one of Jonas Savimbi's principal supporters — and also one of Samora Machel's. Harry Oppenheimer, South Africa's wealthiest businessman, held a secret meeting with Machel in London in October 1983, and is



Captured ComBloc equipment, and confidence, mark the signs of a successful guerrilla movement inside Mozambique. Author predicts a Renamo victory by the end of 1986 — if the U.S. State Department will back off.

Third World guerrillas on both sides of the fence use a strange assortment of weaponry. This Renamo freedom fighter carries a World War II-vintage 9mm Z-45 Spanish STAR submachine gun, originally purchased by Portugal and Cuba.



anxious to have his Anglo-American Corporation gain lucrative contracts with the Frelimo government. David Rockefeller, chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, and Melvin Laird, secretary of defense under Richard Nixon, recently went to Maputo and came back with tales of what money they could make with Machel. When Sen. Robert Kasten (R-Wis.) blocked the State Department's efforts to send military aid to Frelimo, Laird put pressure on Kasten to relent.

It is an incredible web of greed and naiveté spun by people who have abandoned their commitment to political liberty, democracy and humanitarian concern for the savaged people of Mozambique.

Its spinning has been principally orchestrated by Chester Crocker, undersecretary of state for African Affairs, and his deputy, Fred Wisner. They and other reactionary invertebrates at State now bear responsibility

Continued on page 93

# RASHEED

## Swedish-Egyptian SKS?

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



**R**ASHEED ... never heard of it? Well let's just say that it's a technical mongrel.

The Egyptian small-arms industry was established by Swedish technicians before the overthrow of King Farouk. Most of their early efforts were copies of foreign designs. The Hakim rifle, a 7.92mm copy of the Swedish 6.5mm Ljungmann AG42B; the Port Said submachine gun, actually nothing more than the Swedish Carl Gustaf M45; the Maadi AKM; and the Helwan 9mm Parabellum copy of the Beretta M1951 pistol are examples.

By 1954 Egypt began to obtain substantial assistance from the Soviet Union. Procurements included both the Czech Vz52 (see SOF, May '85) and Russian SKS carbines. These apparently appealed to the Egyptians who proceeded to design a carbine which used the Ljungmann system of direct gas action combined with the configuration, chambering (7.62x39mm) and folding bayonet of the ComBloc weapons.

The Ljungmann semiautomatic rifle was adopted by Sweden in 1942 as the Halvautomatiskt Gevar 42 less than one year after it had left Erik Eklund's drawing board. Adopted in haste, numerous deficiencies were too soon apparent and a modified version, the AG42B, was introduced in 1953. Trigger mechanism and extractor were changed, front sight strengthened, magazine revised and the gas tube was fabricated from stainless steel.

**Firing the Egyptian Rasheed carbine produced little recoil but many stoppages.**

Eklund's gas system was the first to discard the usual piston assembly in favor of a tube which permits the gases themselves to hit the bolt carrier. After the bullet passes the gas port, gas is tapped off through a hole in the gas cylinder above the barrel in the conventional manner. The gas is directed rearward through a tube and then strikes a cup on the bolt carrier's face which seats over the end of the gas tube. Never proven in battle, the Ljungmann was issued only a few to a squad and never completely replaced the 6.5mm Mauser bolt-action rifle in the Swedish Army. Its gas system, however, was to reach fame (or infamy) when it was incorporated into the AR-10/AR-15/M16 series rifles designed by Eugene Stoner. It was also used in the less controversial French M1949 and M1949/56 service rifles.

With an overall length of 40.2 inches, the Rasheed matches that of the SKS exactly. A 20.5-inch barrel with four grooves and a right-hand twist also duplicates SKS specifications. At 8 pounds, 12 ounces, empty, the Rasheed is 4 ounces heavier than its communist cousin. And it's far heavier than any rifle need be for this cartridge.

The barrel is threaded to a forged, mill-finished receiver of dubious hardness (my specimen is peened severely where the bolt group abruptly ceases its rearward travel). A fixed ejector is fitted to the bottom of the receiver just to the rear of the magazine well. A spring-loaded hold-open, activated by the magazine follower, is mounted adjacent to the ejector. The receiver also contains a spring-loaded auto safety sear which prevents the trigger from being pulled unless the bolt is locked in battery. Unlike



**Rasheed, field-stripped.**

the Ljungmann, in which the bolt is retracted by first pushing the receiver cover forward and then pulling it to the rear, the Rasheed uses a conventional, non-reciprocating retracting handle mounted to the right side of the receiver. The left side of the receiver is marked with Arabic script and "RASHEED 7.62 MADE IN U.A.R." (United Arab Republic.)

The gas block is sweated and pinned to the barrel. The gas port is 9 inches from the end of the chamber, 4.5 inches closer than that of the SKS. Therefore, in theory, the Rasheed should provide greater port pressure to operate the system. A slotted gas plug threaded to the block serves as an adjustable gas regulator. There are four operating positions, denoted by small serrations on the gas block. A hook, bent into the gas plug's squared washer, ratchets into these serrations as the plug is turned (with a tool not provided). A fifth position, presumably for rifle grenades, shuts all gas flow to the gas tube. The end of the barrel has been threaded to accept a grenade launcher.

## RASHEED SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber** . . . . . 7.62x39mm ComBloc  
**Operation** . . . . . Gas — direct, no piston. Stainless-steel gas tube carries gas to strike bolt carrier. Locking by means of falling breechblock, rear portion of which drops into a recess in the receiver body. Trigger block safety.  
**Cyclic rate** . . . . . N/A. Semiautomatic operation only.  
**Magazine** . . . . . Curved, all-metal, 10-round detachable staggered box type. Can also be recharged in place with SKS stripper clips.  
**Weight, empty** . . . . . 8 pounds, 12 ounces  
**Length, overall** . . . . . 40.2 inches  
**Barrel** . . . . . Four groove with a right-hand twist.  
**Barrel length** . . . . . 20.5 inches  
**Sights** . . . . . Tangent-type rear with stepped-elevation positions: 300-meter battle sight and 100 to 1,000 meters; not adjustable for windage. Round, post-type front with protective hood; adjustable for both elevation and windage zero.  
**Finish** . . . . . Blued  
**Stocks** . . . . . Wood  
**Accessories** . . . . . Sling; integral folding bayonet.  
**Manufacturer** . . . . . United Arab Republic (Egypt).  
**Status** . . . . . No longer in production. No longer in service.

A protective muzzle nut is held in place by a spring-loaded nub, which cannot be depressed enough to remove the nut on my Rasheed. The stainless-steel gas tube (more substantial than the M16's) is threaded to the gas block and held securely by a jam nut. The gas tube runs under the rear sight assembly

which is fixed to the barrel by two steel bands. Studs on the bottom of these bands act as recoil lugs and mate with two corresponding holes in the stock.

A tangent-type rear sight has stepped-elevation positions in the SKS/Kalashnikov manner. First comes the battle sight position (300 meters), then graduations in 100-meter intervals from 100 to 1,000 meters. One thousand meter sights on a 7.62x39mm carbine are the stuff P.T. Barnum made famous. No adjustment for windage is possible on the rear sight. The round front sight post can be adjusted for elevation zero by means of the SKS tool which fits through a hole in its protective hood. A screw on the right side of the front sight hood permits horizontal adjustments which are then locked in place by a set screw in the front face of the sight base. The complete front sight assembly is sweated and pinned to the barrel.

A folding bayonet, of the SKS type, sits 1 inch in back of the front sight under the barrel. Its 9¼-inch chromed blade would look handsome on the parade ground with the Rasheed held at shoulder arms by garitroopers, but combat troops would find little use for this fragile appendage.

Back to more important matters, like the bolt group. The massive bolt carrier rides on rails milled into the receiver's inner walls. The bolt itself hangs within and under the carrier. In the battery position, the rear end of the bolt body drops down into a recess at the bottom of the receiver where it butts against a locking shoulder. When the bolt carrier

commences its rearward motion it goes through approximately 5/16-inch of free travel before lifting the bolt out of the locking recess, thus permitting pressure to drop to a safe level. A spring-loaded firing pin is pinned in place. The extractor claw is retained by a flat steel spring. A hole on top of the bolt carrier accommodates the driving springs. There are three recoil springs. The main spring is 7¾ inches long. Its guide rod is threaded to a hole at the rear of the sheet-metal receiver cover which rides on rails milled on the outside walls of the receiver. Two 3.5-inch springs, attached to each end of a 2-inch guide rod, lie nested within the main spring. A guide for SKS stripper clips has been attached to the front of the receiver cover. Rearward travel of the bolt carrier ends against a bolt stop sitting on the receiver which contains the safety lever and shaft.

The trigger mechanism is quite simple. Pulling back on the trigger drives the trigger bar forward and it, in turn, rotates the sear backward on its axis pin releasing it from a notch at the end of the hammer. The spring-loaded hammer, with a hard chromed face, is then free to rotate forward on its axis pin to strike the firing pin. The spring-loaded trigger bar is rotated down and out of engagement with the sear until it is released at the final moment when the bolt is locked and the auto safety sear's lever swings upward, relieving its downward pressure on the trigger bar. After taking up the slack, the trigger pull weight on my specimen is a fairly clean 4 pounds. An unnecessarily complex magazine latch release of the flapper type is attached to the trigger housing.



**Swedish Ljungmann rifle with its bastard child, the Egyptian Rasheed carbine.**

A 10-round detachable staggered box-type magazine is standard issue. Of all sheet-metal construction, the curved magazine is more substantial than required and not easy to field-strip. It is also difficult to remove from the magazine well. The magazine latch release must first be folded rearward and then shoved forward to drop the magazine. I prefer to charge the magazine while it remains in the carbine by means of the clip guide on the receiver cover. Be advised, however, that SKS stripper clips are less than satisfactory as a loading method, especially the last three or four rounds.

All of this is housed in a wood stock exhibiting an astounding lack of quality. Its orange-crate wood has been shaped and only partially smoothed by what appears to have been a large and very coarse bastard file. Knotholes have been crudely filled with wood putty and the whole affair, including the handguard, brushed with a dark stain and then varnished. Most of those imported to the U.S. have stocks refinished by the Egyptians with all arsenal cartouches removed in the process. Wood-to-metal fit, as might be expected, is

atrocious. The rear sling swivel is mounted toward the bottom of the stock, but offset to the left. A bent steel rod, welded to the front barrel band, serves as the front sling swivel. I have never seen an issue sling for this weapon. There is no butt trap for storage, nor is any cleaning rod attached.

Disassembly begins as with the Ljungmann. First, remove the magazine and clear the weapon. Place the safety lever in the center position (left is safe, right is fire — there are no markings). Cock the hammer and slide the receiver cover forward enough to clear the bolt stop. Pull the bolt stop straight up and out. The receiver cover, recoil springs, guide rods, bolt carrier and bolt can then be withdrawn from the rear. Remove the three screws in the trigger housing and pull the trigger mechanism down out of the bottom of the stock. Remove the two screws on the front barrel band, slide the band forward and lift off the handguard. The barreled action may then be separated from the stock.

Unscrew and remove the gas plug. No further disassembly is required. After cleaning, lightly lubricate all the metal parts, except the interior of the gas system, and reassemble in the reverse order. Make certain the gas plug has been replaced so as to pass the maximum amount of gas into the gas tube.

You'll need every molecule of gas you can get. Using 500 rounds of assorted PRC (arsenal 71, 1983 manufacture), and my own reloads with PRC Berdan primed cases and 21.0 grains of Czech Vz52 powder propelling the Czech Vz52 130-grain jacketed boat-tail bullet, the Rasheed couldn't fire 10 rounds without a stoppage. Most prevalent was the failure to go into complete battery (thank God for the auto safety sear!). Since we had maximum gas flow, the only explanation is weak driving springs. My supposition is that all of the small lot of Rasheeds manufactured possess this defect. Before it could be corrected by stronger springs, Egypt was receiving substantial quantities of the Kalashnikov rifle from the Soviet Union and shortly thereafter began manufacture of a Russian AKM copy at the Maadi facility. The semiautomatic-only Rasheed was simply lost in the shuffle and totally forgotten. All Third World countries want to rock 'n' roll like the big boys they so desperately ape.

King of the gun-spring mountain is Walt Wolff (Wolff Spring Co., Dept. SOF, P.O., Box 232, Ardmore, PA 19003-0232). Walt can probably replace even moribund Rasheed recoil springs. He'll be hearing from me shortly. Try him for any firearm spring problem — ordinary or

**RIGHT (from top to bottom): Rasheed gas system: stainless-steel gas tube threaded to gas block and adjustable gas plug with its ratchet washer.**

**Rasheed trigger mechanism with bolt top that contains safety lever and shaft which blocks the trigger.**

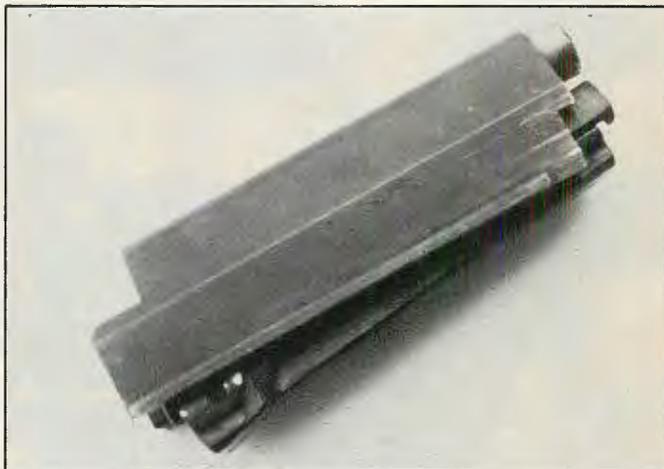
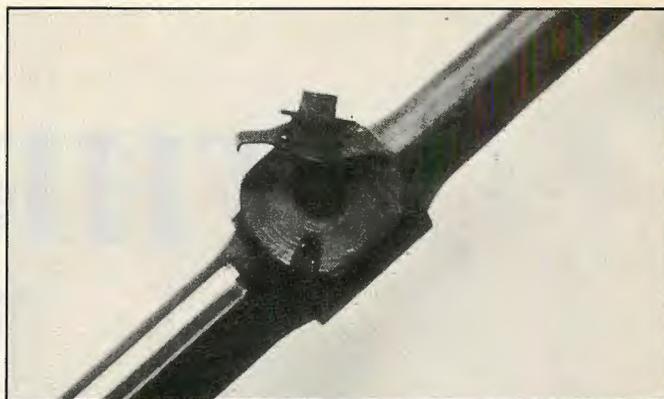
**Rasheed bolt carrier and bolt body. Bolt is shown in the dropped — locked — position.**

**Rasheed folding bayonet — in the SKS style.**

offbeat. Walt helped develop the M2 selective-fire version of the .30 M1 Carbine during World War II and is certainly not a *novillero* when it comes to rattle guns.

Ejection varies from a dribble at your feet to 20 feet to the front and right. Stove-pipe stoppages are not uncommon occurrences either. Accuracy potential is of the ComBloc variety, four to six MOA depending on ammunition. Felt recoil, as one could expect with an eight-pound, 12-ounce 7.62x39mm carbine, is next to non-existent. Hit probability, at ranges under 300 meters, is fairly high — when the weapon is functioning.

There are, to my knowledge, only 75 Rasheeds in the U.S., brought in with an equal number of Hakim rifles. It is not anticipated that any more will be imported. Their current collector value is thus quite high — about \$750 each. They have, in my opinion, no user value whatever. I would no more wish to charge into the flames with a Rasheed than a Breda PG assault rifle (7x57mm — made for Costa Rica), a Chauchat or any Italian machine gun of WWII vintage. Like these disasters, the Rasheed will never get more than a feeble footnote in the history of military small arms. ☒



# THREE-GUN MATCH

## Running and Gunning for \$60 Grand

by SOF Staff



ABOVE: J. Michael Plaxco, center, with RKB and Convention Director Bill Brooks, won first place, sponsored by Springfield Armory.



LEFT: Bill Rogers being congratulated by SOF Publisher Bob Brown on behalf of Sturm, Ruger & Co. for his second-place finish. Rogers' firm, Rogers Holster Co., Division of Safariland Ltd., sponsored prize for top pistol competitor.

**R**AIN. Cold rain. It almost never rains in Las Vegas, and it's seldom chilly. Not that it matters in this blazing neon oasis of indoor pleasure palaces, a piece of gaudy costume jewelry set in the midst of empty desert mountains. But Mother Nature beat all the odds when the 6th Annual *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun International Combat Shooting

Match came to town last September.

You know it's not nice to fool with Mother Nature. But you *can* ignore her if you put your mind to it. So despite the drizzle, she failed to dampen the gung-ho gusto of 161 shootists who went running and gunning for 60 grand in cash and prizes at a specially prepared combat assault course at the Desert Sportsman Rifle and Pistol Club near Red Rock Canyon.

Unlike during the 1984 shoot-out, J. Michael Plaxco would not be denied in 1985. He coolly gunned his way through the shotgun, rifle and pistol phases to win \$10,000 and a first-place trophy, courtesy of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine. Unlike the previous year, there were no surprise finishes. Plaxco set the pace throughout most of the match as he chalked up solid scores in five of the six stages of competition, according to match director Michael J. Horne. In only one of the six stages did Plaxco turn in what Horne described as a "marginal" performance. Plaxco fell about 10 or 15 seconds off the winning pace on the shotgun assault course — the same segment that cost him a first-place win a year earlier.

It was in this same stage in the 1984 match that John Shaw surged from the pack to surpass a well-established Plaxco lead by blistering the shotgun assault course. SOF's shotgun assault courses traditionally are fast and furious. The designer of the 1984 course, John Satterwhite of H&K (well-known for his own shotgun expertise), predicted that the maximum possible score in that stage would be 200. Shaw's amazing shotgunning won him 242 points in 1984, snatching victory at the last moment from Plaxco's grasp.

No one could catch Plaxco in 1985, however. He led in the two rifle stages (earning him an extra \$1,000 from Springfield Armory as the top competitor with that weapon) and remained near enough first place in the pistol and shotgun stages to take top slot.



**TOP:** Robert Leatham, center, won fifth place overall and top shotgunner. He is being congratulated by Dick Swann of Atlantic Research & Marketing.

**BELOW LEFT:** J.R. Able, left, a Marine who won honors for top military shooter, is congratulated by Roy Riddle of Military Armaments Corp., which sponsored that prize.

**ABOVE:** Larry Besplug, a Canadian who won top foreign competitor, is awarded prize by Mrs. Allen Kerr, representing MilArms Ltd.

**BELOW:** Lee Souter, top police shooter, with prize sponsored by *Combat Handguns* Magazine.





Match sponsor Al Mar congratulates top female competitor Diane Lamb.



John Satterwhite represented H&K, which sponsored third-place prize of \$2,000.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Run and gun was the way to win the Three-Gun International.



Like every year, the match courses are changed and kept secret until the day before the shooting starts. The most popular course for spectators and competitors in 1985, according to comments heard by Horne, was the pistol assault course designed by Dave Vining. Mr. Vining's props were particularly outstanding, Horne said.

But what grabbed every competitor's attention on Vining's assault course was the required use of the Beretta 92SB-F (U.S. M9), the Pentagon's choice for the new 9mm military service pistol. Each competitor was issued the pistol, 40 rounds of ammo, three magazines and the Bianchi military flap-style holster, the same rig being bought by the Department of Defense. Some tech reps were heard to complain that their companies had not been invited to furnish pistols for this portion of the match. They apparently missed the point that the 92SB-F was selected precisely because it won fiercely fought competition for the lucrative Pentagon contract.

One of the biggest differences between 1984 and 1985 was the expanded format, from four stages — two shotgun stages and one each for rifle and pistol — to six stages, two for each weapon. Another was use of the 92SB-F, a change that at first caused some grumbling among competitors, who later said they ended up enjoying that match segment the most.

Another change was the scoring system. The 1984 match judges used a modified Comstock scoring method in which target scores were divided by time. Then scores for some stages were multiplied by a match factor to adjust discrepancies between competition with various weapons. Horne pointed out that this match factor sometimes exaggerated the differences between, say, first and second place.

The 1985 match used a ranking system Horne said he prefers. Each of the six stages were ranked. At the most basic level of understanding, for instance, if a competitor won first place in each of the six stages (highly unlikely) he or she would receive a score of six. If someone scored first, second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth place in each stage, the aggregate score would be 21. It's not quite that simple, though, Horne said. For instance, the rifle match had to be scored so that it was equal in importance to scores from the other two weapons combined because, as a match simulating combat conditions, the rifle is considered the most important weapon of the three.

Horne said he felt like the ranking system would require a competitor to consistently perform near the top in all stages to win overall. This would help avoid scoring phenomena in which one person might score so far ahead of other competitors in one or two specialized stages (such as can happen when using a match factor to extrapolate scores from individual stages), while getting mediocre scores in other stages and still winning overall.

Plaxco was trailed closely by second-place winner overall, William H. Rogers,



Beretta U.S.A. rep Warren Barron. Beretta sponsored sixth-place prize and award for top shotgunner.



ABOVE: Omega editor Metzger blazed away with a national-class pack, as really big-bores blasted the desert (BELOW).



"Just send a lawyer: The guns and money are already here."

## SOF THREE-GUN MATCH

CONTESTANT	PRIZE	SPONSOR
1st Place J. Michael Plaxco	\$10,000	<i>Soldier of Fortune</i> , P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306
2nd Place Bill Rogers	\$3,000 & Mini-14	Sturm, Ruger & Company, 98 Lacey Place, Southport, CT 06490
3rd Place Joe Hamilton	\$2,000 & HK 91	Heckler & Koch, 14601 Lee Rd., Chantilly, VA 22021
4th Place Lee Souter	\$1,500 & S&W M645	SOF/Smith & Wesson, 2100 Roosevelt Ave., Springfield, MA 01101
5th Place Robert Leatham	\$900 & Beretta 92SB Pistol	Atlantic Research & Marketing Systems, 230 W. Center St., West Bridgewater, MA 02379
6th Place Brian Enos	\$800 & Beretta 92SB Pistol	SOF/Beretta U.S.A., 17601 Indianhead Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607
7th Place Craig Gifford	\$700 & Beretta 92SB Pistol	SOF/Beretta U.S.A., 17601 Indianhead Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607
8th Place Ross Carter	\$600 & Beretta 92SB Pistol	SOF/Beretta U.S.A., 17601 Indianhead Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607
9th Place Tommy Teas	\$500 & Beretta 92SB Pistol	SOF/Beretta U.S.A., 17601 Indianhead Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607
10th Place Scott Seabourn	\$400 & Beretta 92SB Pistol	SOF/Beretta U.S.A., 17601 Indianhead Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607
<b>RIFLE SEGMENT</b>		
1st Place J. Michael Plaxco	\$1,000	Springfield Armory, 420 W. Main St., Geneseo, IL 61254
<b>PISTOL SEGMENT</b>		
1st Place Joe Hamilton	\$1,000	Rogers Holster Co., Division of Safariland Ltd., 1941 S. Walker Ave., Monrovia, CA 91791
<b>SHOTGUN SEGMENT</b>		
1st Place Robert Leatham	\$1,000	Beretta U.S.A., 17601 Indianhead Hwy., Accokeek, MD 20607
<b>TOP FOREIGN COMPETITOR</b>		
1st Place Larry Besplug	\$2,000	MilArms Ltd., 10922-97th St., Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5H 2M5
<b>TOP FIRST-TIME COMPETITOR</b>		
1st Place Joe Hamilton	\$1,000	<i>Combat Weapons Magazine</i> , P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306
<b>TOP MILITARY COMPETITOR</b>		
1st Place J.R. Able	\$1,000	Military Armaments Corp., P.O. Drawer 111, Lingleville, TX 76461
<b>TOP POLICE COMPETITOR</b>		
1st Place Lee Souter	\$750	<i>Combat Handguns Magazine</i> , 1115 Broadway, New York, NY 10010
<b>TOP FEMALE COMPETITOR</b>		
1st Place Diane Lamb	\$500	Al Mar Knives, 5755 SW Jean Rd., Lake Oswego, OR 97034
<b>MEDIAN AWARD (81st Place Overall)</b>		
Jeff Nelsen	Mini-14 5.56mm Rifle	Sturm, Ruger & Company, 98 Lacey Place, Southport, CT 06490

### DONORS

Beretta U.S.A.	(6) Beretta 92SB pistols	\$2,850
Hanson Cartridge Co.	10,000 rounds 9mm ammo	\$1,800
Swarovski Optik	(1) scope, (1) binoculars	\$1,200
MFA	(20) "Easy Loader" combat carrier releases for Remington M1100	\$500
Assault Systems	(3) No. RRB range bags	\$420
Buckles By Mike	(3) top three shooters buckles	\$400
Bianchi Gun Leather	(6) Gov't. Model M-12 holster belts and magazine pouches	\$400
Smith & Wesson	(1) Model 645 pistol caliber .45	\$400
Dynamit Nobel of America	(1) airgun, (2) Super H-Point	\$400
Bowen Blades	(1) handmade knife	\$375
JFS Inc.	(4) JFS Redi-Mags (\$160), (4) JFS Redi-Tac Slings (\$76), (4) Tac-Latch IIs (\$132)	\$568
D.C. Brennan Firearms, Inc.	(2) NIL-FLASHes	\$300
DeSantis Holster & Leather Goods	(7) holsters	\$252
Eagle Ltd.	shooters' medals	\$250
Wells Creek Knife & Gun Works	(1) Applegate-Fairbairn fighting knife	\$250
Aimpoint	(1) Aimpoint MKIII (\$220), (1) AR-15 mount for same (\$30)	\$250
Stackpole Books	(6) firearms books	\$202
Tru-Square Metal Products	(1) brass-plated U.V.-18 tumbler	\$200
INCO	(10) Sipo baton whips	\$200
Lowe Alpine Systems Inc.	T-Shirts, hats and briefcase	\$150
Magnum Research	(2) Galil rifle cases	\$150
Fiberpro Gun Stocks	(1) Kevlar-Graphite stock	\$150
Class-3 Airguns	(1) HKMP5 airgun, (1) paint cartridge	\$150
Centaur Systems	(1) Quadra-Lok Drop-in Match Barrel System	\$145
Brigade Quartermaster	(1) UZI battle harness (\$100), (1) woolly pully (\$42)	\$142
Specialty Products	"Holirein" Mini-14 conversion kit	\$130
CO MO Specialties	(4) shoulder holsters .45 ACP	\$100
The Leather Arsenal	(1) 12-gauge Five Pac (\$20), (1) 12-gauge Four Pac (\$20), (1) Insider Holster (\$30), (1) Insider Mag Pouch (\$10), (1) Single Mag Pouch (\$20)	\$100
Yurika Foods	(1) food assortment	\$100
Magnaport International	(1) gift certificate	\$100
J.R. Stupero	(1) blowgun	\$100
Tracy & Page Inc.	(1) practice karate target	\$90
Jones Optical	(2) hats (\$14), (2) glasses (\$26), (2) goggles (\$35)	\$75
Spyderco	(1) knife	\$50
Combat Glasses	(1) combat glasses	\$50
Paracombatives Ltd.	(1) Ju-jo Self-Defense Device (\$14), (2) Ju-jo Knife Plugs with manuals (\$28)	\$42
HKS Products Inc.	(6) TenA speedloaders	\$40
Alcan Wholesalers	(1) box exploding targets	\$25
Roger-That Inc.	(2) T-Shirts	\$15
Blue Mountain Graphics	(2) T-Shirts	\$15
RHS Enterprises	(1) manual	\$15

who carted off three grand and a Mini-14 put up by Sturm, Ruger & Company. Ironically, Rogers' firm — Rogers Holster Company, a division of Safariland Ltd. — sponsored the \$1,000 bonus prize for the top pistol competitor, which was won by Joe Hamilton.

Hamilton also managed to nail down third place overall. For that distinction he won another \$2,000 and an HK 91. Sponsor for the third-place prize was — who else — Heckler & Koch Inc. If the three grand and brand-new assault rifle weren't enough for Joe to take home to Mama, he bagged the Tyro Award — another thousand bucks — for being the top first-time SOF match competitor. He might have been an FNG to the SOF Three-Gun Match, but nobody who saw him shoot was giving Hamilton any grief about being a newbie.

Lee Souter was another multiple match winner. He won \$1,500 and an S&W M645 from Smith & Wesson for winning fourth place overall. He picked up another \$750 from *Combat Handguns Magazine* for being the top-ranked law enforcement competitor.

Robert Leatham followed Souter by winning fifth place overall, a \$900 cash award from Atlantic Research & Marketing Systems and a Beretta 92SB-F pistol provided by Beretta U.S.A. Leatham won another \$1,000 from Beretta U.S.A. for taking top honors in the shotgun competition.

An active duty Marine, J.R. Able, finished 26th in a field of 161 to take the \$1,000 prize for top military competitor. Sponsor for this award was Military Armaments Corporation. Larry Besplug of Canada won the \$2,000 prize for top foreign competitor, which was sponsored by MilArms Ltd. Besplug finished in 50th place.

Jeff Nelsen finished 81st overall and won the median award, a Mini-14 donated by Sturm, Ruger & Company. Diane Lamb finished in 109th place as the top female competitor. That \$500 prize was sponsored by Al Mar Knives.

Now, for those of you who had to watch from a safe distance or didn't get out to the range at all, the following is a rough, weapon-by-weapon description of the six stages of the 6th Annual *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun International Combat Shooting Match:

### SHOTGUN

"Doorway Defense," or room to room tactical target engagement, was the first of two stages in shotgun competition. Doorway Defense, run by Russ Showers, placed the competitor in a doorway with two knockdown Pepper Popper targets on one side in one "room" and three of the same type targets — one a "no-shoot" to simulate a hostage — on the other side. The competitor would engage one set of targets, shift his weapon and then engage the other set. Then the sequence would be repeated in reverse order. A penalty was assessed if the hostage target, placed between two bad guy

*Continued on page 98*



## SOF VIETNAM

# DIEN BIEN PHU DROP

Combat Correspondent Jumps  
with the Legion

Text & Photos by Howard Sochurek, Life Magazine © Time Inc.

**ABOVE:** French Foreign Legion, French army and newly integrated Vietnamese paras land in DZ. An unsuspecting Viet Minh battalion conducting field exercises fought effectively before withdrawing east across river. Few arms were abandoned and they even took time to bury their dead before retreating.

**RIGHT:** Wrapped in canopy silk, three Legion paras are buried while troops from Gen. Gilles' Headquarters Company jump in on the second day of operation.



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## COMBAT CORRESPONDENT

During World War II Lieutenant Howard Sochurek commanded the 3234th Signal Photo Detachment and made three first wave combat landings on beaches in the Philippines and on Okinawa. He later became a photo officer for General MacArthur in Tokyo. In 1950, he joined Life Magazine as a staff photographer, making his first combat jump behind enemy lines in Korea in October 1950 with the 187th Regimental Combat Team at Sukchon (north of Pyongyang).

As a combat correspondent Howard Sochurek became the first American journalist to join the French forces in Dien Bien Phu on 20 November 1953. In the spring of 1954 the famous war photographer Robert Capa relieved Sochurek for one month. Sochurek heard of Capa's death on 25 May 1954 as he boarded a plane to Hanoi. Dien Bien Phu had fallen two weeks earlier on 7 May 1954.

Sochurek is still a professional photojournalist and resides in New York City.



After covering Vietnam for almost three years, I had gotten to know General René Cogny, operational commander of French Forces in Northern Vietnam, quite well. That evening, during a daily press briefing, Cogny's aide-de-camp, Captain de la Maison Rouge, pulled me aside and told me to be ready at 0500 the following morning to "accompany the general." Cogny would send a jeep and an escort officer to the Metropole Hotel where I was staying in Hanoi.

The best way to get a lead on French para activity in Hanoi was to check bordellos on Rue de Lattre or the officers' private fun club called simply "La Roseraie."

I checked out both and found them teeming with paras: some from Major Bigeard's 6th Battalion Etranger Parachutiste, others from the second battalion of the first regiment commanded by Major Jean Brechignac. They were the best in the French military and had just returned the day before from an airborne operation at Tu Le in the mountain highlands.

But by midnight curfew the last strains of "Lilly Marleine" had faded from the shabby bars and the paras were locked in their barracks to await an unknown mission.

At 0500 sharp Cogny's jeep arrived at the Metropole with a very young French-speaking escort officer. The three star license plate was covered. At 0600 we were at Gia Lam airport on the outskirts of Hanoi. There was a temporary hold on the mission and it was only much later that I was told that heavy fog covered the mountains and valley in the drop zone.

A DC-3 aircraft shuttled airborne commander General Jean Gilles to the drop

**Communist soldier with the 148th Independent Infantry Regiment winces with fear as he wriggles from hole where he was hiding.**

**T**HE 19th of November 1953 began like any other day in French Indochina. But after dinner that night I sensed something big was afoot. The war had been going badly for the French both politically on the home front where Premier Joseph Laniel was struggling to remain in power, and militarily halfway around the world. French intelligence in Hanoi had reported that the 316th Viet Minh Division was marching toward Laos and had reached Son La only 60 miles from the Laotian border.





**Aerial view of Dien Bien Phu valley looking east across Nam Yum River. Chutes from Maj. Bigeard's battalion are clustered in center clearing. Mountains surrounding valley were heavy jungle; a single road, Route 41, ran east to Son La and north to Lai Chau.**

zone at 0500. When it arrived at 0630 the DZ was completely covered. By 0700 the weather began to clear and Cogny was given a go signal. And by 0720 Operation Castor was set in motion.

At 0930 Cogny ducked from his low-slung undersized Citroen and strolled toward the requisitioned civilian air Outre-Mer C-47, whispered a destination to his pilot and jumped aboard. Of the American aid C-47s available to Cogny, 65 out of 67 were being used. In addition, he had to contract all available civilian aircraft for major missions. It was only

then that I knew our destination was Dien Bien Phu, in the Viet Minh stronghold on the border of Laos located 180 miles deep into enemy territory and 100 miles south of the Yunnan China border.

Cogny had received intelligence several days before that the 316th Viet Minh Division was on the move toward Laos. To delay their progress and organize guerrilla resistance among the T'ai tribesmen that populate the area, Cogny planned initially to drop two battalions of paras into an area known to contain the 148th Viet Minh regimental headquarters. Then he would decide whether to jump another four being held in reserve. It was a gamble. He might meet man-for-man resistance from a well-entrenched enemy.

Cogny was obviously

worried. Considering the desire of his home government to keep casualties at a minimum, I asked what would he do if he met with heavy resistance in the initial phase of the operation?

"If I lose heavily," he answered, "I will commit only two battalions and will tell them to secure a strong perimeter and defend it until they can get out. We hope the people of France will come to understand that what we are doing here may prevent World War III, that our losses here may prevent even greater losses later."

At 1055 we were circling the drop zone. Seven-thousand-foot mountains, green clad with sheer approaches and deep cut gorges, opened into a valley that was about three miles wide and eight miles long. Down below, we could see the stacks of harvested rice, the rectangular pattern of the newly harvested

paddy fields, the crosslike symbols that sprouted from every eave of the T'ai village huts.

Men were harnessing their chutes. We dropped to within fifty feet of the ground. The rattle of machine-gun fire from a Viet Minh counterattack spattered just below. The Viet Minh had surely been taken by complete surprise. They had been conducting grenade practice in full battalion strength on the airfield adjacent to the drop zone when the first wave of paras hit the silk at 1030. Clad in uniforms and camouflaged helmets of almost identical material to that of the French, they stayed and fought hard, withdrew, regrouped and counterattacked.

The first French losses were severe because of confusion caused by the

similarity of uniforms. Some French died from *coupe-coupe* [rice knife] wounds as they struggled free of their chute harnesses. Stick after stick of paras kept dropping. The Viet Minh withdrew into the chest-high elephant grass that rimmed the DZ. As we circled at a higher altitude, Cogny decided to commit his additional battalions and we headed for the rear headquarters.

At Lai Chau, 60 miles north, two American Sikorsky H-19B helicopters had just taken off with urgently needed radio equipment and as we passed in midair I was assured of a ride to the battlefield on the next available trip. In the meantime we lunched on cold chicken and champagne and met the principal chief of the T'ai Federation, Deo Van Long. Van Long was jubilant. It was clear that Cogny's desire to regain the confidence of the local T'ai people was working.

That evening at a party to celebrate the return of the French to Dien Bien Phu (which translated in T'ai means the seat of the Border County Prefecture), Deo Van Long told me how his people felt toward the enemy.

"They have nothing to teach us and nothing to

bring us. We are not interested." Van Long also told of the Viet Minh's lack of respect for the T'ai women, of the land reform program that

did not work but exacted only impossible taxation and of the constant demands on his people for coolie labor. What Deo Van Long did not tell me was that Dien Bien Phu's 13,000 inhabitants grew a million dollars of opium a year that was now a loss



**First plane into DZ was French medevac. Smoke markers show area cleared for landing by pathfinders.**

to him but a great revenue source for the Viets.

At our briefing in Lai Chau, General Cogne told me a little bit about the enemy he was confronting — the 148th Independent Infantry Regiment. The paras knew it well. They had fought the 148th at Na San, 70 miles north of Dien Bien Phu in December 1952. The battle was a stand-off. In the spring of 1953, the 148th was part of an invasion force into Laos. Now they were headquartered in Dien Bien Phu. Cogne knew that of the four battalions that made up the 148th, three of them, the 900th, 920th and 930th were out of the valley; only the 910th Battalion and regimental headquarters remained. What he did

not know until later was that a heavy weapons support company with mortars and recoilless rifles had remained to face the landing forces of Bigeard and Brechignac.

The next morning I boarded the first helicopter for Dien Bien Phu. A temporary evacuation hospital had been established on the airstrip at Lai Chau and I photographed some of the first wounded to come out. "Walking wounded" Corporal Jacques Duvigneau told me how he had been shot at with an American carbine from a 10-foot distance, had turned quickly to avoid being hit only to be jumped by a Viet Minh swinging his *coupe-coupe*. He told of how his company had intercepted an enemy courier on bicycle who had been sent with a demand to requisition 30 tons of rice for the approaching 316th Viet

Minh Division, of how the 148th headquarters had been found complete with abandoned documents and, sadly, about his 10 buddies who would jump no more.

As we landed on the airstrip amidst the discarded parachutes at Dien Bien Phu, the 10 dead were being silk-wrapped for burial. Cogne was dropping another battalion on top of us. Bodies tumbled, chutes opened and white canopies bloomed everywhere. I ran to clear the drop zone. Man after man mechanically popped from the planes. But one form accelerated faster and faster. We waited hopefully for his chute to open. The speed of the form increased then suddenly crumpled into the soft paddy stubble. Later we bowed our heads as padre George Chevallier administered the last rites to the dying para. His chute had fouled as he somersaulted headfirst

from the plane.

By now the total drop amounted to 1,800 men. We moved out to the village where men were shuttling back and forth carrying case after case of ammunition marked with a red and blue American shield. They read: "For mutual defense." I was reminded again of Cogne. "We are fighting here one part of the war against communism."

At the command post situated beneath the bamboo floor of a T'ai stilt house, Lieutenant Colonel Louis Fourcade interrogated three newly recruited T'ai guerrillas. They told of entering the nearby village of Ban Hon Let to which the Viet Minh had fled. Nearby, one-eyed para General Jean Gilles was calling for an air strike. I went over to the ex-148th headquarters and passed three Viet





Minh dead that were caught while escaping down the shore of the Nam Yum River that bordered the headquarters compound. On the way I paused to watch Chaplain Chevallier standing in a shaded clearing conducting a requiem mass for the dead and 52 wounded French Union soldiers. As he lifted the spirits of the congregation, cries of agony of a mother in labor filtered through the thatch of a nearby hut; a little later, the wails of a new T'ai citizen. The life cycle at Dien Bien Phu

was complete.

Toward evening the first trickle of villagers appeared on the opposite shore of the Nam Yum. Several hundred crossed back through waist-deep water to their homes. And as one T'ai woman passed me, she smiled and extended her hand. Cogy and chief Deo Van Long would have appreciated that smile. Back at Lai Chau the next day I chatted with Cogy while waiting for

a plane. Four little Chinese boys with open-bottomed pajamas squatted on the edge of the mountain rimmed airstrip playing a game of T'ai chess. Quipped Cogy, "Giap has the next move."

By his bold move Cogy had accomplished two things. First, he had intercepted the Viet Minh division pointed at Laos. Second, he had regained the support and confidence of the T'ai people who could help him most in conducting guerrilla-type warfare in the strategically important

**ABOVE:** The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 1st Algerian Regiment fought in Dien Bien Phu at strongpoints named Gabrielle and Isabelle. Here soldiers take wounded comrade to aid station.

**RIGHT:** U.S.-supplied H-19 removes French and Vietnamese wounded from DZ. Forty percent of original drop force were newly trained Vietnamese troops.



China-Burma-Thailand border area. In retrospect, of course, he bought time, but he also bought the eventual disaster of the entire French position in Indochina.

The long siege and final fall of the beleaguered fortress has been well-documented. I made many attempts to persuade General Cogy to let me return to the valley after the siege began. I did not succeed. But he did permit me to witness a night airdrop on 1 May 1954, a week before the fall.

So in a French DC-3 we circled the fortress at 5,000 feet as we took heavy ground fire. Then we dumped our load of 80mm mortar shells well within the perimeter. The path of tracers arched up at us from the surrounding hills. The French position was hopeless — brave men in the wrong place at the wrong time. But all who died there and those who survived will always be honored for their bravery. Dien Bien Phu will always be a symbol of that bravery to every military professional. ✕

# COCKLESHELL HEROES

## SAS Hit and Float in Mozambique

by Barbara Cole

*The Rhodesian Special Air Service operated almost exclusively across the border during the bitter 14-year bush war, undertaking deep-penetration missions against insurgents harbored inside neighboring Mozambique and Zambia. There were also missions into Botswana, and at one stage they were operating without benefit of passports in all three neighboring black territories at the same time.*

*Long before the war escalated and the whole region became their battlefield, clandestine missions across the border were undertaken by Special Air Service operators. Later, when the situation intensified, they were responsible for some of the most audacious and sensitive missions of the war.*

*By January 1977 the SAS had been operating inside Mozambique for nine years against communist-backed terrorist forces. Their continuing presence in Mozambique's northern Tete province made them prime targets, and a new method of infiltration had to be devised to deceive enemy forces already on the hunt.*

*This article, excerpted from Barbara Cole's new book, *The Elite — The Story of the Rhodesian Special Air Service* (available from SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306, \$25), shows what can happen when a little imagination is applied to the SAS motto — "Who Dares Wins."*

— The Editors

SAS A-Troop Commander, Captain Bob McKenna, knew there had to be a better way of entering Mozambique undetected. Parachute drops from Air Force Dakotas, even with the pilots' diversionary tactics, often ended up with SAS operators playing cat and mouse games with ZANLA and Frelimo troops once they were on the ground. The border areas were also watched closely, and any unidentified spoor was immediately followed up.

What they wanted was a foolproof way of outfoxing the enemy. They needed to infil-

### LIVING HISTORY

While some might think it unusual for a woman to write military history, Barbara Cole is qualified. No stranger to war and SAS operations, her 10 years in Rhodesia as a reporter for the *Rhodesia Herald*, a stint as news editor for the controversial *Zimbabwe Times*, and her work in the Rhodesian Ministry of Information kept her in the war zone.

After war's end, she gave up her career with a South African publishing company to concentrate on researching and compiling the history of the Rhodesian SAS. She tracked hundreds of SAS veterans now dispersed in many countries around the world and got them to tell their tales — a remarkable feat considering that secrecy is a way of life with SAS men.

Barbara now lives in Durban, South Africa, with her husband, Pete, himself a 10-year veteran of the Rhodesian SAS and presently an officer in Ron Reid-Daly's Transkei Defence Force. She is compiling a book on the SAS-trained Mozambique National Resistance Movement.

trate undetected, strike and melt into the night . . . then pop up elsewhere to mount another attack, with the enemy not knowing where they came from or went to — or where they were likely to hit next.

What they needed was somewhere safe to operate from, and some sort of transport to get them from one target to the next.

McKenna turned his attention to the most unlikely "base camp" in Mozambique — giant Lake Cabora Bassa, one of the largest manmade lakes in the world, straddling northwest Tete Province. At 155 miles long and 31 wide, the lake was an ideal hiding place for SAS teams who could base up on

shore or one of the rocky islands during the day, then hit the terrors on their own territory at night.

The plan could present enormous problems, but surely it made sense to include the lake in the overall strategy, use it as a firm base and put an SAS team on it? It did to SAS headquarters. All told, 12 A-Troop men under McKenna were selected to experience the novelty of the very first lake op on Cabora Bassa. Every man was thrilled at having been chosen, but there was apprehension about the unknown.

As always, rehearsals were the time-tested secret of success, and the canoes from which they were to live and operate for six weeks were taken out to Lake McIllwaine near Salisbury to iron out possible problems.

Space problems immediately became apparent. With two men to a canoe, there was little room left once they squeezed themselves in with their weapons and equipment, much of which had to be made waterproof to prevent it becoming useless. Resupply — food, ammunition, canoe spares, explosives — would be airdropped by Dakota, and daily radio contact would be made with SAS HQ back in Salisbury.

On 17 January the team was ready. Men, canoes and other stores moved by truck northwest from Salisbury to a point on the Musengezi River, their southeastern entry point into Lake Cabora Bassa.

A final six-kilometer cross-country ride through the bush brought them to a lonely spot at the river's edge. They climbed from the truck, more than just a little hot, tired and still, and quickly donned their regalia of war — green terrorist-type uniforms and the usual assortment of AKs, FNPs, RPDs, and an RPG-7 rocket launcher. Each man also carried a pistol in a shoulder holster so he would still be armed should his canoe capsize.

It was 1800 and still light when they stepped into their heavily laden canoes.

The red half-ball of the sinking sun fil-

tered through the bush at the river's edge and danced on the water as they pushed off for terrorist country. The peaceful beauty of a Rhodesian sunset was unmatched anywhere . . . and the war seemed a very long way from such a tranquil scene.

As the canoeists gently paddled along the muddy banks of the river, they passed the unmistakable shapes of crocodiles sleeping in the dying heat of the day. Softly, the paddles brushed the water as the flotilla continued on its way. Suddenly, first one, then another croc woke up, caught sight of the intruders, and dashed headlong into the river.

But they harbored no evil intentions. The crocs were only startled by the intruders and wanted to get into the safety of the muddy waters to hide from the strange new creatures in their territory.

The quiet hum of the African bush settled in around the SAS men. They were on schedule and confident. Then, disaster.

As they rounded a bend, they were whipped away, spinning and crashing into a set of rapids, hitting trees, then sinking. Canoe structures were broken, kit and equipment were soaked. There was to be no going on that night, if at all.

By 1800 the next evening, however, expedient repairs had been made, and kit had dried out during the steaming day. Radios still beamed into SAS HQ at strength fives, and the decision was made to carry on.

Only one more obstacle, a territorial hippo guarding his stretch of the river, stood in their way. After a laborious time-consuming portage around the resolute beast and further paddling through large patches of reeds, the SAS team reached its base of ops — glimmering Lake Cabora Bassa.

Navigation was difficult in the pitch-black night as they wound their way through kilometers of partially submerged mopani forest — a legacy from the huge hydroelectric dam at the eastern end of the lake — searching for a night base. By 0300 they reached land at last. Or at least mud. But it had been a long night and they were glad to be even on that muddy, smelly piece of land, surrounded by its evil-looking water.

Next day they put up bivvies for shade from the blistering sun as there was no natural shade anywhere near their base. All around was mud and desolation. Hundreds of trees reached forlornly out of the water near the shores, a reminder of the prelude days. There was no way of describing the atrocious smell of the once magnificent mopani forest now drowned and putrifying.

The sunset over the peaceful lake was incredible. And the stark surroundings and mountains, looking as if they had been chiseled from a giant slab of marble, gave the canoeists the uncanny feeling of having been suddenly transported back to the Stone Age where time stood still.

Captain McKenna established radio communications with SAS Intelligence Officer Scotty McCormack flying somewhere over Tete Province. It was reassuring to think



Thinner and shaggier, McKenna's (upper right) "Dirty Dozen" back safe in Rhodesia. Photo: Three Knights Publishing

Winged dagger of the SAS and their motto, "Who Dares Wins."



that someone was thinking of them, Bob mused. They were very conscious of being a long way from home and help, very much on their own, and if anything untoward were to happen, there would be no immediate back-up, no prompt casualty evacuation.

After an aerial resupply — which included a much-appreciated hot meal fresh from the SAS kitchens — the SAS was ready to go to war. Four operators under Colour Sergeant Lutz exchanged sandals for walking boots and were dropped on the mainland at 1715. They were to trek inland to leave a surprise on the ZANLA infiltration route snaking its way through the bush to Rhodesia.

Toward dark the following day, the men on the lake saw a green flare shoot into the night over on the mainland. It was Lutz and company, back from their landmining

foray, unable to attract the attention of the rest of the paddlers with their out-of-order radio.

Their colleagues hastened to recover them and learned that they had been forced to return barefoot to avoid leaving boot spoor on the dirt roads. After giving the team a few hours rest, they were back in their canoes by 0300 to spend a very long time crashing and maneuvering around the mopani forest.

At 0915 a loud explosion rolled across the Mozambican countryside. It could only be Lutz's landmine. "First blood to us," McKenna logged. Intercepts later reported that the 2IC (second in command) of the Mkumbura Frelimo garrison had been killed in the blast.

Within a few days, 10 of the Cockleshell Heroes left the lake on another mission. Leaving sentries to guard the camouflaged canoes, they set off to the road halfway between Mague and Daque, which even by Mozambican standards was in poor condition.

McKenna and his 2IC, Sergeant Major Pete Cole, recced a good ambush position, then showed each man his spot in the site. When everyone was satisfied where he had to go, they moved back into the bush where there was more cover and natural shade and where they could hide until a target appeared.

With weapons ready and two men on a *stag* (watch) at a time, they remained in their position among the bushes for nine hours. Finally, their wait was over. The sound of a vehicle could be heard approaching.

The team raced to their prearranged positions and watched as a new Land Rover bumped its way down the road. In the bushes the 10 blackened-up men waited expectantly, every index finger curled around the trigger.

McKenna and Cole were to initiate by opening fire. Their FNs were fitted with Trilux scopes, making their targets look that much closer. They could not miss at that range and as the truck drew level, Bob picked off the driver and Pete shot the other passenger.

The others joined in immediately. There was a roar from the SAS weapons . . . and the Land Rover hurtled off the road and crashed headlong into the bushes with bodies being flung off the back as rounds slammed into them. The ambushers moved forward, cautiously covering each other and checked out the occupants of the vehicle. All were dead or dying.

There had been 10 altogether — three in the cab and seven in the back. Two had been fully kitted out in Frelimo gear, and the rest wore an assortment of Frelimo boots, shirts and trousers. One man was later identified as ZANLA.

The SAS men recovered enough small-arms ammo to replenish their RPD belts, and an assortment of documents. With some difficulty they managed to burn the shot-up Land Rover, and left the bodies lying where they fell.

The ambush party was moving fast, leaving a trail of footprints in the dirt track. Pete Cole was tasked to booby trap the spoor with the most basic of explosive devices: two grenades, pins pulled, placed in empty tins with tripwires extending across the trail. It was not the most sophisticated method, but it was a simple and effective means of discouraging the enemy from following up. As McKenna was to comment in his log: "It's easy being a terrorist."

By now the team had spent almost two weeks on the lake, and so far there had been no indication that the terrors had any idea of who or where they were. There had been no follow-up activity, but to play it safe McKenna decided to stir things up on the northern shore for awhile.

After the desolation, shallow stretches and foul water of the southern side, they were delighted to find the northern bank grassy, the water clear and altogether pleasant.

The target chosen was a small Frelimo base next to Nhende village about five miles north of the lake, and, as they were due to be resupplied with ammunition, landmines and rockets the following night, they could afford to expend a fair amount of ammunition on the attack.

McKenna gave his orders, and all 12 men set off from their lakeside base at 1730. They moved through the thick thorny bush toward a dirt road, and Colour Sergeant Lutz had the unenviable task of walking in front, getting his hands, arms and clothes torn as he led the way. Once they hit the dirt road that ran from the lake to the barracks town, the going was easy.

En route they laid a landmine in a puddle in the road, and soon after they arrived at the bottom of an airstrip on the outskirts of the Frelimo camp. It was now 2100.

McKenna, Cole and Lutz got within 100 meters of the barracks and studied the area with their nightscopes and binoculars. Fifteen minutes later they had made their combat appreciation and returned to the others.

They were to split into three groups of four and it was 2200 when the teams advanced toward their various firing positions



SAS operators relax during the day in preparation for nighttime operations on the Mozambique mainland. Photo: Three Knights Publishing

American SAS operator Dick Biederman keeps watch from one of the many islands on Lake Cabora Bassa. Biederman later became one of five Americans to die during the Rhodesian war. Photo: Three Knights Publishing



80 meters from the barracks. Minutes later, McKenna initiated the attack.

An RPG-7 rocket slammed into one of the buildings followed by a hail of small-arms fire directed into windows and vehicles, and rifle grenades were fired over the barracks into the courtyard beyond.

But there was no return fire. Nothing moved, no dogs barked — just silence.

When all the rifle grenades had been expended, the three group commanders heaved white phosphorus grenades at the main barracks. Then, having caused enough commotion for one night, they withdrew behind the smokescreen.

They had to be on their way before Frelimo rounded up their men and gave chase, and they still had an eight-kilometer walk to where they had hidden their canoes.

As they struggled over the boulders near the lake's edge, shots rang out from the direction of the barracks — the only appar-

ent reaction from the enemy. It was pitch-black and the terrain appalling, so the SAS men holed up until daybreak before recovering to the lake in their canoes.

They paddled to a small rocky island well away from the shoreline to base for the day. The weather turned sour and a torrential rainfall soaked them, but nothing could dampen their spirits as they heard the landmine in the puddle go off. As they watched the smoke and dust billow into the air, they wondered what and who had hit it.

The weather cleared long enough for another nighttime aerial resupply, and the boatmen spent the next day patching canoes and distributing fresh stores and ammunition. As usual they were were out on the lake again that night, and the following night they experienced one of the worst storms of the trip.

They tried rafting up in a small group of trees but the waves were far too big and began throwing them dangerously close to the trees. The storm showed no sign of abating. The troops made a hair-raising dash to a more sheltered spot along the shoreline, waiting for the lake to vent its fury. Bad weather carried over into daylight, and the SAS troopers were forced to remain in hiding.

The weather was certainly controlling this op.

Next day, Pete Cole and six troopers were briefed on a mine-laying operation to take place at a ZANLA infiltration route south of the lake. They spent most of the day preparing their equipment and landmines, and late that afternoon changed into their walking boots, blackened-up, and were ferried back to the southern shore.

The team pushed through thick bush under a moonless sky, and nine hours later laid up to wait for daylight to come and go. Three and a half more hours that night put them at the target.

It was a dirt road near a crossroad, and there was plenty of vehicle spoor. Fresh boot patterns told that a Frelimo patrol had recently walked toward the crossroad, then returned. But the coast was clear, and they

set to work immediately.

The six men had the mine-laying drill down pat. They selected a place to lay the mine and put down a poncho to avoid leaving spoor. With early warning sentries posted on both sides of the road the others prepared the mines, began digging, collected topsoil in a bag, and put anti-lift devices on the mines. All except one man moved away: He armed the mines, filled up the holes with soil, and removed any telltale traces of their presence.

With a last satisfied look at their handiwork, the team moved back to the lake and their island retreat for a well-deserved rest.

It was now three weeks since they had left Rhodesia. The team was almost at the eastern end of the lake and McKenna told them they would be starting west.

The next task was to be a vehicle ambush some 15 kilometers east of Daque, another Frelimo garrison town on the southern shore. Leaving two sentries to guard the canoes, the others started another long difficult approach march.

Even at night the weather was as hot as hell and they had to add salt to their water to prevent heat fatigue. The availability of water would in fact determine how long the ambush position could be manned.

They reached the target area, and a small group went forward to plant a landmine in the road which would assist the ambush. After the camouflaging process was completed, they rejoined the remainder of the team at the ambush position and settled in to wait.

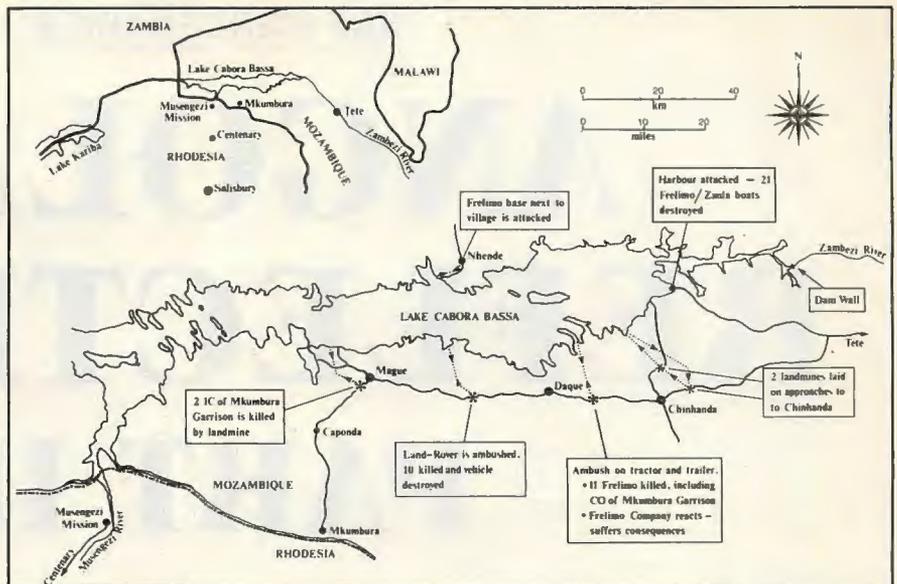
And it was not a pleasant wait. The heat was nearly unbearable, there was little water, and swarms of mopani flies — tiny black flies the size of a matchhead — drove men crazy in the bush. Flies flew in clouds, settling and walking in the team's hair, ears, eyes and mouths and up their noses. The more that were killed, the more arrived, attracted no doubt by the strange smell the flies give off when swatted.

The only traffic all day was an African on a bicycle, and the next day the ambushers waited in vain for a vehicle to drive into their trap. Then the water ran out altogether, and McKenna decided they would stay put until the end of the day. If nothing happened by then, the ambush would be called off.

Forty minutes before deadline, they heard the unmistakable sound of a vehicle. As they moved into action and took up firing positions, a tractor with a trailer came into sight, bearing 12 Frelimo straight for the killing zone.

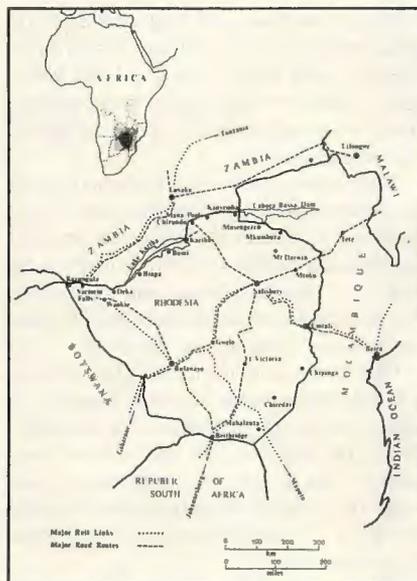
Somehow, both trailer and tractor missed the SAS landmine, but there was to be no escape for Frelimo. Ten Rhodesian weapons were already trained on them and within seconds, rounds from McKenna's and Cole's rifles had killed the driver; the others opened up from a range of 20 meters. The victims didn't stand a chance.

By the time the shooting stopped, 11 Frelimo lay dead, and one wounded man had escaped. The tractor was still ticking over, and its trailer was full of mortar bombs,



**Mozambique's Lake Cabora Bassa, base of operations for SAS hit-and-float raids against Mugabe's ZANLA terrorists and Machel's Frelimo army. Map: Dave Arkwright, SAS**

**Rhodesia, her neighbors and her position in Africa. Map: Dave Arkwright, SAS**



**Their successful six-week mission at an end, SAS Cockleshell Heroes prepare a landing zone for uplift back to Rhodesia. Photo: Three Knights Publishing**

stick grenades, boxes of small-arms ammo, a Russian mine detector and 11 AK-47s.

They were reluctant to destroy a perfectly good tractor, but they obviously couldn't take it with them. A small charge on the engine soon sent it the hard way. AK barrels were bent against trees and other gear rendered useless, and pulled-pin grenade booby traps were set.

Recovered documents indicated that one of their victims had been the new CO of the Frelimo base at Mkwambura and he had been carrying new radio codes, frequencies and call signs for the whole of Tete Province: vital intelligence the Rhodesians would surely use to their advantage.

A hard hump put them back on the lake once again. The next day the dull thud of an explosion in the distance indicated the success of the landmine but it was several weeks before the canoeists heard the details.

The wounded survivor made it to a nearby Frelimo base with a breathless account of the ambush, and a company of Frelimo was sent out to recover the bodies and tractor. A booby-trapped body was picked up, and three Frelimo were wounded. A new tractor and trailer were sent out to pick up the dead and wounded; on its return journey, the trailer detonated the SAS landmine, causing more casualties and flinging the pile of dead bodies in all directions.

After that, Frelimo lost all interest in the affair. The wounded were helped back to base but the bodies were abandoned.

Back on their island, some men were starting to feel run down and weight loss was evident. SAS men were low on supplies and some had already eaten their last food.

SGM Cole wrote in his log: "The operation has now turned into a survival exercise. We spent all morning catching fish ... which satisfied everyone. Despite lack of food, morale is still high ..."

They were now on their way back home. It was almost beyond belief that in six weeks they had not paddled for a single night where

*Continued on page 101*

# ANGOLAN REFLECTIONS PART II

## Seven Years in Prison

by Gary Acker

*Gary Acker had been lied to, cheated out of much of his Marine Corps savings and dumped in the middle of a war his side was losing. Among running native troops, lunatic officers and Cubans beating the bush for all of them, Acker and the rest of the tiny band of mercenaries had hardly a chance. Things fell apart when his patrol ran into a heavily armed Cuban column and Acker began a mercenary's nightmare — seven years in a Third World jail.*

I arrived at Cadeia de São Paulo prison in Luanda at the end of February. When the Cuban comandante took me into my cell he told me no communication was allowed — no talking, whistling, singing, or humming. Just sit and think. But the solitary confinement cells lined the corridor and you could hear everything. I had a small hole in my cell wall and I tried to communicate with the guy next to me. He wouldn't respond. He thought I was a Cuban.

Initially, I was interrogated by the Cubans in a small cell in the back of the prison. Every day I was taken from my cell by a Walther P-38-slinging black Cuban who let me use his right shoulder for balance. Wounded and barefoot, I hopped through the courtyard which was strewn with rubble, debris and broken glass, around the side of the kitchen and mess hall to a small steel door. He opened the door and shoved me through. I landed in front of another Cuban with an AK pointed at my head.

A wall, a Cuban with an AK, guards all around. I'm going to be executed.

But they took me around the corner to the

Cuban comandante with a tape recorder. He asked me questions about my background, where I came from, what I did and why I came. I told him the truth. There was no point in making up stories. I had nothing to defend and protect.

The comandante tried to be fatherly to all the prisoners at first. When that didn't work many were threatened. When one prisoner swore at an Angolan they threatened to have him shot. But the Cubans ran the prison. Angolans held few leadership positions and we had very little respect for them.

I did have a lot of respect for Helder Neto, a bearded Portuguese Angolan who was in charge of all interrogations and investigations. He did not like the Cuban comandante, but he was very professional, and under his direction Angolans never resorted to torture. It was only after his death that they began that.

Interrogations went on for hours. My story was consistent — and the truth. I had come to Angola to fight. That was obvious, so why should I lie? I was caught with a weapon in my hands. But the Cubans wouldn't let up. They played mental games, taking you out in the middle of the night for interrogations, asking the same questions over and over again, or kicking a squawking goose down the cell block corridor while we slept.

I don't really know why they had to interrogate us so much. They had more information on all of us than we knew including service records. They had people working for them — KGB, Cuban G2 and probably some other intelligence-gathering organizations.

One time they asked me to do an inter-

view. I figured that it might get out and someone would know I was alive. I answered five sets of questions but not in order. And then they tricked me and used it at the trial. They showed the film of me answering these questions, all right, but the way they edited it, it was being used against me.

Often, they would bring people around to see us. We called it the zoo time. White people looking very much like Soviets came by and I think President Agostinho Neto came to stare once.

Lice infested the prison, the prisoners and especially my blue coveralls. Periodically they would spray our cells with DDT powder. When they did, I would turn my coveralls inside out and wipe the DDT powder off the wall, floor, bed, and then fold them up and put them on my bed. I refused to wear them. When the comandante came in, I would sit there with my crotch covered by my combat jacket. They didn't like that.

Callan was in a cell almost opposite mine and when he wanted new clothes for his men or a cigar he raised hell and banged on his door until the Cuban colonel came. He got his cigar and we got new monkey suits the next day. They treated Callan a little bit different, a little better. I hear he even got different food. Perhaps it was to pacify him.

In Angola you don't have the right to remain silent, you can't hide behind any Fifth Amendment and you're not innocent until proven guilty. You have to give a statement against yourself. And then prove your innocence.

The Cubans and Angolans sifted through all the information we had given, corrected it, rewrote it and finally it was recorded in



Angolan president, Agostinho Neto, with his white Portuguese wife. Photo: Al J. Venter

Portuguese and translated into English. We signed the original English copy of our declaration. This is the one that would count, they said, the one that would be used at the trial. But it was the Portuguese one that was used. I don't know how much difference that made.

The food wasn't too bad under the Cubans. There was always some type of soup, rice and canned Soviet meat or Japanese mackerel. We got out of our cells for three to five minutes once in a while but I exercised in my cell. After being shot, the muscle in my leg had drawn up and I had to stretch my Achilles tendon to get the movement back. And every day I'd go for a walk — three paces, turn; three paces, turn; three paces, turn.

There were no bars in my cell — just concrete, a thick steel door and two reinforced concrete windows. There was no glass to separate me from the elements. The wind blew in my cell and the rain doused me. And, of course, the mosquitos flew right in and bit me. I had a steel bed, a one-inch foam mattress, mattress cover and blanket. Since there was no toilet paper, I tore up my mattress and used that until I noticed that I was blocking up my toilet. Then I stopped and used my hand.

As time grew closer to the trial, the weather became warmer and it became dark around 1800 hours. I moved from Kevin Marchant's cell to an FNLA political commissar's cell. Fernando Costa didn't speak any English and I didn't speak any Portuguese. That's when I really started learning Portuguese.

Three months after my capture, when the interrogations were over and the documents were signed, we were given Angolan lawyers. I didn't even know who my defense counsel was except that he was an Angolan officer who wasn't interested and didn't have any questions. The trial was scheduled for 8 June. Of course, it was delayed.

Later I found out that two lawyers were coming from the United States to defend me and Daniel Gearhart — Robert Cessner and Bill Wilson in addition to our court-appointed lawyers. Three British lawyers represented the British. Gustavo Marcello Grillo was defended by an officer by the name of Marcedo who was later to turn up in the prison as a prisoner. He was implicated in the 27 May coup d'état. Callan was defended by an Angolan woman.

Finally, on 11 June we were given monkey suits, underwear, socks, Soviet-made boots, and escorted to the court in a gray Bedford truck with a cage in the back. We were handcuffed to the bench, to one another and the end man was handcuffed to the cage. Two Cuban guards were inside, two outside the locked door. So with an escort and convoy of Cuban vehicles and cars carrying armed undercover Cubans, we headed to the trail in the Bedford war wagon, as we called it.

We all sat in the courtroom with translation headsets in front of an international commission of jurists who were there to see that our rights were observed. The only one I remember was Paulette Pierson, a Belgian communist.

Television crews and reporters filled the courtroom. One of the female members of the tribunal was dozing in a corner, but other than that it was a typical communist show trial. They produced a published book with photographs of the 13 of us with biographical information in English, French and Spanish. The first four photographs in this booklet just happened to be of those who received the death penalty. The fifth photograph was of Grillo who received a sentence of 30 years. The book came out well before sentencing, and indicated the communists had it stacked from the beginning.

The trial began 11 June and lasted about two weeks. Then the court adjourned for a week for "deliberation." As they waited most of the international commission of jurists left the country. By 28 June, the day of sentencing, there were very few people in the courtroom.

Although I knew my life hung on the prosecutor's summation, nevertheless it was as boring as any three hours of my life. He put everyone to sleep. Then, suddenly, he shouted across the sleepy, nearly empty courtroom: "For all the men, women and children who have died in all the concentration camps throughout the world, I ask the death penalty."

I started laughing. What did I have to do with concentration camps during the second World War? I wasn't even born then.

"For all the people who have died in wars, I ask the death penalty." And when he finished his speech, the international commission of jurists applauded. It really made me sick.

Finally, the day of sentencing came. Callan stood right next to me, incoherent, drugged. As we listened to our sentences I looked at him and he didn't even have his headset on. When I told him that he had gotten the death sentence he didn't seem fazed at all. They were afraid that he would make a scene. They needn't have been concerned, he wasn't really there.

Danny had been expecting his sentence. I think they were all told the bad news before sentencing; some may have been told before the trial. Danny seemed to know that he was going to die and McKenzie knew he was gone. I'm sure Callan knew, too.

On 10 July 1976 Daniel Francis Gearhart, John Derek Barker, Andrew Gordon McKenzie and Costas Georgio (Callan) were executed. I saw them being taken away. That morning I had tried to instigate a hunger strike in remembrance of them. All agreed, but not all kept their word: Their

Gary Acker's FNLA membership card.



stomachs were more important than our men.

It had been Michael Weisman, a Para, who had informed on Andy McKenzie. He told the Angolans that he had participated in the Mkele Dzambo massacre and that Andy had been one of the guys who shot 14 people. There was no need to tell them all that. That evening, I heard Michael Weisman cry in his cell.

The day of the executions we had been moved to a communal cell in B block. B block was an open cell with two shower stalls, a sink, two toilets, and windows on three sides. Food was served in an ammunition can. We had plates, spoons and tin cans for mugs. My daily routine was exercising and reading the Bible. It wasn't a very exciting life. Most of the time everyone just sat on their beds and read or slept. We didn't keep track of time. Time was measured from one meal to the next.

We would get out about 10 to 15 minutes per month. They'd walk us around the courtyard. But there's not much you can do in 10 minutes. They would ration us soap to wash our bodies, clothes and plates. And when that was gone, that was it. Cigarettes were rationed also.

We devised a method of talking to the South Africans above us out the back windows. They received better treatment because they were POWs and under the care of the Cubans, not the Angolans.

We had seen the food that the South Africans got: meat sandwiches taken in on a platter, cooked bananas, potatoes, seasoned rice and bread. There were seven of them and nine of us. We asked them that if they had any food left over to send it down to us. So they tied a plastic bag to a rope made from torn mattress covers. When the guards looked away they'd lower the sack down the back of the prison wall to our window. There were more leftovers than our regular meals. It was great. But it wasn't long before we got caught.

We returned to our meager diet of rice, boiled fish heads (the guards got the bodies) or salt boiled cod and barley. Sometimes they'd give us *funj* (thick porridge made of manioc flour and water). It wasn't like the stuff you'd normally get and we refused to eat it. So I'd just roll it up in balls and throw it on the ceiling. It made good glue.

We had sing-alongs in our prison block. We'd sing a song and the South Africans would join in followed by the British and then the Cubans would tell us to shut up. We did it a couple of times. It wouldn't last that long and the guards didn't seem to mind much.

Another thing we would do was get a five-gallon can which we used as a platform with three small cans on top of it. Then we'd take wooden crates and chop them for firewood and boil water and make drinks such as orange peel tea. Sometimes we'd get packages from home so we'd have instant coffee, hot chocolate or bouillon. They caught on, but left us in peace since we weren't causing trouble.

One day Grillo got upset for some reason and banged on the door with a can. Our entire cellblock — the entire garrison — was quickly surrounded by armed Angolans. Then the director of the prison, an Angolan by the name of Ungunga, came in with a pistol in his hand and asked what the problem was. Grillo, who spoke Spanish, talked to him and they took him out. I don't know what was wrong, but he was moved to another block. Then there were only eight of us left.

As time went by there was a lot of friction among us. Fights erupted constantly. I finally tired of it all and asked to be reassigned. A couple of days later I moved into cell 14 with a UNITA soldier named John and a guy called Paiva who had been with the MPLA. John and Paiva never said a

**Aerial shot of Acker's seven-year home in Luanda. Photo courtesy of author**



word to each other.

John had walked into a mine field and stepped on a mine. It blew his legs apart. They amputated one leg completely as well as his other foot. He said at that time you couldn't tell MPLA from UNITA or FNLA because they basically wore the same uniforms — civvies mixed with Portuguese uniforms. So after he had gotten blown up, some MPLA troops went to inspect the bodies and walked into the same mine field and were killed. Finally, a smart MPLA patrol got him out of there after a warning from some villagers, and threw him in jail. They weren't sure what he was. But he stuck to the story that he was MPLA and they eventually let him go.

Around April or May 1977 I moved in with Gus in the back part of the prison. They were redoing a section, a cellblock which was called the train, putting in cement beds. We volunteered to move some of these cement beds. At least it let us get out more.

Toward the latter part of May, the Cubans needed a load of cement beds to be unloaded in the courtyard. At this point we'd become reliable menial labor and they came to us rather than the Angolans if a job needed to be done.

Everything was finally settling down to a routine that was at least bearable. But we were due for a change. A white Portuguese named Dragon told Satch and John Namick that there was going to be an attack on the prison. He knew so many details that we knew something was afoot. He was right.

On the 27 May 1977, around 0500, the shooting started. At first, I thought the guards were playing, shooting off their weapons the way they did at celebrations. I tried to go back to sleep, but I heard grenades being thrown and heavy machine-gun fire. This continued until around 0700.

I wanted to be prepared for any outcome, so I got dressed, went to the bathroom and ate a little breakfast. I knew that if the prison fell it would mean our deaths because no one in the country liked us except for UNITA or FNLA. Dragon had already told us what army was marching, and it wasn't our side. The attackers were troops of communist fractionists — pro-Soviet hardliners. And they would have stood us against the wall.

A Zairean named Rosa came into the prison screaming, "It's terrible, it's terrible. They're taking over the prison." Helder Neto, who had originally done interrogations, was one of the casualties of the coup. He was taken away by the fractionists and shot. Then they burned his body.

If that was the fate of a good Angolan, I was sure the fractionists would chop me to pieces. I had accepted the fact that I was going to die. And as I expected, they took us from our cells through the office area and around the kitchen wall corner. When I saw all the English lined up along D block wall, I knew I was doomed.

Fifteen to 20 soldiers stood in front of the wall with automatic weapons pointed directly at us. They were inserting new



**FNLA troops march to war in Northern Angola. Photo: Al J. Venter**

magazines. Without hesitation, I walked directly to the wall. Grillo started walking in the other direction but was immediately directed to the wall. Nine of us stood in front of the firing squad. I noticed an MP43/44 German assault rifle from WWII and pointed it out to the others. Nobody else cared; Gus just looked at me funny.

Malcolm McIntyre stood next to me in tears, crying, "What are they going to do, what are they going to do?"

"Medic, they're going to shoot you," I said. "What do you think they're going to do?" That didn't make him any happier — he cried more. It was obvious what was going to happen. It was foolish to cry or worry about it. In another couple of minutes we'd all be dead and there would be no more problems.

We waited and waited . . . and we patiently watched a confrontation between the leader of the assault and the commanders. The leader, a pregnant woman, wanted to kill us immediately. She had driven the lead BDRM that rammed the gates. Her officers finally convinced her to lock us up and kill us later.

Back in B block, we noticed the guards were gone. They had shed their uniforms, put on civilian clothes and run. We wouldn't see them for awhile.

When the coup finally failed, the Cubans arrived with Angolan soldiers. The Cubans

and Soviets knew about the coup, but pretty much stayed out of the way, electing to allow the problem to resolve itself. Meanwhile, the MPLA imprisoned the fractionists a few at a time.

We had expected to be shot as an indirect result of the rebellion, but we hadn't expected it to create a population problem in the prison. The MPLA were arresting their own people in droves: mainly fractionists hiding in the capital city and in the countryside. At maximum capacity our prison would hold 250 to 300 prisoners. It had been as low as 100 to 125, but after 27 May the prison community ballooned to a high of 1,000. Some one-man cells with no beds held up to 17 people. Two people were crammed into each three-by-three-foot punishment cell.

People were tortured day and night. Screams filled the dark halls.

I helped serve food to the prisoners so I knew who was disappearing and who was beaten each day. Prisoners were taken away at night for execution. They would turn out all the lights in the prison, take 10 or 12 screaming prisoners out, tie them up and throw them into a white VW ambulance. Then the guards would get together another load and herd them onto the ambulance

when it returned. There must have been three or four loads per night, every night.

At a rate of 40 to 50 executions per night, we could have expected the our crowding problem to solve itself, but the population of the prison was continually being replaced. As prisoners appeared every day it became apparent that the MPLA was no longer suppressing a rebellion: They wanted revenge. As further proof of this, the calm and orderly progress of court appearances and interrogations gave way to a pattern of casual brutality. Prisoners were beaten with rifle butts, tortured with acetylene torches. Ironically, the woman who led the attack on our prison was captured and executed before the baby was born.

I knew a guy who saw his friend arrested as a fractionist — he was framed. And I heard numerous accounts of a death camp where prisoners were naked. Men and women were supposedly sent to this death camp in a Boeing 707. I don't know if it was true, but every Angolan in the prison was convinced of it.

The camp commander's name was Mian-ga and he later came back to our prison as a prisoner. He would get up in the morning, have formation and shoot people at random. If he wasn't pleased with his food he'd shoot the cooks and pick some new ones whether they knew how to cook or not.

Our prison remained overcrowded for a

long time . . . and the killings went on. But my cellmate, John Lawlor, and I kept to ourselves and did odd jobs like washing the Soviet GAZ truck the head triggerman used to haul living and dead prisoners. We became trustees because, according to Angolan radio, we did not escape when we had the chance. Of course we would have if the odds had been in our favor.

We gained a certain amount of freedom because of the work we had been doing, but, understandably, they were hesitant to give us too much. When we wanted more time outside and protested, refusing to go back in, they didn't know what to do. They said they'd solve the problem. They solved it all right — they put John and me back in a one-man cell and kept us there. It was so small only one bed fit in the cell, so we took turns lying down.

Later, we were moved to cell 7. We got food through the little window in the door. There were no lights. We did have a South African friend who was working in the kitchen so we were able to get cooking oil for lamps. Black soot filled our noses and lungs.

We stayed in cell 7 from 1977 to 1978 when we were moved to the largest cell, cell 5, with a large number of other prisoners. John and I stayed there until August 1978. For quite a few months we weren't allowed out at all, then two to four prisoners at a time. Eventually things calmed down and we were allowed to move around a bit more freely.

I got a bad case of malaria while I was in cell 5. I thought I was going to die. For three days I was unable to eat or drink anything except for a little of water, couldn't hold anything down, had diarrhea, had hot and cold flashes and was sweating constantly. During that first onslaught of the runs I

couldn't stand — I crawled to the toilet. The malaria recurred in a milder form about once every three or four months after that.

In August 1978 we moved to G block upstairs where there was seldom any running water. John and I were to remain in G block until my release in November 1982.

We began gardening at this time. Working in the garden allowed us to move a little bit more freely. They even let us have some gardening implements — hedgeclipper, hoe, hose, watering can. It helped pass the time. Eventually I had 19 papaya trees and 23 hot pepper plants throughout the prison grounds.

While I was watering the garden one day an Angolan guard who was a traitor (he had informed on his own organization and family) rudely grabbed the hose from my hand. As an act of revenge I killed a good-sized rat that same day with a leaf stabber that we'd made and put it at his barracks doorstep. I waited for him to come back. When he returned, he asked who had put the dead rat on his doorstep.

"I put it there." He was unarmed. He took one step toward me and stopped. The Angolan communists have a thing about respect — they expect it, but they don't seem to give it. I told him that this was a gift for him; I put it there because he had not learned respect. The prison officials thought that was funny. No one really cared because this guy was a traitor.

Later that evening, the director of the prison, Ungunga, called me in. The rat was still on the doorstep, now covered in ants. He asked me what it was there for and why I had done it. I told him.

**Soviet-made Cuban tanks in the streets of Luanda have become a common sight.**  
Photo: Al J. Venter



"Well, his bed is right there," was Ungunga's reply. "But I also sleep in this barracks so I want you to pick it up. If you want problems with me, I'll give you problems. Otherwise pick it up and get rid of it."

I had no problems with Ungunga. He was always fair. So I picked up the rat and got rid of it. I was not disciplined.

From 1978 on, I contemplated escape and began preparing. Over the years I was able to make or steal knives. I also had a machete, two sets of camouflage uniforms, two sets of boots, a pack, a fishhook, arrowheads made out of pounded steel bars, a sinker, two camouflage ponchos, a small pack, canned food and can openers. I had the equipment but the problem was the political situation and opportunity.

I had opportunities to escape. If I said I didn't I would be a liar. But when these opportunities arose, I had nothing with me and the chances of success were slim. There was the time I went to the university hospital in a vehicle and walked back to the prison with one unarmed guard who didn't weigh over 100 pounds. He was a real nice guy. I could've taken him, broken him in half. But I had no contacts on the outside and a white man in the bush stands out.

Soon I began working in the mechanic area, repairing VWs and Soviet jeeps, trucks, cars and ambulances. Working on vehicles was a privilege because it got us out of our cells most of the day, working on our own. And as the political situation improved we were allowed out even more.

Once in a while I'd get visits from the Italian consulate representing the American government in Angola, communist generals from Allende's air force, or Paulette Pierson and her communist friends. I also received visits from Donald McHenry, Andrew Young's assistant, and Senator George McGovern. They just wanted to know how we were treated.

I made friends with a lot of the kids on the outside. They were very poor and didn't have any toys so they'd make trucks and cars from tin cans. Sometimes I'd steal jam and canned milk from the kitchen for them.

Don't get the idea that we got better food than people on the outside. Our food situation depended upon what the country was getting. The priority sequence was clear — the military came first and then came prisoners. Sometimes the prisons would get left-over canned or powdered milk or fresh meat (fish or chicken), but most of the time the guards would do stupid things like throw out full bags of chicken that had gone bad in their refrigerators. Rather than give it to the prisoners they'd let it rot. I saw them throw away vegetables like that. I saw them take six cases of boneless ox from Botswana, cut it up, salt it and hang it out in the back of the prison to dry. They didn't salt it well enough and it became infested with maggots. I saw them bring rotten fish to the prison for the prisoners.

But the kids that came around weren't only interested in food — they were often just curious. There was a little girl and her



**FNLA troops hoist SKSs and cry for "total war" against the communist-backed MPLA and their Cuban allies in Angola. Photo: Al J. Venter**

sister who always used to come and talk to me. My clothes were ragged and one day the little girl came with thread and needles to sew them.

I enjoyed the kids. I'd give them political lectures when they would ask, "Why did America go down to Chile and kill Allende?" I'd explain what really happened and what the rest of the world was like. The political commissar at the prison knew that I was giving political lectures to the kids. It wasn't too long afterward that they put a stop to it.

There was more to my political harping than just sermons to children. I'd often tell the commissar of the falsehoods and propaganda on Angolan radio, television and newspapers. I told him I had to straighten their growing children out and tell them the truth. I was always giving him a hard time. Anytime I could snipe at him, I would.

While I was in G block I had a dog for seven months. I raised her from a pup and "cell broke" her in three days. She reminded me of a dog I had in the States named Boots. So I called her Boots. She got better food than me most of the time and I couldn't do anything about it. She was a good dog. Finally the owner came for her and I never saw her again although I kept her plate until I was released.

During those last years I worked in the garage on the officers' personal vehicles

and on Soviet jeeps. The quality of the work of the Angolan mechanics was poor. When they tightened lugbolts they'd tighten it as much as they could by hand and then stand on it until it wouldn't go down any further. Everything was done by force.

Soviet vehicles were poorly built and their designs were worse than the craftsmanship. A GAZ truck gearshift is to the right of the driver's seat, and so far to the rear that a really short man can hardly drive it. Clutch plates were a constant problem: Springs broke out of the center and they never engaged the pressure plate correctly. Until the clutch plate was half-worn the clutch never really disengaged.

Angola only receives a shipment of replacement parts from the Soviet Union once a year. The Angolans usually exhausted their supply in the first month and then cannibalized other vehicles. Driving habits were poor so the Angolans wrecked most of them anyway.

Life was good enough during this period that we could afford to give some attention to improving working conditions. We even built a concrete ramp in the shop so we could work on the undersides of vehicles. I

mixed all the concrete myself. The prison officials brought in a cement mixer just for that job. The English prisoners would take the wheelbarrows full of cement up the ramp and dump them where the Portuguese prisoners directed. Then the Portuguese would smooth it. Eventually we built a carport with work benches.

Angolan military mechanics weren't dependable and were terrible mechanics as well. Outside the garage I was a prisoner and they were the authority. But in the garage, I was the authority. I had power because I worked on the officers' cars. But the closer I came to the time of my release the less I worked on cars. They would only call me for jobs they couldn't do.

I was finally released in November 1982 after spending seven years in prison in Luanda. I was locked up for the crime of being a mercenary. But I never considered myself a mercenary — I was a professional soldier. To me there's a difference. A mercenary has no scruples, he fights for anybody, he'll kill anybody. He robs, rapes, has no sides, no loyalties. He'll even shoot his own men if it serves his purpose. A professional soldier has political allegiances. He doesn't kill innocent civilians. He's there to do a job — he's not there for anything else. He's not there to rob or to steal. He's there to fight the enemy. ✕

## CAMPESINO HEARTS AND MINDS

Continued from page 45

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have to do is roll out of bed into your trench," said the sergeant with a smile. No one was in the trenches now, but you could bet that 25 civil defensemen would be manning them ever so alertly at night.

Most of Mendez Island's 121 citizen-soldiers were busy earning a living, while others were taking their shift patrolling the village's perimeter in squads of as many as 12 men. What particularly catches the observer's eye is the fact that the men carry their rifles at work — whether it be tilling the land, harvesting, fishing, milking the cows or anything else.

"We have plenty of volunteers," said Sergeant Majano. "What we need are arms. Right now we have 200 trained men who do not have rifles." However, the Fox of Mendez, as the Gs call Majano, has been working on this problem at the rebels' expense. Mendez Island's civil defense has regularly captured weapons from the guerrillas after repelling their attacks.

The combination of a sophisticated trench system, regular patrolling and an armed labor force has made Mendez Island one tough nut to crack. The Gs have learned this the hard way. Sergeant Majano and his men have severely bloodied them.

"We lost a lot of people when we attacked here," said seventeen-year-old Manuel, who was a six-year guerrilla veteran when he turned himself in to Sergeant Majano last Easter to start a new life in Mendez Island. "Life with the guerrillas is terrible. Many more would desert but the comandantes don't let them." Today Manuel proudly carries a G3 in the civil defense.

The last time the guerrillas attacked Mendez Island was on 17 and 18 March 1985. Yet not even guerrilla mortars, machine guns and RPGs could defeat Mendez Island's people. The brave villagers fought off the ferocious dawn and dusk assaults with the prompt support of air force helicopter gunships and A-37 Dragonfly bombers. While men as old as their late sixties and boys as young as 11 years old blasted away with their M1 carbines, G3s, hunting rifles, shotguns and pistols, women rushed them ammo and hot coffee. It was reminiscent of the American Wild West, commented one villager, except the attackers were shooting high explosives and tracer rounds instead of arrows. One villager was wounded.

"That was the last straw," said Sergeant Majano. On 19 March this wily veteran of the 1969 Salvo-Honduran "Soccer War" plus many counterinsurgency operations during his 27 years of military service set an L-shaped ambush with a half-dozen men. The guerrillas walked into it and the Fox of Mendez and his pack killed two Gs and wounded three more. One of the wounded was a 12-year-old boy the guerrillas had

forcibly recruited.

"We took him to the nearest doctor and saved him," said the sergeant. "Now he is reunited with his family." The villagers could not save one of the other wounded guerrillas, though.

"We found him the next day bleeding badly from the stomach," said Sergeant Majano. "We tried to help him but he died. All we could do was say a prayer, then bury him." The guerrillas have not bothered Mendez Island since. They fear they will lose more men if they do. And not just KIAs or WIAs. Sergeant Majano and his men have already captured 18 guerrillas, a high number for a civil defense unit in El Salvador.

Sergeant Majano and his men treat their prisoners well. This is a reason why many have reformed and returned to a peaceful civilian life. Despite being surrounded by villages where there is a lot of guerrilla sympathy, life at Mendez Island is now tranquil and Sergeant Majano's primary preoccupation is promoting sanitation and health care for the villagers.

"But we are always ready in the defense of our people," affirmed the sergeant, holding his shortened AR-15 captured from the Gs.

Mendez Island could not boast today's successful civil defense program before the arrival of Sergeant Majano as local commander 17 months ago. In fact it did not even have civil defense before 1980 and the guerrillas murdered, kidnaped and robbed villagers at will. In 1980 the army detached troops there for two years. Before withdrawing to fight guerrillas in more critical areas, the government troops trained a 15-man civil defense force. But when Sergeant Majano came to Mendez Island on 20 March 1984, he found a civil defense unit adrift without leadership. The previous local commanders were more interested in boozing and profiteering than defending the village. They paid scant attention to organizing the people or even preparing defensive positions. One local commander even tried to abandon his men during a guerrilla attack.

"We told him if he ran, we would shoot him," recalled one villager with disgust. Sergeant Majano, with the assistance of instructors from the 6th Brigade, went right to work turning Mendez Island into a brilliant example of how civil defense can work.

"It's all a question of motivation and patriotism," says the sergeant modestly.

"Everyone lives united and armed," said Pedro Alfonso Zavala, a 41-year-old farmer. "We fight for our homes, work and country." These sentiments were echoed by the 80-some villagers Sergeant Majano had gathered for me to interview on 21 August.

"We do not want communism," said Corporal José Flores, 20, the only other soldier in Mendez Island and a life-long resident whose brother was killed by the guerrillas when they attacked the village in 1983. "We have to join together or we will lose our freedom."

Eleven-year-old Manuel Antonio Cortés is not too young to be aware of the fight for

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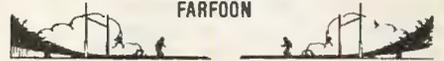
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freedom. "We await the enemy to defend  
our families," said the little boy proudly  
holding his M1 carbine.

"We're free because we're armed," said  
Manuel Antonio's 12-year-old playmate  
José Luis Basurto, who was also holding an  
M1 carbine.

Blanca Ilda Guzmán, 29, cooks for Men-  
dez Island's civil defense. The last time the  
guerrillas attacked, Blanca rushed coffee  
and ammunition to the men. "The next time  
they attack I'm going to fight with a rifle,"  
said the feisty woman who suffered a minor  
head wound in a guerrilla ambush in 1982.

In 1982, the guerrillas put a pistol to one  
young campesino's head when he refused to  
join them. "I told them I had to help support  
my family and they left," said the young  
man who is now one of 18 guards employed  
by a government agricultural cooperative in  
the village. "I couldn't sleep afterward for  
fear that they might come back. Now I sleep  
well because I have a G3."

"The civil defense of Isla de Mendez  
characterizes the best disciplined of the rest  
of the civil defense for the reason of having  
as chief a sergeant of great experience as  
Sergeant Majano," said Colonel Manuel  
Antonio Nuñez, the S-2 at the 6th Brigade  
headquarters in Usulután. "Before, the is-  
land was abandoned and the terrorists would  
enter when they desired. But with his organ-  
ization, Sergeant Majano stopped them  
from operating in such a manner and  
achieved a special mystique from his men  
with an iron discipline which has given  
positive results and which has converted the  
island into a bastion against the terrorists."

I felt safer during my three days at Men-  
dez Island than in Washington, D.C. In  
fact, it was a welcome change of pace for a  
war correspondent who spends much of his  
time humping the hills and ducking com-  
munist bullets and shrapnel. I ate a lot of  
conch, turtle eggs, fish and lizard meat. I  
sunbathed at a beautiful abandoned beach.

Still, the bloodstained ruins of nearby  
haciendas are vivid reminders of the tenacious  
war villagers have waged to defend their free-  
dom against communist tyranny. It is the cour-  
age of El Salvador's people that will keep this  
tiny republic free. ✕

rillas' fortunes have taken a turn for the  
worse. The Salvadoran armed forces and  
security forces — which have grown  
from 13,000 ill-equipped, undertrained  
troops in 1980 to a well-armed, U.S.-  
trained force of 45,000 dedicated profes-  
sionals — have driven the rebels from  
their traditional bastions and have kept  
them on the run. According to General  
Adolfo Blandon, the armed forces chief  
of staff, in the first six months of 1985  
the armed forces mounted 84 major oper-  
ations, 14 medium operations, 16  
minor operations, 12 forays of armed air  
recon, seven airmobile operations and  
27,632 patrols, resulting in guerrilla  
losses of 3,225 men — 774 KIAs, 455  
WIAs, 1,540 captured and 456 who  
turned themselves in to the government.

Government armed forces suffered  
800 casualties in this period. The gener-  
al's figures show 211 KIAs, 567 WIAs  
and 22 MIAs. The trend is down from  
1984 when government troops suffered  
over 1,800 casualties of which some 800  
were KIAs. (Improved medical attention  
and the tripling of the Salvadoran air  
force's helicopter fleet to more than 60  
choppers over the last 20 months have  
saved the lives of hundreds of soldiers.)

Today American and Salvadoran mili-  
tary sources estimate guerrilla strength at  
around 6,000 combatants. According to  
documents taken off Nidia Diaz, a guerril-  
la commander captured last April by an air  
force helicopter Hunter Squadron, FMLN  
leaders have abandoned hope for outright  
military victory. The government's  
"Permanent Offensive" has forced the  
rebels to break down from battalion-sized  
units to small squads of five to a dozen men  
dedicated to a prolonged war of economic  
sabotage, ambushes, assassinations and  
kidnapings.

The guerrillas have paid a high politi-  
cal price for their ruthless campaign.  
They have lost a lot of domestic and  
international support. At the beginning  
of this decade guerrilla support was so  
widespread they could organize demon-  
strations of tens of thousands of people  
in the capital, San Salvador. Today in-  
telligence sources estimate that the guer-  
rillas count on the support of only five to  
10 percent of the population — much of  
it coerced.

While the guerrillas have been on the  
defensive politically and militarily, the  
government has been winning support  
in-country and overseas with free elec-  
tions, social and economic reforms,  
civic action as well as a crackdown on  
right-wing death squads and abuses by  
government troops. And despite the gov-  
ernment's successes, the war will drag  
on because of Soviet support for the  
guerrillas.

In a captured guerrilla document dated  
10 November 1983, and addressed to the  
National Directorate of Nicaragua's Com-  
munist Sandinista regime (FSLN), the  
high command of the FMLN affirms:

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## TURNING THE TABLES

Communist insurrection continues to  
plague El Salvador, but the "Days of  
Crisis" when the guerrillas seriously  
threatened to topple the fledgling demo-  
cratic government of this tiny Central  
American republic in the early 1980s  
appear over. As recently as 1983 guerril-  
la forces of the Farabundo Martí National  
Liberation Front (FMLN) — at their  
peak strength of 10,000 fighters accord-  
ing to a Western diplomatic source —  
overran army garrisons and occupied  
towns of several thousand inhabitants.  
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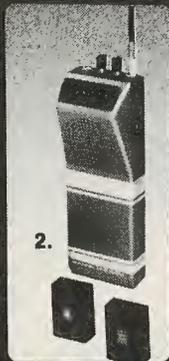
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"FSLN and FMLN are indissolubly united in defense [of] revolutionary conquests and have decided to deepen them even though it may mean clashing directly with imperialism itself."

In another captured guerrilla document dated 24 November 1983 the rebel high command writes the Sandinista National Directorate: "Given the level of our confrontation with imperialism and the puppet forces, our process requires a superior level of solidarity aid in the logistical field. We consider that the present juncture is favorable for giving audacious steps in this sense. Finally, we value to a high degree the new steps in our relationship and in the search of a superior level of coordination, that may multiply the potentiality of our two peoples, in the historic task of the defeat of imperialist intervention. Comrades of the DN (National Directorate), we are sure of the success of your work in the defense of the revolution."

According to a high-ranking guerrilla comandante who defected to the government last April, the vast majority of the rebels' weapons and ammunition have been off-loaded from small, outboard-powered boats. Intense patrolling by government troops and the Salvadoran navy have made headway in denying rebel resupply, according to Colonel Miguel Alfredo Vasconcelos, commander of the 6th Infantry Brigade in the southeastern coastal province of Usulután.

In early 1983 it had become evident to Salvadoran policy-makers that military pressure alone was not enough to defeat the insurgents. Guerrilla war is not so much a battle for territory as for the populace. By disrupting the government's ability to keep law and order as well as provide essential services, the guerrillas undermine local authority and intimidate the population whom they propagandize about the better life that joining the revolution would bring.

The combination of a beefed-up and more professional military and a drop in support for the communists among the civilian population have limited the ability of the guerrillas to continue the war at the same pitch as before. But that doesn't mean the fighting will stop anytime soon. The situation is much more complex than that. In the words of Col. Vasconcelos, "As long as the terrorists receive resupply from Cuba via Nicaragua, the war will continue." ✕

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## GREEN HELL

Continued from page 51

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nected to a trip wire and powered by a PRC-77 radio battery. The trip wire is attached to a plastic, insulating MRE spoon, which prevents the electric circuit from closing. When Juan kicks the wire the spoon is pulled, the circuit completes, the detonator pops, and the Claymore's little steel balls splatter Juan all over the jungle.

The ambush is one of the most casualty-producing weapons we have in our arsenal for a jungle environment. It worked beautifully in Vietnam for U.S. Special Forces and the Aussie and Kiwi SAS; these days it should do just fine against Juan. To get a go for this segment of their education, the squad must successfully negotiate a booby trapped jungle lane by finding and marking all of the hidden nasties and trip wires during night and day, without sustaining any casualties — within 15 minutes.

JOTC is a fun place for scout platoons, because they can use limited helicopter assets available at the center for rappelling and extraction. There is a four- to five-day scout/tracking mission conducted for scouts during which several JWB NCOs will accompany the platoon. They break up into teams and conduct zone, area and route recons, and then vertically extract by chopper for the return to Fort Sherman.

Much of the final week is occupied by an FTX (field training exercise) which is aligned closely with the unit's mission and role in combat — but as practiced in the jungle.

Along with JOTC and the other home units, Fort Sherman also hosts a periodic international Jungle Operations Conference. This year representatives from Canada and Britain, the United States, and most of the Caribbean, Central and South American countries are scheduled to attend. (Argentina, however, is still conspicuous by her absence — still sulking over the Falklands, I guess.)

The purpose of the conference is largely to compare notes on jungle training developments. All participating contingents put on displays and demonstrations of various aspects of their jungle doctrine. There are hopes that liaison will also be established with the British Jungle School in Brunei, the Australian Jungle School in Queensland, French Foreign Legion personnel, and with the New Zealand garrison in Singapore.

Over the last two years more than 20,000 U.S. combat soldiers have been jungle-trained at JOTC. The center's annual budget is only \$500,000, and this includes continuous running of the 193rd Infantry Brigade's NCO Academy. It's a cost-effective operation, and it provides troops with a unique exposure to a true tropical environment staffed with professional instructors.

Hot, steaming and wet jungles aren't my favorite places, so I wasn't heartbroken when my visit at the jungle school ended. The ride back to Panama City for my outward flight took place under the same

threatening skies as when I arrived, and the battalions of land crabs continued to crunch and stink under the truck's tires. Troops of gorged vultures still lurked alongside the road, waiting to pick up the pieces of whatever the jungle had left over for them.

But they were now just part of the scenery, something I had come to live with and expect in the jungles of Panama. I'd only been there as an observer, so I knew the troops who had run the full course would have little to worry about if they were ever thrown into jungle combat south of Texas. ✕

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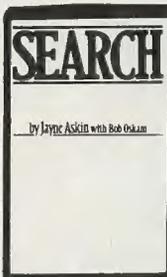


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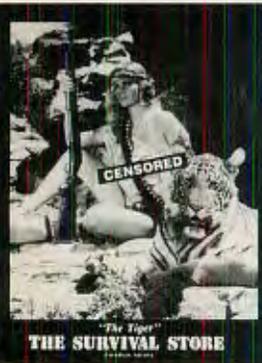
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from the JWB instructor startled me and set the light infantrymen off at a mad dash toward the first obstacle — a five-foot wall.

"Everything," emphasized Grey-stoke, "has to be done as a squad to get the soldiers to work together in a jungle environment."

Working as a team, two of the strongest men dove down into a crouch next to the base of the wall. Once the rest of the squad had bounded off their backs and effortlessly cleared the wall, the two "vaulting horses" followed their mates and quickly disappeared into the gloom of the jungle. I followed them.

Once inside the "J," it took my eyes a minute or two to adjust to a gloom after the intense brilliance of the midmorning sun. I jogged along the slick and slippery track in darkness, listening to the overpowering jungle noise. The going was not made any easier when the track began an uphill climb cut into steps and stairs by a maze of roots growing above ground level.

I caught up to the squad as they were working their way into the next obstacle — the Bushmaster. The leaders of the squad ducked under the wood and barb-wire hurdle, high-stepping as they ran the football obstacle of car tires. Then it was quickly back down on their bellies into the slimy red mud to low-crawl under the length of concertina wire obstacles. They started to bunch up at both ends of the Bushmaster as individuals made their way. Though some tasks and stages are individual efforts, each obstacle must be negotiated as a team — no individual is allowed to strike off on his own. Once the squad was all through, they were off again — flat out — through the steaming green jungle, splashing through stagnant puddles along the slippery trail toward the next hurdle.

Two wet and slime-covered telegraph poles constitute the log walk, both running at right angles over a pit that is often home to those nasty fellow travelers of the J — snakes.

Then it's off again at a dead run. Heat and humidity take their toll on the infantrymen, and the slime and ooze of the sucking red mud makes the going more than just a little bit tricky. Several soldiers lose their footing, falling hard under the weight of their equipment and the fast pace of the run.

They bunch up again upon reaching the edge of a cliff overlooking the beach, and the only way down is along the knotted rope. But for the mud smeared along it by previous squads, these grunts would surely suffer rope burns at the speed they slide down to the Caribbean shore.

"This rope down is to test their stamina and upper body strength," Greystoke said. "And courage."

Once on the beach it's off again, this

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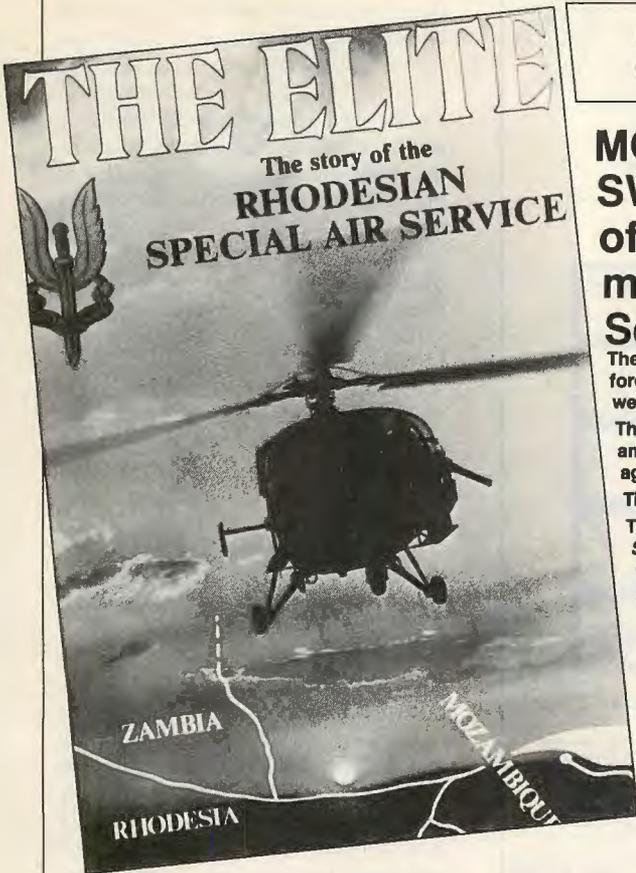
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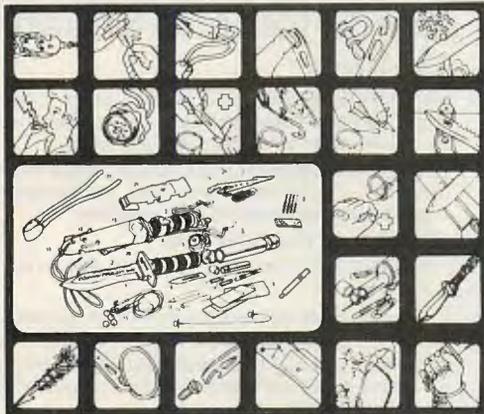
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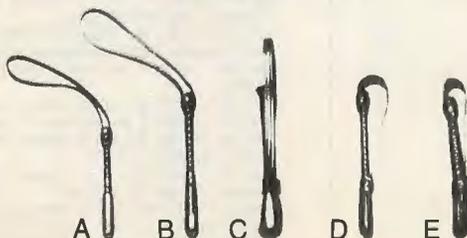
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time for the stretcher carry. They haul one of their number in a litter as they run out across the exposed coral and into the glittering shallows to dash around a small island a few yards off the beach and head back to their starting point, all the while pushing themselves as fast as the hip-high water and sandy beach will allow.

Once back at the bottom of the knotted rope they drop the litter and strike out along the wet, moss-covered rocks of the shoreline, rounding the cliffs of the headland.

Then it's up a 40-foot cargo net to the top of the cliff. Greystoke told me, "The reason for the cargo nets is to show what it's like in amphibious operations, and once again, to test upper body strength."

Once at the top troops run to the opposite side of the same headland where another 40-foot cargo net invites more pain in a descent to the coral-strewn beach. When the entire squad hits the bottom, they take off running along the coral beach and up into the jungle again.

Back in the steaming, wet, slimy undergrowth they find that the two-rope bridge is next on the agenda. By this time the troops are exhausted, soaking wet, and covered in all manner of slime and crud, cuts and bruises. The two-rope bridge is a tough obstacle as it's inevitably wet and muddy. Leading men assist the stragglers up onto the ropes from the mud puddle at the starting pole. Once the rest of the squad is up and moving forward, the leaders spring up from the sucking mud, shinny the pole and slide onto the rope — all the while shouting encouragement and pushing the others on.

It is but a short amble from where they drop exhausted from the end of the two-rope bridge to the commando crawl. This is a high, single-rope crossing, and the squad traverses the slimy rope with one wet leg hooked over it, pulling their leaden bodies hand over hand. Many soldiers, so exhausted by this time that they might as well be pulling a mountain behind them, cross very slowly, taking frequent rests. Some, unable to continue, can only dangle with hands or feet until they drop to the ground and start over.

Then there's the 34-foot ladder. Troops now have to pull themselves up, rung after greasy rung, to the top, and then in leaping bounds down the other side as quickly as possible. This obstacle is indeed a test of upper body strength and nerve in high places — especially after their trying exertions on the previous two obstacles.

As the squad stumbles painfully toward the end of the course, they encounter the low-crawl pit. The pit is 16 inches deep, filled with muddy slime and putrid water, and covered by low wire. Getting the dog-tired troops into the mud and

water is a real leadership problem for the squad leader. He must also be careful that none of his shagged-out soldiers drown in their now somewhat reduced condition. Troops force themselves into the pits, faces showing above the water as they inch their way through the slime, dodging the low wire just overhead. Following the low-crawl pit they encounter the hip-over — a series of log hurdles at between groin and waist height.

"They can't touch the logs with their hands. They have to step over each log. This really tests their leg and stomach muscles," Greystoke explained.

The hip-over is negotiated with arms up and hands grasped behind the helmet. It tests leg and abdominal muscles.

The last test for tired grunts is the six-foot wall — a foot higher than the starting wall. Troops stumble on and clear the wall, some of them dropping exhausted in the water and mud below. But they stagger up, and once the squad is all across they force themselves into a sprint to the finish line.

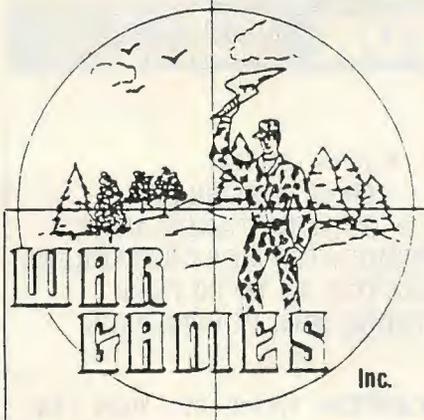
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## RENAMO

*Continued from page 57*

ity for prolonging the bloodshed in Mozambique by frantically propping up Machel when he is on his last legs — instead of calling for a negotiated cease-fire and the democratization of the country.

The American ambassador to Mozambique, Peter de Vos, has been described by a chief aide to Sen. Steven Symms (R-Idaho), who was recently in Maputo, as such an unreserved apologist for the Machel regime and so infected with the endemic State Department disease of "clientitis" that he "should be registered as a foreign agent for the Mozambique government."

Indeed, by State's continual and relentless attempts to cut deals with Soviet-backed dictators at the expense of anti-Soviet democratic freedom fighters — from trying to get the president to agree to selling out the contras if Ortega will sell out the FMLN in El Salvador, to its opposition to the repeal of the Clark Amendment (prohibiting aid to UNITA in Angola, passed in December 1975, and repealed this past June), to George Schultz's public opposition to the \$5 million in aid to the non-communist resistance in Cambodia passed this summer by Congress — *the U.S. State Department has become the single greatest obstacle to freedom from Soviet tyranny and imperialism in the world today.*

Renamo is not without blame, however,



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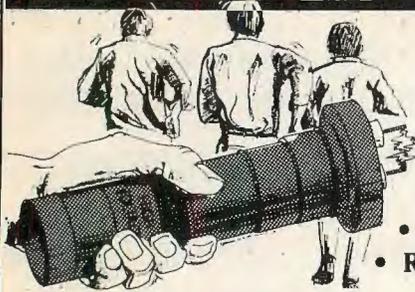
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for its failure to present a convincing message to the rest of the world. Its military effectiveness in the field is not translated to political effectiveness in the press. Angola's UNITA, for example, has a very articulate and personable representative in Washington, Jerry Chitunda, who intelligently and persuasively argues for UNITA to the press, on the Hill, and elsewhere. Renamo has no one.

Because of this, and internal conflict within Renamo's National Council, the commonly heard accusation that Renamo has no clearly stated political ideology and that its objectives are "vague" or "murky," is not effectively refuted in the media. Hopefully, the recent appointment of Artur da Fonseca as Renamo secretary for Foreign Affairs will help alleviate the problem.

Renamo's goals are explicitly put forth in a 10-point program. The document proposes a national constitution guaranteeing individual rights and freedoms to be drafted by an elected constituent assembly. It also specifies the times of free general elections, and provides for a federal form of government with each of Mozambique's 10 provinces exercising "authority over matters of mainly local or provincial importance."

Renamo's basic goal is not the seizure of power, but rather "the dissolution of all communist political, administrative, economic, social and other structures in Mozambique," and to see that a constitutional government is freely elected through a multiparty democratic system.

As Dhlakama himself explained to me via radio, Renamo has two primary objectives for Mozambique.

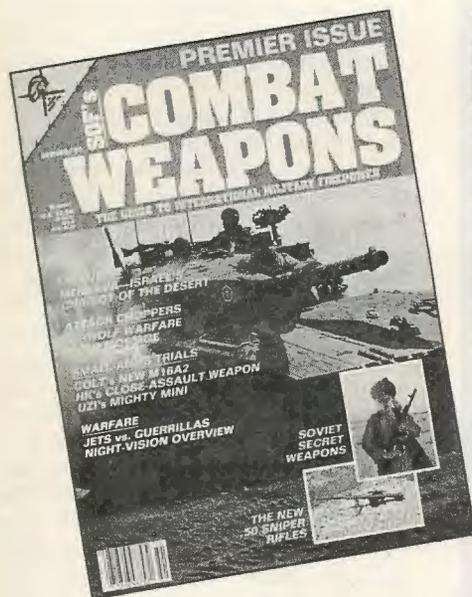
"First is to free ourselves from Soviet colonialism. The Soviet Union is the world's curse," Dhlakama said. "Second is to free ourselves from the tyranny of Marxism. There are no freedoms of any kind in Mozambique today — of religion, of speech, of the press, of assembly — none. We want to bring those freedoms to the Mozambican people. We want each Mozambican to peacefully conduct his life and earn his living as he sees fit — instead of being told his purpose in life is to work for the benefit of the State and of Samora Machel."

Today Dhlakama is close to his goal. The Frelimo regime is riven with dissension and may be falling apart. If Machel is not able to get enough Western aid and military assistance, the hardline Stalinist faction of Frelimo, led by Armando Guebuza, will most likely seize power with Soviet/East German help. Guebuza will break Nkomati and invite the ANC back in to declare guerrilla war against Pretoria, leaving Pik Botha and Chester Crocker with omelettes on their faces and their "let's make a deal with the communists" policy in ruins. A collapse of Western support for Frelimo could lead to a quick Renamo victory.

And even if Machel does get material help from the West, his army has neither the manpower — there are probably not many

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Renamo has no vehicles; everything is on foot. It's the same for Frelimo because Renamo has closed and mined all the roads. Frelimo troops can fly between airports, but most small strips are shut down and they don't have much heliborne capability.

But now it was the morning of Friday, 21 June, and I had to be back in Los Angeles by the 25th. Tuesday was not far away. The border was, however, 40 miles through the bush. I was up at first light to find warm water to wash and a meal of rice and chunks of roasted antelope waiting for me. Off at dawn with a bodyguard of a dozen heavily armed men, we covered the 40 miles in little over 12 hours. The border lay on the other side of a swamp and river that I would cross in a tiny dugout canoe. I had to wait until midnight, I was told, as the boatmen were afraid of the hippos which could easily overturn the canoe. Also, on the other side, there were hyenas which should be gone after midnight.

At midnight I said goodbye to my bodyguard, and settled into a dugout with three boatmen and an unarmed Renamo agent from the neighboring country. One man stood in front and poled, with another at the rear paddling and steering, the third in reserve. I have never encountered such hordes of mosquitos in my life crossing that swamp, not even on the Sepik River in Papua, New Guinea. Slowly and silently we glided across fields of lily pads and finally out to the river.

"Crocodiles not so bad, but hippos very dangerous," I was informed, but we were late enough so that none appeared. The night was moonless. Smearing with "deet" repellent, I lay back on my pack and watched the Southern Cross and Scorpio pirouette over the Milky Way one last time.

We reached the other side two hours later, and walked through the African darkness past enormous termite mounds standing 10-12 feet high for about an hour. We finally arrived at a small town, and slept quietly on a concrete portico near the marketplace.

We were up before first light, and by dawn had walked a few miles to the nearest train station.

"Many robbers on this road at night," my guide let me know, "but now night almost over — I think all OK." Swell.

The train ride took 10 hours to a city that had a hotel and an airport. After 36 hours of flying and layovers, I arrived at LAX Tuesday morning at 1000 — and made my speaking engagement that night.

The refrains of a Renamo song were still in my mind. Sitting around a campfire at night, I would get out a tape recorder and ask the men to sing. Their favorite was:

The Resistência Moçambicana is the  
struggle Against . . . Imperialismo

Communismo

Socialismo

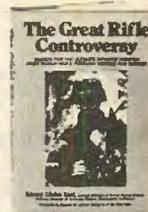
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## THREE-GUN MATCH

Continued from page 65

targets, was hit. Many competitors with long-barreled weapons found themselves snagging on the door frame, which hurt their time and their aim.

The shotgun assault course, set up and run by club local Al Newell, used 15 metal

knockdown targets. Home described this stage as "a fairly standard shotgun combat assault course with a couple of curves thrown in." For instance, one target had to be engaged from a prone position after crawling through a culvert. And about half-way through this stage, a target was 65-70 yards out from the shooter, making a slug round necessary. Home said this was "a big equalizer" because of the heavy penalty for failing to engage the target. A good time for the shotgun assault was 60 seconds, but the 30-second penalty for the slug target knocked a lot of otherwise good competitors out of the running.

### PISTOL

Ken Hackathorn ran a modified Cooper assault course for the first stage of pistol

competition. It was a short, quick course using 10-inch round metal targets instead of paper. From the starting position, the shooter had to engage four targets instead of the two in a standard Jeff Cooper course, two each on the left and right at 15 yards. Instead of moving to a wall structure and engaging two targets on either side of a tunnel, the modified version had four targets — two on each side of a tunnel entrance — which had to be engaged through a window in a barricade structure. The standard Cooper course then has the shooter holster the weapon, crawl through the tunnel and engage one target at the far right before shooting the stop plate. The modified course had the competitor crawl through a tunnel — unsecured boards laid over a very confining support frame — to an obstructing wall just past the tunnel's end. Then two targets, one on either side, had to be engaged at acute angles using the strong hand only. There was no stop plate. A deceptively good course here, folks, one that looked a lot easier than it actually was. There were a lot of misses and a lot of time lost.

The second pistol assault course, designed and run by Vining, turned out to be the most popular single stage of the match, both because of the course design and the issuance of the Beretta-Bianchi rig. Generously sized targets — 12x12 — contributed to this stage's popularity. The targets were large for two reasons: one, because most contestants were required to shoot a weapon with which they were not familiar; two, because it was a tough course. It wasn't just an assault course; it was an assault course with a mission. Designated firing positions simulated various parts of the mission scenario. A procedural error penalty of 10 seconds also was assessed over the course if the contestant did not use available cover. Most designated firing positions had cover. Contestants were limited to 40 rounds.

The scenario had the timed contestant playing an infantryman trying to resupply a friendly machine-gun nest while moving against hostile targets over the course. Lending a burdensome note of realism to this scenario were 240 rounds of .303 Vickers machine-gun ammunition, neatly packed in its original wooden British crate with rope handles.

Contestants started with the Beretta holstered in Condition Three, with a full magazine and an empty chamber. When the buzzer started the clock, the contestant could draw and charge his weapon then or when he reached the first designated firing position, but he had to carry the ammo crate. From the first position, he had to hit two targets about 10 yards out on the left.

Picking up the ammo box, the contestant then had to crawl through a concrete culvert, which some people found difficult while dragging the crate. At the end of the culvert were two targets that had to be hit, one straight out about 15 yards and the other up a hill about 10 yards at an acute left angle. After exiting the tunnel, the contestant moved to his next firing position, the



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machine-gun nest, where he could leave the ammo crate. From that position he had to hit four targets in the open about 20 yards across the canyon. The next firing position was a rock wall. From that position the contestant had to hit three targets at 20 yards, all partially concealed in a simulated building front. Then on to another firing position, this one a wall with a window and door. After engaging three targets at 10-15 yards, the shooter went through the door to the final designated firing position. The final target was 25 yards out and the stop plate about .15 yards away.

#### RIFLE

The assault rifle course was run by firearms instructor Clint Smith. Starting with an empty weapon (no bipods allowed in '85), contestants were timed as they went through various firing-position sequences aimed at three Milpark paper silhouettes placed at 150, 220 and 330 yards. Three designated firing positions were used. Position one was designated for free-style shooting, while prone shooting was not allowed in positions two and three. Contestants had to hit each of the three targets twice from each of the three positions. Scoring was limited Comstock.

The rifle competition's second phase, a square range exercise run by Terry Kenny, looked simple enough but was very demanding. At 100 yards, a contestant fired two rounds at the target, reloaded and fired two more rounds. Then this sequence was

repeated. Moving to the 50-yard mark, contestants were timed on snap shooting, five separate single-shot presentations beginning with a port-arms position. Then contestants moved to the 25-yard marker and repeated the five-round snap-shot sequence at new targets with only head shots allowed.

So despite the absence of the 100-degree-in-the-shade heat hammering the desert gun club, the match courses offered an unusually tough challenge. Rains came and went and still Red Rock Canyon echoed with determined gunfire as 161 did their dead-eye best. A few went home richer, even more people the wiser, but most with a hankering to come back next year for an even better showing. And the echoes had barely died when planning for the 1986 match began. Grab your favorite pieces and be there. ✕

## FULL AUTO

*Continued from page 14*

to my M16A2 Colt Commando — a worst case scenario — but be advised that although it is equipped with a bayonet stud the Commando's 11.5-inch barrel is too short for a bayonet.

You must use the M16A1 lock washer when installing the Vortex. Do not use an M16A2 peel washer, since

the distance from the barrel's muzzle to the device's orifice is critical in determining its effectiveness. If fitted to an AR-18/180-series rifle you must obtain a special washer from Smith Enterprises. Ruger Mini-14s can also be rethreaded to accept the Vortex. Milled from bar stock of a proprietary material, the Vortex is heat treated to Rc 55-60, .010-.015 inches deep.

When properly installed, the Vortex Flash Suppressor will cut muzzle flash by as much as 95 percent in comparison to the standard M16 birdcage with no increase in muzzle blast. The effect is most noticeable from the front; slightly more flash will be seen from the side. Remember, in combat the length of your enemy's flash signature will denote his relative position to you — if it's long, he's on your flank. The smaller it becomes, the closer he is to your front.

That the Vortex is open pronged and may catch on vegetation in the deep bush is more than offset by its phenomenal reduction in flash signature. You can purchase a Vortex Flash Suppressor for \$24.95 postpaid from Armscorp of America (Dept. SOF, 9162 Brookville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910).

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## SOME DARED; SOME DIDN'T

Continued from page 53

managed to escape.

The man was a New Zealander — at least that was what the passport said — named O'Neill, 27 years old and born in Australia. After a thorough interrogation he was caught in several contradictions and lost his nerve. When he was about to be delivered to a specialized interrogation center, Gen. Guerrero ordered that the man should be taken to Buenos Aires and released. This proved to be the last chance of getting first-hand evidence about British infiltration of the mainland.

Applying a lesson learned in counterinsurgency war, the Argentines knew that even if they could not make the British come out and fight, they could neutralize them with permanent patrolling and population checks. This was done regularly and aggressively.

Although most information related to these events is still classified, it is known that much of the evidence on British operations came from double agents who were involved in some way or another in supporting these operations during the war.

Today, we are sure that at least one reconnaissance raid was made on Rio Gallegos and that this raid would have been attempted if British air superiority had ever been seriously threatened. But we also estimate that the security measures taken after the intelligence reports on British infiltration incidents in the area would have made any such operation costly.

Would it have succeeded? We will never know. Nevertheless, to those men who operated in Argentine territory on reconnaissance operations during the conflict, their boldness and professionalism are recognized and respected by their one-time adversaries. ✕

## COCKLESHELL HEROES

Continued from page 77

the wind had been favorable. For the three weeks they labored eastward the wind blew from the east; now they were going westward and it blew from the west. The weary troopers paddled the lake for one more night, heading for their final pickup point.

The following morning they cleared a landing zone for the pickup choppers by blowing down two large trees, then mowing the rest of the bush with machetes and entrenching tools. Soon, five Alouette choppers arrived to recover them and their equipment. Looking like the Dirty Dozen, they sported beards, their hair curled to their shoulders and their clothes were tattered and torn.

The SAS men flung their kit into the choppers and clambered in after it. The sun

was shimmering on the vast, smelly, beautiful lake as the choppers climbed out of the LZ taking the troublesome intruders back home.

The 12 *Cockleshell Heroes of A-Troop, Rhodesian SAS*, had paddled 335 miles during their six weeks on Lake Cabora Bassa, and had left a toll of dead and wounded that included the CO, 2IC and political commissar of the Mkumbura Frelimo garrison. So effective was their mining of the only access road between Tete to Mkumbura that attempts were made to build a parallel road in some stretches.

Valuable lessons were learned from this first of what would become many boat operations by both SAS and Selous Scout troopers.

McKenna and his team had amply proved that operating from the lake was a viable proposition, and, as anticipated, ZANLA and their Frelimo friends didn't have a clue where the SAS had come from.

— The Editors ✕

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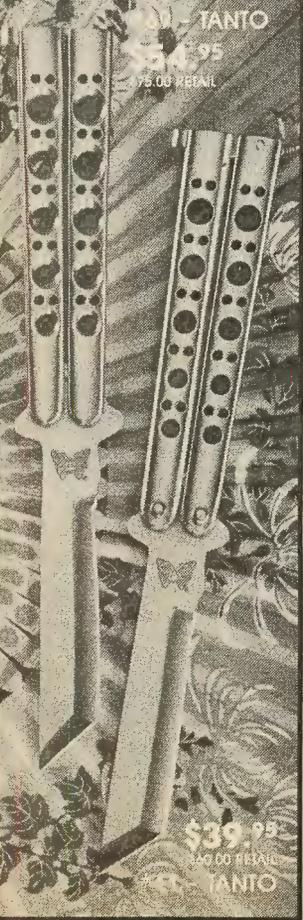
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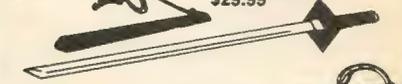
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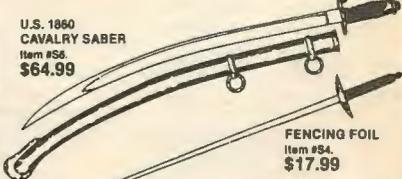
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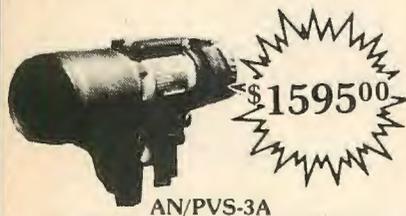
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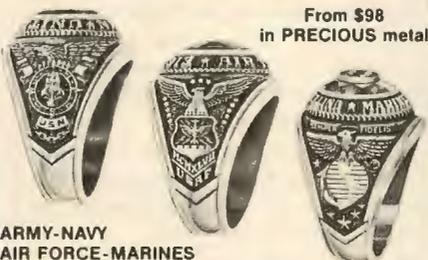
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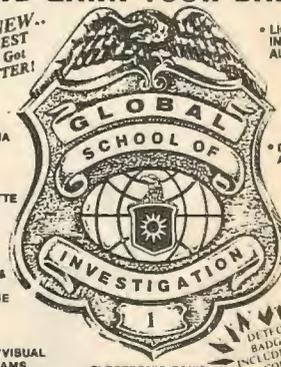
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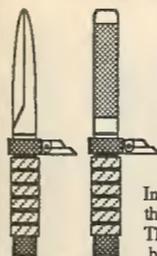
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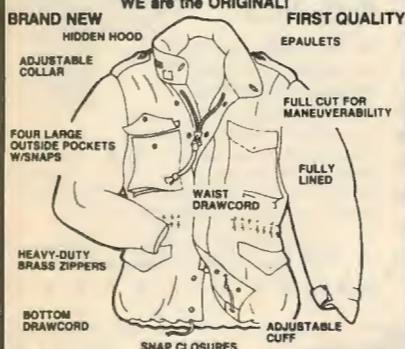
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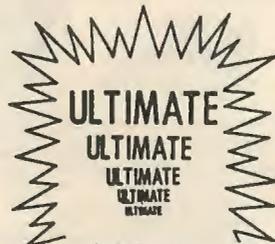
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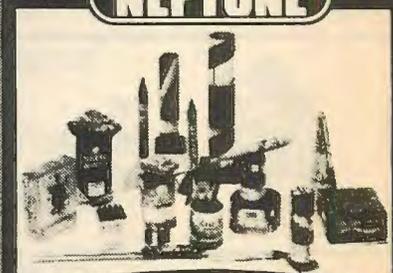
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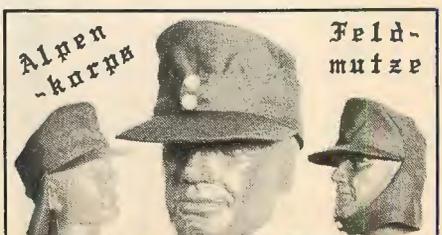
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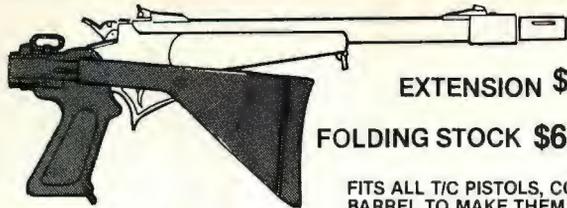
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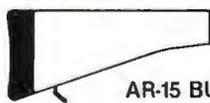
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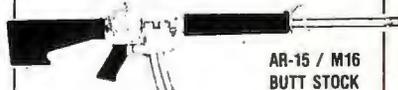


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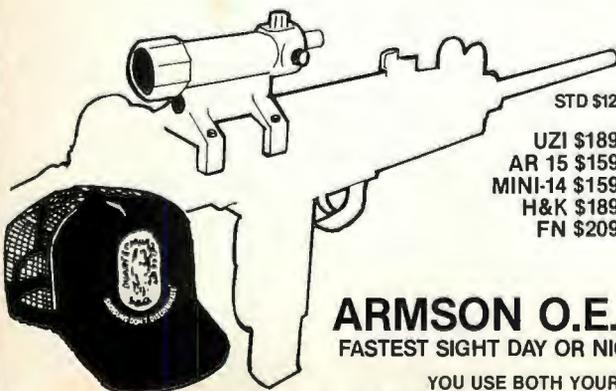
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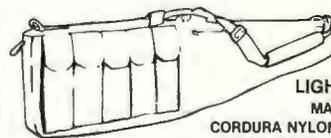


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# Taurus handguns give you the right balance of top craftsmanship and affordable price

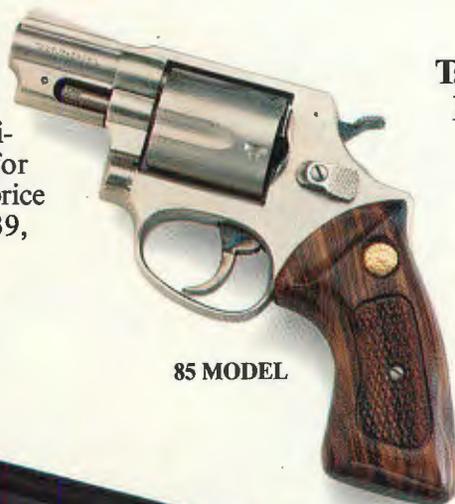
Meet the finest value dollar for dollar in firearms today—Taurus handguns. They've earned an enviable international reputation for superb quality at an affordable price since their introduction in 1939, meeting the highest standards of accuracy, dependability and safety.

A Taurus is an *ideal* choice if you're a first-time handgun buyer and perfect for the experienced shooter.

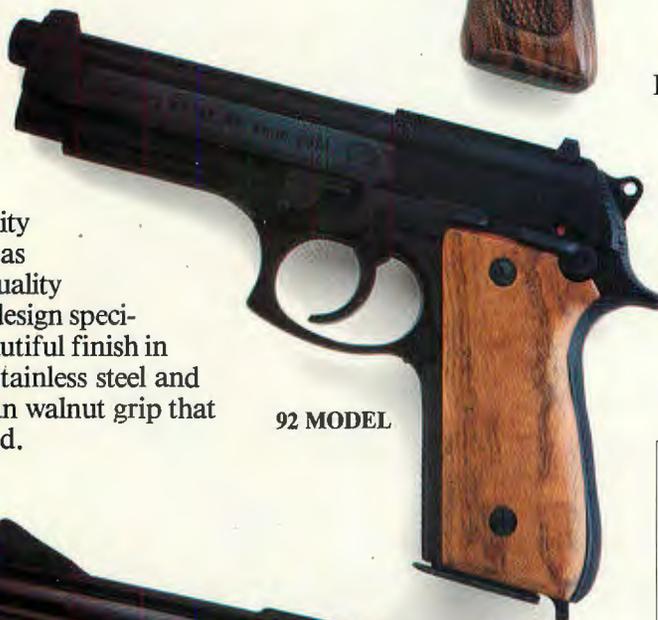
Shooting a Taurus handgun gives you the opportunity to use a product that has been built from high-quality materials to the latest design specifications. Note the beautiful finish in blue, satin nickel, or stainless steel and the handsome Brazilian walnut grip that fits snugly in your hand.

Taurus offers a comprehensive selection of styles and calibers—  
.22 L.R., .32 Long, .38 Special, .357 Magnum, 9 MM and 380. Look at the three popular models below:

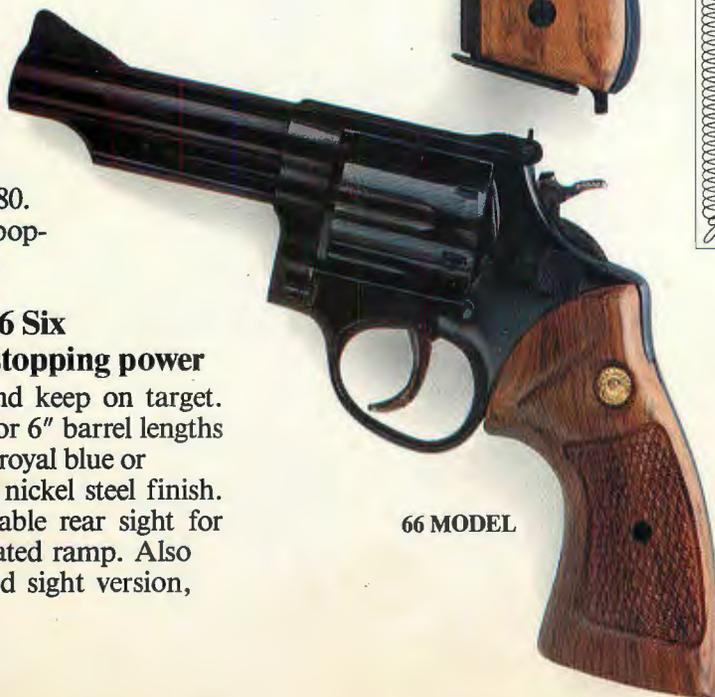
**Taurus Model 66 Six rounds of .357 stopping power**  
Easy to control and keep on target. Available in 3", 4" or 6" barrel lengths in traditional deep royal blue or corrosion-resistant nickel steel finish. Completely adjustable rear sight for windage with serrated ramp. Also available in a fixed sight version, Taurus Model 65.



85 MODEL



92 MODEL



66 MODEL

## Taurus Model 85, The Protector Lightweight, powerful, reliable

Rugged construction and ease of operation distinguish the 5-shot Protector. 2" or 3" barrel lengths. Notch rear and serrated ramp front sights. Chambered for .38 Special. In blue, stainless steel and satin nickel.

## Taurus Model PT 92 Rapid fire, light recoil semi-automatic

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