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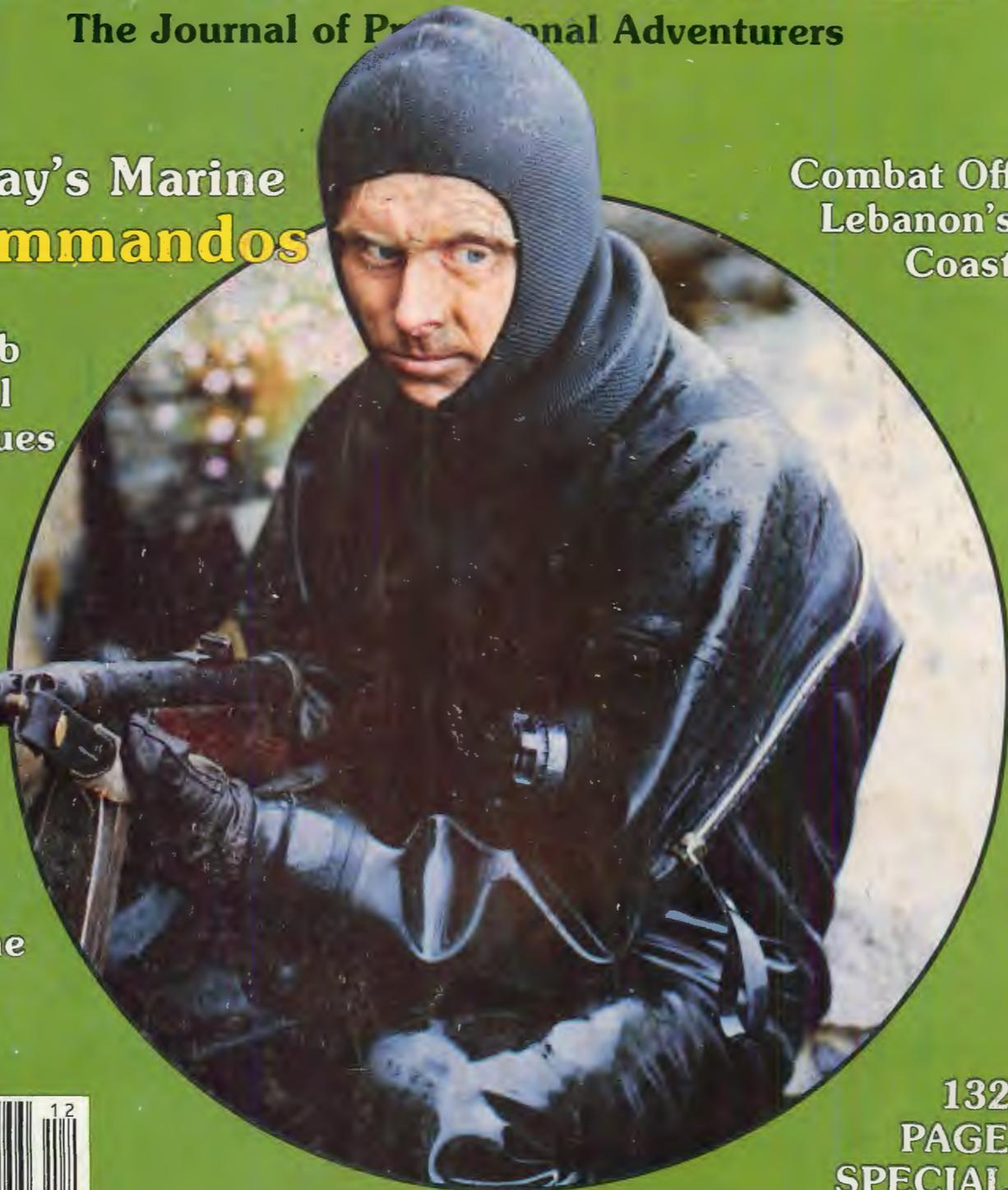
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COVER: During a training exercise in one of Norway's countless fjords a Norwegian Marine Commando covers the approach of his men. Equipped with a Suomi submachine gun and trained for infiltration and sabotage in Norway's harsh climate, these tough commandos are an integral part of Norway's defense of NATO's left flank. Photo: Forsvarets rekrutterings-og opplysningstjeneste

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

IT'S certainly true that comedy isn't always pretty. But it's even uglier when it crops up in places it has no right to be — like in the arena of world politics.

But comedy is just what we got at the eighth Summit Conference of the Nonaligned held in Harare, Zimbabwe — not exactly a bastion of neutralist political thinking.

Twenty-five years ago leaders of the postwar independence movement formed a group of "nonaligned nations," putting forward the claim that they were neutrals in the Great Power confrontation that seemed to be brewing on the horizon. The notion had some merit at the time — these new countries had little choice but to stand



completely divided. But those days are gone and the conference is now nothing but a bad joke. The players in Harare this year were unbelievable. Fidel Castro, Yasser Arafat, Daniel Ortega and Muammar Khadafi headed the list of dignitaries claiming that they were free from the filth of international mud wrestling. The conference got underway with the "non-aligned" nations paying lip service to staying at arms length from the U.S./USSR power struggle, but it took only a few minutes before the speakers began bashing Washington for its international policies.

This latest conference was the same old story. Leaders spouted the traditional Leftist pablum about how the U.S. is to blame for all the poverty that runs rampant in the Third World, how Washington has instigated the rebellions that are cropping up in their nations and how South Africa is the root of all evil in Africa. How convenient it must be to be able to blame all the woes in the world on someone else.

More than any other nonaligned

conference of the past, this one was marked by thinly veiled hypocrisy. Mugabe really put on a show for his guests. Zimbabwe spent \$30 million on the conference, ironically the same amount that the country needs for drought relief. Never mind that Zimbabwe is deeply in debt.

The best irony, however, was the link between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Pretoria was the butt of many attacks by African heads of state, but Robert Mugabe seemed to have no trouble swallowing the fact that, while his comrades blasted their southern neighbor, the conference would have been impossible without South Africa. Everything from building materials to jet fuel had to be supplied by South Africa.

As the propaganda droned on, Western observers and journalists were given a rare treat — a glimmer of honesty. And it came from an unexpected quarter. The always unpredictable Libyan dictator, Muammar Khadafi, climbed to the podium and delivered a 75-minute speech on — get this — the hypocrisy of the conference.

"I want to say goodbye, farewell to this funny movement, farewell to this utter falsehood. I am totally against America, totally against Israel, totally against NATO."

Only mild applause from the baffled buffoons. That wasn't part of the standard script. Mugabe, obviously flustered by this departure from fantasyland, sagely stated that "not all our members" agree with Khadafi. Wild applause. But at least the conference had given Khadafi a forum to air his views. Big deal.

Isn't it ironic that the world's most famous lunatic stood out among his peers as a tower of reason? We won't get to see something like that again for quite a while. ☒

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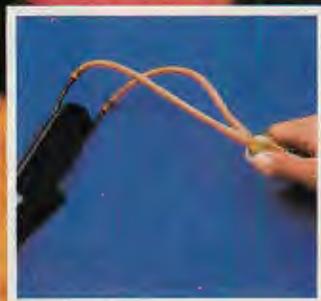
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BUCKMASTER BS...

Sirs:

I purchased a BuckMaster just before your test results were published in SOF magazine ("Buckmaster: Big Blade Busts," June '86). Frankly, I was a bit skeptical as I did not believe Buck would produce such a piece of garbage.

The first time I used the knife the blade dulled very rapidly. I was skinning a caribou my son had shot. The next time I was cutting cartilage from the neck and the point snapped! This proved to me that your magazine articles are authentic, and I have written Buck asking them for reimbursement. Buck claims their knife will "master the toughest wilderness challenge." All I can say is BS.

R. Dwyer
N.W. Territory,
Canada

I wanted to say a good word for the BuckMaster and Buck knives. I purchased mine even after reading SOF's review. I managed to break off half-an-inch of the point, at least partially through my own stupidity. I wrote to Buck, returning the knife, with a full and honest explanation of how I had broken the blade. Though stupidity played a part, I really felt the break should not have occurred. Within three weeks, Buck sent me a new BuckMaster. You just can't ask for more than that of any company.

Joe R. Lux
Washington
Court House,
Ohio



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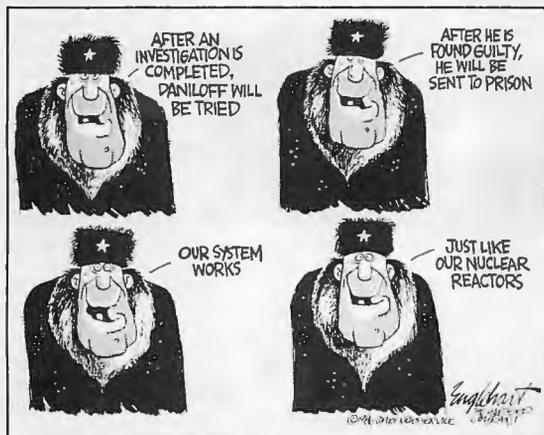


SOF AFGHAN COVERAGE...

Sirs:

As one who knows the lure of forbidden frontiers, I enjoyed reading "Afghan Attack" by Jake Border (SOF, September '86). Mr. Border's photographs and text gave an evocative and compassionate view of the war "from the ground up": vineyard bunkers, shell-cratered dirt, the cold camps where the faithful bow in prayer, the trenches where they die for freedom. That tells half the story, and tells it damn well. The other half is "from the sky down": the terror of carpet bombing, helicopter gunship raids, explosive toys dropped to maim Afghan children. The Soviets will have to tell that half of the story at a war-crimes tribunal someday.

Bladerunner
Cranford, New Jersey



G° NAVY...

Sirs:

Sierra Hotel on your outstanding August issue. As a Navy aviation ordnanceman, my only gripe with your magazine had been your lack of coverage of naval warfare. Boy, was I surprised when I finally scrounged a well-read copy of your August issue. Beautifully emblazoned on the front cover was a Tomcat in full afterburner from my very own squadron, the VF-33 Starfighter.

We here onboard *America* are well aware of the tension, apprehension and outright fear prior to the raid on Libya. Thank you for providing insight into what it felt like on the receiving end. Keep up the excellent work and thanks again for the support. It's people like you that make it all worthwhile.

Charles A. McCullen
VF-33 Line Division

All Navy personnel out there, listen up. Look to future issues of SOF for more coverage of what the Navy does best — delivering U.S. military might overseas to those who need a taste of it.

CHEAP GARANDS?...

Sirs:

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Garnerville, New York

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Continued on page 111

S OF SCOOPS CBS...

Ayatollah Khomeini's radical Islamic regime in Iran plans to resume natural gas exports to the Soviet Union for the first time since 1979, according to a 25 August broadcast by the CBS Evening News. The item appeared the following day in the *Wall Street Journal*. We thought our readers might like to know that SOF sources reported this back in March and it appeared in the July issue, (See Bulletin Board, "Iranians Make Up") which was on newsstands in June. Among several other aspects of a reconciliation deal between the Kremlin and Iran, SOF also reported that in return for renewed natural gas exports, the Soviet Union will restart work on two Iranian nuclear reactors at Isfahan and Ahvaz. CBS News and other media *did not* mention this, however. Woe to the sane, civilized world if Iran ever gets a nuclear capability.

You can read vital foreign affairs developments in *Soldier of Fortune*. Or you can wait a few months and hear them on CBS.

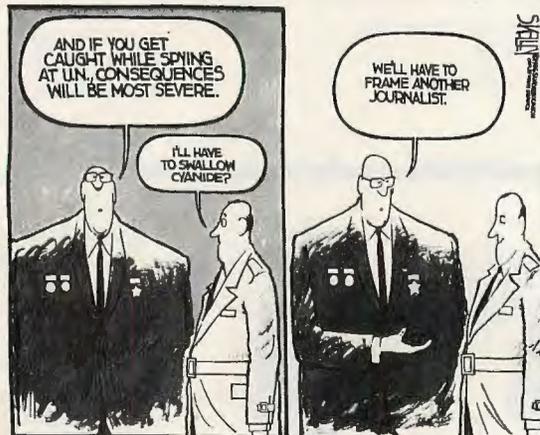
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Alex McColl, left, director of Omega Group's Special Projects Office, and SOF Publisher and Editor Robert K. Brown sort clothing and equipment for SOF's El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund. We need camouflaged clothing (small and medium sizes only); combat boots and socks; ponchos; bore cleaner, patches and oil; compasses; canteens; etc. Medical supplies also are sorely needed. Clean out your closet, footlocker or old seabag and send the gear to help fight communism in Central America. Include with the shipment a packing list and specify if you do not want to be listed with other contributors in Bulletin Board. Mail donations to: P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.



RECKONING DAY FOR ID LAB...

After this issue of SOF went to press, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations held a hearing on allegations raised in the July issue of SOF (See "Missing in Action: Skeletons in Uncle Sam's Closet"), which charged that the Army facility tasked with identifying the remains of U.S. servicemen from Southeast Asia is woefully lacking. The record of that 10 September hearing confirms the first SOF report on the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, as well as the follow-up report in this issue. (See "Bones of Contention," page 35.)

Pentagon officials and lab administrators have lied about problems in the lab. The hearing record reflects this fact. Two Army witnesses had to be reminded more than once that they were under oath when it became apparent they were not being truthful in responding to questions posed by subcommittee members and staff, who were well prepared. But the question remains: What is the Army going to do about it? Can the subcommittee's findings compel the Army to make effective changes? Read our latest report on this outrageous scandal. Then write your congressman and senators and tell them what you think. Address your correspondence in care of the U.S. Capitol. The zip code for the House of Representatives is 20515, for the Senate 20510. Make your voice heard.

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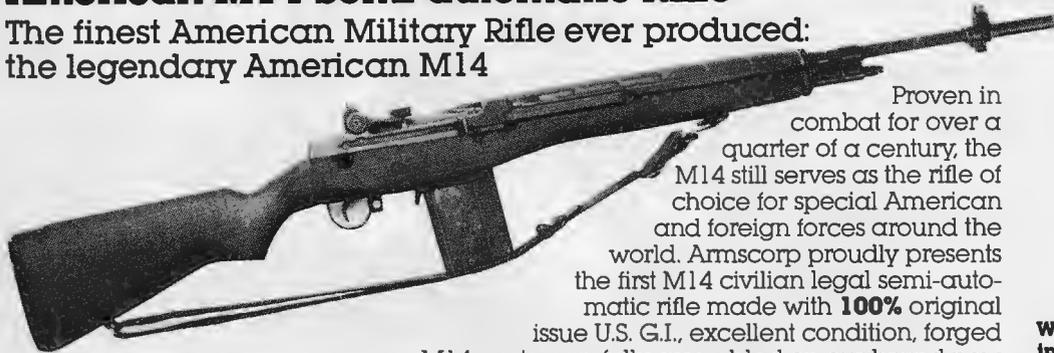
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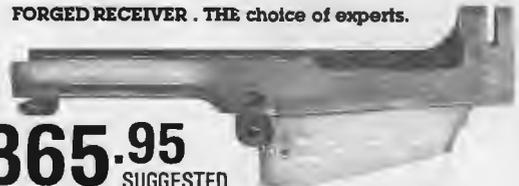
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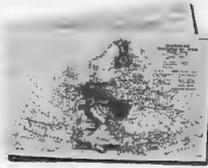
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EQUIPMENT is often one quick way to separate the pros from the amateurs in any field. A professional—be it in sports, the arts or in combat—has a sixth sense about his needs. He therefore selects equipment less on the basis of appearance, brand name or what is trendy at the time, and looks for a particular piece of gear that will serve his specific requirements. By definition, there is little or no room for compromise in the performance of any profession, particularly when your life, or someone else's, may well depend on the performance of your equipment.

In a life-and-death situation, it is of vital importance to know how to properly assess the potential effectiveness of your gear. Because in a battle of blades, all else being equal, it could mean the difference between who ends up with a tag on his toe.

So if you think you might use your blade for something more than making wood shavings for the hound to lie in, take a close look at the type of knife you cart around. Do you *really* need a combat knife? Probably not. Besides, the best defense in a knife fight is a 12-gauge shotgun.

More than likely, what 99 percent of the people who need a knife actually require is a good survival knife. Let's take a look at the difference between survival and combat knives.

Basic design requirements for a fighting knife are relatively simple. One is looking for a blade that will enable its user to cut a similarly armed opponent more frequently and more severely than he can cut you. Nothing more, nothing less. One doesn't need a saw or a bottle opener in a knife fight, or a handle full of fish hooks. The requirement is for a sharp blade that holds its edge, big enough for lethal momentum and longer reach, small enough to still have speed and maneuverability, something with superior slashing, backstroke-cut and stabbing capability.

A man with a 9½-inch blade can reach and cut a man with a blade 6- or 7-inches long and not get cut himself. That may sound so obvious as to be country simple, but in today's high-tech thinking it's a principle often overlooked. It's so obvious people may not realize it before it's too late.

Now granted, toe-to-toe, slash-and-bleed knife fights aren't very common today outside of certain neighborhoods. But 150 years ago, before the development of repeating firearms, knives were the next step up for antagonists bent on something more serious than knuckle dusting.

A study of the blades from the era of 1835-1845 reveals some useful and



BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

Staking Your Life On a Fighting Knife

interesting information. Most of these antebellum blades have one common characteristic immediately apparent: size. Most of these blades are 9-10 inches long. Of those outside this range, most of the remainder tend to be longer, not shorter.

The reason for size is two-fold. Most men are between 5-foot-8 and 6 feet tall. Blades in the 9-10-inch range fit men of this height for combat purposes. Shorter blades lack the reach and leverage, and blades that are only a little longer sacrifice too much speed. Quickness coupled with reach is the desired and deadly combination in a fighting knife. A good combat knife is a finely tuned combination of the two.

What about the survival knife? Doesn't it have the same requirements as a fighting knife? Fighting, after all, is a matter of survival. But survival itself is much, much more. So the requirements are similar, but not identical.

A survival knife more often is needed as a tool for a variety of jobs, and many of these entail chopping and hacking. Building a shelter or a litter are two obvious examples. The light, quick blade of the fighting knife is not well suited to making heavy cuts without great effort.

Blade length of a good combat or utility/survival knife is about the same, usually 9-10 inches, which provides the magic of good leverage missing in blades of 8½ inches and less in length.

The survival knife differs from its combat counterpart in that its blade is typically a half-to-one ounce heavier. A good utility/survival blade also has the bulk of its weight slightly farther down the blade, nearer the tip. This type of selective weight placement provides a blade that strikes with greater force. A serious survival knife should be capable of severing a sapling as large as a man's wrist with no more than three-to-five strokes.

A specialized fighting knife will

weigh about 13½-14½ ounces. Its heavier survival counterpart will weigh about 16 ounces or so, without the sheath. These are considered to be large knives by today's standards. Many of the so-called combat/survival knives, however, weigh a full quarter-pound more. But making a knife that is light or heavy is not in and of itself the central theme. Putting the weight where it will do the most good is the trick.

So the basic difference between the blade of a good fighting knife versus that of a good survival knife is not one of size, but of balance. A man in a knife fight can be an elusive target if he has any experience, and a long, quick blade makes your job easier in this specialized instance. Survival usage leans more toward the tool function of your knife, and a blade that is slightly slower but considerably more powerful is what is required here.

So what do you need in a knife? Be honest with yourself. If you are a bill collector who works his ghetto accounts on Saturday nights, a combat knife is probably the best choice.

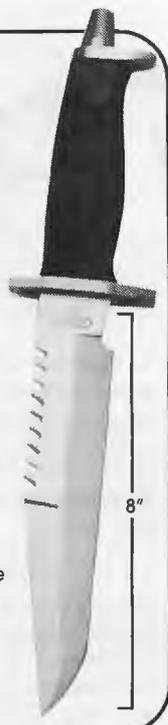
But if you are an active-duty serviceman whose MOS requires that you spend much time in the field, a combat knife may not necessarily be the most useful. Your everyday needs may stipulate that you would be best served with a knife balanced for the survival/utility mode. The same holds true for the avid outdoorsman. The survival knife is a lot more practical, and also makes a devastating combat weapon if the need arises. A good survival/utility knife can make a good weapon. But a good fighting knife usually makes an indifferent tool. Whatever you choose, do so with care, making your selection on the basis of need and performance, not hype and hokum. Choose your gear with care, for one day you may be called on to stake your life on it. ✘

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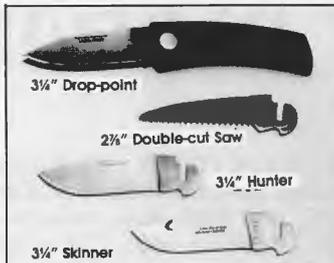
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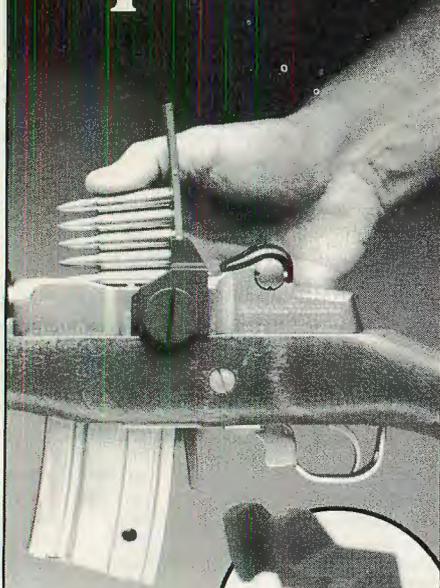
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IN REVIEW



NO SANCTUARY. By Richard Aellen. Bantam Books Inc., Dept. SOF, 666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103. 1986. 272 pages. \$3.50.

ONLY a few good novels have come out of the Rhodesian war to date. This is one of them. What really makes this book worth your money, though, is the fact that it's a tautly written action/adventure story back-dropped by the war — but not about the war itself.

Former Vietnam pilot-turned-freelancer Marshall Roberts decides to set up shop in war-torn Rhodesia flying charters and giving lessons. Times are tough, and when he's offered \$10,000 to fly into Mozambique to pick up a secret cargo, he takes the bait. What follows is a fast-paced run through intrigue, violence, and the turbulence that was Rhodesia in its waning days.

Aellen deserves high marks for his first novel, especially in the crucial area of detail. His descriptions of the Rhodesian scene are accurate, his characterizations true to life. If you're ready for an entertaining thriller interwoven with a breath of Africa, **No Sanctuary** hits the mark.

RED STORM RISING. By Tom Clancy. G.B. Putnam's Sons, Dept. SOF, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016. 1986. 652 pp. \$19.95.

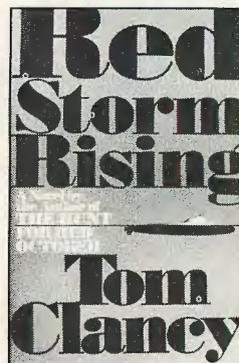
TOM Clancy rocketed to literary prominence with his first novel, *The Hunt for Red October*. Rather than rest on his laurels, he capitalized on his good fortune by writing a new novel, **Red Storm Rising**. As with his first foray into the world of high-tech conflict, Clancy sticks with what he does best: He gives the reader a glimpse of what our sophisticated weapons systems will and will not do in combat.

Few authors have more depth of knowledge about weapons technology than Clancy, a surprising accomplishment considering he's never been in the military and gleens all his material from unclassified sources. But with **Red Storm Rising**, Clancy takes his chosen genre one step farther. He has combined the fruits of his previous work with wartime crystal ball predic-

tions in the tradition of General Sir John Hackett's *World War III*.

The result is impressive. Clancy welds small scenes from various Soviet attacks along NATO's front into an account of what might happen if war comes to Europe. If you haven't figured out that the results will be grim, **Red Storm Rising** will leave you with little doubt.

Don't get the idea that this book is flawless. At the very beginning, Clancy sets the stage for war when a group of fanatic Muslims blow up an oil refinery in Siberia. The Kremlin, desperate to replenish the loss, decides it must go to war with NATO in order to get away with invading the Persian Gulf. Not likely.



The war in his book is faceless. Machines do the fighting, and when a plane or a tank goes up in smoke, it takes a moment to realize that nothing has changed from past wars. Although the human combatants are often encased in mobile armor or moving at the speed of sound in aircraft, the result is the same: They die, just like the soldiers of old. Destruction is the common thread throughout the book; men and machines will die in fiery confusion no matter who wins.

Clancy's story jumps from theater to theater, and never allows the reader the chance to fully know the characters. But he compensates by developing in detail the relationship and experiences of a small group of U.S. soldiers who escape from their NATO base in Iceland after the Soviets invade. Their adventures are a much-needed human element in this technological tale.

But who wins in the end? Dive into Clancy's second outstanding novel for the answer to that.

Continued on page 17

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The greatest deception plan of military history, the forgotten role of British forces in the Korean War, and the most formidable operational fighter of World War II are but a few topics described in this **1987 Military History Calendar**. Focusing on 20th-century conflicts, this all-new calendar highlights nearly ten events each month which have changed the course of history. Emphasizing air power, this calendar also has photos of massive bomb-proof submarine pens, flamethrowing tanks and more. Photos courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and the Imperial War Museum in London. 12 x 13, 41 photos, B&W. **\$8.95**



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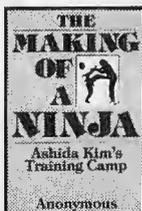


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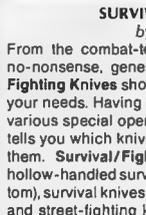
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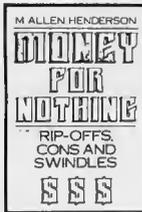


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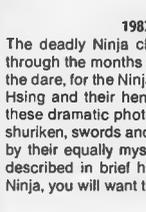
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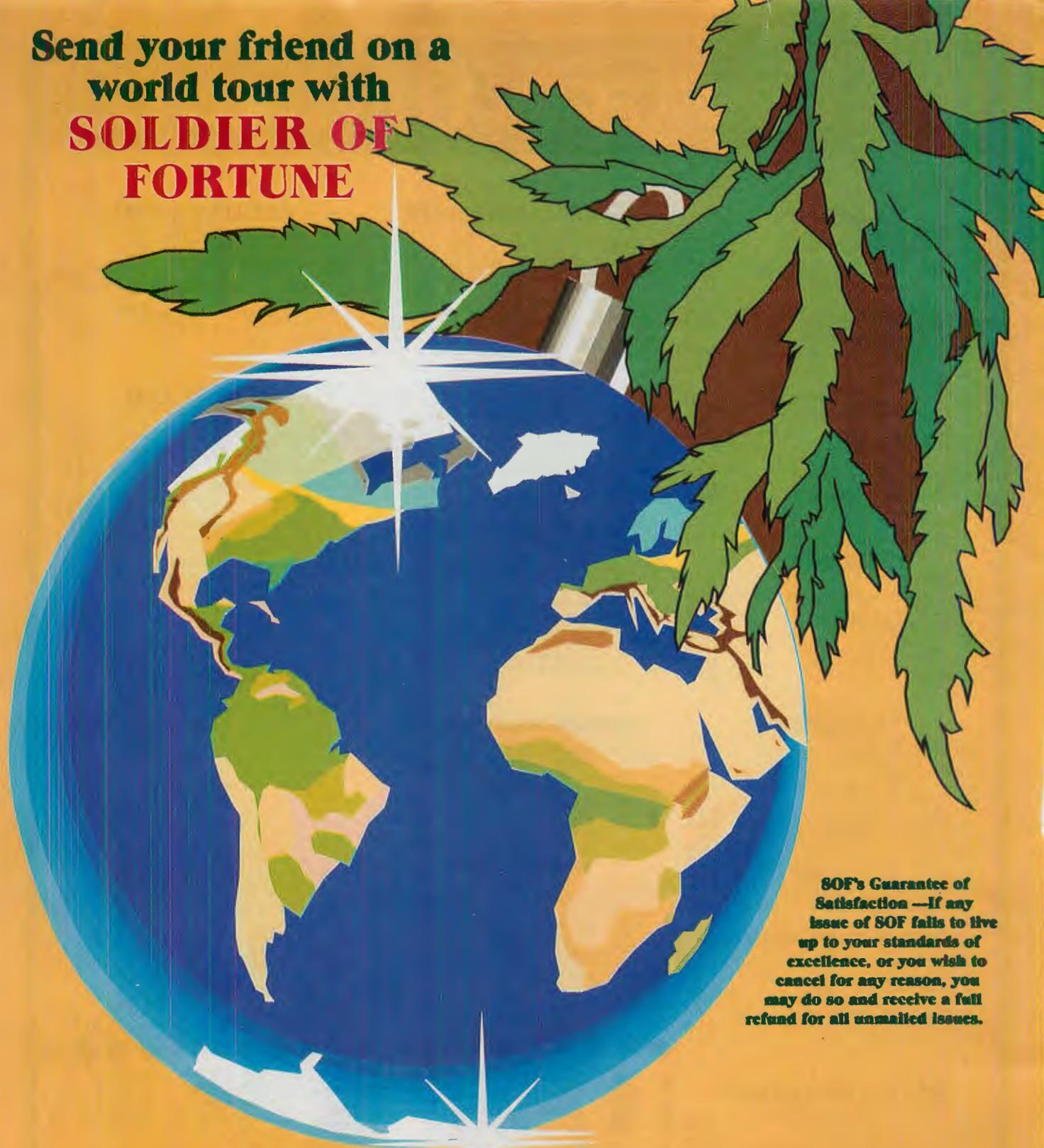
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THE CUTTING EDGE. By C.J. Heatley III. Thomasson-Grant Publishing, Dept. SOF, 505 Faulconer Dr., Suite 1C, Charlottesville, VA 22901. 1986. 152 pp. \$38.00.

IT probably wasn't intentional, but C.J. Heatley couldn't have planned the publication of his new book at a better time. The U.S. Navy had bloodied Libyan dictator Muammar Khadaffi's nose not once but twice, and the hit movie *Top Gun* had everyone talking about how exciting it would be to fly as a fighter jock. All this presented quite a fanfare, and served as the perfect opening shot for a new book on naval aviation.



PHOTOGRAPHY AND INTRODUCTION BY NAVY PILOT C.J. HEATLEY III
2001 FOREWORD BY SENATOR JAKE GARRETT

NavAir comes to life in **The Cutting Edge**, a collage of exquisite photographs. This book is a portrait of the awesome potential built into our naval air arm as fighters and attack aircraft streak through spectacular skies and land precisely on the pitching decks of aircraft carriers.

Heatley, an active-duty Navy pilot, is first and foremost a photographer. His love of naval aviation combines with his camera skill to present a work unencumbered by overly technical charts and staid statistics (found in the back of the book).

This is not meant to be the final word on aircraft and their capabilities. Rather, **The Cutting Edge** is a pilot's view of what it's like to push personal skill and high-tech machines to the limit.

Sprinkled throughout the photos are interviews with pilots and *Top Gun* instructors, flight engineers and the sailors who make sure the aircraft get into the air safely. **The Cutting Edge** will give the reader a glimpse of what it's like to be a naval aviator, but if for no other reason, pick it up for the photographs. ✈

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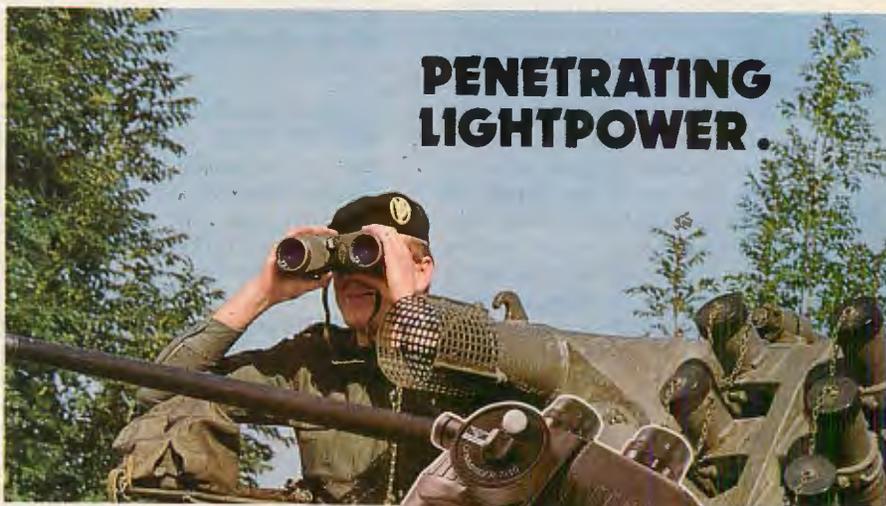
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**STEINER
BINOCULARS**

IN February, 1986, the Department of the Army announced that 10 components of the M60 GPMG had been redesigned "to improve weapon reliability and durability." The major modification was to the operating rod which now has two sear notches. A forward sear notch was added to permit sear engagement in the event of short recoil. In addition, the face of the rod has been case hardened to reduce burring, and the yoke's roller and pin redesigned. A larger diameter, single-strand recoil spring replaces the original multiple-strand spring which dragged along the bottom of the op rod's interior to develop flat spots that shortened its useful life span. A new, one-piece guide rod has been adopted and that's good news, as the press-fit and induction-brazed head on the old guide rod loosened all too frequently. A new bolt plug will supposedly retain the bolt plug pin more securely. A redesigned gas cylinder plug contains a built-in lock washer they say will eliminate the need for lock wiring. Don't you believe it. There's a lock washer on the cocking lever's guide retaining screw and it still falls off with annoying regularity. The firing pin, bumper cam spring and extractor have also been beefed up.

All of this is entirely too little, too late, as none of the above address this gun's major deficiencies. Let's review them: numerous critical components can be reassembled backwards; rapid chipping of the bolt's locking lugs which increases wear on the barrel socket camways; a poorly designed bipod incorrectly attached to the barrel; no adjustable gas regulator; a flimsy carrying handle attached to the receiver instead of the barrel; the rear sight's elevation markings are stamped into a piece of soft aluminum and wear away quickly until they are all but invisible; forearm latch springs break constantly; receivers crack near the front rivets; anodizing on the top cover wears off in short order requiring continual repainting; and cotton bandoleers which rot after a few days in a tropical environment. There's more, but why bother. The M60 is a pox that can be cured only by the adoption of another machine gun.

Ma Deuce Optics

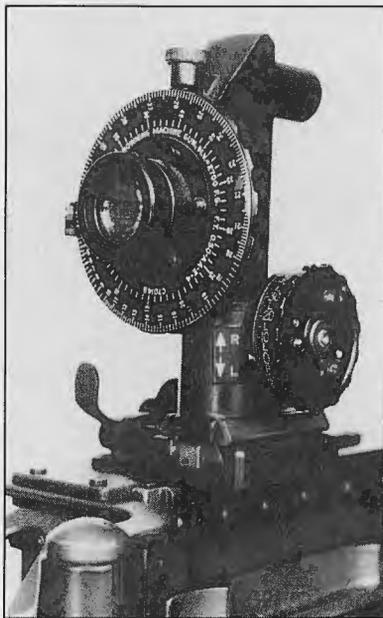
Throughout WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War the Browning .50-cal. HB, M2 machine gun proved its value as a long range sniping tool, even though it has always been handicapped by the lack of an appropriate optical sight. By the late 1960s the U.S. Army dropped this application for the M2HB and during arsenal rebuilding of these weapons, removed the dovetail groove from the top cover which



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Auto Sense



M1 telescopic sight for Browning .50 cal. M2 HB machine gun.

permitted installation of a telescopic sight. FM 23-65 (May, 1972) states that "At the present time, there is no definite telescopic sight designed for exclusive use with the Browning machine gun, caliber .50 HB, M2."

Prior to this time, the only optical sight ever officially adopted for the .50-cal. BMG was the M1 telescopic sight manufactured by the Perflex Corp. of Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1942. It was less than ideal. The range dial on this sight was graduated in both mils and yards (0 to 3,000) and calibrated for the trajectory of the 708-grain projectile at a muzzle velocity of 2,700 fps. The windage dial was calibrated in mils only (one mil equals $\frac{1}{6400}$ of 360 degrees). The reticle consisted of a narrow, pointed post with a horizontal stadia line. However, as the scope's magnification was less than 2X, it was of little value at ranges beyond 600 yards — precisely where the .50-cal. BMG starts to display its prowess in dispatching individual enemy targets. Long gone from U.S. military inventories, the M1 sight is now of collector interest only. They are not common, and complete with the leather case can command up to \$500.

We don't need a separate .50-cal.

sniping rifle. Ma Deuce will do nicely if she's fitted with the proper eyeball. A milspec telescope built to take the pounding, with a magnification of 10 to 12 power would be just the ticket. As heavy as it is, I'd rather hump with Ma Deuce and her capabilities as both a heavy machine gun and sniper, than a 40-pound single-shot. Now, if we can only get the message to the men who decide these matters.

MAC 10 Magazines

In 1976 the inventory of Military Armament Corporation was sold at auction. Included were 2,500 MAC 10 submachine guns in caliber 9mm Parabellum. Many more were produced by RPB Industries, Inc. of Atlanta, Ga., before they were shut down by the BATF. Locating suitable magazines for these weapons is not easy. Intratec U.S.A., Inc. (Dept. SOF, 11990 S.W. 128th Street, Miami, FL 33186) is one of the country's largest producers of magazines. They have recently developed a 36-round two-position feed magazine for the 9mm MAC 10 based on the famous Swedish 'K' design. Except for the nylon follower, it's made of all steel construction with a phosphate finish. There are indicator holes for 12, 24 and 36 rounds. This sturdy stick is available for \$32.95. It cannot be employed in the S.W.D. Mil/9mm submachine gun. Too bad, as the zytel nylon magazine is dreadful.

Of even greater interest is the availability of the unique Swedish 'K' speed loader. It is used in conjunction with the peculiar Swedish 36-round stripper clip assembly which is actually a stamped sheet-metal pressing of six 6-round strippers in a row. With these two items in hand you can load a 36-round magazine in four seconds. The speed loader can be purchased from Intratec for \$29.95 and the 36-round stripper clips cost \$4.95 each and are reusable. This set-up will take magazines for the Swedish 'K', 9mm MAC 10, KG-9 and TEC-9. It will not accommodate S&W M76 magazines.

Intratec also markets Swedish 9mm Parabellum submachine-gun ammunition for sale to law enforcement and governmental organizations only. This ammunition is constructed to operate open-bolt submachine guns and consequently the case's wall thickness is

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Emperor Hirohito's Super Battleship!

The Yamato was the largest and most powerful battleship ever completed. She led the Japanese fleet that attacked Midway, and fought valiantly at the Battle of Leyte Gulf. She was finally sunk in April of 1945, after taking damage from over 11 torpedoes and at least 7 bombs.

Based on secret Japanese Navy plans No. 19.215-220 drawn on Feb. 7, 1944 during reconstruction at the Kure Navy Yard, this huge plastic kit is a highly detailed model of the Yamato as she looked at the time of the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

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holders and all gears, wiring and running hardware (motors and batteries not incl. You'll need a Mabuchi RS540 motor for the propellers, and a Mabuchi RE-260 motor for the gun and radar system.). The kit features over 600 parts, made of brass, steel, metal, styrene and ABS plastic. The one piece hull is over 4 feet long. Construction is very simple for a kit this large with so many working features. Includes its own display base.

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greater than that found on commercial 9mm cartridges. The 106.5-grain projectile has a steel jacket plated with tombac (a copper and zinc alloy) and possesses excellent penetrative qualities. The propellant has been designed to minimize muzzle flash. The lacquered and waterproof round has been successfully tested in both arctic and tropical environments. The lot I tested was headstamped with the Swedish army producer code '070' and was produced in 1981.

Maxim Belts

There are a lot more Maxim machine guns in collector's hands than there are Vickers. Yet a Vickers cloth belt is worth no more than \$18 and an original 250-round Maxim belt will set you back at least \$125. Sam Urschel, a member of the SOF Demo Team, has come up with a bizarre alternative. You can pick up German WWII non-disintegrating MG34/42 50-round metal belts for about \$5 each. Load the cartridges backwards, with the link's extractor groove tab toward the bullet, insert the belt into the Maxim's feed mechanism upside down (links to the bottom) and your '08 or '08/15 will purr like Bismarck's cat. Sam has also designed a sheet-metal case deflector for his StG44 that drops those precious and tediously formed boxer empties in a neat pile at your feet instead of 15 yards into the bush.

Rare SKS

Century Arms, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 714, St. Albans, VT 05478)



Swedish 'K' SMG speedloader with Swedish stripper clips and new Intratec magazine for the MAC 10 9mm.

recently imported a second batch of 90 SKS rifles from PRC. At only \$149.95 each, they sold out fast. And this time there were some mighty strange birds in the nest. Just about every arsenal in China was represented. Of the 3,000 rifles in this lot, about 1,000 had stamped sheet-metal receivers. Previously unheard of, these unusual rifles can be readily distinguished by a large rivet on each side of the receiver, up front, toward the chamber, and partially concealed by the stock. Two more rivets can be seen on top of the receiver's rear end when the receiver cover is removed. About 20 of these also had fiberglass stocks. In addition, about 500 of the other PRC SKS rifles were fitted with flat-blade bayonets, usually associated with the Soviet version, instead of the more common cruciform type. If you bought one of these most recent Century Arms imports, examine it closely. You may have received quite

a bit more than you paid for. We can only hope that more will turn up in future shipments.

And finally, you can date your PRC SKS (if the serial number range is above one million) in the following manner. Take the first digit of the serial number and add 1956 (remember they are Type 56 rifles). For example, if the first digit is a '7,' your specimen was manufactured in 1963. If the serial number is under one million it was produced in 1956. If the serial number is ten million or more, then add the first two digits. Thus, a rifle with serial number 13035021 was manufactured in 1969.

Tracers

Wherever it's legal and safe to fire them, tracer ammunition will brighten any machine-gun shoot. But, pyrotechnic ammunition is expensive in any caliber and all too often its precarious shelf-life will result in nothing more than a belt full of overpriced, color-tipped ball.

You can fabricate your own if you purchase a pamphlet sold by T.T. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2700, Huntington Beach, CA 92647) for only \$5. Based upon a method used and discarded by Frankford Arsenal in 1942, you will need only a few basic power tools and a simple homemade hydraulic mechanism (made with an automotive jack) which is described and illustrated. The pamphlet's instructions

Continued on page 104

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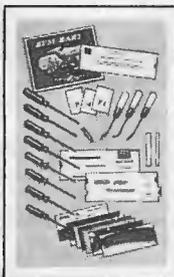
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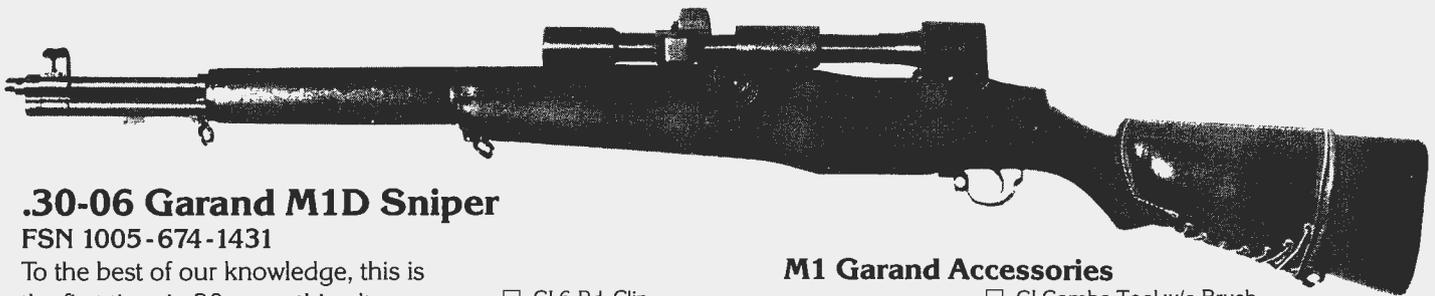
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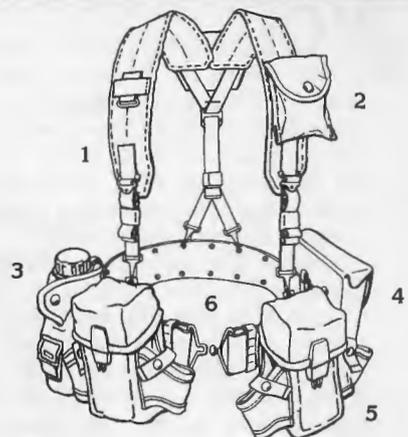
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“ONE-SEVEN, this is One-Seven Alpha ... we've been 'bushed!' His breath rasping and words tight with strain, the young patrol leader radioed in his sitrep. "I've got three, maybe four, down, and we're taking heavy incoming. I need medevac and air support ASAP!"

Ambush. The last word any combat soldier wants to hear unless he's on the giving end. Its purpose is to destroy or harass the enemy: make him afraid to patrol, deny him access to terrain he wants, keep his nerves constantly on edge. It's one of the most effective combat tools you can use in the bush — if you use it properly.

Ambushes are classed into two types: point and area. Put simply, point ambushes are single setups aimed at a single target area such as a road/river junction, a well-traveled path or guerrilla rendezvous point. Its advantage is a concentration of firepower on a specific target and easier control, yet it doesn't always produce the best results.

As evidenced in Vietnam and Rhodesia, enemy forces, once 'bushed, would unass the AO in all directions. You killed some, but others would get away. To counter this, area ambushes were established which dramatically increased kills.

An area ambush is a number of point-type ambushes designed to confine the enemy within a series of kill zones. A central ambush site is established, and other point ambushes are set up along likely escape routes. Enemy troops are allowed into the main kill zone and the 'bush is sprung. Disoriented survivors will likely follow the easiest escape routes — stream beds, trails, downhill slopes — and run into your well-placed secondary ambush sites. It's a good system, but it has its flaws: The chance of compromise is greater, and your arcs of fire had better be good or you'll fire on your own troops.

There are a number of variations of each type of ambush depending on such factors as terrain, enemy force, control factors — and your imagination. But there are a few basic points to cover first before you lurk off into the bush to do battle.

All ambushes, regardless of size or type, will have two basic elements: assault and security. In essence, the assault group's task is to lay devastating fire into the kill zone and destroy the enemy. Security's job is to provide early warning and protection from the flanks and rear of the assault group. As a secondary mission, they will eliminate enemy troops as they try to flee the primary killing zone.

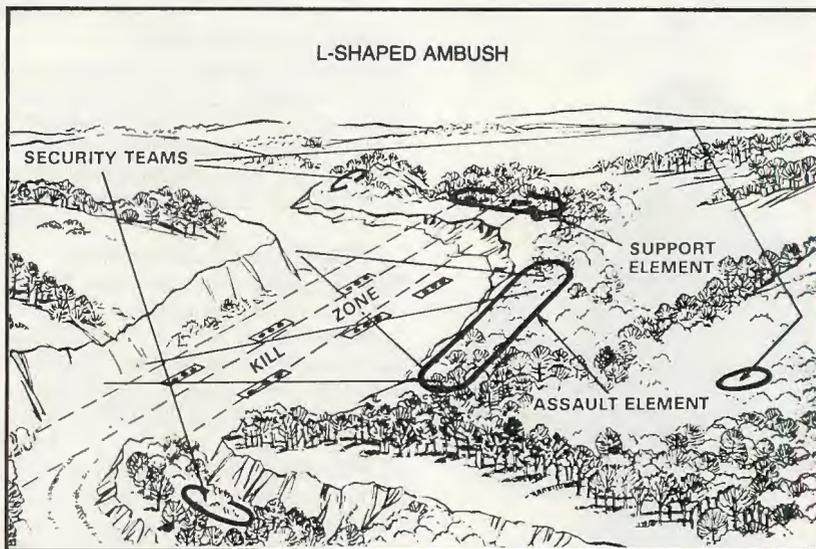
Assault and security elements pro-



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by John Coleman

Ambush!



“L” ambush allows support group to fire along the long axis of the target — a better utilization of automatic weapons.

vide the core of every point ambush. On a larger scale in an area-type ambush, the secondary point ambushes provide early warning and security for the main ambush site.

To refine the process of ambushing even more, you now need to consider the physical layout for your ambush. Of the many variations of point- and area-type ambushes, let's look at a few of the basic versions from which more complicated designs can spring.

One of the simplest to control and most widely used version is the linear, or line, ambush. If the enemy makes use of roads, trails, stream beds or other combat no-nos for travel, simply align your assault force parallel to their line of movement. Security teams are placed on the left and right flanks, far enough out to provide early warning, with the third team positioned to cover your rear. Mines or punji stakes can also be placed on the opposite side of the trail to confine the enemy in your killing zone. They walk in, you walk out.

There are some problems, though, which you must consider. First, if enemy troops keep a combat interval of 3-5 meters, they probably won't all be concentrated in your killing zone. Second, it's not the optimal set-up for your automatic weapons. They'll be best positioned at the flanks of your assault group to give crossing enfilade fire, but their effectiveness is still restricted.

That's when a variation termed the “L”-shaped ambush comes into play. Here, a third element of your ambush party, the support group, can be used to deadly effect. Imagine the letter “L,” its long end forming your assault group and the shorter end forming the support group. Assault aligns parallel to the target trail or road with support either cutting across it or following the line of any sharp bends or curves. Support will contain automatic weapons and can fire along the long axis of the target. Instead of sighting on two or three enemy troops, gunners can engage the whole line, and can also act as a blocking force to contain the killing zone.

What's the biggest disadvantage? In

Continued on page 105

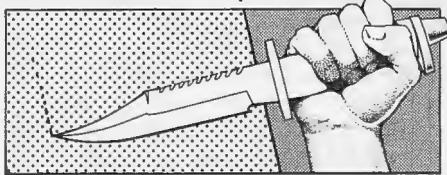
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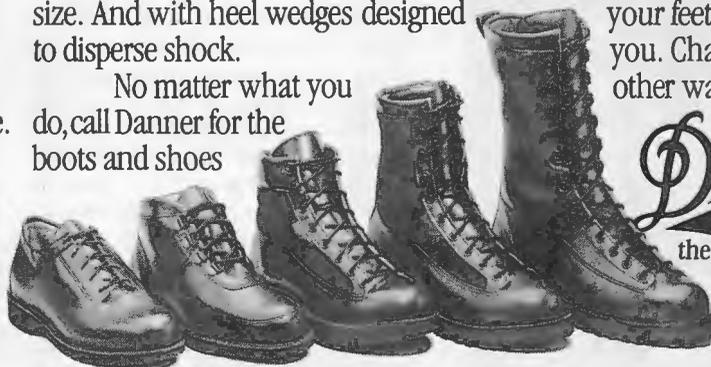
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I WAS THERE

by William Stodgel

Death Comes Calmly



Sandbags surround dud mortar round as a precautionary measure.

IT seemed as though we were always getting mortared in Vietnam. And yet what had become an almost daily routine took a savage turn one particular evening.

Several of us had been sheltered for hours in the sandbagged bunker when I first heard it. A high-pitched, mewling sound came whispering piteously from the dense blackness beyond the thick canvas door. As the small dimly lit room fell instantly silent I heard it again, this time clearly recognizable as a voice. The woeful strain of one word was plainly discernable. "Help!" Someone had been caught in the deadly metal storm of incoming shells.

Two sergeants and our commanding officer sprang for the doorway, but before stepping into the darkness our captain turned to say, "Stay put!" It seemed a simple enough order at the time.

Within 60 seconds three more soldiers, one newly appointed sergeant and two in-country greenhorns, followed them from the bunker. Slowly, two more minutes passed . . . Another barrage came marching thunderously across the perimeter of our encampment. Only black impenetrable silence followed. Every last man strained to listen, all our senses alert as one being. We knew that our people were out there. Vulnerable.

With a quick, heavy rustle the canvas flap sprang aside and two men stepped through into the light. A

sergeant was half-dragged, half-carried, to the middle of the bunker. One of the new men held the fledgling NCO upright by wrapping wounded arms around his neck. At first, the younger soldier appeared unscathed, while the sergeant, naked from the waist up, stood hideously bathed in crimson from head to belt line. Deep gasps of air wrenched into his lungs and his chest convulsively rose and fell.

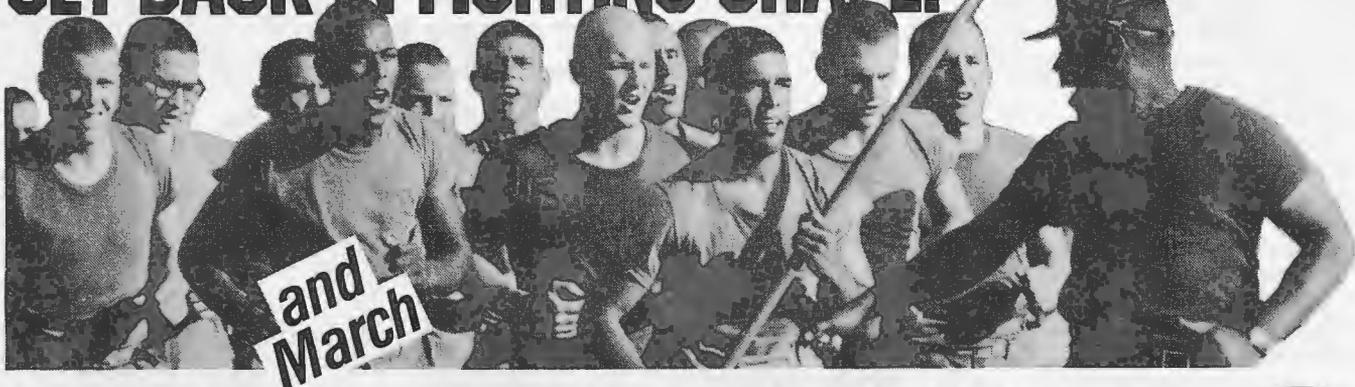
Blinking sticky, uncomprehending cinemascope eyes, he turned toward the kid who held him upright. It was then that I noticed a small trickle of blood coming from the younger soldier's right temple. They looked into each other's eyes, one grievously wounded, the other just realizing that he too had been seriously hit. Something passed between them. Was it merely eye contact and realization? I don't think so. It was an intimate exchange of much greater depth — even spiritual. Nothing was spoken aloud, but a haunting passage took place nonetheless. Soul to soul. I felt as if I shouldn't be watching. Some things are not meant to be seen.

Quickly I radioed Tan Son Nhut air base for an emergency dustoff. Sadly, 45 minutes would pass before their arrival.

The sergeant, looking the worst of the two, had only been partially scalped and would live to tell of it. The greenhorn, who hadn't even felt his injury, sat smoking a cigarette. A thin stream of blood, no larger than a blade of grass, seeped from his right temple. At first, he professed to be absolutely fine, but within minutes a slight trembling of his hands began, and they laid him gently at my feet. He couldn't have been more than 18 or 19 years old. Covered with a green army wool blanket, he lay there for perhaps a half hour — quivering and gradually turning mushroom grey.

His death was much easier than one might imagine. Like flipping a switch, "on" one minute and "off" the next. Dying is never the same once you have seen it. You tend to think of it differently — with less dread and more forbearance. ☘

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For the combat competitor, police marksman and sport shooter, the new Millett Assault Rifle Sights for the AR-15/M16 are a big improvement over the factory sights. Millett, well known for their pistol sights, now offer improved replacement sights for the AR-15/M16 family of rifles.

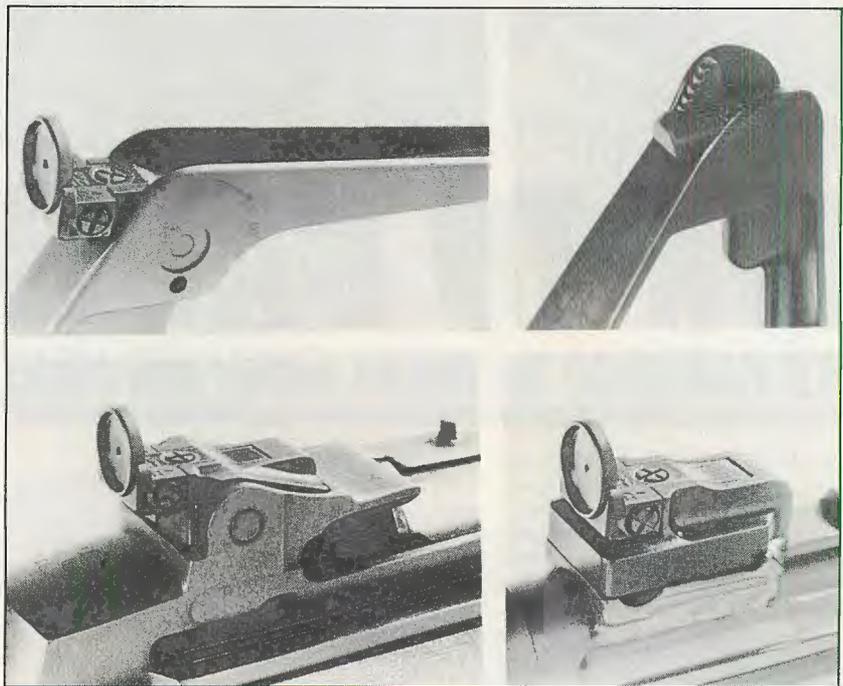
The sights are made from heat-treated steel construction for rugged durable use. They're easy to install, and come with complete instructions. No special tooling or gunsmithing is required.

Unlike the factory AR-15/M16 sights, the Millett rifle sights are fully adjustable on the rear sight only, and offer peep hole diameters of .080 inches for general shooting, and .050 inches for fine target shooting. Millett's peep apertures are reverse tapered to eliminate distortion and give the shooter a clear, sharp sight picture.

Also available are replacement sights for the Ruger Mini-14 and HK 91/93. As with all Millett sights, they're covered by a lifetime guarantee.

For more information contact Millett Sights, Dept. SOF, 16131 Gothard Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92647.

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



SURVIVAL FOLDER

The number of functions a knife is expected to perform seems to be growing. At least that's what you may be led to believe with all the new features that have been added to knives recently. Unfortunately, most of these gadgets only detract from the overall effectiveness of a blade. As compromises are made for the sake of aesthetics or the prevailing whim of the public, knives begin to lose their identity and much of their usefulness.

Designing a multi-function knife that works well in all the roles it's meant for is not an easy job. But one company — Timberline Knives of Mancos, Colorado — is on the right track. With the introduction of Timberline's new Model SX Survival Folder, a truly practical multi-purpose knife with survival features has arrived.

The model SX is a locking blade pocket knife with removable handle scales that are pre-packed with a compass and a variety of survival fishing equipment. The hollow ground blade is heat treated 440-C high carbon, high chromium, stain resistant steel, and measures 3¼ inches in length. Overall length



when open is 7½ inches. Weight is a very light 4 ounces due to the special alloy aircraft aluminum interframe and the hollow Micarta handle scales. The knife comes with a sheath that contains extra pockets for a waterproof fire-starting flint and hex wrench disassembly tool.

Timberline offers a full line of knives designed for all uses. For information on the Model SX Survival Folder and Timberline's other knives write to Timberline Knives, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 36, Mancos, CO 81328.



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Reasonably priced custom-made knives are not easy to come by. One source of such knives is Michel Ouellette, a custom knife maker in Quebec, Canada.

The Woodsman MkIII is just one example of Ouellette's work. This handmade knife measures 11 inches in length and weighs in at 14 ounces. The blade is made from 440-C stainless steel, the handle from Micarta.

Selling for \$325.00, the Woodsman is a good buy as well as a good knife. For further information, write to Michel Ouellette, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 418, Sawyerville, Quebec, Canada, JOB 3AO. ✂

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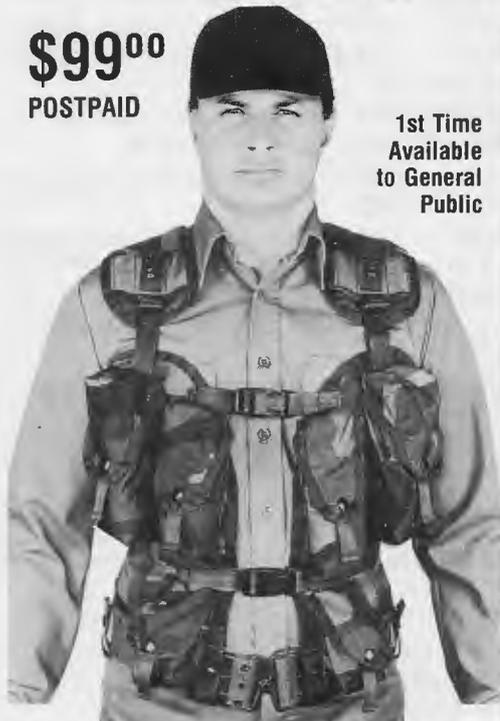
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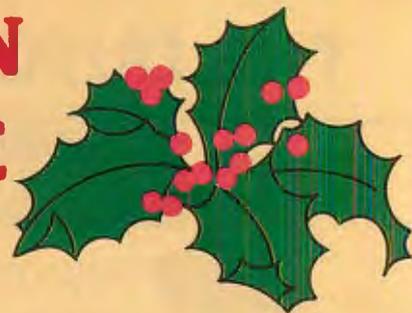
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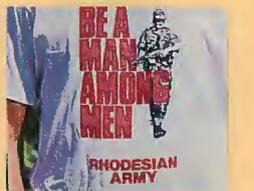
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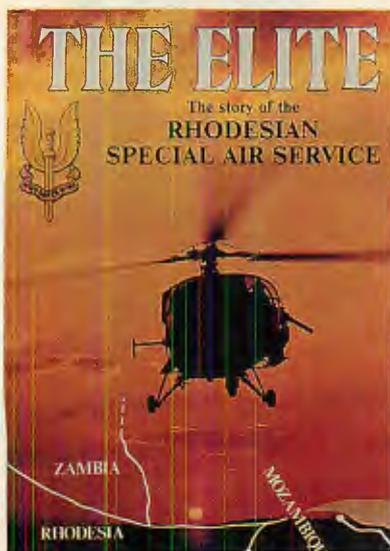


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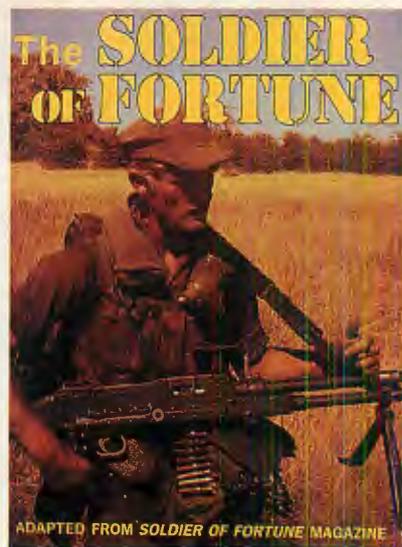
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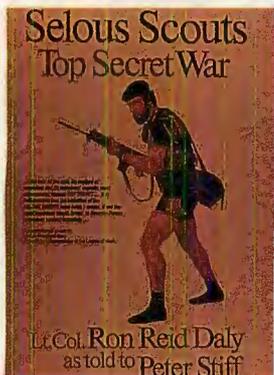
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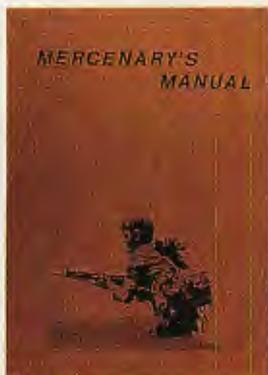


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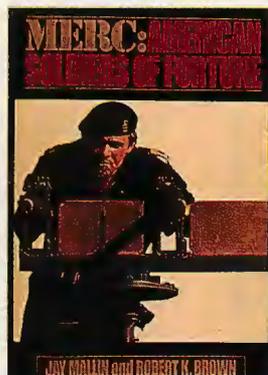
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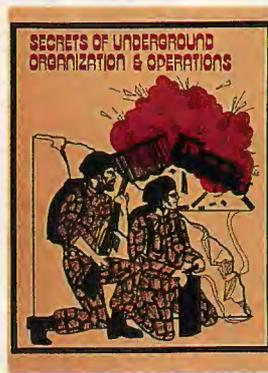
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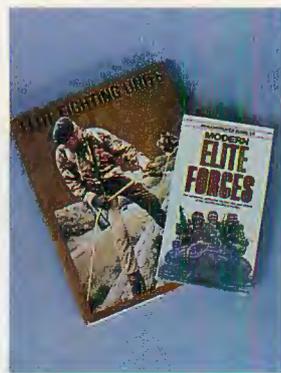


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#8012

BONES OF CONTENTION

Army Stonewalls On Lab Scandal

by James L. Pate



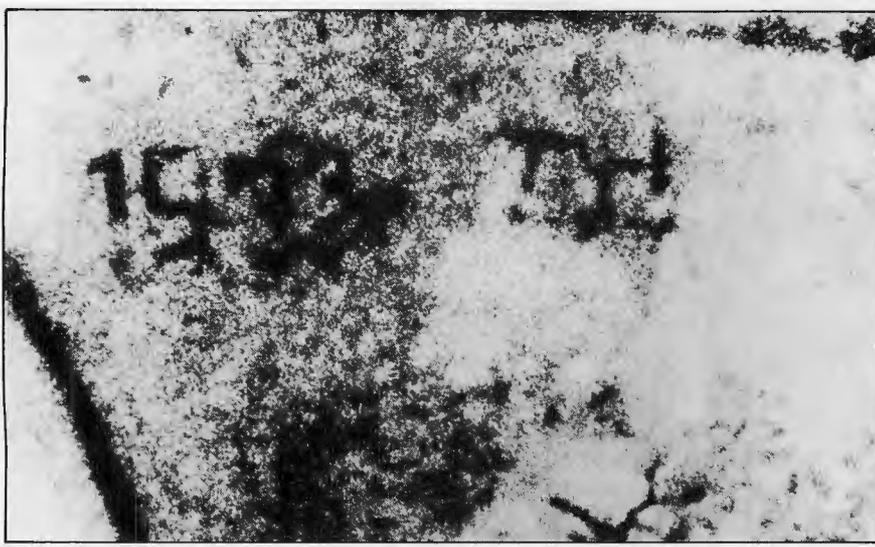
LUCK sometimes comes well disguised and when we least expect it. Being lucky was the last thing to cross the mind of Mrs. James Cowan Sr. when a casualty assistance officer called her 16 years ago. He informed her that skeletal remains had been "positively identified" by the Army as those of her son, James Jr. The younger Cowan had been listed as missing in action. Mrs. Cowan later accepted the bones from the Army and laid them to rest in a family plot.

Flash forward to 1973. Operation Homecoming, the return of U.S. servicemen held as prisoners of war in Southeast Asia — *all* POWs, said the Pentagon and the North Vietnamese government. Mrs. Cowan's luck dawned on her when she heard her son was among those being repatriated. But the three-year nightmare of thinking her son was dead still comes back to haunt the family. James Cowan Jr. certainly got an eerie feeling this past July when he visited Chicago for a week-long extravaganza honoring Vietnam veterans. Looking at a Vietnam memorial to U.S. war dead, Cowan saw his own name listed.

The Cowans have been a lot luckier than the general public, however. The families of MIAs in particular have had no luck in getting the Pentagon to admit that serious problems exist within the facility that analyzes the remains of U.S. servicemen recovered in Southeast Asia. Nor has the Pentagon responded as requested to specific recommendations by its own evaluation team, the scientific community and two congressional panels to correct those problems at the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CIL-HI).

The Army's spokesmen have refused to discuss criticism of specific cases by widely recognized forensic anthropologists who've

Furie used this skull and photo-superimposition to "identify" a set of remains. Scientists say this would be impossible because no facial bones are present.



Dr. Mike Charney, (left) and George Gill are sworn in as witnesses before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations. Photo: Kate Patterson, *Army Times*

The above escape and evasion symbol, stamped out in 10-foot high letters in elephant grass 300 miles north of the Paksé crash, has been interpreted to read: "1573 TH" or "1973 TH." DIA said the symbol, seen in a satellite recon photo, was believed to be made by Tom Hart. Photo: Defense Intelligence Agency source

challenged the work of Tadao Furue, for 35 years an Army lab technician and now CIL-HI's "senior anthropologist." Yet they demand "concrete evidence" of wrongdoing from their critics. As a result of the Army's failure (or refusal) to recognize the depth of the controversy and deal forthrightly with it, the MIA remains have literally become bones of contention.

Tadao Furue "is eminently qualified to be the senior anthropologist at the Central Identification Laboratory," Major General John S. Crosby testified to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee in July. The Senate panel took a cursory look at the lab, its work and its personnel.

The Army's position has remained unchanged since the issue arose. According to Army Lieutenant Colonel Keith Schneider: "We have full confidence in the [CIL-HI] personnel . . . as experts in analyzing partial skeletal remains. . . . The Department of Defense is fully confident in the accuracy of those identifications and in the fact that the identifications are the result of the most thorough investigation forensically possible."

But many scientists in the field think Furue — a GS-13 who has successfully passed himself off as a Ph.D. to some reporters when actually he doesn't possess any postgraduate degree — should not work above a technical level.

In order to defuse such criticism, as well as enhance CIL-HI's and Furue's credibility, the Army has strongly encouraged him to obtain membership in the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS). Such an effort failed at the AAFS Convention last February when questions were raised about his academic qualifications. Admittance to the Physical Anthropology Section requires at least a master's degree.

But Furue told the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* in August he will try again in 1987. His prospects don't seem good, however, according to a copy of an AAFS letter independently obtained by *Soldier of Fortune*.

"I did receive my copy of the letter from Minoru Takano, University of Tokyo [where Furue falsely claims to have obtained a master's degree] regarding Mr. Furue's educational background," wrote Dr. George Gill of the University of Wyoming, also secretary of the Physical Anthropology Section of the AAFS. "I trust that we are able now to completely drop this idea of his membership in the AAFS. . . . I have heard that Mr. Furue might be seeking membership in the General Section [which does not require a graduate degree] I am afraid that if this happens, those of us who have the evidence will be compelled to bring our findings before the Ethics Committee. Can't we encourage Mr. Furue to give up on this idea of AAFS membership?"

"I am one of the physical anthropologists of the AAFS who have recently been called upon to review MIA skeletal identification cases done by Mr. Furue. The three of us who have reviewed actual bones, and done careful comparison to Mr. Furue's records [reached] the inescapable conclusion . . . that in some instances there has been fabrication of data in his reports," Gill wrote in the 25 August letter to Dr. Richard C. Froede. Froede is a physician who heads the University of Arizona Medical School's forensic science program. He is an AAFS vice president and chairman of the academy's Membership Committee.

Gill is not the only forensic anthropologist to go on record against Furue's work. The Army has charged that the criticisms of Furue and CIL-HI originated mainly with Dr. Michael Charney, an SOF scientific consultant and professor emeritus at Colorado State University. But Charney has plenty of distinguished company. Among their number are: Dr. William Bass of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, who called Furue's work "appalling"; Dr. Walter Birkby of the University of Arizona, president of the American Board of Forensic

Anthropology; Dr. Michael Finnegan of Kansas State University; Dr. Norman J. Sauer of Michigan State University; Dr. Clyde Snow of the University of Oklahoma; and Dr. T. Dale Stewart of the Smithsonian. All are board certified and Stewart is acknowledged as one of the top physical anthropologists in the world, consultant to the Army for 40 years and author of "Essentials of Forensic Anthropology," the definitive textbook in that area of science.

The findings about Furue's lack of academic credentials were first published in the July 1986 issue of *Soldier of Fortune*, which also documented details about:

- Fabricated lab data.
- Altered lab reports.
- Inadequate lab facilities.
- An apparent conflict of interest between Furue and Dr. Ellis Kerley, appointed by the Pentagon to head a three-man team evaluating Furue's work and the lab facility. Furue and Kerley have been friends since 1954, and Furue was Kerley's best man when the latter married. Kerley says this has not affected his judgment. Kerley sponsored Furue for AAFS membership in 1986, and is sponsoring him again for 1987.
- A lack of professional qualifications for the lab's two top administrators, Colonel Johnie Webb and Thorne Helgesen. Helgesen was lab director until being relieved of the job after publication of SOF's findings. Lab sources say Helgesen's loss of title "was to make the Army look good on paper" and that Helgesen still plays a key role in the lab's day-to-day affairs.
- Use of Furue's "morphological approximation technique," which one of the Pentagon's own three experts, Dr. William Maples, termed "useless." Concerning Furue's lab reports he had examined, Maples testified to the Senate committee that "there seems to be a lot of window dressing



Dr. Ellis Kerley, head of the Pentagon evaluation team and now an Army consultant on the lab, denies a conflict of interest because his old friend, Tadao Furue, is lab anthropologist. Photo: Kate Patterson, Army Times



Johnnie Webb, military head of CIL-HI, failed to tell the truth to a Senate panel about the use of forbidden lab techniques at CIL-HI. Photo: Kate Patterson, Army Times

... and little substance. The amount of variation they allowed ... was totally inadequate and even someone in introductory courses in human osteology would not be allowed to write a report inferring such accuracy from this type of evidence."

SOF contacted the office of U.S. Rep. Bill Nichols, chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations, in February about its initial findings. Nichols met with this reporter and Dr. Charney in Washington in March, when Nichols first viewed the skeletal remains identified by CIL-HI as those of Air Force Master Sergeant James Fuller. A hearing by Nichols' subcommittee into findings by SOF was imminent as this story went to press.

After these findings were made known to Nichols, Secretary of the Army John Marsh vowed in a 14 May letter that Furue's unscientific method would no longer be used. Lab sources say use of the unscientific technique continued at least through the end of August. Charney used over 200 bones to examine Furue's technique. He said it has no scientific validity.

In addition, Furue has falsely claimed to reporters that he "invented a unique identification method called the Cranial-Facial Superimposition System." The quote is from a story by Patricia Patton of United Press International which appeared in the 19 December 1982 issue of *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. Furue also has told congressmen visiting CIL-HI that he invented the system.

In fact, photo-superimposition is a technique used as early as 1883 in Europe, according to anthropological literature, and it is widely familiar to the scientific community. Probably the most famous case involving this technique is that of Revolutionary War naval hero John Paul Jones. A bust made by the noted sculptor Houdon was

used with the photo-superimposition technique to positively identify Jones' alleged remains when they were exhumed in Paris for removal to the United States Naval Academy in 1906. A report on the case was published by the Government Printing Office in 1907.

The controversy over CIL-HI began in July 1985, when heavily burned and fragmented remains recovered earlier by a CIL-HI excavation team from an AC-130 crash site near Paksé, Laos, were returned to families. The government contends 13 men died in the crash. Of over 65,000 bone fragments recovered, between 600 and 700 were separated into 13 piles weighing a total of about three pounds and "positively identified" as 13 individuals.

Maples — one of the Pentagon's own experts — later testified that only two of the 13 cases were actually identified, though. As family members sought outside opinions on the identifications from recognized civilian anthropologists, it became increasingly clear that "mistakes of a blatant nature" had been made, according to a report writ-

Tadao Furue denies allegations he has deliberately misidentified MIA remains or falsified his academic credentials. Photo: Kate Patterson, Army Times



ten by the Pentagon evaluation team, which included Drs. Maples and Kerley, both forensic anthropologists, and Dr. Lowell Levine, a forensic dentist.

Furue declined to answer questions for SOF's July story, saying he had been ordered not to comment by the Army. Various Army public affairs offices have consistently refused to make either Furue or Webb available to SOF for questioning. When this reporter saw Webb in Washington, Webb said the SOF's July report contained "several problems." But when offered the opportunity to sit down with a copy of the story and correct any errors of fact, he walked away, saying he had no time to do so.

The Pentagon's only real corrective measure has been its decision in July to rescind the identification of Capt. Thomas Hart, table navigator aboard the plane that crashed at Paksé. His wife, Mrs. Anne Hart, earlier was pressured by the Air Force to accept the remains. She refused and the Air Force threatened to bury the remains at Arlington under Hart's name anyway.

But Mrs. Hart has U.S. intelligence documents specifically stating that her husband is believed to have survived the crash. These documents have been attached to a U.S. District Court suit. Other intelligence reports indicate that he was still alive in captivity years after the crash. She told SOF the Pentagon had failed as of September to tell her what status, if any, her husband's case now holds. Her two court cases against the Pentagon are pending.

As SOF's investigation continued through the summer, more disturbing findings surfaced. Allegations concerning criminal fraud by top lab staff members — specifically Furue, Webb and Helgesen — were made.

Continued on page 106

COLD WEATHER COMMANDOS

Guarding Nato's Northern Flank

Text by Arnstein Tranoy

Photos by Forsvarets Rekrutterings-og Opplysningstjeneste



Covering their approach with an AG-3 battle rifle, Marine Commandos paddle towards Norway's frozen coast. Norway's long coastline provides the Commandos with their principal area of operations.

During a brisk September night at a coastal artillery fort on the east coast of Norway a home guard soldier on exercise walks his post by the sea. Although alert, he is oblivious to the two frogmen silently emerging from the ocean. When he finally realizes the danger, it is too late — he is face-to-face with their AG-3 rifles. He never had a chance, never heard a sound. The Norwegian Marine Commandos had struck again.

THE history of the Norwegian Marine Commandos began as far back as the 1920s when the Norwegian navy Torpedo-Mine Command operated helmet-divers for anti-mine and search and recovery operations. During WWII the Norwegian navy continued to run a small group of mine-divers in Great Britain, although they didn't see much action.

In 1953 a frogman school in Horten, Norway was opened as a result of

pressure from diving enthusiasts, although the mission of frogmen in Norwegian naval doctrine was not clear at that time. The course was patterned after the U.S. Navy frogman training program and was considered extremely tough, even by today's standards.

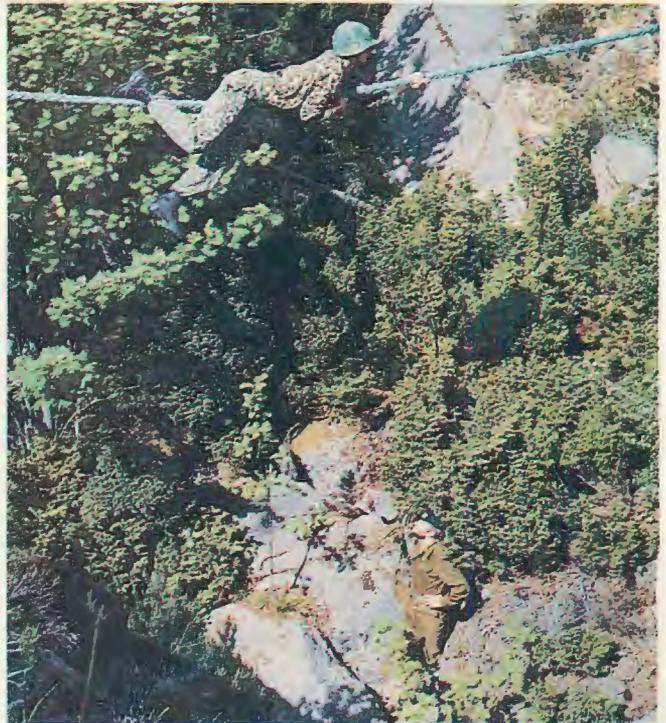
In 1962 the two schools for divers were united and called the Norwegian Diver and Frogman School. The school is



ABOVE: Marine Commandos on patrol armed with Suomi 37/39 SMGs. This type of uniform is only worn by the Commandos.

RIGHT: Commando crosses a one-rope bridge under the watchful eye of an instructor. Only 10 Marine Commando candidates graduate each year.

BELOW: Marine Commandos are used for several peacetime missions including search and rescue and underwater ship work. Their skills are in high demand in the North Sea oil fields.



now situated at the Haakonsværn Navy Base outside Bergen. In 1968 it was divided into two divisions: Mine Divers and Marine Commandos. The reason for this division and the creation of Marine Commandos was a desire to have both an offensive and a defensive group of specially-trained soldiers within the navy. The increasing need for specialization was also a major factor.

A trained Marine Commando must be able to execute many different missions,

NORWEGIAN FREELANCER

Arnstein Tranoy has served 18 months in the Norwegian air force and army. He is presently a second lieutenant in the Norwegian air force and a first year student at Stirling University in Scotland, majoring in business studies. This is his first journalistic endeavor.

and in order to do so successfully, he must complete extensive training. But an interested applicant must start out in the same way as any raw recruit — basic training.

All new recruits are bunched together and sent through navy basic. Then the Marine Commando hopefuls try their hand at a basic course in diving that involves diving medicine, diving theory,



ABOVE: Wet jump: Marine Commandos deploy by sea, air and land.

RIGHT: Over 1,700 miles of coastline provide ample space for Commandos to hone their diving skills.

BELOW: Commandos take a break during an exercise. Most candidates drop out of the course during the first "hell week."



lifesaving, underwater search and rescue and other similar skills. Those succeeding in this course then have a choice: they can go through the rest of their national service (15 months) as a light diver or they can apply for either the mine-diver course or the Marine Commando course.

About '50 men are accepted as applicants in the Marine Commandos and all go through an introduction week or,

as it is more popularly called, "hell week." Only 10 Marine Commandos graduate each year and most who drop out of the course do so in the first week. Among the dropouts are would-be adventurers and tough guys who soon find that they are not so tough after all.

This first week involves hard psychological and physical tests with minimal rations. A Marine Commando is taught to survive in the open. Learning this skill means that he must overcome

exhaustion, pain and hallucinations, eat what can be found in nature, and learn to sleep almost on command.

The course lasts 14 weeks and involves signaling, swimming (with and without uniform), beach reconnaissance, patrolling, and kayak and rubber dinghy drills. It also includes firing several different infantry weapons, the use of



explosives, first aid, mountaineering, hand-to-hand combat and intelligence.

The scuba portion of the course is sophisticated. Training includes diving with rich oxygen, mixed gas down to 55 meters, and pressurized air down to 60 meters. Would-be commandos are dive-tested to a simulated 90 meters in a carefully-controlled pressurization tank, and swimming skills are taught and

exhaustively tested. Trainees must then swim 3,000 meters underwater and 10,000 meters on the surface. And that's just to pass.

With all that behind them, the Marine Commando hopefuls go through a two-week course in guerrilla warfare. All trainees must also pass a four-week course at the army's Airborne Commando School at Trandum.

After 16 grueling weeks the 10 soldiers who survive the ordeal officially become

Marine Commandos and are sent to Ramsund Navy Station in Northern Norway. There they go through an introduction period with particular emphasis placed on the special climatic conditions in northern Norway. However, since Marine Commandos can never be *too good*, they continue their training during the rest of their service time by



ABOVE: Kayak operations: Marine Commandos are at home along the rugged Norwegian coastline.



LEFT: Rappelling is an integral part of Commando ops. A fellow Commando waits below in a sea-going kayak.

BELOW: During training, breaks are few and far between, so soldiers take them when they can. This trainee makes do with what little food he has during a cold Norwegian morning.



undertaking military missions all over Norway.

Weapons play a big part in the life of a Marine Commando and the ones used depend on the mission. All the weapons in the Norwegian armed forces inventory are available to them. These include the AG-3 which is the Norwegian-built version of the Heckler & Koch G3, the Suomi submachine gun (the Swedish Husqvarna-made version of the Finnish weapon), the Heckler & Koch MP5A2

and MP5A3 submachine guns, the Norwegian Kongsberg Vapenfabrik Colt Model 1914, the Walther P-38, the Luger P-08 and several other WWII weapons.

The AG-3, the MP5 and the Suomi are the favorite weapons of the Marine Commandos. The Suomi is often used when the mission includes diving because

it will fire without difficulty even after prolonged immersion in water. Although a WWII weapon, the Suomi is extremely sturdy and accurate and is probably the most reliable weapon in the Norwegian armory. The MP5 and AG-3 are often used on inland missions.

The Marine Commandos are an offensive unit. Their functions in war are many, but their main task is to penetrate



Marine Commando hits the beach with his AG-3 battle rifle. Note shoulder patch and beret crest, and unit's unofficial badge worn around the Commando's neck.

enemy lines undetected and report back to friendly forces. They also perform sabotage and infiltration missions, often in cooperation with other branches of the armed forces.

The Norwegian navy reveals little about the Marine Commandos. The unit's potential in war is enormous and in a

country like Norway with deep fjords, high mountains and the harsh climate of the northern peninsula, a unit like the Marine Commandos is essential. Good intelligence can decide the outcome of combat in these sparsely populated areas. And because Norway doesn't possess a wide range of electronic equipment for gathering the information required, the Marine Commandos are vital in keeping the military intelligence network operating.

Even with their value as inland soldiers, the Marine Commandos will inevitably be associated with amphibious warfare. Since they have never had an opportunity to show their skill in war, their performance under hostile conditions is still untried. But if their level of training is any indication, they should do just fine. ✕

BY 1000 hours the hot, sodden air had settled oppressively over the thickly wooded forest; the sun already burning its way through the green foliage to bake the forest floor. Call sign "Alpha Charlie," the two-man sniper team from the 82nd Airborne Division, felt the new day's soggy heat flow into their underground "hide" through the loopholes facing their target area. The stale air in their bunker didn't stir; it just became more stagnant, more uncomfortable, with each passing minute.

The 6x6x4-foot hide had been their home for better than two days, sharing the cramped space with their combat-loaded rucksacks, load bearing equipment, radio, camouflaged "ghillie" suits, sniper weapon system and M16 — and a variety of insects and crawlers. Sleep had come only in snatches, one man observing the target area — a small bridge some 300 meters away — while the other rested.

They were already tired before they'd even started their target area observations. The move-in had been a slow, patient and painstaking process: They were behind enemy lines, and compromise could come from the slightest mistake. Then there'd been the all night digging and camouflaging session of their hide. It had to be letter perfect: deep enough to comfortably stand, large enough to provide at least minimal comfort for a number of days, situated to provide optimal observation and weapons' coverage of the target area, strong enough to provide overhead cover and, perhaps most important, so well blended into the terrain that even the most experienced enemy scout would pass it by. All done at night, deep inside enemy territory.

SOF UNIT REPORT

"ONE SHOT, ONE KILL"

Army Sniper School is Dead On Target

by John Coleman

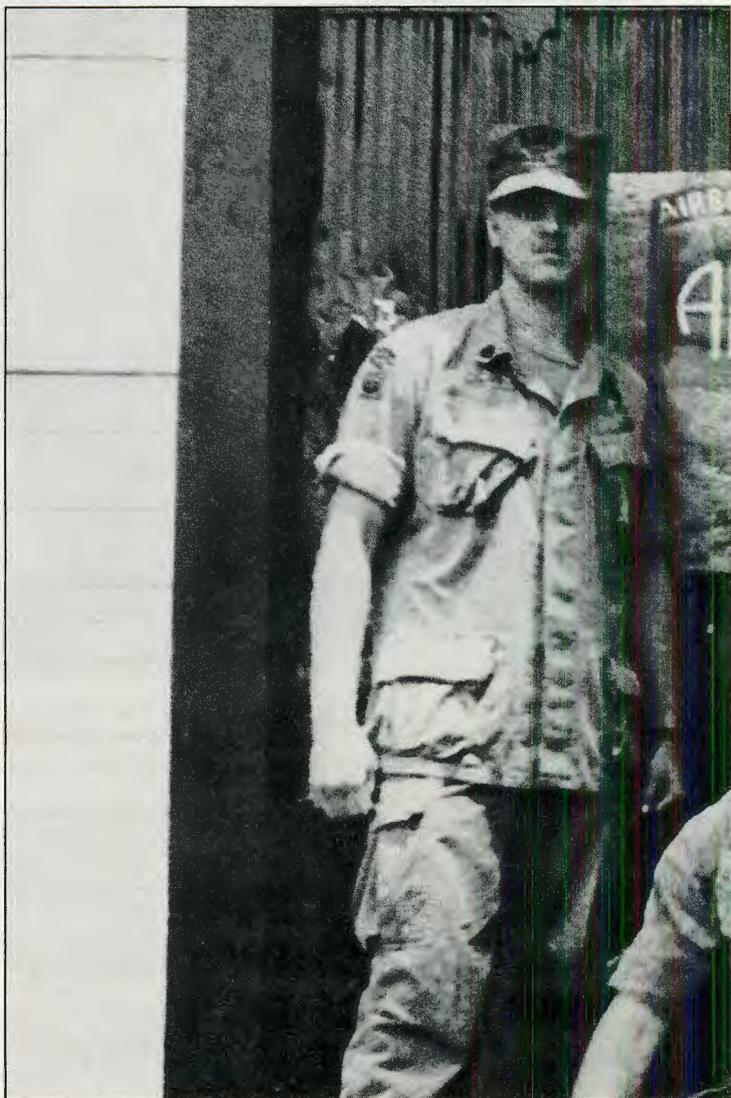
PFC Paul Normandeau leaned against the earthen ledge of the hide, an eye glued to the M49 spotting scope. Periodically he'd change to the binoculars, sweeping the area while giving his eyes a rest. An occasional wave of sodden air wafted through the loopholes, cooling for a brief instant the sweat forming on his black and green camouflage-painted face. Never for more than a few seconds did he take his eyes off the target area. Their mission was too important to allow even a moment's slack.

He swept the bridge and the road leading up to it for what was probably the hundredth time. Movement. On the road, maybe 75 meters on the other side of the bridge. He looked again. Two figures, carrying weapons. One dressed in the uniform of a Soviet officer, the other in a green and sand-spotted camouflaged jumpsuit. Normandeau nudged his teammate, PFC John Labis, with his foot.

"What's up?" Labis asked quietly, rolling on his makeshift bed of ghillie suits to face his teammate.

"We've got the primary target coming down the road. He's got a buddy with him."

Labis stood up and peered out the second loophole. He spotted the two distant figures immediately, then peered again through the ART-2 scope mounted on his sniper rifle. The two men jumped into clear focus. "Soviet uniform" — an adviser to guerrilla forces operating in the area — was definitely their primary target. He was carrying critical intelligence information and documents which could affect future U.S. operations in the area. They hadn't been briefed on "spotted suit," but he was





ABOVE: Sgt. Scott Raitt, NCOIC of AMTU's Sniper Committee, locks into a good sitting supported firing position with the M21 sniper system. Photo: John Coleman

BELOW: Sniper instructors (left to right) Lucas, Huffer, Pipes and Raitt. Skull & crossbones committee logo aptly reflects their motto: "One Shot, One Kill." Photo: John Coleman

probably a senior member of the guerrilla forces. A good secondary target.

Labis kept the Soviet centered in his sight as the two moved closer to the bridge. It was a known range; Labis adjusted his scope for 300 meters. Normandeau fed him wind conditions — nil. It should be a good shot. The two enemy troops closed on to the bridge, half alert while scanning the bush alongside the road, but generally unconcerned. They were in friendly, guerrilla-controlled territory.

The Soviet officer crossed and then stepped off the bridge. One shot cracked through the still, hot morning air; the officer crumpled onto the dusty road. Acting out of instinct, the guerrilla dove for cover. Then he remembered the documents on the adviser. They had to be delivered. He crouched, then dashed over to the inert body on the road. Frantically he pulled at the pouch on the officer's belt. A scant moment later a second shot rang out, and the guerrilla dropped sprawling to join his comrade under the washed-out, pale blue sky.

Callsign Alpha Charlie had carried out its mission.

"OK, sniper. Come on out of there." Sergeant Scott Raitt, NCOIC of XVIII Airborne Corps' AMTU (Advanced Marksmanship Training Unit) Sniper Committee, delivered his order to the empty woods.

To a casual observer, Sgt. Raitt was talking to a piece of Ft. Bragg's pine needle-strewn forest floor under his feet. Then, a 2x2-foot section of the forest floor broke away, lifted up and was pushed aside. PFCs Normandeau and Labis climbed out of their hide to face a tough critique of their mission and hide



AGAINST THE ODDS

Only the best marksmen should be selected for sniper training. The telescopic sight rifle belongs in their hands, without regard of their rank. A high degree of hunter-like behavior, patience, endurance, and cunning is required of the sniper. Cold-blooded deliberation, skillful use of the terrain and all camouflage possibilities, and outstanding powers of observation must distinguish him from other men, both in creeping up to the enemy's position, as well as his assault against the enemy. The desire to zero in on the enemy under any conditions, to hit and destroy him, must be especially impressed upon snipers. It is an honor to be a sniper. — Requirements for German Army snipers in World War II.

Snipers have played key roles in battle throughout history. Men who have shown extraordinary ability with their weapons — be it bow & arrow, muzzle loader or today's state-of-the-art sniper weapons systems — have invariably been chosen as the commander's spearpoint in time of conflict. But when the war is over, the sniper's fighting edge often becomes dull.

During peacetime, snipers, as well as other specialized forces, generally bear the brunt of cost reductions and reorganization — or elimination — to conform to standard conventional war mindsets. In the grip of this unfortunate attitude, sniper training, equipment and, most importantly, utilization, fall far down on the list of commanders' priorities, and an invaluable asset to the battlefield leader is lost. In fact, sniper squads and platoons are not even currently listed in the Army's tables of organization; they are generally drawn from existing scout or recon platoon manpower pools, and used — or misused — at the commander's discretion.

But all that may be changing. Senior officers up to Department of the Army level are coming to realize that snipers are precision instruments and efforts are underway to incorporate — and fully recognize — the sniper asset.

One strong proponent is Colonel Steven L. Arnold, the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade commander, who oversees and supports a four-week sniper course run in his command.

"The Army as a whole does not recognize a sniper squad," he said. "We're working with the proponent, Ft. Benning, in doing just that. We have written our proposal; it has reached Fort Benning, it has been briefed at the higher echelons of the U.S. Army."

Colonel Arnold, who commanded a RECONDO unit in Vietnam which employed snipers, agrees that the sniper concept has a valuable place in current Army operations.

"One of the ways we've used them frequently is to put them in an advance in a surreptitious, clandestine manner; have them observe the target area for 24 to 48 hours, have them report what they have observed, and then do an air assault into the target area based on the intel they have provided. They will also then support the air assault by taking out key targets," he explained.

"That's been effective, but the key is their ability to do clandestine operations and their ability to really be good observers — good intel gatherers."

"It has been recognized as a valid requirement," Col. Arnold said. Although the sniper unit has not yet been approved by the Army, he believes there is a future for the sniper. "It should be, hopefully, in the new tables of organization for the U.S. Army, and Fort Benning is supporting us there."

One of the main complaints heard, however, is that even given an established sniper squad or platoon, most commanders



LEFT: Committee Chief Instructor Sgt. David Pipes critiques snipers' hide during 3½-day FTX. Photo: Spec. 4 Michael Hofbauer, XVIII Abn Corps Public Affairs

RIGHT: Sniper's basic combat load includes everything from a bowsaw to construct his hide to a tripod for the M49 spotting scope — and weighs close to 90 pounds. Photo: John Coleman

BELOW: It'll never be officially recognized, but the Sniper Committee's logo gets the point across. Photo: Spec. 4 Michael Hofbauer, XVIII Abn Corps Public Affairs



simply would not effectively be able to employ it. Some of the Sniper School graduates felt their parent unit wouldn't use them as snipers, or misuse them if it did. Only two graduates, from Col. Arnold's 2nd Brigade, felt they would "definitely be employed as snipers."

Instructors at the school generally agreed that in addition to the regular five-week sniper course, an abbreviated course stressing sniper employment could be run for unit commanders. But as First Lieutenant Chris Gaertner, Ft. Bragg's Advanced Marksmanship Training Unit commander, said, the problem lies not so much in technique but rather in awareness.

"Commanders need to know the asset's there, and that solves a major problem. Sometimes commanders even forget they have mortars in support. We need to educate them that the asset exists rather than run a course."

Such was the interest at Ft. Bragg in the sniper program that 1st Lt. Gaertner was tasked to brief the 82nd's commander and his senior officers. If that's any indication of Army-wide interest in snipers, then the current program is off to a good start.

But there are other problems which face snipers and their proponents, one being the stigma of "elitism." Yet as Col. Arnold and others have pointed out, the Army's special unit capability is expanding — and becoming more acceptable — as evidenced by the formation of SOCOM (Special Operations Command) Headquarters at Ft. Bragg.

Does this mean the sniper will find unqualified acceptance? Not likely. Dogmatic officers steeped in classical war theory will continue to view snipers as they view other unconventional operators: as undisciplined, uncontrollable and unnecessary within the strictly defined order of battle. But others such as Col. Arnold, who do view the sniper as a precision instrument in the

Army's toolbox, will, with luck, slowly turn the tide.

Equipment — primarily weapons systems — and training are two other chronic problems which continue to plague the sniper. Although the Sniper School run at Ft. Bragg is an excellent program, instructors and students alike agree that further instructional material, and time, could be added to make it more effective. Classes on ComBloc sniper systems and tactics, forward observer and air assault procedures, the sniper in the urban environment, tracking and extended time for the fieldcraft and shooting phases would undoubtedly produce better snipers.

With the current M21 sniper system, however, even extended range time may not help sniper students fulfill the school's motto of "One Shot, One Kill." Some of these accursed M14s used by the committee date from early Vietnam service and, as one instructor put it, "The XM21 system may have had its teething pains, but now the teeth are falling out." Combined with the ART-2 scope — with more moving parts than its predecessor and mounting bolts which tend to loosen easily — students have to struggle, and occasionally exchange systems, in order to meet the course's stringent qualification requirements.

Replacement systems are currently being tested by the committee and throughout the Army, and in fact a new system, the XM24 (7.62mm with a Leupold-type scope) is tentatively scheduled to hit the Army's inventory around August 1987. (As of this writing, the Army is not releasing information on the XM24 system or its manufacturer.) But funding — thousands of dollars for each *individual* system — may be the stone wall which keeps the tired M21 in service for the time being. As the AMTU's First Sergeant, SFC Dan Pasive, put it: "We'd like to see new equipment, but as long as I've got good instructors, we'll make do with what we've got."



construction.

Down the road, the two "dead" enemy troops, committee Chief Instructor Sergeant David Pipes and Sniper Instructor Corporal Damon Huffer, came to life and headed toward the hide to add their input. Sergeant Timothy McGinnis, the committee's National Match armorer and weapons instructor, and Sniper Instructor Sergeant Randall Lucas also moved forward from their vantage point behind the hide.

"You accomplished the primary mission. Good," Sgt. Raitt told the two sniper students while marking down points on his clipboard. "Let's look at your hide."

For all appearances, the students' hide was undetectable. The small mound forming the roof was unnoticeable, and their camouflage blended in perfectly with the terrain. Yet there were errors which an experienced guerrilla — especially one familiar with the area — or a sharp enemy special unit operative, would catch. A bit of spoil, the sandy clay-like earth dug from the hole, had been left uncovered by the road. The position of a few tree branches at the rear of the hide looked man-made rather than the result of natural fall. Grooves in the ground in front of the loopholes were a shade too pronounced, and the loopholes themselves had collapsed slightly from the weight of the overhead cover thus restricting vision. Small points that could lead to compromise — or worse — in combat. Here, they led to the deduction of critical, graduation-required points.

Sergeant Raitt and his staff finished their inspection. Raitt explained the errors to the students, using them as teaching points. Then came the verdict: "Good hide, snipers. Well

done." Labis and Normandeau were obviously pleased.

"What's next, sergeant?" One of the students asked.

Raitt put his hands on his hips. "Continue the mission, sniper. Continue to observe."

The purpose of the AMTU Sniper Committee's five-week Sniper Course is "To provide specially selected personnel, who are highly trained in fieldcraft and marksmanship, instruction on how to deliver long range precision fire on selected targets from concealed positions in support of combat operations." It sounds relatively simple when couched in those terms, but the Ft. Bragg course — and the sniper's actual role in combat — is anything but simple. Even selection for the course, geared to take up to 34 sniper students from Ft. Bragg units, is tough: only 27-30 usually comprise the starting class.

An applicant must first get by the standard requirements — restrictions on time in service, retainability by the unit after graduation, rank, physical condition and marksmanship (candidates must be qualified as expert on the M16). Even after those are met, other factors play heavily on the sniper's selection for the course. Sniper candidates must be "emotionally stable and reliable as determined by a qualified psychiatrist," have no record of disciplinary action, no history of drug or alcohol abuse or serious marital problems, and no physical conditions — including the wearing of contacts or eyeglasses — which would hamper their work as unit snipers. And, candidates must be designated as a sniper within their parent unit and be assigned the M21 sniper system.

Once these prerequisites are met, the course begins at Sniper

BELOW: Ghillie suit and sniper log are tools of the sniper's trade. Students record all activity near their hide for future intel debriefs. Photo: Spec. 4 Michael Hofbauer, XVIII Abn Corps Public Affairs





ABOVE: Armed with the M21 sniper system, this two-man team prepares to move out on a mission. Enemy leaders, forward observers — and snipers — are primary targets. Photo: John Coleman

BELOW: Sniper team in action. Spotter with M49 scope will help sniper acquire the target, then feed range and wind information to ensure accurate first shot. Photo: John Coleman

Committee headquarters located in the range area, a 15-minute drive from XVIII Airborne Corps HQ. Week one emphasizes academic subjects, most of which are taught in or around the Sniper Committee shop. It's here that students begin to assimilate the meaning of the sniper's role as compared to standard airborne infantry tactics taught and practiced in their parent units. Sniper employment in the advance, attack, defense and retrograde are specifically stressed; classes and field work in sniper history, equipment, land navigation, techniques of observation, target detection and selection, range estimation, individual movement along with camouflage and concealment, hide selection, construction and occupation, night observation devices, target leads, and wind and weather all put the sniper students on the same course wavelength.

They're also introduced to the uniform which will become their standard field outfit: the ghillie suit. Ghillies are one-piece uniforms, reinforced in the front with heavy canvas, which are covered with camouflage netting, burlap strips, and a variety of other camouflaging materials which make the sniper nearly invisible in the field. A really good ghillie takes two weeks to construct, but sniper students are given their first "free" weekend to come up with passable models.

Students are hit with their first exam at the end of the first week — and are introduced to the inflexible 75 percentile which governs the entire course. They need a 75-percent score to pass the exam. If they don't, they wash out. The 75-percent rule also applies to the fieldcraft exercises. A 74.5 percent in that phase will send you back to your unit — and about one-third of the



course RTUs (return to unit). Same for the shooting phase, where another third or more of the course RTUs, for the FTX (field training exercise) phase, and for the course overall. At one stage the requirement was 80 percent, but literally only 2-3 students out of 30 managed to graduate.

AMTU's Sniper School is allowed to formulate its own standards under the guidance of XVIII Airborne Corps' G3 Operations. As a local-unit course, it has more flexibility in this regard than other Department of the Army TRADOC (Training and Doctrine Command)-governed courses.

Week two of the course begins the critical separation between those students who *think* they can be snipers, and those who have the actual ability to handle the tough mechanics of the job. The entire week is devoted to in-the-bush work on fieldcraft, where the course's key word — "patience" — takes on physical meaning.

"Going to the target location and getting back is the greatest challenge," Sgt. Lucas, a veteran of the 1983 Grenada rescue mission, explained. "Snipers have to be very good in fieldcraft, camouflage and movement, and you have to have patience. Time is a critical factor: take it. Stop and think before you do anything; think before you act."

Chief Instructor Sgt. Pipes summed up the importance of this phase of training. "It's good to be a good shot, but it's better to get out alive."

Students are immediately put to the task of testing their own



ABOVE: M21 and M16 provide firepower for the team although stealth and fieldcraft are their greatest weapons. Photo: Spec. 4 Michael Hofbauer, XVIII Abn Corps Public Affairs

BELOW: The last thing you'd want to see while on patrol. These students practice the school's motto, "One Shot, One Kill," during their two weeks of intensive range work. Photo: John Coleman

BELOW RIGHT: Bolt-action McMillan system (top) is a serious contender to replace the aging M21 which dates from early Vietnam service. Photo: John Coleman

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

"One Shot, One Kill." It's the Sniper School's motto, and the standard they set during training. And it should be the combat sniper's rule to live by while on operations.

But it's not only technique and training that make a sniper one of the most deadly adversaries on the field. As every combat infantryman knows, it's his weapon that often spells the difference between life and death.

The 7.62mm NATO M21 U.S. rifle, or M21 sniper system, is the tool of the trade for today's U.S. Army snipers. Based on the NATO M14 rifle adopted by the U.S. Army in 1957 as the successor to the M1 Garand, the M21 saw early service in Vietnam as the XM21 (experimental) sniping rifle. It was so successful in the field that it came into the Army's inventory.

Modifications to the system, however, were absolutely necessary to transform a standard infantryman's rifle — with a rated maximum effective range of 460 meters — into a system that could consistently strike the kill zone of a target at ranges of 1,000 meters or more with the proper telescopic device, regardless of temperature, weather or humidity. That process is known as accurising, and affects nearly every part of the upgraded M14.

The stock of the weapon itself is impregnated with an epoxy waterproofing substance which helps prevent warping and increases tensile strength. Stocks are also matte-finished to cut down on shine which could compromise the sniper's location. Further, stocks are bedded, or custom fitted, to perfectly match all the metal parts of the weapon.

To ensure the most perfect fit, a system termed glass bedding is utilized. Using Acra Glas-Gel, any gaps or nicks in the wooden stock — no matter how small — are filled and carefully planed; the glass bedding is also used to fill out irregularities which may be found in the fitted metal parts as they join the stock.

Another critical aspect concerning fitting of the metal and wooden parts is called free floating of the barrel. According to the Sniper School's National Match armorer, Sergeant Timothy

McGinnis, the purpose of free floating is to "make sure there's uniformity; that every round fires the same way." If the barrel touches any part of the stock or heat shield during firing, then a vibration will take place causing inaccuracies and a shifting of the shot group. The barrel channel of the stock is grooved out to allow at least $\frac{1}{16}$ of an inch tolerance and then sealed, and other parts are planed down to ensure free floating.

The barrel itself is left unchromed. Chroming of barrels extends round life (AMTU's sniper rifle barrels are changed at a relatively early 1,800 rounds fired), but often creates an unevenness which can dramatically affect fall of shot. In this case, less life means more accuracy for the sniper.

Sergeant McGinnis, who has done advanced armorer courses at the Rock Island Arsenal and at Aberdeen Proving Ground, also hand polishes every moving metal part with a variety of soft rubber abrasives to ensure a smooth functioning, crisp action. Special attention is paid to the gas cylinder and piston in order to help reduce carbon build up, and to the operating rod and spring.

Trigger pull is especially critical to the sniper. Targets of opportunity may appear only briefly, and the sniper needs to get an accurate round away with a minimum disturbance to his rifle. Sergeant McGinnis customizes trigger pull for individual shooters, and adjusts pull from 3-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds — "Just like breaking glass," as he puts it.

Another area McGinnis pays close attention to is the flash suppressor. The suppressor is hand-fitted and reamed to improve accuracy so that at each bullet release, gasses push out and cone evenly which send the round on a straight plane. Another reason he reams out the flash suppressor is to limit the possibility of a "banana peel" whereby the suppressor may split open at the end if a bead of water is introduced.

McGinnis, along with the other Sniper School instructors and students, agrees that a new sniper weapon needs to come into the inventory. But, as he puts it: "There are better systems for snipers, but as long as the M21's accurate enough for the mission, it's workable."



LETHAL LIGHTWEIGHT

Ultra Light's Ultimate Sporter

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

LOCATED in the rugged limestone karst of West Virginia, a small company, Ultra Light Arms, Inc., has stepped forward to introduce what is most likely the very epitome of an accurate lightweight rifle. Billed as the "ultimate mountain rifle" it weighs an astounding 5.5 pounds, complete with the scope. Let's take a close look at this incredible firearm.

Ultra Light's Model 20 is not a chopped and channeled version of someone else's standard-sized action. Machined from ordnance-grade, heat-treated steel, the bolt and receiver weigh only 20 ounces. It's chambered for an amazing array of cartridges that include .284 Win., .308 Win., .243 Win., .358 Win., 7x57mm, 7mm Ackley, .257 Ackley, 7mm08 Rem., 6mm Rem., .22-250, 250-3000 Savage, .300 Savage and .257 Roberts. We chose a specimen in .308 Win. (7.62x51mm NATO) for SOF's test and evaluation — the lightest .308 Win. rifle ever built. Model 20 receivers chambered for the .17 Rem., .222 Rem., .223 Rem. and .22 Hornet are 3/8-inch shorter in overall length. Standard-length cartridges, such as the .25-06, .270, .280 and .30-06, are chambered in the 24-ounce Model 24 action. The Model 28 action (28 ounces) handles belted magnum cartridges like the .264 Win., 7mm Rem., .300 Win. and .338 Win. All are available either right or left-handed.

When you first heft an Ultra Light rifle two thoughts are likely to race through your mind almost simultaneously. It's too light to be a real firearm and the felt recoil must be horrendous. The diminutive receiver accounts for a significant portion of the weight reduction. Model 20 receiver rings are only 1.225 inches in diameter, more than a tenth of an inch less than most bolt-action rifles. The Model 20's "jeweled" bolt body is only .592 inches in diameter compared to .700 inches for the U.S. Enfield cal. .30-06 Model 1917. The bolt-sleeve, bolt handle and washer-type recoil



ULTRA LIGHT MODEL 20 SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber308 Winchester (7.62x51mm NATO).
Operation	Manually operated turn-bolt. Two-position, three-function safety.
Feed Mechanism	Three-round blind magazine.
Weight, empty	5.5 pounds, complete with scope.
Length, overall	41 inches.
Barrel	Douglas No. 1 Contour Premium; six grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches.
Barrel length	22 inches.
Stock	Kevlar, reinforced with graphite; DuPont Imron polyurethane finish, matte or lustre: black, brown, green, woodland or desert camouflage.
Trigger	Timney with 3-4 pound pull-weight.
Sights	Optical only; Leupold 3-9X Compact with CPC reticle; matte finish.
Price	\$1,300, complete with hard case, scope rings and bases; without scope.
Manufacturer	Ultra Light Arms, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1270, Granville, WV 26534.

lug (fitted between the barrel's shoulder and the front face of the action) are correspondingly much smaller than normally encountered.

Interior and exterior diameters of the bolt and action are held to within .002-inch total runout. Two locking lugs on the bolt body cam vertically into recesses on the top and bottom of the receiver ring. The recessed bolt face carries a "bump"-type ejector and small claw extractor. Both are spring-loaded. Depressing a knurled button on the rear of the bolt sleeve on the left side of the receiver will pivot the bolt stop downward and permit the bolt group to be withdrawn from the receiver. Push rearward on the end of the striker assembly until the small disassembly hole is completely exposed. Insert a drift and rotate the striker assembly counterclockwise to remove the firing pin and spring. No further disassembly is usually required, although Allen head wrenches are supplied for the scope rings and to separate the stock from the barreled action.

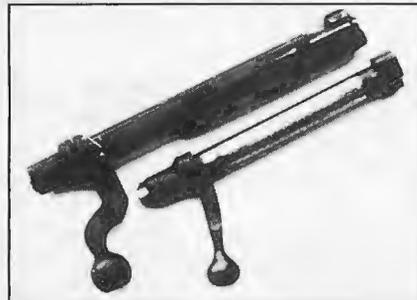


MARTY HART

With heavy hearts, we must announce that Marty Hart passed away on 2 September 1986. Marty, a member of the SOF Weapons Team since its inception at the second annual SOF Convention in 1981, participated in many tests and evaluations over the last five years. Tragically struck down at the age of 31, before his life and expectations were fulfilled, Marty will be sorely missed by all those whose lives he touched. A devout Christian and gentle giant, he was forever the peacemaker among our band of warriors. He left us far too soon, but fought the good fight, finished his course, kept the faith. Although he never had the opportunity to serve in the armed forces, Marty will always be remembered by his family and the SOF staff for the good soldier that he was.

LEFT: Marty Hart fires the Ultra Light Model 20 in caliber 7.62x51mm NATO.

BELOW: Ultra Light Model 20 rifle weighs only 5.5 pounds, complete with scope. Woodland camo stock fabricated from Kevlar reinforced with graphite tips the scales at only 20 ounces.



TOP: Leupold 3-9X Compact scope mounted on Ultra Light Model 20 is only 11 inches long and weighs only 9.5 ounces.

ABOVE: Diminutive Ultra Light bolt which measures only .592 inches in diameter compared to U.S. Enfield caliber .30-06 Model 1917's bolt.

Timney single-stage adjustable triggers are used exclusively on all Ultra Light rifles. Ours was set at a crisp 3.75 pounds. A unique two-position, three-function safety is located to the rear of the bolt sleeve on the right side of the receiver. Push forward to fire. When pulled back with the thumb, it blocks the sear and locks the bolt's movement. Pushing down on the safety lever will

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SALTY CRUSADERS

Sailing with the Christian Militia

by Ned Kelly



THE little Israeli-built "Dvora" fast attack craft was on station, about 20 miles southwest of Sidon, conducting a routine patrol off southern Lebanon's troubled coast. The seas were slightly choppy and the quickly deteriorating weather threatened to make patrolling difficult. But the Marine Force (navy) of the Lebanese Forces took to their guns with a professionalism that is hard to find in a maritime fighting force made up mostly of volunteers.

Robert, a Christian refugee from Syria, was the "Dvora's" radar operator. As he sat at his post he noticed a small, irregular contact on the scope — a faint spot of green light which faded, grew, disappeared, and then appeared again. It was moving south too fast to be ignored. And the Marine Force was too cautious to pass it off as just more of the innocent flotsam that frequently littered this part of the eastern Mediterranean.

Tony, the boat's young skipper, knew his stuff. He had been trained by the French navy's para-commando frogmen and the Israeli navy, and his confidence was reflected in the easy manner in which he puffed on his Dunhill pipe. After a few moments of deliberating the radar contact, he offered me a belly-warming swig from his hip flask. The liquor took me by surprise and bit into my innards on the way down.

Tony reminded me of a salty English sea captain as he calmly went on about his business. There was no indication in his actions that the rapidly worsening seas concerned him; he went on explaining the tactics of the chase he was prepared to orchestrate between his small gunboat and the fleeting — and still unconfirmed — radar contact.

The Christian gunboat slowly and cautiously closed in on the fleeting radar blip that grew stronger and stronger. Finally, Tony was able to make visual

ABOVE: Marine Force gunner mans a Browning M2 .50 cal. on a routine patrol of the Lebanese coastline.

LEFT: Coastal patrol craft and Zodiacs patrol the inshore coastal waters of Lebanon.



contact through his binoculars. This was no nondescript refuse of the sea, nor was it an honest fishing boat. It was an outboard-powered rubber boat full of Palestinians, armed to the teeth and heading south for Israel.

Tony shouted his orders. Gunning the engines up to maximum revolutions, the boat pounded the blustery sea as the Marines rapidly closed in on the PLO terrorists. The well-drilled Marines stood silently by their well-oiled 20 mike-mikes and .50 cals., awaiting orders as the deck pitched wickedly back and forth.

Green tracers from the rubber raft arced wildly and ineffectually overhead. The PLO was desperate now, and as the range narrowed to point blank, they opened up on the charging gunboat with volleys of RPG fire.

Tony heeled his gunboat over broadside. With good old fashioned discipline, the Marines took the incoming terrorist fire without a murmur, waiting with calm deliberation for the chief's inevitable signal: "Fire! Fire! Fire!"

Within seconds after Tony "crossed the T" of the PLO boat, the order came and the Christian Marine gunners took only seconds to finish their grisly work. The flotsam of wood, rubber and human flesh — all that remained of the Palestinian boat — slowly sank into the churning waters.

But there were survivors. After the Marines had overcome their surprise, they all brought their guns to bear on the helpless men bobbing in the sea. Tony ordered his men to stay alert, but not to fire. There was no need to worry — the Palestinians had their fill of heroics and offered no further resistance.

As the gunners covered the survivors, the rest of the crew pulled them in one by one and quickly began treating the

TOP: "Dabur" coastal patrol craft patrolling turbulent waters off Lebanon's coast.

CENTER: Marine Force commando on a beach assault training exercise readies his RPG-7.

BOTTOM: LF Marines perform beach recon under cover of darkness.



CHRISTIAN RAIDERS

Most Marine Force missions against enemy objectives in Muslim-held Lebanon are pretty hush-hush, but once in a while some come to light. One such raid was spilled by the Lebanese press in late 1985, the details of which certainly show the Marine Force in a favorable light.

In addition to their usual patrolling duties, the Marine Force often finds itself setting up blockades on the Muslim-controlled coast south of Beirut to intercept any shipments of arms and ammunition that come into Muslim Lebanon by sea. They also undertake secret seaborne operations behind enemy lines to prevent the successful landing of these supplies.

After a particularly severe bout of shelling on the civilian suburbs of Christian east Beirut by various Muslim factions, the LF headquarters OK'd direct action against the enemy-held coast. The Marine Force had information about the arrival of an arms shipment from their intelligence sources within Muslim held territory.

The Marine Force had attempted to intercept this cargo while it was still at sea, but due to some bad luck the LF gun boat missed its quarry. The cargo ship made land off a small coastal village in the vicinity of Damour called Naamé and anchored in a cove offshore while discharging its load of arms into the small boats that came alongside the ship.

The Marine Force wasn't about to give up, though. The carefully-planned strike was scheduled to take place that night. The Marine Force commandos were transported aboard gun boats from their harborside base at Jounieh — about 20 miles north of Beirut — to the enemy coastal village, careful to make their way well out to sea so as to remain unseen. The element of surprise was absolutely essential, not only to the success of their mission but also to their very survival.

The commandos quietly unloaded their Zodiac assault boats in darkness, right under the noses of the Muslim enemy. They climbed down off the gun boats into the Zodiacs and made their way quietly to shore, eventually putting themselves between the enemy coast and the ship being unloaded in the cove.

The LF gun boats had been monitoring the radio frequencies from over the horizon during their run in. The Marine Force knew that the Muslims on shore did not have radio communication with the ship in the cove or with any of the boats unloading her. They predicted that the unloading party would naturally assume their attack was shore launched.

Then the Marines attacked.

The speeding Zodiacs came out of the predawn darkness and across the inky water, taking the Muslims by complete surprise. Under fire from FN MAGs and RPG-7s at point blank range, the Muslims took repeated hits and suffered heavy casualties. The few vessels that escaped were badly damaged and ran themselves up on the beach to avoid sinking.

As anticipated, the freighter assumed that they were being attacked from shore. She up-anchored and put to sea to avoid further damage, but the Christian gun boats were lurking in the darkness, waiting for the freighter, should she escape the Zodiac-borne raiding party.

She ran straight into the arms of the waiting gun boats, who opened up on her with their 20mm and .50-cal. deck guns. In the ensuing firefight the freighter's steering gear was damaged and she ran aground. The gun boats then pumped hundreds of HE rounds into the beached ship, setting its deadly cargo on fire.

The Christian gun boats returned to Jounieh, without further incident, secure in the knowledge that they had made a dent — a small one — in the pipeline of arms flowing to the Muslims in west Beirut.



TOP: "Dabur" coastal patrol craft takes to the seas in a routine exercise.

wounded. Tony's crew had become skilled at combat medicine after years of campaigning, which had seen them not only caring for their wounded comrades, but also for injured Christian civilians evacuated from coastal areas hit with rocket and artillery attacks by Muslim extremists.

Tony stood his gunners down with a hearty "well done," and headed his little gunboat back into the distant gloom to continue the otherwise monotonous task of patrolling Lebanon's troubled shores.

The Lebanese Marine Force is a small self-contained maritime fighting force, somewhat akin to Israel's naval commandos and France's marine commando frogmen. Like most other branches of the Christian militia the beginnings of the Lebanese Force's (LF) little navy were quite humble.

It all started during the Lebanese civil war. Begin-

ning with the January 1976 evacuation of Christian refugees from the Muslim massacres at Damour, the LF has relied heavily on seaborne operations. At first, they used whatever boats were at hand — a combination of what military craft they could get their hands on and sundry small boats, mostly pleasure craft. Manning those craft was a force consisting purely of volunteers — men with the necessary training and experience who gravitated together



to serve their beleaguered society.

Peacetime sport scuba-divers became the LF's first naval frogmen. Peacetime boat builders became the first marine engineers. Fishermen took to the seas once again. Regardless of their various maritime civilian backgrounds, all of these men had one thing in common — they were dedicated volunteers who decided they wouldn't be pushed out of their homes without putting up a fight.

Today, however, all members of the Marine Force are professionals. Most of their training is as infantry raiders and they specialize in small-scale raids from the sea. The Christian Marines also include a small unit of commando divers who specialize in clandestine raids, beach recon and underwater demolitions in much the same way as do the U.S. Navy SEALs. After satisfactory service as commandos, selected militiamen are further trained in seamanship and the various related skills needed to crew the ocean-going vessels of the Marine Force.

The LF Marines currently maintain a small flotilla of Israeli-built gunboats — "Dabur" coastal patrol craft and "Dvora" fast attack craft — as well as large patrol craft, and the British-built "Tracker Mk 2" coastal patrol craft. The usual role of these gunboats is to maintain control of the inshore coastal waters along Lebanon's seaboard. And with the help of the vigilant coastal radar stations, they are able to maintain the initiative at sea which includes the routine interception of Lebanese Muslim vessels operating out of west Beirut and southern Lebanon. The

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ABOVE: The emblem of the Marine Force is the LF delta (triangle within a circle) superimposed on an anchor. Shoulder patch is worn on the left shoulder of their Israeli-style fatigue shirts.

LEFT: "Daburs," armed with two 20mm cannons and two .50-cal. MGs tackle rough seas in search of enemy vessels.



SOF WEAPONS INTEL

FULCRUMS OVER FINLAND

Soviet MiG-29 Takes Center Stage

by GM Services

SSIX new fighter aircraft swept out of the Soviet Union and into Finland. But these sleek birds were not the harbingers of World War III carrying bombs and missiles. Instead, they were armed with a payload of propaganda and a carefully orchestrated public relations blitz aimed at the West. These were the newest additions to the Soviet war machine's line of fighter planes, and in an unprecedented publicity ploy, the

Kremlin was putting them on display for all to see.

Called the MiG-29 Fulcrum, this fighter should have been under the strictest security, but throwing aside the usual cloak of secrecy, the Soviets flew the fighters into Finland's Kuopio-Rissala air base and offered a stage-managed first-time view of the MiG-29.

The four day "friendship visit" in early

July, gave Western experts their first close-up view of the twin-engine air-defense interceptor which, apart from classified intelligence photos, had only been seen from satellite. Experts and reporters alike took advantage of the opportunity to study and extensively photograph the aircraft. What they learned provided a long awaited view of today's state-of-the-art in Soviet aviation technology.



MiG-29 approaching for landing. Air frame design similarities between the Fulcrum and U.S. F-15 and F-16 are readily apparent.

It appears that Soviet designers have dramatically improved the quality of their aircraft and they now appear to present a serious threat to the Western air forces. Not by sheer weight of numbers, but rather because Soviet technology is now much closer to that of the West. According to the U.S. Defense Department, the acquisition by espionage of documentation on the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 fire control radar saved the Soviets close to five years of research and development time and at least \$55 million. The F/A-18 technical documentation was used as the basis for the new look-down shoot-down engagement radar in the MiG-29 Fulcrum. The U.S. methods of component design, terrain mapping functions and real-time resolution enhancement techniques were cited by the Defense Department as key elements incorporated into the Soviet counterpart (The same documentation is reportedly being used by the Soviets to design effective countermeasures against the two U.S. aircraft).

The aircraft which visited Finland, even if fully operational, were not equipped with the full complement of avionics the aircraft is intended to carry. The leadership of the V PVO-Voyska Protivovozdushnoy Oborony (Troops of Air Defense), reluctantly accepted the Soviet Minister of Defense's insistence of the importance of the visit, stressing the opportunity it presented for

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Fuselage	Length overall, including nose probe — 17.36m. Height — 4.37m. All metal structure, built with large amount of titanium parts.
Tail Unit	Tailplane span — 7.75m. Cantilever structure. Sharply swept back all-moving horizontal surfaces running along the engine cowlings from wing to tailplane.
Wings	Wing span — 11.55m. Cantilever low-wing monoplane. Five large air intakes open above each of the sharply swept wedge intakes. Intakes themselves are blanked off while taxiing.
Weight	Approximate operating weight empty is about 8,000kg, maximum take-off weight is 15,500kg.
Power Plant	The engines are believed to be twin Tumansky 8,300 kg thrust R-33D turbofans with afterburners. Baffling closes the intakes while taxiing. This baffling is probably to prevent foreign object ingestion. Airflow into the engines is maintained via the row of five large louvered intakes above each wing root.
Avionics	Large pulse doppler lookdown/shootdown radar giving the Fulcrum a day and night all-weather operating capability against low flying targets. Features of particular interest include what could be an infra-red sensor forward of the windscreen, SRZO-2 (NATO code Odd Rods) IFF, Sirena 3 radar warning system, and heads-up display.
Armament	The Soviet version is armed with six AA-10 and/or close range AA-11 air-to-air missiles, rocket pods, bombs at other pods on two pylons under each wing and one under each engine airduct. There is a single cannon port, probably for a twin barrel 30mm cannon, in the port wing root.
Performance and Evaluation	Maximum level speed at height is estimated at mach 2.2 and maximum combat radius is 1,150km.

showing the flag in a non-Warsaw Pact country. But the council was concerned about the opportunity offered to Western intelligence agencies to carefully examine one of the Soviet's newest fighters.

Despite the complaints, though, the idea was approved by the Council of Defense over objections by the GRU (the Soviet military's intelligence branch), and the GRU's deputy chief for disinformation, who asked for more time to prepare for the visit. It was finally agreed to send the aircraft, but with reduced avionics equipment.

A few days after the visit, exactly as planned by the GRU, the technical and non-technical media of the West was inundated with pictures and articles about the MiG-29 Fulcrum. Propaganda or not, the opportunity to examine the most recently deployed Soviet fighter was too important to pass up.

The U.S. knew of the MiG-29's existence long before it landed in Finland. In January 1977, a new experimental aircraft, designated by the Defense Department RAM-L, was first observed by a U.S. satellite at Ramenskoye flight test center. Successive reports indicated that the RAM-L was intended to be mass produced as a combat fighter, and NATO gave it the name Fulcrum.

The MiG-29 is believed to be the second successful project fully under the direction of designer R.A. Belyakov (the first was the MiG-23/27). Belyakov is well known for his development of swept-wing jets. Like his previous MiG project, the Fulcrum is believed to be in production at the GAZ-155 factory near Moscow. A two-seat version is also reported to be in production. Although some sources describe the two-seater as "combat capable," it is essentially a conversion aircraft.

About 90 MiG-29s are currently operational with the Soviet air force. The first regiment of Fulcrums (45 aircraft) entered service in 1984 with the Air Defense of the Leningrad Military District. The second regiment is also deployed in the Leningrad Military District, and deployment in East Germany has started.

This deployment clearly demonstrates the Fulcrum's mission: to intercept fighters or tactical bombers flying at low-altitude where the use of SAMs or interceptors are not as effective. Should NATO F-111s or Tornados succeed in getting by the SAM defense network then it will be the task of the Soviet fighter/interceptors to ensure that they don't reach their targets. The MiG-29 Fulcrum will be a major player — along with the Su-27 Flanker and the MiG-31 Foxhound — in the evolving Soviet air warfare doctrine.

In 1979 Soviet air defense strategy was changed, culminating in a reorganization of the air force. By shifting to a reliance on a new advanced system of early warning and air combat and command control, the Soviets were able to reduce the number of front line fighters to 1,200. No longer would they have to rely on swarms of fight-





ABOVE: MiG-29 Fulcrum landing at Finland's Kuopio-Rissala air base. Brake-chute saves wear and tear on brakes and landing gear.

LEFT: The Soviet Union's newest fighter the MiG-29 Fulcrum, inflight over Finland.

ers and interceptors to gain and maintain air superiority.

The MiG-29s will progressively replace MiG-21s and MiG-23s, but, because of cost, they will never be built in the same quantity as the older aircraft. Despite the differences in production and maintenance costs, though, the MiG-29 is a capable successor to the MiG-21 for two reasons.

First, it has been built, like the MiG-21, with a relatively short range to increase its speed and ability to intercept. The main requirements for this type of aircraft are

formidable acceleration, good maneuverability for aerial combat and the ability to destroy targets beyond visual range when required. Finnish pilots who saw the plane said it had superb maneuverability and great power, and the sustained rate of turn is said to be one of the biggest improvements over earlier Soviet fighters.

Second, like the MiG-21, the MiG-29 can be configured in an "export version" without detracting from the main operational capabilities of the aircraft. Not so with the Soviets' other new fighters, the Su-27 Flanker and MiG-31 Foxhound, aircraft with technical and operational capabilities suitable only for the Soviet Union and a few Soviet allies.

In a highly modified form (minus much of the sophisticated avionics) the Fulcrum is expected to be exported widely. First customers are reported to be India and Syria. In

Jordan, King Hussein has expressed interest, a tactic he frequently employs when the U.S. doesn't readily agree to provide him with the weapons he seeks.

India has plans to buy two squadrons (40 aircraft) of MiG-29 Fulcrums from the Soviet Union and initial delivery has already begun. Additional aircraft will be made under license at Hindustan Aeronautics plant which is already manufacturing earlier types of MiGs. India will be the first country outside the Soviet Union to operate the aircraft. An advanced version of the MiG-21 was built by the Hindustan Aeronautics, after which the Indian air force acquired the MiG-23 and, for armed reconnaissance only, the MiG-25. It also has an option to buy the MiG-27, but that seems unlikely in view of the MiG-29 deal.

In Syria, unofficial sources claim to have seen a new MiG-29 at a Syrian air force base. Apparently Syria is interested in receiving 80 aircraft destined to substitute the aging MiG-23 and the obsolete MiG-21, today no match for Israel's F-15s or F-16s. The arrival of the MiG-29s in large numbers could alter the balance of air power in the region, especially if Jordan also joins the list of Fulcrum customers.

In Finland, increasing political pressure is being brought to bear on the Finnish air force to buy the new Soviet MiG-29 interceptor aircraft to help the balance of trade between the two countries. But Western sources say the Finnish air force, which is limited by treaty to 60 combat aircraft, prefers a new fighter being developed by Sweden, the Yas Gripen. Finnish officials insisted that visiting Soviet Defense Minister Marshal Sergei Sokolov was not in Finland to sell arms. During his stay he held talks with his Finnish counterparts, Defense Minister Veikko Pihlajamaki and Commander of the Finnish Defense Force, General Jaakko Valtanen. No official arms sales talks were conducted despite speculation that the Soviets might use the occasion to sell MiG-29s.

Western sources said pressure for the MiG-29s came mainly from Finnish politicians anxious to save hard-hit sectors of industry, such as shipbuilding, that rely heavily on the Soviet market. Finland is Moscow's second largest Western trading partner after West Germany.

What impact the deployment of the Fulcrum will have on the balance of power in Central Europe remains to be seen. It will certainly have increased the overall production of ComBloc aircraft, a statistic that is sure to outrage the Pentagon. According to the Defense Department, the Soviet Union is outproducing the U.S. in tactical aircraft, producing 790 combat aircraft as a yearly average while the U.S. produced only 360. However, in the same period NATO countries altogether produced 720 combat aircraft yearly against 895 of the Warsaw Pact countries.

NATO hopes to do better than that in the future. ✖

ISRAELI FAL

Armscorp's Inexpensive Import

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



THE state of Israel has never seen peace. For the past 38 years Israelis have seen too many wars and too many deaths. Hemmed into their tiny country on the Mediterranean by a numerically superior enemy, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have always sought — and possessed — a technological edge over their opponents.

Although it is most famous for elite pilots and state-of-the-art fighter aircraft, the IDF takes its concern for quality weaponry right on down to the infantryman in the field. Naturally, they chose one of the world's most popular battle rifles, the FN FAL, as the basic infantry weapon. By the early 1950's the FN FAL was clearly the Western world's finest battle rifle. Adopted first by Canada in 1953, in 1954 it was also adopted by Great Britain, Belgium and Venezuela. Israel became the fifth nation to adopt the FAL when it placed orders with *Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre* in 1955.

At first, both the light and heavy-barreled models were manufactured in Belgium. FN production was gradually phased out as more and more components, and then eventually the complete weapons, were fabricated by Israel Military Industrial of Tel-

How not to fire the heavy-barrel FALO. At 13.2 lbs., the standing position is difficult to maintain for more than a few seconds.

Aviv. Israeli FALs, replaced by the Galil in 1972, are now imported by Armscorp of America Inc. (Dept. SOF, 9162 Brookville Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20910) in a semiautomatic-only version, with an upper receiver made in Israel. Reasonably priced, there is a great deal here to interest both the shooter and collector. Armscorp is the same firm that brought you the 98k Mauser in 7.62mm NATO, the M14 in semiauto and countless other products.

Let's take a close look at the distinctive features that characterize the Israeli model of the FAL series.

The new upper receiver retains the outward appearance of the current, type 3, FN receiver with single, mean-width planes replacing the earlier stepped flats. This combines a reduction in machining time with a strengthening of the receiver's rear area. Forged in Belgium from SAE 4140 steel, the forging weighs 7 pounds when it is shipped to Israel. After six hours of machining and over 100 operations, 5.6 pounds

have been removed from the forging and the total weight of the receiver is approximately 1.4 pounds. To meet BATF requirements the cut for the auto safety-sear has been omitted. All other tolerances are within FN's military specifications and the attention to detail is evident.

Most critical is the barrel-to-receiver interface and this dimension is held to .004 inches total runout. This semiautomatic-only receiver is heat treated several times during production to achieve a body hardness of 20 to 28 Rockwell C and a surface hardness of Rockwell C 45. The upper receiver and all other components, except for some lower receivers, are phosphate finished. Lower receivers are either all-phosphate or black baked enamel over phosphate. Hebrew markings (the manufacturer's name) and the Star of David appear on the upper receiver's right side, along with the serial number and manufacturer's and importer's identification in English. '7.62 MM S.A. FAL' (indicating a semiautomatic version) is stamped on the new receiver's left side.

These receivers are machined by S.B.L. Industries in Tel-Aviv, who also assemble



ABOVE: Firing the FALO from the hip assault position looks tough but has little application in real combat.

RIGHT: Firing the FALO in the proper prone position off the bipod.

the complete rifles with surplus IDF components. S.B.L. has produced parts for IMI and FN since 1960, including components for the UZI, Galil, .30- and .50-cal. Browning machine guns, Eagle pistol and 106mm recoilless rifle, as well as sights for most rifles made in Israel.

Israeli FALs are readily distinguished by a number of unique components. Most distinctive are the handguards which were originally patterned after the rounded and ribbed wood forearm assemblies of the rifles fabricated to Colonel René Studler's orders for the August, 1952 Aberdeen trials. These handguards burst into flames during sustained full-auto fire and were quickly redesigned by the Israelis. As modified, the ribbed, wood grips (with crenulated steel reinforcements driven into the wood at each end) cover only the rear portion of two front-ventilated, sheet-metal heat shields. A single screw, passing through the gas block, holds the handguards in place. Two small U-shaped sheet-metal heat-guards snap over the gas tube to protect the firer from burning his hand.

Israeli selector mechanisms, in both configuration and sense of direction, also differ from the standard metric FAL. Change lever positions on the FN FAL are marked 'S' (safe), 'R' (semiauto) and 'A' (full-auto) and one moves the lever clockwise from the top position ('S') down to semiauto and then over to full-auto. On Israeli FALs, while the safe and semiauto positions remain the



same, you must push the selector lever counterclockwise, past 'S,' for full-automatic fire. As the Israelis did not permit soldiers to fire the "light" version in full-auto, its selector legs were designed to be long enough so that they butt against the upper receiver and the mechanism cannot be rolled over into the 'A' position. Selector markings were originally in Hebrew, but these have been removed by milling on our test specimens. The full-auto position has been left blank and the safe and semiauto positions have been marked 'S' and 'F,' respectively. Hebraic markings remain on the handguards, front sling swivel, gas plug, hammer and barrel. IDF markings on the buttplate have been stamped out. Bolts on both test rifles carried Belgian crown proofing.

The front sight guards, integral with the

gas block forging, are larger and considerably more substantial than those found on any other FAL. The round, post-type front sight has a square bottom sitting on top of a notched round base, stamped with the index numeral '2.' It can be rotated to adjust the elevation zero by pushing outward on two very stiff spring clips within the protective ears.

Rear sights are of the British Commonwealth type. These high sight-line assemblies cannot be interchanged with the current FAL low rear sight, first introduced on the West German G1 FAL. Adjustable for both windage and elevation, but totally unprotected, those on the light rifle are marked in 100-meter increments from 200 to 600 meters.

A few small components further distinguish Israeli FALs. The black anodized,



Firing the Israeli FAL rifle — standard barrel

aluminum retracting handles are much larger than those encountered on other metric FALs. The takedown hinge pin connecting the upper and lower receivers has a unique configuration and requires a spanner wrench for removal. Takedown levers remain in the original position, in back of the upper receiver (they have been moved downward on current FN FALs). The magazine catch is of a peculiar ringed spur shape and the hold-open thumbpiece is the small, early FN type.

Buttstocks on Israeli FALs are always wood. Standard-barrel rifles have buttstocks with rebated wrists and protective metal ferrules. The sheet-metal buttplates have no storage traps.

Although the light rifle submitted to SOF for test and evaluation was fitted with the current 22mm diameter flash suppressor and grenade launcher combination, most Israeli FALs were equipped with the classic plain muzzle. A bayonet stud, milled into these plain barrels, accepts the early FN bayonet with built-in flash hider prongs. When the FAL was first developed, IMR-type propellents were still in vogue and there was little need for a flash suppressor. All FAL barrels have four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches. SOF's "light" rifle's barrel was manufactured in 1981 and the FALO's in 1971. Both were in new condition. Without a flash suppressor, the "light" rifle's overall length is 41.5 inches, but it still weighs close to 9.4 pounds, far too heavy by today's standards.

But, that's a piece of cake compared to the FALO (heavy-barrel FAL) which tips

the scale at 13.2 pounds and has an overall length of 45 inches. Lacking a quick-change barrel and with a bottom-fed magazine of only 20-rounds (larger capacity magazines will cause the weapon to "monopod" on the magazine, careening wildly off the bipod), the FALO failed in its intended role as a sustained-fire, squad automatic. Far too heavy to be successfully fired off the shoulder, it was still too light to cover the selective-fire option in caliber 7.62x51mm NATO and burst groups were unacceptably large in full-auto.

In addition to its heavier barrel, there are other features which differentiate the Israeli FALO from the more prevalent "light" rifle. So-called Model B wood buttstocks on the FALO are missing the wrist projections of the earlier Model A, but there is no protective metal ferrule. The buttplate has a hinged shoulder strap. However, there is no storage trap. Elevation marks on the rear sight were extended to 700 meters and the 200-meter position is an odd little button added to the rear. The FALO's carrying handle is much larger. An FALO old model, two-piece flash suppressor has been fitted to the heavy barrel. It will not accept a bayonet. Thank God. Who wants to charge up the hill, screaming bloodcurdling battle cries, with this monster? The suppressor portion unscrews for replacements with a BFA (blank firing attachment). A substantial, removable bipod, of indigenous design, folds under the barrel in a splayed,

awkward position when not in use. Its legs cannot be adjusted for height.

As I have discussed the FAL's method of operation on several other occasions (See SOF, "Fusil Automatique Legere," June '82, and "Brazilian Bargain," May '86), there is no need to dwell on that topic other than to say it is gas operated and fires from the closed bolt position. Under ideal conditions, the FAL's gas system passes the major portion of the gas through the regulator and out into the atmosphere and helps to reduce recoil.

Adjustment of the Israeli FAL's gas regulator does need explanation. Included with each rifle is a reprint of the 1972 Rhodesian army manual on the FAL. It states, "The rifle is adjusted before issue with regulator set at 4. Do not alter this setting unless necessary." Typical milspeak nonsense, it certainly doesn't apply to the Israeli FALs we tested. If, on the other hand, you attempt to adjust the regulator in the usual manner, by rotating the gas-regulator sleeve (located immediately to the rear of the front sight assembly) to the left until the gas port on top of the gas cylinder and in front of the sleeve is completely exposed, the regulator will fall off the cylinder. Reinstallation can prove difficult. So, let's try another method.

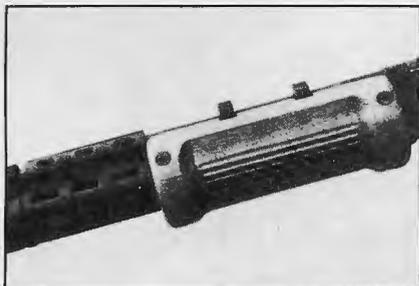
With either a FAL adjusting tool or the base of a cartridge, rotate the gas-regulator sleeve to the right as far as it will go. Make note of the gas sleeve number which appears upper-dead-center. It will vary from rifle to rifle. Using this index mark, turn the sleeve back to the left two complete revolutions. In this position almost all the gas is diverted to the atmosphere and when a round is fired short recoil will occur (the hold-open will fail to engage and/or the bolt will fail to travel far enough rearward to pass the magazine and strip another round during its return in counter recoil).

With an empty magazine inserted, fire one round only (by inserting the cartridge into the chamber through the ejection port) after rotating the gas-regulator sleeve, one notch at a time, to the right. When the hold-open finally engages, verify by firing several more rounds one at a time. Then, as a safety margin, rotate the gas-regulator sleeve to the right an additional two notches.

Blaze away, but make certain the gas plug has been rotated by depressing its spring-loaded locking pin with the nose of a bullet so the Hebraic script is on top. Rotating the plug 180 degrees will prohibit gas from passing into the gas cylinder.

After more than 30 years of service in the armed forces of almost 90 countries, the FAL series needs little testing now to demonstrate its reliability. It is both reliable and robust, with the possible exception of somewhat lowered performance in high dust environments under adverse conditions.

Accuracy potential can prove difficult to assess on some rifles in the FAL series. Mounted on the lower receiver and too close for most eyes, the rear sight wobbles about like a headless chicken. It should be



Distinctive ventilated sheet-metal and wood handguards immediately distinguish Israeli FAL from other rifles in this series.

shimmed with a paper match, or the equivalent, for accuracy shooting.

Heavy triggers can also adversely affect the FAL's potential. Pull weights on both test specimens hovered at 11 pounds — far too sluggish to drop flies at 100 yards and worse than usual. Yet little can be done to improve a FAL trigger. Stone past the obvious burrs and you'll end up with an unregistered machine gun.

The best we could do, using Portuguese military ammo was 3 MOA off the bench at 100 yards with either rifle. This is acceptable accuracy for a battle rifle with

iron sights. While not match grade, the Portuguese fodder is milspec and available from Armscorp for only \$139.95 per thousand, plus HIS. It was manufactured in 1981 (headstamped 'FNM 81-19' with NATO cross in circle) with a 150 grain flat-base FMJ projectile in front of 43 grains of ball propellant. Although Berdan primed it's non-corrosive. Shoot it, step on the cases and walk away at that price.

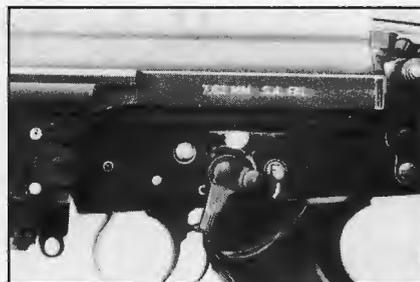
Blasters, as well as those with a penchant for history, will find much to admire with these Israeli FALs. The price is right. Suggested list price for the standard-barrel model is \$695.95 and \$795.95 for the FALO. Forged FAL receivers are also available for \$399.95. Those with strong backs may opt

Continued on page 101



ISRAELI FAL SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber	7.62x51mm NATO (.308 Win.)	
Operation	Gas with adjustable regulator and conventional piston. Locking by means of falling bolt which butts against locking shoulder in recess at bottom of receiver. Fires from the closed-bolt position.	
Feed	20-round detachable, staggered, box-type magazine.	
Barrel	Four grooves with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches.	
Sights	Post-type front with protective ears; adjustable for elevation zero. Sliding ramp peep aperture rear with no protection; adjustable for windage zero and elevation from 200 to 600 (700: FALO) in 100-meter increments.	
Finish	Phosphate.	
Furniture	Wood and metal forearms; plastic pistol grip; wood buttstock.	
Manufacturer	S.B.L. Industries, Tel-Aviv, Israel.	
Exclusive		
U.S. distributor	Armscorp of America Inc., Dept. SOF, 9162 Brookville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910.	
	Standard-barrel	FALO
Weight, empty	9.4 pounds	13.2 pounds
Length, overall	41.5 inches	45 inches
Barrel length	21 inches	24.5 inches
	(no flash suppressor)	(with flash suppressor)
Price		
(suggested retail)	\$695.95	\$795.95



Israeli FAL lower receiver: Hebraic selector markings have been milled off and replaced with 'S' and 'F' on the semiautomatic version. Long legs on the selector prevent its movement to the full-auto position. Note ringed magazine catch release and takedown lever which remains in the early location in back of the upper receiver.



Heavy front-sight guards also unique to the Israeli FALs.



High rear sight on Israeli FALO heavy-barrel rifle: Note that elevation potential has been increased to 700 meters and 200-meter position is a small button attached to sight's base.

STRIKE AT DAWN

Marine Aviators Help Set the Rising Sun

Text by Sam Keith

Photos by Robert Millington

VMB-413 PBJ-1C over the Solomon Islands, 1944.



I tossed and turned, too excited to sleep. In the morning I would be reunited with my combat crew after 39 years. Now their young faces flashed in my mind. Bright images, like slides flicked through a projector, teased and paraded. Would I recognize them?

As I pondered, images of the *Kihili Maru* strike kept recurring . . . invading my mind. How I had dreaded that one! It had followed too closely on the trauma of the last. It was the old story of falling off a horse, then mounting the saddle before the pain and terror set in . . .

Captain Robert "Oak" Millington was the best pilot in VMB-413, the first Marine

squadron of medium bombers to see action in the South Pacific. We nicknamed him Oak because we looked up to him so much and he towered over us like a tree. Of course, we enlisted members of the crew called him Oak amongst ourselves, but we always addressed him as "Captain" or "Sir."

WWII VETERAN

Sam Keith, radio-radar waist gunner of the first Marine medium bomber squadron in the South Pacific (VMB-413), is presently a retired high school teacher whose credits include the book *One Man's Wilderness*, and articles and short stories in *Alaska Magazine*, *Alaska Fest*, and *Read Magazine*.

Perhaps we were biased, but we were fiercely proud of our PBJs. Unlike their B-25 Army Air Force counterparts, which were painted brown, our PBJs were blue with white bellies. We were even prouder to be part of Oak's crew, and we enjoyed the reputation of generating excitement whenever we went on a strike. Something out of the ordinary usually occurred. That became the understatement of the year. In 1944, we were shot down during a strafing and bombing run in the northern Solomons followed only days later by a harrowing solo against a freighter reefed in range of gun emplacements on a nearby hill. We usually took more than a few days to recover from a

25 March 1944. Clockwise: Joe DeCeuster, Robert Millington, Jim Merriman, Tommy Thomas, Mert Ward, Sam Keith.

The reunited crew 39 years later. Left to right: Joe DeCeuster, Tommy Thomas, Robert Millington, Sam Keith, Jim Merriman, Mert Ward.





mission, but the war wouldn't always wait. This time we had two in a row.

The first was on 29 July 1944. On northern Choiseul, an island southeast of Bougainville, the Japanese gunners protecting the supply dump had been ready for us. We roared in just above the coconut fronds, all guns ablaze in a strafing and bombing attack. The five PBJ's accompanying us were timing their runs so as not to get clobbered by the delayed bomb blasts of the previous attacker. We circled for another pass. Tracers from my waist gun streamed into a gun emplacement, as the ground, winking return fire, blurred beneath.

Suddenly the intercom crackled. It was Mert Ward, the tail gunner.

"I'm hit! I'm hit in the ass!" Tommy Thomas, the turret gunner, was still hammering with his .50-cal. twins, and the brass was showering from the chutes. Then I noticed the starboard propeller windmilling. A smear of oil, widening from the nacelle, was whipping in gobs. Gasoline surged from ruptures in the wing tank. I called Oak.

"Trying to feather the prop now," came the reply. "Check on Mert if you can." I stooped past Bill MacDonald, a photographer from Intelligence, who was busy out the camera hatch. Then I saw the first aid packet on Mert's web belt partially blown away, the wound on his exposed buttocks a jagged fissure that was not even bleeding. I packed it with sulphur powder from my kit. Mert, with his headset on, shouted close to my ear. "Oak wants you up front. He can't raise Joe on the intercom."

I hurried past Bill who was looking strangely at his hands, as if in a trance. After crawling over the top of the bomb bay, I dropped into the well of the main hatch and started bellying along the tunnel that led to the nose. A blast of air struck me. I squinted in the force of it as I moved toward its source. Joe DeCeuster, the navigator, was frozen to the free .50. Its barrel was bent at a downward angle from the shattered nose and the twisted fixed guns. For a moment I thought Joe was dead. I touched him, gripping his shoulder, awakening him from a daze. Like a dog flinging spray after a swim, he shook his head and grinned.

"Oak wants us," I shouted, relieved — at least for the moment.

We worked our way back to the well. The starboard engine was still windmilling. The port engine was vibrating, laboring. Jim Merriman, the co-pilot, made hand motions to start throwing out gear. Anything that was loose, or we could tear loose, went through the bottom hatch. The plane was struggling to maintain what little altitude we had. Oak could not feather the propeller of the battered starboard engine. Up and down again in stomach lurching plummets, swaying, tilting and roller coasting, we crippled across New Georgia Sound, gateway of the famed "slot," the ocean high-

VMB-413 photographer on combat mission.

way south to Guadalcanal for the "Tokyo Express" — the graveyard of ships and planes. Oak was desperately trying to keep it from claiming yet another corpse. He was determined to reach Barakoma, an airstrip on southern Vella Lavella.

"Up . . . up . . . up you son of a bitch!" Oak was shouting as he fought the controls. But it was obvious we were going in. Joe and I positioned ourselves, bracing our backs as the one good engine died.

"Please, God, please. Not yet," I remembered saying to myself.

The first impact was more sound than feeling. The second though, as the nose smashed down, was bone wrenching. A piston head of water rushed at me from over the top of the bomb bay. I was inundated, then wallowing in the salt water. Figures were moving about as if in dreams, climbing through the top escape hatch. I was dazed. When I realized what I was doing, I found myself stepping down on the starboard wing awash in the swells. I heard shouting. I inflated my Mae West, eased from the wing, and swam around the tail to where the life raft was bobbing from a line attached to the fuselage. Bill MacDonald was bellowing. He was tugging at Tommy's shoulders just outside the hatch. That seemed to launch me into sharper focus. I stroked towards him, and together we wrenched Tommy's legs free of the shroud lines of a parachute he had released from its pack for cushioning. Tommy was retching and coughing sea water.

Miraculously, we were all aboard the big raft that had been inflated and ejected from its compartment. Someone cut the raft line, and not a moment too soon, for as we drew away, we watched the tail of the plane rear skyward like a thick cross and disappear

Crew practiced bombing an old Japanese destroyer awash on a coral reef before the *Kihili Maru* strike.



VMB-413 PBJ over home base: Stirling Island Treasury Group, Solomon Islands. VMB-413 was the first Marine medium bombing squadron to see action in the South Pacific.

behind a swell.

One of our planes skimmed over us. We waved and shouted. Then the excited chatter began. . .

"We did everything wrong on ditching procedure, but here we are. Somebody likes us up there."

"All hell broke loose in the nose. I thought charges of dynamite went off."

"Out of control. That plane was out of control. One thing I proved though, a PBJ won't fly on one good engine when you can't feather the bad one. Wonder I didn't kill us all."

"Thought we bought it for sure."

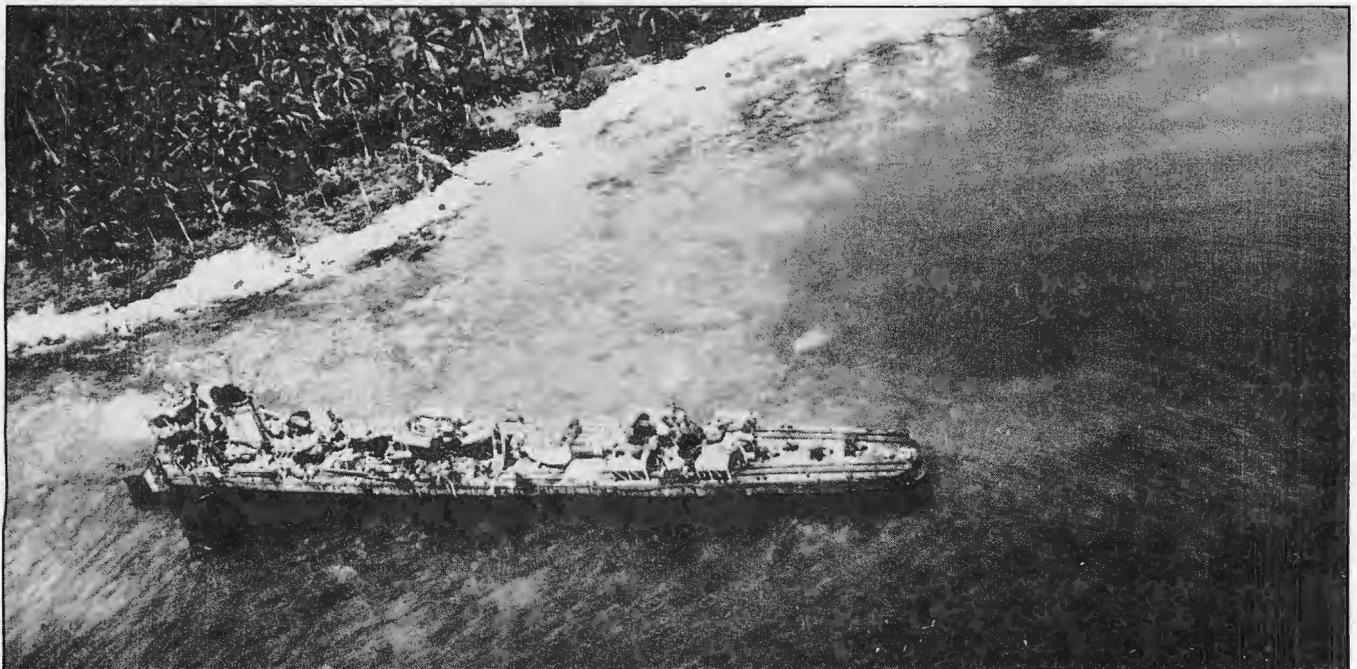
The Catalina Flying Boat, PBV or

"Dumbo" as we called it, picked us up just under two hours later. Our covering plane had done its job. A sailor with a Thompson at the ready crouched in the hatchway as we paddled towards him.

"You gyrenes better haul ass aboard. Infested with sharks here. We spotted 'em before we landed."

We finally made it back to the airfield on home base, Stirling Island Treasury Group. The ground crew, grouped in a coral revetment, their eyes roving over our returning craft for evidence of enemy damage, eagerly surrounded us as we alighted from the hatches. They had waited even after the last one, not willing to accept the loss.

We had been lucky on that one. We learned later that only one plane had returned from that strike without being hit. Gear had to be lowered manually for one to land. Three others were so shot up they gave the metalsmiths fits.





Crew poses after rescue on 29 July 1944.

Left to right: M/Sgt. Bill MacDonald, photographer; T/Sgt. Tommy Thomas, turret gunner; Capt. Robert Millington, pilot; S/Sgt. Sam Keith, radio-radar waist gunner; T/Sgt. Joe DeCeuster, bombardier-nosegunner; 1st Lt. Jim Merriman, co-pilot; S/Sgt. Mert Ward, tailgunner (kneeling).

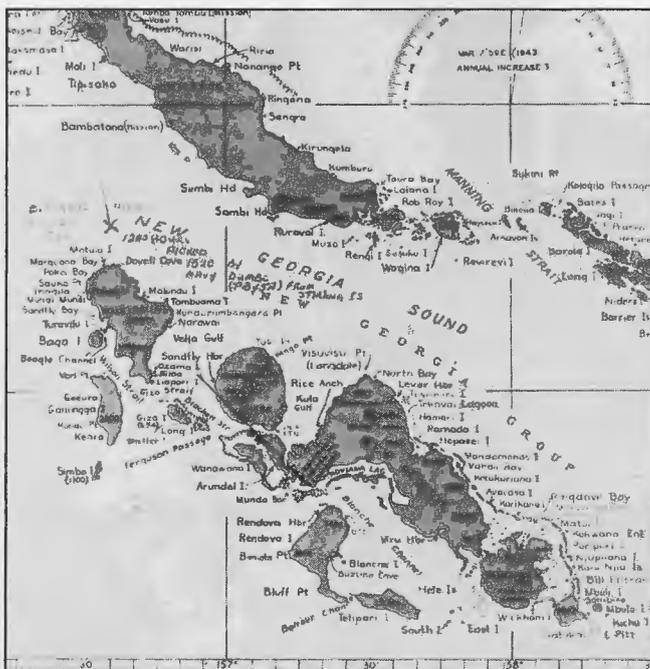
Moments after we had landed and felt the reassuring ground beneath us, Oak was called in to see Colonel Galatian, our squadron commander.

"Oak," he greeted. "How would you like to get even with the Japs?"

Naturally, Oak was all for it. Our next strike would be against the *Kihili Maru*, a 430-foot Japanese freighter.

My back nagged as a chronic reminder. Sometimes when I moved a certain way, I thought my spinal column would collapse. Mert had been hospitalized, so he would not be going with us after the freighter. Tommy would move back to the tail. I would take over his turret to be near the radio just in case.

Strip map of southern Bougainville with location of *Kihili Maru*, Kangu Hill, and approach into the breaking dawn on 9 August 1944.



The *Kihili Maru* was reefed just off of southern Bougainville in the Solomons. Coastwatcher and other intelligence reports not only indicated it housed some very important "brass" but also emphasized its ever-increasing firepower. The gunners on it were no amateurs as several unsuccessful strikes against it had borne out. Numerous anti-aircraft batteries on nearby Kangu Hill, as well as others strategically nestled on shore and on the offshore islands, ringed it with a murderous fire, making the ship a

fortress. Trying to hit it from up high was not the answer. A surprise low level attack appeared to be the solution to its apparent invulnerability.

At first I felt honored that Oak had been selected for the operation. Even though rumors started circulating about the suicidal aspects of the mission, I was confident that Oak could do the impossible. Gradually, however, the taunting from other crews, whether brought on by jealousy or real concern, began to erode my blind allegiance.

A knot of fear twisted and tightened in my stomach. I had trouble containing it, but I was much too proud to let it surface. It reached such proportions one night, when sleep would not come, that I strayed from the tent into the jungle and laid bare my inner thoughts before a huge banyan tree as if it were a shrine. Even though I felt a certain release with this outpouring, memories of the strike only days before were still too vivid to ease the knot that continued to pull and to throb in my gut. I already knew what it was like to get shot out of the sky.

During our few "rest" days, Oak supervised the stripping down of the plane for more speed. Seven .50-cal. guns, along with their ammunition and ammo boxes, were removed. The two fixed guns in the nose, the four package guns forward (two on either side of the fuselage), and the tail gun were also pulled out. Spare radio coils, loose parachute gear, and wing racks would be left behind. Fuel would also be greatly curtailed. With the weight of the aircraft reduced by nearly 5,000 pounds, Oak estimated he could coax another 30 knots out of

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Strip map issued to pilots showing Bougainville and Kihili airfield where the *Kihili Maru* was beached.



SWAMP WARRIOR

Navy Seal Crashes Charlie's Party

by John B. Dwyer

During the Vietnam War, Frank Thornton was a U.S. Navy SEAL (Sea, Air and Land) conducting counterterrorist (CT) operations as a Phoenix Program (Phuong Hoang) adviser in the IV Corps/Delta region. SEALs were tasked with that duty in 14 of the Delta's 16 provinces.

With its main objective being the elimination, preferably by capture, of the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI), Phoenix was indeed a counterterrorist program. But before going after the VCI, Thornton, like many other SEAL operators, took on other advisory duties that led to combat — and earned him some of the many medals for valor he was destined to receive along the way.

Today, Frank Thornton is president of Trident Investigative Services in San Diego, California. A primary service provided by his firm is protecting executives and corporations worldwide from possible terrorist attacks. He earned his credentials in this field the hard way.

RIGHT: Navy Lieutenant Frank Thornton earned the Silver Star, four Bronze Stars and a number of other valor awards during his tours in Vietnam with the Navy SEALs.

BELOW: Gotcha! One of Thornton's PRUs captures a VC hiding in a camouflaged bunker.





CHAU Doc Province is located in the upper Bassac River region near the Cambodian border. During Tet 1968, elements of several VC battalions infiltrated and besieged its capital city of Chau Phu, a major trading center on the Vietnam-Cambodian border with multi-storied buildings, banks and movie theaters. The VC held several key strategic positions in the city where they had set up strongpoints, effectively trapping civilians, Filipino USAID (United States Agency for International Development) personnel and Maggie, an Army nurse. The liberation of Chau Doc/Chau Phu turned out to be a three-day operation that involved SEAL Detachment Alpha's 8th Platoon under Lieutenant Dick Marcinko, a five-man Provisional Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) force, Navy PBR (Patrol Boat, River) and Seawolf (armed UH-1B) helicopter support, a CIA agent and Petty Officer Frank Thornton.

Thornton had arrived in Vietnam in mid-

SEALs Peterson, Thornton, unidentified Australian from Vung Tau detachment and Lt. Ray Salopek on Long Son Island. After numerous recons, the detachment blew Charlie's underground complex with C4.

1967. From Saigon's South Vietnamese navy base, he along with Lieutenant Joe DiMartino trained and advised Vietnamese SEAL counterpart *Lien Doan Nguoi Nhai* (LDNN) personnel in SEAL operational tactics before integrating them into the ranks of SEAL platoons. At the time, Thornton and DiMartino were the only SEAL LDNN advisers in the Delta. By January 1968 Thornton was already an experienced combat veteran of numerous missions in the Delta/Rung Sat Special Zone (RSSZ), and when the call came he was ready.

At 0300 on 31 January, Frank Thornton and four 8th Platoon SEALs were inserted by PBR into the outskirts of Chau Phu.

Coming ashore, the PBR had to run a gauntlet of intense VC fire which it had answered with its twin .50s. Now, as they made their way to the province chief's house where they were to rendezvous with the local CIA agent and a PRU adviser, Special Forces Staff Sergeant Drew Dix, the group came under heavy machine gun and sniper fire. It took several harrowing fire-and-maneuver dashes to get to the house. Inside, the SEALs learned from the CIA man that a number of people, including an Army nurse, were trapped and needed rescuing. Could the SEALs help? Moments later a jeep was commandeered and the mission was underway.

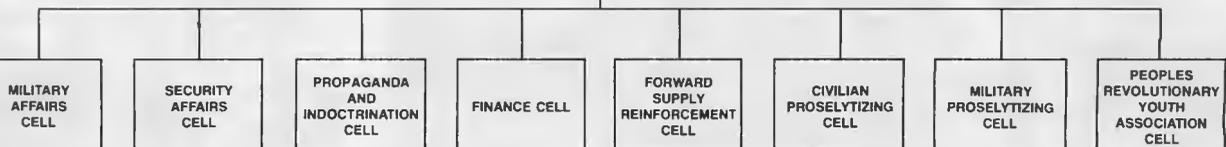
With the CIA man at the wheel, the four SEALs alert for snipers and Thornton providing cover fire with the jeep-mounted .50 cal., Staff Sgt. Dix made repeated dashes in and out of houses and buildings, flushing VC into the open and bringing out eight USAID workers, civilians and Maggie, the nurse who'd been hiding in a first floor cabinet as VC searched for her upstairs. (Dix was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions.)

The rescue effort/armed mobile patrol continued for two more days during which time Thornton managed to pinpoint the VC's command post. Situated in a Chau Phu movie theater, he was only able to get off a couple of bursts toward the building. On the third day, 2 January, it became his primary target.

Having radioed for and received a 57mm recoilless rifle, Thornton put his plan into action. Dodging bullets in the streets, sometimes going the rooftop-to-rooftop route as VC swarmed below, he and his fellow SEALs finally came to the strategically located building they'd selected. Its location and height made it perfect: Thornton would scale the building, and using the 57mm recoilless, eliminate the command post. As the SEALs laboriously raised the weapon up by rope, they were caught by a burst of enemy fire. Thornton took a bullet fragment

VIET CONG INFRASTRUCTURE

LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY
SECRETARY/DEPUTY SECRETARY
CURRENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



in the eye. SEAL Clarence Risher was hit and critically wounded. Ignoring his wound, Thornton exposed himself to the continuing VC volleys, returning their fire till Risher had been evacuated, ensuring in the process that there were no more friendly casualties. (Risher later died of his wounds.)

Returning to the original task, Thornton and the others succeeded in raising the recoilless rifle onto the roof. After getting it positioned on that vantage point, Thornton proceeded to blow the VC's CP all to hell.

Aside from the Bronze Star P.O. Frank Thornton received for his actions from 30 January to 2 February 1968, there was also a personal commendation letter. It was to Thornton's CO and from Chau Doc Province CORDS (Civil Operations and Rural Development) adviser B.P. Westall. It ended with the words, "Along with a small group of Americans, [Thornton] participated in the actions which led to the retaking of the provincial capital in a short period of time. Since that critical time, he has participated in numerous patrols into VC territory, spotting the enemy and enabling the province to keep tabs on the VC, thus lessening the chances for another Viet Cong attack . . . his breed is rare indeed."

The Long Son Raid

Two months after Thornton's Tet actions, the SEAL Team Two operator was concluding his extended first tour as LDNN adviser while working out of the Vung Tau training facility. Offshore was the island of Long Son where an unknown-sized VC force was known to be located since they periodically sent rockets flying into Vung Tau. Thornton was discussing the situation one day with Coastal Group 33 Junk Force commander Lieutenant Ray Salopek, and expressed his strong opinion that "somebody ought to take a look at that island and see what the VC are doing."

Several days later, on the night of 15 March, Thornton and three Junk Force personnel climbed over the side of Lt.



Holding a Sterling SMG, Petty Officer Frank Thornton and teammate take a break during ops on Long Son Island. Thornton had had enough of VC rockets hitting their Vung Tau training area.

Salopek's Vietnamese junk and into an IBS (Inflatable Boat, Small), silently paddling ashore for some "sneak and peek" reconnaissance of the VC on Long Son. Taking the point, Thornton led the team to a concealed spot where an observation position was set up. Through the next morning the men maintained their vigil, spotting only a few VC which ordinarily wouldn't have excited much attention or concern — except that they were packing 60mm ammo boxes on their backs toward what intel sources claimed was a company-sized base camp. They returned to the junk and reported their findings. Next day the Air Force conducted a series of strikes against Long Son based on that intelligence. Still, Thornton and Salopek had gut feelings that the bombing

raids hadn't completely solved the problem.

On the nights of 22 and 31 March, they and the Junk Force team revisited Long Son. Suspicions were confirmed as Thornton led the group inland on both recons. They observed VC carrying mortar and rocket ordnance the morning of the 23rd and discovered a tunnel complex at the island's west end early on April Fool's Day. Thornton had seen enough. The time for direct action had arrived.

Through the back waters of the South China Sea, Thornton, Salopek and company paddled back in for their fourth and final visit to the island on 6 April. Manoeuvring the IBS up a small canal they found a good beaching location, then deflated and hid the boat. Taking the point again, Thornton led the team over what was by then familiar ground. After stopping for a quick reconnoiter at a concealed spot, they quietly set about rigging and setting the C-4 charges they brought along on buildings and at tunnel entrances.



LEFT: Thornton, covered by his PRUs, sends back intelligence data on local VC. SEAL on far left carries the Stoner assault system.

BELOW: Viet Cong troops viewed the Mekong Delta region as their own private preserve — until SEALs and the "Brown Water Navy" PBRs took them to task.



HOLY WAR COMBAT TOUR



American Merc Joins the Mujahideen

Text by Gene Scroft

Illustrations by Ron Volstad

STARING me in the eye when I woke up was an Afghan trying to steal my AK from under my sleeping mat. Instinctively, I hit him in the face. Seven men jumped me. In a blind rage, I hit, kicked and punched anything within range. Afghans don't punch, they slap, so I was able to more than hold my own until they got a rope around my neck. I agreed to stop fighting.

I lied.

As soon as the rope came off I started swinging again. The second time they wised up and left the rope on after my hands were tied.

I wasn't going to let these bastards kill me without a fight. Cursing myself for not having a backup piece, I kicked, headbutted and spit blood on anyone stupid enough to get close.

They didn't kill me. They just stole my rifle and ordered two men to take me to a village far enough away so that I couldn't easily double back. I expected a lot of strange things in Afghanistan, but not being held prisoner by the men I came to help.

Earlier that morning I had thanked the

village chieftan, Aiop Han, for his hospitality during my two-months stay, which had not been very eventful. I told him I was leaving for Herat with or without his help.

Aiop's men weren't warriors. Their idea of combat was to fire their 12.7mm machine guns in the air to impress their friends and then hide the gun at the first sign of enemy aircraft. Aiop said that he would provide a guide and donkey for my gear. Thanking him, I then tried to get some sleep. I was awakened by my assailants — Aiop's men.

I had gladly walked for 50 days to deliver weapons to Aiop via camel caravan. Here I was being repaid for my efforts by being robbed.

The town of Morghab, location of a communist garrison, is a five-hour walk from Aiop's village. The chief constantly bragged that he was going to attack Morghab. But he always found an excuse. On one such occasion he whined that he had a stomach ache. I blew my top. I was suffering from amoebic dysentery. After that, I never tried to conceal my contempt for his cowardice.

Four times I accompanied Aiop's men to

Morghab to fight the enemy. Each time we ended up drinking tea in someones's house. On one of these visits Aiop was informed that a column of BRDMs and BTRs was about to attack his village. Instead of rushing back to protect his family and property, Aiop took a two-day circuitous route back, apparently hoping to avoid enemy contact. When we finally returned, the village was on fire and one old woman had a belly full of 120mm mortar shrapnel. I treated her wounds with the little medicine I had, but she died.

Timidity wasn't unique to Aiop's men. Five kilometers from our village was a large mujahideen camp located inside a huge cave. The enemy could never have found it, let alone bomb it. Stored in this cave were one 14.5mm and two 12.7mm machine guns, two 82mm mortars, three 82mm recoilless guns, anti-tank mines, AKs and plenty of ammunition. With all this firepower I tried to convince them to run frequent raids against the enemy. They didn't even listen. When their village was attacked, they were only minutes away but

refused to help.

These events ran through my mind as I was led — still tied — down the trail by Aiop's men. My two "guides" were members of the caravan I traveled with from Pakistan and I had considered them friends. They insisted that Aiop forced them to attack me. This was nonsense. They participated because they wanted to be part of the treachery and were surprised when Aiop had them disarmed and forced them to bring me to the next village.

When they finally untied me about an hour from the village, I immediately hit one in the face and began to pound on the other one. Grabbing a stick from the trail, I told them to go to hell and started off alone. To my surprise, the two insisted on showing me the way. They were terrified to return to the village without doing what they were told.

Another factor in their decision was the two men on horseback armed with Lee Enfield .303s that Aiop sent to follow us.

I wanted to ambush these SOBs but I couldn't find a suitable position. I waited for them in plain view on the top of a small hill. They wouldn't come close. They stopped at least 100 meters away and motioned for me to continue walking. I didn't budge. They made a wide detour to the head of the trail to urge my guides forward. Not knowing where the hell I was, I had no choice but to follow.

After about four hours we came to a small town on the banks of the Morghab River. Aiop's men disappeared, leaving me at the house of Abdul Aziz. My treatment under Aiop disgusted Abdul Aziz and he agreed to help.

A strange feeling came over me as I rested. It wasn't fear or isolation, though I had reason to feel both. It was exhilaration. I had come to Afghanistan in late 1984 to experience an intensity of life unavailable in the ordered world. I would justify life by surviving. Until now the pervasive feelings had been boredom and frustration. But by fighting back I had survived Aiop's treachery and the aloneness I felt afterward. My spirits were buoyed by this adventure and I was hungry for more.

Abdul Aziz claimed to be a commander in the Jamiat organization. In reality he was a prosperous rice farmer who commanded two servants armed with .303s. But he was a brave man and agreed to guide me toward Herat.

Our travel party consisted of four men, three horses and a donkey. Guess who got to ride the donkey? We traveled for three days until Aziz turned me over to another mujahideen group. As he departed, I gave Abdul Aziz my compass in appreciation of his help. He didn't understand exactly how to use it, but he liked it because it showed him the direction of Mecca. I'm sure he's a popular man around prayer time.

This new mujahideen group also agreed to help in my quest to reach Herat. My guide rode a horse and I got another damn donkey. We rode for almost an hour before my escort decided he wanted to spend the day drinking



YANK MERC IN AFGHANISTAN



This is the first of a two-part story by Gene Scroft, the *nom de guerre* for a West Point graduate who served in the 75th Rangers and the 82nd Airborne. Bored with the spit-and-polish peacetime military, Scroft headed to Central America after his five-year obligation. Later, Scroft met a mujahideen leader who suggested he should visit Afghanistan if he was hungry for action.

Croft headed to Quetta, Pakistan, one of two main staging areas for the Afghan resistance. (The other is Peshawar.) Always up for a challenge, Croft decided while in Quetta he would try to reach Herat, a remote city in Afghanistan's northwest corner near the Iran-Soviet Union border junction. Rumor has it that one Western journalist — either French or Danish — reached Herat. This is unconfirmed. It would be a journalistic coup — not to mention a feat of human endurance — for Croft to reach Herat.

There was another reason he wanted to go so deep inside, however. Afghan field commanders in eastern and central Afghanistan are closely scrutinized by the mujahideen's political offices in Peshawar and Quetta. Political officers are sensitive about outsiders taking up arms to fight the Soviets because it is a touchy subject with Pakistan's government. But in Herat, on the opposite side of Afghanistan from logistical bases in Pakistan, Croft felt he could find a commander willing to overlook such regulations because Croft had come not just to write, but to fight.

Even before the Soviet invasion in 1979, the region around Herat seldom saw visitors from the West. Croft's months of walking took him along the western edge of the Hindu Kush through mountains ranging from 6,500-14,000 feet to a Turkomen backwater east of the Morghab River. He was surprised and disappointed that despite the token presence of resistance elements in western rural areas, only in the city of Herat were serious operations mounted against the Soviet invaders and their puppet government. The Tajiks in Herat are allied with one of the more effective mujahideen groups, the Jamiat-I-Islami. In contrast, rural resistance cells of western Afghanistan are much less aggressive. They are unfamiliar with modern unconventional warfare tactics and cling instead to archaic methods passed down from 19th century mountain tribal warfare.



tea with his friends. If I had stopped every time someone wanted to drink tea I'd still be wandering around Afghanistan. I joined the first old man going in my direction. He was going to the village of Nick Ma Ma, a Jamiat commander. Maybe he could help me get to Herat.

Plans for Revenge

Nick Ma Ma's camp was fairly well armed. I didn't see anything heavier than an RPG-7, but they carried AKs, Iranian G-3s, Lee Enfields and even some M1s. They asked me to stay. I was tempted, but decided to continue on to Herat. Nick Ma Ma's men rode on horseback. But there wasn't an extra mount, so I knew I would end up sitting in camp most of the time. Herat was urban warfare. I could get to the enemy on foot.

When I told him about my ill treatment at the hands of Aiop, Nick Ma Ma offered to punish him. While burning for revenge, I knew what would happen if I went back. Aiop would apologize, return my rifle and plead for his life. This would satisfy the Afghan sense of justice and Nick Ma Ma would then leave Aiop alone.

This wasn't my idea of justice. I not only wanted to kill Aiop, I also wanted to burn his crops and tents as a warning to others. I doubted that Nick Ma Ma shared my view of revenge, so I declined his offer and continued toward Herat.

After two days of riding, I arrived in a mujahideen camp ringed with 12.7mm machine guns and supplied with Soviet and Bedford (English) trucks, the first vehicles I'd seen in months. It was in this camp that I got my first good look at an AK-74.

I like the idea of a smaller round. The more ammunition you can effectively carry the better. I also liked the sleeve used to align the trigger group parts. It makes the weapon a snap to reassemble.

I didn't see any modern American weapons in Afghanistan. The muj think that their Lee Enfields are American state-of-the-art. I bragged that the M16 is a much better weapon. I should have kept my mouth shut. Naturally they wanted to know why — if the M16 is such a fine weapon — they weren't receiving them from the United States. My explanation of American covert purchases of Chinese weapons didn't convince them. Hell, I wouldn't have believed it either. One box of grenades stamped with "GIFT FROM USA" would do more for our national interests than a million in supposedly covert aid.

Every day that I stayed in this camp the commander would tell me that he would help me *farda* (tomorrow.) After five days of "farda," I took a truck and left. The mujahideen pleaded with me not to go alone, but they didn't offer to help. About three kilometers down the road I met a farmer who spoke surprisingly good English. He was impressed to see an American willing to fight for his country and gave me a horse and a guide. It was my lucky day.

Tracers Over Herat

After three days of hard riding, and numerous guide changes, I arrived in a suburb of Herat, exhausted but happy to be there at last.

Tracers lit the night sky over downtown Herat. I stayed in the house of a lieutenant of Ismail Han, the Jamiat commander of Herat, and observed the nightly spectacle above Herat from his rooftop. Again I was lucky. They gave me a Chinese folding stock AK and a homemade chest pack that held four 30-round magazines. I left with two guides for the center of Herat.

We walked for two hours, in broad daylight and right under the nose of two communist positions. The Soviet and Afghan armies stay in large camps outside of the

I crawled to the roof with an RPG gunner. I covered him with my AK while he opened fire on a road grader, igniting the fuel tank and killing the driver.

city where they feel safe from attack. The positions inside the city are manned by hastily conscripted militia units that take the majority of the casualties. Generally the militia stayed locked inside their positions. As long as we stayed out of enemy kill zones we were safe. Unless, of course, a missile or a bomb dropped on our head.

We stopped to eat downtown in what is known as a committee, a group of about 20 mujahideen. Much of Herat is depopulated so committees can choose from thousands of abandoned homes for their headquarters. While we ate, one mujahideen began calling America an evil, imperialist power. I wasn't in any mood to listen to that garbage. I told him that he listened to too much Radio Tehran and that he should keep his ignorant mouth shut. I was just about to punch this guy in the nose when another man, Abdul Ahmad, asked me to join his committee.

Abdul Ahmad was about 36 years old and deadly serious about the jihad. Most of his family had been killed by the communists and he commanded a committee in the center of Herat. He said that he was impressed with my aggressiveness and asked me to fight the jihad with him. I gladly accepted.

Abdul Ahmad's weapons consisted of captured AKs, an RPD machine gun and an 82mm recoilless gun. The recoilless was their pride and joy. It's similar to the American 90mm, but is usually fired from a tripod rather than from the shoulder. The 82mm is the biggest direct fire antitank weapon I saw in Afghanistan.

On my second day with Ahmad's committee, a freedom fighter whom I didn't recognize came in and took our 82. When I asked about it, someone said he was borrowing it for an attack. I grabbed my rifle and followed.

It was dark by the time I arrived at the other committee. The darkness allowed me to keep a low profile. I wasn't about to let some commander deny me the opportunity to waste communists because of some reservation about an American dying under his command.

The First Attack

The master plan was a mystery to me. But I did figure out that the target was a militia post less than 300 meters from a Soviet 122mm howitzer position. I joined the re-

We could see the barrel of his AK sticking out the door. Taking aim at the molding, I squeezed off a round when he moved in my direction — got him in the shoulder.

coilless crew, knowing it would play a major role in the attack. We carried the tube and seven rounds to a house directly across from the enemy position.

I knew that the enemy had the house registered with artillery because it was an obvious attack position and one wall was already blown down from 122mm fire. I moved the gun to the garden next door. The garden wall would give the gunner protection while hiding some of the gun's signature.

I had forgotten how loud a recoilless was. The first round landed short and the back blast covered the garden with dust. The second round scored a direct hit. The seven rounds were gone in seconds.

When the last round was fired, the mujahideen started to pull back as I started to move toward the enemy. I turned and yelled at them, "What the hell are you doing? Attack!" They had other ideas. They felt that their mission was over and it was time to go back and brag about their marksmanship. Was this all there was? Not quite. Another group of mujahideen came up the trail and when I yelled for them to attack, they did.

We ran across 200 meters of open field. None of the DePuy three-second rush stuff, just assholes and elbows. We took up a position in a servants' quarters 20 meters from the post. I crawled to the roof with an RPG gunner. I covered him while he opened fire on a road grader, igniting the fuel tank and killing the driver.

I joined the group downstairs and we threw grenades into the post. We weren't getting any return fire so I rushed across to the porch in front of the post. No one followed. I tried to get them to attack by yelling "Allah Akbar" (God Is Great), but they didn't move. Alone in a building full of communists, I did the safest thing I knew. I attacked.

Along the elevated porch was a huge set of doors flanked on each side by six-foot windows. I moved to the other end of the porch, firing through the windows as I moved. Assuming a prone position, I looked around the corner. I could see figures carrying AKs moving into the main building from a low courtyard. I held my fire. The militia doesn't wear uniforms and I



couldn't tell if they were enemies or friends. If I accidentally killed a mujahideen, I'd end up in front of an Islamic tribunal. Mullahs are not known for their sense of humor, so I'd probably be shot.

Friend or Enemy?

Again firing through the windows, I ran back to the other side of the porch and began yelling "Allah Akbar." After about a minute, one mujahideen finally decided to attack. He took two steps, tripped, and fell on his face. In time, about 10 mujahideen were on the porch. I could still see the figures moving around so I asked the mujahideen next to me if they were *dost* or *dushman* (friend or enemy.) When he looked around the corner, 7.62 tracers flew past his head. We looked at each other and laughed. I guess we had found the bad guys.

We entered in mass through the front doors. Later, I would teach my committee proper room-clearing techniques, but for now I joined the crowd. We stumbled through the darkness to the windows overlooking the courtyard. Most of the enemy beat a hasty retreat when we opened fire but one poor sucker was caught in his room. Trapped against the wall between the door and the window, he couldn't move an inch. We could see the barrel of his AK sticking out the door but we couldn't hit him. I took aim at the molding around the door and I

squeezed off a round when he moved in my direction — got him in the shoulder.

I was on the right side of the firing line and I could see a man moving around me toward our rear. I couldn't identify him as enemy, so I held my fire. I tried to warn the mujahideen by shouting "*Dushman, dushman!*" But they were too preoccupied to notice. When he came up the back stairs I wasn't too concerned. What militiaman would be stupid enough to walk into a room full of mujahideen?

He pointed his AK directly at my stomach as soon as he saw me. By the terrified look in his eye, I knew I was dead. Great, killed by a confused mujahideen in my first Afghan combat. I yelled "*Dost, dost!*" and moved to grab his rifle. This time he aimed at my head. Luckily, another mujahideen came to my rescue by separating us.

I returned to the firing line. Suddenly, tracers flew between my legs. The man who almost shot me came running by, followed by a stream of gunfire that impacted around me. I did a quick 180 and got off one shot at the asshole before he disappeared out the door. I guess he was just a lost commie after all.

The man in the courtyard surrendered when his room caught fire. We jumped through the windows and while one mujahideen took the prisoner, the rest of us ran into

the room to collect *gannymat* (booty). We collected a radio, AK ammunition and a Russian map case that I claimed as a personal prize. Three of us carried a carriage-mounted 7.62mm machine gun back to our committee. I reloaded and returned to the post, but the battle was over.

I counted three enemy dead. A group of mujahideen stood over another body that was making the guttural sounds some fresh dead make. He was lying in a pool of blood, back shot and looking with clear eyes toward the sky. He wasn't a communist, he was our only casualty. I wondered if he took a friendly bullet.

I thought it better not to ask.

Only then did the Soviets open fire on us with their 122s and 12.7s. During the entire battle they didn't lift a finger to help their allies. Afghan killing Afghan is an integral part of their strategy.

This battle taught me a lesson. From now on, I would be the first one in and would shoot anything that moved. Islamic trial or not.

A True Professional

Near Abdul Ahmad's committee lived a remarkable man. Dr. Amin was the only surgeon in Herat. His English was excellent and he had contacts with some German medical association. He didn't have to be there. With his education and background

A WAR OF ALLIES

I first entered Afghanistan in late 1984 through the small village of Robat. I was told in Quetta, Pakistan, that this was the quickest route to Herat. Robat is just inside Afghanistan in the triangle formed by the Pakistan/Iran/Afghanistan borders. It serves as a way station for mujahideen weapons destined for northwestern Afghanistan.

I had to be smuggled through six Pakistani checkpoints between Quetta and Robat. If discovered, I could have been deported. I dressed in Afghan clothes and maintained a low profile in the cab of our truck. When the guards became curious I would screw up my face and try to pass as a half wit. I guess I look half-witted because only once was I close to being caught.

It took us 30 minutes to convince the guards at one checkpoint to let us pass. When they finally waved us through one muj, a marijuana chain smoker, screamed for us to stop. He wanted to pray. Idiot. Why couldn't he pray after we were out of sight of the checkpoint? I didn't know the Islamic prayer ritual and I'd stand out like a black man at a Ku Klux Klan rally.

I followed the mujahideen to a stream and copied their ritual of washing off my hands and feet. When they started to pray, I hid in the cab of the truck and pretended to repair something. One

Pakistani guard asked the mujahideen some questions about me but I guess the Afghans told a pretty good lie because I wasn't bothered. I almost tore that pot head apart when we finally got out of there.

When I arrived in Robat there was combat — combat between the mujahideen.

A commander in the Hesbi-i-Islami organization (a extreme fundamentalist Iranian-influenced faction) defected to our group with three Hezbi trucks loaded with ammunition. Shortly thereafter one of our trucks was ambushed by the Hesbis as it drove out to collect firewood. Two of our men were wounded, one captured and one of the defector's men was killed.

The Pakistanis intervened to stop the shooting (the border is ill-defined in this area) and after negotiations our man was released. The defector moved to another area and things settled down. Later we learned the defector was nothing more than a heroin smuggler who never ventured farther into Afghanistan than Robat.

Only the lack of AKs kept our force from going on to Herat. The Pakistanis required that each mujahideen personally receive their rifles in Pakistan (they wanted to count heads). I stayed behind in Robat with our other men to guard our

ammunition and machine guns when the other men went into Pakistan to get their rifles.

When they were gone, a mujahideen commander — a supposed ally — came to our camp with his five-man bodyguard and demanded that we give him our weapons. He said he needed the weapons for his followers waiting in Iran. We refused.

About midnight, two Bedford trucks loaded with his followers drove into our camp. When they discovered that we were in a 12.7mm machine gun position they quickly drove away — leaving their commander at our mercy. I told our commander to kill the son-of-a-bitch (that's obviously what he planned for us) but he was released. Sometimes the mujahideen are too forgiving.

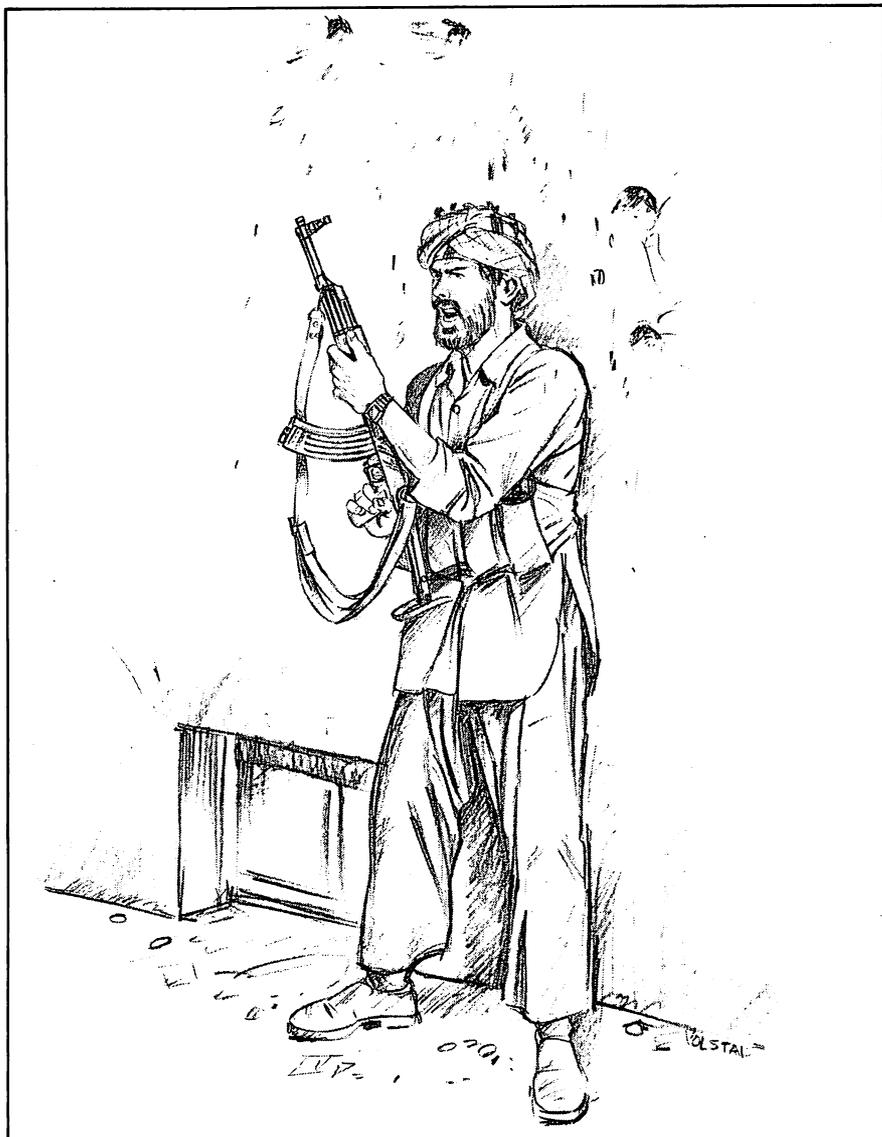
Because of political problems with the Pakistanis, our muj returned empty-handed. They said they had no idea when they were going to get AKs. They also told me they intended to go to Herat via Iran when they did get the rifles. I had no intention of staying in Robat any longer (I'd been there for over a month already) and I had no desire to travel through Khomeini-land. I took the next truck back to Quetta. There had to be another route in.

A communist machine gunner started firing wildly from the roof. Bullets plastered the windows above me while glass and masonry rained down on my head.

he could have lived a comfortable life in Europe or in the United States, but he stayed to help his people.

I first went to Amin to get help for my dysentery. He gave me metronidazole and it plugged me up in 10 days. After three months with the runs it was like being reborn. The four prisoners we captured in the last battle were kept in Amin's camp, including the poor bastard who was in the courtyard. He was so full of holes that he had to be helped to the can. All the prisoners were well treated before they were shot.

One day I was drinking tea with Amin when a mujahideen was brought in with a nasty leg wound. He had been shot in the calf and both his bones were shattered. The men who brought him in didn't know about tourniquets and he was suffering from severe blood loss shock. His foot was pointing 180 degrees in the wrong direction and I was sure Amin would amputate.



Continued on page 109

MARCHING THROUGH THE HAZARAJET

After reaching Quetta the second time the mujahideen political officer who had sent me to Robat told me he was supplying a man who claimed to be a commander in Badghis Province near the Soviet border with a 12.7mm machine gun, mines, explosives and ammunition. The commander from Badghis claimed that he would travel to his home village near the Morghab River and after a 30-day visit he would go on to Herat to fight the communists. This sounded good to me so I joined his group. (I had no idea at the time but he was actually just the brother of a local chieftan and commanded nothing.)

There were about 10 of us who crossed the border in a large Bedford truck with supplies. Because of fighting between pro- and anti-Shi'ite mujahideen groups we had to make numerous course changes. As an American I keep a low profile in villages plastered with

Khomeini posters. The men I traveled with were Sunni Moslems, as are most Afghans, and didn't like the Khomeini crazies any more than I did.

In one Shi'ite village, they discovered who I was. They tried to bring me to their commander but I refused. I kept my AK always at the ready in case they tried to grab me. Finally, I agreed to see their commander when they threatened to confiscate our truck.

The Shi'ite headquarters was packed with men. The commander was friendly but some of the younger men were openly hostile. (American imperialism, shit like that.) My patience quickly ran out and I told them that Khomeini was no friend of the mujahideen. Of course, they called me a liar, but they let me go. Sometimes an aggressive posture is the wisest strategy.

A few days later we ran out of roads. We bought six camels for our gear and

started walking north. Walking through central Afghanistan — the Hazarajat — where there is very little fighting, was peaceful but strange and disorienting. I felt like Alexander's soldiers must have felt when they passed through. We marched up rugged desert mountains to pass ancient crumbling ruins in passes guarding beautiful green valleys on the other side.

The strangeness of the place fascinated me. I'm not exactly sure what it was, the ruins, the camels, the donkey dung, but this was another world. One night while I was trying to absorb the alien landscape, I tuned to the Voice of America on the radio and listened to a Chuck Berry special — talk about culture shock.

After about 50 days of uneventful walking we arrived in Badghis where we were supposed to find the war.

BARNETT'S PANZER II

by Karl Klein

made to construct woven-grass targets for practice purposes.

The crossbow itself is an outstanding weapon. Considering the factors of size, weight, simplicity, maintenance (especially in a sub-tropical environment) and effectiveness, Barnett's Panzer II is one of the best in the market for military/paramilitary use. There were a few minor design flaws, however, that became noticeable after some serious use. Trigger assemblies were not properly seated in the receiver recesses and occasionally caused the string to slip off the bolt and ride forward between bolt and barrel. In essence, a misfire. We managed to correct the problem by drilling a 1/8-inch hole in both receiver and trigger assembly, and then insert a roll pin to properly align the two. More serious is the lack of a cocking device for the crossbow. This is an absolute necessity for the average archer, and especially Salvadoran archers. A crow's foot device would be adequate, and there's really no need for a compound cocking device such as a goat's foot for archers of reasonable strength.

Sights on the Panzer II, factory notch & bead, are just fine as they come. Arce archers easily adapted to them, and ranges and groupings inherent in the weapon don't justify the added complexity of scope sights, or for that matter, aperture target sights. We found that mid-range trajectory at 25 meters runs approximately 12 inches above line of sight, so ranges must be accurately estimated to within five meters. As with any weapon, the firer must be familiar with its characteristics and peculiarities — in this case a proper compensated sight picture — before he can expect consistent first-round hits.

Performance throughout bow training was good. At ranges less than 15 meters, bolts grouped at two inches or less. In fact, it was fairly common to ruin some bolts because the second would land on the first. At ranges greater than 25 meters, groupings tended to depend on wind variability. A reasonable group at 30 meters would run about four inches with occasional erratic bolts. With more practice, decent groups could probably be made at up to 50 meters with the Panzer II on a deer-sized target.

But is the Panzer II, or any crossbow for that matter, practicable in El Salvador's bush war? It's certainly more cumbersome and delicate than the M16, and traumatic shock of a bolt on the body is certainly not as great as a 5.56mm round. And, a suppressed weapon would obviate the bow's inherent ability to kill quietly.

But that's why we took the bows down south: to let the Salvadorans carry and fight with them, and bring back their reports. Perhaps the crossbow, one of man's oldest weapons, will find a new niche in 20th Century warfare.

For more information on the Panzer II, contact Barnett International Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 934, Odessa, FL 33556, or call (813) 920-2241. ✕



TOP: Untrained Arce archers obtained 6-inch groups at 20 meters during their first "hands-on" with the weapon.

ABOVE: Measuring 81mm mortar canister for crossbow bolt quiver.

WAR never changes, just its tools — or so the saying goes. Ancient China's black powder rockets have given way to thermonuclear weapons, and the search for more efficient weapons of battle continues to be man's overriding passion. Yet the crossbow has seen military service for more than 3,000 years, and it continues to pop up in the most unlikely places. Morazan Province, El Salvador, for example.

In June 1986, as a member of SOF's training team, I took five Barnett International Panzer II crossbows down to El Salvador's Arce Battalion for test and evaluation. Would a crossbow have military value in that country's guerrilla war? Could it stand up to rugged field use? Could Salvadoran soldiers learn to use them effectively? That's just what SOF wanted to find out.

The crossbows were well received by Arce troops, and special interest came from Captain Dardano Sosa, Arce's S-3, for their potential use by the *Infiltraciones* (special recon troops) during SOG-type missions.

Initial demonstrations went well, with untrained archers (but competent riflemen) obtaining 6-inch groups at 20 meters with the Panzer II. An immediate problem evidenced itself in the aluminum bolts when used against hard targets: they bent. This caused erratic shots and degraded confidence in the bow, but immediate plans were

BARNETT'S PANZER II

Standard Draw Weight	150 lbs.
Physical Weight	4.8 lbs.
Length	31 inches
Width	25 inches
String Length	25 5/8 inches
Number of Strands in String	31
Power Stroke	9 inches
Bolt Length w/ Threaded insert	14 inches
Bolt Length w/ Field Point	15 inches
Bolt Length w/ Standard Broadhead	16 1/4 inches
Bolt Weight w/ Field Point	410 grains
Bolt Weight w/ Standard Broadhead	420 grains
Feet Per Second (fps)	210
Foot Pounds of Energy	40
Maximum Effective Range	35 yards
Unit Cost	\$295

SURVIVAL guns. What exactly are they? A Colt M1911A1 .45 ACP pistol that pops two dirtballs in a street fight before they stitch you, is most certainly a survival weapon. The .500 Nitro-Express double-barreled rifle that stops a charging rhino before it stomps your guts into the African veldt is a survival gun. The M16 that drops an enemy soldier before he reaches your position is also a survival gun. But, by common usage, the term has come to mean, in general, that firearm stashed, more or less permanently, in a plane, vehicle or boat, which awaits an emergency you hope will never occur. Used but little, it must perform without failure if you are ever so unlucky as to be stranded in the wilderness.

When its need was first conceived by the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II, employment against enemy personnel was excluded from consideration. Downed pilots, trapped behind enemy lines without food, were thought to be in need of a firearm to procure small game. While the concept was more than a little farcical when applied to the heavily populated European theatre (stealing barnyard eggs would be more practical), it had some merit in the Pacific jungles.

No choice was made, however, until April 1944, when the Air Force selected the commercially manufactured Stevens over/under .22/.410 rifle-shotgun. Initially, .22 LR hollowpoint and .410-gauge rifled slugs were issued until it was decided the Japanese would probably claim our pilots used this ammunition against their troops in violation of Article 23e of the Hague Regulations (which somehow didn't forbid burning them out of tunnels with flamethrowers). A .410-gauge shell with No. 7½ shot was substituted and a .22 LR cartridge with a full-metal jacket was developed and adopted as the T42. By the end of the war more than 1½ million rounds of T42 ammunition had been manufactured.

A total of 10,000 Stevens rifle-shotguns were purchased. By September, 1945 a 10-inch smooth-bore barrel manufactured by Mossberg for the M1911A1 service pistol was also type classified. By 1950 a bolt-action rifle chambered for the .22 Hornet cartridge with a detachable 14-inch barrel and telescoping stock was adopted. Close to 30,000 of these M4 rifles were purchased from Harrington & Richardson. In 1951 it was supplemented by the M6, an over/under .22 Hornet/.410 gauge rifle-shotgun, designed by H&R but manufactured by Ithaca, from whom more than 66,000 were procured. Both the M4 and M6 are still carried in USAF survival kits.

Unfortunately, the M6 has 14-inch barrels which classify it according to the National Firearms Act of 1934 as a title II firearm. There are but few in private collections. In 1982, Springfield Armory, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 420 West Main Street, Geneseo, IL 61254) decided to produce a civilian version called the M6 Scout. Except for the barrel lengths (18 inches), markings and one important addition, the M6 Scout

by Peter G. Kokalis

SPRINGFIELD SURVIVAL RIFLE



ABOVE: M6 Scout

BELOW: Close-up of M6 Scout showing forged monobloc receiver, rebounding hammer and selector, top latch, hinge pin with ring, .22 Hornet cartridge and original U.S. Air Force aluminum cased .410 gauge shell (No. 6 shot).



ABOVE: Close-up of M6 Scout's buttstock storage compartment which holds four .410 gauge shells and 12 .22-cal. Hornet cartridges.

closely emulates its military counterpart. Let's take a look at its salient features.

With an overall length of 31.5 inches, the M6 Scout weighs, empty, just 3.5 pounds. The rifle barrel is presently available in three calibers: .22 LR, .22 Rimfire Magnum and .22 Hornet. We chose the military's .22 Hornet chambering for our test and evaluation. All metal surfaces are phosphate finished. The rifle barrel sits on top of

the .410 gauge shotgun barrel which has been chambered for the now standard 3-inch shell. Both barrels are sleeved into a forged monobloc receiver. A fixed blade, unprotected front sight has supposedly been left purposely too high so you can adjust the elevation zero to the ammunition you have selected for your survival kit. Remember, if you have to file down the front sight blade (carefully, just a little at a time) it will progressively move the point of impact upward. A nonadjustable, unprotected, flip-

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“ONE SHOT, ONE KILL”

Continued from page 50

levels of patience and bushcraft expertise through the conduct of what is called a “stalk.” Starting 1,000 meters away from the target — a deuce-and-a-half with two sniper instructors — students have three hours in which to close to 200 meters, identify their primary target, and shoot. In the interim, instructor “walkers” move throughout the stalk area and observe for any breaches of movement or camouflage discipline, and check for muzzle-blast effect when the students fire. To ensure they’re shooting at the right target, the instructors on the vehicle hold up small, numbered cards which the students must identify through their ART-1 or -2 (Adjusting Range Telescope) scopes.

Stalking is one of the most difficult aspects of the fieldcraft training. Students are run through the exercise five times — each worth five points — and the best three-out-of-five scores are recorded. In combat, of course, results are shown through either proper execution of the mission — or compromise of the sniper.

Instructors at the Sniper School tell the story of SFC Bert Waldron, an Army sniper in Vietnam, who once spent three days — instead of the course’s requisite three hours — stalking his target over 1,000 meters. The Viet Cong target never knew what hit him, and Waldron went on to become one of the premier snipers in Vietnam.

Stalking isn’t the only aspect of fieldcraft taught and tested during the students’ second week of the school. In the camouflage and concealment exercise, sniper students are allowed 10 minutes to blend into the terrain before the course cadre does their best to compromise them. In some instances, an instructor will literally walk on top of a student before his position is known. In others, the student gives himself away through improper camouflage or unnecessary movement.

Students are also given range estimation exercises, and an observation exercise during which they must identify 10 military-type objects in 40 minutes using directions from a known TRP (target reference point), and give size, shape, color, condition and the critical “appears to be” information.

At the end of the second week, students need to have a minimum of 180 out of 240 points to pass fieldcraft. One hundred seventy-nine points will RTU the student, and about one-third of the class feels the axe. Often, it’s the student’s inability to slow down, to get in the patient and careful sniper’s frame of mind, that sends him home.

“Patience is the sniper’s virtue,” NCOIC Sgt. Raitt emphasized. “Don’t be in a rush or you’ll compromise the mission — or the course.”

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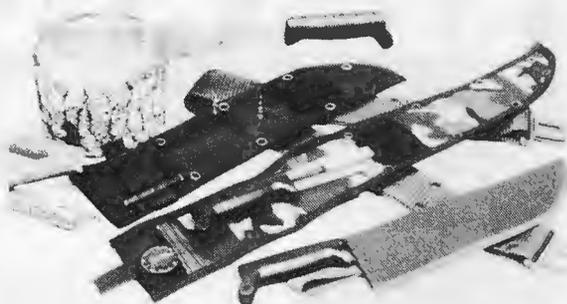
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what most people view as the sniper's main function: shooting. It is an integral aspect of a combat sniper's job, but a sniper who thinks it's the *only* job is, as Sgt. Raitt terms it, a "cowboy."

"A sniper can be the eyes and ears of a unit leader," Raitt said. "Information can be far more important than one, or a dozen, kills."

But, there are numerous occasions on the battlefield when "long range precision fire on selected targets" can be tactically critical. Key enemy leaders, both officer and NCO, crew-served or automatic weapons gunners, forward observers, enemy scouts and trackers — all become key targets under the sniper's expertly trained eye. There is one target, however, which supercedes all the others.

"The greatest threat is another sniper because he's trained in the same techniques that you are," Sgt. Lucas pointed out. Perhaps that's one reason why sniper students take such care during the shooting phase: They have to be able to deliver the first shot accurately — before the other guy does.

Students expend a controlled 1,500 rounds of 173-grain, M118 7.62mm Match Ammunition per man during their two week's range work. Using the slightly antiquated M21 sniper system (an accurized M14 with scope), students begin by zeroing their system at 300 meters on cut-down KD (known distance) E-type silhouette targets. Using the sniper/observer team concept, one man shoots while the other, using an M49 spotting scope, coaches and provides information on windage and round strike. It's a slow — and patient — process which not only stresses the need for first-round accuracy, but which also bonds the team together as one integral unit.

After the zero is established, students progress to KD targets ranging from 300-600 meters, and a variety of moving and snap (limited exposure) targets. All firing is done from the prone supported position off rucksacks, as they would likely do on the battlefield, up to ranges of 600 meters. Six hundred meters is by no means the maximum range for an effective sniper, but due to the current lack of longer, usable range facilities at Ft. Bragg and the age of the M21 system, it is considered a practicable range for training. (Some of the weapon systems currently being used by the Sniper Committee are acid-etched "XM-21" (experimental) which dates them back to the early days of the Vietnam War.)

Shooting practice leads to the students' final test. At 300 meters, students are allowed three rounds to confirm their zero and two spotter rounds to check wind conditions. They then engage 10 KD targets, five snap-type targets which are exposed for five seconds, and five moving targets which also have a five-second exposure. It sounds relatively simple. But try it on cut-down targets at ranges from 300-600 meters, and it's no wonder that around one-third of the class fails this phase. Out of a possible 100

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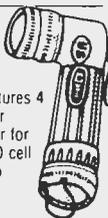


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- Ranger Commandos (Black)
- Artillery & Guardian Angels (Red)
- Commando Dress (Camouflage)

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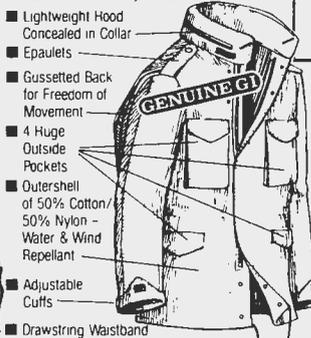
GENUINE military clothing isn't the cheapest. But as every ex-GI knows, the clothes seem to last forever, they're very, very warm and designed to be functional.

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In one form or another, this jacket has been the military workhorse for over 40 years and is still going strong.

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Orders from \$70.01 to 90.00	\$7.25
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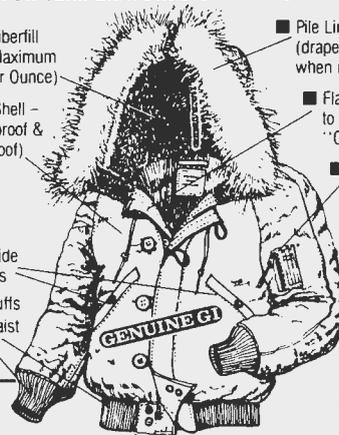
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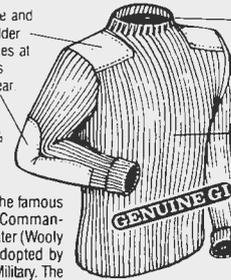
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Choose: Olive Drab (OD) Green Crewneck (USMC approved); Black V-Neck with epaulets and name plate area on breast (US Army approved); Black Crewneck (no epaulets or nameplate area); Camouflage Crewneck; Tan Crewneck; Maroon Crewneck.

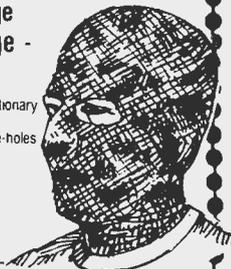


Commando Sweater - Commercially made - patterned after the GI ones, these are commercially made in easy care 100% acrylic. Although they are copies, they are constructed surprisingly true to the all wool ones, complete with sleeve and shoulder patches. Choose between: Olive Drab (OD) Green or Black. Specify Size: S, M, L, XL \$22.75/each.

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points, 75 are needed to make the grade and continue with the course.

By the time the FTX (field training exercise) rolls around in the fifth week, the remaining few students are stressed out — both physically and mentally. First Lieutenant Chris Gaertner, AMTU's commander and a Ranger/Pathfinder/Jumpmaster school graduate, has high praise for the students who make it this far in the course.

"Sniper School is tougher than Ranger School in terms of stress. In some ways it's harder physically because you have to stay still for long periods of time," Gaertner said. "It's also much more intense than Jumpmaster. Sniper School is worse than the worst parts of both schools combined."

Students agree, and a course observer could see the strain and fatigue on their faces as they operated in 95-degree, high humidity weather.

The students' final course mission, a 3½-day land navigation/escape & evasion/sniper exercise, takes place about 55 miles west of Ft. Bragg proper in a leased State Game Area. Crisscrossed with overgrown streams (home of more than a few water moccasins), swamps and tangled underbrush, terrain and temperature take their toll on students burdened with a standard combat load of 85 pounds of gear. But no one gives up the ghost.

"It's a matter of personal motivation," one of the students, a Special Forces staff sergeant, said. "It'd be easy to quit, but we kept driving; kept saying, 'We're gonna make it!'"

"And the mental pressure's there too," another student added. "You know you have to get the points. You get this far and you know you can't give in."

After their mission briefing, the two-man teams (in this case, there was one three-man team since seven men were left on the course) headed off on the first stage of the op: a 15-kilometer land nav course run through some of the most miserable terrain imaginable. And right behind them were the course instructors — the "enemy" — tracking and doing their best to compromise the snipers' mission. (On another course, one of the snipers had changed his combat boots for tennis shoes, totally throwing off the trailing instructors and making them wonder who the hell was wandering around their training area.)

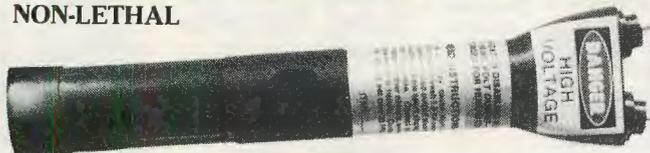
But the real test was still to come. Each team had been assigned a target area to observe for an indefinite period, and were briefed that a Soviet adviser with vital intelligence documents would probably pass through. The adviser was their primary target. That meant constructing a hide which would pass the closest scrutiny; constructed at night, without assistance, after a grueling hump through the swamps. And the hide would have to serve as home for up to five days — sanitary facilities included.

During the two nights and two days the teams occupied their hides, they were required to maintain constant surveillance of their assigned target area. The instructors

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put together a variety of "enemy" actions — from gunshots to flares to roadblocks — for the teams to observe and record in their sniper logs, which would later be graded.

It's tough to maintain a continuous watch, one up and one down, on snatches of sleep after humping and digging for nearly 24 hours. It's called sniper burnout, when the eyes refuse to focus and the brain simply doesn't record the information it's fed.

Around mid-morning on the last day of the FTX, the Soviet adviser and his guerrilla counterpart made their way through the three target areas. Only one call sign, Alpha Charlie, engaged its primary target. With a good critique on their hide, the two young 82nd Airborne Division troopers knew they had passed the course.

The two other call signs weren't so sure. They hadn't seen their primary target, and although their hides, range cards and sniper logs were good for a first-time effort, they had lost critical graduation points. Their faces reflected the depression they felt as they climbed out of their hides.

But they were given a second shot, not out of the instructors' kindness, but because the course had a built-in retry scenario at half-point value. Even then, some of the students weren't sure they'd make the grade.

"Continue to observe, sniper," Sgt. Raitt told them. Hours later the primary target reappeared, and both he and his guerrilla escort were taken out with two quick shots by the two callsigns.

"It takes a special breed of man to become a sniper," Sniper Instructor Cpl. Huffer said at the course graduation a few days later. The seven graduates, a few passing by only one or two points, sat motionless in the Sniper Committee classroom while a small crowd of family members, unit officers and NCOs looked on. A few earlier graduates of the course nodded their heads appreciatively; they knew *exactly* what it took to make the grade.

Awards for honor graduate and honor team were handed out, and each sniper received a certificate stating that he had successfully completed Sniper School. And although they didn't hear it, the highest award they received came from Sergeant Tim McGinnis, the course's National Match armorer and weapons instructor.

"I wouldn't hesitate a bit to deploy anywhere in the world with the instructors or these sniper graduates," he said.

Therein lies the proof that XVIII Airborne Corps' Sniper School is a success by anyone's standards. ✕

SALTY CRUSADERS

Continued from page 57

continued operation of these coastal services and their safe passage is important to the economy of Lebanon, and to the morale and continuing confidence of the Christian

civilian population.

Another important role of the Marine Force is to provide the amphibious assault and sea-lift capability for the bulk of the LF. In the winter of 1984/1985 this capability of the Marine Force was sorely tried.

During the battle for possession of the Iklm Karroub district between Beirut and Sidon, all military and civilian resupply, as well as reinforcement and casualty evacuation, was by sea, mostly from the small port village of Jiré.

This Christian enclave in southern Lebanon was under constant heavy attack by strong PLO and Druze forces. The Christian villages of the district were subjected to daily rocket and artillery barrages from the enemy-held high ground positions overlooking that coastal farming district.

The position of the defending LF units became untenable and they were forced to evacuate the district to prevent a disaster that would have resulted in the loss of their best units and irreplaceable military equipment as well as a massacre of civilians. The Marine Force evacuated the LF combat units and many of the civilians from Jiré. It was a difficult operation, one that had to be pulled off right under the noses of the PLO and Druze who overlooked the whole area from their lofty mountain perches.

The evacuation was not interfered with by any seaward threat. The ever watchful Marine Force coastal patrol saw to that.

The Marine Force has seen its share of waterborne rescues, too. In the fall of 1984

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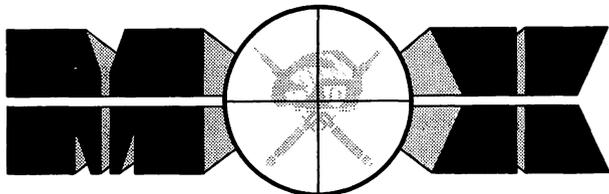
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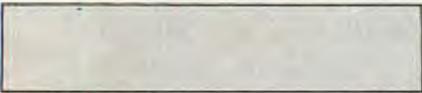
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a civilian ferry, having departed the port of Beirut, was seen to be foundering and in extreme difficulties as she skirted west Beirut. The reaction of the Muslim terrorists in west Beirut was to open up on the distressed vessel full of civilians with all the coastal artillery and rockets they could bring to bear in the time available.

Marine Force gunboats raced at high speed, slicing through the autumn seas, to the succor of the desperate and sinking ferry. Arriving in record time, one gunboat returned the fire of the shore-based Muslims while the other Christian gunboat aided the ferry's terrified civilians. As it took aboard the ferry's passengers, the second gunboat provided a stationary target for the Muslim gunners. Due partly to the Muslims poor aim, but mostly to the cool gallantry and calm professionalism of the Marines, the rescue came off with only a few casualties.

The LF Marine Force's legacy of success continues to serve as a deterrent to enemy assaults on the Christian Lebanese coastline. Although the Christians in Lebanon live in constant fear of sudden and violent death, they can rest assured about one thing: As long as the LF Marine Force prowls the seas, they can turn their backs on the threat from the sea. The LF Marine Force has that avenue of attack covered. ✕



SWAMP WARRIOR

Continued from page 73

Nha Be-stationed 999th Regional Force Company on a sweep of suspected enemy positions at a location in the 400 square-mile jungled hell of the Rung Sat "Forest of Assassins" where the VC tenaciously held on after three years of U.S./ARVN ops.

Following a helicopter insertion, the 999th spread out and initiated their sweep. Thornton kept his men behind, setting up an ambush along a known enemy supply route. As night fell he noticed two sampans moving toward them downstream into the ambush kill zone. Letting the first one go by, Thornton ordered his team to open fire on the second one as it glided into the zone. But after killing most of the VC aboard the craft and sinking it, he noticed a whole sampan flotilla heading downriver right behind the lead pair. There were 14 sampans, all loaded with VC who wasted no time in disembarking and deploying in several groups, intent on surrounding Thornton and his men.

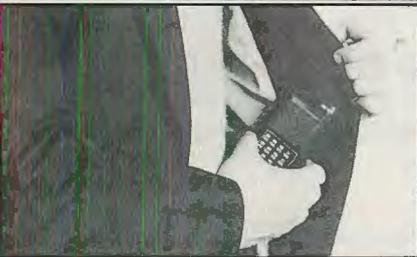
"The only thing that saved us," he said, "was that we were positioned on a point with water on both sides of us . . . and the Seawolf gunships."

After deploying his team in a defensive perimeter, the veteran SEAL scouted the immediate surrounding area for an extraction point even as the VC began probing

their position on three sides. Thornton radioed for air strikes and Seawolf gunships in a battle that raged for three hours into the night. At several times in the dark and the confusion, two groups of VC ended up firing and lobbing grenades at each other — over Thornton's position — while he and his men lay low. Finally, with air strike ordnance exploding only 20 meters away and helicopter extraction arranged, Thornton led his team into the water where they floated downstream in the general direction of the extraction point. On the way one of the PRUs dropped his M60, and the team had to stop a nerve-jarring 15 minutes until it was found and recovered. Finally making it ashore, Thornton took the lead as his team probed ahead. Discovering that they were by then behind the attacking VC group, Thornton led his men 600 meters inland to the pick-up point and safely out.

While serving as Long An Province PRU adviser, Thornton developed and refined an operational technique that proved effective in anti-VCI missions. "Parakeet" operations, as he called them, utilized the hardest, most current intelligence gathered by his PRU agents on the location of VCI personnel. Given this intel, Thornton took immediate action by loading one squad each of SEALs and PRUs onto two choppers and taking with him the agent who could pinpoint the objective. Nearing it, he ordered the choppers down for a quick insertion, moved straight to the target, snatched the

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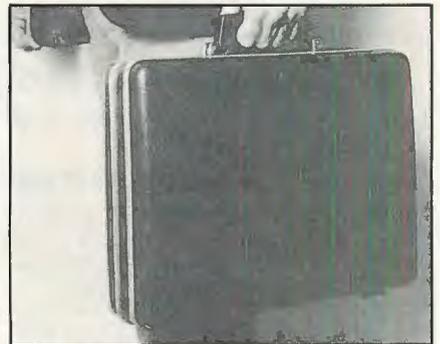
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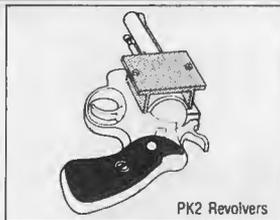
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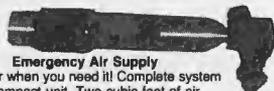
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in the initial exchange Thornton rushed to his aid, and while shielding the man, he killed a VC at point-blank range with his CAR-15. Despite heavy automatic weapons' fire aimed at him, Thornton carried the wounded man to a relatively safe area for helicopter extraction. He then turned his attention to the bunker that was spewing out the heavy fire, making life hell for him and his team. With complete disregard for the danger involved, Thornton took on the bunker in a one-man rifle and grenade assault that resulted in three dead and one captured VC, the end of the firefight — and later the Silver Star.

Anti-VCI operations continued. They netted not only cadre personnel but weapons caches. During a mission conducted on 12 September 1969, Thornton and his SEAL/PRU team hit Tan Tap village in the Can Giuoc District of Long An. They captured two 60mm mortars, two M60s, one RPD, one AR-15, one carbine, 11 SKS rifles, 30 B-40 rounds, 100 AK-47 magazines and 48 pairs of barbed wire cutters.

The Rung Sat IOCC commanding officer, Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Tan, cited Thornton and his men for their "enthusiasm and highly serving spirit." He cited them again for a mission conducted four days later called Operation Chuong Duong conducted in the Rung Sat Special Zone. In the general's words, "They made heavy contact with a crowded number of

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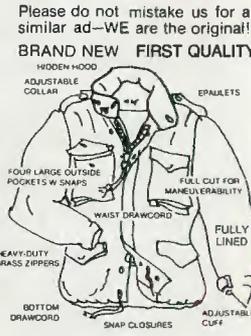


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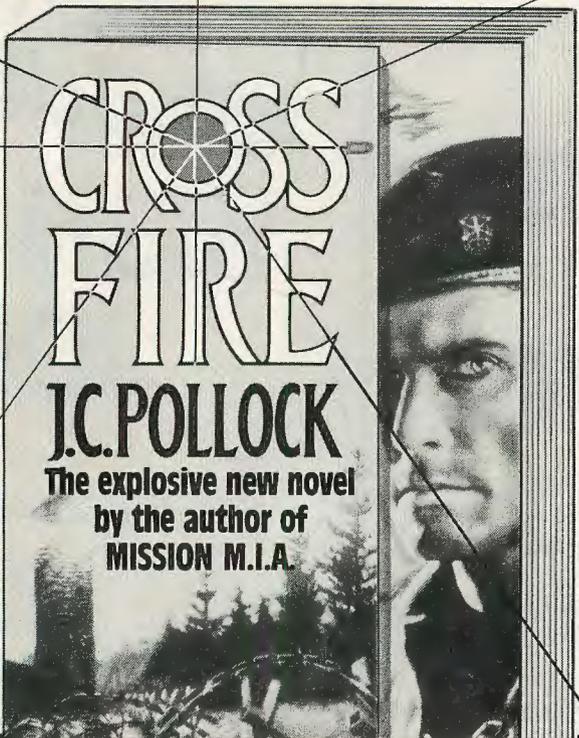
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VC. Senior Sergeant Francis F. Thornton bravely stayed side by side with our men, regardless of the enemy's fierce firepower and danger, and assaulted the enemy's resistance positions. He employed his individual weapon and grenades to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy." Op Chuong Duong resulted in two VC KIA; four sampans, 10 trenches, 12 breastwork fortifications and 100 meters of det cord destroyed; and one CKC rifle, one .45 pistol, two typewriters, two radios, 26 B-40 boosters, 12 stick grenades and a variety of medicines captured.

It was 11 October 1969. Thornton's PRU field agents had brought in hard, current intelligence on a meeting of district-level VCI cadre at a headquarters in Can Giuoc, Long An Province. After a briefing session Thornton loaded SEAL members Glascock, Naus and four PRUs — now all mission-hardened regulars — into their chopper while he boarded the lead helo with the field agent who would direct the pilot to the target area.

Following insertion the group split into two teams and moved into concealed observation positions. From his, Thornton watched as several VC entered the suspected meeting place. Calling on months of stealthy maneuver expertise, he crawled past a 10-man VC security force up to the entrance of the headquarters. Spotting what he figured was the head honcho, Thornton grabbed him and moved back toward his men. As he reached them, three VC came out of the meeting and began moving directly toward the SEALs' position. Thornton radioed for helo extraction and signalled the other group to join his in moving to the pick-up point. By that time, however, the security force had been alerted by their three comrades who'd spotted movement. A fierce firefight ensued with the security force and three-man VC group hitting the SEALs/PRUs from two flanks. After deploying his men to positions from which they could best suppress the enemy fire, Thornton conducted a one-man assault at their strong point, attacking with rifle and grenades, wounding one VC and causing the others to break and run.

Back at base following a safe extraction the prisoner was interrogated. It was then that Thornton and his men learned they had bagged Pham Van Kinh, commanding officer of the four VC battalions of SR-6 and the highest ranking enemy officer ever captured in the province.

Thornton was awarded a second Navy Commendation Medal for that action, and also received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry w/Silver Star after recommendations from Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Tan and RSSZ PRU Chief Maj. Nguyen Hiop.

Postscript

In writing about Frank Thornton, it's necessary to underline the fact that while he carried out numerous heroic acts, he did so as part of a team which included not only fellow SEALs and PRUs, but life-saving Seawolf helo air support in several instanc-

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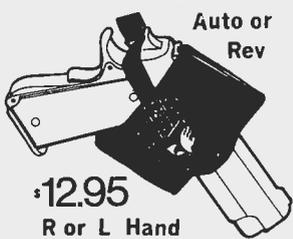
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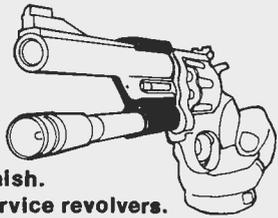
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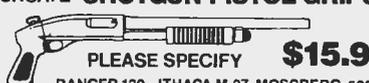


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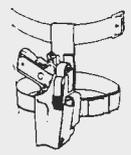
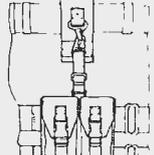
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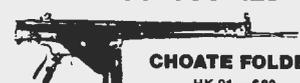
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es.
And, in singling out Frank Thornton, readers should realize that many other SEAL operators throughout the Delta/RSSZ were performing equally outstanding missions for which they deserved and received great credit. In proportion to their small numbers, SEALs were the most highly decorated U.S. military unit to serve in Vietnam.

Frank Thornton didn't end his Vietnam service with the PRUs. He participated in a number of POW rescue missions called Bright Light operations in the 1970s. Thornton won't discuss the details, but it is known that one of them was partially successful. As part of a SEAL platoon inserted deep inside VC-infested Dam Doi District in the southeastern section of the southernmost Ca Mau Peninsula, Thornton took part in the liberation of 28 South Vietnamese prisoners. He and the others found positive signs that U.S. prisoners had recently been there, and that the VC holding them had moved out not long before they arrived. Despite their valiant efforts, Bright Light operators never succeeded in liberating any U.S. POWs.

By 1978, near the close of his SEAL career, Frank Thornton had worked his way up the ranks — a "Mustang" — from seaman to lieutenant, and had formed the first U.S. Navy counterterrorist platoon while with Special Warfare Group One at Coronado. At the time, the outfit went by the official name of "Quick Reaction Platoon." It

was the forerunner of today's counterterrorist SEAL Team Six. ✖

**LETHAL
LIGHTWEIGHT**

Continued from page 53

release the bolt (while the sear remains blocked) and permit cartridges to be cycled through the action. This is the only means by which you can empty the three-round blind magazine. This feature will not appeal to potential law enforcement users. I would like to see either detachable box magazines, or, at the very least, a detachable floorplate, but Ultra Light is unwilling to accept the loss of the stock's complete rigidity and the attendant degradation in accuracy. The aluminum trigger guard has a black matte finish, as do all the exterior metal surfaces.

Barrels play no small role in a rifle's accuracy potential and Ultra Light Arms has chosen the very best. A 22-inch Douglas Number 1 Contour Premium barrel has been fitted to the Model 20 receiver. Overall length of the rifle is 41 inches. Douglas Barrels, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 5504 Big Tyler Rd., Charleston, WV 25312) uses 4140 chrome moly steel barrel blanks which are carefully heat treated before they are bored, reamed and button rifled. In caliber .308 Win., the bores are cut to .309-inch as sub-sequent stress relieving not only collapses

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all radial stress but will spring-back the bore to the correct groove dimension. The six-groove Douglas .308 barrel has a right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches. In my opinion, this twist is superior to one in 12 inches for long-range shooting. Faster twist is required to stabilize the .308 projectile and prevent keyholing at ranges of 1,000 yards and beyond.

All of this rests in another component that contributes in large measure to the Ultra Light's impressive performance capability — the 20-ounce synthetic stock. Constructed from Kevlar that has been graphite reinforced, the stock is a hollow shell without the usual low-density foam filling. Standard colors, in either matte or lustre, are black, brown, green, woodland or desert camo, applied with DuPont's Imron polyurethane finish (at \$80 per gallon, the world's most expensive automotive paint). With a pear-shaped forearm and a broad and wide — but functional — cheekpiece, the Ultra Light stock has classic lines.

More important, it is essentially straight-line, with no drop at the heel whatever. The comb line lies only 3/8-inch below the bore's axis. Both the recoil area and inletting are

cast — not machined — into the stock for greater strength. The entire stock has been bedded from the forend tip to the tang. No pressure is placed on the barrel, neither is it free-floated, as there is no gap between the barrel and inletting. Barrel vibrations are thus translated directly to, and dampened by, the stock to the effect that ammunition with assorted projectile weights will all shoot to virtually the same point of aim.



Ultra Light uses their own aircraft-hardened, 1-inch aluminum scope mounts which, complete with screws, weigh less than 2 ounces. Each base and lower ring half are one-piece. There is no more appropriate scope to slap on the Ultra Light than Leupold's 3-9X Compact with black matte finish as it weights only 9.5 ounces. Objective lens diameter is 33mm and the overall length is only 11 inches. Its CPC (Center Pointed Crosshair) reticle pattern consists of thick horizontal and vertical bars that narrow to fine lines in the center. Eye relief is 3.8 inches and that's as it should be.

Recoil energy is a function of the cartridge and the weight of the firearm. Homer S. Powley derived a simple formula that closely approximates recoil energy, when IMR type powders are employed. Just add the propellant charge, in grains, to the weight of the projectile, in grains, and multiply this sum by the propellant charge, again in grains. Then, divide this product by 80 times the rifle's weight in pounds to arrive at the recoil energy in foot/pounds.

Using match ammunition imported by FFW Norma, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 300 South Jefferson, Suite 301, Springfield, MO 65806) which is loaded with 42 grains of IMR type powder behind a 168-grain hollowpoint boattail (HPBT) match bullet, the Ultra Light Model 20 delivers 19.2 foot/pounds of recoil energy. This compares with 11.5 foot/pounds for an FN FAL firing the same ammunition, 3.9 foot/pounds for an M16A1 using M193 ball and 39.8 foot/pounds for a Browning Safari Grade bolt-action chambered for the mighty .375 H&H Magnum loaded with a 300 grain bullet in front of 78 grains of powder.

But actual felt recoil is largely dependent upon the stock's geometry and the recoil pad or buttplate. A .30-06 1903 Springfield with its steel buttplate will knock the hell out of you during extended firing sessions. And the 98k, whose stock line is well below the bore's axis, is even more unbearable. Perceived recoil with the Ultra Light Model 20, while initially fairly sharp, is of short

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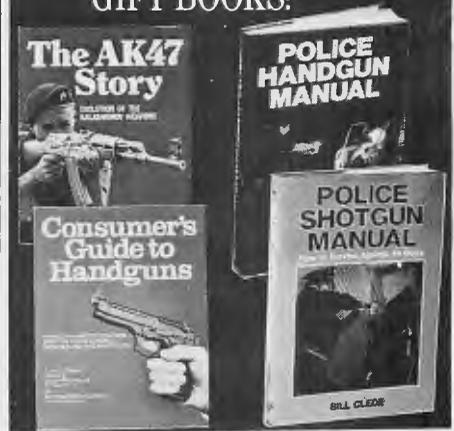
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duration and not at all unpleasant, as a consequence of its straight-line stock and substantial Pachmayr rubber recoil pad.

Norma's No. 17679 match ammunition clocked an average of 2,578 fps out of the 22-inch Douglas barrel. Their Jaktmatch, an economy cartridge with a lighter 146-grain FMJ bullet flew out at 2,785 fps. Both shot to the same point of aim. This rifle will shoot consistent 1 MOA groups in anyone's trembling hands. I fired one three-shot group with the Norma HPBT ammunition from the bench at 100 yards that measured 0.3 inches. Outstanding. Who could ask for anything more from a 5.5-pound rifle?

You don't use boot laces for a sling on a rifle of this quality. Bruce Nelson (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 8691 CRB, Tucson, AZ 85738) stitches up the finest strip of leather I've ever seen for toting non-military rifles. His No. 225 C.W. Sling (\$32) is named for Carlos Widmann, who rediscovered a forgotten British rifle-sling arrangement used during WWII on the Enfield No. 5 MkI "Jungle" carbine. This system has been popularized and taught by Jeff Cooper. A steel loop, similar to a military pistol's lanyard ring, was fitted to the rifle just in front of the magazine well. The sling is attached to the front swivel and this loop. In use, the tricep of the left arm is placed through the sling and drawn back while the left hand grips the forearm in the normal manner. It's not only steady, but permits the target to be acquired rapidly. Nelson's C.W. sling is the only one made with a foam padding covered by orthopedic suede leather that helps to anchor the arm in position and dampen heartbeat-induced movement, as well as improving the carrying comfort.

Unfortunately, there is no swivel stud ahead of the trigger guard on the Ultra Light Model 20. But Nelson's sling can be attached in the conventional manner. Two reinforced QD swivel studs are cast into the usual locations on the butt and forearm. They accept the Uncle Mike's (Michael's of Oregon, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 13010, Portland, OR 97213) quick detachable sling swivels (\$6.45). Handcrafted for the common 1-inch swivels only, Nelson's sling is 2 inches wide in the padded area and is the most comfortable carrying sling I've ever slung over my shoulder.

By every standard of comparison the Ultra Light Model 20 climbs to the top with ease. It will shoot the pants off every standard bolt-action on the market, including some benchrest Frankensteins, and with its synthetic stock is totally unaffected by weather conditions. After a quarter-century of lugging military mammoths up and down the hills, it's a joy to carry. The handling characteristics are excellent and perceived recoil is acceptable with even the largest belted magnums.

But you must pay, if you want the very best in life. Complete with rings and bases (but without scope), stock length-of-pull to your specifications and hard case, this custom rifle costs \$1,300. Contact Ultra Light Arms, Inc. (Dept SOF, P.O. Box 1270,

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ISRAELI FAL

Continued from page 65

for the heavy-barrel. The rest of us will snatch a standard-barrel model off the Armscorp rack.

For those of you who want to keep your new FAL working, Armscorp imports 750,000 spare parts that will fit any FAL except the Australian L1A1. Most of these parts are new and in excellent condition. ☒

STRIKE AT DAWN

Continued from page 69

its performance, thus attaining a top speed of 220 knots.

We made practice runs on a Japanese destroyer hulk awash on a coral reef, skipping bombs into her side until Oak felt he had the touch. Hopefully, our practice would pay off.

The plan was to come in over the tree tops of southern Bougainville from the west, the 700-foot Kangu Hill looming as a great sign post to the Maru beyond. Break out over the beach just as the sun was rising to silhouette the ship. On the approach Joe would strafe the decks while Oak concentrated on lining up for his releases of the four 500 pounders with delayed fuses shackled in the bomb bay racks. Then it would be up to me in the turret to keep the gunners down and to Tommy, as observer in the tail, to record the results. The briefing officer made it sound easy.

Well, here we were. I was to take off on one of the hairiest missions I'd ever heard about and the knot of fear pulled even tighter in my gut. At times my back was agonizing, but I kept it to myself. As apprehensive as I was, and as much as the back pain stabbed, I was too proud to take the easy way out. Boot training at Parris Island had instilled the spirit as if it were trapped in stone.

"You're quiet these days, Sam," drawled Jim Merriman, the co-pilot, the day before the strike at dawn.

"Just thinking more than I should, sir. I guess that's the problem." That was as close as I could come to saying I was scared to death.

Jim smiled in his placid way. He had that coolness under fire. His methodical mind made him a perfect balance with the daring Oak. On the first strike, he was the one who thought to cut the power before we went into the drink. Although I never heard him mention it, he had probably pulled the life raft ejection handle as well. He took care of those important "little" things. I admired his unruffled presence and wished some of it would rub off on me.

He put his hand on my shoulder. "Think of the good things in your life," he said.

"Don't dwell on this one. Get a good night's sleep."

9 August 1944. Somebody shook my shoulder in the black early morning. In a daze I squinted in the flashlight beam and made out a specter-like shape beyond the mosquito netting yelling, "Hit the deck. Up and at 'em, flyboy." Stumbling out of bed, my fingers groped for my flight gear. I shook it out, then tipped my shoes upside down and banged them down hard before tugging them on. The last thing I needed was scorpions or centipedes in my gear.

Breakfast that morning was as unsatisfying as ever. After burning my lips on the mess kit cup and having the coffee scald its way down, I gulped the tasteless dehydrated eggs into my fluttering belly. Then we piled into the canvas-topped truck and took the short trip to the intelligence shack, rocking on the hard wooden bench all the way. The sweet stink of mashed land crabs tainted the air stream.

The last-minute briefing at the intelligence shack was standard. Everything was second nature at that point. We set our watches and reviewed the RPM's and manifold pressure settings for noise-economizing. It ended with "Good hunting, boys..."

Back into the truck, we swayed and bounced out to the coral revetment, where the big Wright Cyclone engines rumbled. Blue flames darted like lizard tongues from their cowlings. I tightened the shoulder holster and slipped on the Mae West. No need for the chute harness on this one.

The PBJ stuttered, coughed and shuddered to life. We felt the soft jolts of wheels turning over the coral as the hulking beast moved out into position. Suddenly the ascending roar and the cowlings shook — the entire plane quivered. Propeller blades tore through the air into a crescendo as the brakes released and we lifted into the air. We vaulted from the precipice at the end of the Treasury strip — the precipice that pitched into a foaming sea.

I moved into position and was back on the charging handles of the blue-black .50s. I slammed the mechanism forward. They were ready to go.

Daylight was coming on fast. Too fast. Hugging the jungled canopy of southern Bougainville, we shot above it like a storm-driven bird through mist. Flocks of white cockatoos scattered like tiny, flapping clouds. Then we rose suddenly, as if balancing for a moment on tiptoe to peer beyond a barrier. Kangu Hill was off to starboard.

"Target dead ahead. We're going in!"

A steamy, green world tipped, exposing the beach sweeping beneath and drawing away incredibly fast. Joe's forward free gun shuddered. The pungency of exploding powder drifted back and mixed with the sweet perfume of tropic blossoms. I shivered as the bomb bay doors opened. Then I felt successive upward heavings, the bombs falling away in quick sequence, yet trailing like hounds. Finned cylinders tumbled in eerie slow motion and hit with a splash

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spreading blossoms as they hit.

I gripped the pulsing steel of the .50 cal. like a bulldog as it spit short, vomiting bursts. Tracers ate into the ship's structure, streaking off at crazy angles. The side of the ship was ablaze with brilliant bloomings and explosions of soot. I was frozen on the trigger, burning the barrels out. The white smear grew beyond the masts like a geyser. The ship lifted in the middle, erupted, and spewed red and yellow and brown. Uncontrollably, a yell of triumph formed deep in my throat and emerged as a resounding "YAAAAAAHOOOOOOOOO..."

"Jesus Christ, Oak... sir. You blew the damn middle out!" yelled Tommy.

But Oak wasn't ready for accolades yet. His only thought was to "...get the hell outta here!"

The euphoric intercom chatter on the way back magically released the knot in my stomach. No longer did the pain in my back nag. Perhaps my jubilant war whoop and body language had snapped the spine back into alignment. I was grinning so hard my cheeks began to ache.

We got a commendation for that one: "Give that Peter Baker jig crew that socked that *Kihili Maru* a well done from Mitchell." Major General R.J. "Pete" Mitchell, USMC, Commander of Aircraft, Northern Solomons.

That was 39 years ago...

It was great to be together again. Even with the added weight and wrinkles I recognized them.

Tommy, owner of a big car dealership in Panama City, Florida, had just lit one of his long cigars. He was glancing at three elderly Japanese businessmen hurrying past. A drift of their native tongue reached us. Tommy grinned, wagging his cigar in their direction.

"You suppose they could be the guys that shot us down?"

"Or the gunners on Kangu Hill," chimed in Oak, an attorney from Gridley, California.

We all laughed.

Jim Merrimen, an engineer from Midland, Texas, pushed back in his chair. "Kangu Hill," he drawled in his soft way. "All those guns firing at us. How in the world did they ever miss? I was never so scared in my life." ✕

SURVIVAL RIFLE

Continued from page 81

type rear sight has a peep aperture (marked '22') for the rifle barrel and an open V-notch (marked '410') for the smooth-bore barrel.

Right in back of the rear sight is the spring-loaded top lock which holds the barrel and receiver group to the stock. Grasp the end of the latch and lift up to pivot the barrels and receiver away from stock for loading and unloading the weapon. A spring-loaded extractor will pop up and permit fired cases to be removed by hand. Pull

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out the hinge pin to completely separate the barreled receiver from the stock group. A ring has been attached to the hinge pin to facilitate its withdrawal and a spring-loaded ball bearing at the other end inhibits its accidental removal.

The rebounding-type hammer must be cocked by hand to fire a shot. Pulling the hammer's selector knob up, with the hammer either cocked or uncocked, will move a block up to hit the rifled barrel's firing pin. Push down on the selector to fire the shotgun barrel. Both firing pins are spring-loaded and retained by screws. An unorthodox trigger bar has been incorporated into the firing mechanism. It must be squeezed upward to release the hammer. While the trigger pull weight on our test specimen was 8.5 pounds, the release was clean and crisp. A simple cross-bolt safety has been added to the M6 Scout. Not found on the military version, this is an important addition. Placed between the firing pins and the hammer, sliding it to the right will expose a green dot and block the hammer's striker from impacting on either firing pin. Slide the cross-bolt to the left to expose a red dot and fire the weapon.

The stock has been fabricated from a stamped, sheet-metal pressing wrapped around the firing mechanism and a plastic block that serves as a checkered buttplate and storage compartment holding four .410-gauge shotshells and an even dozen .22 Hornet cartridges. The storage compartment's hinged cover has been coated with neoprene which serves as a cheekpiece. A strip of neoprene under the cover prevents the stored rounds from rattling about. To open the storage compartment, depress the latch release button on the left side of the stock and swing the cover up and back.

Springfield Armory provides some useful accessories for the M6 Scout. A black nylon sling with quick-detachable swivels costs only \$4.70. A reprint of the military tech manual, essentially an illustrated parts breakdown, is also \$4.70. A cleaning kit will set you back \$12. There are three choices for storage. A utility case in black or OD is \$17.50. A more preferable padded carry-all, which thoughtfully includes a spare hinge pin, costs \$19.50 in black and \$21 in camo. Backpackers can utilize a holster with shoulder carrying strap that lists for \$25.50 in black and \$27 in camo.

Remington factory ammo was used throughout our test and evaluation of the M6 Scout. Their .22 Hornet loading features a 45 grain jacketed, softpoint bullet. Its nominal muzzle velocity is given at 2,690 fps. We lost 185 fps of that velocity because of the 18-inch barrel, as our average test velocity was only 2,505 fps. Standard deviation was an acceptable 30 fps. This ammunition will consistently place three rounds into a 1.5-inch circle at 50 yards and that's excellent, considering the rather crude iron sights found on the M6. It also shot directly to the point of aim, so it was not necessary to file the front sight blade. However, all the fired cases had primers set

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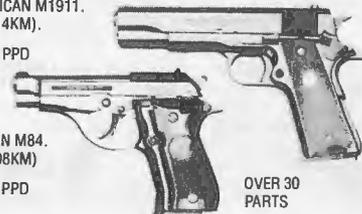
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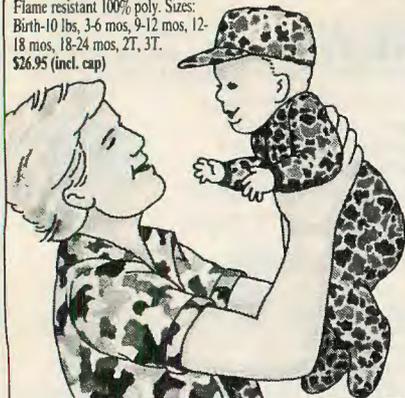
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back at least six thousandth of an inch and about 20 percent of the primers were pierced. While this is sometimes an indication of high pressure, in this instance I believe it signals excessive headspace. If your M6 Scout should exhibit this phenomenon, return it to Springfield Armory and they will correct this problem without question. As soft-point bullets are quite destructive on anything smaller than a coyote, I suggest you use cast or full metal jacket bullets on edible game. Felt recoil in this caliber is almost nonexistent.

Remington's 3-inch Express shell with 11/16 ounces of No. 6 shot was patterned at 25 yards, a realistic range for the .410 gauge. Choke cylinder bore (no constriction whatever), the M6's shotgun barrel shot just slightly low and to the right. Seventy percent of the pellets were evenly distributed within a 30-inch circle and six pellets struck the 4-inch red aiming dot on the shotgun pattern target. Again, this is excellent performance and more than adequate to stop small moving targets. Since the M6 Scout weighs but 3.5 pounds, the 3-inch shotshell recoils with a gentle shove against the shoulder.

The M6 Scout is modestly priced at \$115 in .22 LR, \$122 in .22 Rimfire Magnum and \$126 for the .22 Hornet version. Versions in .223, .45-70 and .45 Long Colt may eventually be offered. Military buffs should be pleased with its appearance and the opportunity to own the next best thing to an issue M6. Those who feel the need for a survival gun in their kit would be well advised to examine the rugged M6 Scout closely. In my opinion, it's superior to its alternatives. Charter Arms' AR-7 Explorer is a .22 LR semiauto rifle only and the Savage 24-C over/under is larger and considerably more expensive. ❧

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Continued from page 20

and formulas will enable you to produce red, green, amber, white or multiple-color tracer in any pistol and rifle caliber (even muzzle-loading Minnie balls). This information is a close duplication of military processes and formulas from publications usually not available to the general public. T.T. will also answer any questions you might have once you get started.

TUFOIL GUN-COAT

Lubricants are a most significant part of proper firearms maintenance and especially so for machine guns. There seems to be no end of new products for this purpose and I try to test as many of them as possible. In recent years Teflon has become the most fashionable base for most of these new products. As a general rule I don't care much for Teflon-based lubricants. Anyone can take Teflon, grind it up and stir it into some oil. The problem is, it won't stay

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in suspension and unless you shake the container vigorously immediately before use, you might end up with a solvent instead of a lubricant. In fact, the U.S. military has experienced increased wear on the M60 GPMG because of its commitment to Break-Free CLP.

Flouramics, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 103-105 Pleasant Avenue, Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458) has patented a process for keeping Teflon in suspension and introduced a product to both clean and preserve the metal surfaces of firearms called TUFOIL GUN-COAT. I have been using it on everything from Kalashnikovs to Browning machine guns for several months now and can endorse it without reservations of any kind. Functioning at temperatures from minus 60 degrees to plus 500 degrees Fahrenheit, it contains, in addition to Teflon, an anti-rust ingredient. The Teflon micro particles (0.5 to .05 microns) impregnate the metal's pores for permanent protection while forming a thin surface film. Tests conducted in conjunction with a New Jersey police department indicated GUN-COAT's increased lubricity can reduce barrel temperatures by as much as 25 percent.

I must take exception, however, with the manufacturer's claim that it "virtually eliminates jamming in automatics." Most stoppages in automatic weapons are totally unrelated to the type of lubricant employed. However, its ability to remove powder temperatures and preserve metal surfaces are all we require. And, you don't have to shake it. A two-ounce bottle with either a dropper tip or pump spray costs \$3.98 and a handy pen oiler is just \$2.25. ✕

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 24

the confusion every ambush creates, an adrenalized gunner may swing his weapon a bit too much and spray the assault group. Use stakes or tie-downs to limit gun axis, and make sure every man knows the locations of the others.

A third type, also known for its simplicity and control, is called the bloody nose, or "T"-type ambush. It's main purpose is to interdict infiltrators moving across relatively open ground or following roads and trails, especially at night.

Using a trail infiltration route as an example, your assault group forms the top of the "T" and straddles the trail. Security is placed to the flanks and rear, and mines or other anti-personnel devices are set alongside the

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incoming trail route. When the enemy literally walks single-file into your assault group . . . Bang! Bloody nose. As ambushes attempt to run left or right, they're engaged individually by members of the assault group as they cross each man's front. "Bloody nose" has the distinct advantage over linear ambushes in that enemy troops are held in a gauntlet of fire for a longer period of time.

Using these three ambush types as a guide line, a whole Pandora's box of variations can be applied with a bit of experience and imagination. Ambushes may have never won a war by themselves, but there's no doubt they've hammered painful dents in the enemy's armor over the years. ✘

BONES OF CONTENTION

Continued from page 37

Dr. Sam Dunlap, one of three Ph.D.s hired to work under Furue's supervision after the Paksé controversy arose, said he was told by two investigators from the Army's Criminal Investigation Command (formerly CID) that the probe was terminated within the Secretary of the Army's office. When SOF interviewed both, Chief Warrant Officer Jack Wilson denied Dunlap's allegation and Sergeant First Class Gary Kehoe declined to comment. The Army says the investigation was shelved by the local command in Hawaii "for lack of evidence."

Dunlap subsequently resigned under Army pressure. He appeared before Nichols' subcommittee, his testimony damning the lab in general, and Furue and Webb in particular.

In addition, various U.S. intelligence documents viewed by SOF indicate that the Pentagon had evidence well in advance of the Paksé excavation that Hart and two other crewmen survived the crash. Maples told the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee that "based on skeletal evidence, I think the possibility must be quite high that several individuals from the Paksé crash could be alive."

One intelligence memo implies that the Pentagon never really expected to recover enough skeletal remains to make positive identifications. But strong promises were made to the Laotian government that all remains would be positively identified. Laos had hesitated a long time before granting permission for this first-ever U.S. excavation within its borders.

The memo states that the Army and the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) in Bangkok knew that members of a Lao resistance group had removed four sets of remains from the Paksé crash site two years prior to its official excavation. These Lao-tians tried twice — first directly through

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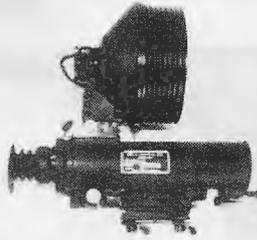
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JCRC and later through a Thai general — to turn these remains over to the U.S. Government. After being turned down twice because they wanted money, the Laotians buried the remains in a Thai refugee camp. A second group of Laotians are also known to have buried some remains found after the crash in a mass grave.

Other findings indicate that while the Army has made changes on paper giving the appearance of corrective measures, it actually has stonewalled all attempts — from outside the lab and within — to take effective action.

For instance, the Army continues to allow Furue to use his scientifically unproven "morphological approximation technique" in making identifications. Dunlap made the allegation in letters to Secretary Marsh and several members of Congress. Dunlap and two other Ph.D.s in physical anthropology — Drs. John Lundy and Peter Miller — were hired in the fall of 1985, when it became apparent that the controversy over the Paksé identifications was not going to go away.

Dunlap, Miller and Lundy, as well as three lab technicians, were hired by the Army, despite a recommendation in the Pentagon report stating that "new anthropologists . . . will not alleviate the problem of credibility." The report further noted that the lab's work load does not justify additional personnel. On the other hand, Kerley wrote in the report that his old friend, "Tadao Furue, should be retained as senior anthropologist. He is a competent, experienced anthropologist whose abilities are not in question."

At the Senate hearing, Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Ariz., cornered Webb when Webb said all recommendations had been followed. Under questioning by DeConcini, however, it became apparent that the Army ignored a specific recommendation from its own evaluation team that "a forensic anthropologist of national or international reputation and unquestioned credibility must be employed" to head the lab staff, including Furue, on a daily basis (emphasis contained in the report.) "This new anthropology supervisory position is the single most important recommendation made at this time and must be obtained to reestablish the credibility at CIL-HI."

The Army instead hired Kerley — again raising questions about partiality toward his old friend Furue — as a consultant to oversee CIL-HI from his home in suburban Washington.

Webb also testified that the three Ph.D.s and three technicians were hired in response to recommendations in the Pentagon report. That testimony conflicted directly with his statement published in the 5 August issue of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, which quoted Webb as saying that the hiring of the six civilians "had been planned long before" the report was issued last February. The Army has declined several requests to make Webb available for questioning by SOF.

Webb also testified that differences of

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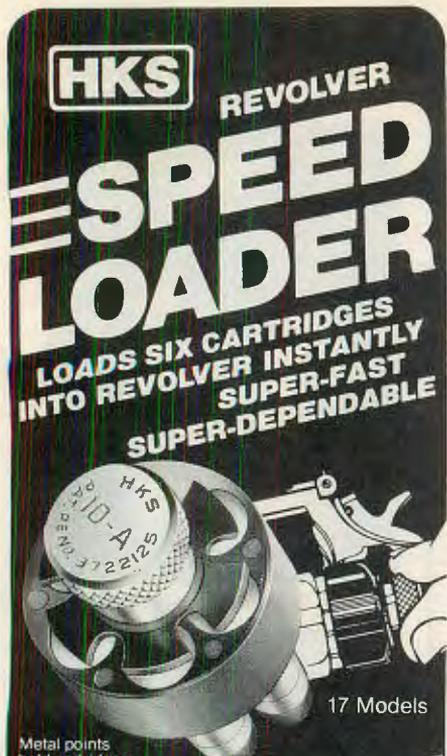
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opinion between Furue and anthropologists in the lab were always discussed openly and a consensus is arrived at before any official scientific conclusions are made. This directly contradicts statements by Dunlap, Lundy and others that they "have been excluded from all decision-making processes regarding remains" in the lab.

Relations between Furue and Webb on one side and the Ph.D.s on the other got so bad that Dave Dressel, a labor relations officer from Fort Shafter, was called in to mediate. He investigated allegations by the three scientists that pressure not to complain about unscientific practices in the lab had reached the point of harassment, such as having their mail opened, their phone calls monitored and their office desks rifled at night. Further, Helgesen and Webb tried to deny the Ph.D.s access to scientific professionals and facilities. Dressel recommended that a criminal investigation be made. Although the CID report stated that some of the allegations were true, the Army command in Hawaii said the charges were "not serious enough" to warrant prosecution.

There are other indications that the Army in general — and Webb in particular — are pressuring the new lab staff to toe the Pentagon's party line. Webb and Lundy met with local reporters in Hawaii to refute charges in Dunlap's letter to Secretary Marsh that Webb and Furue "are incompetent at best." Lundy was quoted in the Hawaii interview as disassociating himself from anything Dunlap had said.

But in private, Lundy tells another story. In one letter to a colleague dated 19 July, Lundy said "what they do at the lab is not really anthropology... Scholarship is an alien concept to Furue, [Marla] Mahoney [Furue's lab assistant and close friend] and the others, suprisingly, including [Madeline] Hinkes. I made about the biggest mistake of my life, certainly of my professional career, coming to the lab to work."

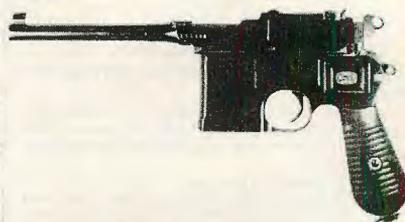
Further, Lundy joined with Dunlap and Miller in assisting Dr. Michael Charney — one of the lab's most outspoken critics — in preparing a research paper for presentation at the 1987 AAFS Convention. The paper examines the methods used in Furue's "morphological approximation technique," arguing that Furue's self-developed technique is scientifically worthless. Lundy mentions in a letter to Charney that Peter "Miller let slip to Marla [Mahoney] that we were working on the paper and she and Furue now know." Dunlap, Miller and Lundy subsequently were ordered by Webb to withdraw their names from Charney's paper, although they continued to assist him with research.

The Army's argument has remained unchanged. If mistakes were made in the Paksé identifications, such mistakes are an "aberration," as Major General Crosby testified to the Senate, and have not occurred in the analyses of other remains. Although they still contend that Furue's morphological approximation technique is valid, Army



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brass say its use has been discontinued. But yet another case indicates the Army is lying.

CIL-HI's case number CILHI-0080-85 (name withheld) was brought before Furue for a second analysis because of questions raised by the family of the Navy captain, whose reconnaissance aircraft was shot down 21 September 1967. The captain bailed out and was confirmed alive on the ground, where he was subsequently captured. The second analysis, signed by Furue and Mahoney after Secretary Marsh said Furue's technique would no longer be used, states that "morphologic approximation was utilized."

Drs. Gill and Charney are among the forensic anthropologists who examined Furue's second report and the remains in this case. Gill wrote that the finding based on Furue's technique "is not justifiable" and that Furue's determination from skeletal remains as to whether the subject was right- or left-handed was "so speculative as to be ludicrous."

Charney's report to the family discredited Furue's analysis in several areas. For instance, Furue's second report falsely stated that "the entire skeleton" was present. Also, Furue used a leg bone that was fragmented in three places to make his "morphologic approximation" when a fully intact bone from the other leg was available for more accurate measurements. In short, Charney's three-page letter and three-page report noted that Furue's second analysis of the remains contained "many instances of careless if not actually deliberate disregard" of accepted scientific practice.

Given this overwhelming consensus of informed scientific opinion that Furue's work is incompetent at best — deliberately fraudulent at worst — why should the Army be so insistent on keeping him in charge of CIL-HI? Especially when Furue's work has proved so damaging to the credibility of the Army in general and the POW/MIA issue in particular. One would think that if President Reagan has made resolution of this issue "one of highest national priority," that Pentagon leaders would be *anxious* to take corrective actions rather than drag it out into a battle of words and wills. Haven't the families of these men suffered enough? Apparently Pentagon leaders don't think so.

The final option for an answer on CIL-HI and Mr. Furue seems to lie with the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations. We can only hope. ✕

HOLY WAR COMBAT TOUR

Continued from page 79

I had underestimated him. As Amin removed the bone fragments and sewed up arteries, his nurse started an IV. Amin frequently had to stop and revive the patient by slaps and heart massage. When he was done, the leg was in a cast and the man was

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A Garden Party

Within two days of my first battle, I was fighting again. Abdul Ahmad decided to attack a communist training school near the governor's house. Our party consisted of 15 mujahideen armed with AKs, RPD machine guns and our recoilless. We climbed over walls and roofs and went through what seemed like every garden in Herat. We were lost more than once. Abdul Ahmad said that he made a recon the day before, but somehow I doubted it.

We finally positioned our recoilless on the roof, directly across the street from the school. It was about 2300 hours and we could see the enemy in their rooms. We dropped down to a nearby house and captured five communists eating in the kitchen of a well-heeled Afghan. The owner of the house pleaded for his life and said that he often helped the mujahideen. I didn't believe it, but the mujahideen decided to let him go. Strange things happen in this often confusing but bloody war.

Three men stayed with the recoilless and the prisoners while the rest of us moved to a house across the street from the school's main entrance. The owner begged us not to use his house — he was afraid of retribution. In the end we just ripped out his telephone and left him alone. We went to the garden next door where the owner was more than happy to help. We gathered near a garden gate that led to the street and waited for the recoilless to signal the attack.

When the 82 fired, two of us ran across the street. The others stayed in the garden trying to figure out what to do. The man with me, Jalat, was a thief before the war, but he was one of the bravest mujahideen I met. He was later killed when a 122mm missile landed on his house. I could see the school less than 40 meters away. I told Jalat that it was *mezdeek* (near). But he just shook his head and said *dur* (far). Laughing, I ran over to the school. Our 82 was blasting the second floor and a communist machine gunner started firing wildly from the roof. My position was exposed to enemy fire, so I moved to the front of the building — just in time to receive mujahideen machine gun fire.

Bullets plastered the windows above me while glass and masonry rained down on my head. I yelled "Allah Akbar" to warn them that I was downrange. I started firing into the basement windows when I heard a voice calling "Ahmad? Ahmad?" (my Afghan nom de guerre.) It was Jalat. We were both firing into the compound when Jalat saw a bicycle leaning against the wall. He began to shoot it full of holes, but suddenly stopped and tried to repair the damage, wearing an expression like, "God, what have I done?" I couldn't stop laughing.

Voices called out from the building that they wanted to surrender. Six of them came out to the porch begging us not to kill them. As we searched them, I saw another one still in the doorway with an AK. Aiming at his

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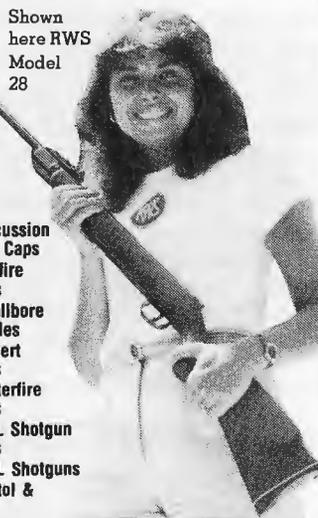
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chest, I told him to throw down his weapon. He didn't. I would have shot him then and there but I could see by his manner that he wanted to surrender. Maybe he just couldn't understand my lousy Farsi. I grabbed his weapon and turned him and the others over to some mujahideen who had entered the compound.

Friendly Fire

Firing our weapons, Jalat and I rushed into the building. We cleared all the rooms on the first floor and then went down to the basement, where we captured one man hiding in a closet. I ran upstairs alone. I cleared rooms for about a minute when someone started firing up the stairs from the first floor. Luckily they missed. It was Abdul Ahmad. He's a good man and was embarrassed at his mistake. Since I wasn't hit, I wasn't angry.

From the second floor I could see two brand new Toyota land cruisers in the back. I told Abdul to take them or blow them up. He said he would handle it. Downstairs, I found a room full of communist training films. No one wanted to take them as *ganny-mat*, so I tried to destroy as many as possible. Unfortunately, I didn't have any grenades and was only able to destroy a few.

Loaded down with captured AKs and .303s, we ran down the street, leading our 10 prisoners tied with turbans. An enemy 12.7mm started to fire tracers down the center of the road and the mujahideen in front of me tried to get skinny in a doorway. I told him to keep moving. All we had to do is turn the corner at the end of the block. We made it.

Back at the committee I found that the mujahideen didn't take the trucks because they couldn't get them started. This was disappointing, but all in all it was a good attack. The school was burning and we had 10 prisoners, eight rifles and a 7.62mm machine gun. We had no casualties and everyone was bragging how brave they were. I didn't know what the future held. But for now I was having a helluva good time. ✕

FLAK

Continued from page 5

DUCKS IN A ROW...

Sirs:

In one of your cartoons in the August '86 issue (Bulletin Board, page 10), my beloved country is portrayed as a duck! This comparison would seem to be something of an insult. It would appear that the U.S. is a beautiful, sleek bald eagle, while poor little England is a web-footed woddler. Thanks a lot.

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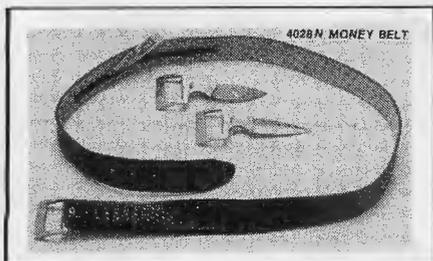
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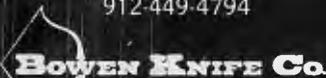


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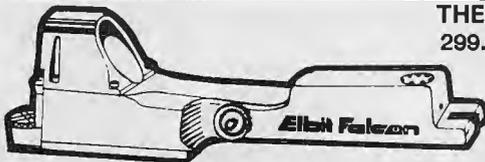
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Continued from page 6

MACHINE GUN BAN TARGETED...

Legislation already has been drafted that would repeal that portion of the recently passed Volkmer-McClure Firearm Owners Protection Act which bans the sale of new machine guns, according to NRA Governmental Affairs Director James J. Baker. He said it is expected to be introduced by the end of the year. The NRA is coordinating this effort with the National Firearms Association, a relatively new group composed of licensed owners of machine guns and other items regulated by the National Firearms Act of 1934. There are 117,000 registered machine guns and other firearms and devices covered by the 1934 NFA, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

The manner in which U.S. Rep. William Hughes, D-N.J., tacked on and passed the controversial amendment to the Volkmer-McClure bill at the last minute outraged machine-gun owners. Hughes introduced his measure as the House was about to adjourn from debate on the Volkmer-McClure bill. Few members even had time to read the Hughes amendment before Rep. Charles Rangel, one of Hughes' liberal Democrat cronies from New York, called for a voice vote in his temporary capacity as acting speaker. Listening to the vote, it sounds as if Hughes' opponents outnumbered the anti-gun crowd, but Rangel declared that the "ayes have it." He hastily gavelled in the measure over calls for a recorded vote.

As a public service to those who might like to see and hear for themselves how Hughes and Rangel cheated the public in general and machine-gun owners in particular, Robert K. Brown, SOF's publisher and editor (also an NRA national board member) has made available copies of a videotape of the House floor action. It's available for a refundable \$10. Make checks payable to SOF Exchange. If the videotape is returned within 30 days, your money will be refunded. Send your check to: **Tape, SOF Exchange, P.O. Box 687, Boulder, CO 80306.**

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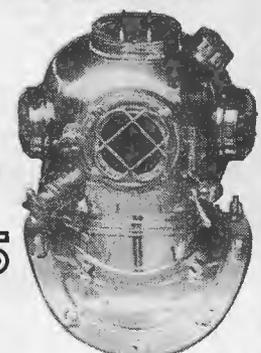
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of the Navy John Lehman. His private memo to the chief of naval operations "to accelerate our efforts" to build a multi-million dollar, steel-hulled sailing ship leaked to the press just as President Reagan was trying to keep Congress from torpedoing his 1987 defense budget.

Senator Sam Nunn, D-Ga., ranking minority member on the Armed Services Committee, drafted this amendment to the Pentagon's fiscal 1987 authorization bill: "No funds authorized to be appropriated by this or any other act may be used by the Navy for: (1) planning, design or construction of a naval ship primarily powered by the wind; (2) raising, refurbishing and/or recommissioning the Monitor or Merrimac, or any replica thereof; (3) introducing Kitty Hawk-class biplanes as light attack bombers for use aboard Navy aircraft carriers; (4) developing submarines made wholly or largely from balsawood."

Nunn was poking fun at a Lehman's proposal to build a square-rigged sailing ship for the Navy fleet, not unlike the Coast Guard's *Eagle*. Nunn was not alone. At a meeting of Pentagon brass that included Lehman, Don Hicks, research director for the Defense Resources Board, surprised everyone when he suddenly flashed a chart on a briefing screen and offered four options to build a tall ship for the Navy. One option had it outfitted with cruise missiles, electronic countermeasures, sophisticated satellite communications and antisubmarine listening devices, with an estimated taxpayer cost of \$28 billion.

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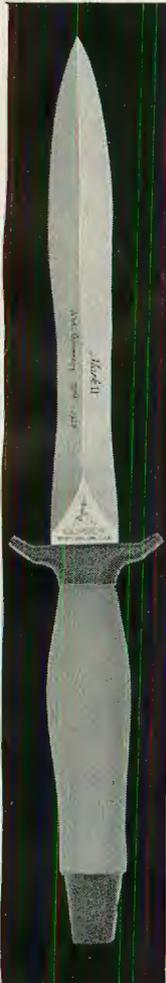
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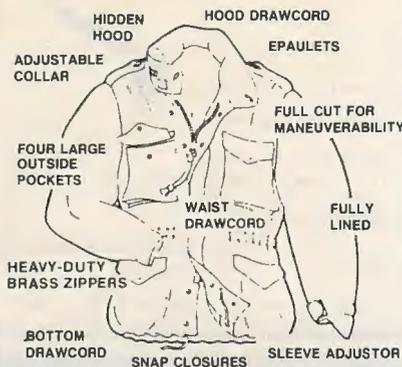
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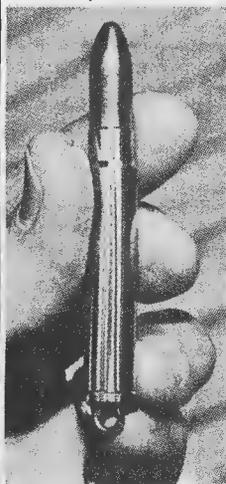
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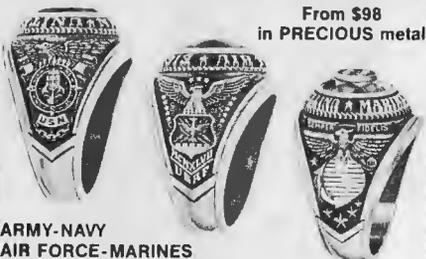
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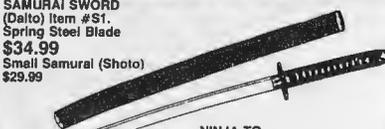
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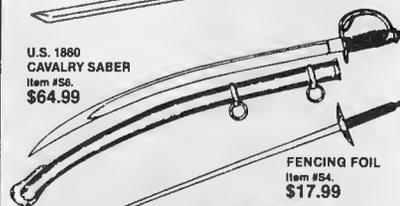
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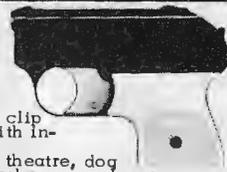
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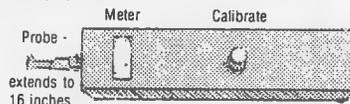
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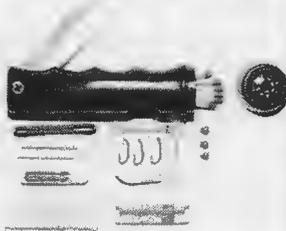
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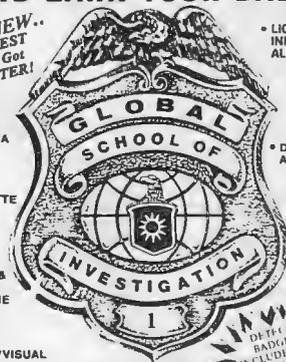
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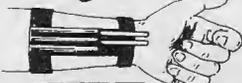
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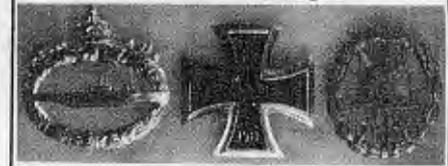
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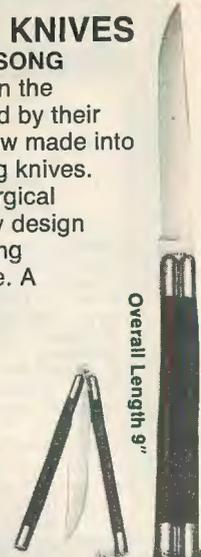
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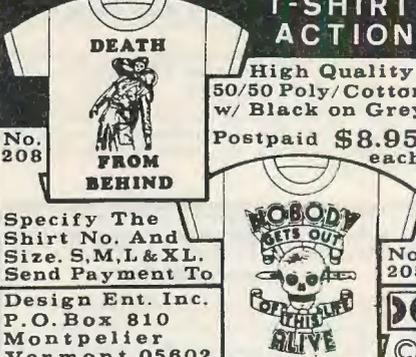
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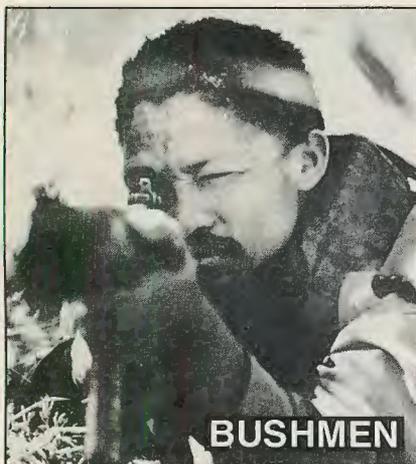
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