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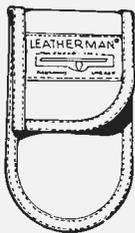
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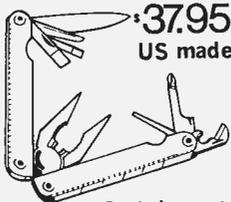


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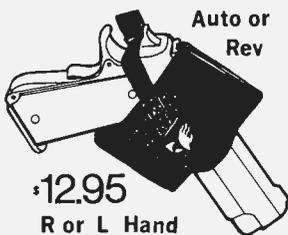


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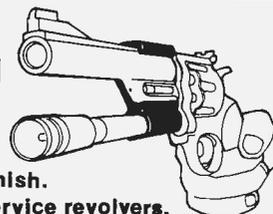
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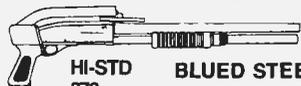
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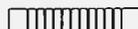


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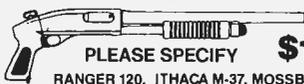
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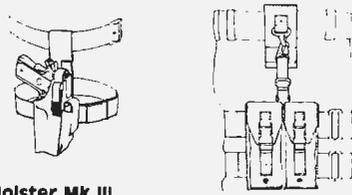
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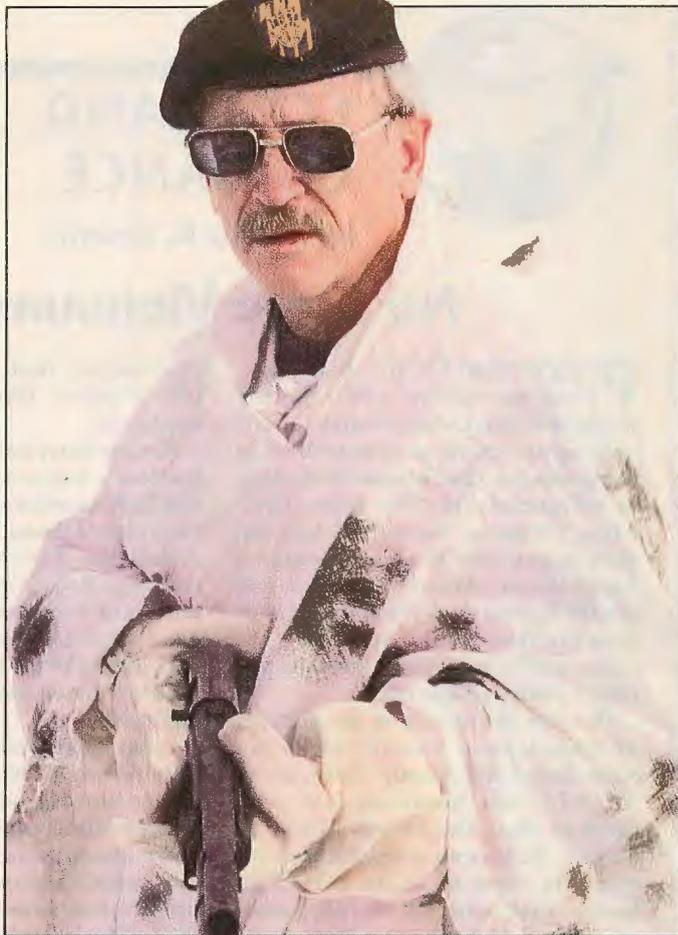
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COVER: *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown fires Benelli's Super 90 combat shotgun. Benelli and Heckler & Koch teamed up to produce this first-rate weapon, perhaps the finest of its type in the world. Get the full story with Kevin E. Steele's in-depth evaluation on page 74. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

No More Vietnams

PERIODICALLY the less-than-loyal opposition gets together to decide what they dislike about helping the good guys win the war in Nicaragua. One phrase they cling to religiously is "No more Vietnams." That is, instead of helping the contras fight the Soviet-backed Sandinistas, America should sell out its friends with the hope of winning the favor of its enemies.

But will that bring peace in our time? History says no.

Despite the glorious prophecies of Hanoi Jane Fonda, when we abandoned the South Vietnamese in 1975, the dominos fell even quicker than the "hawks" anticipated. Ruthless communist regimes in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia anxiously filled the power vacuum and brought about what David Horowitz has aptly termed "a 20th-century nightmare."

Peaceniks have conveniently ignored the blood bath in Southeast Asia — and the steady stream of desperate boat people washing up on our shores — only to redirect their flawed, self-righteous faith in "peoples' liberation movements" toward Central America. And no one has yet taken them to task for their poor judgment. Without so much as a hint of trying to learn from hindsight, the Left is again appealing to emotions rather than intellect in their assault on the Reagan administration's efforts to stop communism south of our border.

By trying to establish a link between our failure in Vietnam and the current situation in Nicaragua, the Left suggests that a similar fate is in store for the United States if we continue to oppose Soviet-backed regimes. Of course there's no real evidence to support that

conclusion. And this brings us to the biggest flaw in the Left's approach.

Rather than debate the administration's anti-communist policy, the Left attacks it. Why? Because they don't have answers — only criticisms. "No more Vietnams" isn't a policy. It's merely a convenient tool for slandering an opponent while shying away from the real issue: What to do about communist adventurism in our hemisphere?

Like most emotionally-charged rallying cries, "No more Vietnams" is intentionally vague. If you take it to mean that there shouldn't be any more losing wars, that's fine. But I don't think anyone, from the Right or Left, has come up with a policy that will guarantee that. So we have to be a little more practical in our interpretation.

I take "No more Vietnams" to mean that the United States should avoid past mistakes. Mistakes like not allowing the military a free hand to pursue clear objectives, or settling for an "honorable peace" when only outright victory will do. But then, I look at Vietnam differently than does the Left — probably because I was there.

When the Left says we're doing the same thing in Nicaragua that we did in Vietnam, I find myself in the sad position of having to agree with them — we're losing.

Failing to embrace the Reagan administration's unyielding support of the anti-communist contras will result in American combat troops being sent into Nicaragua. And then, the Left will have caused the very thing they so emphatically insist they are trying to prevent — another Vietnam. ✕

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ARMSON'S ABRIGHT (AND SAFE) SIGHTS...

Sirs:

Thank you for the excellent article describing the use of the Trijicon Self-Luminous Iron Sights for pistols and revolvers, which appeared in the March '87 SOF ["Armson's Bright Sights"]. However, the caption for one photo reads: "Warning label on slide of Glock 17 states that sights contain nuclear isotope tritium, and absolves Armson of liability in case of user injury." I wish to emphasize that Armson does not need absolution: There is **no** safety issue with our gunsights. It would take the simultaneous rupture of 10,000 of our gunsights in an unventilated 10'x10' room to possibly expose a person to some radiation risk. The labeling is a regulatory requirement only, clearly stating the fact that the user is exempt from any regulatory requirements.

We don't want your readers to think that they are being exposed to some danger with our gunsights. We have met or exceeded every government requirement for safety, just as a luminous watch or a compass must in order to be sold in stores to the general public.

Glyn A.J. Bindon
Armson, Inc.



FLAK



A PREMATURE OBITUARY...

Sirs:

In the article "Caspian Arms .45" in the November '86 issue, it says "before Randall and Detonics went out of business." I want to make sure that this mistaken information is corrected. Detonics is *not* out of business.

Randall did go out of business, but Randall was not and is not related in any way to Detonics. Detonics has made the Detonics .45, now known as the Combat Master, the smallest production .45 ACP on the market, since 1976. We have expanded the line to include the Servicemaster, a "Commander"-length 1911-A1-based design in stainless steel, and the Scoremaster, a full-length 1911-A1 in stainless steel, made for those who want the very best in the John Browning 1911-A1 design.

Diane McCarthy
Vice President/General Manager
Detonics Firearms Industries



MARXISTS IN SRI LANKA...

Sirs:

I'd like to thank Mr. Tom Marks for writing a very realistic account of my country's main problem [see "Counterinsurgency in Sri Lanka," SOF, February '87]. Many people have written articles on this issue but they are more biased toward Tamils and India. Mr. Marks describes the real face of the Tamil insurgents. They are Marxists and their main goal is to create a Marxist government in Sri Lanka.

We hope that Mr. Marks' article will give the Western world a better understanding of the conflict in Sri Lanka.

Desappriya Jayasuriya
University of Mississippi

SOUTH AFRICAN SPEAKS OUT...

Sirs:

I have been reading SOF for the past six years and would like to congratulate you on the high standard of your magazine.

May I point out a few facts to SOF and all of its readers worldwide. South Africa is at this moment fighting a war against communist aggression. This war is fought on all different levels. On the South West Africa/Namibia border with Angola, the war is fought against SWAPO. Within South Africa, we fight this war against the African National Congress. With us in this fight against communism are UNITA in Angola and RENAMO in Mozambique, but the government denies giving them any support.

Another factor in this war is the U.N. arms embargo. This country cannot buy essential supplies to survive the war. It seems that the United States and all other Western countries are playing right into Russia's hands by not supplying us with arms. Thus these countries are supporting the communists in southern Africa. I do wish that the United States would be less biased in its reporting of events in South Africa.

J.E. Moerdyk
Verwoerdburg, South Africa

Unfortunately, as SOF readers in America well know, all of the feverish public outrage over apartheid negates any possibility of

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the mainstream U.S. media's granting unbiased reporting to the overall situation in southern Africa. SOF, however, sends correspondents out into the field without liberal blinders on, to get the real story. Be sure to look back in particular to the April '87 issue. Jim Hooper's article, "Stalking SWAPO," gives a detailed and insightful look into the complex problems facing that troubled corner of the world.

MERCENARY GUIDANCE...

Sirs:

Congratulations on a good Command Guidance in the February '87 issue. I'd like to add to your list of mercenaries the group of men who were probably the most highly regarded and at the same time the most blatant mercs of recent time. They were the AVG/American Volunteer Group "The Flying Tigers" of the Chinese Air Force. They received \$600 per month and a bonus of \$500 for each Japanese plane shot down. Their cause was also to save "the good guys" in the early stages of WWII.

J. Warren Kohler Sr.
West Islip, New York

In your Command Guidance of February '87, you mention the Spanish Civil War of the mid-1930s. The "mercs" who fought in that war served in the International Brigades, which were organized by the

Soviets. The American brigades, such as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, were controlled by the Communist Party U.S.A. Also, the Spanish Civil War was fascism vs. communism — both suck!!

Peter Dispenza
New York, New York

You raise an old prejudice that the Americans who fought in the Spanish Civil War had to endure when they returned to the United States and enlisted in our armed forces — during World War II, when their units transferred overseas, they were left behind, shunned and suspect because of the strong

Communist Party affiliation of the XV International Brigade.

In fact, however, over 60 percent of the Americans who fought in the XV Brigade were not communists — they fought on the Republican side because they saw fascism as the greatest evil of the twentieth century. Also, in the mid-1930s the true face of Soviet communism was not yet known: The rest of the world was kept in the dark by Stalin's combination of secrecy and propaganda.

ILL WIND...

Sirs:

A wind of change is nowadays blowing in Greece, and it is pushing this land to the left. We have already had a good taste of a Marxist-Leninist regime. Let us not proceed to details, because this letter would be quite incapable of comprising them all. But please allow me to tell you that we, people of this land, are disgusted to see Greece in the hands of Soviet-directed pawns intending to lead us to the misery, poverty and intricate bureaucracy of every communist-converted country. I wish this could get through to those who are hooked on the communists' sweet talk.

Name withheld by request
Athens, Greece ✕



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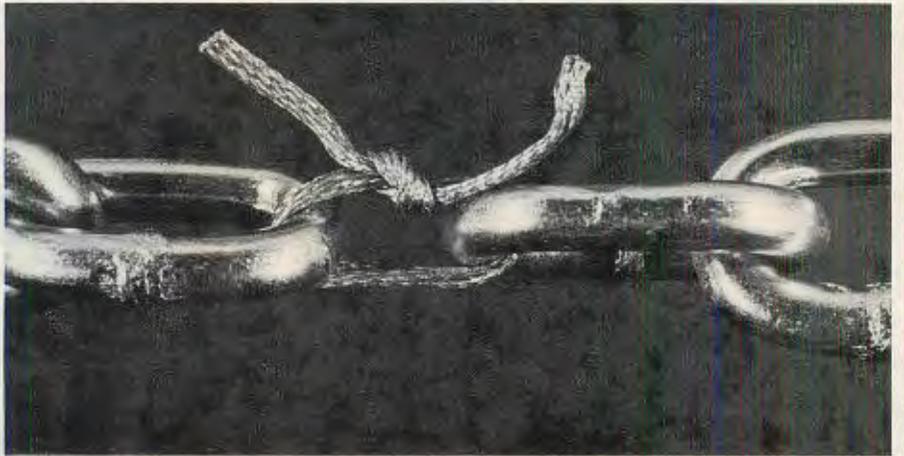
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He went on to report on several of our competitors (not too favorably). Read the article on page 104 of that issue for details.

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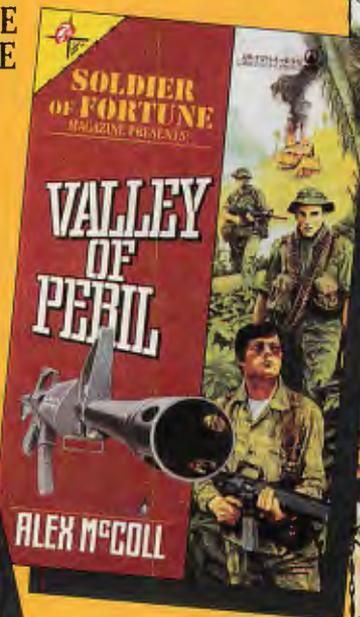
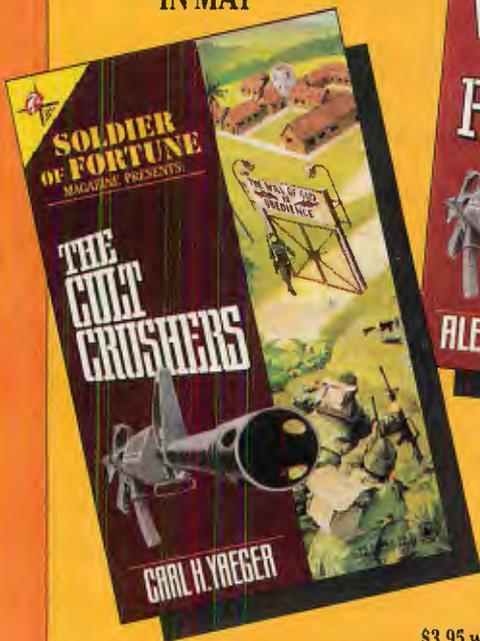
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A taxidermy of a large brown bear is the central focus, standing on a rocky outcrop in a forest. The bear is facing left, with its head turned slightly towards the viewer. Its fur is a rich, dark brown color. In the background, there are several tall, thin evergreen trees and a range of mountains with patches of snow under a clear blue sky.

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RUGER EMPLOYEES PRODUCE ANOTHER ONE-MILLION PRODUCT

The one millionth Ruger M-77 joins the ranks of five other Ruger guns which have already taken their place in sporting arms history by exceeding the one millionth mark. The other million "plus" Ruger guns are: the Ruger "old model" single-action revolver (1970); the Ruger Model 10/22 autoloading carbine (1978); the Standard and Mark I semi-automatic rimfire pistol (1979); the Ruger "New Model" single-action revolver (1979); and, the Ruger double-action revolver in Security-Six, Service-Six, and Speed-Six models (1983).

The company has achieved this singular acceptance in its field in less than forty years with a reputation for producing

finely conceived firearms with an unparalleled record of quality control, safety, and reliability in the field at a fair price.

A large percentage of Ruger sporting arms are sold through the specialty gun dealer who provides expertise and "personal service" in the day-to-day business of meeting the requirements of the hunting, shooting, and law enforcement communities. Many of these dealers are listed in the Yellow Pages under headings such as *Guns*, *Gunsmiths*, and *Sporting Goods*. To experience the genuine pleasure that comes from handling fine quality Ruger firearms, visit and support your independent stocking gun dealer.



"We're coming on strong" at the Ruger plant in Newport, New Hampshire, as seen in this photo which shows approximately 800 of the more than 1500 quality-conscious people who are employed in five Ruger manufacturing facilities across the country. All of us at Ruger are dedicated to manufacturing sporting guns of the highest quality, strength and reliability. Every Ruger firearm is tested by actual shooting on our ranges before shipping.

ABOUT OUR COVER ... ABOUT CONSERVATION ... ABOUT SPORTSMEN ...

To many sportsmen our cover painting, *Alaskan Brown Bear Out of the Shadows* by one of North America's greatest game-animal artists, Carl Rungius (1869-1959), exemplifies the objectives of the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act which marks its fiftieth anniversary in 1987.

Much of the wilderness and its wildlife inhabitants as seen through Mr. Rungius' eyes has been restored as a result of the successful implementation of Pittman-Robertson. This unique program in which *hunters pay for*

conservation and hunter safety education is funded by a federal excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. Since its inception Pittman-Robertson has provided the impetus for the preservation and perpetuation of vast populations of game birds and animals, particularly of those many species once thought to be extinct. The success of this program is a tribute to the millions of knowledgeable hunters who have helped make it possible.



RUGER® SINGLE-ACTION REVOLVERS



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New Model Super Single-Six



New Model Single-Six .32 H&R

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New Model Super Blackhawk

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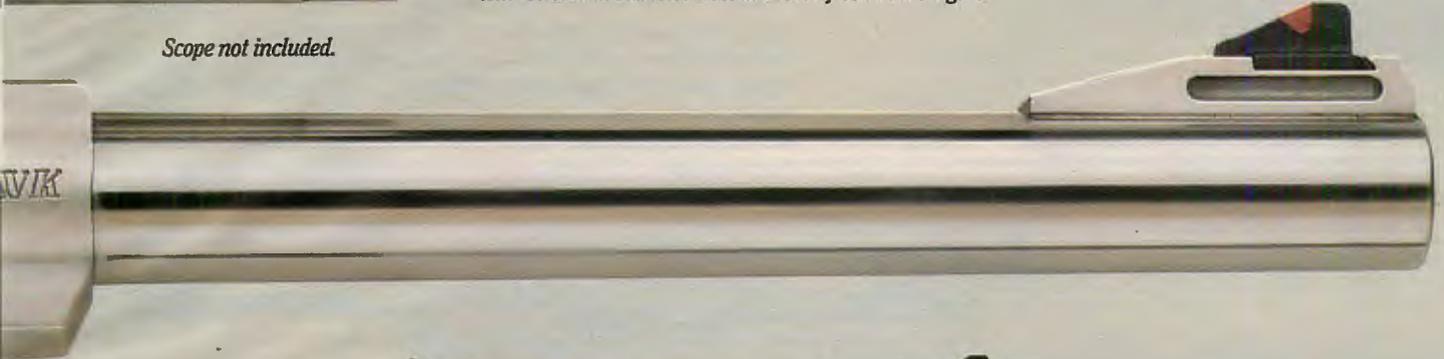
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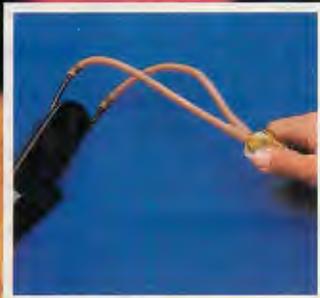
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BATF FORM 4 FOR TITLE II TRANSFERS...

Many SOF readers remain uncertain whether they would qualify for BATF approval to legally own a machine gun. BATF approval is *mandatory*, advises SOF Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis, if you can meet the following restrictions.

You must reside in a state and municipality where possession of a Title II firearm is not prohibited. You must obtain certification on the BATF Form 4 application from the chief law enforcement officer in the area of your residence, who can range from your local police chief up to your state attorney general (often a problem, as in some areas this is being arbitrarily denied). You must be 21 years of age or older (if the transfer is from a Class 3 dealer). You cannot be a fugitive from justice, a felon, an illegal alien, dishonorably discharged from U.S. military service, an unlawful user of or addicted to any controlled substance, have been adjudicated as mentally incompetent or have renounced U.S. citizenship. You must either be a U.S. citizen or have written authority from your embassy. Finally, in addition to a \$200 transfer tax and the required passport-type photographs, you must provide fingerprint cards which are fully rolled, unsmudged and can be classified properly by the FBI.

BATF Form 4 transfer applications are currently taking approximately 90 days to process.

BULLETIN BOARD



JANE WEPT...

Jane Fonda found herself moved to tears by Oliver Stone's controversial movie "Platoon," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. The paper reported that she wept in the theater lobby after seeing the film. "I had to sit down and cry," she said. She was joined there by several Vietnam veterans, the report continued, "and we wept together."

Hanoi traveler (or isn't that "fellow traveler") Jane further said, "I have been so close to guys who have been devastated by the war... What "Platoon" does — better than I've ever seen before — is to show what it was like being there, what those men went through."

We find ourselves a bit perplexed by her testimonial. The news reports we saw back then showed her on the other side — in Hanoi, in North Vietnam — doing her Academy Award-winning best to demoralize and defeat the very American fighting men she now calls comrades.

HONOR ROLL...

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund contributors:
Ronald S. McGuckin, Jimmy Fletcher, Tony West, Scott M. Young, Brian Remmey, G.I. Supply, Spencer Boaz, Van F. Baker, George T. Helsius, Bill "Leo" Deroche, Kevin W. Love, Jim Simon, Shane Carter, Mike Kampf, William Butler.

Refugee Relief International, Inc.:
Tom Kosciolk.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund:
Ronald S. McGuckin, Peter Whitehill, K.A. Kluge-Morawski-Konshins.

Numerous donors requested their name not be printed.

SOF'S KOKALIS ELECTED TO NFA BOARD...

The National Firearms Association's mission is to represent the interests of shooters, collectors, importers, manufacturers and dealers of full-auto firearms and their semiautomatic counterparts. Four persons were recently added to the NFA's Board of Directors through election by the general membership. SOF Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis was one of the four, receiving the approval of 90 percent of the members casting ballots. Also elected were Evan Whilden of Action Arms, Dr. Phil Dater, highly respected sound-suppressor designer, and Linda Farmer of Hard Times Armory.

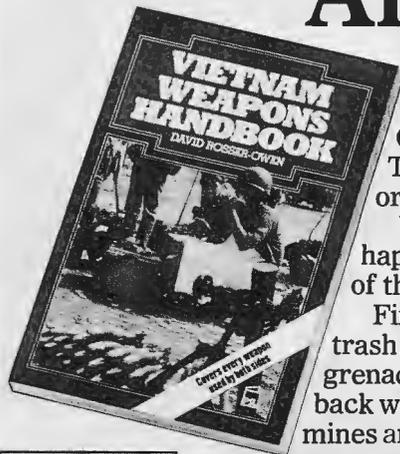
The NFA is working to repeal that portion of the Volkmer-McClure Firearms Protection Act which prohibits the possession or transfer of machine guns not registered before 19 May 1986. Kokalis reports that the NFA plans to be in the forefront of the battle against pending legislation to prohibit the possession of all semiautomatic weapons.

Every SOF reader should become a member of this important organization, which has NRA sanction. Regular membership in the NFA is only \$25 per year — a small price to pay for the preservation of your Second Amendment rights. Contact the NFA at P.O. Box 160038, Austin, TX 78716.

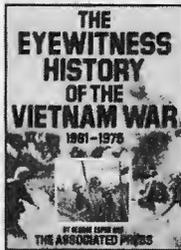
KOEVOET CORRECTIONS...

Author Jim Hooper relayed in a few fixes for his article on South West Africa's Koevoet counterinsurgency police division (see "Stalking SWAPO," SOF, April '87), but we got them after the presses had run. In that article, the rank "Special Warrant Officer" should be just "Warrant Officer," and Warrant Officer Marius Brade is actually Warrant Officer Marius Brand. Hooper also reported that Brigadier J.G. Dreyer has now made major general. Congratulations.

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		3	40/50 Firecrackers - Br. 2,000 pcs., Case 16,000 pcs.	16.00	105.00			37		Two-Stage Silver Jet Spin Up - \$1.75 ea.	15.00	150.00	
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REUNIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS...

46th Seabees Reunion will be held **6-8 May** in **Fort Worth, Texas**. For information, contact: **Mary Holliday, 1833 N.W. 11th, Oklahoma City, OK 73106**.

3/60th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division Reunion for "The Wild Ones" who served in 1966-67 is set for **8-10 May** at the **Clarion Hotel** in **Colorado Springs, Colorado**. Contact: **Ed Blackledge, 2295 Satinwood Dr., Mansfield, OH 44903, (419) 589-4749** or **(419) 522-2711**.

173rd Airborne Brigade Annual Convention is set for **20-24 May** at the **Continental Royal Motor Hotel** in **Orlando, Florida**. For more information, write or call: **Jeff Mazer, Convention Project Officer, 173rd Airborne Brigade, P.O. Box 716, Casselberry, FL 32707, (305) 695-3611**.

11th Armored Cavalry Regiment will hold its third annual reunion **28-30 May** in **St. Louis, Missouri**. For further information, write: **David Summers, 3923 Burgen St., St. Louis, MO 63116**.

7th Infantry Division Association has scheduled its **11th Reunion 11-14 June** in **Norfolk, Virginia**. Prepaid reservations must be made to attend. For information, contact: **Louis S. Wise Jr., 3001 Richmond Ave., Mattoon, IL 61938, (217) 234-6534**.

720th MP Battalion Reunion is scheduled for **12-14 June** in **Killeen, Texas**. For information, contact: **Joseph Selovich, 1909 35th St., Kenosha, WI 53140, (414) 654-0517**.

22nd Bomb Group (M/H), 5th AF (WWII), Hqs., 2nd, 19th, 33rd, 408th Bomb Squadrons have scheduled the **38th Annual Reunion 22-26 July** in **Oshkosh, Wisconsin**. Contact: **Jack Clark, Box 4734, Patrick AFB, FL 32925, (305) 636-5004**.

Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Association has been activated. For membership information, write or call its executive director: **George H. Ecker, 201 Apache St., Huachuca, AZ 85616, (602) 456-9561**.

Vietnam Veterans Parade: Chicago 1986 is a five-chapter, 144-page photo essay book covering the June 1986 Chicago Welcome Home Parade and associated events, say its publishers. Copies are available for \$15 each plus \$1 each for postage and handling from **Nam Vets Publishing Co., Dept. SOF, Room 791, 142 Lincoln Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501**. Bulk rates are available.

MOSCOW GOES CALIFORNIA...

Is Moscow plotting to scrap the dictatorship of the proletariat and convert to the laid-back, feel-good lifestyle of Marin County, California? Of course not. But why has Werner Erhard come to call?

Erhard is the creator of "est" and currently heads his own Erhard Foundation, headquartered in California. Believe it or not, 65 members of the prestigious Soviet Academy of Sciences (including

intellectual luminaries from *Znaniye*, the All Union Knowledge Society) and 15 "scientist observers" (probably from the KGB) subjected themselves last June to a five-day series of lectures by Erhard himself. Est's originator was in Moscow at the invitation of *Znaniye* and at the personal invitation of Anatoly Dobrynin, former Soviet ambassador to the United States who now heads the International Department of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee. Dobrynin's International Department specializes in planning and coordinating "peace offensives," propaganda, disinformation, terrorism and other forms of international subversion aimed at accomplishing Soviet goals in the world without resorting explicitly to war. *Znaniye*, with about 3.2 million members, is a Soviet propaganda organ that gives about 24 million "educational lectures" a year, generally denouncing Soviet dissidents and supporting Soviet endeavors such as the war in Afghanistan.

Aside from ego gratification, it is difficult to tell what Erhard gets from associating with Soviet intellectual thugs. The benefits to the Soviets, however, may prove considerable. While Erhard's psycho-babble itself will not benefit his Russian audiences any more than it has his American ones, the man does have an awful lot of devoted followers in the U.S. and western Europe. And the Soviets dearly love to manipulate men with followers. Toward their own ends, of course.

SOUND OFF, PART II...

Last month we asked you to take a couple of minutes to tell us what you do and don't like — or like most and like least — about *Soldier of Fortune*. We asked you to fill out and send in the special SOF Wants You! reader survey form in that issue. Now we are asking you to do it again. This month's SOF Wants You! reader survey form is on page 99. Once again, please fill it out, fold it up and mail it to us. We want to hear what you have to say about what you see in SOF. ✕

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THINK of a knife and the first image that comes to mind is the blade. This is probably as it should be, for the heart and soul of an edged weapon is the part that does the cutting. However, an outstanding blade that is fitted to a poorly designed handle is not capable of delivering all the performance that would otherwise be possible.

Ask an Olympic sprinter to run the hundred meters in shorts and track shoes and then get him to try it wearing jeans and cowboy boots. Though his athletic potential in both instances doesn't change, there will be a difference in his times. The same concept applies to knives and the types of handles they are fitted with. The thing that *looks* best to some people is not always the thing best suited to the job at hand.

Let's briefly compare the function of the grip on two common hand-held weapons — the handgun and the knife. Serious handgunners are particular, even downright picky, about the grips on their ordnance. They are careful about their grips because they know that a solid, stable shooting platform is conducive to a higher degree of accuracy. They know that a consistent grip gives tighter groups, and a grip that better enables one to control recoil leads to faster target acquisition on follow-up shots. Consequently, handgunners have a myriad of accessory grips which cater to their particular needs.

Knife users are not so lucky. Most of today's knives have handles that are poorly suited for serious work. It is true that there are a wide variety of shapes and materials available on the handles of today's knives, and some of the materials are in fact spin-offs from the handle development enjoyed by handgunners. Unfortunately, what works well as a material on the grip of a handgun does not necessarily work as well when used on a knife.

While a handgun and a knife are both hand-held weapons, they are most definitely not used in the same manner. Each possesses different characteristics to best accomplish its task. In regard to firearms, the bullet, or more properly the powder charge, is what provides the power to strike. With knives the applied force comes from the person holding it.

Therefore, a handgun needs a grip that lets the shooter control the piece. A knife needs a grip that lets the user control the piece *and also generate as much striking power and leverage as possible*. Both the shape of the knife handle and the material from which it is made greatly determine the degree of blade control and ability to generate striking power. Here's how it works.

Generally speaking, a knife handle



BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

Get a Grip



Handle shape and material mean more to a battle blade than most people realize. While it is nothing fancy, the handle on the kukri sold by Atlanta Cutlery is functionally a good one. The shape is good and the hardwood scales give a secure grip. Photo: J.D. Mayfield

should be oval in cross section and shaped so that, as it is swung, centrifugal force causes it to press tighter in the hand. The oval cross section also enables the man using the knife to tell by feel alone the relative position of the cutting edge. It is imperative that you be aware of where the cutting edge is without having to think about it, especially in the dark or in an emergency. Tubular or round cross section handles do not telegraph this information.

The human hand is not symmetrical, either. A handle that is larger at the front, or guard end, tends to be hard to hold and slips from the hand when hard chopping or slashing strokes are administered. Most full-tang knives are constructed this way. They have to be, for if the tang on this type of knife is larger at the back than at the front, the guard cannot be fitted to the blade from the rear.

Some of the most striking and beautiful Bowie knives from Sheffield, England, were made with handles of

this type, and if you have ever swung one of these in your hand you know how hard this type of handle is to hold on to. A modification of the classic "bird's head" handle shape is probably the best bet for a combat or survival knife, as it is a comfortable handle that gives excellent control of the blade.

Knife handles have been made of just about every material you can think of — from aluminum to fossilized walrus penile bone. The handle material must provide a grip that is comfortable, durable, easy to hold on to and doesn't hinder the generation of force in the blade. To me, this generally means a handle of a suitable hardwood or stag. Metal handles are out because they stick to bare skin in winter. I know you can wear gloves, but have you ever tried to skin an animal or clean a fish in a survival situation with gloves on? Synthetics such as micarta have the same problem in cold weather as does metal, but to a lesser extent, and both metal and the hard synthetic materials are slippery when they get bloody or wet.

Then there are the softer synthetic grips similar to the Pachmayr grips that are so popular on handguns. These do provide a good secure grip, even in cold weather. However, one of the very properties that makes this type of material desirable as a handgun grip actually works against it as a knife handle — *the material absorbs recoil*.

When you strike a violent blow with a knife fitted with a soft handle, the handle actually absorbs part of the force of the blow. Think about it. Part of the energy that you are trying to deliver to your target gets lost in the handle, which makes it necessary to use more muscle to get the job done. Remember that the powder and bullet provide striking force in a firearm, and the way a man squeezes the trigger has absolutely no bearing on the amount of force he delivers. But a knife or a club is a different matter — a handle that absorbs energy is inefficient.

Continued on page 91

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SENSES heightened by adrenaline and pulses racing, six camouflaged men watch an area 25 meters to their front with owl-like attentiveness. Another soldier 150 meters down-range just warned them that over 20 enemy troops are approaching.

A life-or-death decision has to be made in the next few seconds — to attack a force four times larger or to let them pass and wait for smaller game. These men are all Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS) — they aren't about to let this opportunity pass.

As Mozambican ZANLA terrorists move into view, the lead terr fills the SAS machine gunner's sight. The gunner waits anxiously for the signal to begin the ambush and open fire.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Claymores go off in rapid sequence, spraying the killing ground with thousands of steel pellets. With this cue, the machine gunner and riflemen open up, adding their controlled fire to the random destruction of the claymores.

Most terrs drop dead in their tracks. Some survivors dive to cover behind their dead comrades. Those lagging behind double back the way they came — right into the waiting guns of the SAS troops who initially spotted them. All shooting stops within seconds.

Now the fallen enemy has to be searched for documents and items of value to military intelligence. Knowing that not all bodies on the ground are dead, precautions are taken before leaving cover because, like a wounded animal, a wounded human is extremely dangerous. Hand grenades are thrown into the killing ground to flush anyone playing possum — one terr jumps up and runs for the bush.

"CRACK!"

He doesn't make it.

By now maybe three minutes have passed since the claymores detonated. Designated searchers emerge from their ambush positions and move down to the bodies strewn along the path. Working in teams of two, covered by the machine gunner and a rifleman behind them, they quickly gather the enemy's weapons and start checking packs and pockets.

That done, booby traps are placed beneath the captured weapons and the searchers withdraw to their original ambush positions. The other SAS troops down the path in both directions are called in and the entire group moves to a secure location far from the ambush site.

Like most special forces units, the Rhodesian SAS was especially good at conducting ambushes. The key to its success was establishing and practicing certain fundamentals which were applicable



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Bob McKenna

"At My Command..."



In an ambush — where communication is critical — discreet signals are imperative to avoid compromising position and for use amid the noise and confusion of combat.

to all ambush scenarios. In particular, signals were developed for alerting, opening fire, ceasing fire, and withdrawing or regrouping their troops, with special signals added for unique circumstances. When determining your own ambush signals, one rule is paramount — keep them simple.

Radio Signals

Radios provide most battlefield communications. But not every soldier has one and, when in close proximity to the enemy, a radio can't be spoken into without giving away your position. Their use, therefore, is severely limited in ambushes.

In the above incident a radio was used by the early warning group to alert the main group. Because voices carry in the bush, the warning came in the form of "clicks" given by pressing the transmit button on the radio handset. To prevent misinterpretation or letting static confuse the issue, the clicks are given in a specified sequence and repeated.

Another signaling method is for the radio operator to blow softly into the handset to indicate the size of an enemy force — one puff for every five enemy spotted, for instance. In this manner messages can be sent from groups that are out of sight and sound

range without a word being spoken. When the action is over, radios can be used to call outlying security and early-warning groups.

Non-Vocal Signals

For communication within a group, non-vocal signals are used to avoid alerting the enemy and because, once the shooting starts, even the loudest voice is lost in the din. Non-vocal signals can take many forms, from physical contact to visual signals, and they need to cover many contingencies.

Signals to alert ambush team members that the enemy is approaching and to ensure that all weapons commence firing simultaneously are of utmost importance. Without directing maximum firepower at the right moment the advantage could easily shift to a numerically superior enemy.

As an ambush position might well be manned for days before the enemy appears, it is not feasible to keep all members at full readiness. To allow some to rest while others keep watch, a cord can be laid from one pair of men to the next. When clicks from the early-warning group come in on the radio, the ambush commander pulls the cord to alert his men. Be sure that a single tug is not used as a signal, since an accidental movement could cause the whole group to be alerted unnecessarily. Instead, a double tug, repeated, tells all troops to aim their weapons and move selector switches off "safe."

Clearer and most unmistakable of

Continued on page 92

SITTING on the end of my bunk, I raised my ankle cast off the floor and rested it on the bottom rung of the bed frame. A cool breeze blew in through the screened door. It gave a welcome relief to the muggy Vietnamese night air.

Across the ward, Staff Sergeant Whitner stood up. Limping on a cane, he strolled toward the screened door. Two other patients and I fell silent as Whitner passed by. Standing in front of the door, the Korean War veteran peered out into the darkness across an open sandy area about the size of a football field. He sighed and cast a lingering glance down the neat rows of ward buildings. Among them were a Red Cross lounge, NCO Club, cafeteria, barbershop and everything that the U.S. Army could possibly provide to make life easy.

We were patients recovering from wounds or disease in the 6th Convalescent Center, located on the massive military installation at Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam. It was August 1969. The war raged on, far away in the countryside. In our 30-bed ward it was quiet and secure. In fact, the base was considered so secure that President Johnson had twice reviewed the troops there.

"You guys got it too easy," Whitner said, running his hand through his graying hair. "What more could you ask for?"

"A plane ticket home," yelled Gilmore, sitting across the aisle.

"Throw in a two-day layover on Waikiki beach," I said with a chuckle.

Another guy named Red laughed heartily and pointed to a calendar hanging from a wall locker. "A week with Miss August will suit me fine," he said.

An hour later, the lights around the sandy field began to flicker out, one by one, as the evening's activities drew to a close. Halfway down the ward, someone called for lights out.

As my head rested on the clean white pillow, my thoughts went back a few weeks, back to the jungle in Quang Nai Province, where I had seen my rifle company, part of the Americal Division, decimated week after week. Those memories were not easy to live with. At least for now I felt safe, and sleep came easily.

When I woke, I knew something was wrong. Rubbing my eyes, I saw only a few others sitting upright. They looked like perched night owls. For an instant, the room glowed. I looked through the screens. Orange flashes came from one row of wards along the sandy field. Tin roofing sheets tumbled crazily through the air. The sound of explosions hammered the air.

"What the--?" Red said.

"Incoming?" Gilmore asked.



I WAS THERE

by Jeff Chapman

Price of Sleep



On a hot night in August 1969, VC sappers with satchel charges struck a low blow to American morale — they attacked the hospital facilities at Cam Ranh Bay.

Whitner looked through the screened door and screamed, "Sappers! Satchel charges!"

No one in our ward made a move as the walls creaked and moaned from the concussions. Suddenly panic ensued. Half the ward ran for the rear door and the rest crowded out the front door. Once outside we ran for the bunker.

Hindered by the awkward ankle cast, I tripped and fell in the sand. As I went down, I saw Gilmore sprint around the corner with the others.

Red came from behind and grabbed my arm. "Let's get to the bunker," he screamed. About 30 yards away, automatic weapons fire chattered — long steady bursts — cracking with the distinctive sound of enemy AKs. Machine-gun bullets ripped through the air above our heads.

"VC!" Red said and pointed.

Fifty feet to our front, three communist infiltrators dressed in drab clothing crouched up a concrete causeway between the ends of the wards and the field. As they moved toward us, they ducked each time one of their satchel charges went off behind them. With each detonation, debris flew up and out into the field. Large flood lamps in another row of buildings clearly illuminated the infiltrators. All of

them shouldered rifles; two carried large baskets on their backs. They stopped at the front of one ward, readied several satchel charges, pulled the fuses and threw them inside. Then they ran like hell.

When they rounded the corner, one paused to look at us and grabbed his rifle but was pushed forward by the others. Then, as quickly as they came, they disappeared into the darkness. A huge explosion followed. We covered our heads as debris rained down from the destroyed ward.

My legs trembled as we got up and ran to the bunker. Approaching the dark, shadowed entrance, I grabbed Red's arm and said, "Wait." Then I shouted toward the entrance, "Friendly," fearing we might be mistaken for the enemy.

A head poked out of the shadow. It was Whitner. He waved us in. Red looked into Whitner's face as we scrambled past and said, "Who did you say has it easy, sarge?"

On crude wooden benches about 30 of us sat crowded beneath the sand-bagged canopy of the bunker, listening to satchel charges and automatic weapons fire. An eerie stillness sat among us. No one realized that, during the ensuing minutes immediately after the attack, a massive evacuation of wounded patients was taking place as close as 50 yards away. What we did realize was that the few wards which surrounded ours had been spared.

Continued on page 94



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SQUAD Automatic Weapons (SAWs) are the latest and greatest fetish in the field of military small arms. Every NATO country and their client states have either recently adopted one or are hot to do so.

Ivan Ivanovitch had his 35 years ago. Development of the Ruchnoi Pulemyot Degtyaryev (Degtyaryev Light Machine Gun) commenced during World War II. Referred to as the RPD, it was fielded in the early 1950s and became the standard squad automatic for the Soviet Army and its satellites. It was the first machine gun chambered for the 7.62X39mm (M43) intermediate cartridge. It was manufactured in the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) as the Type 56 and Type 56-1 and by North Korea as the Type 62 light machine gun. Long obsolete in the Warsaw Pact armies, it's still employed by communist terrorists and guerrillas from Africa to Latin America.

And what exactly is a SAW? As the name implies, it's a machine gun designed with characteristics that enhance its employment at the infantry squad level. To that end, it should be capable of sustained fire, which usually requires belt feeding and a quick-change barrel. Other desirable traits are modest weight, chambering for a modern intermediate-type cartridge, compactness, a sturdy bipod, high hit probability, successful human engineering and performance to RAM-D (Reliability, Availability, Maintainability-Durability) standards. How well did the RPD conform to these criteria?

Gas operated and firing from the open-bolt position, the RPD is a relatively simple locked-breech design with a minimum number of parts. The locking system is, in general, similar to that of Degtyaryev's DP light machine gun used by the Soviets in WWII. When the trigger is pulled, the slide, containing the piston and bolt group and riding in slots milled into the receiver's inner walls, moves forward under power of the compressed recoil spring in the buttstock to push a round out of the belt and into the chamber. The extractor slips over the cartridge and the bolt comes to rest. Locking takes place as the slide continues forward and a solid wedge at its rear end drives between the two flapper-shaped locking lugs and forces them into the receiver's locking recesses. (These locking lugs are not attached to the bolt head and often disappear underfoot when the weapon is disassembled in the bush.) The slide goes on and this wedge, acting as a hammer, strikes the firing pin, which is not spring-loaded.

After the powder has been ignited and the bullet passes down the bore, a portion of the expanding gases passes through the gas port, and after deliver-



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

RPD — ComBloc SAW



Firing RPD (PRC Type 56-1) from hip assault position. Though lightweight, reliable and accurate, RPD lacks quick-change barrel — essential for modern SAW.

ing a sharp rap to the piston, disperses into the atmosphere from the open cylinder. As the piston and slide commence their rearward motion, there is a short delay before the bolt unlocks while the chamber pressure drops to a safe level. Then the locking lugs, riding in cam slots cut into the slide's top face, are forced inward against the side of the bolt body and unlocking is completed. Ejection is downward, out the bottom of the receiver.

There is a three-position gas regulator on the gas block with settings marked "1," "2" and "3," each of which is lined up with an index pin. The first is supposedly for normal use, but in my experience the RPD will function more reliably if the number two position is used. To adjust the regulator you must loosen and remove its retaining nut on the left side with the combination tool in the buttstock kit. Then you have to press the regulator to the right to disengage it from the index pin. It sounds easy, but in the field when the weapon is hot and the regulator is fouled, you will be forced to drive it out with a mallet or, more likely, the heel of your combat boot. Don't use a rock. The gas block and cylinder are pinned to the barrel. All steel components except the bolt group (left in the white) are salt blued (often incor-

rectly, as many parts are often plum colored).

The slide carries an actuator roller (similar to the M60 and FN MAG 58) mounted on the left side which fits into the spring-loaded feed rail under the top cover. Attached to the feed rail is a feed slide which holds the single, spring-loaded feed pawl. When the feed rail is moved to the right by the reciprocating actuator roller, the feed pawl moves to the left. When the bolt moves forward to chamber a round, the actuator roller travels down a straight portion of the feed rail, as the belt must remain stationary at this time. When the cartridge clears the belt, the roller pushes the feed rail to the right and the feed slide and its pawl move to the left, out of top cover. A spring-loaded stop pawl on the feed tray prevents the belt from being pulled to the left as the feed pawl rides over the next cartridge in the belt. During the recoil stroke, the mechanism pulls the belt and the next round to the right.

Testing by the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War convinced them that the RPD's energy level and the 7.62X39mm cartridge were marginal in their ability to move the belt. I do not agree. The Army's test results also conflict with extensive tests conducted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Even under conditions of adverse fouling, if one of the two higher gas regulator positions is used, as well as only clean and undamaged belts, the RPD will pop all the caps you feed it.

RPD belts are of the non-disintegrating push-through type and

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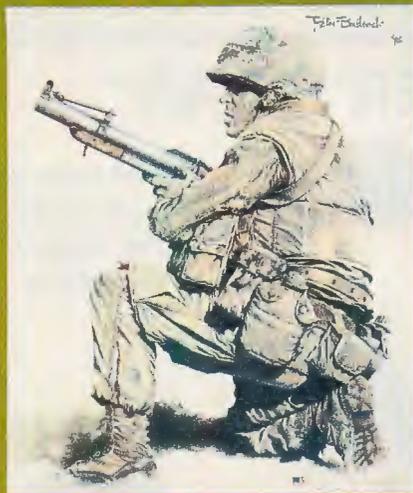
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The Marines are America's amphibious force-in-readiness. In Vietnam as in every Marine battle from Tripoli to Grenada, the individual Marine "grunt" was the nucleus of the Corps. This print by renowned military artist Peter Badcock (*Images of War, Faces of War*) shows a Vietnam era Marine armed with an M79 40mm grenade launcher. His uniform is torn and dirty but his face shows the determination that made the Marines a threat to America's enemies for two hundred years.

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each link is connected by a short, steel, spiral spring. Two types of links were fielded. One has a conventional tab which fits into the cartridge case's extractor groove in the manner of the MG 34/42 link. A later version, more difficult to load quickly, has a right-angled projection that fits against the base of the cartridge. There are three types of belts: 50-round beginning belts with a starter tab for loading without lifting up the top cover, 50-round ending belts and 25-round middle belts. RPD belts can be joined by putting the end link of one (except for the ending belt) into the front link of another and using a cartridge to secure them. One hundred rounds can be stored in a drum-shaped belt carrier which attaches on later models to the ejection port dust cover when it is swung down and locked in place to serve as a magazine bracket.

At 20.5 inches, RPD barrels are about two inches longer than M249 SAW barrels. They are chrome-lined with four-groove bores and a rate of twist of one turn in 10 inches (just slightly slower than the AK-47/AKM rifle series). Lacking quick-change capability, RPD barrels are threaded to the forged receiver by interference fit and then pinned. This is a major and legitimate criticism. ComBloc troops were instructed never to fire more than 100 rounds a minute through the RPD. In the heat of battle, such admonitions are usually ignored. However, operators will know when they have exceeded the recommended rate of fire, as the wooden handguards, devoid of any heat shields, will invariably burst into flames.

Handguards, grip panels and buttstock are of the usual varnished orange-crate quality. The buttstock's peculiar club-foot configuration is derived from the DP (Degtyaryev Pakhotnyi) LMG and was continued with the introduction of the RPK and RPK-74. It was designed to implement the European practice of grasping the underside of the buttstock with the support hand. RPD handguards are shaped to carry the weapon only.

Rigid D-shaped sling swivels are attached to the left sides of the gas cylinder's support bracket and the buttstock. Slings are usually web with leather ends. Later models carry a tool kit in the buttstock which consists of a combination wrench, broken case extractor, punch, jag tip, front sight wrench with cross bar, gas cylinder and gas port reamers, four-piece cleaning rod and sometimes a spare extractor and firing pin.

RPD sights are more than adequate for the limited range of its cartridge. A conventional front post, adjustable for

Continued on page 98

ANOTHER PEACETIME CASUALTY.

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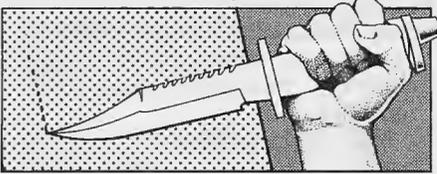
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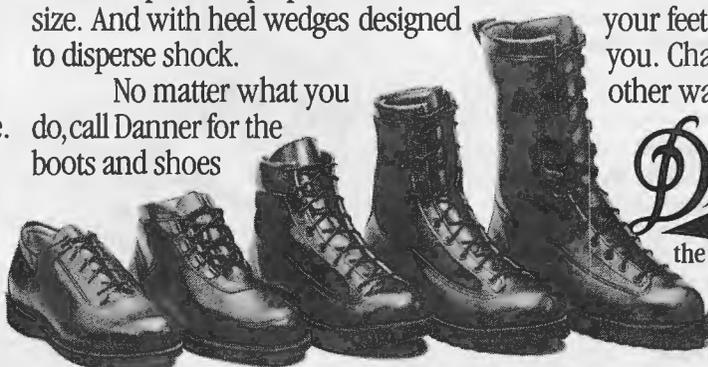
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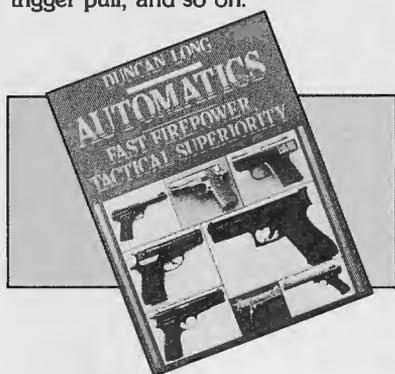
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AUTOMATICS — FAST FIRE-POWER, TACTICAL SUPERIORITY. By Duncan Long. Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306. 1986. 136 pages. Softcover. \$14.95. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

WITH almost exclusive emphasis on semiautomatic pistols designed for self-defense, this stimulating and encyclopedic reference offers no puff-piece writing to massage manufacturers' reps. Duncan Long spares no one as he observes that the Beretta Model 21A (.22 LR) is ammunition-sensitive, the Luger all too often malfunctions in combat environments, the ASP's "guttersnipe" sights are next to useless, Smith & Wesson's Model 39/59 series is plagued with a faulty extractor and poor reliability, H&K's VP-70Z has an unacceptably heavy double-action trigger pull, and so on.



His conclusions that the Thompson/LaGarde tests were flawed, that there is little difference in performance between the .45 ACP and 9mm Parabellum cartridges and that expanding bullets are superior regardless of caliber are sure to churn every big-bore bully's stomach.

This provocative text covers the historical perspective and currently available pistols in calibers .22 LR, .25 ACP, .32 ACP, .380 ACP, 9mm Parabellum, .38 Super and .45 ACP. Long's chapter on magnum automatics includes a fascinating, somewhat ghoulish section on the Bren 10 boondoggle. Supplementing the text are useful appendices on ballistics, manufacturers, publications, troubleshooting and a brief summary of the XM9 trials.

I highly recommend this informative book to both advanced pistoleros and rank beginners.

THE DAY THEY ALMOST BOMBED MOSCOW. By Christopher Dobson and John Miller. Atheneum, Dept. SOF, 115 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003. 1986. 288 pages. Hardcover. \$16.95.

IN REVIEW



RUSSIAN Tsar Nicholas II's abdication in 1917 and the Bolshevik seizure of power eight months later set the stage for one of the most bizarre military interventions in history. What began as support for the Russians in the war against Germany turned into war against the Russian government and, before it was over, the British, French, Poles, Czechs, Japanese, Canadians and Americans would all be fighting on Russian soil. The war was overshadowed by other events and is hardly remembered by anyone today — except of course the Soviets. Consequently, this intervention has become little more than a footnote in most history books.

The Day They Almost Bombed Moscow, despite its somewhat sensational title, is a well-researched, down-to-earth account of the intervention. Dobson and Miller, through interviews with some of the few surviving participants, cooperation from the Soviets, and British documents only recently made available to the public, have managed to produce the most complete account in English of this unheralded conflict.

Someone trying to sell the story as fiction would probably be hard-pressed to find a publisher: It's just too unbelievable. British spies attempting to overthrow Lenin, the Royal Air Force in position to bomb Moscow, 70,000 Japanese troops in Siberia, American infantry in battle near Archangel, a mutiny by the British Royal Marines — once again, fact proves stranger than fiction.

The Day They Almost Bombed Moscow is insightful and entertaining history, and at the same time serves as a back-door look into the current struggle between the superpowers.



THOSE WHO FALL — AN UNFORGETTABLE CHRONICLE OF WAR IN THE AIR. By John Muirhead. Random House Inc., Dept. SOF, 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022. 1986. 258 pages. Hardcover. \$18.95.

A dull roar reverberated inside the cockpits of the B-17s as the 301st Bomb Group droned toward their objective. After four long hours, they reached their target and let loose the fury contained in their bomb bays. Those who survived the heavy flak and fighters turned back toward the sanctuary of southern Italy — those who didn't perished in a ball of flames or sat out the war as POWs. Though author John Muirhead's descriptions are longer and more graphic than this one, his book **Those Who Fall** is a collection of his air-war memoirs that, while accurate, becomes tedious and repetitive.

Muirhead manages at times to generate momentum — specifically when the lead starts flying — but the book bogs down as soon as the planes land. Apparently, as a pilot Muirhead did a lot of sitting and waiting between missions. Waiting was boring for him and it's boring for the reader, since Muirhead insists on giving these experiences as much if not more weight than he does actual combat scenes.

Those Who Fall presents one man's experiences and, therefore, adds little to the body of work written by World War II pilots. Thankfully, Muirhead takes no liberties with history — his descriptions are ruthlessly accurate and at times even revealing. His writing often rings poetic when we're offered a glimpse into the soul of a bomber pilot.

It seems Muirhead has tried too hard to write a work of literary value and gets away from the nuts-and-bolts action and interrelationships that could have made this book great. It's only toward the end, when he's a prisoner in Bulgaria, that we really learn about him and his comrades in arms.

Those Who Fall is not a bad book. On the contrary, it's an impressive effort by a first-time author. However, in the areas of sustained high-pitched excitement and giving the reader overall insight into men at war, it falls short. ✖

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The most commonly publicized sources are commercial nuclear reactors. The threat of a melt down or partial melt-down such as Chernobyl or Three Mile Island is an ever-growing concern. There are over 100 commercial reactors in the United States with over 25 additional on order. Plants that process radioactive ore could be common sources of radiation. Escaping ore dust or fumes leaking from filter systems and smoke stacks are reported constantly. Major highways and rail lines used to transport radioactive waste to a dump or storage site are possible high risk areas. The number of truck accidents and train derailments are on an ever-increasing occurrence. The list goes on and on, increasing weekly.

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world, the saying is, "time is money". In this world, "time is life". Don't forget to take **SURVIVOR** with you for added protection



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May 1987

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Again, thank you for a great 1986. We look forward to seeing you at our match in August 1987.

Sincerely,

Robert K Brown

Robert K. Brown
Publisher

P.S. Catch the match story on page 40.



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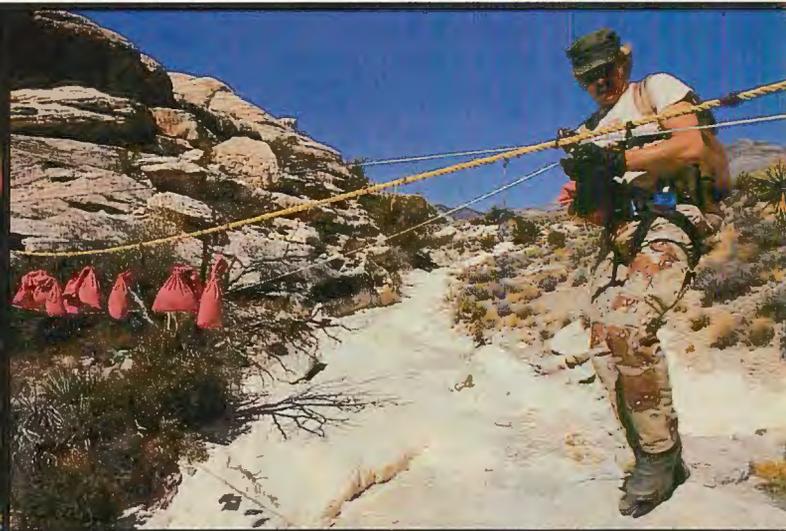
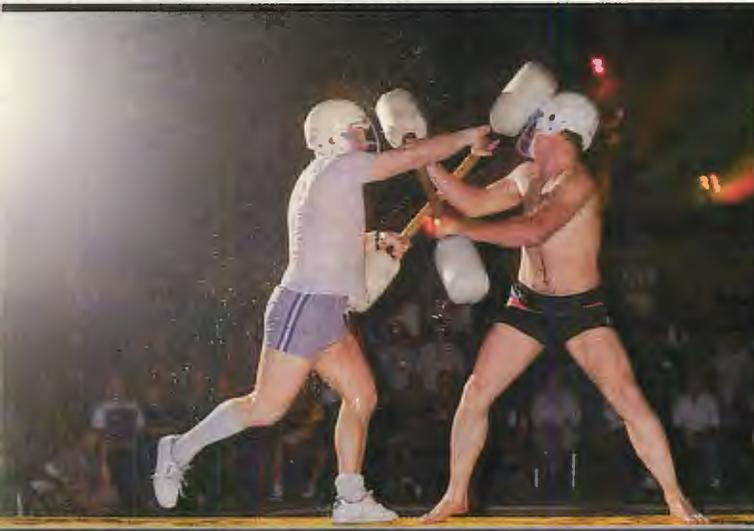
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SAHARA HOTEL, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, AUGUST 26-30, 1987

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TROPICSCREEN

With the arrival of summer, many of us will head for the great outdoors for some real livin'. To protect yourself from insects, a shelter of some type is necessary. Generally this means getting a tent — but now there's an alternative. Epco Design has come up with a line of lightweight net screens that keep bugs out while allowing you to see what's going on around you.

TropicScreen, the largest of their line, is a free-standing, luna-style "tent" that's large enough for two people. Constructed of "no-see-um" netting and shock-corded fiberglass poles, TropicScreen has no floor or door. To enter, you lift up the netting by convenient handles and crawl inside. No portion of the netting touches the sleeper(s), making it particularly valuable in very hot climates. The entire package weighs a scant 37 ounces and rolls to a compact 21-inch by 4.5-inch cylinder which fits easily into a backpack or duffel bag.

TropicScreen is available from outdoor specialty stores or by mail



TOMAHAWK FOLDERS

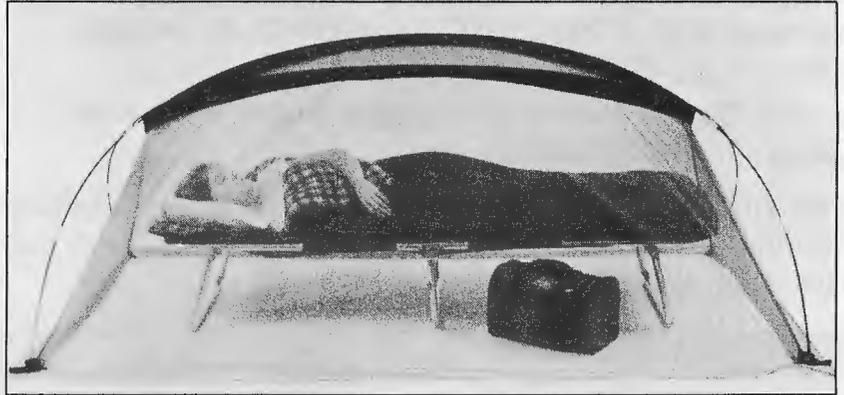
West Coast Cutlery has recently added two new knives to its list of quality cutlery. Tomahawk folders, designed by Jim Frost and Bob Cargil, feature the patented Frost/Cargil Sidelock and cost just \$38.95 (plus \$2.00 for shipping and handling). The bone handles are decorated with custom scrimshaw logos. Logo designs available are Special Forces, Airborne or Soldier of Fortune beret and cross-daggers.

Also available from West Coast is the Blood Master II — a 15-inch Bowie survival knife. Typical of survival knives, it features a hollow handle design and comes with fishhooks, line, sinkers and more. Price has been slashed for SOF readers to \$59.95 (plus \$3.00 for shipping and handling).

Contact West Coast Cutlery, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 2194, Roseville, CA 95746. Telephone: (916) 791-2961.

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

by Tom Slizewski



order from Epco Design, Dept. SOF, 900 First Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98134, for \$39.95. Phone (206) 583-0818.

ELITE UNIT BLADE

Most average consumer knives are just that — average. Those desiring a first-rate blade either settle for what's available or put out the money for the custom item. Now there's a third choice — Para Arms "Protectorate" 840-A1 Elite Unit Battle Blade (E.U.B.B.).

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The blade of the 840-A1 is 9½-inches long and spike tipped. The handle is of the kukri/Bowie design, sub-hilted, and has a built-in pommel/hammer butt.

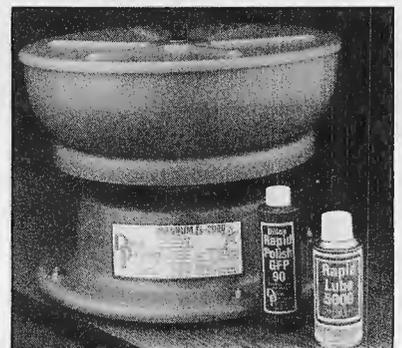
Suggested retail price is \$189.95 plus shipping. A limited edition Barry Sadler knife called *The Shadow* is also available for \$275.00 plus shipping.

Contact Para Arms, Dept. SPI, 3377 Solano Ave., Suite 437, Napa, CA 94558.



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HOSTAGE TO HOLLYWOOD

SOF Duo Makes Film Debut

by Robert K. Brown



“I SAY, old chaps, there will be no obscene or vulgar language in the studio or on location. A good movie doesn't have to have profanity, sex or violence.”

John Donovan looked at me and I looked at John — the message passed at a glance: “What the fuck!”

“Neither does a Sunday school class,” said Donovan to me later. He and I then practiced for our next meeting with the movie moguls with a chorus of “Eat, suck, fuck, bite, gobble, nibble and chew, you asshole.”

With this rude introduction, Donovan's and my movie careers were off to a flying start. First day in the studio and we'd found we had come all the way to Africa to play parts in a movie about mercenaries directed by a powder puff named Percival who didn't understand that soldiers don't talk — or act — like deacons.

We went to the nearest bar to ponder whether we had been brought over to help make a “terrorists-take-hostages, SOF-led-mercenaries-kill-terrorists-and-save-hostages” movie, or the African version of *Peter Pan*.

The movie was being filmed in Africa, where the investors' money would stretch further due to a favorable exchange rate for dollars. Percival was chosen as director at the insistence of some of the investors. He obviously wasn't amused with the technical experts he'd been provided. “He appears to be intimidated by our attitude, experience,

UPPER LEFT: John Donovan, executive officer for the mercenary force, and commanding officer Robert K. Brown.

CENTER LEFT: John Donovan inserts stun grenade into grapefruit.

FAR LEFT: John Donovan and Wings Hauser, the male lead, discuss an upcoming scene.

LEFT: Tullio Monetta, the lead villain in the movie, was a real life mercenary in the Congo and on Mike Hoare's raid on the Seychelles.



background and earthy language," guessed Donovan.

Early on, when we tactfully suggested to Percival that Americans would like a certain level of expertise and proper techniques in their shoot-'em-ups, Percival countered with, "We're not making this movie for Americans." We would have added, "For no one else, either."

Actually, in our dual roles as actors and technical advisers for "Hostage," we should have been in Africa and involved with production weeks before filming began, not two weeks after it started. By the time we arrived in-country, Percival had already made some bad technical decisions that could not be changed.

For example, grizzled military veterans are portrayed by 22-year-old fuzzy-cheeked actors. Percival had rejected our suggestion of using *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine staffers, perhaps justifiably since the movie's meager budget couldn't handle the cost of airfares to Africa for a large group. But he also dismissed our idea of fleshing out the mercenary force by drawing on an almost unlimited pool of former Rhodesian Selous Scouts and SAS types who were not only the right age but who also knew how to assemble, wear and handle their weapons and who were locally available.

We also suggested we be allowed to procure uniforms and kit for the movie but "noooooo." Thus when we arrived on the set for the first day of shooting, we gagged when we saw the moth-eaten, antique miscellany of packs, web gear and uniforms Percival had rounded up. Not to mention having to listen to Percival say, "OK sonny, here's how you wear your beret."

The casting, uniforms and kit were bad — but the weapons were worse. Some of the would-be mercs were to be armed with Armi Jager AP-74s, the Italian-manufactured .22-caliber M16 look-alikes! We pleaded with the director to position these atrocities as far from the cameras as

UPPER LEFT: Executive Officer John Donovan.

UPPER RIGHT: With Robert K. Brown leading assault (center), mercenary force assaults terr camp.

CENTER RIGHT: *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine's own Robert K. Brown, armed with an Al Mar knife and a Striker 12-gauge shotgun which features a rotary drum magazine.

FAR RIGHT: John Donovan gets trimmed up for a scene.

possible — to no avail.

Propmaster Mike Folly, a veteran of 80 some films worldwide, including "Zulu," "Zulu Dawn," "Charge of the Light Brigade," "Shout at the Devil" and "The Wild Geese," and who generally imports his weapons props from England, walked off the set when he got a taste of Percival's production standards. He didn't want to risk his credibility on the sub-par quality of the props.

Luckily, Donovan and I had enough sense to bring our own uniforms and web gear. A special thanks to Al Mar for providing our SERE 6 knives and to Sentinel Arms Corporation, which arranged for us to be issued Striker 12 revolving rotary drum magazine 12-gauge shotguns when we arrived in Africa.

Four weeks into filming, producer Mike Leighton arrived, took one look at what was going on and told Percival to go back to filming church conventions. Folly returned, which helped, but with four weeks of film in the can we basically had to march on with what we had.

From the time of Leighton's arrival, Donovan and I did have input, but because of continuity we weren't able to change much.

Fortunately, all the merc scenes take place at night, so the errors that had John and I biting our nails and gnawing our knuckles will not be all that obvious to the

average viewer.

And there are a lot of obvious implausibilities in the script, over which we had no control. Such as inserting the male lead, Wings Hauser, into the AO by hang glider; using an acetylene torch to cut an entrance into the plane where the hostages are being held while the main body of terrorist troops is only 50 yards away; a garrote scene and a cluster-fuck attack across an open runway. Against my better judgment I let them talk me into filming a scene where I pull a grenade pin with my teeth. I busted the scene and on the retake I refused to bite out the pin, so they just spliced the two segments together to get what they wanted.

The terrorist-villain lead, Tullio Monetta, found it all as amusing as we did. Monetta was a real life merc in the Congo and later in the abortive Mike Hoare raid on the Seychelles.

All in all, there's a lot of yelling, screaming, whining, crying, shooting, gurgling, smoke, deaths and a little sex. And for the price of a movie ticket you'll get a chance to see Big Bad John Donovan make his movie debut. The professionals on the set called him a natural and predicted he could be a star — a sort of WASP "Mr. T."

And for the price of a movie ticket you get to see John Donovan and me playing ourselves . . . and singing. Johnny Cash and Marty Robbins we are not! ❦

RENAMO

Freedom Fighters' Agenda for Victory

Text & Photos by Bob McKenna

WE had made our way in-country only to be greeted at the staging area with the unpleasant news — delivered in a somewhat hysterical manner by our designated guide — that we would all be shot on arrival at the first resistance camp.

Surprising news — and unsettling. Our trip preparations stateside had included assurances that our reception by RENAMO, the Mozambique National Resistance, would be friendly, but we had to wonder whether “life in Africa” — the damnable

equivalent there of Murphy's Law — had truly taken a threatening hand.

With me were Tom Schaaf Jr., director of the Washington-based nonprofit Mozambique Information Office (MIO), and Andrew Eiva, dedicated freedom-fighter



FIRSTHAND EXPERIENCE

Bob McKenna knows guerrilla warfare firsthand. After a Vietnam combat injury resulted in a medical discharge from the U.S. Army, McKenna signed on with the Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS), serving 10 years and rising through the ranks from trooper to well-decorated captain.

Following the loss of Rhodesia, McKenna accepted a commission as a major in South Africa, serving as Officer Commanding, 2 Commando, 1 Recce Regiment. He also served as second-in-command of the Transkei Defense Force Special Forces Regiment and as an intelligence officer in the TDF Military Intelligence Detachment.

McKenna routinely maintains firsthand contact with various hot spots around the world, and his unique experiences routinely find their way into the pages of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine.

Secretary to the president of Renamo (upper left) accepts a Gerber BMF knife on behalf of President Dhlakama. Gerber Legendary Blades donated the knife, which was presented by the author.

supporter, especially in Afghanistan. The three of us entered Mozambique in the latter part of 1986 on behalf of the MIO. Our purpose was to make an assessment of the situation in the southeast African nation and to meet with Afonso Dhlakama, president and military commander of Renamo, the little-known guerrilla movement fighting the Marxist government of Mozambique. (Renamo's name derives from the Portuguese *Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana*. See "Marxism Under Siege," SOF, March 1987.)

There at the staging area we three first had to meet among ourselves and assess our situation. Logically, in view of his contention about certain and violent death, our guide had declared he would have no part of the expedition. Given what Tom and I knew from previous experience with the guerrillas, we decided to go ahead anyway. We hadn't traveled all the way to Africa to be turned away by an irrational fellow spouting bootless threats.

So, on we went. We left our staging base several hours before dawn, in search of Renamo. Roughly following one of the routes taken by Dr. Jack Wheeler (see "RENAMO," SOF, February and March 1986), we were confident that it would not be long before we made contact, and we were only slightly less confident that we would find an amicable welcome. En route we managed to locate an English-speaking lay preacher who knew where a guerrilla base was and would take us to it.

After six hours of traveling by various means of transportation, the lay preacher delivered us to a Renamo control post with about a dozen guerrillas lounging about. An exchange of greetings followed, along with an explanation of our purpose and identity. We were invited to sit in a hut pending instructions from higher command. It was friendly enough at that point, but there was no doubt that we were now in the hands of armed Africans — the same ones our first guide had said would shoot us on sight. So far, he was wrong.

After about an hour, and the arrival of a messenger from somewhere, we were taken up a track toward a base but were stopped before we could see it. More waiting followed and early in the afternoon our hosts provided lunch. Amazingly enough, it was served on a table complete with white tablecloth, water glasses and pitcher and assorted cutlery. Not the sort of treatment usually accorded to prisoners pending execution. Or was this perhaps the condemneds' last supper? Whatever the case, the exertions of the day had sharpened our appetite, so we fell to with gusto and enjoyed the cornmeal and two-inch-long fishes.

After lunch, more waiting. Then, just before dark, we were taken into the base and

Author McKenna explains basic principles of map and compass for a Renamo commander. Having few maps and fewer compasses, the guerrillas rely on local guides for land navigation.

MACHEL: NO MAN OF PEACE

The death of Mozambican President Samora Machel in an October 1986 airplane crash prompted wide coverage in the international press. Most of the early reports focused on speculations and accusations that South Africa had somehow caused the crash. Pilot error on the part of the Russian at the controls is now accepted as the cause.

What dominated the rest of the media's reports were Machel eulogies portraying the late president as a "man of peace" and the "George Washington of his country." To compare this brutal, atheistic tyrant to America's first president is disgusting enough, but to further describe Machel as a "man of peace" is simply to deny the facts.

There have long been suspicions that Machel was involved in the assassination of Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, Frelimo's first president. A moderate, Dr. Mondlane opposed the terrorist tactics advocated by Machel's faction. He was so popular in the party, though, that the only way to remove the opposition was to remove the man. So Dr. Mondlane was killed — blown to pieces by a letter bomb. Machel took over Frelimo and his brand of "peace" became party doctrine. Untold thousands of Mozambicans have suffered torture, imprisonment, deprivation and death as a result.

Documentary proof that peace was not one of Samora Machel's priorities was recovered from the wreckage of his Russian plane. Specifically, a document in his possession called for and planned the overthrow of the Malawi government — a sovereign nation bordering Mozambique. Curiously, this document has virtually been ignored by the media.

Why? Surely a proposed invasion of one country by a combined force from two others is newsworthy. Could it be that, having just said so many good things about Machel, the media did not want to contradict themselves? Or is it another instance of the international re-

fusal to portray African countries in an "unbiased" manner, particularly Zimbabwe and Mozambique?

Less than two weeks before his death this "man of peace" chaired a meeting between high-ranking defense and security officials from his country and Zimbabwe. Among the Zimbabwean contingent were the army commander, the defense minister and the minister for state security. The ultra-secret (and embarrassing) minutes of this meeting were part of the debris strewn over the countryside in the wake of the plane crash. A press conference held by the South African government to present this evidence of Zimbabwean and Mozambican intent to destroy Malawi as an independent country was largely ignored.

The minutes of the meeting describe in some detail how Malawi was to be invaded under the pretext of attacking the Mozambique resistance movement and how some elements of Malawi's security forces were to be subverted. There are many statements by Machel indicating that he was not quite the noble fellow the press would have us believe. From his own mouth, as recorded in these minutes:

"Mozambique and Zimbabwe must bring into being a new force in Malawi. Banda [the president of Malawi] is worn out. We must not allow South Africa to set the course in Malawi. We must not allow the English, the Americans and the FRG [West Germany] to choose the Malawi leaders. The army knows how these things must be done.

"Here, we are following Mao Tse Tung's theory: Win the majority, isolate the minority and annihilate them one by one.

"We can also organize a Malawi liberation front, equip ourselves and infiltrate into Malawi."

These are the words of a "man of peace"? The only time Samora Machel fit that description was when that Tupolev aircraft scattered itself, and him, all over the African landscape.





shown a well-built pole-and-reed hut — typical of the fifteen or so other huts of various sizes that we could see scattered among the trees. It even had three hand-made beds inside. The split-bamboo mattresses proved quite comfortable. We eventually fell asleep to the chirpings and scrapings of a million bugs and the whine of a billion mosquitos. Thank God for mosquito nets and anti-malaria pills! In the morning we discovered that all the troops lived in similar quarters, with officers having their own individual ones. The camp was also well-provided with latrines and was exceptionally clean — keeping flies and illness to a minimum.

At about 1000 that morning, a motorbike roared into camp bearing a neatly dressed but very dusty individual. Dismounting and dusting himself off, he approached the commander of the camp, who smartly snapped to attention and threw the newcomer a salute. Obviously a senior officer from some higher formation, he engaged our host in conversation for a few minutes, glancing at us repeatedly. Then he walked over to us and spoke in English. We were pleasantly surprised, as it was the first English we had heard since the lay preacher left.

Another surprise soon followed. The new officer, who was introduced as Commander Peter, had been staring at me while the introductions were made. He then said, "I know you. You trained me in Rhodesia in 1979." He was correct, and had a better memory for faces than I. Commander Peter's memories of me were good ones. Any lingering thoughts we had of a hostile reception vanished with his delight at seeing us.

It turned out that Peter had been sent by the provincial commander to talk to us and assess our intent *before* a decision was made as to our fate. One of his usual responsibilities is the care of all foreign prisoners captured by Renamo in that province, and there had been quite a few.

Apart from Zimbabwean soldiers, prisoners are invariably well-treated and released when appropriate. A few words from Peter to the camp commander and our status immediately changed from "suspicious characters" to "honored guests," although there were few material advantages. At least we were now free to move around the base, talk to the men and even leave the base to visit the locals. The next step was to get to Renamo headquarters at Gorongosa and see President Dhlakama.

On the assumption that permission would be granted for us to make the journey to Gorongosa, we discussed with Peter the best way to get there. Two options were available — feet or motorbikes. As the former method took two weeks and the latter only three days, the decision was an easy one. The bikes were already at hand,

Motorcycles captured from government forces are often used by Renamo couriers and commanders.

Democratic forces of Renamo are winning battle against Marxist-Leninist government of Mozambique.

being some of many that have been captured from the Mozambican government. The trip through several hundred miles of liberated area presented no security problems and accommodation would be provided at Renamo camps along the way. All we needed was a go-ahead from the boss.

Before that was given we had another VIP visitor. This one also arrived on a motorbike and was greeted deferentially by the other officers. He said nothing to us, though, and merely sat taking notes during a two-hour conversation after lunch. He appeared not to understand what we said. He only spoke to the other people at the table, and then only in Portuguese.

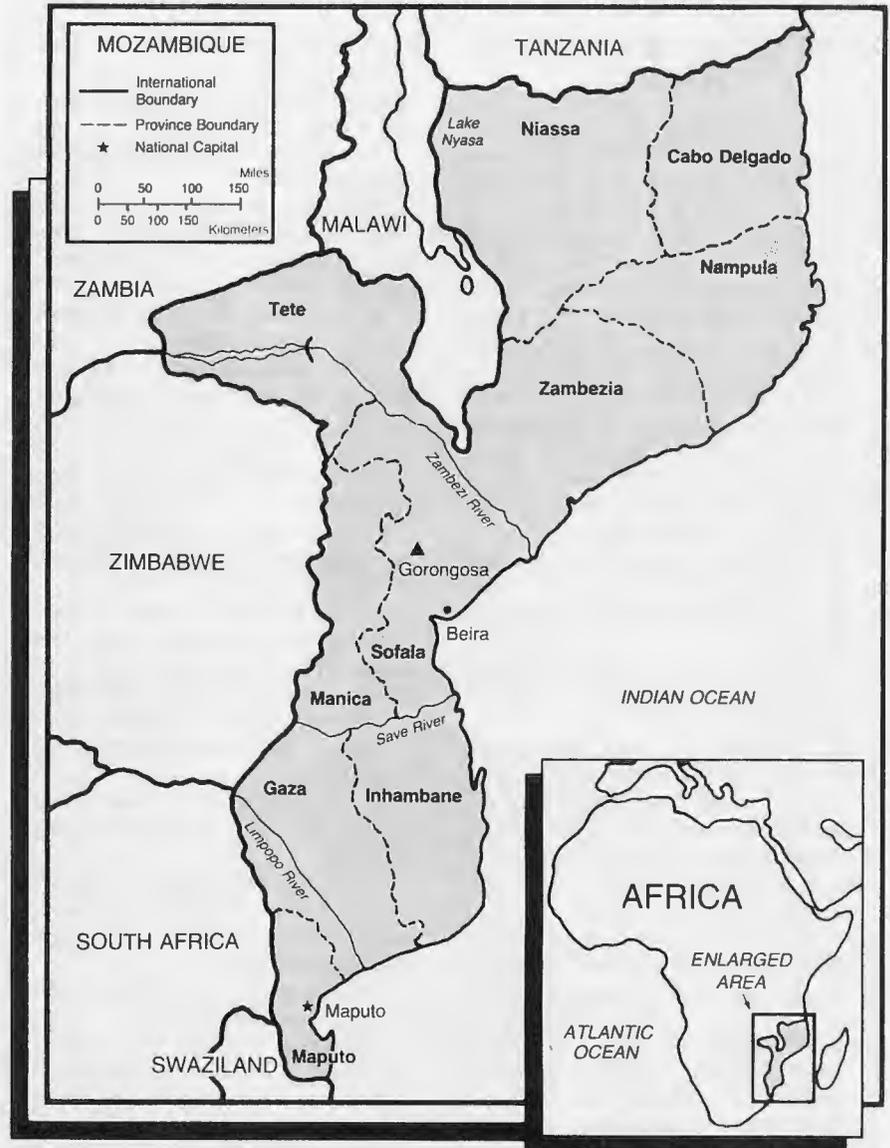
Finally, he must have satisfied himself as to our sincerity and good intentions because he dropped the pretense and said in almost perfect English, "Hello. My name is Joseph and I am the personal secretary to President Dhlakama. I am to give you greetings from the president." Surprise, surprise. The rest of that day passed in very interesting conversation, since the president's secretary was extremely well-informed on all aspects of the situation. The next day we got permission to meet Dhlakama.

The next day we also got a reminder that we were in a war zone. Early in the morning the sounds of a heavy bombardment came rolling across the countryside from about 20 miles to the south. It lasted nearly half an hour, but I was unable to tell precisely what type of weapons were in use. My best guess was recoilless rifles and heavy mortars (later found to be correct), and that a major attack was in progress. No one would tell us what was going on, but from the lack of concern in our camp we didn't feel threatened either. We later found out that a Mozambique army garrison of 400 troops, the last government stronghold in the area, had been captured.

As our meeting with President Dhlakama was to take place a week in the future, we waited for a couple more days, during which time we visited civilians, talked to Joseph and Peter, and lost weight because of the nature of our diet. We had found that, with minor variations, our first meal of cornmeal and fish proved typical of those we would have with Renamo.

Although in some liberated areas the guerrillas grow their own crops, because of the small size of this local garrison their food was donated by the local civilians. These people often told us how happy they

Author McKenna poses with two friends in camp. Portable cassette player worn by one has neither batteries nor tape. It has become a status symbol, highly sought-after by guerrilla commanders.



RENAMO'S POLITICAL POLICIES

Very few people outside of Mozambique are aware of why the fighting has continued in that southeast African nation for more than a decade after it was "liberated" from the Portuguese. Even fewer people know that the resistance movement has a clearly defined, coherent political program reflecting a combination of Western ideology and traditional African values and customs.

A Renamo government would be far more closely aligned with capitalism and democracy than the tyrannical Marxist regime that is currently destroying the country. The recent death of Mozambique's unelected dictator, Samora Machel, has not changed the policies of the government — nor has it reduced Renamo's determination to continue the fight.

Why the fight continues has been stated by Renamo President Afonso Dhlakama:

"The Marxist-Leninist regime which Samora Machel represented still provokes continued war in Mozambique. The oppressive nature of Frelimo's communist policies is the sole cause of the conflict. Concentration camps, summary detention and executions, denial of basic human freedoms, and Frelimo's destruction of the economic infrastructure have resulted in widespread starvation and misery. As a totalitarian regime, Frelimo has banned all political opposition, precluding any opportunity for peaceful resolution, thus sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Renamo's

struggle is to institute a political democracy and system of constitutional government. Restoration of individual liberties is basic to redressing the economic ills and human rights atrocities of the Frelimo regime."

What the guerrillas intend to do when they win is prescribed in their "Manifesto," published in 1985. Stated political ideas include the following:

(a) The eradication of the system of communist dictatorship.

(b) The establishment of a Government of National Unity to pacify the country, to introduce and stabilize a democratic order and to build the foundations for social and economic redevelopment.

(c) The people have the right to choose and freely vote for the political, social and economic system of the country.

(d) The traditions, customs and personality of the Mozambican people will always be respected by all sectors of authority. Progress will be made in step with history and never against it.

Renamo's ideas about justice include the following:

(a) All citizens shall be equal before the law and shall have the same rights and duties.

(b) No one shall be tried without defense and no one shall be arrested without an order or warrant from the appropriate authority.

(c) Judges shall be professional, permanent and independent.

(d) Political prisoners will be given their freedom and other prisoners will have their cases re-examined by impartial judges.

were to feed Renamo because they had previously been forced to give their total production to government administrators. Since the guerrillas took control three years ago in this area, the people were allowed to keep everything they produced.

Afonso Dhlakama is the second president of Renamo, having succeeded the founder, André Matsangaisse, who was killed in action in 1979. The goal of Renamo is to overthrow the oppressive Mozambican regime established by Samora Machel (see the accompanying "Machel: No Man of Peace"). That regime came into being, without the slightest hint of an electoral process, when the Portuguese colonial empire collapsed in 1974. At that time the communist-supported Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) took power virtually by default.

The guerrilla army has grown from 800 armed fighters to over 20,000 at present and is now active in every province of the country. Most estimates suggest that 80 to 85 percent of Mozambique is no longer under the control of the government. Even targets in the major cities of Maputo and Beira have often been attacked by resistance forces, giving further evidence of the inability of the regime to protect its dwindling territory. Frelimo was not nearly as effective when the Portuguese gave up the government of Mozambique.

André Matsangaisse was a dedicated officer in Frelimo and a veteran of many battles against the Portuguese. Only after he saw the direction that the post-colonial government was taking did he begin to have doubts about his ability to support the organization in its drive to turn Mozambique into a "workers' paradise."

Eventually his outspoken views against Marxist excesses landed him in a concentration camp — a "re-education center," in the party's lexicon. Escaping from the camp, André sought refuge in Rhodesia and found that he was not alone. Many other officers and men from Frelimo shared his views and his dilemma. He founded Renamo. When André was killed in action in 1979, his successor was another ex-Frelimo officer — Afonso Dhlakama.

Schooled by communist Chinese instructors in Tanzania, members of Frelimo were well-versed in Maoist guerrilla warfare doctrine. In their battles they had plenty of opportunity to practice what they had learned and indeed became very adept at "making a noise in the east and attacking in the west," "withdrawing before superior forces," etc. Dealing justly and fairly with civilians was paramount.

Virtually all of Mao's principles fit well into the context of guerrilla war in Africa and Frelimo veterans knew how effectively they worked. It is not surprising, therefore,

Renamo guerrilla with author McKenna carries a Romanian AK-47 mounting a Hungarian AMD flash hider. Parts from broken weapons are used to keep others functioning.



that some of these veterans are now using the same tactics, in the same countryside, with the same results. Only this time it is not the Portuguese who are being beaten but the Mozambican government forces.

Ex-Frelimo officers and troops who make up the core of Renamo have not forgotten their lessons. They have managed to train thousands of new recruits in the same methods over the last eight years. There are now guerrilla formations active in every province of the country. Many large towns have been captured and Renamo administrators are restoring a secure and peaceful life in thousands of square miles of truly liberated areas. As noted above, even the government strongholds of Maputo and Beira are not immune to guerrilla raids.

All of the ten provinces of Mozambique have a guerrilla commander who takes his orders from Renamo headquarters near the center of the country. In addition there are hundreds of smaller camps scattered throughout the country. Some of these camps have been in the same position for years without ever having been attacked. Frelimo rarely ventures out of the cities these days, and its Zimbabwean and other allies are increasingly reluctant to bear the brunt of the war. (Most sources indicate that there are between 8,000 and 12,000 Zimbabwean troops plus Tanzanian and Eastern European personnel helping the communist regime stay in power.) There are also reports of friction between government troops and their foreign counterparts, as well as stories of firefights between different elements.

Renamo maintains several strike battalions, armed with the best and heaviest weaponry, to engage in major attacks against enemy garrisons and other important targets. These units may be 850 men strong and have mortars and recoilless rifles for support. They are deployed under the personal orders of President Dhlakama. They rarely fail to take their objectives.

The morning of our scheduled departure for our meeting with President Dhlakama dawned with a message that "a situation" (local slang for an enemy attack) had developed near Gorongosa and that we should wait until a better time.

A few more days elapsed during which "the situation" became more confused and the president left his base to control it. It started looking as though we could be hanging around for weeks with no guarantee that we would ever get to Renamo headquarters. Regrettably, other commitments precluded our waiting that long, so we reluctantly decided that our best course was to return at a later date.

Bidding our friends goodbye, we left Mozambique. Not all of our goals had been

Renamo guerrillas, equipped with a variety of weapons, assemble to receive their orders for the day. Condition of the weapons and non-military attire of these freedom fighters clearly indicate that they are *not* receiving aid from South Africa.

achieved, but we had certainly been able to determine that the Mozambique National Resistance is stronger than ever and is seriously threatening the communist government of the country. Having been involved with the movement since 1978, when it started armed resistance, I was very pleased to see how close Renamo is to overthrowing the oppressive regime established by the now-deceased Samora Machel.

It is ironic that Frelimo, which used to be successful at guerrilla tactics, is unable to defeat this Renamo insurgency. It is now possible that the key, as proclaimed by Chairman Mao, is no longer in Frelimo's possession. That key is support of the populace. Nowadays in Mozambique, Renamo has that support.

The Mozambique Information Office in Washington, D.C. is a nonprofit organization with a very small budget. Our trip would have been impossible without the

Author Bob McKenna, MIO director Tom Schaaf Jr. and freedom-fighter supporter Andrew Eiva gather at the river with Mozambican villagers near Renamo camp.

generous contribution made by James Blanchard III. In addition to paying for the airplane tickets, Mr. Blanchard, a Louisiana businessman, also provided a significant amount of medical and communications equipment for the guerrillas. ✕

Renamo commanders discuss progress using a map of Mozambique. Like most of Renamo's equipment, the map was captured from Frelimo.



BEST IN THE WEST

SOF's Three-Gun Match

by SOF Staff



SPEED and accuracy with a variety of weapons determined success or failure in the 1986 *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun Match, held as always in conjunction with the magazine's yearly convention. The latest competition was fought out at the Desert Sportsman Rifle and Pistol Club at Red Rock Canyon outside Las Vegas, site of the competition in the three previous years. This latest contest drew 133 shootists total — 132 from across the United States and Canada, and one from Japan.

Like the Bianchi Cup, the Steel Challenge and the Second Chance Bowling Pin Match, the *Soldier of Fortune* Three-Gun Match is a big-money event, offering \$60,000 in cash, weapons and other prizes put up by the magazine and other top names in the gun publishing and weapons manufacturing industries. Each year it attracts many top shooters who go running and gunning for the booty. This last year competitors as far down as 55th place went home with a prize.

A big attraction of the SOF Three-Gun Match from the competitor's standpoint is

ABOVE LEFT: USMC G/Sgt. J.R. Able, center, receives Military Armament Corporation Annual Armed Forces Trophy from Military Armament Corporation's Roy Riddle, right, as SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown stands by. Photo: Duane Hall

LEFT: First Place Overall Gold Medal Winner James Clark receives his award, \$5,000 in prize money and an engraved SIG-Sauer P226, from SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown. Photo: Duane Hall



ABOVE: Springfield Armory Annual Rifle Award Winner Garth Gaines, left, receives the award from SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown. Photo: Duane Hall

BELOW: Al Mar of Al Mar Knives, left, and SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, right, flank Sharon Kimbrel, top female competitor, at the awards banquet prize presentation. Photo: Duane Hall



Shotgunner runs the Red Dawn Assault.
Photo: Duane Hall

that it is the only big-money event that requires proficiency in three weapons: assault rifle, pistol and shotgun. It is the only combat-style match set up for military assault firearms, so it has a distinctive paramilitary flavor.

The match was divided into an event for each of the three weapons categories: assault rifle, pistol and shotgun. And each event was divided into two stages designed to challenge that particular weapon.

In the rifle event, the "Scrambler" stage was a five-station continuous assault. Each station consisted of a barricade with a window through which two 10-inch metal plates placed in the center of a Milpark target had to be engaged. The plates were placed 75 to 125 yards from each station and a maximum of four rounds was allowed to knock them both over.

Competitors started seated in a box about ten yards from the first shooting station. On the start signal, the shooter had to run to the first station, pick up a preplaced rifle and engage the two plates through the window. The shooter then advanced to each of the four remaining stations. Each successive station became smaller, which forced shooters to assume shooting positions that became increasingly difficult. Shooters were timed from the start signal until the last plate was engaged. Score was straight time plus penalties, which consisted of five seconds for each plate left standing and 10 seconds for every procedural error.

This was one stage in which competitors had to select one of the stock rifles in 5.56mm or 7.62mm NATO calibers provided by the match staff. The guns were supplied by Heckler & Koch, which offered

Running and gunning for 60 grand in prizes on a challenging course with a distinctive paramilitary flavor. Photo: Duane Hall



ABOVE: Debra Christofides, left, receives the special "Tough Guy Award" from SOF Three-Gun Match Director Michael Horne, center, as SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown stands by. Photo: R.P. Montoya

BELOW: John Satterwhite of H&K, left, presents Garth Gaines, center, the trophy and prize for top overall score in the assault rifle competition, as SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown stands by. Photo: Duane Hall

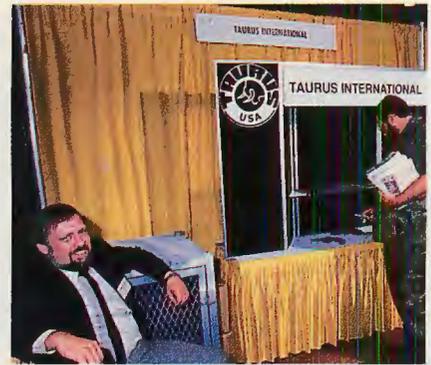


the following models: HK 91A2, 93A2 or SL 6 or SL 7. Shooters were provided time in which to fire a few rounds for sighting purposes and to become familiar with the rifle's operation.

The winner of this stage was Jerry Miculek, who shot a score of 59.91.

The second stage of the assault rifle event was divided into six substages varying from seven to 150 yards using two Milpark targets, one of which was partially concealed by a white silhouette. Shooters began with a requirement to place one head shot on each target from seven yards out.

The next position was at 25 yards. Here the start position was flat on the back with the shooter's head toward the target. The rifle was on the ground on the shooter's weak side. At the start signal the shooter had to roll over to the prone position, take up the

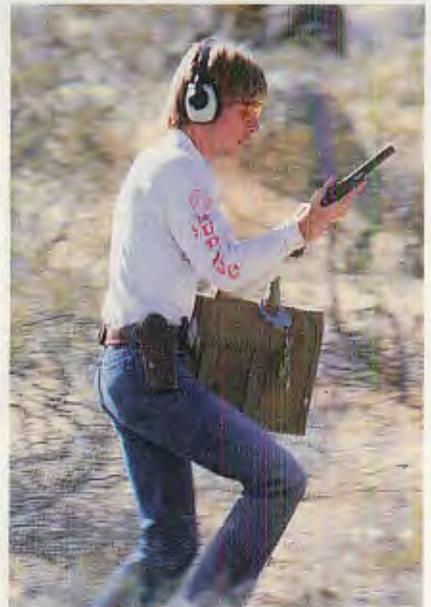


ABOVE: Taurus International was a major SOF Three-Gun Match sponsor. Two other major match sponsors not pictured here were JFS, Inc., sponsor of the Top Military (Reserve) Award, and MilArm Co. Ltd., sponsor of the Top Foreign Shooter Award. Photo: Duane Hall

SOF THREE-GUN MATCH SPONSORS

Corporate Match Sponsors	\$3,200	Soldier of Fortune Magazine
	\$3,200	Heckler & Koch
	\$3,000	Sturm Ruger & Co.
	\$3,000	Sigarms, Inc.
	\$3,000	Taurus International
Springfield Armory Annual Rifle Award	\$1,000 plus trophy	Springfield Armory
Tyro Award (top first-time competitor)	\$1,000 plus M-14 rifle	Armcorp of America
Top Law Enforcement Officer	\$750	Combat Handguns Magazine
Top Military Award (Active)	\$500 plus weapon	Military Armament Corp.
Top Military Award (Reserve)	\$500	JFS, Inc.
Top Female Shooter	\$500	Al Mar Knives
Top Foreign Shooter	\$500	MilArm Co. Ltd.
OTHER DONATIONS		
Beretta U.S.A.	Beretta Model 687EL over & under shotgun	\$2,850
Military Armament Corp.	2 MAC-10 pistols, scope & belt buckles	\$1,610
Soldier of Fortune Magazine	2 H&K rifles	\$1,400
Assault Systems	Range bags & key rings	\$870
Jones Optical	Optical goods	\$715
DeSantis Holster Co.	Holsters	\$675
R. Terzoula Custom Knives	3 knives	\$660
Sigarms, Inc.	Engraved handgun	\$600
Bianchi Gun Leather	Holsters, mag pouches & belts	\$550
Cold Steel	Knives	\$540
Dillon Precision Products	Loading equipment	\$540
Glock, Inc.	Handgun	\$500
Sturm Ruger & Co.	Handgun	\$500
Omark Industries	Bullet press & plate	\$450
Black Dragon Knife Shop	2 Cordura SWAT vests	\$400
Know Your Enemy	Targets	\$400
Pioneer & Co.	7x50 military binoculars	\$400
Ram-Line, Inc.	Rifle stocks, handguards, mag & bi-pods	\$389
ADCO International	Falcon gunsight & 2 E-Z Bright cloths	\$350
Stackpole Books	Firearms books	\$330
Action Arms	Shooter's kit	\$300
Running River Knives	Survival knife	\$255
Dan-D Custom Knives	Custom knife	\$250
Dan-E Knives	Custom knife	\$250
Eagle Ltd.	7 shooters' medals	\$250
The Edge Co.	5 Army Ranger knives	\$250
Wells Creek Knife & Gun	Combat knife	\$250
Aimpoint	Series 2000 sight & mount	\$240
Sgt. Sandy's	Suppressor	\$240
Pacific Cutlery	3 knives	\$225
Bashaw Medical Supplies	2 SWAT vests & 2 packs	\$200
Buckles by Mike	5 awards buckles	\$200
Ranger Surplus	SAS jump suit	\$190
Anite Productions	3 Second Chance video tapes	\$180
Al Mar Knives	Folding Fighter knife	\$175
Fiberpro	Stock blank	\$170
Tru-Square Metal Products	Polisher	\$160
Alpine Military Sales	2 insulated coveralls	\$150
B&D Trading Co.	3 knives	\$130
Stecoa International	Shooter luggage set	\$120
Dawson Custom Knives	Knife	\$115
Alcan Wholesalers	32 targets	\$110
Commando Specialties	SWAT vest & 3 SWAT holsters	\$110
Jonathon Ciener, Inc.	.22 LR conversion kit	\$100
Amacker Products	12 camo headnets	\$95
Tiger Stripe Products	Uniform	\$90
Lowe Vector	Liberty bag	\$80
Laser Products	Sure Fire tactical light	\$70
Tactical Support Systems	Knives, lighters & tote bag	\$57
Aztec International	Table lighter	\$40
Phillips Publications	2 books	\$40
Yurika Foods	Food sampler	\$35
Combat Glasses	MAG 1 glass frame	\$25

ABOVE LEFT: Awards banquet outside the Sahara provided a mellow end to three hectic days of SOF-style running and gunning for 60 grand in prizes. Photo: Duane Hall



ABOVE: Joe Hamilton checks his weapon on the fly during the Document Grab. Photo: Duane Hall

BELOW: Chip McCormick, center, displays the check he received for his pistol stage win and accepts congratulations from Walter Sych of Sturm Ruger & Company, left, and SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, right.



rifle and engage the targets.

At 50 yards, shooting was offhand with only two rounds in the weapon, one round for each target. The shooter would then reload with two more rounds and engage each target again from the same position.

At 75 yards, shooters had to place one round on each target, starting with the rifle shoulder slung. The shooters were allowed to engage the target freestyle at the final ranges of 100 and 150 yards.

Shooters were timed for how long they took to engage the targets during strings and this was divided into their score time, with penalties being added for misses, procedural errors and hits on the non-shoot targets.

Lee Souter won this stage with a score of 3.79388.

The pistol event consisted of two stages called the "Florida Assault" and the "Document Grab."

As in the one portion of the assault rifle competition, the Florida Assault stage required contestants to use a weapon supplied by the match staff. The mandatory pistol for this portion was a service-model SIG-Sauer P220 double-action auto. The shooter began the Florida Assault seated in a vehicle with his personal handgun containing four rounds. The loaded P220 lay on the front seat next to a dummy, which simulated the shooter's wounded partner. At the start signal, the competitor was required to place all four shots from his personal weapon on an IPSC Option target about 25 yards away.

SOF THREE-GUN MATCH OVERALL PLACINGS

1. James Clark	66	11. Jerry Miculek	137
2. Chip McCormick	75	12. Clyde Harrison	139
3. Brian Enos	103	13. Jeff Wassom	140
4. Tom Yorst	110	14. Mike Voigt	147
5. Bob Looker	110	15. Ronald Fillinger	147
6. Samuel Vaughan	115	16. David Watson	156
7. Stu Mullins	122	17. Jim Erickson	165
8. Lee Souter	134	18. Garth Gaines	167
9. Eddie Rhodes	134	19. Dan Smith	167
10. Joe Hamilton	135	20. Allen Hall	180
		21. Bobby Reed	183
		22. Scott Seabourn	190
		23. Charles Puttman	191
		24. Allan Zitta	203
		25. Terry Cross	203



Chip McCormick, right, receives Armscorp of America Tyro Award from Cindy Wong of Armscorp of America, left, as SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown looks on.

The competitor then exchanged his empty pistol for the P220 and exited the vehicle. Using the vehicle as cover, the contestant had to engage the same target again, this time with the P220. The shooter then ran to a curb with the P220 and engaged the target from a prone position. The final station required the shooter to fire through a simulated open window using his strong hand unsupported.

The winner of this stage was Joe Taflinger, who shot a score of 251.49. The mandatory use of the SIG-Sauer P220 surprised a number of competitors who discovered that they scored better with it than with their

Continued on page 81

THERE ARE JUST THREE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ...

SOF THREE-GUN INTERNATIONAL COMBAT SHOOTING MATCH

26-28 AUGUST 1987

DESERT SPORTSMAN RIFLE & PISTOL CLUB
Las Vegas, Nevada

WHO ... The SOF Three-Gun Match is open to all persons legally able to possess firearms in the United States, as well as foreign shooters of good character. This match is not an invitational tournament; however, all competitors are subject to review and acceptance by a selection committee.

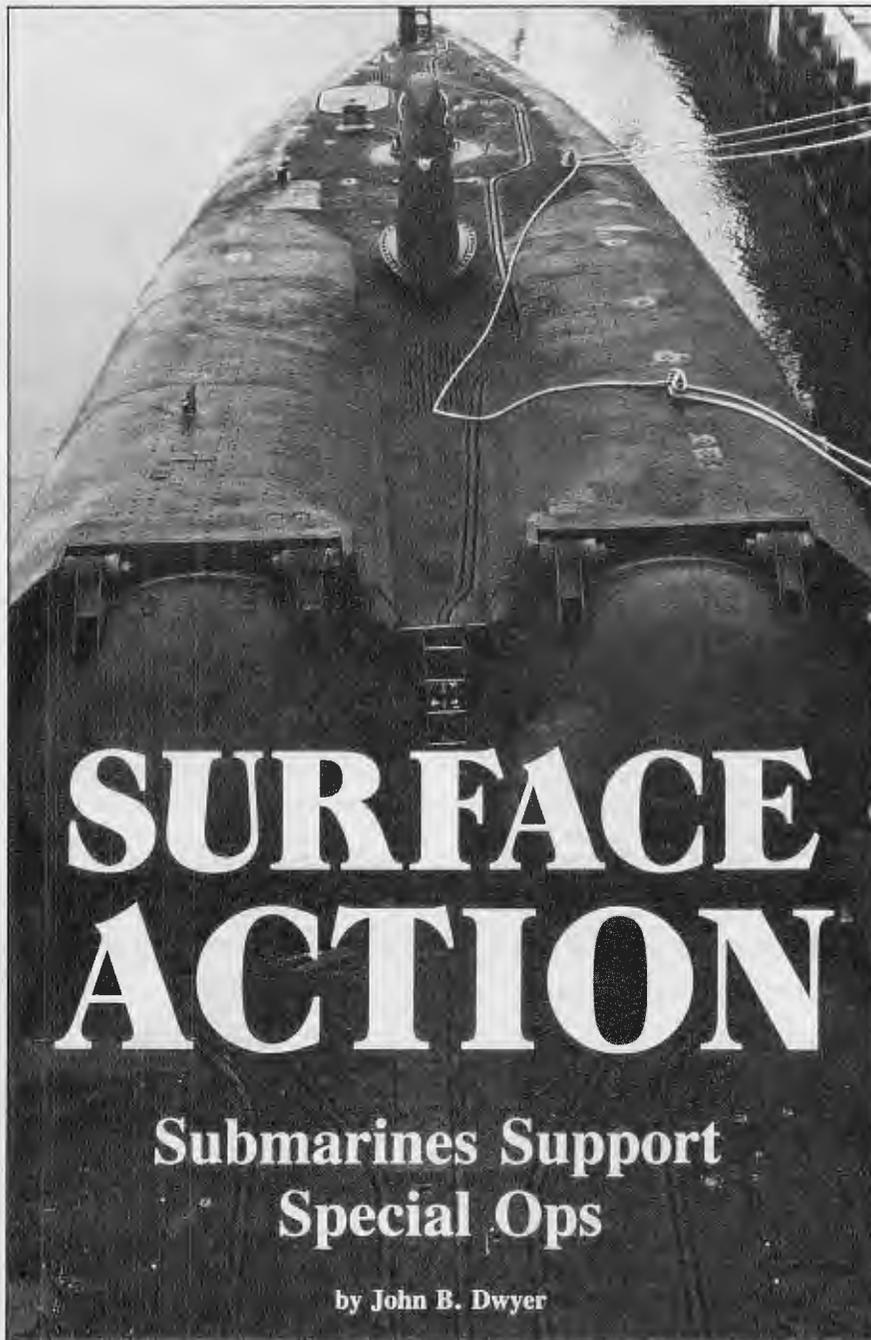
WHAT ... The SOF Three-Gun Match is patterned after military and police courses designed to test practically oriented skills with rifle, pistol and shotgun. In general, the shooter is required to engage targets before, during and after negotiating manmade obstacles or natural terrain features. Course scenarios are those that could be encountered during a confrontation with an armed adversary. Our objective is to determine the world's best three-gun combat shooter. Veteran shooters as well as novice competitors will find the course of fire safe, challenging and fun. This match is held in conjunction with the SOF Convention.

WHEN ... The SOF Three-Gun Match will be held on AUGUST 26-28, 1987 at the Desert Sportsman Rifle & Pistol Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

For further information and an application send one (1) office-size, self-addressed, two-stamped envelope to:

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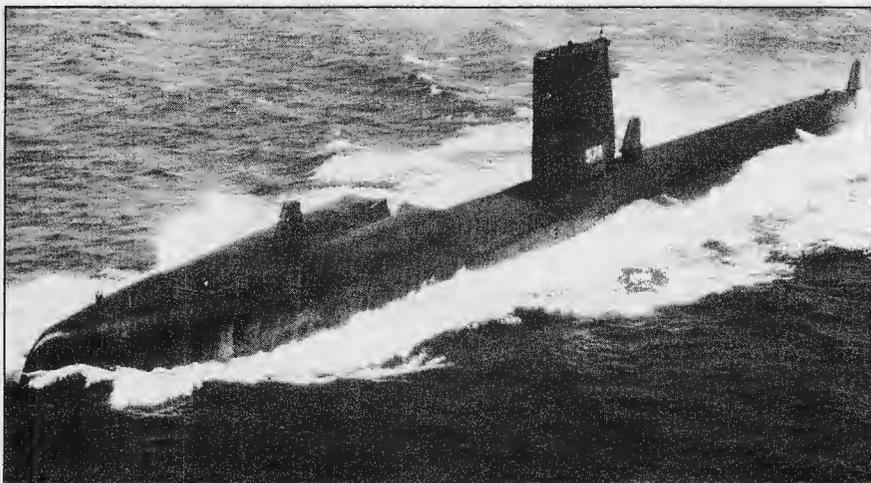
NEW DATES
AUGUST 26-28, 1987



SURFACE ACTION

Submarines Support Special Ops

by John B. Dwyer



“GUN crew topside!” With a detachment of U.S. Navy Underwater Demolition Team 11 in trouble on the beach, submariners onboard the USS *Perch* rushed topside to engage the enemy. *Perch*’s gun crew opened fire with her .50-caliber machine guns and 40mm cannon. That battle in August 1966 off the coast of Vietnam and another more complicated battle *Perch* fought nearby on the following day were to be the last surface actions fought by a U.S. submarine. Those engagements — known to *Perch*’s men as “*Perch*’s War” — along with the mission of the combat swimmers on the beach were part of one of the little-known sidelines of the naval war in Vietnam, submarine special operations.

A 14-man detachment from UDT 11, under the command of Lieutenant (j.g.) Ron Seiple, was assigned beach survey work during August 1966 in conjunction with Operation Deckhouse III. The objective area was a notorious Viet Cong stronghold north of Qui Nhon in II Corps. The team’s work wasn’t made any easier by the fact that word of the planned operation had reached the VC, who prepared accordingly.

On the night of 20 August, *Perch* launched three IBS (Inflatable Boat, Small) loads of Seiple’s men. The beach recon was successful and mostly uneventful. The only excitement was caused by artillery fire from a nearby South Korean army unit, obviously unaware of the landing party’s presence.

The next night a second recon party was launched. This time the VC were waiting, but from their ambush position they apparently couldn’t precisely pinpoint the boats as they paddled toward shore. The VC recoilless rifle fire was little more than a nuisance, and the team successfully completed its beach survey. However, the lead UDT swimmer scouts had become separated from the main group in the VC-caused confusion and a search party was launched from *Perch* to locate and recover them. Ironically, it was the search party that remained unaccounted for after the swimmer scouts and all other personnel had returned to *Perch*, which by then had surfaced 2000 yards offshore to help find the missing men and provide fire support if needed.

Worried about the search party’s failure to return, Lt. Seiple, along with two of his men, launched another IBS and paddled shoreward to recover their teammates. Lying about midway between *Perch* and the beach, Seiple decided to take a chance and set off a signal flare to orient the lost swimmer scouts and alert them to his position. Two things were immediately heard — the swimmers’ voices and small arms fire. Sei-

UPPER LEFT: Close-up view shows the USS *Grayback*’s forward deck hangars, which carried up to 60 special warfare personnel and their equipment, including eight IBSs and four SDVs.

LEFT: USS *Grayback* (LPSS 574) conducted submarine special operations off the coast of Vietnam from 1970 through 1972.

ple and his men paddled with a vengeance toward the voices. *Perch* followed them in as close as water depth would allow. As the submarine recovered all her swimmers, her gunners on deck opened up, putting .50-caliber machine gun rounds into the VC position as the sub's skipper, Lieutenant Commander Tom Dykers Jr., conned *Perch* seaward.

The first two beach recons for Operation Deckhouse III were protected by an 85-man ARVN force in positions inland from the beaches. The third recon, however, had no security element assigned to it. In the wake of the battle between the sub and the VC on shore during the second recon, the security detail let it be known that they were afraid to stay on the beach overnight. And because they couldn't reach the nearest friendly base before darkness, they requested permission to sleep aboard *Perch*. Dykers refused. But, since no perimeter defense troops had been assigned for the third recon, a bargain was struck. Dykers agreed to ferry the ARVN troops next morning to the third beach, where they would pull security duty. In return for their staying overnight on the beach, he anchored *Perch* 500 yards offshore to provide fire support if required.

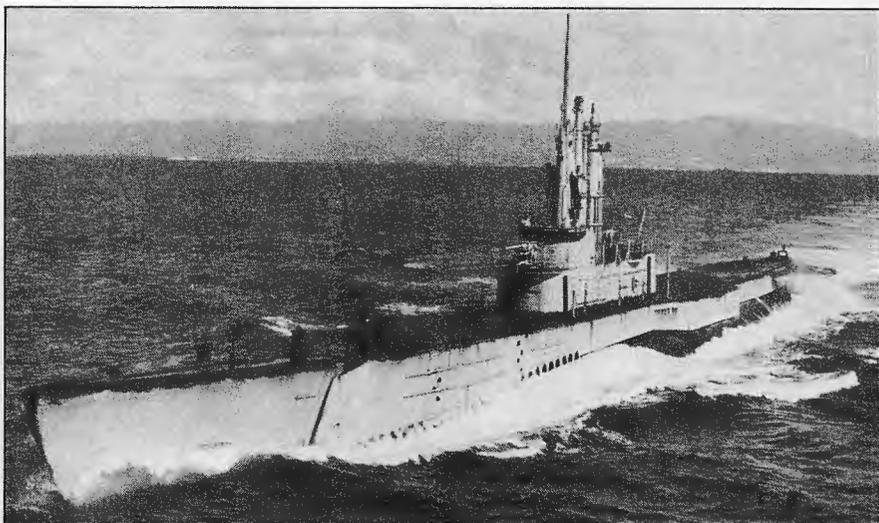
In the gathering darkness, with *Perch*'s crew at battle stations, enemy movement was spotted on shore. Dykers ordered his 40mm gunners to fire on the VC who were beginning to gather at the right and left flanks of the ARVN position. Submariners heard and saw an initial and then a secondary explosion, and they figured the gunners had probably hit an ammo cache.

At first light, *Perch* sent in seven motorized rubber boats to bring the ARVN troops onboard. They were joined by nine government sympathizers, refugees from a nearby village who'd joined the troops. Had they remained ashore, they'd have been killed. They were transferred to a U.S. Navy Swift boat on patrol in the area.

Lt. Cmdr. Dykers took *Perch* in on a surface approach to the third beach, where the VC had dug in in anticipation of her visit. The skipper called for air strikes and then took his sub to within 1100 yards of the beach, where he ordered his .50-caliber and 40mm gunners to open fire at the enemy emplacements. Something of a shooting gallery then occurred. With each pass, the A-1E Skyraider air strikes forced the VC from their foxholes, and the fleeing enemy became targets for *Perch*'s machine gunners.

Perch's boat handlers and crew then executed a mini-amphibious assault, launching and landing UDT men and the ARVN troops in two waves of six motorized rubber boats. Lt. Seiple led them all ashore in the lead IBS. After the beach had been secured and two prisoners taken, he and his men completed what they'd come for in the first place, the beach reconnaissance. Seiple was later awarded the Bronze Star for his actions, and Dykers received the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V.

Most of the submarine special operations



During submarine special operations off the coast of Vietnam in August 1966, USS *Perch* (APSS 313) became the last U.S. sub to use her deck guns in combat.

carried out during the course of the Vietnam War were a good deal more routine than the mission of the *Perch* which led to her surface actions. The little-known submarine special operations — involving the transport, launch and recovery of UDT or SEAL combat swimmers by specially converted submarines fitted for covert/ clandestine operations — were conducted by the USS *Perch* (APSS 313) and her successors, the USS *Tunny* (APSS 282) and the USS *Grayback* (LPSS 574), and their embarked UDT and SEAL detachments from 1965 through 1972.

The forward-based western Pacific detachments of UDTs 11 and 12 had set up shop at Subic Bay in the Philippines in the early 1960s. From each of those units a submarine operations detachment was formed. Initial training in the techniques of submarine special operations was conducted with *Perch* in the waters off Subic Bay. Submariners and special warfare personnel jointly developed and refined the specialized techniques involved in surfaced and submerged launches, vectoring, rendezvous and recovery methods.

In late 1965, *Perch* steamed a westerly course out of Subic Bay before diving be-

SPEC WAR HISTORIAN

Vietnam veteran John Dwyer interviewed SEALs and submarine divers, consulted submarine command histories and operational reports, and managed to uncover previously unpublished photographs in preparing "Surface Action." Dwyer's previous articles for SOF include a history of U.S. Navy special warfare ("SEAL Saga," October 1985), the story of UDT operations in Korea ("UDTs in Korea," September 1986) and a profile of SEAL officer Frank Thornton's exploits in Vietnam ("Swamp Warrior," December 1986).

neath the South China Sea. She surfaced on a November night about 3000 yards off Ben Goi, on the coast of South Vietnam. On board was Detachment Charlie of Underwater Demolition Team 12. In preparation for the amphibious strikes of Operation Dagger Thrust, Rear Admiral D.L. Wulzen, commanding officer of the U.S. Seventh Fleet's amphibious forces, had tasked *Perch* and the UDT 12 detachment with a preassault covert beach reconnaissance.

With practiced efficiency, *Perch* boat handlers rushed topside to the afterdeck's boat lockers and began inflation and rigging of the seven-man IBSs in preparation for launch. The UDT personnel made a final check of weapons and equipment. Boats readied, they were placed in the water on either side of *Perch*'s afterdeck. The combat swimmers then boarded and hooked up their tow lines, the other ends of which were attached to the periscope. At the command of the sub's skipper, Lt. Cmdr. Dykers, *Perch* was taken down to a keel depth of 40 feet before getting underway. With the rubber boats connected to the sub via the lines to the periscope, the boats were towed until they were close to the target beach. After *Perch* signaled "release" through her periscope, the boats disconnected the lines and made their way toward shore. The submerged submarine remained on station to vector the paddling team through the night to the objective, with a combination of coded radio transmissions and infrared signals.

The team successfully completed the reconnaissance, yielding the needed hydrographic data which was sent to *Perch* which relayed it to the amphibious forces commander. The team then stayed ashore and joined the amphibious assault forces at dawn. Thus was accomplished the first in the series of U.S. Navy Vietnam War submarine special operations. There would be many more, some equally successful, some not so successful.

Operation Double Eagle, conducted during the latter part of January 1966, was the largest amphibious landing since Inchon. Before sending troops ashore near Quang Ngai and Tam Ky in I Corps, the amph-



bious forces commander needed a covert beach reconnaissance. *Perch* and Detachment Charlie of Underwater Demolition Team 11 got the mission.

In the deeper waters off I Corps, Lt. Cmdr. Dykers took his submarine to within 1000 yards of the objective and set her on the bottom. UDT 11 support divers, wearing semi-closed-circuit SCUBA, exited the forward escape hatch. Two of them swam to the afterdeck, removing the IBSs from their lockers. After triggering their inflaters, the boats were sent to the surface. Two other divers set up a "hookah rig." Using twin 90-cubic-foot air bottles as an air supply source, they attached extended hoses which were connected to four regulator mouthpieces. These were then attached to a trolley device which rode along a line the divers had rigged from the forward escape hatch to *Perch's* forward sail top. With preparations complete, the support diver officer-in-charge advised his supervisor inside *Perch* that they were ready.

Seconds later, UDT 11 combat swimmers began exiting the forward escape trunk, being pulled out through the hatch by support divers. They "buddy breathed" with them until all were in position to take air from the hookah rig and then ascended the line to the surface.

Once there, they fully inflated the boats and unstowed weapons, radios and vectoring equipment from their watertight containers. There, off a hostile beach in the dead of night, the hours of training paid off. Below, the support divers re-entered *Perch's* escape trunk. Vectoring this time was accomplished by the team leader in the command IBS activating a sonar pinger hung under his boat. After receiving its signals with her passive sonar, *Perch* then sent right/left corrective directions via coded radio transmissions, guiding the boats to their target.

After they had gathered sufficient beach contour data using swimmer scouts, range lights and pacers, the swimmers reboarded

Navy UDT combat swimmers back-paddle to clear the USS *Tunny's* wash in preparation for periscope tow.



Submerged to nearly her sail top, the USS *Tunny* receives the UDT signal "ready for tow."



UDT boats being periscope-towed to their objective by the USS *Tunny*.



After mission completion, UDT men paddle their boat over the USS *Tunny's* afterdeck in preparation for a wet deck recovery.

the IBSs and paddled through the surf to the prearranged rendezvous point, where they attached a line between their boats and activated the sonar pinger suspended under the command boat. Offshore, *Perch's* sonarman picked up the signal. Guiding in on it, the submerged submarine, following a course parallel to the coast, navigated between the UDT boats, snagged their line with her raised periscope and towed them a safe distance out to sea. After reducing her speed to less than one knot, *Perch* gave the surfacing signal — three red flashes through the periscope. Lt. Cmdr. Dykers ordered his sub to surface. In a reverse of a dry deck launch, boat handlers went topside to execute a dry deck recovery, assisting the returning combat swimmers from their boats and deflating and stowing the IBSs. In no time, the amphibious forces commander had the beach data needed for Double Eagle.

In September 1966, the USS *Tunny* arrived at Subic Bay to replace the *Perch* for Vietnam submarine special operations missions, taking on 80 percent of *Perch's* experienced crew to ensure continued operational expertise. A converted Regulus I missile platform, *Tunny* had had her afterdeck missile-carrying hangar converted to a special operations personnel transport space capable of berthing up to 70 men with their equipment, including six IBSs.

To maximize efficiency, *Tunny's* skipper, Lieutenant Commander Bill Green, had eight of his submariners trained at the Subic Bay Divers School. By having the submariners handle support diver functions, the UDT personnel were free to concentrate on mission essentials. Green also added another innovation. A team of his men was trained in heavy weapons. That ready-reaction force — called "*Tunny's* Tigers" — would be on standby should any onshore detachments require reinforcement or support. The Tigers would also be used if an enemy vessel threatened *Tunny* during surface operations.

Through late 1966 and early 1967, *Tunny* submariners and UDT 11 and 12 personnel trained hard in submarine special operations techniques in the waters off Subic in preparation for forthcoming missions. As it turned out, the majority of those were covert beach surveys for the classified National Intelligence Survey. The data those missions collected was sent to the office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Assistant for Counter-Insurgency and Special Activities, where it was analyzed for possible future action.

At dusk on 1 May 1967, the *Tunny* bottomed in waters off Phuoc Tien in southern I Corps. After waiting until dark, Lt. Cmdr. Green ordered operations to commence. Four support divers exited the submarine's forward escape trunk, set up a hookah rig, unstowed, inflated and sent IBSs to the surface, and rigged a line from the forward escape hatch to the sail top. This work, done underwater in the dark of night, was never routine and required a great deal of skill and

discipline. Preliminaries completed, *Tunny's* support divers pulled UDT 11 swimmers out through the hatch, a mandatory safety procedure. After gaining the surface, the swimmers checked their equipment and finished inflating their boats. Vectored by acoustic pinger, they paddled toward the target beach. The UDT men reported seeing upward of 100 lighted craft that night, yet they inserted undetected. On the beach they stayed in contact with *Tunny* using a new communications device, the Grenadier Underway Telephone System. Secure communication was ensured because the system was linked to the sub with a length of Mk.37-1 wire-guided torpedo wire.

After successfully completing their work ashore, the UDT men were vectored back to *Tunny's* offshore position, from which she periscope-towed them seaward to a safe area for a wet deck recovery. Lt. Cmdr. Green ordered his sub surfaced with safety and bow buoyancy tanks blown dry, but not the main ballast tank. With about two feet of water over the afterdeck, the hangar door was opened and UDT personnel moved out on deck to help in the recovery of their returned teammates, who had paddled their IBSs aft of the hangar. At that point, Green ordered *Tunny's* low-pressure blower started, bringing the main deck high and dry so the UDT men could complete the deflation and stowing of their boats.

Beach reconns didn't always go smoothly for *Tunny*. During an earlier preassault mission off Sa Huynh in II Corps, weather had become the enemy. At 0211 on 13 February 1967, *Tunny* dry deck-launched motorized IBSs carrying UDT 12 personnel. The command boat anchored in 10-foot swells outside the surf and deployed two swimmer scouts. The boats then waited for the scouts to return with their report before deciding whether or not a full recon could be conducted. Thirty minutes after having vectored the boats through a rainy, black squall, *Tunny* received a radio message from the second boat that the command IBS had been capsized by a 20-foot wave.

Their anchor line snapped by the wave, the three UDT men in the command IBS had been dumped into the surf. While they swam through rough water to the beach, the second boat was barely surviving capsizing. The second boat's anchor remained moored and its UDT men hung on as it was tossed vertically on its transom. Upon getting their boat righted, the drenched UDT men popped a swimmer emergency flare. *Tunny* responded immediately, turning on her running lights and snorkel red light to help guide the missing UDT men and launching another IBS to assist in recovery operations. The three swimmers from the capsized command boat made it to the beach, where they joined the stranded swimmer scouts. After burying their radio and what was left of the wave-smashed command IBS, they began a series of through-the-surf swim out attempts, while the second boat searched for them.

Tunny, having moved as close to shore as



Support diver from the USS *Grayback* assists a Navy SEAL SDV (Swimmer Delivery Vehicle) operator back to the submarine.

possible, received a message from the second boat at 0548 saying that it had recovered three of the five missing swimmers. Shortly thereafter, two swimmer emergency flares were spotted. By 0600, *Tunny* had closed to within 1300 yards of the beach and anchored. Lt. Cmdr. Green then radioed the nearby LST (Landing Ship, Tank), USS *Westchester County*, requesting one of its LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle/Personnel) to assist in search and rescue operations. Five minutes later, *Tunny* received another message from the second boat, saying that it had recovered another swimmer. Finally, at 0725, *Westchester County's* LCVP radioed *Tunny* that it had rescued the last of the missing swimmers. Vectoring the LCVP to a rendezvous point, *Tunny* picked up the last lost man. The ordeal was over.

Tunny continued submarine special operations through October 1968. During that period she was almost involved in two unique operations that, for political reasons, were never conducted.

On 23 January 1968, the electronic surveillance ship USS *Pueblo* was seized by the North Koreans. Of vital concern to the Pentagon was preventing the highly classified ELINT (electronic intelligence) equipment onboard from falling into enemy hands. Training with a detachment of SEAL combat swimmers, Lt. Cmdr. Green drew up and submitted a plan to MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) proposing that *Tunny* transport the SEALs to where the North Koreans were holding the *Pueblo*

and there execute a submerged attack to blow up the ship. MACV vetoed the plan.

During the early part of 1968, a plan for a direct action strike against a target near Hanoi was conceived. Designated Operation Night Bolt, it called for *Tunny* to transit the Gulf of Tonkin submerged and launch a detachment of SEAL Team 1 combat swimmers, who would insert and make their way to the objective.

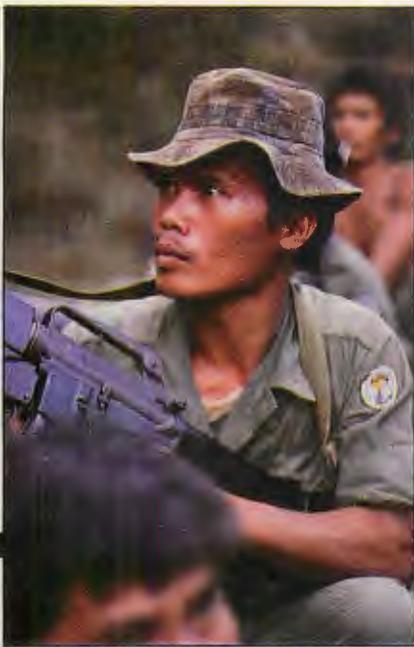
At Subic, submarine and SEAL officers, with CIA personnel looking over their shoulders, drew up a detailed operational plan for Night Bolt. For several weeks in and around Lingayen Gulf and other Philippines locations, *Tunny* crew and SEAL Team 1 personnel rehearsed all aspects of the clandestine mission. Then at the last minute, for reasons never fully explained, Night Bolt was called off. The intended target and the operational details remain shrouded in secrecy.

Due to the evolving nature of the war, there was a lull in Vietnam submarine special operations through 1969, after *Tunny* had departed. Her successor, the USS *Grayback*, was a one-of-a-kind special warfare platform. *Grayback's* large forward deck Regulus II missile hangars had been converted to compartments which could accommodate 60 men, eight IBSs and four SDVs (Swimmer Delivery Vehicles). Besides carrying UDT or SEAL swimmers and their boats, the hangars had facilities for charging SCUBA bottles with air, mixed gas or oxygen for semi-closed-circuit or closed-circuit SCUBA rigs and for recharging SDV electric batteries. Both port and starboard hangars had stations from which

Continued on page 111

CEASE-FIRE MANEUVERS





Staying One Step Ahead of the NPA

Text & Photos by Tom Marks

ABOVE: Troop riding in pump boat. "Catch 'Em" patch of 52 IB is visible on his left sleeve.



FAR LEFT: Major Gantuangko riding in pump boat. He wears airborne patch on right sleeve with Philippine flag, Scout Ranger tab on left.

LEFT: Wading across yet another stream, troop pauses for a drink. Soldiers cannot remember the last time they received water purification tablets; everyone just takes his chances.

BELOW: Scout Ranger, armed with an M203 on his M16, leads the patrol.



HE was young, just 18, but already a veteran of two years' recruiting for the outlawed Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the villages (*barangay*) of northern Samar. "The struggle will continue," he told me in an offhand manner, drawing in on a cigarette. He was relieved to be out of the line of fire, eager to get on with his life, but he knew that would be difficult. He had little education. And until his capture in late November 1986, his only steady job had been as a member of a Political Organizing Team (POT) charged with making converts for the rebellion.

We sat in the headquarters of the 52nd Infantry Battalion — 52 IB — and talked casually. The hastily cobbled-together cease-fire which had gone into effect on 10 December was but a few days old. Media reports repeated with mind-numbing frequency that this Christmas, for the first time in years, the guns would be silent. There would be "peace."

It was a strange peace. Both the communists and the government knew the differences separating them were so total that what was at hand was little more than a hiatus in the long struggle by the CPP and its military arm, the New People's Army (NPA), to seize political power (see the accompanying "Philippine Communism"). Through its front organizations, the CPP was recruiting furiously, even as the NPA regrouped and rearmed.

"We were directed to continue politicization even during a cease-fire so as to get a bigger group," the POT member was saying. "We were told not to trust the government about cease-fire talks. [Philippine President] Cory Aquino is still the same as [former President] Marcos. She is rich. She still belongs to the higher class. So the way she will run the government will be the same."

His manner was matter-of-fact. So why go through the exercise? He replied in generalities, speaking from his perspective at the base of a pyramid. Having examined a cache of freshly captured documents, I already knew the answer as viewed from the

CEASE-FIRE

“Units were warily observing orders to avoid ‘encounters’ — firefights.”

apex. “The revolutionary movement is most capable in maximizing its gains in a generally open democratic space,” said the analysis contained in *Some Notes on the Issue of Ceasefire*, the product of a policy review conducted by high-ranking CPP cadre on 5 July 1986. “We are most capable in organizing and mobilizing the people and in taking advantage of the socio-economic programs that may be set [up] by the civilian government [of Mrs. Aquino].”

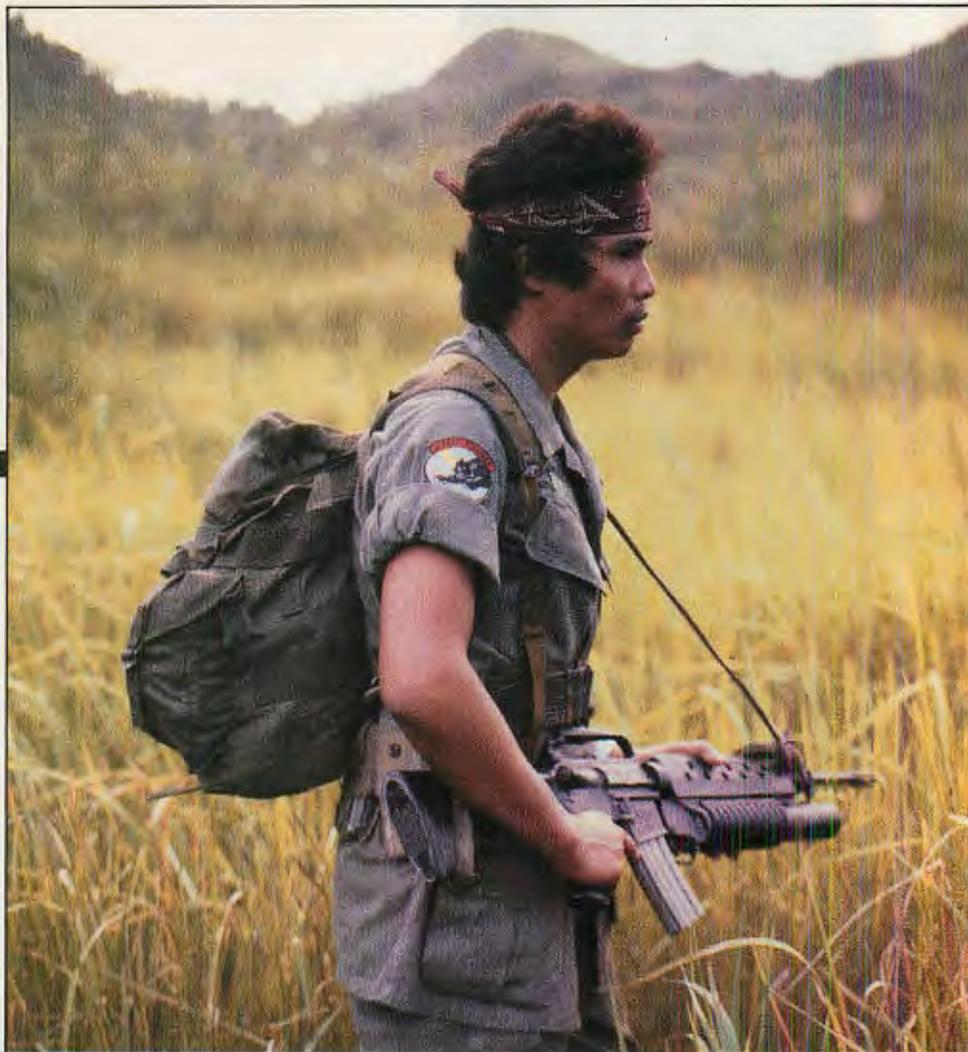
In other words, a cease-fire involving freedom of movement and unrestricted political activity is obviously the best environment in which to carry out mobilization for the armed overthrow of a government. Hence, the communists had pragmatically supported the Aquino truce initiative, all the while dickering over technicalities so as to achieve the best possible terms. They had not been able to achieve everything they wanted.

Their demands ranged from the sacking of key security force officials to disbandment of the militia to pulling the troops out of rural areas. Still, they had made out well enough and even had been allowed to open an office in a plush Manila suburb. Some left-wing members of Aquino’s cabinet appeared eager to give them more, but the military dragged its heels. The communists had to settle for what amounted to quasi-official recognition by the government.

My guest and I continued to talk for a bit, then made ready to part. I was to accompany a patrol and had to prepare my gear. What did he most want to do now? He replied, then glumly agreed with my subsequent observation: Indeed, the chances were probably slim that the U.S. would welcome as an immigrant an ex-communist guerrilla named Fidel! Still, you never know these days. I told him to brush up on his Spanish and call the number of a friend. There might be openings.

Return to 52 IB

Fidel goes about his business — a number of former CPP operatives work with the battalion — as I check my gear. The battalion executive officer (XO), Major Rudy Gantuangko, has given our patrol but several hours to be standing in formation ready to go. We are heading for the interior where



Note Scout Ranger patch on right sleeve and use of “Ranger sling” on top of weapon. This soldier is regarded as one of 52 IB’s best.

we know, truce notwithstanding, the guerrillas will be active.

Units such as 52 IB are warily observing orders to avoid “encounters” — firefights as we would call them. Several known gatherings of CPP forces and commanders reported by agents (the meetings apparently had been called to discuss the cease-fire’s particulars) were carefully avoided. Under usual circumstances they would have been attacked. As much as possible, though, routine patrol activities continue, except that emphasis is given over to “CMOs,” civil-military operations.

In practical terms a CMO involves putting troops into the populated areas to mingle with the inhabitants and to hear their grievances. “If we don’t visit the *barangay*,” Rudy observes, “it will be the communists who will be visiting — not just the party members but the NPA themselves. And if we allow them to get control of the rural areas, we will be sitting ducks here [in the main population centers].”

Sound logic. It has been nearly a year since the battalion and I first met, shortly before the fall of the Marcos regime (see

AN OFFICER AND A SCHOLAR

Tom Marks rose to the rank of major in the U.S. Army, serving as an airborne ranger infantry officer and then as a military intelligence analyst specializing in revolutionary warfare. Now a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Hawaii, Marks has traveled extensively in the Philippines during the past year. He last wrote for *Soldier of Fortune* in February 1987 on counterinsurgency in Sri Lanka.



Author Tom Marks rests in Samar jungle with 52 IB troop.



Patrol enters a *barangay* in the interior. No paved streets here; the farther into the interior the patrol moves, the worse the villages look. Weapons are at ready, for guerrillas like to wait on outskirts and catch troops with their guard lowered as they relax.

“Island Fighting,” SOF, July 1986). Then the philosophy of taking the fight to the guerrillas was being pursued with zeal by the troops, and our introduction to each other had been a smashing success. On an initial patrol we made several contacts and captured an NPA advanced training camp which contained documents exposing numerous details of CPP infrastructure and operations. Subsequent visits had been equally rewarding.

This trip, though, had begun with a far greater sense of urgency than the others. The note I received in the soiled envelope had been brief and to the point: “We were unlucky last week. We suffered 10 KIA and 19 WIA. It was an ambush.” Arriving too long after the fact, like all correspondence posted in northern Samar, the lines had prompted me to a flurry of activity. Within days I was in the battalion command post (CP).

I’m not sure what I expected to find. Twenty-nine casualties is a lot by anyone’s standards, especially in a counter-guerrilla campaign. Yet there, on the ground, it was as if time had stood still. For the troops, the bleeding was just another episode in an unremitting deadly game of chess. Survivors talked casually about “the ambush” — the troops all called it that, using the same tone Americans who were there apply to “Tet of ’68” — and the patrols continued to move out into “the hinterland.”

All around me soldiers check their gear. When Marcos was overthrown there had been a surge of hope in the line units that their lot would improve. With the grasping, dishonest, crony generals removed from the chain of command, the logic went, the supply situation was bound to improve. Scuttlebutt even had it that jungle boots would be issued. Unfortunately, no such thing came to pass. The feet around me in



Major Gantuangko chats with *barangay* captain, or village headman, as troops look on. According to the headman, communists had not visited village during truce period.

shower slippers tell the story. One troop gives a “What can I do?” shrug as I examine an infection on his foot and offer the opinion that it will cripple him if it continues to go untreated. Inflamed and showing a head of pus the size of a quarter, it has already shot angry red blood-poisoning lines up his leg. As we move out in the small convoy, we stop at a local pharmacy, where Rudy digs into his own pocket and buys the soldier penicillin.

In the days to come, the XO will do the same a dozen times in a dozen different cases, trying to make up for shortages of everything from medicine to rations. He can ill afford to do so on his meager salary — the gross pay of a major is less than U.S. \$200 per month — but if he doesn’t, no one else is going to. The unit is made up of his boys, so he does whatever it takes to make sure they are combat-ready.

He looks after the patrol in his own way, providing it with a core group drawn from the battalion scouts, an S-2 asset which is, therefore, under Rudy’s direct supervision. All of these personnel are graduates of the rigorous Philippine Scout Ranger course, six months of intensive instruction culminating in a combat patrol continued until contact is made with the enemy. Rudy himself went through the course at the ripe old age of 30. He had left the army and decided to seek his fortune selling electronic equipment on the strife-torn island of Mindanao. When he was ambushed during one of his sales trips, he figured the world of commerce could do with one less salesman. He re-upped and went on to win the Gold Cross, the Filipino equivalent of the Silver

Star, on Leyte, the island to the west.

As is the case with many Philippine Army officers, Rudy has spent virtually his entire career in the field. He has been on Samar for more than a decade, separated from his family the entire time. The New Armed Forces of the Philippines, or NAFF (the “New” was added to the previous AFP appellation after the ouster of Marcos), unlike Western military establishments, has little in the way of support structure, so moving families and such must take place at personal expense.

Most soldiers, whether officers or enlisted men, choose to leave spouses and children in their home areas. Rudy’s family has remained on another island in the Visayas, the central Philippine group of which Samar is a linguistic part. By agreement between them, his wife is pursuing her Ph.D. so that the family will have a fallback position if anything should happen to him.

Death is a possibility taken in stride. There are no choppers on standby to medevac the wounded, no med companies nearby for quick surgery to save a life. The nearest military medical facility is at regional headquarters, hours away by road. A bad wound suffered during a patrol often means death. If a limb or some other physical feature is lost, the army continues to utilize the soldier in a special “P3” unit. Too often the work is perceived as trivial, so 52 IB has always taken care of its own. Soldiers who in any other army would be boarded out, troops minus an arm or an eye, continue to serve, making the battalion their home.

Regardless of the difficulties, there are those who bear the burden of bringing their families along. As we make our last-minute patrol preparations, they say their final goodbyes. Our scout contingent is made up of young, single men. The remainder of our squad-sized unit is drawn from a line company. They are a mixed lot, some in the unit

CEASE-FIRE

"We suffered 10 KIA and 19 WIA. It was an ambush."

PHILIPPINE COMMUNISM

Virtually every American newspaper which has printed articles on the Philippine conflict has used the phrase "a 17-year war" to describe the communist insurgency. The origin of the count 17 is obscure — and highly misleading. In reality the communist struggle for power has gone on far longer.

Foreign communists have been active in the Philippines since the 1920s, but the Philippine Communist Party (*Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*, or PKP) was not born until 7 November 1930. Its activities soon led to its proscription, so it went underground and operated through labor fronts and the small Socialist Party of the Philippines, with which it merged in 1938 at the behest of the Communist International (Comintern) in Moscow. Such work gained for the PKP a certain semi-acceptability by the close of the initial decade after its formation and, with the party's participation in the World War II resistance against the Japanese, Philippine communism was able to make significant strides.

The postwar "Huk Rebellion," which was viewed by both the government in Manila and the United States as a communist insurrection, seems now, after closer examination, to have been in many respects a peasant uprising of which the PKP was able to take advantage. The rebellion was preceded by a decade of peasant unrest in Luzon, and the *Hukbalahap* (*Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon*, or "People's Army Against the Japanese") itself drew its primary strength from anti-Japanese sentiment among the abused populace. While its political brains were PKP, many of its local leaders were not. This allowed the government of Ramon Magsaysay to cut the ground from beneath the movement by means of reforms which satisfied peasant grievances.

This defeat of the Huks marked the



Concern shows on soldiers' faces as patrol prepares to depart for Samar interior.

low point of Philippine communism. The PKP had been decimated, with most of its politburo captured in October 1952. There followed slow disintegration, and by the early 1960s the movement was moribund. Nevertheless, it did not die. Low-level violence continued, as some Huk commanders and their proteges refused to surrender.

In 1966, after a decade of relative calm, insurgent-related violence suddenly increased sharply. Some sources have claimed this was due to heightened government repression, but the nature of the actual incidents — there were 64, resulting in 83 deaths, 21 injuries and 20 kidnappings — shows that approximately two-thirds of the dead fell into five categories: security forces, government officials, private officials, those who specifically refused to cooperate with the guerrillas, and informers. The pattern that emerges is not one of self-defense but of an insurgent movement attempting to expand.

It is now known that while the PKP of the Huk era lost most of its footsoldiers to government action, it was able to maintain its intellectual base. Thus as new blood entered the party, its efforts to overthrow the system were revived. Young Maoists forged tenuous links with the Huk remnants, sparking off an-

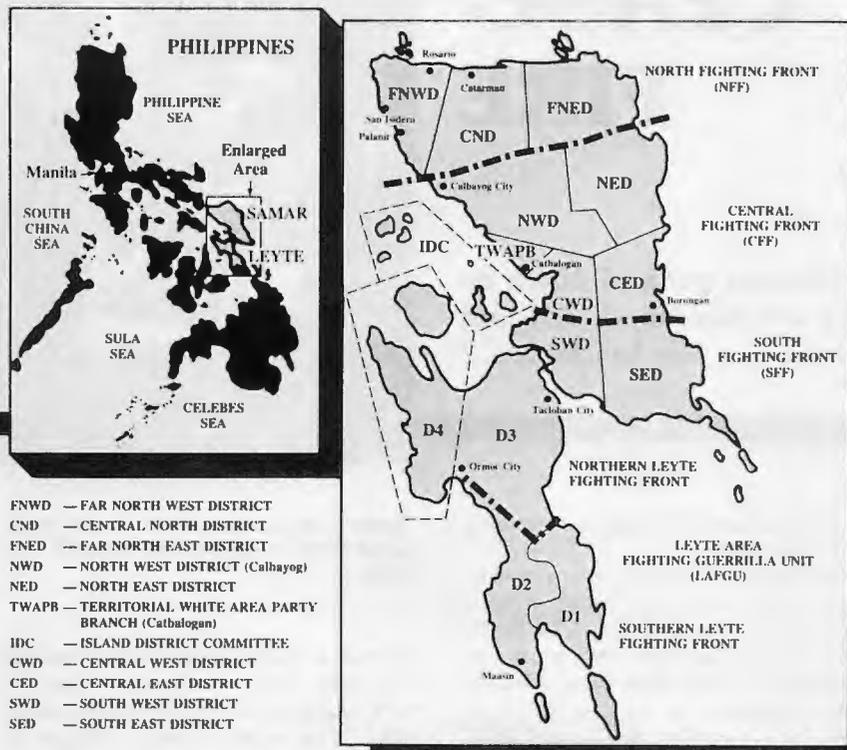
other round in the war, but one now called a "people's war." In December 1968 and January 1969 a new party charter was drawn up, and the Maoists emerged at the head of a revived Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The former PKP remained in existence but faded into relative obscurity.

After taking stock of its position, the CPP decided that Philippine islands other than Luzon (on which Manila is located) offered the best immediate terrain for a successful "liberation" struggle. Hence, it shifted its focus to outlying areas in the archipelago. By 1972, for instance, the so-called *Dulo Plan*, which divided Samar into six districts (*dulo*) targeted for subversion, had been implemented.

First penetration was achieved through relatives in the region southwest of Catbalogan, with the primary objective being the central interior. A reorganization in late 1976 divided Samar into northern and southern area commands still under direct supervision of the politburo. This arrangement ended with the 1980 politburo decision to create Island Party Committees (IPC) which would be tactically independent while taking strategic guidance from the central party leadership. The Samar IPC was set up by mid-1981, as was its superior Vissayas Commission. These have run the struggle on Samar ever since.



SAMAR/LEYTE CPP/NPA ORGANIZATION



since its inception, others newer to the game. All, however, are experienced, for 52 IB has been continually in the field since deploying to northern Samar in early 1985. With a minimum of fuss, we move out to our drop-off point on the coast, then strike inland.

Northern Samar is a harsh environment, both physically and in human terms. Poverty can be seen everywhere: in torn, dirty clothes, worn buildings, tired faces. The year-round rain makes things and people look all the more dilapidated. It also makes for a tangled, sodden forest as we climb, ankle-deep in mud, toward our target *barangay* in the hills. The troops make endless jokes about open patches of ground we cross. "It's our national highway," says one. True; on the map the stretch is marked "2nd class asphalted."

Some national highway. I have had my jungle boots resoled in Manila as a test of the constant complaints the troops voice about locally produced footwear. Even the boots, they claim, when they are available, don't last long. I quickly see their point, as my heels come off in the first several miles. I walk the rest of the patrol on flat soles and have calves that ache for weeks afterward.

Organization for Subversion

Our route falls in the area of the CPP/NPA's Central Fighting Front, one of three such "fighting fronts" in Samar (see map). My previous patrols have taken me to all three fighting front areas, but most, including one the week before, have been in the most contested area, the North Fighting

Front. This patrol into the central belt of Samar is a new experience.

A "fighting front" is the highest level of politico-military organization in the CPP. It is estimated that there are roughly 40 nationwide. "FFs," as they are called, are not to be confused with the ubiquitous political fronts which operate under the banner of the CPP's international front organization, the National Democratic Front (NDF), headquartered in the Netherlands. It is the NDF which is handling the ongoing peace negotiations with the government. It purports to be an umbrella for numerous organizations opposed to the Philippine government. In reality, while the NDF has its own components also created by the CPP — the head of one, Christians for National Liberation (CNL), was recently feted at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. — the National Democratic Front was set up by the party in 1973 and takes its orders from the CPP United Front Commission.

The United Front Commission, of course, answers to the CPP Politburo and Central Committee. These run the war through regional commissions, which, in turn, call the tune for Island Party Committees. Samar, for instance, comes under the Visayas Commission, which has its headquarters on Cebu. Fighting fronts answer to the Island Party Committees.

It is at the fighting front level that the first NPA units make their appearance: Front Guerrilla Units (FGU). These are of varying size and composition, having no fixed TOE, but generally vary from platoon to company strength. Fighting fronts are broken into District Party Committees (DPC). Our patrol is moving through the North West District. Each DPC has a District Guerrilla Unit

(DGU). Again, no fixed TOE has emerged, but a reinforced squad is the general figure for manning. Finally, under the DPC, sectors control the actual *barangay* and their Local Guerrilla Units (LGU).

As the CPP infiltrates an area, each *barangay* must go through a precise series of organizational promotions. First, Political Organizing Teams (POT) make a thorough "social investigation" of the target locality, most often using relatives and acquaintances to gather information on every individual and his grievances. A blueprint for subversion is drawn up, usually as a formal document, and then used to guide the POT when it infiltrates back into the village. The POT merges with its first converts to become the *Barrio* Liaison Group (BLG). (*Barrio* is the predecessor term to *barangay* and still enjoys widespread use within the CPP since the term *barangay* was put into use by the Marcos government.)

Second, when the BLG has made enough contacts, it dissolves and gives way to Organizing Groups (OG), also termed Political Organizing Groups (POG), which are carefully delimited "sectorally," one each of peasants (men), women, young people and, most recently, children.

Third, as these develop and increase in sophistication and in formal schooling (the CPP conducts clandestine, structured classes in the hills, complete with graduation certificates), the most advanced OG members are promoted to Organizing Committees (OC).

Fourth, the most trustworthy individuals in the OCs are formally inducted into the CPP itself and become the local Party Branch (PB). Finally, when the area has been "liberated," a *Barrio* Revolutionary Committee (BRC) is

CEASE-FIRE

"He was gunned down as he sat, wounded, holding up his hands."



Major Rudy Gantuangko, 52 IB XO, briefs patrol before departure from jump-off point.

assembled of key PB members and takes over local administration.

Since the CPP preaches the armed overthrow of the government, it must organize clandestinely. This is the reason for the existence of its armed units: They protect the politicization effort. Party cadre would be highly vulnerable in the absence of the "muscle" provided by the FGU and DGU.

Even so, a village which is easily accessible to security forces is a dangerous place for CPP organizers and their armed minions alike. This is why isolated villages are

usually preferred by the guerrillas for their first efforts. As is the case with the interior regions of Samar, it is in those "out of sight, out of mind" locations that the government presence is minimal, especially that of security forces.

As the village organization grows, it develops its own capacity to enforce its will as well as to resist government efforts to reas-

CPP DISINFORMATION

In mid-August of 1986, faced with the decimation of its apparatus in the *Barangay* Palanit area of northern Samar due to aggressive operations by 52 IB, the CPP cranked up its disinformation machinery. The case offers insight into the use of political means to augment the insurgent military effort.

Through its agents of influence in the premier Philippine human rights group, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), a story was released that a reign of terror had been unleashed on the hapless populace in the battalion's AO. The Manila press picked up the charges, the biggest splash being provided by the left-wing daily *Malaya*.

It was *Malaya's* page-three article of 8 August which was of most interest. The article built its charges of "torture and brutalities" allegedly committed by 52 IB around the purported desecration of the Palanit chapel through its use as a command post and interrogation center. TFDP and another human rights group, the Samar Alliance for Human Rights — Northern Samar, were quoted numerous times in the *Malaya* article so that by the end of the piece the reader was left with no doubt but that the battalion stood accused of an array of crimes. It seemed worth checking out.

I flew to Samar and began my rounds. The *barangay* captain, or elected headman, of Palanit was away, so I talked with a member of the village council, also an elected official. He asked not to be named — as had *Malaya's* sources —

but said the village had asked that 52 IB troops remain permanently in the area to keep "the people in the mountains" from terrorizing them. The chapel, a small tin building on a bluff to one side of the coastal highway, had indeed been used by the battalion as a temporary forward CP — this during some of the worst of the rainy season, when it was pouring constantly — but with the permission of both the headman and the council, who, the councilman said, had consulted with the villagers. The chapel, which was sparsely furnished, was little-used except on Sundays and had tin slats placed across its doorless main entrance to keep out intruders.

The arrangement with the battalion had called for the troops to clean the building each Saturday so that it could be used on Sunday, and this had been done. When an inquiry had come from San Isidoro parish questioning the use of the chapel, the reply from the village was that "exceptional circumstances" made it necessary. It had been "outsiders," the councilman observed, activists not even from the village, who had made the chapel's use by the soldiers an issue. Other villagers with whom I spoke informally told much the same story.

Fair enough. I headed for the court of San Isidoro municipality to check out what TFDP claimed were innocent farmers "languishing" there. Examination of court records — open to the public — determined that 18 persons accused of involvement in a July 1985 ambush all had been properly arrested and re-

manded to the custody of the court. In the Philippine system, those arrested are allowed to present their stories to the judge in a preliminary hearing. He decides whether there is sufficient evidence to hold the suspects. This had been done, the judge told me, with some of the suspects confessing and implicating others. Therefore he ruled that the suspects had to be held. The documentation of both sides was in the process of being forwarded to the Regional Trial Court for prosecution.

Evidence, of course, is not public, but further interviews in the region indicated that the military obviously had a case. Informants had been used to roll up the local CPP network. How deeply each arrested individual was involved remained for the court to determine. Despite the claims that the prisoners had been tortured, I found it interesting that the judge and other court officials said no one — press or otherwise — had interviewed them on the matter. The prisoners themselves seemed dispirited and were uncommunicative but showed no signs of torture.

The charges of murder — "the massacre of six logging workers" — were naturally more difficult to investigate, but seemed unlikely based on discussions with troops in the field on subsequent days. What emerged was the murky world of counter-guerrilla warfare, a struggle in which the CPP was losing operatives and key officials — and needed to find a way to throw the battalion off its trail.



Scout Ranger riding in pump boat. Scout Ranger tab and 52 IB patch are visible on his left sleeve.

sert its writ. When a *barangay* is at the OG level, those few individuals recruited as local militia are generally expected to serve only as part-time auxiliaries, helping with functions such as message carrying and foraging. It is not until the village reaches the OC stage that a full-fledged local militia emerges. These are the classic guerrillas of folklore, those usually motivated by poverty and other local grievances. They are not NPA. NPA are the full-timers in the FGU and DGU, called simply "hardcore" by the government troops, as in, "We were able to kill one hardcore."

At the present stage of development in the Philippine insurgency, the local guerrillas are not known to keep their weapons in the *barangay*. Instead, the firearms are kept by the NPA units and distributed for each operation. In Samar, the principal form of contact remains the guerrilla raid conducted for the purpose of seizing arms and ammunition. The guerrillas are extremely wary of tangling with government units of any size unless it is from a carefully prepared position. It was from just such a position that the ambush was conducted which led to the casualties detailed in the terse letter which had brought me back to 52 IB.

"Catch 'Em"

For much of 1986, the CPP had been handled roughly by the battalion. 52 IB troopers wear a Philippine hawk with the motto "Catch 'Em" on their fatigues, and they had been doing just that.

The battalion area of operations embraces all of the CPP's Far North West District (FNWD) and much of its Central North District (CND) and North West District (NWD). The communists, of course, delimit their AO differently. The FNWD and the CND fall under the North Fighting Front (NFF), but so, too, does the Far North East District (FNED). The layout is such that a large part of the battle for northern Samar is a 52 IB versus NFF affair.

This happenstance has not been to the North Fighting Front's benefit. The greatest



Crossing river on homemade raft. Troops are in positions on either side as pairs are ferried across. Note ready position assumed by all as they cross.

CPP success in all of Samar has been gained in the FNED, in another battalion's AO; some of its most spectacular failures have come in 52 IB's sector. Captured communist documents prepared at the end of 1985, for instance, claim that 115 *barangay* in the FNED have operational CPP militia units. (There are 579 *barangay* in all of northern Samar, 209 of which are listed as "influenced," or heavily infiltrated.) In contrast, the same documents list just 11 *barangay* militias in the FNWD — and none in the CND.

Captured documents from mid-1986 speak of the difficulties being experienced and exhort units to perform more vigorously. One report, from an FNWD organ, notes: "The biggest problem we have encountered during those times [September 1985 through April 1986] is the relatively slow movement in the improvement and consolidation of the party." A prime reason for that, says the document, is "the escalated operation of the enemy" — that is, 52 IB. A CPP directive, dated 24 April and captured from a courier during the same period, states that the situation has become difficult to the extent that the FNWD's NPA regulars are to become directly involved in the proselytization effort — the first time such a directive is known to have been issued anywhere in the Philippines.

The final straw, as far as the CPP was concerned, came in April-August 1986. At that time the party was attempting to revive an effort to infiltrate *Barangay* Palanit, a key location in the FNWD where the mountains come down virtually to the coastal highway, thus allowing whoever holds the village of some 1,000 people to interdict north-south traffic. Operating continuously in the area for months during the height of the rainy season, 52 IB decimated the local

CPP apparatus. The party responded by attempting to launch a disinformation campaign through its human rights and media links (see the accompanying "CPP Disinformation"). This effort was centered around the alleged desecration of the Palanit chapel and alleged kidnappings and "salvagings" (death squad murders) of purported innocents. The battalion pressed on.

When the disinformation campaign proved as unsuccessful as military operations in ridding the CPP of 52 IB, a plan was set up to eliminate the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel George Vallejera. An ambush was planned along a section of highway it was anticipated Colonel Vallejera would use to inspect his outposts enroute to a conference at 1/8 Brigade Headquarters in Catarman. Fortunately for the colonel, he took another route. Unfortunately for 52 IB, an attack on another brigade unit led to orders for the battalion to provide assistance.

Colonel Vallejera called for a platoon to join him at his Catarman location. As only one truck at the battalion CP was operational, 29 personnel under the command of a technical sergeant piled into it and raced off. They were to pick up their platoon leader along the way. They never made it. The truck was ambushed in the vicinity of *Barangay* Baysag, near Rosario, on the afternoon of 9 October. The unit, attacked at pointblank range, lost 10 KIA and 19 WIA (including one former CPP operative serving as guide).

In December I walked about the ambush site and talked to survivors. The troops had been caught due to carelessness. They had relaxed, not expecting to be hit along a stretch of main highway, albeit one undergoing construction work in a relatively remote location. Once surprised, they never had a chance. Situated on an overgrown bluff just 30 meters from the road, the ambush site allowed direct fire onto the bed of the 6 x 6 truck.

Continued on page 82

SOF MILITIAS

CITIZEN SOLDIERS

Fighting for the Right
to Defend
America

by James L. Pate



ABOVE: Sgt. Russ Rice, armed with HAC-7, during field maneuvers with the Texas Reserve Militia. Photo: James L. Pate

BELOW: Texas Reserve Militia members scramble for cover in weekend exercise. Photo: James L. Pate



What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that its people preserve the spirit of resistance. Let them take arms!

— Thomas Jefferson, 1788

FREEDOM is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. But force of arms won this land “conceived in liberty” and it’s what defends our freedom to this day. In the fanfare over the Constitution’s 200th anniversary, many citizens no doubt will forget this fact.

Manned by unpaid, self-equipped citizen-soldiers such as the minutemen, colonial militias were the catalyst that ignited the American Revolution. Had they waited for someone’s permission to

act, this nation would have gained its independence *much* later, and then probably as a member of the British Commonwealth.

Granted, a regular army was the only way to defeat the British in the long run. But when the Founding Fathers drafted the Constitution more than a decade after minutemen fired “shots heard round the world,” they recognized the militia as a free people’s necessary and final bulwark against tyranny — both foreign and domestic. This belief further manifested itself in the Second Amendment and in the Militia Act of 1792, which, until the early years of this century, decreed that free American males were *obliged* to possess a firearm and a minimum supply of ammunition and military equipment in order that an armed

citizenry could be perpetually maintained.

George Washington was the biggest critic in his day of the citizen-soldier concept. But this isn’t as ironic as it might seem. A citizen militia conceivably could challenge Washington’s authority in what was then a very loosely-defined endeavor. He criticized militias for lacking discipline and being widely inconsistent in their equipment, training and ability.

Washington’s criticisms live on today. And the debate over the necessity of militias, what they should or should not be, is just as fervent as ever. In examining today’s total force concept, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) is at one end of the spectrum. At the opposite end, and hardly less controversial than Star Wars in some states, stand local militias.





Known in the federal bureaucracy as "state defense forces," 22 states have laws recognizing citizen-soldier service in one form or another (see "For More Information" on page 90). Almost as many more states are studying the concept while waiting for a more well-defined national consensus to emerge.

Samuel Brick, chief legislative counsel for the Department of the Army, has authored a bill that probably will be the primary instrument with which lawmakers recast existing federal legislation regulating militias. After languishing for months in the president's Office of Management and Budget, Brick's bill was approved and subsequently okayed by the General Services Administration and the Justice Department. In part the bill would allow federal loans of vehicles and office space to state forces, as well as provide state troops with active-duty U.S. military trainers and possible access to federal facilities not in use. However, it would not provide one cent of federal money.

MAVERICK LOCKS HORNS IN TEXAS

Nowhere has the debate over militias come into sharper focus than in Texas, where citizens have long been recognized for their rough individualism. A small band of Texan irregulars chose a fight to the death in an old abandoned mission called the Alamo rather than surrender to a vastly larger army of Mexicans. Fired up with cries of

ABOVE: Mounting up on their deuce-and-a-half, Texas Reserve Militia unit strikes a pose before heading into the bush. Photo: James L. Pate

BELOW: Beret flash and official insignia of the Texas Reserve Militia.



BELOW: Maj. Gen. James Dennis, Texas adjutant general, had dubbed members of the Texas Reserve Militia "misfits." Photo: James L. Pate



"Remember the Alamo," a militia army, General Sam Houston's 1st Texas Regiment of Volunteers, won Texas its independence from Mexico in 1836. Thanks to Houston's militiamen, Texas was a sovereign nation before joining the United States.

At odds on this issue today are the officially-sanctioned Texas State Guard (TSG) and the unsanctioned, independently organized Texas Reserve Militia (TRM). Their debate centers on whether citizen-soldiers in the Lone Star State should train for possible combat, and to a lesser extent whether citizens have a right to go out and form their own militia independent of any government control. Both questions have national implications because the 100th Congress very likely will amend Title 32 Section 109 of the U.S. Code, which governs state militias and defines the scope of their mission.

The popular concept of state defense forces revolves around the idea of a home guard entity that would mobilize when National Guard troops had been federalized and sent elsewhere. This concept is based largely on the experience of World War II. Because a militia hasn't been engaged in large-scale combat on American soil since the Civil War, some militia leaders — based on the experiences of WWII — mistakenly presume that combat *per se* necessarily implies action outside U.S. or state borders. This view unfortunately ignores the steadily growing probability of terrorism within the United States.

One Texan, Robert Holloway, a Special Forces veteran who served two tours in Vietnam and later served in the Rhodesian Light Infantry, favors combat training as part of a state defense force doctrine. Holloway doesn't see some "Red Dawn" on the horizon. But he favors the ounce-of-prevention argument. Given his experience in unconventional warfare and the proximity of an unsecure national border over which thousands of illegal aliens cross every day, Holloway argues that *if* local militias were needed to fight internal threats, it would be too late for ad hoc training. He is also convinced that militias can be maintained without federal funding.

The Texas State Guard disagrees. The TSG was organized almost 50 years ago and during World War II numbered over 17,000 men, including motor pools, a magazine staff, a regimental band, machine gun companies and much more. But the much smaller TSG of the 1980s sees its mission as quite limited, primarily providing assistance in disaster relief, traffic regulation and crowd control. Shotguns in National Guard armories are available if needed, but the TSG's primary weapon is the nightstick. The TSG adamantly opposes training with military firearms or learning combat tactics.

Holloway's differences with the TSG be-



LEFT: On the march: 1st Battalion, 1st Light Infantry Regiment, Texas Reserve Militia. All are self-equipped. Note new member who has yet to purchase cammies. Photo: James L. Pate

came public in 1984, when he was a TSG major commanding the 105th MP Battalion in Fort Worth. At that time, uniforms were at the heart of the dispute. The 105th began wearing BDUs about six months after the Texas National Guard adopted the uniform, its decision based on a reading of Texas law, specifically Article 5786 Section 8, which states that "the uniform for officers and enlisted men . . . of this state shall be the same as that prescribed for the Armed Forces of the United States ." Everyone bought their own BDUs in the 105th, so it cost the state no money. But TSG headquarters insisted that BDUs weren't permissible because they were "combat" uniforms and that the official TSG uniform was OD "pickle suits" bought under a long-standing TSG contract.

This dispute snowballed into a major media battle. The exposure eventually cost the state guard 60 percent of its budget and it "suffered the most embarrassing episode in its . . . history," said the *Houston Chronicle*. Top state guard officials publicly accused Holloway of disobeying orders. He demanded a court martial, but instead TSG brass attempted to quiet the issue once and for all by honorably discharging Holloway. He insists that he has never disobeyed a lawful order and defies the TSG to prove that he ever did.

The 105th's group commander, Colonel Maurice Lambert, who later became an antagonist of the 105th, ironically had touted the battalion under Holloway as "the best-trained battalion in the United States."

Not only that, but Holloway's 105th has served as an aggressor force against the U.S. Army Reserve and, in the humble words of one 105th squad leader, "we kicked some ass." So much so that, in 1983; U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Cecil L. Allen wrote a letter of appreciation to the Texas adjutant general, who commands all National Guard and state guard troops in Texas. Lieutenant Colonel Allen's Army Reserve unit headquarters was captured three times in a single exercise by the 105th, although the reserve unit outnumbered the 105th by four to one.

Under Holloway, the 105th MP Battalion "performed in a truly outstanding manner, adding greatly to the realism of the ARTEP exercise," Allen wrote. "The military knowledge and experience displayed by his personnel . . . added to the realism as well as safety . . . The establishment of a permanently organized opposing force team consisting of Major Holloway and . . . the 105th MP Battalion is highly recommended for consideration by your headquarters."

Yet in October 1984, a few months after Holloway's ignominious discharge, the entire 105th was disbanded, with the brass in Austin citing the unit for "ineffectiveness and inefficiency," though all discharges were honorable.

And TSG bureaucrats in Austin said the 105th was "just too gung-ho." The ex-CO of the battalion, Maj. Holloway, was labeled by his TSG critics as "a maverick."



In 1984, when this photo of Texas State Guard Sgt. W.K. Powell was taken, less than \$50,000 of the TSG's \$250,000 annual budget was spent on troops. Powell illustrated this dilemma by dressing in equipment issued to him by the TSG. Powell noted on the back of his photo, "Thank God for the garrison cap," seen tucked at a strategic point in Powell's belt.

Holloway is not averse to this term. It originated with a hero of the Texas Revolution, Samuel A. Maverick, who gained fame as a rancher who refused to brand his own cattle. "Maverick" later came to mean an independent who refuses to abide by the dictates of his group.

Being the maverick that he is, Bob Holloway and his men didn't just throw up their hands and go home. If they couldn't serve their state in the defunct 105th MP Battalion, then they'd follow the lead of their colonial predecessors and form their own militia.

Thus was the 1st Battalion, 1st Light Infantry Regiment of the Texas Reserve Militia officially incorporated under the National State Defense Force Association.

ARE YOU EQUAL TO THE TASK?

Troubles for the TSG didn't begin with Maj. Robert Holloway, though. It had already come under fire from other members as an ineffective "paper tiger" organization.

Attached to a 22 April 1983 memo to all group, battalion and company command-

ers, "a discussion of the relationship between the Texas Army National Guard and the Texas State Guard" was recommended by Lieutenant Colonel Fred R. Van Devender of the Texas State Guard Association. It angered many state guardsmen because it encouraged National Guard commanders to utilize the state guard in such ways as "ask them to . . . serve coffee upon your return from training. Ask them to wax the floor. . . . Ask them to furnish custodial personnel."

Outraged by what they saw as belittling their patriotism and personal sacrifice, many state guard volunteers raised a storm of protest. Van Devender later issued a second memo — this one not on official Texas State Guard Association stationery — acknowledging the "confusion" caused by the first one. "Rather than attempting to set the record straight" about the first memo, Van Devender wrote, "its prompt destruction . . . is more appropriate."

Contrasting sharply with this decidedly domesticated approach to duty were TSG recruiting brochures, which at the time depicted a state guardsman with an assault rifle at port arms above the bold slogan: "Are You Equal to the Task?" Critics, among them dozens of TSG members, charged that the organization itself was not up to much of a challenge.

"Someone in Austin is laboring under the impression that the TSG can be called on in time of need. They cannot," wrote Kenneth G. Paynter of Lubbock. A former Marine Corps platoon sergeant in Vietnam, Paynter joined the TSG in 1983, commissioned as a first lieutenant. After serving eight months, Paynter wrote his state representative, Jan McKenna, to complain about the lack of training for state guardsmen. The entire TSG is organized around 32 military police battalions. But when the local National Guard commander gave Paynter's unit permission for limited participation in military police training at no cost to the state, Paynter said the plan was blocked by TSG headquarters.

"The officers in Austin are very good at blowing smoke," Paynter wrote McKenna. "The more unqualified they are, the higher they go up the ladder." He further complained that the TSG was paying \$14.95 each for helmet liners which were available at a local surplus store for \$3.50. When he notified state headquarters of the possible savings, he said he was informed that the state guard would continue to purchase this item from its "normal source." In a postscript, Paynter said he and ten other officers and enlisted men in his unit resigned "to express our dismay with the manner in which the TSG is being run."

Judge Jon O. Karau of Pottsboro and Judge John M. Elkins of Sherman, both TSG lieutenant colonels, also wrote their state representative, Robert Bush, to complain about "poor leadership" within the TSG. They charged that the commanders in Austin had embarked upon "a mission in direct conflict with the spirit and letter of

A BRIEF MILITIA HISTORY

Minutemen probably are the best known of militias in the United States. The American Revolution began when minutemen engaged British regulars at Lexington and fired the famous "shot heard round the world."

Militias were organized soon after the arrival of the first permanent European settlers in the late 1500s and early 1600s. There was no one to rely on for protection except themselves. Colonial powers such as Spain, England and France had representatives in the colonies. But these officials often were unable to collect taxes from their subjects, much less provide sanctioned authority to protect them from hostile intent.

The minutemen received official sanction when they were enrolled by an act of the provincial congress on 23 November 1774. Meanwhile, other communities throughout the colonies had long maintained their own volunteer militias. From the onset of colonization until the beginning of the Civil War, both small and large communities had militias, especially in the South. But organization and ability varied widely, even after passage of the Militia Act of 1792.

Not until the Dick Act of 1903 was any real effort made to devise a cohesive form for militias. There still weren't any national guidelines. But the two main purposes of a militia remained: (1) to provide local colonial, and later state, officials with the power to enforce their authority in times of internal crisis, and (2) the availability of additional organized force to central authority in times of grave national emergency.

The Dick Act of 1903 established the National Guard as the official militia organization of the United States and gave to the president the authority to call out the National Guard under federal control in times of war or emergency. But it soon became apparent that states needed some form of militia that would remain under local control. But Section 10 of the Constitution forbids states to "keep troops or ships of war in time of peace."

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson called much of the National Guard to active duty for the Mexican Border crisis in the southwestern United States. Yet there was no official declaration of war, so the states could not legally create a militia force to rely on in the absence of federalized National Guardsmen.

The National Defense Act of 1916 was the first law to recognize the need for the organization of militia forces at a local level to be available in the event of the National Guard being federalized. But state governors were still severely

limited in just what they could do and when they could do it. They were limited to the formation of constabularies or state police organizations.

But then along came World War I.

Tensions with Germany were already severe when the Mexican Border crisis ended. Interest in home defense units, or local militias, grew quickly after President Wilson broke diplomatic relations with Germany on 5 February 1917. Released from federal duty in New Mexico and Arizona, the Illinois National Guard returned home to discover they had been called to active duty there by the governor. Massachusetts and Pennsylvania created state Committees of Public Safety, a name used to organize militias in the American Revolution.

By 5 August 1917, all National Guard units were returned to federal active duty. And when states requested federal troops to protect sensitive installations within their borders, the War Department advised them that National Guardsmen would be unavailable and municipal and state officials would be held responsible by federal officials for securing vital facilities.

The Home Guard Act of 14 June 1917 rectified this to some extent. It primarily enabled the Secretary of War to provide equipment to and maintain some control over state organizations. By implication the new law seemed to recognize the legality of state troops, at least during wartime. Yet it was unclear on the question of whether states actually possessed the authority to undertake the organization of such a force. The acting judge advocate general issued an opinion on 13 October 1917 which granted that authority, but only in times of war and to be "much more restricted" than the regular Army or National Guard. The chief of the Militia Bureau further stipulated, on 27 March 1918, that any such troops could not be called up by the federal government for duty outside the nation.

Each state provided its own solutions as the war progressed. Some formed National Guard reserve units, others increased state police assets, others formed military units for state service and some communities formed militia units outside the parameters of any state organization.

For instance, of the 500 Springfield rifles which had been authorized by the legislature and sent by the federal government to the Arizona State Guard, 200 of those rifles ended up with the Loyalty League, an unauthorized irregular militia force.

Other states had unauthorized militia forces: 5,000 such men in California, 52 companies in Arkansas, 25 companies in Oklahoma, two regiments in Oregon and 4,000 unauthorized irregulars in Connecticut. Colorado and Georgia listed



Lt. George Ott, right, and Sgt. Roy Bell during patrol training exercise prior to leaving the Texas State Guard to join the Texas Reserve Militia. Photo: George Ott Collection

unauthorized "units in several counties," Nebraska listed "a large number" of unauthorized militia troops and South Dakota reported "a few."

These homegrown units often overlapped in states which had militias authorized by their respective legislatures. States with recognized militias included Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island (the largest state force, with 10,000 men under arms), Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

These figures were obtained from a 14 December 1917 report on home guard units from the Militia Bureau, which later evolved into the present-day National Guard Bureau. No reports were available for North Dakota or Washington.

While the states dealt adequately with the brief security problems of World War I with a variety of local solutions, the onset of World War II presented a much bigger challenge for home defense. Most such local units disbanded quickly after WWI. But the Axis powers of WWII were considered much more likely to instigate civil unrest and commit acts of sabotage and espionage. There was a very real fear, especially in coastal areas, of raids and parachute landings.

The United States was still officially at peace in the summer of 1940, but Section 61 of the National Defense Act of 1916 was amended to allow states to raise their own defense forces at *their own expense* during peacetime. "State guard" was established as the preferred term for these units. Some states had already begun to move. A year earlier, Connecticut contacted the American Legion and the VFW about organizing



veterans into state guard units.

World War II was the heyday of these local militia units. They were better manned and better equipped than any such units before or since. The Texas State Guard even had its own regimental band, its own magazine and a State Guard Association. There also was more uniformity in organization from one state to another than in the past.

State guard units had a four-part mission in WWII: (1) performing the peacetime duties of the National Guard; (2) a full-time emergency guard duty function in coastal regions and other vital areas in the year after Pearl Harbor; (3) combat training by all state guard units from 1942 to early 1944, to better serve with federal troops in the event of an invasion; (4) an internal security role after March 1944, but with increased responsibilities. These units became so active that state guard reserve units were even formed.

California was the largest and most active of the state guard organizations in WWII, with 67,000 troops under arms. Several privately organized and self-armed irregular militia units in that state became "Licensed Military Companies" in 1941 under authority of state legislation. They were merged with the California State Guard in 1943.

As WWII ended, state guards tried to keep up enlistment and training proficiency. As was the case in WWI, state guard leaders knew it would be some time before National Guardsmen returned home and longer still before they reorganized into local units. The Washington State Guard shifted its recruiting emphasis from older to younger men, hoping to entice them to transfer to the National Guard once it returned. The Louisiana State Guard drew up plans for helping the National Guard recruit after the war. New York had planned as early as 1943 to use its state guard as a nucleus for reorganizing its National Guard.

But the federal government terminated the state guard program in 1947. Most state units were disbanded by the end of that year. A congressional resolution,

passed 25 July 1947, repealed Section 61(b) of the National Defense Act of 1916 [amendments passed since 1940], which permitted state forces serving in the place of the National Guard during peacetime and the federal provisioning of these troops.

Some states resisted in one form or another. Although the Texas State Guard was disbanded, the Texas State Guard Association succeeded in getting a state law passed on 26 January 1948, which not only authorized but *activated* the Texas State Guard Reserve Corps. Strictly speaking, this violated federal law, but it served primarily as a means to maintain a training cadre to use in the event of a full mobilization.

In 1949, Kentucky formed an "Active Militia," and the Ohio Defense Corps was established. But no other state went as far as Texas in resisting as much as possible the federal efforts to withdraw local authority for maintaining some type of paramilitary or military security force.

The Korean War brought a brief and comparatively limited resurgence of state guard forces. Small training cadres were authorized under limited legislation that expired in 1952, two years after its enactment. Although a few continued on an unarmed basis, most state cadres disbanded.

The legislation that enabled state guard units to function during the Korean War was prompted in 1950 by the National Guard Association, which prevailed upon Congress to pass the two-year amendment to Section 61 of the National Defense Act.

In 1956, Section 61 was amended again to permit the voluntary maintenance of state militia units. Today, as Title 32, Section 109, United States Code, this is the law that governs state defense forces as they now exist. With a renewed and growing interest in such militia units, Title 32 very likely will be amended during the 100th Congress to expand the role and resources for these latter-day minutemen.

state and federal law. . . . The mission . . . by law involves armed defense of the State of Texas in the absence of the National Guard, a task for which the State Guard is totally unequal."

This became publicly apparent when the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* published its findings on TSG troop strength in September 1984. The newspaper reported that the TSG "has been overestimating its troop strength for years" by not officially discharging people who had left the guard. The rolls were further inflated by out-of-state students who enlisted in the TSG to obtain in-state tuition rates. In 1984, out-of-state students represented one-sixth of state guard enrollment, but tuition waivers have since been discontinued.

The newspaper's findings supported figures cited in the letter by Judges Karau and Elkins, which stated that "the Adjutant General's Department shows an overall strength of 2,300 state guardsmen. Texas State Guard headquarters states a strength of 1,900 personnel. The actual count of active personnel by attendance during the most recent call to active duty was 586 guardsmen."

The TSG's annual state budget, which includes no federal funds, is based on how many men and women it has on the rolls. Its fiscal year 1984 budget of \$250,000 was "not nearly enough to actually train 2,300 — or even 1,858 — militiamen," the *Star-Telegram* reported.

Of more interest, though, is just *how* the TSG spent its meager 250 grand in 1984. According to a copy of the 1984 TSG budget obtained by *Soldier of Fortune*, less than \$50,000 was earmarked for the troops. Over twice that amount — \$100,000 — went to salaries for three full-time headquarters officers and two clerks, another \$40,000 for travel by headquarters staff and almost \$58,000 was designated for "other operating expenses."

When these and other complaints were aired before the state legislature, many called for disbanding the TSG entirely. "State Representative McKenna said she favors revamping the State Guard to include more training and combat readiness," the *Star-Telegram* reported. "If we can't get that, we're going to disband it," she reportedly said.

So the Texas State Guard had its annual budget slashed from \$250,000 to \$100,000. Little else has changed in the TSG, however. Almost all of the budget is consumed by state headquarters, and troops now receive no nominal pay for their call-up time (six hours per month minimum).

"SLOPPY PAPERWORK"

Brigadier General Roland B. Harris, the TSG commander, refused a request by *Soldier of Fortune* to provide a breakdown of the state guard budgets for 1985 and 1986. Because it is funded with state tax dollars, such information is by law supposed to be open for public inspection.

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SOLDIERS OF MISFORTUNE PART 2

American Mercs Board Slow Boat to Ghana

by John Coleman

We hear about plots here at SOF. Lots of them. Usually they come in the form of drunk sailors in Cape Town, or out-of-work oil pipeline guards from "somewhere in the Middle East," babbling their sure-fire plan to topple someone or some place over telephone relay satellites monitored by everyone except the Jamaican coast guard.

Occasionally though, 24-carat gems surface through the morass. Real-life private operations that actually have funding and troops to carry them out. Such was the case with the now-infamous Ghana coup attempt that ended in a stinkhole of a Brazilian prison.

In late 1985 we heard that an op was underway. We knew the source and trusted him, and we knew some of the mercs recruited for the job. I became the SOF case officer, tasked with following the op's progress and, if possible, putting myself in a position where I could cover it firsthand.

In hindsight it's easy to fault-check a plan, but I could see problems arising from the very beginning. Too many people knew that something was up; the international phone lines were going into meltdown with people talking about "The Job." Details weren't known, but there sure were a lot of fairly accurate guesses as to what was coming off.

In a CYA move, the plotters put out the word that the job was cancelled, then on again, then off again. General interest died, but I kept my eye on it. A short while later, in early February 1986, eight of the nine mercs who were finally recruited flew out of Miami to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to set the plan into motion.

By that stage I knew the target was Ghana, and I had a general idea of the time frame involved. After some oil burning sessions with the senior SOF staff, I convinced



Merc team leader John Early aboard the *Nobistor* enroute to Ghana. He turned the operation into a shambles. Photo: T.C.

a reluctant Bob Brown that I should fly to Accra, the capital of Ghana, to record the coup firsthand. We worked out a plausible cover story and I got my passport, shots, travel arrangements and other particulars in order. It was a dicey job, but exactly the sort of work — and story — that SOF does best.

Then came the delays. Not from our end, but from the mercs'. Some equipment problems, we heard. Finally, word came in the first week of March that the troops were enroute to their target. I altered my travel plans for the tenth time and got ready to move.

Then the shit hit the fan. Before it made headlines around the world, I got a phone call.

"They've been arrested in Rio de

Janeiro," my source said.

"Where?"

"Rio. In Brazil, you know?"

"I know where the fuck Rio is. How in the hell did they get there?"

"I dunno. But they're in jail for illegally entering the country. No visas. Sounds like a real cock-up."

And so it was.

Last month we gave you the first part of what we've come to call "The Boys in Brazil." Long-time merc Pierre Duvall, who organized the initial plan, gave us his story on how he put the operation into motion — and was eventually cut out of it.

In this, the second part of *Soldiers of Misfortune*, we'll take a look at the actual operation itself. It won't be easy to pinpoint exactly what went wrong; there were just too many miscues, and too many seasoned soldiers who should have known better — but didn't. For our own reasons, we've left most of their names out of this story. We figure they've been through enough.

If you're looking for the Dogs of War, they-read- Jane's Infantry Weapons-by-night textbook example of how to pull off a coup d'état, stop right here. This is the Merc's Manual — Murphy's Law style.

THE Eastern Airlines pilot fingering the controls of Flight 27, winging its way from Miami to Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 12 February 1986, might have considered an early retirement if he had known the background — and mission — of eight of his passengers. Between them, they had multiple Vietnam combat tours (three having served with Special Forces), bush-hardened service with the Rhodesian Army (Selous Scouts, Rhodesian Light Infantry and Grey's Scouts), stints with the South African paras, Middle Eastern military advisory contracts, recent Central American work as military trainers to the Salvadoran forces, and a variety of law enforcement, bodyguard and private security jobs. They weren't your average tourists.

Instead, the eight were on their way to Argentina to pick up weapons, hop a boat and overthrow a country. The strange part is that only two or three of the quiet gentlemen enjoying in-flight service actually knew what they were flying halfway around the world to do. The others, for the price of a round-trip ticket, a bit of spending money and some vague descriptions of "easy security work" — and the promise of an adventure — simply chucked it all, flew to Miami and strapped themselves in on the overnighter to Buenos Aires.

For those men the job had sounded simple enough: The government of Ghana, a tiny, rabidly Marxist country on the west coast of Africa, had bought a shipment of arms and ammunition from the government of Argentina. The Ghanaians wanted to make sure it all arrived safely. Through various intermediaries, could some qualified guards be

found to babysit the gear during its voyage from Buenos Aires to Accra? No sweat. The men jumped at the chance for a couple weeks of easy work and easier money. Everything was on the hush-hush, but they were told that the job had the sanction of the U.S. government, thus calming any fears about working for a foreign government — especially one led by a devout Marxist with strong ties to Libya. (Two of the mercs, both Army SF retirees, only took the job on that condition. They had pensions to worry about.)

For the others, specifically John Early, officer commanding merc force, and Bob Foti, recruiter and organizer (Foti remained in the States, ostensibly to work out further funding, and joined the others eight days later in Buenos Aires), the job wasn't as cut-and-dried. For months they had planned, plotted and schemed with Godfrey Osei, the dissident exile who would replace Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings as head of the Ghanaian government; Ted Bishop, a nefarious arms middleman and intelligence agency cutout; and a mysterious New York commodities broker called Solomon, who organized the arms buy in Argentina and acted as the operation's chief controller and intelligence agency liaison, to get the overthrow in motion. [SOF sources state that Solomon was Solomon Schwartz, then an agent of the Bophuthatswana Trading Corporation on Madison Avenue in New York. Schwartz was indicted a few years ago for allegedly attempting to transport some 500 Ruger Mini M14s to Poland through New York's JFK Airport. According to an SOF source close to the government — and as we go to press — Schwartz has been indicted for his part in organizing the arms buy in Argentina. Surprisingly, Ted Bishop, who approached Schwartz initially to set up the buy, has not been indicted.]

It was on Bishop's advice that the rest of the force were not told of the actual operation until they were out of the United States. The reason? They were worried about breaking U.S. laws covering neutrality, specifically the one that says, in effect: If you conspire to overthrow a country with which the United States is not at war, then go straight to jail. They would wait until the mercs were safely ensconced in Buenos Aires before springing the good news.

As the Eastern flight made its approach into Ezeiza Airport the next day around 0900, the eight men tensed. This would be the first real test of whether or not the operation was indeed "sanctioned" — at least by someone if not Uncle Sam. Back in Miami, their passports had been gathered up and quickly whisked to the Argentine consulate for visas. Without photos, paperwork or even signatures, the passports were duly returned with the appropriate stamp. That eased some worries, but now they had to traverse Argentine customs and immigration. None of the men were carrying any embarrassing contraband such as M60 machine guns or concealed .45s, but neither did they want to answer any awkward ques-



Weapons were purchased through a New York broker and Argentine military intelligence. Rifle grenades and one machine gun were their heavy firepower. Photo: S.H.

Merc work is not all beans and bullets. During their two weeks in Buenos Aires, the troops had ample opportunity to sample the local female population. Photo: S.H.



tions.

They needn't have worried.

Waiting patiently were Ted Bishop and an Argentine called Garcia. Garcia flashed his credentials and the troops were walked through customs and immigration without a second glance.

From that point, any doubts about official sanction — by someone — of whatever the mission was to be vanished. And it was also the beginning of the end of pure and simple military common sense.

After a cramped ride inside a bread truck, the eight troops, Bishop and Garcia offloaded outside the Hotel Republica, their home for the next few weeks. Rooms had been organized by Argentine intelligence (and probably bugged), and the troops were paired off by Early. Few knew each other, and everyone was reticent about discussing what they knew about the mission. Later that evening, Early and Bishop called a meeting in Early's room. Those who didn't

know about the plot to topple Ghana were let into the secret.

Reaction was subdued. Mercs who already knew the plan sat quietly and made no comment. Those who hadn't known also sat quietly and made no comment. From Early's pep talk, the plan — and additional money promised — made it all seem like a cakewalk. Overthrowing a country? No problem, señor. Early made it very clear, however, that anyone who wanted to back out could. They all had prepaid return airline tickets back to the States; no hard feelings against anyone who wanted to jump ship and leave his comrades to carry out the op — short one critical man.

They all looked at each other. No one moved. One of the mercs said later, "If just one guy had got up and said, 'This is a bunch of bullshit. I'm leaving,' then the rest of us probably would have got up and left too. But I wasn't going to be the first." Apparently, they all felt the same way.

The meeting adjourned on a quiet note. Everyone went back to their rooms to think it out, but the die had been cast. No one would make the first move to back out, either then or further down the line when it became all too clear that the op had turned into a Class A abortion.

After a quick, and subdued, breakfast in the Republica's two-star restaurant the next morning, the mercs trundled down to what was to become their operational headquarters during their stay in Argentina. It was a commodities broker's office, Cohuay S.A., on Esmeralda; not surprising since Bishop had used Solomon, who worked out of the BTC office in New York, to set up the arms buy in Argentina.

After sprawling in chairs and over desks, the mercs were finally introduced to their boss, "the next president of Ghana, Godfrey Osei." Osei, who had been arrested by Rawlings in 1983 and later escaped, was a man driven by visions of a free Ghana — led by himself. Little nitty-gritty details, like how to actually accomplish that goal, didn't seem to worry him. His stock answer to all questions usually ran, "Don't worry. It's all taken care of."

As he began to brief the eight mercs on

what he wanted done when they hit the Accra beaches, one of the men noticed that his tan beret, squashed down on his head giving him the appearance of an acorn, sported something similar to a Nazi death's-head badge. It was food for thought.

Filling in Early's briefing from the previous night, he told them their priorities were to take out Jerry Rawlings and free political prisoners from jail, including two CIA operatives still being held as the result of an earlier U.S. intelligence disaster in Ghana, and take over the broadcasting station. To do this they would sail to the neighboring Ivory Coast, pick up and arm 100 Ghanaian exiles and lead them in the attack against Accra. Army units inside the country were on his side, he told them, and the people would welcome them with open arms. Any questions? Mute faces stared back. Godfrey smiled and left.

Bishop took over the briefing. He and Osei had been there for two weeks prior to the mercs' arrival and Bishop, as mission logistics officer, had, along with Argentine intelligence/liaison officer Louis Kabut, organized the boat, arms and equipment necessary to run the op. As he drewled on in pure Texan, it became painfully obvious that he didn't have a clue as to what the fuck was going on as far as military matters went.

What kind of weapons had been organized, he was asked. Oh, machine guns and that kind of thing. Is there any armor in the city? Don't worry, the police have been briefed to leave the keys in the ignitions of the armored vehicles. (Keys? Ignitions? The mercs with experience in armor had never heard of personnel carriers cranking up like Honda Civics. Most have push button or toggle switch starters.) Well, just in case, do we have weapons to knock them out? Oh sure. Rifle grenades. What kind? Antipersonnel or shaped charge armor piercing? Bishop looked blank. Don't worry. They'll knock out anything. How about communications? Huh? What do you need that for?

Things were going downhill fast. Scattered around the room were piles of equipment Bishop had purchased, at great expense, with Osei's money. According to what some of the mercs found out later, Bishop was double billing on equipment purchases. He and Argie intel man Kabut were splitting the overage, hoping to add as much of Godfrey's \$500,000 operational fund to their own bank accounts as possible.

A quick check of the gear heightened the mercs' "Oh shit" factor. Web belts were made of *plastic*, and the ammo pouches didn't fit on them anyway; canteens had no covers, just one hook to attach them to the belt; rucksacks were cheap, locally made civilian models; and the team's two medics, both Special Forces trained, cringed in horror when they saw that their supplies consisted of Band-Aids, hydrogen peroxide and World War II-vintage sulfa powder. Bishop had deemed this gear more than ample for an attack force of over a hundred. His rationale? "Sheeit, boys. This op's only gonna take you a couple of hours to pull off.



Target Number 1: "The Castle," residence of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, Marxist leader of Ghana. Photo: Philip Edwards

Target Number 2: Accra's broadcasting station. Godfrey Osei would announce the coup from here. Photo: Philip Edwards



Anyway, those Africans will run lak hell when the shootin' starts."

Just dandy.

Bishop and Kabut could read the disgust in the mercs' eyes. It was time for some serious placating. They were led upstairs into what was a private bank, *Marbiel*, run by Francisco Samarro. Payday. Merc leader Early received \$12,000, and the rest got from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Disregarding Argentina's currency regulations, the troops wired various amounts of cash back home via the Banker's Trust in New York, Godfrey's bank in the States. Things looked a little better.

Regrouping back at the Republica, the mercs took stock of the situation. Obviously, they couldn't knock over a Pup 'n' Taco with the kind of shit Bishop was providing. Their concerns turned to the weapons the Texan had organized — at this stage no one was clear on just what he'd bought from the Argentines — and the ocean-going transport and beach landing craft they'd use on the op. Over beers, they decided to split into teams the next day. Some would check on the boat and arms arranged by Kabut and

Bishop, while others would forage through Buenos Aires shops for decent webbing, medical and other critical supplies.

Again, team leader Early asked if anyone wanted to back out. Each man looked at the others, most still ready to take him up on his offer. Already the pros could see the mission turning into a goatfuck, but there was a chance that it could be salvaged. After all, Godfrey still had loads of money to spend to square away the equipment side, and they'd yet to hear John Early's plan for taking Accra. Early, after all, was a Vietnam Special Forces vet, had served in the Rhodesian Army — the latter part of his time with the Selous Scouts — and had spent time in Central America and other hot spots. [Early had also been Mr. Hollywood for a brief period, acting as technical adviser for the movie *Red Dawn* and during the shooting of one of the *Rambo* flicks.] There was just no doubt in anyone's mind that he'd get this gang bang organized.

Perhaps most important, though, was the bond already forming between the mercs, the most common thing in the world when military men get together to pull an op. One just doesn't desert the team. And, they'd been paid.

No one took Early up on his offer.

That night, Godfrey had them all for dinner in a private room upstairs in the Republica. Beer, wine and liquor flowed, although most of the mercs took it easy. A few of them, in fact, didn't drink at all, even though everything went on the Ghanaian's tab. Bishop and Godfrey took up the slack, and pretty soon their jaws were wagging nonstop.

His first plan of action, Godfrey told them, would be to completely disband the military, as he didn't trust any of them. A few of the mercs looked at each other with raised eyebrows. The would-be king, now on the wrong side of tipsy, had just told them that day that there were units friendly to him which would help carry out the coup. Oh well. Next, *his* men (waving his arm expansively around the table) would become the officers for an elite quick-reaction force under Godfrey's direct command. They would have aircraft and would be on call to put down any coup attempts. His foreign officers, he promised, would of course be well-paid for their efforts.

Godfrey took a pause for another drink, and the mercs started shooting questions at him. What about Rawlings' air force? Were they on sides? No, but his loyal army units would drive petrol trucks onto Kotoka Airport's runways and set them afire. How about the navy? Oh, just a few old patrol boats that were with us; they wouldn't get in the way. What will the military do when we hit the beaches? Don't worry. Rawlings disarmed most of them a little while ago. He's afraid of a coup. (Giggles from the top end of the table, wan smiles from the mercs.) Anyway, I know my people. They'll run. Don't worry, it's all taken care of.

Godfrey had said his piece and would say no more. Attention turned to the diminutive Texan, Ted Bishop. What kind of current

military intelligence do we have out of Accra? Well, the Israelis are handling all that. We'll get the word when we hit the Ivory Coast. (Just bitchin'.) What about our boat? It's a work boat that we'll pass off as an oil rigger. Lots of them around there. (Jeez. Something that finally makes sense.) And finally the big one. Is this fucking operation sanctioned by Uncle Sam or not?

Bishop didn't hesitate. From the beginning he had claimed to work for the "Company," and now he told them he reported directly to the National Security Council and had walk-in access. The op was covered and cleared, he told them. [According to a well-placed SOF source, Bishop did make personal contact with an NSC official who was a Special Assistant to the President for Latin American Affairs and now works in Alexandria, Virginia. Bishop outlined the Ghana coup plot and, according to the source, was told in no uncertain terms to move out smartly, the NSC and Uncle Sam weren't interested.] And, Bishop continued, Argentine intelligence was cooperating fully during the whole mission. They expected to work out some lucrative arms and mineral deals with the new government once it was in place.

That part of it made sense. During the months it had taken to work up the mission in the States, surely the FBI, CIA, NSC, DIA or some other acronymed intelligence agency would have heard about it. And, if they wanted the mission to overthrow Ghana stopped, they would have stopped it. Moreover, Argentine wheels had certainly been greased or they wouldn't be sitting like knights of the Round Table getting plonked in a hotel smack dab in the middle of Buenos Aires, plotting the overthrow of another country.

With another drink down his throat, Bishop then dropped a real clanger on the assembled troops. He had heard from Solomon, his New York controller, that while the mercs were hitting the beaches, the Israelis would be hitting two terrorist camps in northern Ghana. Terrorist leader Abu Nidal was mentioned. That was top priority, Bishop slurred at them in Texan, and would also act as a diversion by keeping Rawlings' own Libyan-trained and -led reaction force, located some 50 kilometers outside Accra, occupied.

That last juicy bit of intel was enough for one night. It was getting late, and even with the offer of free women ("the tab's on Godfrey, boys"), most of the mercs hit the rack. They had a lot of work to do if this job was ever going to pan out. Uneasy bodies tossed and turned all night, visions of fanatical Libyans armed to the teeth whirling through their heads.

Buenos Aires' cosmopolitan seaport delights eluded the eight mercs during the next days as they split into teams tasked with sorting gear already purchased by Bishop, buying what was required to make up the shortfall (which turned out to be most of everything), sorting out commo requirements and checking the boat and weapons.



Target Number 3: James Fort Prison. Still used to hold political prisoners Osei wanted freed. Photo: Philip Edwards

Target Number 4: Kotoka International Airport. Army units loyal to Osei were to block its runways with burning petrol tankers. Photo: Philip Edwards



They still hadn't received any kind of warning or operations order from team leader Early, so they pretty much relied on their own professional military backgrounds to come up with the right stuff.

Along with intel officer Kabut, the weapons team headed to the *Fabricaciones Militares* warehouse, where the arms and ammo were stored. The buy had been organized by Kabut, weapons selected by Bishop and paid for with Godfrey's money.

When they arrived, Kabut opened the padlocked door. Inside, neatly stacked, were 150 Argentine-manufactured 7.62x51mm FN assault rifles, four 7.62x51mm FN MAG 58 general purpose machine guns, three suppressed PA3-DM 9mm submachine guns, six 9mm FN High Power pistols and three riot-type shotguns. Cased up and already stenciled "GODFREY OSEI, ACCRA, GHANA," were 400 GME-FMK2-MO hand grenades, 3,000 belted 7.62x51mm rounds per MAG and 1,000 rounds per FN, and 100 FN rifle grenades.

No mortars, no armor piercing rocket launchers, no explosives. MAGs would be their anti-aircraft guns, rifle grenades their all-purpose anti-everything else. The weapons team wasn't too thrilled. Kabut told them Bishop hadn't ordered anything along the line of mortars or rocket launchers.

What about tracers? After all, from what the mercs had heard, this was to be a night attack. Tracers might come in handy. Kabut shook his head. Not ordered, he told them. Order them, he was told. He nodded and made a note.

Further inspection showed that the MAGs were lacking spare barrels and cleaning kits. No cleaning kits, either, for any of the other weapons. Not ordered. Shit.

As far as they could see, the only up side to the weapons they'd be using on the beaches of Accra was the fact that they were all in mint condition. Brand-new stuff from the government factory at Rosario. They could test fire and confirm zeros on the boat trip across to the Ivory Coast. There shouldn't be any maintenance problems otherwise.

The weapons team stepped outside into the steamy midday heat and waited while Kabut relocked the warehouse door. If the shit hit the fan on Accra's beaches, or anywhere else for that matter, the measly stockpile of arms sitting in the *Fabricaciones Militares* warehouse would be inadequate — and deadly so. A talk with John Early, Bishop and Godfrey Osei would, they hoped, rectify the problem.

Across town on the docks, merc leader Early and a few of the others surveyed the ship Bishop and Kabut had organized for their nearly three-week trip to Ghana. It was a fucking shambles, a rusting hulk of a World War II Liberty Ship. Dried bird shit cracked under their boots as they walked across the deck and climbed up to the bridge, brownish-red rust flaking off onto their hands from the guide rails. Though none of the men had much of a seagoing background, it was painfully obvious that the bridge controls and instruments were useless as they stood. Thousands of dollars and hundreds of man hours would be needed to make this wreck seaworthy.

They cautiously made their way below decks into the gloomy sauna of an engine room. One small problem: The engine room didn't have one. Its power train had been winched out ages ago, leaving rust and crud in its wake. Sweat poured off the mercs as they climbed out onto the deck. They checked again to make sure this was the right ship. It was. Ted Bishop and Louis Kabut had some explaining to do.

And across the rest of the city, medics, comm specialists and others hit dozens of shops and stores, doing their best to put together the ancillary gear for the operation. Even cursory price checks showed that Bishop had been money gouging Godfrey Osei out of his op fund.

Rendezvousing back at Cohuay S.A., their op HQ, later that day, the mercs exchanged information on what they'd found. The main problems were additional heavy weapons and, of course, the sorry excuse for ocean-going transport. But later that night, back in Godfrey's room at the Republica, Bishop, Godfrey and Early poured oil on the water.

We're still looking for boats, Bishop told them. For what we've got to spend, there just isn't much around. We'll find something better, he promised. No, he said, we can't alter the weapons list. You'll have to make do. But everything's just fine, Godfrey assured his disgruntled merc force. Don't worry. It's all taken care of. You can still back out if you want, Early snapped.

What the fuck.

A sort of routine developed over the next



Merc force practices boat drills enroute to Ghana. The plan called for a beach landing operation through high surf, at night, across five miles of open water. Photo: T.C.

days. Up for an early breakfast, down to Cohuay S.A. to sort and check gear, spread out around the city to buy what was still needed (and to test their newly purchased radios in a local park, while hiding behind bushes), back to the Republica for a light dinner, pep talks in Godfrey's room, then out for drinks, chicks and a late supper when it cooled down a bit after midnight.

Problems were manifest. Although they were nearing departure time (if they could ever get a boat), Early still hadn't given any sort of an operations order for hitting the beaches. He was becoming standoffish toward the rest of the mercs, and responded to most questions by tapping his shoulder (a holdover from his Rhodesia days, when officers wore their rank insignia on epaulets) and saying, "Let's pretend I'm in charge." As far as Bishop was concerned, the mercs had written him off as woefully incompetent. He still had Godfrey's ear, though, and the Ghanaian wouldn't listen to words spoken against the Texan.

Intelligence was another critical area: They just didn't have any. There was no contact with the Ghanaian troops exiled in the Ivory Coast, and absolutely nothing about Rawlings' force dispositions. Everything had been glossed over and the mercs were kept in the dark.

One of the weapons men, a former federal marshal and private investigator, came up with a plan with which Early — after a few days of hemming and hawing — finally agreed. The PI would fly back to the States and round up what information he could on the target, then move onward to the Ivory Coast and make contact with Godfrey's people there. He would scout out a mooring site for their incoming ship, somewhere where it would be easy enough to onload the 100 or so black troops who, for all intents and purposes, had never been on the ocean. Further, he would enter Ghana, scout out

the area, pass along what information he could, then act as beach officer for the proposed assault boat landing which would begin the attack.

A cover story — a sickness in the family — to cover the merc's departure was concocted for Bishop's benefit, as none of the mercs trusted him by now. They did, however, have a lot of faith in the man they were sending back to the States. It was their only bright spot in the op so far.

Shortly thereafter, Bob Foti, the prime recruiter for the mission, flew into Buenos Aires. Ostensibly he had been in Miami, working up further funds for the mission. In a phone call to John Early, he said it was imperative that his bags not be checked when he came through. Early and an Argentine intelligence man met him at the airport, and Foti was walked through customs. Later, the other mercs were told that Foti had brought in plastic tie wraps to secure prisoners.

Hot, frustrating days dragged on. Uncertainty was the byword. Bishop kept claiming that the op was covered by Uncle Sam, specifically the National Security Council. Calls went back and forth between Godfrey, Bishop and their New York controller, Solomon. Everything was fine, the mercs were told. They were all invited to a barbecue at a villa in the Buenos Aires suburb of Del Ray, staffed with dozens of Argentine military intelligence officers (who all claimed to be heroes of the Malvinas War). They were introduced to the general who, they were told, was in charge of the Argentine part of the op. Toasts were made to "friends" in New York (Solomon) and in Washington (the NSC). All troubles in finding a suitable ship for the trip across would be worked out. *Mañana*.

On 23 February some of the mercs, Bishop, Godfrey and a few Argentine spooks took a bus out to a little show called Tourist Day. Separate tables were set up for the various nationalities present — Canadians, South Africans and Swedes, as well as Cubans and East Germans — and the announcer proceeded to introduce each

group. When he came to the table where the mercs were sitting, he cheerfully introduced "the Americans and their guest, the next president of Ghana."

As one of the mercs said later, "It was a bit of an intel blunder."

No shit.

The final break with Ted Bishop came only a day or so later. It had been clear to the mercs that he and Kabut had been fleeing the El Supremo out of his money, but Godfrey had refused to listen. It was only when the Argentine civilian who had been handling their communications gear admitted to John Early and a few of the others that the bill for their cheap Motorola walkie-talkies had been doubled per Bishop's instructions — with the extra \$6,000 kicking back to intel man Kabut — that Godfrey blew up.

Once inside Ghana, Godfrey told the mercs, Bishop would be invited for a little torture and execution session. Bishop did his best to calm Godfrey down, and even pushed him to raise more money — something like \$2 million. No dice. Bishop told Godfrey he needed to go back to the States to raise more money. No way. On 26 or 27 February, Bishop vanished.

Godfrey received an overseas call from Bishop a little later, and the Texan said he was still in on the deal. Could Godfrey meet him in London? The Ghanaian slammed down the phone, then put in a call to Solomon in New York. One very upset future president complained about Bishop's vanishing act, the money rip-offs and the problem with finding a suitable boat for the journey. Solomon assured the agitated Ghanaian that he would take care of Bishop and would sort out the boat problems.

An hour later, Louis Kabut walked into Godfrey's room. A ship and crew had been found, he said. It was called the *Nobistor*, and he had a captain and crew lined up. It would take a little work to get it ready, but departure could be only a few days away.

The game was on.

Most of the gear had by now been located and purchased. Zodiac boats for the actual beach assault were laid on — at a price some \$24,000 cheaper than Early had quoted Godfrey. Money for most of the buys had come out of the mercs' advance payments, with Early promising to reimburse them upon presentation of receipts. He told them to hold off, he would pay them later. A pile of documents and information on Ghana had been received from the merc who had gone back to the States, but aside from one other man, Early refused to let any of the other troops see what the box had contained. Too busy with other things, they were told. And, with departure imminent, Early had still not issued any firm operations orders. The mercs had a general idea of the plan of attack, but there were hundreds of holes any pro could spot in a second.

But by now, a sort of group hypnosis had taken hold. Everything would work out; they placed their faith in John Early as an experienced military man. He wouldn't let them down.

Saturday, 1 March, broke clear, hot and hellishly humid. Working from first light, the mercs transported and loaded gear aboard the 120-foot ocean-going tug *Nobistor*. It was tied up to the explosives dock in Buenos Aires harbor on the premise there were no other berths. In reality, the Argentines didn't want too many prying eyes watching the day's activities. While the men sweated and strained to load equipment into conexes on the deck, Argentine army trucks rolled up to the dock.

Ordnance Corps troops swarmed out of the trucks and started hoisting boxes of ammo and now-crated weapons directly onto the ship. Some of the ammo boxes had been exchanged for tracer; all were stamped "GODFREY OSEI, ACCRA, GHANA."

Under the steaming midday sun, cool-looking senior Argentine army officers in uniform calmly watched the proceedings. As one merc said later, "Just the commission on mirrored Ray-Ban sunglasses would have matched my pay."

Godfrey Osei, Louis Kabut and other Argie spooks were also there to see them off. Godfrey, maintaining a safety zone of at least 10 feet from the water, looked a tad green under his tan beret. He would meet them in the Ivory Coast in two weeks' time, he told them. He also wished, with a forlorn expression, that Bishop would be available in Ghana for his amusement. Grim.

John Early was given what Godfrey said was the last of his money for the mercs' operations and contingency fund. The first contingency was paying bribes to employees of Temec Company, who would handle customs fees, arrange for harbor pilots and ensure that their passports received the proper exit stamp.

Finally, everything was a go. The twin diesel turbos of the *Nobistor* were cranked up and mooring lines cast off. With the sun dropping down behind Buenos Aires, the ocean-going tug pointed its bow east out of the harbor. A definite sense of relief washed over the eight mercs on board. They were finally underway and, if all the problems weren't yet worked out, they would be before they hit the beaches.

The assault force was enroute to its target. In roughly three weeks' time, they'd be in Ghana.

Perhaps the weather was trying to tell the assault force to back off. Skies darkened, gale force winds kicked up and then rain slammed against the 120-foot tug. Ten-foot waves washed over the deck; the fantail only normally cleared the water by two feet in order to expedite loading and unloading of oil rigging gear. Dramamine became the order of the day as the eight mercs, more used to fighting wars than seasickness, lay green in their bunks.

For three days the tug fought its way north, battling the weather for every mile gained. They steamed past Uruguay and then into Brazilian territorial waters, where the storm finally blew itself out. Pale and drawn bodies surfaced onto the steaming deck, the equatorial sun burning down

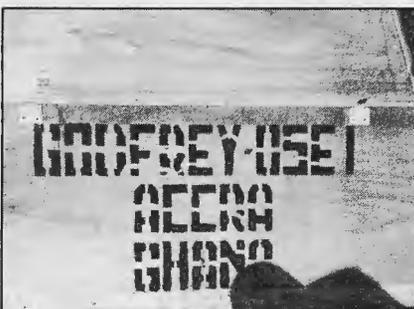


Merc displays one of three suppressed Argentine PA3-DM 9mm submachine guns carried by the attack force. Two of the three conex containers (in rear) used to store the weapons and Zodiac rubber boats, and act as sleeping quarters for four of the mercs, are visible. Photo: S.H.

through a pale blue, washed-out sky.

The joke of the day was directed at their team leader: "Next time, Early, we make this an airborne op!" Early agreed.

Having lost three valuable days to weather, the merc force got down to business. A routine was established that pulled them out of their bunks around 0630 for an hour's worth of PT led by Bob Foti, followed by a first-class breakfast from Hugo, the ship's cook. Their next priority was the 10 Zodiac rubber assault boats they'd be using to hit



Weapons and ammo were all crated and stamped in Buenos Aires. Unknown to the mercs, a shipping clerk in Argentina sent a message to Ghana stating that the shipment of arms was enroute — throwing Jerry Rawlings into a panic. Photo: S.H.

the beach. Weapons firing would have to wait until they'd steamed into international waters.

Opening up one of the three green conex containers secured to the deck, seven red and three black 10-man Zodiacs were hauled out and spread open. All 10 boats, equipped with Mercury or Johnson 35- and 45-horsepower engines, had cost Godfrey in the neighborhood of \$32,000.

The boats were inflated and assembled, and they practiced launching and boat handling drills while the ship's captain kept the *Nobistor* dead in the water. Most had had military training in rubber boats, but it was quickly obvious that launching an RB in the middle of the night — packed with nine fully armed and probably excruciatingly seasick inland Ghanaians — would be a totally different problem.

The plan, from what little the mercs had been told, consisted of hitting the Accra beaches at 0200 Sunday morning, 23 March. Ghanaian troops were paid on Saturday, and the figuring ran that they'd be too drunk to react effectively. Some hours earlier (exact timings not yet decided by anyone), the *Nobistor* would anchor a mile or two offshore and the Zodiacs would begin ferrying troops to the beach. No one had quite figured out what to do with the extra two Zodiacs, as there were eight mercs and 10 boats; the feeling was that two of the Ghanaians could be trained as coxswains during the trip from the Ivory Coast to Ghana. Some 10-plus round-trip ferry runs later — over at least two miles of open ocean,

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NICARAGUA'S STALINISTAS

Subversion South of the Border

by David Segal

IN July 1979 the *Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional* (FSLN), better known as Sandinistas, overthrew Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza with the enthusiastic support of a broad democratic coalition. In those days, Sandinista guerrillas parading through Managua were greeted with the same kind of enthusiasm that had greeted Fidel Castro's men in Havana twenty years before.

In hindsight it is obvious that the initial broad-based coalition was a sham in the best "Popular Front" tradition and the FSLN's top leaders were, and always had been, firmly in the Soviet camp. Today Nicaragua has become, like Cuba, a center for Soviet subversion, and the Sandinistas openly boast about their aid to guerrillas and "freedom fighters" throughout Latin America. Additionally, Nicaragua's army is now the

largest in Central American history.

For many Nicaraguans, however, impressive gains in international status and military power are more than offset by the fact that they are no longer masters in their own house. Indeed, Nicaragua's new activist role on the international scene has very little to do with Nicaraguan interests. Sandinista activities simply don't make sense outside the context of Soviet global interests as





expressed within the framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

SOVIET POLICY AND OBJECTIVES

Soviet support of almost any group that can be used to undermine individual liberty and democratic institutions is hardly new. Support of the "worldwide struggle against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism" has been a cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy since the time of Lenin, and that policy has occasionally resulted in some very strange bedfellows.

In the early 1930s, for example, Stalin ordered the German Communist Party to actively support the Nazis in undermining the democratic Weimar Republic under the slogan: "Nach Hitler, uns!" (After Hitler, us!).

After World War II, rather than limiting its international subversive activity to consolidating its conquests, the Soviet Union has used subversion as a principal offensive weapon to expand its influence among non-aligned Third World countries and to destabilize Western democracies. By the mid-1960s this tactic had taken the form of a coordinated and deliberate use of international terrorist groups. One of the earliest of these groups was Nicaragua's FSLN.

By supporting, organizing, funding, arming and directing terrorist groups and other surrogate forces, the Soviets apparently believe they can use violence and the threat of violence to weaken the West and implement their goals *without risking retaliation in kind*. The object is to attack the enemy on his own territory without risk of being attacked yourself — in short, to wage war on the enemy without being warred upon.

So far, this policy has largely worked and is a source of considerable pride to Soviet policy makers. Writing the May 1980 edition of *Kommunist*, former International Department head Boris Ponomarev looked back on the 1970s with considerable satis-

Daniel Ortega with Fidel Castro — the only foreign head of state to attend Ortega's inauguration as Nicaragua's president.

Photo: Department of Defense

faction. Noting that Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia had been "liberated" in that decade, Ponomarev wrote: "Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique freed themselves from the chains of imperialism. . . . The deteriorated regime in Nicaragua was overthrown. The revolution in Afghanistan, the overthrow of the monarchy of the Shah in Iran, and the victory of the Zimbabwe patriots were blows struck at imperialism."

If anything, Soviet experience in Cuba supports intensifying terrorist sponsorship, using Nicaragua as its second base in the Americas. Without a firm Cuban base to rely on, it is doubtful the Soviets could have given the Sandinistas the support and training that eventually brought them to power in Nicaragua.

IN-HOUSE INTEL

Middle Eastern military affairs and intelligence authority David Segal is well-known to veteran *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine readers. As our contributing editor, David has distinguished himself as America's expert on the Iran/Iraq War. He was the first journalist to break the news that Iraq was using chemical weapons in that conflict.

An Israeli Army veteran, Segal has lived and traveled extensively in the Middle East and Europe, was an international petroleum consultant and spends most of his current time preparing a book which will attempt to untangle the web of the global terrorist network.

We are indeed fortunate to have such a ruthless scholar on *our* side.

SANDINISTAS AND TERRORISM BEFORE THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION

The triumph of the Nicaraguans is the PLO's triumph. — Yasir Arafat

Castro's 1966 First Conference of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (better known as the Tri-Continental Conference) in Havana, Cuba, brought together 500 delegates representing international leftist groups to devise a strategy for their "global revolutionary movement." Two of these groups, the communist Sandinistas (FSLN) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), met for the first time. With Soviet help, arrangements were made for novice Latin American, African, Arab and American terrorists to learn their deadly trade at training camps in Cuba and North Korea.

Almost immediately after the conference, PLO terrorists began training in Cuba. Upon graduation, the Palestinians set up their own terrorist training camps, first in Jordan and then in Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, South Yemen and Libya. The Sandinistas were welcome at these camps and, according to a 1985 State Department publication, *The Sandinistas and Middle Eastern Radicals*, among the PLO's early trainees were Nicaragua's Interior Minister Tomas Borge, Vice Minister of the Interior Rene Vivas and Minister for External Cooperation Henry Ruiz.

Interior Minister Borge, an FSLN founder and one of the nine Sandinista *Comandantes*, reportedly got his terrorist training at a PLO base in Lebanon in 1969. After that he quickly assumed a leading role in establishing and maintaining ties between the FSLN and other elements of the Soviet terror network, a role he reportedly retains as chief of the Interior Ministry. In the early



First of Soviet armed Mi-8 troop-carrying helicopters arrived in Nicaragua in 1981 — well before Sandinistas faced significant armed opposition. Today, Soviet Mi-24 Hind “flying tanks,” proven effective against mujahideen in Afghanistan, also operate in Sandinista helicopter inventory. Photo: Department of Defense

1970s, Borge became a familiar figure in Damascus and Beirut because of frequent trips to the area on behalf of both the FSLN and Cuba. Indeed, the State Department report speculates that Borge was Fidel Castro's personal envoy to the PLO during this period.

Tight Cuban and Soviet control is evident throughout the early FSLN-PLO contacts. According to the State Department report, when Sandinista envoy Benito Escobar met with three PLO representatives in Mexico City in 1969, it was to arrange for a group of about 60 Sandinistas to be trained in Lebanon under joint PLO-Cuban auspices. Even within the PLO, say Israeli sources, the communist Sandinistas maintained their closest ties with the two avowedly Marxist-Leninist groups that are the most loyal to (and most controlled by) the Soviet Union: George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Naif Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). Of course PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and the PLO factions under his control, especially *al-Fatah*, are also viewed as valuable allies.

Together with Cuba, the PLO provided the communist Sandinistas with an invaluable source of training and arms. Borge reportedly even got PLO assistance in persuading Libya's Colonel Muammar Khadafi to cough up money for FSLN arms from North Korea and Vietnam. The FSLN would return the favor in full after coming to power in Nicaragua, but installments, in the form of “acts of internationalist solidarity” with their PLO mentors, began almost immediately.

Sandinista graduates of PLO “commando” training courses began playing an active role in PLO operations, particularly those of Habash's PFLP. The 6 September 1970 hijacking of an Israeli EL AL airliner, which marked Leila Khaled's debut as a

PFLP commando leader, is an early example of Sandinista “internationalist solidarity.” When Khaled's group got caught in a shoot-out with armed Israeli guards, one terrorist was killed. The dead terrorist turned out to be a recent Sandinista graduate, named Patrick Arguello Ryan, of a PFLP commando course. Today, Arguello is revered by the FSLN as a heroic “freedom fighter,” and a large dam has been named in his honor. Within two weeks of Arguello's death, other Sandinistas died for Arafat and Habash when open fighting broke out between the PLO and crack units of King Hussein's Jordanian army.

Sandinista spokesman Jorge Mandi, in an interview with the Kuwaiti periodical *Al-Watan* on 7 August 1979, said, “Many of the units belonging to the Sandinista movement were at Palestinian revolutionary bases in Jordan. . . . Nicaraguan and Palestinian blood was spilled together in Amman and other places during the ‘Black September’ battles.” Even closer PLO-FSLN ties would soon follow.

In February 1978, Benito Escobar, the man who had made the original training arrangements between the communist Sandinistas and the PLO in Mexico City in 1969, met with various DFLP leaders and the PLO's Latin American liaison, Issam Ali, again in Mexico City. The immediate result, according to the State Department, was a PLO-FSLN joint communiqué on 5 February 1978 that affirmed “the bonds of solidarity” which exist between the two

revolutionary organizations. One month later, on 6 March, this was followed by a joint DFLP-FSLN declaration of war against “Yankee imperialism, the racist regime of Israel” and the Somoza government in Nicaragua. Appropriately enough, the joint declaration of war was made in Havana.

Libya and the FSLN Before the Revolution

Even before the triumph of the Nicaraguan Revolution, we received the solidarity of the people of the Libyan Jamahiriya, and, after it, we had a chance to speak and deal with our great friend, el-Khadaffi. — Interior Minister Tomas Borge, speaking in Tripoli at the 15th anniversary of the Libyan Revolution ceremonies, 1 September 1984.

While the communist Sandinistas had been training at PLO camps in Libya since the mid-1970s, the first direct Libyan-FSLN links appear to have been forged in the spring of 1979, when Muammar Khadafi invited the leaders of various Central American guerrilla groups, including the FSLN, to attend his annual Green Book Conference in Benghazi. The result, according to the State Department, was a Libyan pledge of generous financial and political support for the FSLN. An unconfirmed report source says the FSLN delegation at the Benghazi meeting was headed by the ubiquitous Tomas Borge, who hit it off extremely well with Khadafi.

SANDINISTAS AND TERRORISM AFTER THE REVOLUTION

As soon as it came to power in July 1979,

CUBA: MODEL OF A SOVIET SATELLITE

Academics, foreign policy experts, sociologists and political historians all delight in arguing over exactly when Fidel Castro became a communist and America's role (if any) in pushing Cuba into the Soviet orbit. Whatever the merits of these arguments, no one today can seriously doubt that Fidel Castro is a communist or that Cuba is in the Soviet camp.

By the mid-1960s, Cuba was completely dependent on Soviet economic aid. Today the Soviets pump an estimated \$4-5 billion into Cuba's economy every year with no demand or expectation of *financial* payment. They do, however, demand payment of another kind from Castro's dependent government, in the form of total subservience to Soviet foreign policy interests.

As part of an economic-aid-for-political-subservience deal that Castro struck with the Russians in 1968, Cuba's DGI (*Direction General de Inteligencia*) became the only foreign intelligence service directly run by the Soviet Union. Its purpose is to gather intelligence and coordinate communist subversion in the

the FSLN assumed a larger role in the Soviet terror network. Before 1979 they were simply clients, but today the communist Sandinistas are significant patrons of terrorism in their own right. The apprenticeship is over. Under Cuban and Soviet direction, Nicaragua has become a major training center for Soviet-supported Latin American, Middle Eastern and Western European terrorist groups. The Sandinistas predictably strengthened their previous ties to Cuba, Libya and the PLO after taking power, but they also formed close links with European terrorist groups like the Provisional IRA and Spain's ETA (Basque Homeland and Liberty) for the first time.

Sandinista Intervention in Latin America

Nicaragua's effort to export its revolution to El Salvador via the FMLN guerrillas, which seemed so close to success six years ago, has had its difficulties over the last four years. However, arms shipments to the communist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador continue, either smuggled in by boat across the Gulf of Fonseca or overland through the jungles of Honduras.

A lot of Sandinista-Cuban effort now appears to be concentrated on South, rather than Central, America and much of this, particularly in Colombia, Bolivia, Peru and Chile, is financed through the drug trade. Indeed, in his March 1986 speech asking Congress for aid to Nicaragua's *contras*, President Reagan presented a photograph of Federico Vaughan, a right-hand man to Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge,



Ortega with Wojciech Jaruzelski, First Secretary of the Polish United Workers Party. Photo: Department of Defense



Ortega with East German Communist Party General Secretary and Chief of State Erich Honecker. East Germany provides military equipment as well as internal security and military advisers to Sandinista regime. Photo: Department of Defense

loading cocaine on a U.S.-bound airplane at Los Brasiles military airfield in Nicaragua.

"Euro-terror" and the Sandinistas

Whatever one may think about the Provisional Irish Republican Army (Provos), they should not be confused with the devoutly Catholic and ardently nationalistic IRA of the 1920s. Today's Provos are openly Marxist-Leninist, anti-Catholic (indeed, anti-religious) and, on the rare occasions when they espouse nationalistic sentiments, it is invariably in lock-step with the Soviet Party line of the moment. The Provos openly desire to overthrow both the British in the north and the Irish Republic in the south in order to establish a "United Socialist Ireland."

Since they are a violent group formed for the express purpose of engaging in criminal activities (such as murder, arson and armed robbery), the Provos are outlawed in both Britain and Ireland. They do, however, have a legal front organization, Sinn Fein, that expresses Provo political opinions without actually engaging in violence. Given their beliefs, one would expect the Provos to have excellent relations with the FSLN, and they do. Below are some excerpts from the platform adopted at Sinn Fein's 1985 Ard-Fheis (Congress):

This Ard-Fheis reaffirms support for those struggling for liberation and an end to exploitation throughout the world . . . we condemn American imperialist backing of repressive regimes in Central America, in particular El Salvador and Chile (They're a little confused about geography.) . . . we condemn the U.S. arming and financing of

United States and outside the American hemisphere. The first Soviet boss, KGB General Viktor Semenov, set up shop adjacent to the DGI director's office in Havana, and Cuban Intelligence has been under direct Soviet control ever since. Another similar Cuban agency equally subservient to the Soviets is the Americas Department. This department performs the instigation, planning and coordination of pro-Soviet terrorist activities throughout Latin America. Nicaragua and the FSLN are the Americas Department's biggest success to date.

What is more, Cuba has the largest military in Latin America. Though its total population is under 10 million, its vast armed forces number over 300,000. Supposedly this army is needed to defend Cuba against the United States. In fact, however, for more than 20 years its battles have been far from home — mainly against black Africans in the Horn of Africa or in Angola, and in the jungles of this hemisphere. In that time they have fought American forces on one occasion — for three days on Grenada.

That Cuba supports the overthrow of non-communist governments by violent means is hardly a secret. As any short-

wave listener knows, Cuba proudly proclaims itself to be the "Free Territory of the Americas," implying that the rest of the Americas are not free and must be "liberated." A Cuban document, however, explicitly states Cuba's aims in this regard.

"The Republic of Cuba," it says, ". . . considers that its help to those under attack and to people that struggle for their liberation constitutes its internationalist right and duty . . . Cuba aspires to establish, along with the other countries of Latin America and the Caribbean — freed from foreign domination and internal oppression — one large community of nations joined by . . . the common struggle against colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism. . . ." These quotes urging Cubans to take up the Soviet Union's imperialist burden are not from a captured and secret Cuban policy paper. They are from Article XII of Cuba's 1976 Constitution.

Castro's record is clearest on one point — Cuba is one of the tightest dictatorships in the world, with no independent institutions allowed and no form of freedom permitted to challenge the system. This policy is based on Castro's

historic dictum, "outside the revolution, no rights at all." For 25 years, Cubans have enjoyed no rights at all other than what Fidel Castro determines to be within his revolution.

For a vivid and lucid firsthand account of the horrific experiences which befell so many brave and honorable Cubans at the hands of Fidel since 1959, read Armando Valladares' famous book, *Against All Hope*. In the 8 June 1986 edition of the *New York Times*, Ronald Radosh wrote of this book, "It has taken us 25 years to find out the terrible reality — Mr. Castro has created a new despotism that has institutionalized torture as a mechanism of social control."

In the words of a 1986 French television report, "Castro has made Cuba the linchpin between Soviet power and a hemisphere which is engaged in a struggle to see if its future lies with liberal democracy or totalitarian communism dressed up as national liberation."

Castro and the Soviets have made their intentions known. It is time now that America fulfill its role as the defender of liberal democracy and ensure that Castro's cancer is never allowed to spread to our neighbors to the south.



the contras who are attempting to destabilize and overthrow the democratically elected government of Nicaragua.

Besides proclaiming their mutual "solidarity," the FSLN and the Provos are often seen together at pro-Soviet international conferences, such as in Rome, Italy, in 1982 during the Second International Conference of the League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples. At that meeting Sinn Fein President Ruairi O'Bradaigh (Rory O'Brady) shared the rostrum with representatives of the Nicaraguan and Algerian governments, various terrorists from El Salvador and East Timor (Indonesia), and the usual assortment of Palestinian groups.

According to the State Department, Defense Department and British government sources, Provo and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) terrorists train at bases in Nicaragua. What the Provos and INLA give the communist Sandinistas in return is not clear, though reportedly the Sandinistas have been given intelligence regarding British targets in Belize.

Besides cultivating relations with the Provos, the FSLN furthers Soviet designs in Europe through its ties to ETA, a group whose ostensible aim is the separation of Spain's Basque provinces from the rest of the country. Properly called *Euzkadi ta Askatasuna*, Basque for "Basque Homeland and Freedom," ETA was founded in Venezuela, homeland of "Carlos the Jackal" and past refuge of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. Informed observers say the new organization was created on order from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's (CPSU) International Department, which took over most functions of the old Comintern.

Since 1979, ETA has developed firm ties to Nicaragua — very firm ties, if the account of Gregorio Jimenez Morales, one of a group of five "Ettarras" arrested in Costa Rica in 1983, is correct. Jimenez,

"Libyan fighters, arms and backing to the Nicaraguan people have reached them because they fight with us. They fight America on its own ground." — Col. Muammar Khadaffi, *The New York Times*, 1 September 1984. Photo: AP/Wide World

whose papers showed lengthy visits to the Soviet Union, Ireland, Cuba and Nicaragua, said that his group had direct contact with Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge, Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal and Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto. He also claimed that over 100 Ettarras had trained in Nicaragua in 1982 and 1983 and that Nicaragua provides ETA with false passports and other documents.

The general thrust of Jimenez's allegations, if not the specific details, has been amply confirmed by Spain's ambassador in Managua, Mariano Baselga. A highly dutiful man, Baselga gave his government specific accounts of ETA training at camps in Montelimar and Bilsa. So far, the Spanish government has done its best to ignore those reports.

Communist Sandinistas reportedly also train and shelter terrorists from Italy's Red Brigades and Germany's *Rote Armee Fraktion* (RAF or Red Army Faction), better known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang. According to the *Miami Herald*, members of these same terrorist groups occupy high-ranking positions in the Sandinista army. There is speculation that the Sandinistas have ties to other European radical leftist terror groups, such as GRAPO, Direct Action and the Communist Combat Cells, but reliable information is lacking. This is not the case with FSLN ties to Iran.

Iranian Connection

Now that they control an ostensibly sovereign Nicaragua, the communist Sandinistas can expand the scope of their terrorist activities through state-to-state ties. Given the nature of Khomeini's Islamic Republic

(which was set up just six months before the Sandinistas came to power) and the anti-American policies of both governments, it should come as no surprise that Iran and Nicaragua quickly developed extremely friendly ties. The initial contact was made through the good offices of the FSLN's old friend, Yasir Arafat, whose relations with Khomeini, now at an all-time low, were very good at the time.

After that, events moved rapidly. Again according to the State Department bulletin *The Sandinistas and Middle Eastern Radicals*, Iran's pro-Soviet prime minister, Mirhussein Musavi, may have arranged for Iranian arms shipments to Nicaragua during his January 1985 state visit to that country. Indeed, according to that report, "Musavi is believed to control Iran's terrorist operations" and "there may be some Iranian funding for the international terrorist presence in Nicaragua."

Later in 1986, ABC News had confirmed reports that Iran was indeed providing direct military assistance to the Sandinistas. This information was contained in a lengthy communiqué from Khomeini to the communist Sandinista leadership, in which he reaffirmed his solidarity with the Nicaraguan FSLN. This communiqué appeared in the 3 December 1986 edition of a Nicaraguan pro-Sandinista newspaper.

PLO Connection After 1979

We say to our brother Arafat that Nicaragua is his land and the PLO cause is the cause of the Sandinistas. —Tomas Borge

Anyone who threatens Nicaragua will have to face Palestinian combatants.

— Yasir Arafat

When the Sandinistas came to power in July 1979, the PLO did its level best to ensure they stayed in power. Within their first month after taking power, the communist Sandinista leadership officially recognized the PLO as an ally. That very month, a PLO-chartered plane, ostensibly carrying medical supplies from Beirut for Nicaraguan refugees, was detained and searched in Tunis. The plane was found to contain over 50 tons of arms, including an antiaircraft gun. The Tunisians, who would later invite Arafat to establish his headquarters in their country, did not allow the shipment to go through.

Once firmly in charge, the FSLN rewarded the PLO for its past help by breaking diplomatic relations with Israel and granting the PLO the full government-to-government diplomatic ties usually accorded sovereign countries. In July 1980, on the first anniversary of the Sandinista "revolution," Yasir Arafat paid a four-day official "state visit" to Nicaragua. At a reception in his honor on 22 July, he hailed "the strategic and military ties between the Sandinista and Palestinian revolutions." He further stated, "The links between us are not new. Your comrades did not come to this country just to train, but to fight. Your

enemies are also our enemies." Later that day, in an interview on Radio Sandino, Arafat concluded, "The only way, then, is for increased struggle against imperialism, colonialism and Zionism."

These remarks were just more polite talk. Shortly after his Nicaragua visit, Arafat sent PLO colonel Mutlag Hamadan and 25 military technicians to Managua to instruct the Sandinistas in the use of East Bloc military equipment. This was followed in November by a \$12 million loan from the PLO. By January 1981, PLO pilots were in Nicaragua flying helicopters and other aircraft and training their FSLN counterparts.

In return for this aid, the communist Sandinistas allowed PLO agents in Latin America to use Nicaragua as a safe base of operations and supported false cover identities with genuine Nicaraguan documents and passports. The Sandinistas also forge, buy or otherwise obtain foreign documents, including American passports, for illicit purposes. According to a reliable source who is active in various pro-Sandinista U.S. political groups, American passports are sometimes voluntarily "donated" to the Sandinistas by the "useful idiots" (a favorite phrase of Lenin's) among their U.S. sympathizers. These passports are usually reported stolen and doctored for future use by the Sandinistas or their Soviet, Cuban, PLO and European terrorist allies.

The FSLN's most vital contribution to the PLO's cause, however, is simply making its country available as a PLO training center. This became particularly important following Israel's destruction of the PLO's Lebanese infrastructure in 1982.

Libyan Connection After 1979

Libyan fighters, arms and backing to the Nicaraguan people have reached them because they fight with us. They fight America on its own ground. — Muammar Khadafi, 1 September 1984.

As we saw earlier, initial Sandinista contact with Libya was arranged by the PLO, but by early 1979 the FSLN had developed its own channels of communication with Khadafi. The two key figures in setting up the FSLN's Libyan links were the ever-present Tomas Borge and FSLN Construction Minister Moises Hassan, a Nicaraguan of Arab descent. According to the State Department, both of these men were instrumental in getting a \$100 million loan from Khadafi to the communist Sandinistas in 1981, though the *London Times* reports the amount at \$400 million.

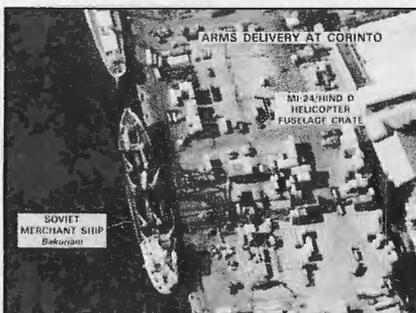
Again, Borge's role appears to have been vital. In late 1980 he made an unpublicized visit to Libya to complete arrangements for the \$100 million loan and discuss Libyan offers for "joint agricultural ventures" in Nicaragua. Indeed, on 20 June 1981, in a Managua ceremony commemorating Khadafi's ouster of the United States from Wheelus Air Force Base, the head of Libya's People's Bureau (Embassy), Ibrahim Muhammad Frahat, openly spoke of

Libya's "particular friendship" with Borge. Incidentally, a foreign intelligence source claims that the "joint agricultural ventures" Borge discussed in Tripoli were proposed terrorist training bases in rural areas.

Libya's support for the communist Sandinistas has not been limited to economic aid. The Departments of State and Defense both report that Libyan pilots and mechanics are training the Nicaraguan Air Force. Given the usual quality of Libyan pilots and mechanics, we should pray that those reports are true. If the Nicaraguan Air Force has to rely on Libyan assistance, we have nothing to fear from that quarter.

Unfortunately, other Libyan military aid has to be taken more seriously. For example, in April 1983, four Libyan planes were forced to land in Manaus, Brazil, for technical reasons. Although the crews claimed they were carrying medical supplies to Colombia, the skeptical Brazilians searched the planes and found they were carrying 84 tons of arms, explosives and other military equipment to Nicaragua. This, of course, is merely the Libyan arms shipment we found out about earlier. Had the Cubans finished

Sandinista Interior Minister Tomas Borge received his terrorist training at a PLO base in Lebanon in 1969. Borge is also a confidant of Col. Muammar Khadafi. Photo: AP/Wide World



Satellite photo of Soviet arms delivery to Nicaragua at Corinto. Photo: Department of Defense

the airfield they were building at Port Salines, the Libyan planes could have landed in Grenada and flown on to Nicaragua undetected.

The 84 tons of Libyan "medical aid" (so similar to the crates of Cuban "economic aid" found after the liberation of Grenada) would, no doubt, have found their way to Soviet-sponsored terrorists in El Salvador and elsewhere. According to Defense and State Department sources, Sandinista weapons and training expertise benefit not only the Salvadoran Communists, but also Argentine Montonero, Uruguayan Tupamaro, Chilean MIR, Basque ETA, German RAF and Italian Red Brigades terrorists. In fact, Nicaragua's aid to international terrorists is so widespread that, in February 1985, Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, not generally known for making waves, complained to Italy's Parliament that Nicaragua had become a haven for Red Brigades terrorists.

Khadafi's chief motive for sending Nicaragua massive amounts of "Libyan lend-lease" appears to be a general desire to aid all "progressive and revolutionary" activities, but Nicaragua's availability as an operational base and training center for Libyan agents is almost certainly a factor in influencing Libyan policy. For instance, there is conclusive evidence of Libyan-sponsored terrorist subversion in no fewer than 27 countries in the Western Hemisphere, particularly in the Caribbean.

And there is no doubt at all that Libyans are operating in Nicaragua. There have been several reports of Libyans assisting the Sandinistas in their fight against the contras, in addition to being trainers and pilots. One intelligence officer tells of a group of Libyans who were staying at Managua's Hotel Camino Real while undergoing intensive weapons and explosives training in the spring of 1985. Interestingly, the Libyans always spoke with each other in slightly accented American-idiom English rather than their native Arabic. While I am not at liberty to say precisely what they were up to, they clearly were planning to carry out a terrorist act in the United States. Fortunately, they did not succeed *this time*.

Cuban Connection

Once the communist Sandinistas came to power, they immediately strengthened their ties with Cuba, the Soviet Union and the East Bloc. Only the Carter administration and the Sandinistas' U.S. groupies (jokingly referred to as "Sandalistas") claimed this wouldn't happen. Only the Carter administration was surprised when it did.

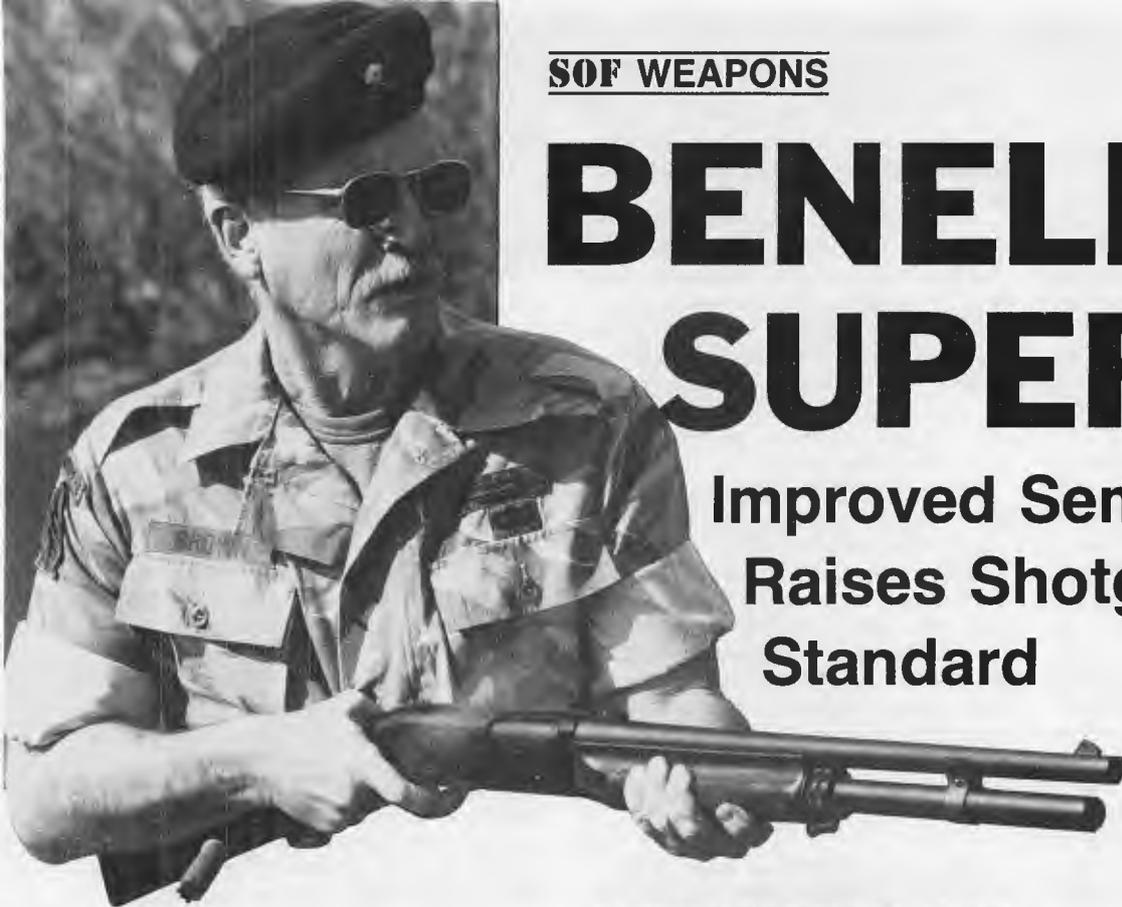
Today there are hundreds of Soviet, East German, Bulgarian and North Korean "advisers" in Nicaragua, but the nearly 7,000 Cubans easily outnumber all the rest. It sometimes appears that the Cubans, rather than the FSLN, are really running the country. One Sandinista government official who recently defected specifically cited his reason for leaving to be that he had to "take

Continued on page 90

BENELLI'S SUPER 90

Improved Semiauto Raises Shotgun Standard

Text & Photos
by Kevin E. Steele



BENELLI'S 121-M1 combat shotgun has gained a reputation worldwide as one of the finest semiautomatic combat shotguns. It is standard issue to several military and law enforcement special units, such as Italy's *Carabinieri* (National Police). Although most professionals still prefer a pump shotgun, the 121-M1 has played a major role in changing many minds in favor of this semiauto.

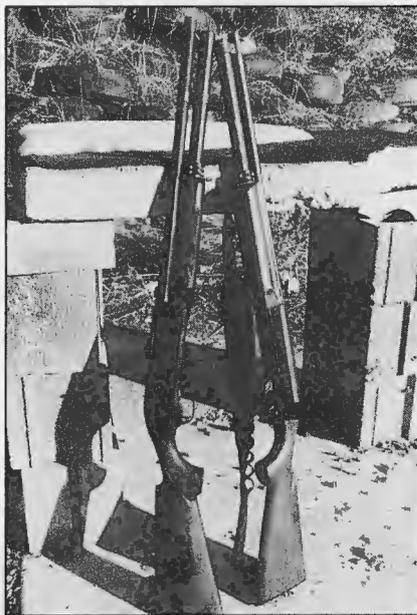
So why redesign the weapon? If it ain't broke, don't fix it. But wait.

Benelli teamed up with Heckler & Koch, Benelli's distributor in the United States, to improve an already outstanding weapon. From this team effort has come the recently announced Benelli Super 90, now available through H&K outlets in the United States. At first glance, the Super 90 looks rather nondescript, without its predecessor's Browning-like humpback receiver. The Super 90, however, improves the design of the original 121-M1. The result is a near-perfect weapon.

The use of smoothbore scatterguns in a more modern military combat role was pioneered by Americans. It probably began in the French and Indian War. There are numerous examples in the 20th century, from the Winchester Model '97s used in World War I trenches to the "China" Marines from Shanghai to Peking, during World War II's Pacific campaigns and in Vietnam. Combat shotguns are here to stay.

The latest development in their use is a gradual, still-evolving change in preference from the slide-action, or pump, to the semiauto.

Pump shotguns have held sway in military circles because the semiauto was not



The Super 90, left, more than stands up to its noteworthy predecessor, Benelli's 121-M1, right.

SIGHTING IN

Kevin Steele is a gun writer very familiar to long-time SOF readers. He is a former writer and editor at *Guns Magazine* and also worked for SOF's corporate parent, Omega Group, Ltd., as a vice president for publications. Kevin is now a Colorado-based freelance writer covering outdoor and shooting topics.

considered dependable enough for military or law enforcement use. In some cases, though, this was more the fault of paper hulls used in the manufacture of ammunition than the weapon itself.

Still, pumps are manually operated mechanisms with enough force to chamber and an extractor strong enough to eject the most recalcitrant shell. Pumps remained the choice of most military planners when shotguns were required, with such rare exceptions as the use of the Browning auto by the British SAS in the Malaya campaign.

But the invention of the extruded plastic shotgun shell hulls led military armorers to reconsider the semiauto shotgun. The plastic shotgun shell is not nearly as susceptible to water damage as paper; it is lighter and less expensive to manufacture than brass. It soon revolutionized the manufacture of shotgun ammunition.

But the new type of ammo's not the only reason to choose this Benelli semiauto over your favorite pump.

Benelli's new Super 90, like its predecessor 121-M1, is a recoil-operated semiautomatic shotgun. The Super 90 features a spring-actuated, inertia-locking principle which keeps the chamber of the Super 90 sealed until recoil forces have dissipated. Then the locking mechanism disengages itself from its recesses and allows the bolt to unlock, then retract, thereby extracting and ejecting the spent hull. It then returns forward to insert a fresh round delivered by the carrier into the chamber.

One major design difference between the new Super 90 and the 121-M1 is the Super 90's rotating-type bolt, which features twin locking lugs that mate with recesses in the



ABOVE: Super 90 undergoing field testing by SOF staff.

BELOW: Benelli's new Super 90 field stripped. It is easier to take down for cleaning than most assault rifles.



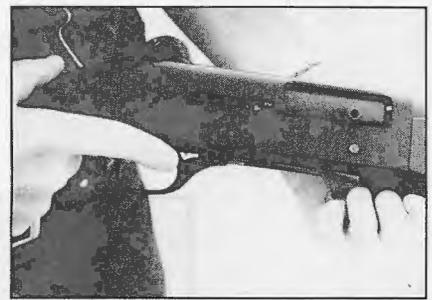
BENELLI SUPER 90 SPECIFICATIONS

Gauge:	12 (3-inch chamber)
Barrel Length:	19.25 inches
Overall Length:	41.5 inches
Weight:	7.5 pounds
Magazine Capacity:	7 2 ³ / ₄ -inch rounds 6 3-inch rounds
Stock:	Black plastic polymer
Sights:	Adjustable square-notch rear; rounded blade front
Length of Pull:	14 inches
Drop at Comb:	2 inches
Manufacturer/ Distributor:	Heckler & Koch, Inc., Dept. SOF, 14601 Lee Road, Chantilly, VA 22021

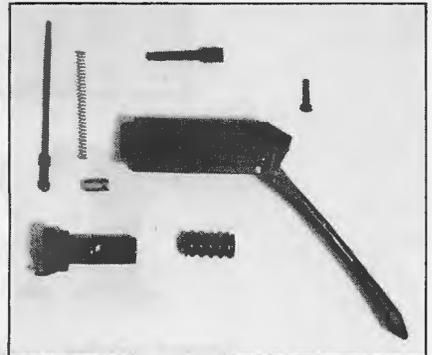
barrel extension. The 121-M1 bolt has a locking bar attached which engages a slot in the upper receiver. The advantage of the new design is its strength. The Super 90's rotary, lugged bolt is capable of containing the highest pressures generated by either the 2.75-inch or 3-inch magnum shells. The Super 90 features a 3-inch chamber, 1/4-inch larger than that of the 121-M1.

The Super 90 exceeds the 121-M1 in another aspect: weight. The newer weapon weighs 7.5 pounds, 1/2-pound more than the older design. Part of this additional weight is in the barrel, 19.25 inches for the Super 90 versus 18.75 inches for the 121-M1, with overall lengths of 41.5 inches and 40 inches respectively.

Gone are the 121's unique inverted buckhorn-type rear sight and square front blade sight, both of which were non-adjustable. The Super 90 sports a more traditional, low-profile square-notch rear sight that is drift adjustable for windage. The front blade, also a lower-profile type, is rounded, measuring about 1/16-inch across, and is mounted to a ramp that is integral to the barrel. The front sight is non-adjustable. As



A major improvement over its predecessor, the 121-M1, is the Super 90's small silver button, shown at the fingertip. The button allows the shooter to quickly chamber a round from the magazine without the inconvenience of the 121-M1, and also serves to hold open the bolt.



The disassembled bolt carrier of the Super 90 shows the new rotating multi-lugged bolt and the system's recoil-delaying coil spring.

the rear sight's notch has a 1/4-inch wide opening, the sight picture is not too coarse for long-range accuracy, nor too precise for a fast, short-range engagement.

One opportunity for improvement of the sights was overlooked, however. Benelli did not inset into the front blade a red or yellow insert, or better yet, a tritium element for low-light target acquisition. But then, it's hard to beat wrapping a white handkerchief around the muzzle when the Super 90 is intended for night ops. (That's an old Border Patrol technique).

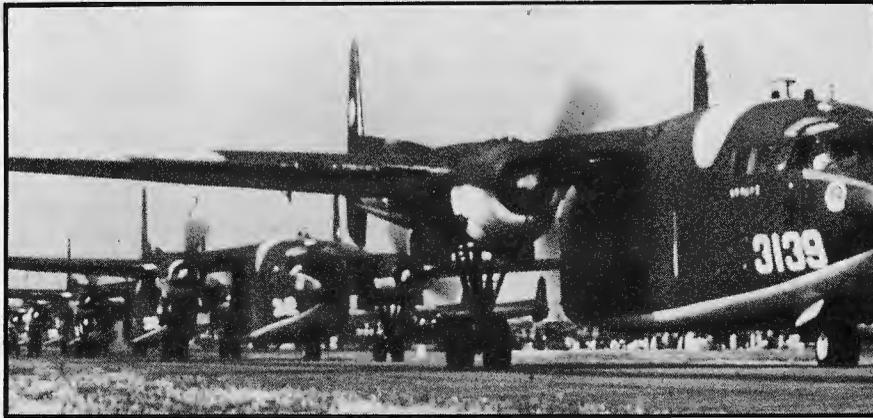
Unlike the 121-M1's oil-finished wood butt and forestock, the Super 90 has been dressed up with black, high-strength polymer stocks, featuring molded checkering along both sides of the forestock and the wrist of the buttstock. The polymer material is both lighter and stronger than wood, and won't split or shatter if the gun has to double as a club.

One option of the Super 90 is a pistol grip stock constructed of the same polymer material as the straight stock. Both stocks attach to the receiver via a through-screw inserted in the pistol grip. Either buttstock also comes complete with a 1-inch solid rubber recoil pad, another improvement over the 121-M1's plastic butt cap.

Integral to the Super 90's buttstocks are the sling swivel slot molded into the center of the butt. This sling slot will accept a

Continued on page 94

ROC army C-119 "Flying Boxcars" loaded with IAAV paratroopers ready for takeoff.



TAIWAN HOOKUP

Airborne Vets Jump in ROC

Text by Mick Doyle

Photos Courtesy of International Association of Airborne Veterans

“DAMN! I'm gonna land in a rice paddy!”

Moments after this cry of shock came about 60 “slurps,” as parachutists from the International Association of Airborne Veterans (IAAV) sank into the rice paddies, cane fields and shallow fishponds that comprise DZ Chaw Chow on southern Taiwan.

On Day 4 of an eight-day excursion, the IAAV jumpers exited the Republic of China (ROC) army C-119s and discovered the soggy DZ Chaw Chow. The ROC army had run the jumpers through a refresher ground school on Day 3 at the Airborne and Special Warfare Center at Ping Tung. The first two and last four days of the trip were taken up with official visits to Chinese military memorials and bases, or free-time excursions to the sights on Taiwan.

The American, Canadian, Australian and British parachutists who made up the IAAV party, including *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Contributing Editor John Donovan, found

the C-119 a breeze to jump from — minimal prop blast and the high twin-boom tail made for an easy exit. Also, the venerable but non-steerable T-10B parachutes, which the ROC had modified by adding capewells and snap hooks to the harness assembly, made for more than adequate chutes. And while definitely on the wet side, DZ Chaw Chow provided a soft landing.

The ROC “Black Hats” who ran the jump are meticulous in their handling of such events. In 250,000-plus jumps out of Ping Tung, they boast that there has never been a major malfunction. Backing up this claim are the reactions of many IAAV jumpers who were very impressed with the professionalism of the ROC army instructors and jump masters. With more than 60 participants in this jump, not a single injury was reported. They also noted the skill of the Divine Dragons, ROC's equivalent of our Golden Knights, who did a free-fall jump after the IAAV's static-line exercise.

The trip was sponsored by the IAAV (an

organization open to all former or current airborne veterans) and hosted by the Republic of China Parachute Association (ROCPA), whose 1,000 members are involved in the support of parachuting, hang-glider, drag-chuting, hot air ballooning and other aeronautic sports.

Lieutenant General Chen-Chou Shih, president of ROCPA and second-in-command of the Chinese army, presented the ROC parachute wings at a formal ceremony at the Warfare Center.

Following this ceremony, ROCPA members led their IAAV guests through a final training session called “Kam Pai, Kimen Kou Liang” — that's bottoms up on 120-proof joy juice!

The Taiwan tour for 1987 will take place 31 October to 11 November. For information and reservations, contact: International Association of Airborne Veterans, Suite 181, 606 West Barry St., Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 327-3120. ✉



ABOVE: Kneeling from left to right: SOF Contributing Editor John Donovan, Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Art Director Craig Nunn with Republic of China paratroopers and equipment.

RIGHT: Left to right: WWII airborne vet Carlos Medina, Vietnam vet Windy Shoulderblade and 11th Abn. Div. vet Paul Lara yuck it up after successful jump.



LEFT: ROC basic jump wings awarded to IAAV members in Taiwan.

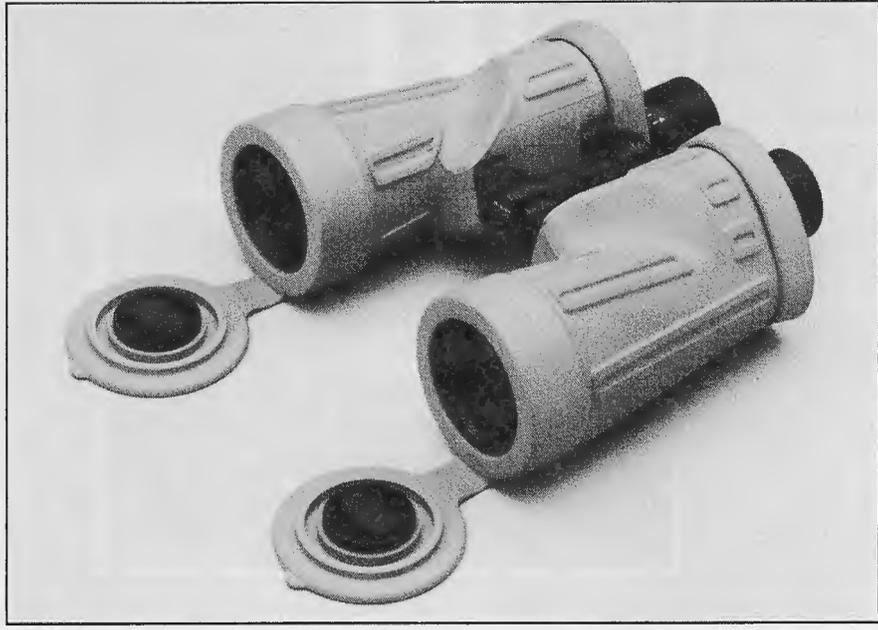


ABOVE: Left to right: Former Canadian Mountie Ron Kurelo and Ontario Regiment recon vet "Rocky" Thompson get acquainted with two especially divine members of ROC's Divine Dragons paratroop team.

T&E

NIKON BINOCULARS

by SOF Staff



RUGGED enough for extreme conditions, Nikon's new Yachtsman 7x50 IF (individual-focusing) armored binoculars join the elite group of high-quality field glasses that are built to outlast the user.

This claim isn't Nikon ad hype — it's based on SOF's own field tests. We dropped, we hammered, we boiled, we froze, we threw in salt water, we dragged in the dirt these Yachtsman binoculars. We did everything but strap a Timex watch to the side and run an M1 Abrams tank over them. But even if we had, they'd still come up ticking. Nikon Yachtsman binocs are as close to indestructible as anyone will ever need — at least on *this* planet.

Using O-rings and gaskets similar to those found on Nikon's underwater camera, the Nikonos-V, the Yachtsman are impervious to water. We submerged them for 12 hours and they showed no signs of leaking. Encased in thick "signal orange" rubber armor, they are easy to hold when wet, resist shock and can be spotted quickly when visibility is poor.

One exceptional characteristic our tests discovered was that the lenses *never* fog — even under sudden, drastic temperature changes. This is a great attribute when using binoculars in winter, since they're usually kept in a warm pack while not in use.

Nikon's 7x50 Yachtsman binoculars are waterproof, fogproof and can take a beating.

However, field binoculars shouldn't be judged solely on their ability to withstand inordinate abuse, but on how much they allow the viewer to see. Once again,

Yachtsman prove superior to many competitors. Their field of view and magnification level make them ideal for surveillance and other long-range work. They also have the second highest "brightness index" of all Nikon binoculars, which means that in low-light scenarios — twilight or dusk — images can be seen with stunning clarity.

When not in use, front lenses are protected by rubberized flip-up/flip-down lids that are permanently attached to the body. Inside these lens lids is a device that holds the rear eyepiece caps so they won't get lost.

These two features are a mixed blessing. The front lens lids have a tendency to flip over the lenses and block your view when you hold the binoculars upside-down. Granted, you're *not supposed* to hold them upside-down, but in an emergency you sometimes can't avoid it. A rubber band around each lens body to hold the lens lids flat solves this problem. More annoying is that the rear eyepiece caps aren't anchored to the body. Though the front lens lids are designed to hold them when the binoculars are in use, these caps can easily fall out of the eyepieces if you're not careful to push them firmly into place.

Yachtsman feature high eyepoint eyepiece lenses and soft, fold-down rubber eyecaps to accommodate eyeglass wearers. The lenses are coated and aberration-free, with sharp focus even at the extreme edges.

According to Nikon, they chose an individual-focusing system for ultimate durability and resistance against shock and corrosion. While it's true that this feature makes for more rugged binoculars at a lower price, it is unnecessarily complex for most people — it takes too much time and coordination (especially with gloves on) to focus in a hurry.

Because of heavy lenses, armor and overall rugged construction, Yachtsman weigh in at a whopping three pounds — an important consideration if your gear is strapped to your back and you have to lug it through a swamp or up a mountain.

Also, this kind of quality doesn't come cheap. With a suggested retail price of \$505.00, most of us will have to think twice about whether we need such specialized equipment. Remember, these aren't general-purpose binoculars for casually watching sporting events or spying on your neighbors from the kitchen window. Yachtsman were designed to do their job under conditions which would destroy ordinary binoculars — all-weather surveillance, backcountry hunting and hiking, paramilitary ops and the like.

If you anticipate such hard times ahead, and you need binoculars that can take more than you'll dish out, get yourself a pair of Nikon Yachtsman. And with a 25-year warranty, Nikon isn't pulling any punches — these binoculars are sure to rank as a family heirloom.

For information on Nikon binoculars and riflescopes, request the SOF literature packet from Nikon Inc., 19601 Hamilton, Torrance, CA 90502, or call toll-free 1-800-645-6687. ☒

**NIKON YACHTSMAN
7X50 BINOCULARS
SPECIFICATIONS**

Focusing System Individual
Magnification 7X
Objective Diameter 50mm
Angular Field of View:
 Apparent 51.1
 Real 7.3
Relative Brightness 50.4
Exit Pupil 7.1mm
Eye Relief 10mm
Size (LxW) 7.5
 x 8.3 inches
Weight 48 ounces

COLT COBRA .45

T & E

by Peter G. Kokalis

WHEELGUNS are an American anachronism. Surpassed eons ago by semiautomatic pistols in both reliability and firepower, they linger on the belts of police and hunters like bayonets on modern assault rifles. They are difficult to conceal, cannot be reloaded with consistency or speed and require an inordinate amount of practice to gain proficiency in the double-action mode.

In the revolver's favor it must be said that it is less ammunition-sensitive, can be stored forever without fear of damage to a magazine follower spring and is a proven man-stopper when chambered for the 50-year-old .357 Magnum cartridge.

Colt's latest entry in this antique derby continues its 30-year fetish for snakes. Deadly hamadryad, the King Cobra, justifiably instills greater fear in mankind than either the Python or Boa, Colt's earlier reptilian model names.

But King Cobra is nothing more or less than an Mk V-frame Colt (the so-called Trooper/Lawman series) .357 Magnum with a new barrel configuration and executed in stainless steel. With the exception of some small components such as the sights, portions of the trigger mechanism and springs, the King Cobra is fabricated from 410- and 416-series stainless steel, including both the button-broached barrel and forged frame.

Its ramped front sight with red plastic insert and the white-outline, Micro-type adjustable rear sight are matte blued steel. The front sight is mounted to the forward-rising, full-length, integral base by a blued, solid steel pin, the rear sight by a junky-looking roll pin. The top of the frame and barrel rib have been glass-beaded to produce a dull, non-glare, matte finish. All remaining exterior surfaces have been satin polished, except for the investment-cast trigger and hammer, which also carry a matte finish.

A black rubber grip molded with three finger grooves contrasts nicely with this metal finish. Relieved on the left side to accommodate speed loaders, the grip also has a "round-but" configuration. Though made by Pachmayr, it carries the Colt emblem. While this type of grip is great for absorbing felt recoil, it should be replaced for law enforcement applications because rubber pistol grips do not permit rapid readjustment of an improper hold during stressful situations.

Our test specimen was fitted with a 6-inch barrel, though an optional 4-inch barrel is available, too. Only four ounces heavier, the 6-inch barrel is substantially more effective in reducing muzzle climb and target reacquisition time when .357 Magnum heavy hitters are used.

Machined from solid bar stock, King Cobra barrels feature a solid top rib, in



Colt's new Cobra — the poor man's Python — with 158-gr. Jacketed Hollow Point ammunition from Black Hills Shooters Supply is an effective combination for wheelgun aficionados.

contrast to the Python's distinctive, but quite useless, ventilated rib. This top rib is matched by a solid, full-length underlug ejector-rod housing. The muzzle is crowned flat and sweeps rearward in front of the ejector-rod housing. Either barrel length has six grooves with a left-hand twist of one turn in 14 inches to optimize performance of heavier 158-gr. bullets. There were some disfiguring chatter marks in the button-broached bore at the muzzle end of our test specimen, but they seemed to have no effect on the pistol's accuracy potential.

Colt revolver cylinders rotate clockwise and are operated by a handpiece that protrudes through a slot in the left side of the recoil shield. The cylinder's locking bolt is offset to the right of the frame's centerline, permitting location of the cylinder's locking notches slightly away from the thinnest portion of the cylinder wall. While the King Cobra's cylinder chambers are not counter-bored, there is a protective rim around the outer edge of the cylinder's rear face. The ejector rod is not latched at the front end and is not full-length for .357 Magnum cases. Locked at the rear only, the cylinder swings out, in the Colt manner, after the latch's thumbpiece (on the left side of the frame) has been pulled to the rear.

A coil mainspring powers the hammer, which has deeply cut, transverse serrations on its spur. A transfer bar transmits the hammer's force to the firing pin. If the trigger is released while the hammer is falling, the bar will drop down and none of the hammer's force will strike the firing pin. The target-width trigger, with three serra-

tions, should be replaced with a narrow, smooth trigger for serious double-action work.

A startling feature of the King Cobra is its double-action pull weight of 16.5 pounds, with considerable "loading" at the end of the stroke just before the break. We deserve better than this from Colt. It irritates me to no end that every handgun produced in this country today requires a trip to the pistolsmith for trigger work. Stainless steel handguns are especially notorious for this flaw.

We selected 158-gr. Jacketed Hollow Point (JHP) ammunition from Black Hills Shooters Supply (Dept. SOF, 3401 S. Highway 79, Rapid City, SD 57701) for our test and evaluation. Using new .357 Magnum Winchester cases crimped securely over the scalloped bullet jacket's cannellure, this excellent general-purpose loading exited the 6-inch barrel with an average velocity of 1,161 fps. With a strong Weaver hold you can expect all six rounds to group into 1.3 inches at 21 feet.

Colt's new King Cobra is an attractive alternative to the Python. Stainless steel Pythons carry a suggested retail price of \$775.95. That will fetch you two King Cobras, which list for only \$389.95. As the Python frame is somewhat smaller, the King Cobra is heavier by four ounces. Those with justified requirements for a stainless steel .357 Magnum revolver can install proper wood grip panels and a tuned, smooth combat trigger on the King Cobra at modest added expense.

Priced to compete with the Smith & Wesson L-frames, it will give them a run for the money, as Colt long ago perfected the art of crush fitting barrels to frames. For further information, contact Colt Industries, Firearms Division (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1868, Hartford, CT 06102). ☒

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THREE-GUN MATCH

Continued from page 43

personal handguns.

The Document Grab pistol stage was similar to the Scrambler assault rifle stage, being a running assault that required shooting from various stations. The stage began with a holster test in which each competitor had to crawl under a barbed wire obstacle with the weapon holstered and then roll out into a prone position. A penalty was assessed if his weapon came unholstered. Once out from under the barbed wire, the shooter was allowed to draw his handgun, but he had to remain prone while waiting for the next start signal.

On the signal, the shooter ran to a simulated window and engaged a number of plates. That done, he was required to grab a waiting satchel, which had to be carried throughout the remainder of the stage. This involved running a few steps to a door, there to engage metal targets simulating enemy soldiers manning a machine-gun nest. The shooter then took shelter at the nest position, from which he then engaged two metal targets simulating hostile individuals seated in an armored car. Still dragging the satchel, the contestant then crawled through a tunnel topped with barbed wire, engaging several more metal plates through portholes in the tunnel wall. A shot on the last plate stopped the clock.

This course of fire proved quite difficult because shooters had to remember the location of the targets and when to reload.

Veteran IPSC shooter Chip McCormick won the stage, scoring 75.32.

The shotgun event consisted of a "Window Assault" and a "Red Dawn Assault."

The first shotgun stage required competitors to fire at metal plates from inside a simulated house, engaging eight targets from windows and doors. To complicate matters, shooters had to start seated outside the house with the shotgun placed beside them and loaded with only five rounds. On the start signal they could then either load the remaining three rounds before entering the house or do so during their movement inside.

Top IPSC shooter and former Bianchi Cup Champion Brian Enos took this stage with a score of 15.8.

The Red Dawn Assault also required shooters to move to various shooting stations to engage a mixture of metal plates and paper targets. The start position was from inside a cramped bunker, which proved a very tight fit for some of the larger shooters. On the start signal, targets were engaged from the bunker, after which shooters moved to other shooting stations that included negotiating and shooting from inside a concrete culvert, shooting from behind a wall and finally from inside a simulated house. To add to the difficulty, some of the targets had to be shot with slug loads, which required shooters to carefully decide how they loaded the magazine of their shotgun



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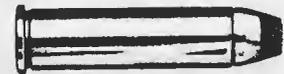
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and the order in which each target was engaged.

Document Grab stage winner Chip McCormick also won this stage, with a score of 41.36. There were some dramatic moments when competitor Debra Christofides accidentally broke her collarbone while shooting the stage. In spite of the pain and discomfort, she wanted to continue. Doctors at the range said no. Her courage did not go unnoticed and she was given a special "Tough Guy" award.

When the shooting was over and the final points were totaled, James Clark stood as the overall winner with a score of 66. He had shot consistently well in all the stages, finishing nine points ahead of the runner-up. Second came Chip McCormick with 75, and he also won the Armscorp of America Tyro Award for the best first-time SOF Three-Gun Match shooter. Brian Enos was third with 103. The Al Mar Knives Top Female Shooter Award winner was Sharon Kimbrel, who scored 498.

Garth Gaines won not only the Springfield Armory Annual Rifle Award but also the H&K Rifle Trophy for being the winner of the rifle event. USMC Gunnery Sergeant J.R. Able took the Military Armament Corporation Annual Armed Forces Trophy for achieving the highest overall score among active-duty servicemen competing. The JFS, Inc., Top Military (Reserve) Award for the highest overall score achieved by a member of the armed forces reserves was won by Jim Erickson. The MilArm Co. Ltd. Top Foreign Shooter Award winner was Kevin Young of Canada, and Lee Souter took the *Combat Handguns Magazine* Top Law Enforcement Officer Award.

The 1986 SOF Three-Gun Match was well organized, thanks to the hard work put in by Match Director Michael Horne and his staff of range officers and officials. The mandatory use of weapons supplied by the match staff was a challenging idea that was well received.

If you're up to the challenge, we'll see you on the range this year! ☘

52 IB

Continued from page 55

Interlocking fire from two M60 machine guns, supplemented by M203 grenade launcher rounds, cut down at least seven personnel in the first volley. One troop was nearly blown in two. A third M60 was used to prevent reinforcement from Rosario and the detachment at Baysag. Bulldozers present for highway construction were positioned to further impede both northern and southern access to the ambush site.

Despite their initial carelessness, which cost them dearly, the troops performed well once they recovered from their shock. The single platoon machine gunner, for instance, managed to get off approximately a dozen rounds in the crucial first seconds before the cover of the weapon was blown

off by a direct hit from an M60 round. His machine gun useless, he grabbed the rifle of a downed friend and squeezed off a few more shots before he, too, was cut down. Individual heroism was the norm in the uneven fight.

The unit was fortunate that the death grip of the driver, victim to the first volley, caused the 6 x 6 to roll, spilling the troops away from the ambushers and placing the truck bed so that it provided some cover. From this makeshift fort, the men attempted to maneuver left but were stopped by the intense volume of fire. Shouts calling on them to surrender were ignored, and they fought on desperately.

Accounts differ as to how much time actually elapsed. Lieutenant Colonel Vallejera, racing toward their location with reinforcements, apparently fought his way through the blocking force and reached the scene within half an hour. The survivors, though, remember the conflict as one of seemingly endless hours. Ultimately, every man was wounded and out of ammunition. One soldier in particular, Private First Class Edwin Danucop, is mentioned by his fellows as doggedly refusing to surrender, holding the guerrillas at bay until he could find no weapon with so much as a round remaining. Only when he had nothing left save an empty rifle did he capitulate. For his efforts he was gunned down by the communists as he sat, wounded, holding up his hands. His body was found blown over

backward, his arms in the same raised position. He has been recommended for the Gold Cross.

As Colonel Vallejera struggled to reach his men, a Nomad spotter plane which happened to be on a milk run to Catarman when the ambush report came in was dispatched for scout purposes. It buzzed the site as the ambushers moved among the survivors collecting weapons and such. This spooked the guerrillas, who hastily departed the area, taking with them all the weapons: 28 M16s and the M60. The unit had no M203s, another factor which no doubt contributed to the soldiers' inability to break clear.

The response of 52 IB to the ambush was indicative of the unit's aggressive nature and high esprit under Colonel Vallejera. Taking stock of the situation, the colonel estimated that the guerrillas would head for an area where previous operations had uncovered a number of guerrilla camps. The pursuit element, joined by Scout Ranger personnel, moved out in the early morning hours and was able, after several days of hard marching, to get in front of the guerrillas.

The communists were divided into two groups, with political operatives, including regional CPP notables, in the first body. The battalion's ambush caught them at ease. Six guerrillas were KIA and five weapons and a radio — all from the Baysag ambush — were recovered. Several individuals, including at least two ranking cadre, were seen to go down but were not among the dead. Blood trails led

from the scene.

The pursuit continued and, less than a week later, the second guerrilla body was encountered. In that fight three communists were KIA and four were WIA and taken prisoner (including three "amazons," or female guerrillas).

Paper Chase

Scheduled to attend the Command and General Staff Course in Manila, Lieutenant Colonel Vallejera departed 52 IB and the battalion appeared to take his rotation in stride. As the new commander worked into the area, Rudy, the XO, put the battalion through its paces. Morale remained high. Testament to that, as our own patrol moved through a succession of *barangay*, was the soldier with the infection. His foot was so swollen it would not fit into a boot, so he wore a shower slipper and limped along with us the entire first day, refusing to be left behind. Finally, at a detachment, he was ordered to stay and wait for our return.

Such behavior is common within Philippine Army ranks. If well led, the troops, for all their material and training shortcomings, will bear up under virtually any hardship and accomplish whatever tasks are given them. They complain little, are quick to learn and are generally easygoing in manner. Virtually all can express themselves in several languages. Most common in 52 IB is *Waray*, the language of Samar, with English and *Tagalog*, which in practice serves as the national language, used to a lesser extent. Relations with the populace are

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comfortable.

Still the campaign to paint the military as an undisciplined rabble continues. While there seems to be an increasing awareness in Western media circles that many of the atrocities and instances of indiscipline blamed on the military in the past were, in fact, the work of either private armies or unsupervised government militia, many episodes continue to be blamed on men in uniform. Some human rights and church groups — a prime example being Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP), which is currently seeking a Nobel Peace Prize for itself — are thoroughly infiltrated by the communists and thus serve as convenient mouthpieces for disinformation. They work overtime investigating alleged military abuses and publishing the results of their "investigations." Simultaneously, they flatly refuse to look into guerrilla abuses.

Recently, the communists have concentrated on the profitable stratagem of using human rights groups in efforts to immobilize units such as 52 IB through court cases. By constantly filing grievance writs through its fellow-travelers and agents, the CPP seeks to keep key personnel, such as battalion and company commanders, tied up answering court summonses. One company commander, a new second lieutenant, was answering just such a charge even as we were patrolling. Because of a subpoena regarding a concocted charge of kidnapping, the company lost its commander for a day just as surely as if he had been knocked out by a bullet.

As Filipino democracy has struggled to get back on its feet, this ever-present problem of how to tell friend from foe has grown more difficult. Privately, officers and men express dismay over policies coming from "the top." Emotions range from bewilderment to disgust and anger whenever the subject of government counterinsurgency policy is discussed. It is fairly widely known that the Aquino administration, in its efforts to effect a peace treaty, has even gone to the point of prohibiting the military from formulating a comprehensive plan for conducting stability operations. It is also generally understood that a prime communist goal is to neutralize the armed forces, the only cohesive group remaining in the vacuum left by the collapse of the Marcos political machine. Men in uniform see the government's do-nothing policy as tantamount to suicide — with the troops, of course, being the first to feel hard steel.

"Aquino saved us from Marcos," says our troop with the infected leg, "but she is giving us to the communists. She is a good person, but she is not a good administrator. She listens to bad advice. This is a crucial time. We need a strong leader."

For the most part, the troops bear their burdens stoically. In the days that followed, our patrol visited a number of sites. The discussions with the people went well. Finally, in the dead of night, with the rain running off our gear, we emerged at our pickup point. It was less than half a day

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before I was scheduled to catch a flight back to Manila.

As I boarded the plane, I reflected on the monumental changes the Philippines had gone through since my initial encounter with Samar. A year had passed, a year of intermittent stays in the field with a battalion I had come to call "mine." So much had changed, yet so much remained the same. 52 IB will do just fine in the months ahead. I flew away remembering the poignant observation offered by our tenacious, near-lame troop: "Even my parents are concerned about the future. It is good that you have come. But you can always leave. We have nowhere to go. We must fight. The communists will never be allowed to take over our country."

Catch 'Em! ☒

CITIZEN SOLDIERS

Continued from page 61

"I know how much we get from the legislature," insisted Harris, a frail man in his 80s who was accompanied to the interview by two staff officers, two NCOs and a civilian press officer. "But I'm not prepared to give out the figure."

SOF advised Harris that the budgetary information was public and he was obliged by law to make it available.

"That's right," Harris replied in the taped interview. "And I know what it is. But I'm not going to give it to you. . . . I just don't feel comfortable giving you that information."

Harris said, "Attendance is pretty high because you have a volunteer situation." Asked for records to verify his claim, Harris could not — or would not — provide any documents. The *Star-Telegram* had cited "sloppy paperwork" by TSG headquarters, so *Soldier of Fortune* asked if attendance reports had been filed. Harris replied, "Not recently."

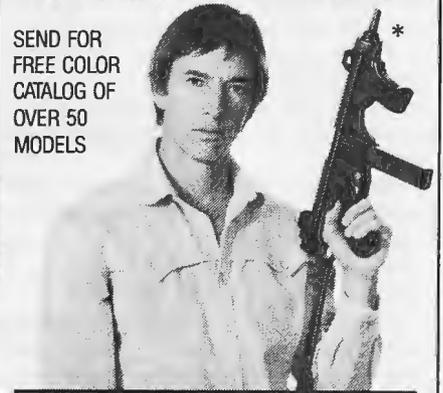
But other documents reflect a steady decline in enrollment and public support. Harris' predecessor, Major General William O. Green, just before his retirement issued a memo stating that the TSG "is being severely handicapped [because] most of our units are understrength. . . . There are many reasons why recruiting and retention are to be considered of primary importance: Firstly, our monetary appropriations are in jeopardy if our strength remains at the present level or below."

The most recently available records reflect a continuing negative trend. In 1981, 500 TSG members resigned and 600 recruits were added. By 1983, though, 785 TSG members were lost and only 552 recruits added. The disbanding of the 105th made 1984 a year of net loss, too.

Holloway said that, when his old unit was disbanded, records in Austin showed at least 28 people on active duty who had been previously discharged from his former battalion. Holloway said he has the paper-

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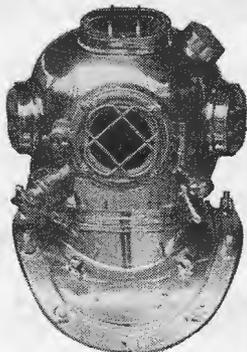
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work to prove that 19 of those 28 cases involved personnel whose discharges were sent to Austin but were never processed.

Out of desperation, in an effort to win new recruits for the TSG, about 25 members of Holloway's Texas Reserve Militia — all former members of the 105th — were offered the chance to rejoin the TSG this January with no loss of rank and grade. Only one individual accepted. But the TSG is campaigning hard to win back the many who have left. For instance, Paynter eventually returned after he was offered a promotion to captain.

Still, many Texans remain disenchanted with the current role the TSG has defined for itself — be it directing traffic or scrubbing floors for its National Guard counterparts. For his part, Holloway said he kept his attrition rate low in the 105th — and now keeps it low in the TRM — by emphasizing the military aspects of home guard duty.

TEXAS RESERVE MILITIA — DEDICATED TO NATIONAL SECURITY

Soldier of Fortune spent a weekend in the field with the 1st Battalion, 1st Light Infantry Regiment of the Texas Reserve Militia to observe their training. Using former members of the Special Forces, Marine Corps and one Air Force pararescueman as a training cadre, the all-night patrol operations were tactically skillful and well-run. Most impressive was the spirit of personal sacrifice and responsibility among the 35 militiamen — each had equipped him- or herself out of personal funds.

A good light infantry unit requires three basic skills: marksmanship, mobility and communication. The TRM has these bases covered. Most were armed with AR-15s, with a few Mini-14s, FN FALs and other assault rifles thrown in. And they handle these weapons with skill. Mobility is assured by members who purchased one 2.5-ton surplus troop truck, two 1.25-ton military trucks and two jeeps. A dozen troopers also put together the bucks to become airborne qualified. But the TRM doesn't have any aircraft — yet.

Equally impressive are the unit's communications assets. Commo NCO, Staff Sergeant Eric M. Ruede, can set up a 50-mile relay grid with 30 minutes' notice. The battalion has at its disposal 15 PRC-25s and PRC-77s, plus four vehicle-mounted BRC-46s and two tall mast antennas. All were purchased and made operable with the personal efforts and funds of unit members. Occasionally the TRM has to lend its radios to Texas National Guard units which are short of operable radios.

Yet Major General James "Jake" Dennis, the Texas adjutant general, called Holloway and his men "misfits" and said they had to go because "they would not train in the skills that they needed, like communications and first aid." He's apparently misinformed — Holloway's men have completed advanced training in both areas. "Their mission was to back up the National Guard in the event of state or national disasters, to protect those armories," Maj. Gen. Dennis said. "But they

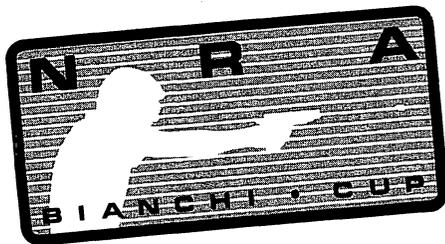
should not receive any training with the M16 rifle."

Privately, criticism of Holloway and his men doesn't deal with doctrine but takes on darker undertones by pointing out Holloway's military service in Rhodesia and implying that his is a racist group. But three Hispanics and one black in the TRM interviewed by *Soldier of Fortune* laughed at that assertion. "Our guys display a much better attitude toward what they do than what I saw in the Texas State Guard," said Sergeant Frank Rodriguez, a fire team leader in the TRM and Vietnam veteran who fought at Pleiku. "Out here you're not a volunteer white or a volunteer Hispanic. You're a volunteer Texan. We're very proud of who we are and what we do. We're here to serve our state. If the bureaucrats in Austin don't see it that way, that's *their* problem."

Other members, among them three Fort Worth-area police officers, agree. "There are other guys who'd like to come out and join us. But without some kind of [official] recognition and support, it's hard for them to justify the time it takes," said Sergeant Dennis Bramlett, who played offensive line for the New England Patriots before moving to Texas, where he is now what Texans call a "large-ish lawman."

Still, the TSG Headquarters argues that, whether or not one favors combat training, many of the activities, such as rappelling and parachuting, undertaken by Holloway's men aren't within the mission of a military police unit. Holloway termed this charge "irrelevant" because his unit no longer be-

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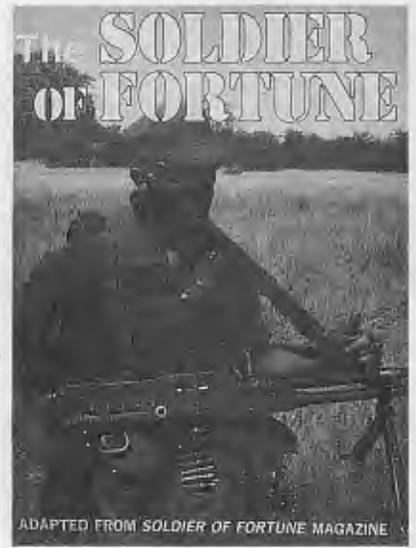
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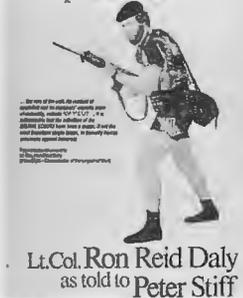
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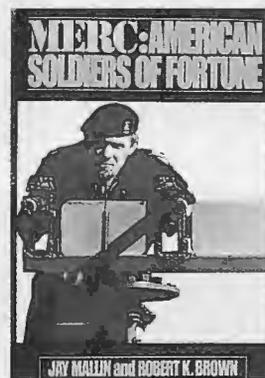
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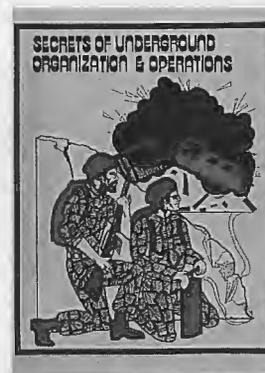
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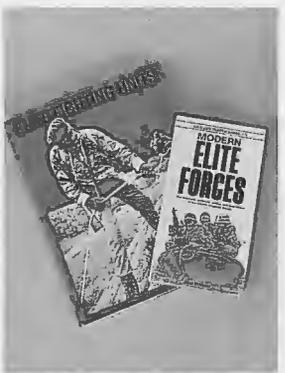
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longs to the TSG. And he says there is much historical and legal precedence to support the existence of the Texas Reserve Militia (see "A Brief Militia History" on pages 60-61).

"They're just a bunch of good old boys who don't want their boat rocked," Holloway said, referring to the TSG command. "They're more interested in wearing their uniforms to Christmas parties and having an 'in' at the closest officer's club than personal sacrifice and useful duty. They don't support the Texas State Guard. The Texas State Guard supports them."

It hasn't been easy keeping the unit going, Holloway admits. "These guys spend so much of their own time and money to drill each month. It takes a great deal of commitment. They're true patriots. I think one reason the bureaucracy sees them as a threat is that they're not in it for the money. Our society operates on the assumption that people are motivated by the almighty dollar. People who aren't concerned with that can be a threat.

"So it would be nice to see the guys get the positive recognition they deserve, rather than the usual crap about being a bunch of racist crazies or renegade-vigilantes-run-wild," he said. His hopes for that rest with newly-elected Governor William Clements, a Republican who came out of retirement to unseat a controversial Democrat incumbent, Mark White, and reclaim the office Clements once held.

Under a proposal being considered, the

TRM would be incorporated into the TSG as a special unit with a three-part mission. The primary mission would be to serve when called on by the governor in the armed defense of Texas. A secondary mission would be to provide an opposition force for exercises involving the Texas National Guard, something already requested by the one National Guard commander over three years ago. The final objective would be to provide riot control and other civil defense services when necessary.

"Without some official recognition, it's going to be hard to keep it going over the long haul," Holloway said. "We've got a lot to offer. We can save the state millions of dollars over a few years and provide a valuable service in a competent manner. Perhaps we can polish away some of the jingoistic tarnish from the idea of being a patriot and give it positive meaning again."

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Readers desiring more information or wishing to comment on Major Robert Holloway's irregular militia efforts should write: **Commander, 1st Texas Light Infantry, Texas Reserve Militia, P.O. Box 5462, Fort Worth, TX 76108.**

Readers desiring more information or wishing to comment on the regular

STALINISTAS

Continued from page 73

orders from Cubans rather than Nicaraguans."

At least 3,000 Cubans in Nicaragua are military and security advisers and their influence has strongly affected the organization and tactics of the Nicaraguan military. A top adviser to the communist Sandinista army is Cuban counterinsurgency expert General Nestor Lopez — a veteran of Cas-

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tro's campaigns in Ethiopia, Angola and the western Sahara. Consequently, FSLN army and militia units are modeled after their Cuban counterparts and the Nicaraguans have even copied Cuba's four-digit unit identification system. Also, many recently constructed FSLN military bases, particularly airfields, are modeled after similar Cuban facilities.

This is not the place to go into Nicaragua's enormous build-up of conventional military forces, the threat that build-up poses to Nicaragua's neighbors, or the FSLN's aid to assorted Latin American guerrilla movements. Suffice it to say that Nicaraguan moves in this area appear to be directed by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Even in the FSLN's own civil war against the contras, Cuban influence is very strong, with Cuban advisers playing an active role in anti-contra operations. If Cuban influence is strong in the conduct of Nicaragua's own civil war, it stands to reason that the influence of Cuba's famed Americas Department over Nicaragua's international terrorist activities is likely to be substantial.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Anyone familiar with the record of FSLN activities since the 1966 Tri-Continental Conference in Havana knows that when Ronald Reagan refers to the communist Sandinistas as "terrorists," he is telling the literal truth. Unfortunately, the president has tended to randomly refer to the Sandi-

nistas' persecution of religion, their drug-running activities and the threat that waves of Central American refugees could pose to the United States. In so doing he has confused the public by diluting the main issue.

It is a mistake to regard the communist Sandinistas as the enemy when they are clearly puppets of the Soviet Union and its allies. By themselves, the Sandinistas (or the Cubans for that matter) pose no real threat, either to the United States or to the region. What makes them dangerous is that they are agents of Soviet imperialism, with the resources of the entire Soviet Bloc behind their activities. And Soviet intentions toward America should be no mystery to anyone. Nikita Khrushchev stated them clearly in 1963 when he proclaimed, "We will bury you!"

If the administration would systematically present plain facts about the FSLN's Soviet-Cuban sponsorship and terrorist activities, past and present, it could win far more support for its hard-line policy toward Nicaragua and the FSLN, and for its tireless efforts to rally support for the contra opposition.

Overthrowing the FSLN will, at best, bring freedom to Nicaragua and avert further damage in Central America for the near future. It will not, however, prevent the Soviets from picking out another vulnerable spot and trying again.

Ever since the mid-1960s, the Soviet Union has been waging violent warfare against

the West by proxy, using terrorism, guerrilla warfare and the armed forces of Third World allies against what they perceive to be the West's areas of vulnerability. So far, the Reagan administration's response has been to defend our vulnerable areas by using similar tactics. This is manifestly not good enough.

If we really want the Soviets to stop their war-by-proxy, we must inflict a serious loss on them by using their own tactics in their areas of vulnerability.

Uncompromising support of the Honduran-based anti-communist contras is the best place to start. For if the communist Sandinistas are allowed to consolidate their regime and their ties with anti-American allies, nothing short of an invasion by U.S. forces will prevent the dominos from falling in Central and South America. ✕

BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 16

So much for the bad handles — what about the good ones? An excellent example of a functionally good handle is the one found on the kukri sold by Atlanta Cutlery. The shape is good, and the hardwood scales give a secure grip. Another good handle shape is that found on a machete, especially those made in Central

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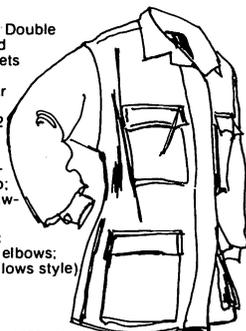
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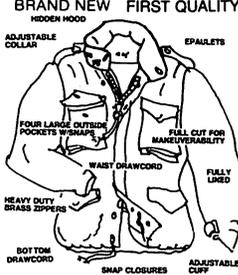
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America and Brazil. These are a form of the bird's-head handle shape and work better than those made in the United States. The U.S. models with molded plastic handles are too nearly round in cross section to work really well in the hand.

One other thing. The handle should not adversely affect the balance of the knife. It shouldn't be so heavy that it makes the blade feel dead in your hand. A fine battle blade is a careful blend of speed, power, reach and cutting ability. The handle has a direct bearing on each of these four elements.

While the blade is the heart and soul of a knife, don't overlook the handle. It's more important than most knife users — and knife makers — realize. ✂

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 18

all signals must be the one to open fire. Electric detonation of mines is good, as is a burst from the machine gun or the commander's rifle. Hand or rifle grenades should never be used as a signal to initiate fire because the delay gives the enemy a chance to escape. Also, shouting "fire" is a waste of time since shouting can't kill anyone. In any case, this signal must be totally unlike any other used in your group.

Once the shooting begins, other signals are needed. One is the signal to stop firing. By day, this can be a colored flare (not the same color as any tracer ammunition in use by either friendly or enemy troops), a colored smoke grenade (keeping in mind this could obscure the target area) or blasts on an infantry whistle.

At night, flares or whistles can also be used. If the enemy is found to be too strong, white phosphorus grenades are a good signal to withdraw since they also provide a smokescreen to cover your movement. Allowance must be made for the possibility that the enemy may throw smoke, although this is unlikely in a successful ambush.

Hand signals should be avoided in ambushes. Even a flick of the wrist or fingers could be seen by a wary enemy. Besides, troops should be looking for targets, not hand signals.

Whether radios, cords, flares, lights, whistles, smoke or any other devices are used, everyone taking part in the ambush must know what they signify. Ideally, most of these signals will be part of unit standard operating procedure (SOP) and require only slight modification for specific conditions. They must also be rehearsed under various ambush scenarios until they become second nature. Finally, review

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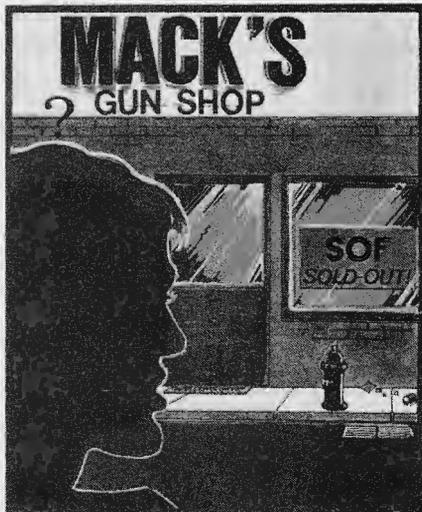
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and discuss signals just prior to setting up the ambush.

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I WAS THERE

Continued from page 20

The sappers had run out of satchel charges.

The attack came as a surprise, but the real shock came the next day. At first light, everyone came out to survey the damage. Hundreds of staff and patients aimlessly strolled around, poking and picking in the debris. Red, Gilmore and I made our way along the crowded concrete causeway. We passed the officer's ward where the infiltrators had raked the beds with automatic rifle fire. Six-inch craters in the concrete floor marked where the explosives had detonated. Beds, wall lockers, blankets, mattresses and splintered wood lay strewn everywhere. Dud satchel charges — nine-inch cubes of plastic wrapped in burlap — and small wire loop fuse cords were everywhere. Amid all this wandered the survivors in

their blue pajamas, dazed and shocked.

We thought the entire base had come under attack that night, but only the 6th Convalescent Center was hit, in a deliberate and carefully planned attack against the sleeping patients. Several squads of infiltrators quietly penetrated the outer defense, slipped a few hundred yards farther inside to the center and destroyed a total of nineteen structures. One hundred patients were wounded, only two died. There would have been more casualties but the satchel charges had no shrapnel. After the attack the infiltrators escaped without losing a single man.

As we continued to survey the damage around the camp, an American television news crew's camera focused on us. As we watched the news crew finish filming the scene, I said, "Fantics."

Red looked at the cameraman, then at me and exclaimed in surprise, "For Godssake! They're only doing their job."

"Not them," I replied, "the infiltrators." Sweeping my outstretched arm toward the gutted buildings, I continued, "How could anyone with a human conscience attack sleeping patients and blow up a church? Has the whole world gone mad?"

Next morning, we found out why

our security perimeter had been breached — two of the South Korean sentries had fallen asleep on watch. That same day, South Korean commanders held a quick trial for the two sentries, then executed them both.

Justice and injustice come swiftly in war. I'm glad I learned that lesson the easy way. ✕

COMBAT SHOTGUN

Continued from page 75

standard U.S. sling of 1.25 inches. The 121-M1's swivels are good for slings of 1/2 inch or less, which is standard in Europe. The Super 90's forward sling swivel, like the 121-M1's, is a steel collar that seats between the tip of the forestock and the barrel-lock ring. It too has a 1.75-inch aperture. Again, the widened sling apertures on the Super 90 are yet another improvement over the 121-M1.

Like the original Benelli, the Super 90 is equipped with an extended magazine tube, accommodating seven shells of 2.75 inches or six 3-inch magnums — plus one in the chamber, for total round availability of eight and seven respectively. The magazine spring is not too stiff to create loading difficulties, nor too sloppy to cause feeding problems. Unlike the 121-M1's feeding gate/shell carrier, which required unlocking via the bolt release before

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you could load a round into the magazine, the Super 90's is free floating. Simply pushing it inward with a shell will permit access to the magazine tube.

The new Super 90 has retained the bolt-release button on the right side of the receiver, below the ejection port, akin to the 121's, but the retracting-handle on the bolt has been changed on the Super 90 to a rounded and knurled fitting, rather than the 121's curved lever. Personally, I like the 121's handle a bit better, but both fulfill their purpose.

The Super 90 is fitted with a cross-bolt type safety mounted to the rear of the trigger guard. Pushing to the right puts the gun on "safe," pushing left on "fire." When in the fire position, a red collar is visible around the body of the cross-bolt. While the cross-bolt safety is the most common form found on scatterguns, I personally have a preference for the sliding-tang type found on the Mossberg guns, as I believe they are faster to acquire with the thumb of the firing hand and do not require the shooter to remove his finger from the trigger area to manipulate.

With the basic features of the Super 90 now out of the way, let's take a look at the crowning difference between the two Benellis.

The biggest complaint leveled against the original 121-M1 was its shell carrier disconnect, or safety. A feature common to most Italian semiauto designs, including Benelli, Franchi and Beretta, the shell carrier disconnect prevents a shell from being loaded into the chamber by retracting and then allowing the bolt to run forward. As most police departments require their officers to carry the shotgun with a loaded magazine/empty chamber, the officers could not chamber a round in their 121-M1s simply by retracting and cycling the bolt. Instead, they had to load a shell into the loading port, then release the bolt. This called for them to carry a spare shell in their pocket or somewhere else handy in the cruiser. Needless to say, if you're in a hurry, this is a bit of a hassle.

Heckler & Koch attempted to correct this deficiency in the 121-M1 by offering a modified button that interrupted the shell carrier disconnect but required the purchaser to fit the button to the weapon, which really needed the services of a gunsmith.

Now, with the Super 90, we don't have this problem, as the gun is fitted with an integral interrupter. This part takes the form of a small silver lever mounted on the right underside of the receiver, just above the trigger guard. By pressing this lever up, the shell carrier will extract a round from the magazine and position it so that it can be picked up by the bolt and chambered as the bolt cycles. Now, the shooter can load the Super 90 by cycling the bolt, so long as he consciously opts to do so by pushing "up" on the interrupter button, which also serves a second purpose as a bolt-hold-open device.

The Super 90's receiver is an aluminum



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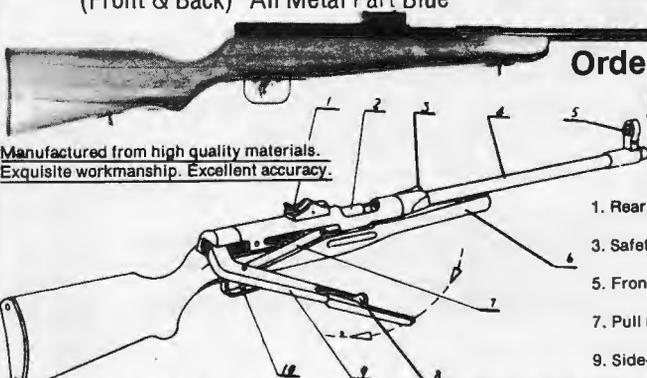
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casting, sporting a black anodized finish. The barrel and magazine tube are dull black, with a bead-blasted phosphate-type finish. From the tactical standpoint, the Super 90 will not pick up light and therefore should be considered non-reflective.

Another nice option of the Super 90 is that additional barrels are available to turn the combat shotgun into a sporting gun. Our test sample came with a 26.5-inch tube with modified choke, sporting a nice ventilated rib. By the time this is printed, HK intends to have available additional barrel/choke combinations.

At the test range, I put the Super 90 through its paces on both stationary and airborne targets. Firing a mixed bag of 12-gauge fodder — including 2.75- and 3-inch shells in both low and high brass, all plastic hull, buck and ball variants — the new gun performed fine.

Despite its light weight and recoil rather than gas method of operation, the Super 90 did not recoil all that severely, which was due in part to the gun's straight-stock design. With a drop at comb of 2 inches, the Super 90 has less drop than the 121-M1 and therefore handles recoil a bit better. While the line of the stock is not on the exact same axis as the bore, it is nonetheless closer in relation to the bore than the stock of the 121-M1, thereby making the new Super 90 easier to control during recoil. However, as the 121-M1's shorter buttstock fits me better than the longer stock of the Super 90, I found I enjoyed shooting the 121-M1 better than the Super 90. Of course, shotgun fit is imperative to good shooting, and many shooters found the 121-M1's stock too short. All I can say about that is if you've got problems with the length of pull of either weapon, take it to a good 'smith and have him adjust the buttstock to your proper measurements.

Firing Remington 2.75-inch, 1-ounce slugs, the new Super 90 averaged 3-inch, three-shot groups from a distance of 25 yards. In spite of the gun's light weight, the shotgun was controllable with these heavy loads, and recoil, though stiff, was not unbearable.

Using a standard IPSC silhouette target as a pattern board, we fired the Super 90 with #000, 00, and #4 buckshot. At the 25-yard distance, all buckshot loads filled the target with 85 to 90 percent of their given shot loads. The hits were all in the vital areas, running from what would be the lower abdomen to the neck/shoulder area. From the dependability standpoint, the Super 90 experienced no difficulties with the slug and buckshot loads.

Continuing our reliability testing, we then fired a mixed magazine holding all plastic Eclipse target loads, 3-inch magnum BB rounds and standard Federal #8 low-brass bird shot. Even with the mixed loads and hull sizes, the Super 90 gobbled them all without a single burp.

Loading a full magazine with the Eclipse all-plastic shells, we did experience one failure to feed. The offending shell was

extracted from the receiver and the bolt cycled to load another. At this point, the bolt did not go completely into battery and the round failed to fire. We again extracted the faulty round, cycled the bolt and fired. The Super 90 ate the remainder of the space-age shells without difficulty.

All in all, the Super 90 proved itself a dependable performer that points naturally and shoots accurately. Firing my original 121-M1 as a control, I found the new Super 90 patterned better at 25 yards than does my shotgun and, with the new controls and options integral to the Super 90, one comes away liking HK's new offering better.

I believe the new Super 90 will both uphold the fine reputation of the original 121-M1 and improve upon it. Without reservation, I can recommend the new Benelli Super 90 as an excellent choice for both law enforcement and military missions. If the opportunity presents itself, check out a Super 90 for yourself. ✕

U.S. MERCS

Continued from page 67

through the surf, at night — the attack force would be in place. The merc who had gone stateside was by this time, they hoped, on his way to Africa to act as their advance party, and would direct the boats to the right landing sites.

From that point the force would split into a number of groups, led by the mercs and tasked with taking out Jerry Rawlings in his "Castle"; James Fort Prison, where the politicians were held; the broadcasting station, located about two miles inland; and an armory across the street at Flagstaff House.

At this point it's vital to note that the merc force aboard the *Nobistor* — by now within two weeks of attacking a hostile foreign country — had not received any formal operations orders from its leader, John Early. Ops orders, used by nearly every military force around the world in one form or another, dictate exactly what each man's job will be and how that job will be carried out. Orders cover enemy and friendly forces (in their case, the mercs had no intel on either Rawlings' forces or the "friendly" military forces Godfrey claimed would assist them); the mission (only vaguely understood); how that mission would be executed, planned down to the finest detail (again, only presented to the men in the vaguest terms); logistical support (rations, water supplies, casualty handling — again, not discussed); and command and signal (alternate comms if the radios fail, chain of command if one or more of the mercs are taken out — none of which was mentioned).

Most importantly, given the acute lack of preparedness, firm escape plans if the mission flopped were generally ignored. There was some talk of busting Kotoka Airport and hijacking a plane, or making their way back to the Zodiacs and then the *Nobistor*.

Both plans left much to be desired.

Thoughts of failure, however, never crossed their minds as the *Nobistor* chugged through the Atlantic on a general north-easterly heading. Their mission was set and the props were turning. There was no backing out now.

Having reached international waters, weapons were uncrated from the second conex and test fired. One glitch arose. Of the four MAGs purchased — which were to be their heavy weapons — only two made it onboard. Early had them empty the conex, but the weapons were missing. (The mercs later found out that Early's copy of the manifest only indicated two MAGs). When they test fired the two MAGs, the stock group of one literally fell apart. They were now down to one machine gun for an attack force of over 100.



Of the four MAGs purchased in Buenos Aires, only two made it aboard the *Nobistor*. When this one was test fired, the stock group literally fell apart, leaving the attack force of 100-plus with one machine gun. Photo: S.H.

But their real problems were only beginning. Unknown to the *Nobistor*'s complement, a clerk in Buenos Aires who worked for the *Nobistor*'s shipping company had innocently sent a telex message to Accra stating that the weapons the government had ordered were enroute.

Weapons? What weapons? A coup-conscious Ghanaian leadership went into a frenzy. Troops were placed on full alert, ostensibly for a training exercise. Suspected dissidents were arrested and jailed. A message went out to neighboring coastal countries to be on the lookout for the *Nobistor*.

Things weren't much better onboard. A check of the captain's coastal navigation books indicated that, at that time of the year, continual storms and heavy seas could be expected off the Ghanaian coastline. Surf running up to six feet high might hammer Accra's beaches. Even for trained crews, an attempted nighttime landing under those conditions would be suicidal.

The *Nobistor*'s radio-telephone went into

action. Early contacted the merc they'd sent back to the States and made a change of plan. He was to rent a number of trucks when he hit Accra and meet the force some five miles east down the beach; the nav book indicated smoother sailing at that point. Early received a "roger" to his request.

What Early didn't know then was that the stateside merc's request for a visa to visit Ghana — under the cover of an African art export business — had been denied. (It was later approved, but by then it was too late.)

But when poorly made plans begin to crumble, they crumble fast. Eduardo Gilar-doni, the *Nobistor*'s captain, told Early he wouldn't anchor any closer than five miles offshore. No amount of talking would change his mind. (According to one of the mercs, Early had asked the team back in Buenos Aires if they would be prepared to hijack the ship in the event this sort of situation arose. The answer had been a uniform "Fuck no!")

Then the tug stopped dead in the water. The captain wanted another \$50,000 deposited in his wife's New York-based Israeli bank account before going on. R/T traffic hummed between Early, the stateside merc now stationed in New York, and a number of others. Word came back to Early: The money is approved, and up to \$100,000 if necessary. He told the captain and other members of the merc force that the captain's demand for additional funds had been denied.

After months of plotting and hundreds of thousands of dollars later, the plan to overthrow the country of Ghana was aborted. Disappointment etched its way into the mercs' sunburned faces. They had come this close and now they were turning back. Even Early's vague talk of storing the weapons and finding another boat to pull the job off later failed to kick their gloom.

They were ready to go home. Early told them he would take care of the weapons; there would be a shipping representative from Argentina to meet the *Nobistor* in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to deal with customs and their passports. Most of the mercs simply wanted to be "put off at the nearest port with an international airport," but the captain had set his course for Rio.

And it was there, some seven days later, on 14 March, that the great adventure they were all looking for really began.

Could the plan to topple Ghana have worked? *We've kicked that question around for hours. Some of the mercs think they could have pulled it off. We don't. If the Ghanaians hadn't been warned of the incoming shipment of arms, perhaps the element of surprise would have held the helter-skelter attack plan together. But only perhaps, and then with a big if. You decide.*

Was it ever meant to work? *That's the question some of the mercs are asking today. Hours of interviews with many of the principals have proved inconclusive. Some say the mission was planned to fail from the start. Why? To embarrass the U.S. govern-*

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ment (which firmly denies any involvement in the Ghana coup attempt) for one. Or, on a far dirtier level, that plans were made to rip off Godfrey Osei from the start, by selling the six tons of arms and equipment to members of the ultra-conservative Brazilian Landowners Association once the Nobistor docked in Rio's harbor. Only those who were involved know the whole truth — and they're not talking.

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FULL AUTO

Continued from page 24

both elevation and windage zero by the wrenches in the tool kit, is covered by a protective hood. There is a knurled nut, retained by an easily-broken flat-spring ratchet, protecting threads on the muzzle, presumably used to attach a BFA. A sturdy non-adjustable bipod is mounted directly behind the front sight assembly. It offers a command height of 11.5 inches, rotation of 90 degrees and can be folded under the barrel. The rear sight assembly is mounted to the top cover and features a protected open U-notch. Elevation adjustments, in 100-meter increments from 100 to 1,000 meters (a bit optimistic), are by means of a sliding ramp. Windage is adjusted by a knurled knob on the left side or right side, depending on the model. The ramp must be lifted up, away from the protective ears, to adjust windage.

The trigger mechanism is both robust and simple. There is no provision for semiautomatic fire, as the cyclic rate is a modest 650 rpm. A hook on the spring-loaded trigger enters an opening in the sear. When the trigger is pulled, the hook draws the sear downward out of engagement with the slide. Rotating the safety lever forward locks the sear in the upward position. Do not retract the slide group while the sear is locked or the two components will bind and render the weapon inoperative until it is disassembled.

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Continued on page 111

SOF WANTS YOU!

I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age? _____
2. A) If you are a subscriber, how long have you been a subscriber? _____
 B) If you buy SOF one copy at a time, how long have you been reading SOF _____ and how many issues have you bought in the last six months? _____
3. Are you a: veteran _____, active duty military _____, reservist _____, law enforcement officer _____, other (describe)? _____

II. READER SURVEY

1. If you are a subscriber, go to question 2. If you bought this issue at a newsstand, why did you buy it? For example, did you buy it because you liked the cover photo, did one of the story blurbs on the cover make you interested in an article, or did you buy it because of a specific article?

2. A) Please tell us how interesting you found each feature in the May 1987 SOLDIER OF FORTUNE. Circle the number in the appropriate column to the right of each title. If you would like to read more about any subject, please place a check on the line to the left of that title. List any comments or suggestions that you may have in the space provided.

For <input type="checkbox"/> More On Subject	Title	Very Interesting	Somewhat Interesting	Not Interesting	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hostage to Hollywood	1	2	3	FIRST FOLD ↙ DOWN
<input type="checkbox"/>	Best in the West	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cease-Fire Maneuvers	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Soldiers of Misfortune — Part 2	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nicaragua's Stalinistas	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nikon Binoculars	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Renamo	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Surface Action	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Citizen Soldiers	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benelli's Super 90	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taiwan Hookup	1	2	3	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colt Cobra	1	2	3	

B) Comments: _____

C) "Soldiers of Misfortune — Part 2" is the second part of a three-part series. What is your opinion of two- or three-part articles? _____

3. A) Rank the columns from 1 to 4, according to your preference (1 being your favorite).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battle Blades: Get a Grip | <input type="checkbox"/> Combat Weaponcraft: "At My Command..." |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Auto: RPD — ComBloc SAW | <input type="checkbox"/> I Was There: Price of Sleep |

B) What's good about your first choice (well written, like the subject, etc.) and what's bad about your fourth choice? _____

4. A) Rank the departments from 1 to 5, according to your preference (1 being your favorite).

- Adventure Quartermaster
- Bulletin Board
- FLAK
- In Review
- Incoming

SECOND FOLD ↙ UP

B) What's good about your first choice (well written, like the subject, etc.) and what's bad about your fifth choice? _____

5. A) If you were the editor of SOF, what topics would you give the most space to? List the topics from 1 to 16 (1 being the most important).

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Combat Reporting | <input type="checkbox"/> Military Affairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elite Units | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Weapons (Tanks, Planes, Artillery) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Firearms | <input type="checkbox"/> Personality Features |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Affairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How Tos | <input type="checkbox"/> Test and Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knives | <input type="checkbox"/> Terrorism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercenary/Soldier of Fortune | <input type="checkbox"/> Movies |

B) Are there any topics you would want articles about that are not listed above? _____

C) Of the above topics, which would you eliminate and why? _____

6. If you were going to assign a writer to do a "How To" article, what would you want him to write about? _____

7. Do you want to read articles about SOF Special Projects (training teams, parachute jumps, freedom fighter assistance, etc.)? _____

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE



8. A) Rank the following types of covers 1-4, according to your preference (1 being the best).

- ___ Combat
- ___ Guns
- ___ Movie or Television Personalities
- ___ Graphic or "Painted"

9. Do you think any of the major articles in this issue are too long? _____

10. A) Was this issue Excellent ___ Average ___ or Poor ___.

B) Why? _____

11. What would you do to improve SOF? _____

*This is a confidential survey — your name is not required. Opinions expressed will provide *Soldier of Fortune* editors with an insight as to what our readers are most interested in.

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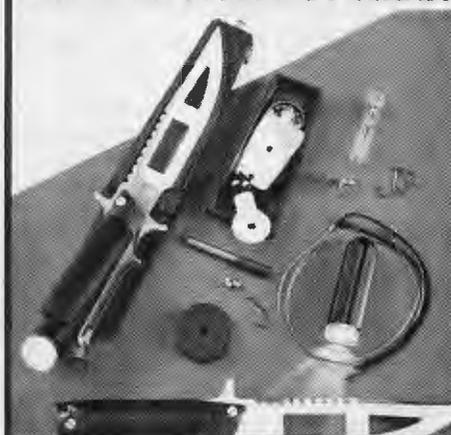
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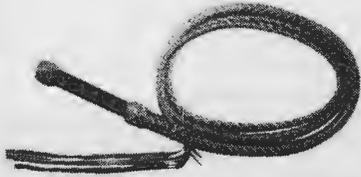
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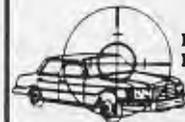
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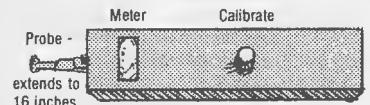
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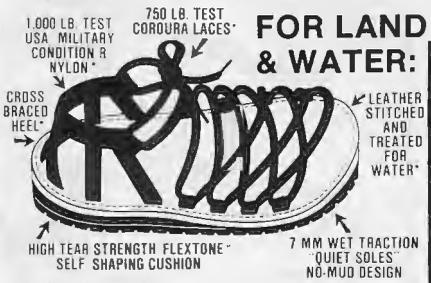


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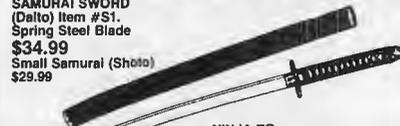


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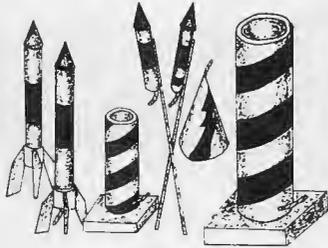
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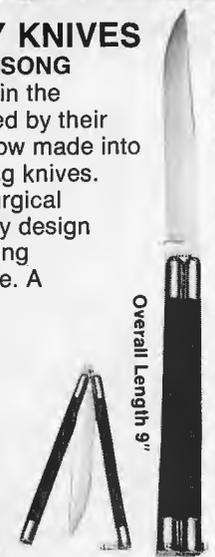
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Continued from page 98

buttstock. With a screwdriver, turn the recoil spring and buffer plug one-quarter turn in either direction. Carefully withdraw the buffer assembly, recoil spring and guide rod (which rests in front of the spring). Drift the butt retaining pin at the end of the receiver to the right and slide the pistol grip/trigger mechanism and buttstock off the receiver. Pull the retracting handle to the rear and remove it. Withdraw the slide group from the rear of the receiver. Lift the bolt and flapper-shaped locking lugs off the slide. The handguards can be removed with a screwdriver. Disassembly of the gas system has already been described. Reassemble in the reverse order, making sure the locking lugs are properly inserted into the slide's cam slots.

Five versions of the RPD were eventually fielded. The first version, rarely encountered unmodified, had a cup-type piston over a male gas spigot, no dust cover and a reciprocating retracting handle and a right-hand windage knob on the rear sight. On the second model the windage knob was moved to the left and the piston altered to a plunger-type with a female gas cylinder. A dust cover on the feed mechanism and a non-reciprocating retracting handle were added to the third model. The fourth model (called the RPD M) had a longer gas cylinder, an extra friction roller on the slide and a spring-loaded buffer in the buttstock to moderate felt recoil and reduce wear on the recoiling parts. The final version (PRC Type 56-1) has all of the above improvements plus a folding magazine bracket/ejection port dust cover and a four-piece cleaning rod in the buttstock.

Weighing only 15.6 pounds empty and measuring but 40.8 inches in overall length, the RPD was every bit as weight-conscious and compact as the new FN Minimi (M249) SAW. Although weapons of this type should almost always be fired from the prone position, behind cover and concealment, short bursts can be effectively directed toward enemy targets from either the standing, hip assault or kneeling positions. Experienced operators can easily fire two- to three-shot bursts with high hit probability at the moderate ranges the 7.62X39mm cartridge was developed to cover.

As light and compact as it was, it didn't suit Rhodesian elite forces, who frequently chopped the barrel back eight inches to the gas block and cut several inches off the buttstock (on those versions without buffers). Loaded with 100 rounds of green tracer, it was an effective ambush weapon

but good for little else. Gaining a 10-inch reduction in overall length is not worth the loss of both the front sight and bipod. U.S. Marines butchered BARs in this manner during WWII and it was equally foolish.

Several million RPDs were manufactured, yet there are no more than a handful of registered specimens in this country. As for Ivan, he's moved backward to the RPK series. Its defects as a SAW are even greater: still no quick-change barrel, and magazines (which "monopod" the weapon off its bipod in the prone position) instead of belts. ❌

SUBMARINE OPS

Continued from page 47

Grayback's diving supervisor could communicate with locked-out members of his 12-man ship's diving gang and with the rest of the submarine.

First tested and evaluated by *Grayback's* predecessors, the SDV had come of age as a special warfare vehicle. Nineteen feet long, the cigar-shaped Mk.7 Mod-6 SDV carried four SCUBA-equipped UDT or SEAL swimmers in its sliding-canopy open cockpit, had electronic subsystems for navigation, obstacle avoidance sonar, rendezvous and docking, and was built of non-ferrous materials to reduce acoustic signature. Designed to conduct reconnaissance, intelligence gathering, agent insertion/extraction and maritime sabotage missions, the SDV effectively extended *Grayback's* operational range and special operations capabilities.

Not all of the evolving operational art of submarine special operations came as a result of combat missions. During 1970 Army-Navy training exercises, one of *Grayback's* SDVs proved their worth in snatch operations. Two SEALs launched from *Grayback* and bottomed their SDV. One deployed a marker buoy while the other grabbed an extra set of SCUBA gear. Both then swam stealthily ashore. Totally unsuspecting as he walked along White Beach on Okinawa that night was Lieutenant Colonel Bill Simpson, commanding officer of the 1st Special Forces Group. The audacious SEALs grabbed the struggling Simpson and forced him into the extra SCUBA rig. Swimming with their captive, the SEALs returned to the marker buoy and down to their SDV. With the surprised Simpson secured in the SDV cockpit, the SEALs returned to *Grayback*.

Grayback's major Vietnam special operations effort was a series of missions conducted in support of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Gulf of Tonkin. *Grayback's* effort there contributed to the defeat of the North Vietnamese 1972 Easter Offensive.

Grayback departed the waters off Vietnam for good in 1972, and her departure marked the end of a unique chapter in U.S. Navy special warfare history, Vietnam War submarine special operations. ❌

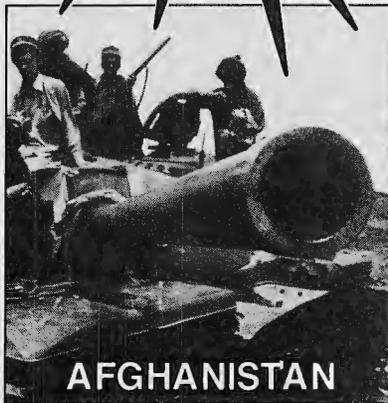
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INCOMING



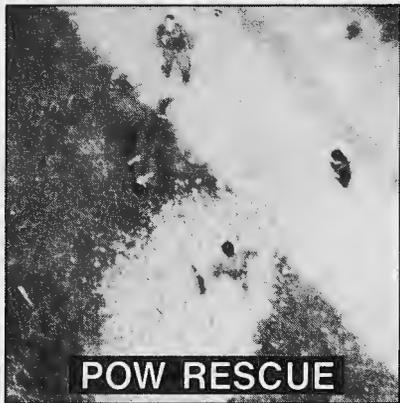
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the fate of eight American mercenaries who were captured by Brazilian authorities off the coast of Rio de Janeiro in March 1986 on their way to pull off this daring mission.

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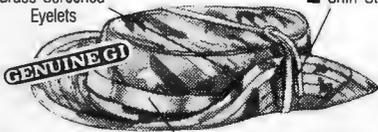
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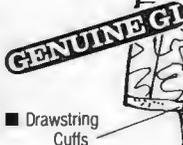
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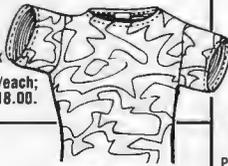
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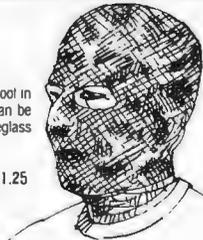
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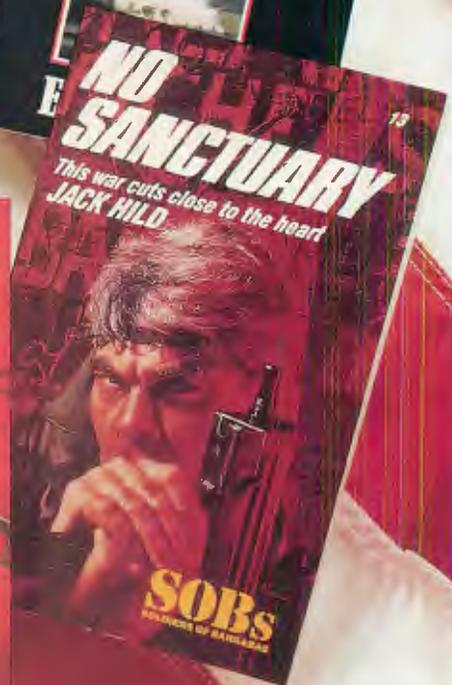
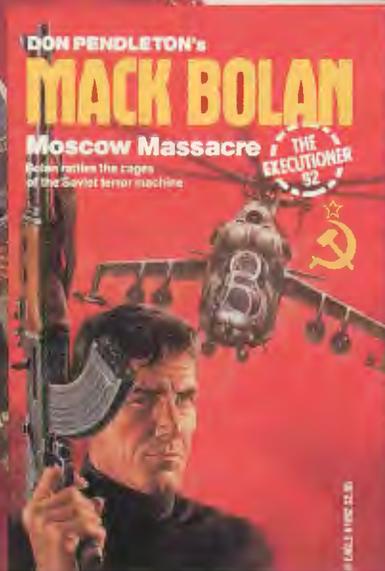
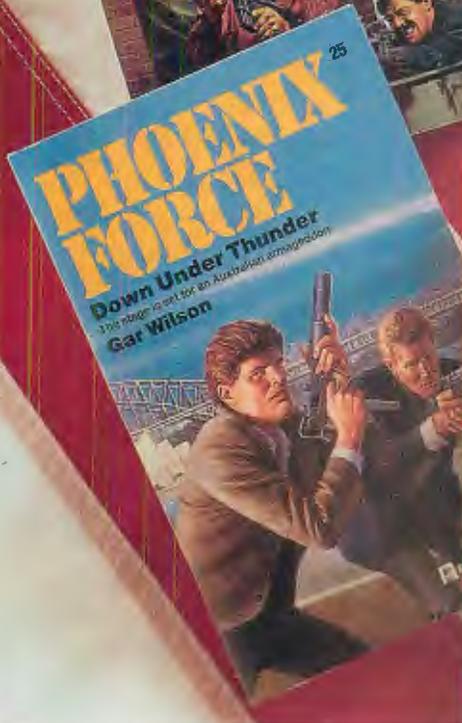
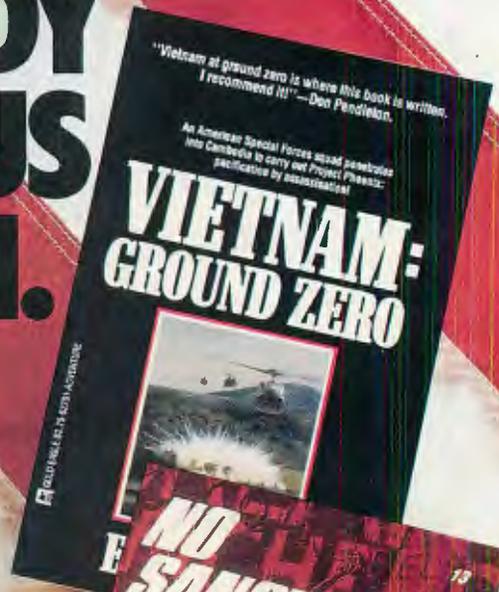
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