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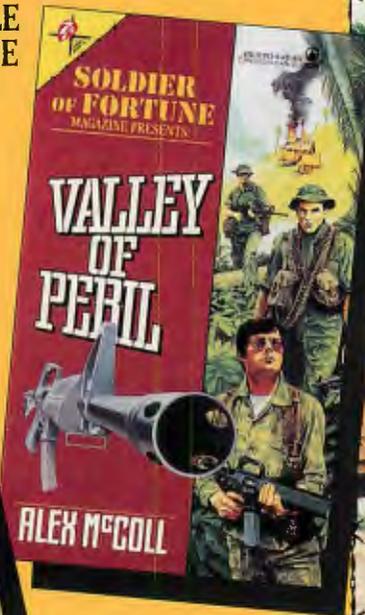
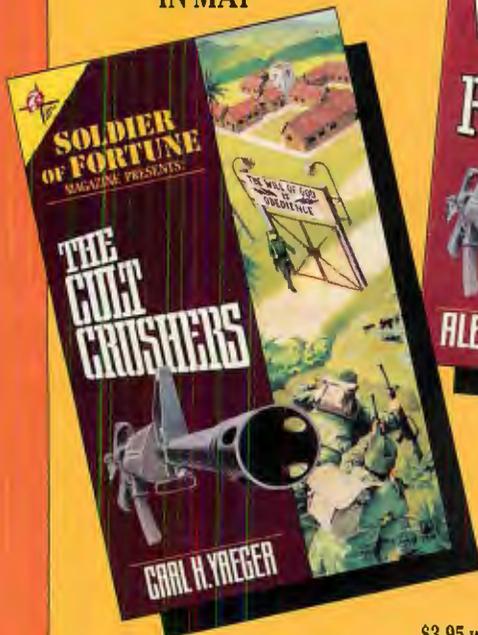
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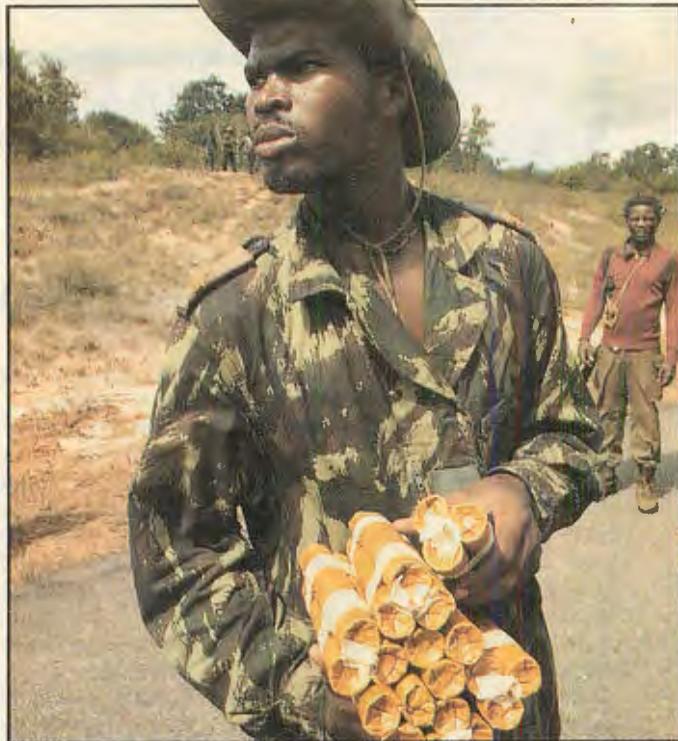
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

Will Webb Make Waves?

DURING the Carter years people talked about the U.S. Navy the same way they talked about the Edsel, eight-track tape players and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. The ships were old and getting older, there were allegations of drug abuse and infighting between carrier and submarine factions within the Navy. All in all, the Navy got about as much respect as, well, Jimmy Carter.

With the Reagan Administration came major changes in the political climate of the country, in our national priorities, and, most of all, in high government officials. The State Department may have gotten saddled with Al "I'm in charge" Haig, but the Navy fared well indeed: It got John Lehman.

Not much has escaped Secretary of the Navy Lehman's attention; he addressed everything from deciding what the principal strength of the Navy will be (the carrier battle groups), to how we will fight the Soviets should there be war in Europe (with aggressive forward deployments beyond the GIUK gap), even to replacing the Navy's unsightly uniforms. Not since the days of Teddy Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" has the Navy been so closely identified with any one man as it has been with Lehman. He has worked tenaciously toward the goals he established when he took office, and the result is the 600-ship "Mr. Lehman's Navy."

Have Lehman's changes made a difference? Most certainly. The attacks on Libya, naval support for the Marines in Lebanon and the Navy's role in the liberation of Grenada have all demonstrated the Navy's real capabilities. Today, when Americans think of projecting power and influence abroad,

they think of John Lehman's carrier battle groups.

Not all of Lehman's battles have been on the high seas. He has battled with DOD, fought with quarreling admirals, and managed to coerce, charm, and cajole appropriation bills through a difficult Congress. All things considered, the Honorable John F. Lehman has done a superb job. Lehman's act will be a tough one to follow.

Enter James Webb. The Reagan White House has nominated Mr. Webb to be the next secretary of the Navy. Webb's credentials speak for themselves. Aggression and innovation have been the hallmarks of his service as assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. His work there has greatly increased the readiness of our reserve forces. Both Congress and the Defense Department are mindful of his abilities and accomplishments.

Despite his notable work at DOD, Webb is best known for other things. A graduate of the Naval Academy, Webb took his commission in the Marine Corps and went to Vietnam, there earning the Navy Cross and suffering serious wounds. Using his experiences for background, Webb wrote the novel *Fields of Fire*, giving Americans what may be their best literary look at the war in Vietnam.

There is speculation that Webb will do for the Marine Corps — in a sense — what Lehman did for the Navy. That won't be easy. But Webb has made a practice of asking hard questions and producing results from the sloth-like Defense bureaucracy. That practice, combined with his genuine concern for the troops, should ensure that both the Navy and the Marines will be well served by his spell at the helm. ✕

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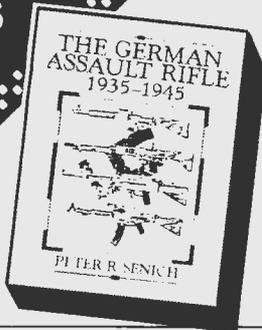
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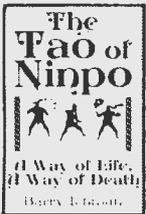


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SEALS AND SBUs...

Sirs:

I found that the article "Fast Boats Over Troubled Waters" (SOF, February '87) was informative only as another story about the SEALs, not the Navy's Special Boat Unit which the article was supposed to be about. The article was five pages long and only one and a half pages had anything to do with the SBU, and only one picture showed the types of boats this unit uses.

If the author, Robert Jordan, is going to write an article about SBUs, I would like to read about the types of boats and equipment these units use, see pictures of the different types of boats, and hear comments from the sailors who serve in these units.

Tommy G.
Willhite
USS John
Adams (SSBN
620)

Author Robert Jordan responds: "Mr. Willhite is most perceptive.

Originally we planned two articles: one on the SBU and one on the SEALs who operate with them. The Navy denied my request to visit the units in Norfolk, Virginia, thus limiting access to those stories.

"When I interviewed Ted Grabowsky in the Pentagon, he impressed upon me the need to limit the scope of my story in order to keep SEAL/SBU operations from being unduly compromised. I personally take issue with the Navy's lack of openness. I think I could have done the stories as planned without compromising security. Without the Navy's cooperation, however, I think we did the best we could with what we had."



FLAK



FRED'S NO RED...

Sirs:

As an ex-G.I. who saw combat in Korea and always marched in the Loyalty Day parades in New York City during the Vietnam era, I'm a bit upset to see the likes of Fred Dryer in your March 1987 issue. It seems to me he's changed his ways. During the Vietnam War he was quick to voice his leftist anti-war sentiments over national television. Keep up this kind of wonderful work and you'll lose a subscriber.

Don Jordan
New York, New York

You must have Fred Dryer confused with someone else. Mr. Dryer's patriotism, then and now, is beyond reproach. Dryer, a college student during the Vietnam War, made his position quite clear when he was arrested for visiting physical abuse upon some misguided youths who unwisely set fire to an American flag in his presence. Actions speak louder than words, and hurt more too.



SOF'S "LEFTIST" COVER PHOTO...

Sirs:

Those grunts on the cover of your April '87 issue, is that the legendary Southpaw Patrol? Or what?

Don Short
Peoria Heights, Illinois

In your article on the movie "Platoon" in the April SOF, the author indicated the necessity of pointing out some of the technical errors in the movie to avoid a flood of mail from your alert readers.

Apparently Oliver Stone's boys aren't the only ones to make mistakes. Your cover photo of "Platoon" was graphic, but were there really that many left-handed soldiers in the 25th Infantry Division? Maybe that's why all the right-handers were with me in the 4th Division.

James Martin Davis
Omaha, Nebraska

No, that is not the legendary "Southpaw Patrol" on our April cover. Initial appearances to the contrary, the photograph is oriented correctly. That scene in "Platoon" was set so that the soldier/actors shown were ready to return fire to the right, which is SOP for the right-hand file in a column. We chose the dramatic photo for the cover because it so well symbolized the movie "Platoon," though we did recognize in our editorial huddle that the left-handed weapon orientation presented some potential for confusion.

A close look at the weapons and web gear in that cover photo shows that Sgt. Barnes' and Sgt. O'Neill's M16s lack ejection ports and forward assists on their left sides, which is as it should be. Further, note the location of Sgt. Barnes' non-issue knife. Finally, look at the photo above, which was taken a bit later in the same setting. Taylor has his rifle southpawed over, but Sgt. Elias carries his weapon normally, with the ejection port cover and forward assist clearly visible on the carbine's right side, as they should be.

TEHRAN UPDATE...

Sirs:

Congratulations on the succinct intelligence provided by Bulletin Board. Regarding the item "Rumblings from Tehran" [January '87], you may be interested to know

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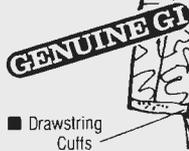
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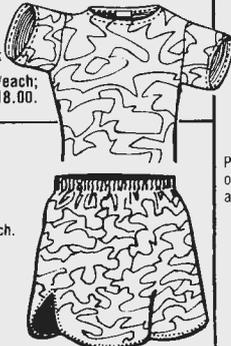
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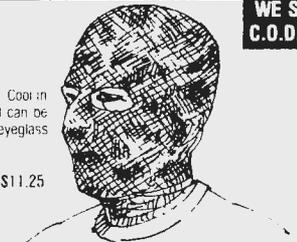
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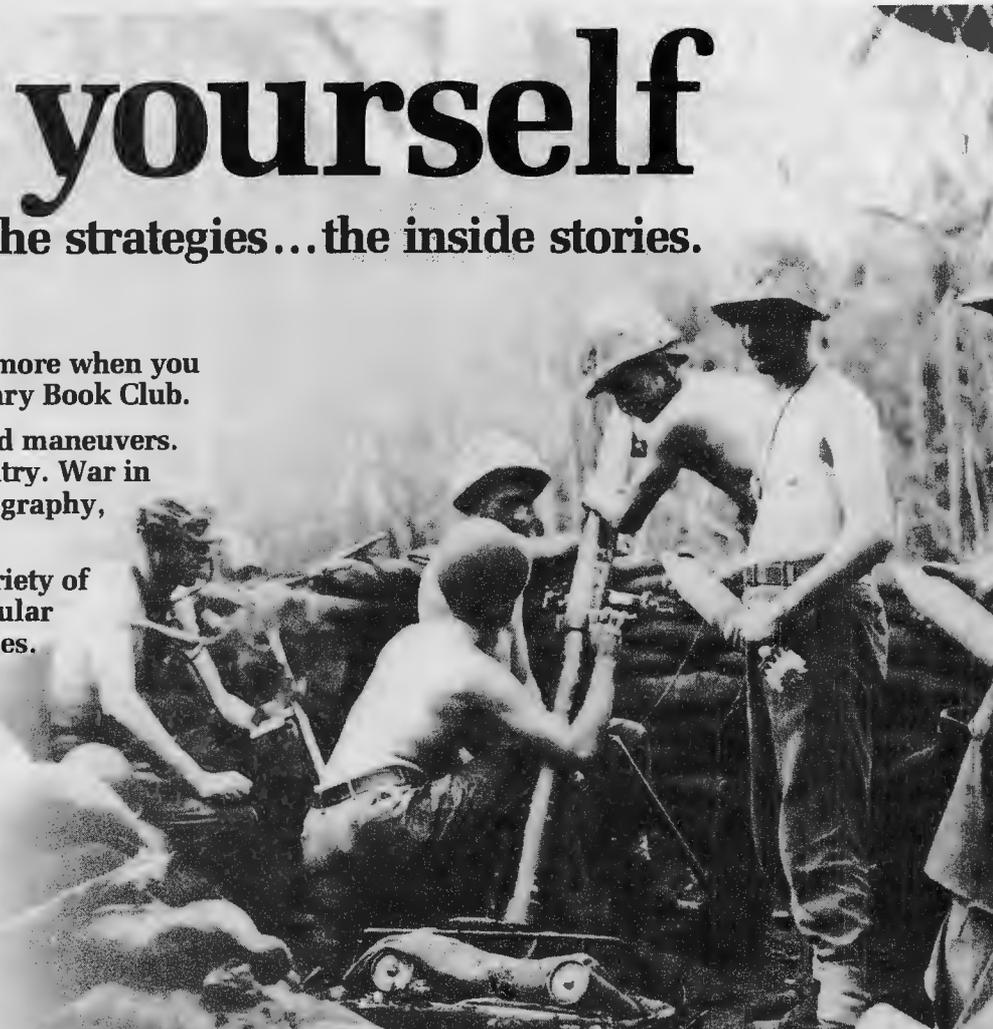
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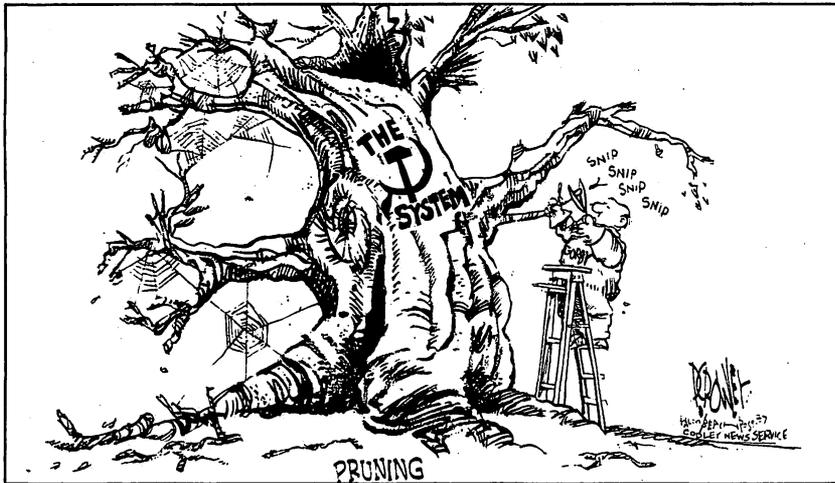
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that Captain Ali Akbar Mohamedi (ex-personal pilot for Iranian parliamentary speaker Rafsanjani), whom you mentioned as having defected to Iraq seeking asylum in West Germany, was murdered on 16 January of this year in Hamburg. The influence of Khomeini and his minions is indeed a difficult one to escape — especially in the Europe of the present day.

Rod McMurdo
London, England

GENTLEMAN BLADESMITH...

Sirs:

After reading the article introducing the custom knife maker Freddie Watt [see "On the Edge in West Texas," SOF, February '87], I decided to contact him. I discovered that Mr. Watt is a gentleman in the truest sense. He was glad to answer my many questions and spoke with not a self-proclaimed authority, but a humble and unassuming knowledge of knife making.

Because of your article I now have in my possession two of the most beautifully constructed custom knives that I have ever seen. If your readers would like to own a custom knife that is both second to none and reasonably priced, contact Freddie. You will also get a man who does not compromise on promises.

David E. Stock
Protective Services
Lewiston, Idaho

COMMAND (MIS)GUIDANCE?...

Sirs:

In reference to Col. Brown's

"Command Guidance" in the March issue, I agree with it and I have held those views all along on the issue. Selling weapons to the Iranians was done for the right reasons. It just shows that when you're the top dog, it's a total no-win situation. President Reagan was damned by the media by the perception that he was cold to the hostage families; when it turns out he was using controversial measures to accomplish something on the hostage release front, he loses.

The president and the great Lt. Col. Oliver North don't have to apologize for anything to anyone at anytime. These men did their duty and did the "dirty jobs" that had to be done and carried out the gritty command decisions no other sons of bitches were willing to risk their ass on.

Brian P. Dumas
Easton, Connecticut

Lt. Col. North needs no defense from me. He is a man of honor who shed his own blood in Vietnam attempting to keep a people free from the clutches of communism. Perhaps here was a man who had promised a people fighting to be free in Nicaragua that he and the United States would support them. It is one thing for a politician sitting at a desk in Washington to cut off aid to a faceless group of people. It is quite another to go out to a jungle like Lt. Col. North has done and look a man in the eye and tell him you'll stand by him. Some men still live by the code that their word is their honor.

Let us remember that a man must answer to a higher law than that written down by the changing winds of politics. We Americans can at least point to one man among us who has stood by his word and his

friends in their fight to be free. I, for one, salute him.

Robert A. Jakucs
El Segundo, California

Granted the idea of obtaining funds for the contras from the Iranians must have struck many as poetic justice, but let us not ignore what was gambled and lost: the enormous public popularity and support enjoyed by the president; a tremendous propaganda victory for the Sandinistas, the Iranians and the Russians; the exposure and dismantling of the private aid network; and most crucially, the loss of any further overt support for the contras by our government or any other. The antics of Lt. Col. North do not deserve our moral or financial support.

David Brown
Columbus, Ohio

Robert K. Brown claims that Lt. Col. Oliver North's sin was that he "saw a way to sucker money out of Iranians to support freedom." I don't agree! The money Col. North "suckered" was in exchange for military hardware the Iranians desperately needed. In this light it appears that it was the American taxpayer who was "suckered" into supporting Col. North's personal foreign policy.

Whether I or anyone else agrees with the policy of Congress outlawing aid to the contras or not is irrelevant. The fact is that for a period of time recently, that aid was illegal. To circumvent due process of law, even in the "defense of freedom," detracts from the system that Col. North is so proud to have fought to preserve.

James G. Bosch
Combined Locks, Wisconsin

In the past I've often concurred with Col. Brown's insightful commentaries. However, this time I must take a staunch position of disagreement. Col. North's actions are more indicative of one who backs an authoritarian or totalitarian regime than a democracy. Most ironically, his plan, called "Project Democracy," had the expressed notion of NOT alerting Congress to its existence and purpose. That does not sound like democracy to me! North's intentions might have been all well and good but he overstepped his bounds as citizen and soldier by assuming absolute power. The last thing this country needs is a well-intentioned vigilante Marine playing with foreign policy.

Patrick Walsh
Valley Stream, New York

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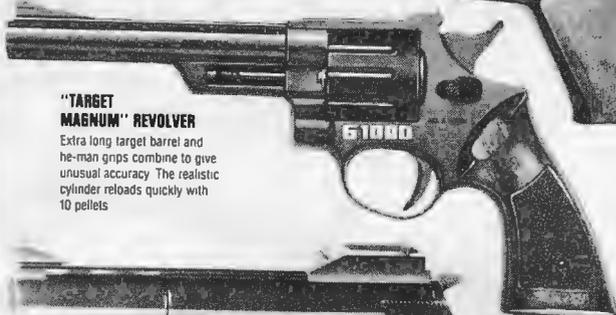
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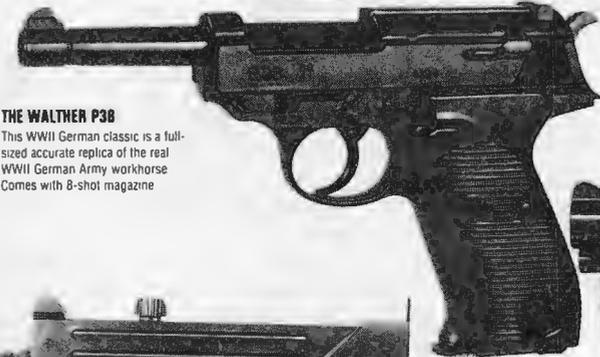
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TWENTY years ago Smith & Wesson introduced its first and only submachine gun. Called the Model Number 76, it met with no greater reception than did its single-action Model 44 and double-action Model 39-1 9mm pistols which were rejected by the U.S. military when submitted to Springfield Armory in 1953, or its most recent failed entry in the XM9 trials.

As the U.S. Navy was unable to obtain the Swedish Carl Gustav Model 45 submachine gun during the Vietnam War because of Sweden's declared neutrality, it convinced S&W officials that a market existed for a comparable weapon. Feeling there were law enforcement applications as well, S&W commenced development of a submachine gun similar in configuration to the Swedish "K" during the fall of 1966. The Model 76 was placed into series production on 24 June 1968. By this time the U.S. Navy SEALs had lost interest in 9mm Parabellum submachine guns, having opted instead for the Colt XM177, which was only 28.3 inches in overall length with the stock collapsed and chambered for the more powerful 5.56X45mm NATO cartridge.

What did they reject? No recent submachine gun has a more undeserved reputation for reliability and robustness. The S&W Model 76 is drably conventional in every regard. Unlocked, blowback-operated, it fires from the open-bolt position by means of advanced primer ignition. Overall length is 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches with the stock extended and 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches with the stock folded. The weight, empty, is 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds, while that of the Colt XM177 is but 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. The cyclic rate varies from 720 to 750 rpm, depending upon the ammunition employed. This is about 100 rpm above optimum for submachine guns, in my opinion.

The receiver has been fabricated from thick, 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch diameter seamless steel tubing with a wall thickness of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. It and all other components, except for the hard-chromed sear, have been phosphate finished. Six broached debris grooves are cut on a bias (rotated like rifling) the entire length of the receiver tube's interior. Front and rear sights, magazine well, threaded barrel socket, sling swivels, ejector and the buttstock's mounting block were heliarc-welded to the receiver tube.

Both front and rear sights are crude, heavy-gauge steel stampings. Non-adjustable, the rear peep aperture and front post have been bent into position along with a set of protective ears on each.

The fixed ejector is mounted to the left side of the receiver tube toward the rear of the magazine well. A guarded,



FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

Superfluous Subgun



Smith & Wesson Model 76 submachine gun. An uninspired design, it met with little enthusiasm and was cancelled after no more than 6,000 were produced.

spring-loaded, flapper-type magazine latch must be depressed downward to release the magazine. A flared magazine well aids in the rapid insertion of loaded magazines. Smith & Wesson's logo appears on the right side of the magazine latch guard and "MADE IN U.S.A., MARCAS REGISTRADAS, SMITH & WESSON, SPRINGFIELD, MASS." is stamped on the guard's left side.

Model 76 magazines have a 36-round capacity and closely resemble Swedish "K" magazines, but are not interchangeable. No magazine loader was designed or produced and, although they are of the more efficient two-position feed type, the last ten cartridges are difficult to insert. A projection on the bottom of the magazine body serves as a tool during disassembly of the weapon.

While none was provided, a sling can be attached by means of two steel rods welded to the left side of the receiver tube. They are too close together, do not rotate and the one next to the ejection port all too often

positions the sling so as to block either, or both, the front sight and ejection port.

Model 76 bolts are quite heavy. If high-pressure ammunition is not used, these submachine guns will frequently short-cycle and double in the semi-automatic mode. Firing from the open-bolt position causes this heavy bolt to fly forward and impact against the barrel with such violence that the weapon is invariably jarred enough to adversely affect hit potential. The bolt's spring-loaded extractor is retained by a roll pin and cannot be easily removed in the field. A fixed firing pin has been milled into the bolt face. Brittle primers on aging surplus ammunition are frequently pierced and gases blowing rearward will etch the firing pin until it develops ragged edges. These edges will pierce all primers and continue the corrosion process until the bolt is useless, or worse yet, will ignite primers out of battery. Spare bolts are a must for those who shoot the Model 76.

There is no safety notch in the receiver's retracting handle slot (located on the right side), nor is there an UZI-type safety ratchet to lock the bolt if the retracting handle is accidentally released from an incomplete cocking motion. Be careful. If you retract the M76 bolt just far enough to clear the magazine well and release it, the bolt

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Like their fathers and older brothers who served at the Bulge, Okinawa and Pusan, our Vietnam Veterans served our nation for the same principles of "duty, honor, country" that have always guided our American fighting men in combat.

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This is the first commemorative longarm ever issued as a combat memorial to these brave Americans. Only 1500 will be made in this strictly limited edition commissioned by The American Historical Foundation and built to the Foundation's specifications by the official maker of the famous Thompson, Auto-Ordnance Corporation. Each is specially serially numbered between 0001 and 1500, with the prefix V (for Vietnam).

This serial number is also inscribed on the accompanying Certificate of Authenticity, which attests to the 24-karat gold plating and the edition limit. You will also receive firing instructions and a 20-round magazine, in the event you wish (or need) to fire it.

For your ease of ownership, the Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson is being produced in a semiautomatic firing version. This means that no special license is required to own one.

The Vietnam War Commemorative Thompson has already been classified as a Curio and Relic by BATT, an acknowledgment of its collectible status.

Special Commemorative Features

This Thompson is a real man's weapon, constructed of 12 pounds of steel and walnut, but hand built with special commemorative features.

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Your finger curls around the 24-karat gold plated trigger, as your left hand and right arm grasp the American walnut stocks — original G.I. production — hand finished with seven coats of hand-rubbed lacquer and polished to a gleaming presentation grade.

The stocks show off the 24-karat gold plated sling swivels, swivel mounts and screws which affix the black leather military sling.

You cradle the precision-milled receiver, which is highly polished to highlight the roll-engraved and gold-gilt infilled commemorative inscriptions. The presentation side bears our Flag, the Vietnam Service Medal, the famous Thompson "bullet" trademark and quotations from both Presidents Kennedy and Reagan. The reverse bears the special serial number, the issuing organization and the Thompson patents.

The shoulder stock is fitted with two, full-color, fired-enamel cloisonne medallions, bearing a gold plated inscription in black — symbolic of the Vietnam War Memorial — surrounding a circularized yellow and red flag of the Republic of Vietnam. The pistol grip is fitted with a matching medallion embossed with the Great Seal of the United States and commemorative tributes.

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- Please also send the optional furniture-finished walnut display case at \$225 each.
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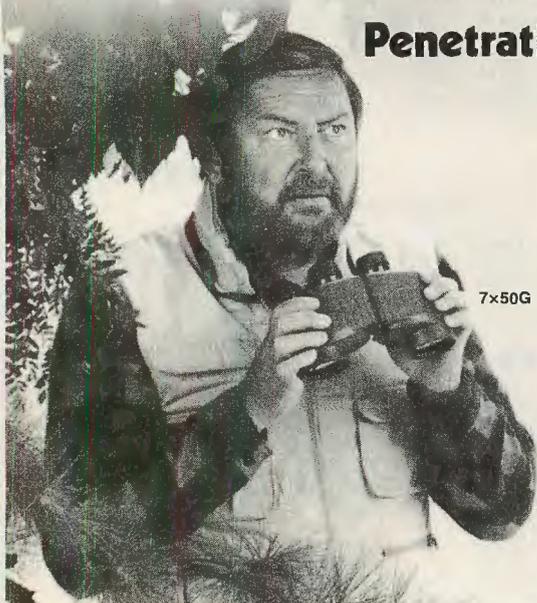
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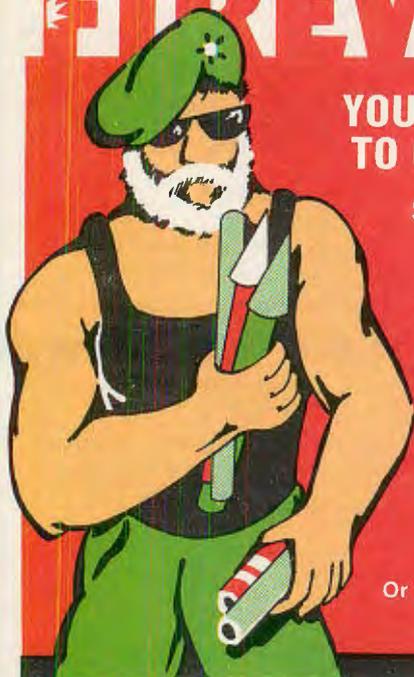
will move forward, strip a round from the magazine and fire.

Model 76 barrels are eight inches in length, with six grooves and a right-hand twist of one turn in 10 inches. The bolt's violent impact against the chamber end of the barrel will eventuallypeen metal outward until the barrel cannot be removed by hand from the barrel socket. Through use of a lathe, this problem can be temporarily corrected by cutting a 45-degree radius on the end of the barrel. A ventilated barrel-jacket with 28 ports has been welded to the barrel's locking nut, which is held in place by a spring-loaded ratchet. The very first production models, having serial numbers with a "T" prefix, had no barrel-jacket and used a bent flat-spring ratchet to retain the barrel nut.

The trigger mechanism is simple, but not entirely free of problems either. Trigger pull weights average 16 pounds. While presumably intended to inhibit accidental discharge, this is still far too heavy and only serves to further degrade hit potential. The trigger is connected to a long, spring-loaded, laminated-steel bar which engages a notch on the sear's underside. When the ambidextrous selector lever is rotated rearward to the "SAFE" position, its axis pin blocks the trigger bar and prevents it from pulling the sear downward out of engagement with the bolt's single bent. When the selector lever is rotated to upper dead center, the "SEMI" position, pulling the trigger will draw the sear down momentarily to release the bolt. While the trigger is still depressed the trigger bar moves down out of engagement with the sear. The sear then rotates upward to catch the bolt's bent before it travels forward once more. After the selector has been rotated forward to the "FULL" position, when the trigger is pulled the sear will stay down until the trigger is released. That is, it's supposed to stay down. As the trigger bar's engagement surface is not cut at a sharply defined 45-degree angle, after extended use it will slip off the sear notch and the gun will shut down while the trigger is still depressed.

The selector cannot be reached by the firing hand and can be rotated out of its detents by merely brushing against the operator's body. Two roll pins through the trigger housing act as stops to prevent 360-degree rotation of the selector lever. The sear's axis pin is retained by a spring clip which is easily lost and difficult to remove. The trigger guard is riveted only at the front end to the trigger housing and can be rotated 180 degrees for firing under arctic conditions. Brass shavings and unburned grains of propellant inevitably work their way downward through the sear's window in the receiver tube

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to collect in the Model 76's trigger housing — where they sometimes adversely affect operational reliability.

The stock folds to the left. Lift up on the front end of the upper strut to do so. But, the spring-loaded lock-up is weak and after use will, all too often, start to fold during firing sequences. The stock has been covered with a black polymer coating and the pistol grip is a black plastic molding. Unlike the Madsen Model 50, the M76 can be fired with the stock folded, although why anyone but a movie actor would want to do so, I do not know.

If you stick to hotter fodder, the Model 76 is generally reliable with no seeming preference for projectile configuration. Be sure to keep your support hand wrapped around the magazine well to avoid blocking the ejection port. Experienced operators will have little difficulty in rapping off three-shot bursts even though the cyclic rate may sometimes hover above 750 rpm. But, for the reasons previously mentioned, hit probability at ranges beyond 50 meters is low.

Providing you have radiused the chamber end of the barrel, field stripping presents no problems. Remove the magazine and make certain a cartridge has not dropped into a chamber. Place the selector on one of the fire positions and pull the trigger to permit the bolt group to move forward into battery, under control. Push the rear

receiver plug forward against the recoil spring and while doing so push the retaining pin up from the bottom and remove it. Remove the plug, recoil spring and guide rod out the rear of the receiver. Draw the retracting handle to its rearmost position and remove it. Slide the bolt out the rear of the receiver. Press down on the barrel nut's ratchet lock and unscrew the barrel nut and jacket. Pull the barrel out the front of the receiver tube. Using the projection on the bottom of the magazine, remove the grip screw and then the pistol grip and stock. Pull the trigger group down from the rear and away from the receiver. Pry off the sear pin's snap ring and remove the sear pin, sear and spring. No further disassembly is possible. Reassemble in the reverse order.

Commencing in 1968, the Model 76 was involved in an interesting, but unsuccessful, experiment with caseless ammunition. Using a standard round-nose bullet, the cartridge case was replaced by a solid propellant with a waterproof protective coating. Ignition was by means of an electric primer and a battery pack was attached to the weapon in front of the trigger guard. The firing pin and extractor were eliminated and two electrodes were fixed to the bolt face. Although performance was equal to brass-cased 9mm ammunition, there was no method by which unfired rounds could be ex-

tracted and the project was terminated.

Production series Model 76 sub-machine guns carry serial numbers with a "U" prefix. Serial numbers begin at U100. As no one, with the exception of a very few law enforcement agencies and some Class 3 dealers, expressed any interest, Smith & Wesson suspended production on 5 July 1974 after approximately 6,000 units had been produced. A generation behind contemporaries like the H&K MP5, UZI and Beretta PM 12S, international sales never materialized either.

During its production life the Smith & Wesson Model 76 SMG was available for \$75. Today, spare magazines fetch \$80 and the weapon itself will bring \$1,500 to \$2,000. Astounding. Ridiculous. This dreary machine is, to me, worth little more than its original price adjusted for inflation. Yet, it has even spawned several dreadful clones: the so-called "MK 760" in 9mm and, even more pathetic, the "76/45," a .45 ACP version using the despicable M3/M3A1 "grease gun" magazine.

As Smith & Wesson will no longer sell spare parts for the Model 76 except to law enforcement agencies, my advice would be to steer clear of their burp gun fiasco. Over the past fifteen years I have fired more than 10,000 rounds through Serial Number "U161" and can certify there must be at least a dozen better choices. ❧

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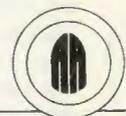
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Operation Meade River jumped off in December 1968 in the "Dodge City" area of I Corps; seven Marine and one ARVN battalion participated in what was the largest Marine helicopter assault to date. The plan was to cordon a large area and go in and root out the VC infrastructure — putting Charlie between the proverbial rock and a hard place. The 1st Marine Regiment, including the author's unit, 3rd Bn. 26th Marines, was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for its performance in the operation.

MY platoon, after serving 10 days on the perimeter, was assigned security for the battalion CP and landing zone. Enemy activity in our area was practically nil, though the targeted VC infrastructure and several NVA/VC units in the area were still a formidable threat should they decide to come our way. Occasionally we were subject to probing and incoming, but we were never directly in any firefights, so we adapted a relaxed, but guarded, routine.

"Permanent routine" medevacs waited at the landing zone and it was a natural pastime for us to watch the LZ and the activities that went on there.

Helicopter traffic had been heavy, and one comical event occurred when a CH-46 unloaded some 40 ARVN tunnel rats and two U.S. advisers. These advisers seemed to be giants, towering over the tunnel rats, whose M16s appeared more like BARs.

Suddenly things stopped being funny.

A two-man TV camera crew exited the helicopter before the tunnel rats had unloaded and began filming a working party of Marines as they loaded body bags aboard the copter.

The cameraman was an American, wearing a pair of pegged, olive-drab Levi's. He wore a subdued Hawaiian-type shirt in a leaf-camouflage pattern. He was also wearing a brand-new pair of jungle boots, something I would have literally killed for. His assistant was Vietnamese, dressed not quite as "in" as the American, but not shabbily either.

An intense hatred toward that "American" immediately began to fester within me. He was filming dead Marines, to me an act as despicable as rape. Before I realized it, I had him dead to rights in my sights. Time stood still as I kept a bead on him with my M16. I vividly remember thumbing the selector from "safe" to "semi." My trigger finger tightened. I acted without conscious thought, and for several long moments I followed this "American" and his filming antics, keeping the front sight-post centered in my M16's rear sight aperture, all the while aimed



I WAS THERE

by Karl Andrews

Meade River Madness



Marine Corps combat action in I Corps during Operation Meade River was rough enough, but security duty at a resupply LZ presented its own dangers. Photo: Department of Defense

at his torso.

This "American" was violating the sanctity of dead Marines, Marines who had paid the ultimate price for their fellow Marines. He never knew how close to death he came that day, just like I don't know why I didn't tighten my trigger finger and send that "American" to his journalistic afterlife. It's funny though, the two Marines with me made no effort to stop me.

Later that week, word came down that engineers were coming to destroy an old railroad berm a few miles away. We were alerted to a "fire in the hole" and told to grab our helmets and flak jackets and hunker down in our fighting holes.

For some reason no explosion followed. No word came down to relax, but things gradually returned to normal. Twice more we heard "Fire in the hole!" Each time nothing happened, and we soon realized that it was a false alarm.

After about four hours of this I had become pretty well bored with the whole situation. Then, once again we heard "Fire in the hole!" Yelling to my

fireteam to take cover, I said to hell with it and stayed underneath my hootch, reading a book. I did take one precaution, and that was to tilt my helmet onto my head, thinking "BFD" to myself.

Less than two minutes later, a brick-sized chunk of concrete crashed through the poncho cover of my hootch, landing less than a body width from me, on-line with my chest. Apathy, indifference and boredom left that hootch almost as fast as I did. I shot out of there, flak jacket flapping, sprinting for my hole. The shock wave and noise of the explosion hit as I landed in the hole. Looking skyward I saw a rising fountain of dirt and debris reaching up to the sky, almost in the form of a mushroom cloud. Moments later everything that went up started to come down, fortunately not in our immediate area.

Thinking back to that explosion, it appears that the chunk of concrete that almost got me had been on top of, or close to, one of the explosive charges. In fact, it was probably part of the tamping material packed over the charge. For the rest of my tour I always paid the utmost attention to any "word," especially "fire in the hole!"

Karl Andrews is the pen name of a Marine gunnery sergeant who served with the 26th Marines in Vietnam during the first three months of 1969. ✕

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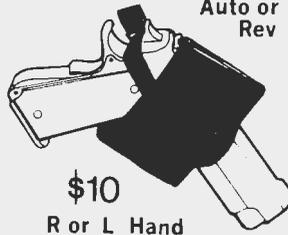
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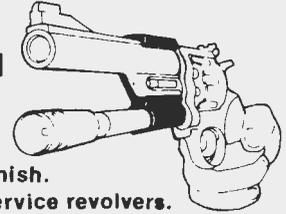
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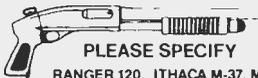
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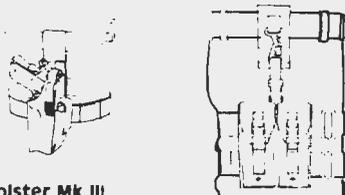
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COUP ABORTS: MERC SKIPS TENNIS...

The decision of President Lennox Sebe of the South African homeland of Ciskei to turn down an interview with French journalist Michel J. Desble of *Groupe Express* last February may have been the smartest move of his life.

M. Desble, it now appears, was in reality French merc Jean-Michel Desbele, a veteran of the Rhodesian Army's Selous Scouts, and his real purpose in Ciskei seems to have been to reconnoiter the place for a coup attempt (as it turned out, abortive) allegedly launched from the rival homeland of Transkei.

Desbele nonetheless carried off the charade with true panache, bantering and exchanging cards and pleasantries with (real) British journalist Tony Allen-Mills in the office of Ciskei's deputy director-general of information while waiting for a decision on his interview request. He even arranged to play tennis with the Brit when the pair returned to Joburg.

Allen-Mills didn't realize anything was amiss until 36 hours later, when the coup was thwarted; the Ciskeians put out a call for the head of Desble/Desbele, with or without body attached, and the Frenchman failed to keep the tennis date.

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And what about the, er, security situation?

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It sounds like the perfect place for the 82nd Airborne, 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions and 24th Marine Amphibious Unit to hold a joint reunion next year marking the fifth anniversary of the Grenada expedition. Better book early.



"Is that a medium range, short range, ICBM, sub-launched, B-1, B-52, Israeli, Moslem separatist, or terrorist device?"

SOF IN SURINAM...

At press time, a team of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine writers, including Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, had just returned from a long trip up the Maroni River and inside Surinam to meet the European mercenaries operating there and observe the anti-communist revolution against Surinam's dictator Desi Bouterse. An article on SOF's trip will appear soon.

AFGHANISTAN JUNKET THWARTED...

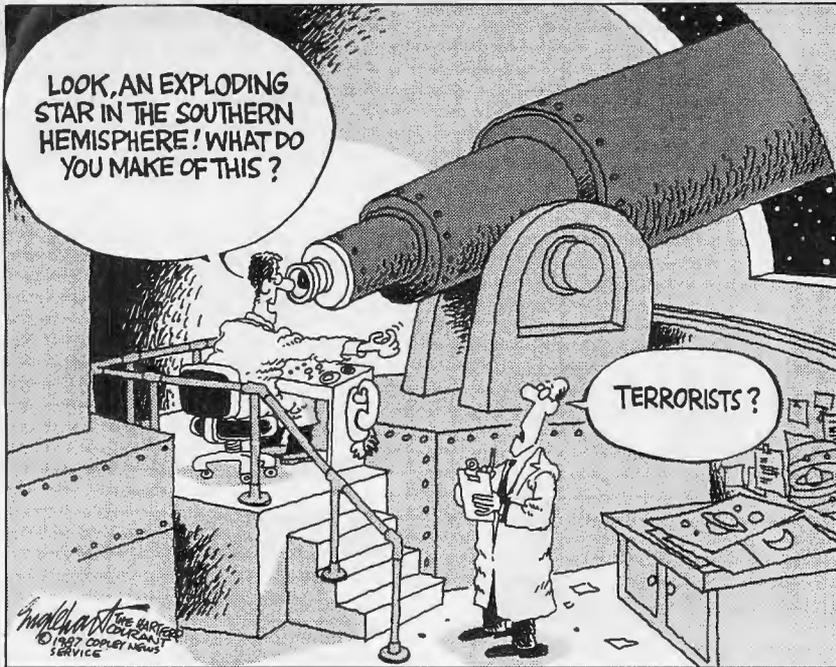
While on a junket to Pakistan late last year, Texas Democratic Congressman Charles Wilson tried unsuccessfully to slip into Afghanistan with the mujahideen.

After packing off his girlfriend, Annelise Ilschenko, and his military escort, Army Lt. Col. James Rooney, on a shopping expedition to Lahore, Wilson donned a *shalwar kameez*, armed himself with a pistol and hooked up with a group of Afghan freedom fighters who attempted to spirit him across the border, where the rebels at the time were slugging it out with Soviet armor.

The party made it through two checkpoints but was turned back at a third, allegedly because of a Shi'ite disturbance.

That, in fact, was probably just a polite excuse for the Paks to keep Wilson out of harm's way. Wilson, who is one of the most vocal friends of the Afghan resistance in the Congress, had blabbed about his plans to practically everyone in Peshawar. (The morning of the caper, U.S. Ambassador Deane Hinton is said to have slipped a note under his hotel room door reading, "I wish I were going with you, but someone has to think about the national interest and the downside risk.") If he were killed or captured in Afghanistan it would have been distinctly uncomfortable for both Washington and Islamabad.

The congressman consoled himself by spending a couple of days hunting rare ibex and markhor in the north of the country, and by day-tripping to the gun-making village of Darra Adam Khel, where, according to the *Dallas Morning News*, he bought himself a submachine gun and three magazines of ammo.



Perhaps Wilson is ready to start his own *jihad* in the hallowed congressional halls of Washington.

CRAZY TO LEAVE THE USSR...

Six years ago, when Soviet psychiatrist Anatoly Koryagin complained about Moscow's practice of committing dissidents to psychiatric hospitals, the Soviets did what any red-blooded totalitarian thugs would — they packed him off to a labor camp.

Last March, Gorbachev finally got around to springing him. Upon his return to Moscow, Dr. Koryagin allowed as how he wishes to leave the country. That might seem like an eminently sane thing to do, but — *glasnost* or no — don't be too sure. About the same time as Dr. Koryagin was beginning his Siberian sabbatical in 1980, one Vladimir Tsurikov was being committed to a Soviet funny farm — for treatment of "emigrational delusions."

AFGHANS WARRED THROUGH THE WINTER...

The war in Afghanistan generally goes into hibernation in the winter, but this year it was different.

The Soviets — through their puppet government in Kabul — proclaimed a unilateral cease-fire in

January, which the resistance promptly rejected with a series of attacks.

The Soviets had apparently expected the response, because within a couple of weeks they were involved in a series of counteroffensives all over the country, including Parwan, Kandahar, Herat, Oruzgan and Baghlan provinces.

For their part, the mujahideen spent a bracing few weeks in January and February blowing away Soviet planes and choppers at a better than one-a-day clip. By mid-February there was a major increase in Soviet night flights in and out of Kabul — it's tougher to sight a SAM in the dark as long as the target has no lights. What a difference a few Stingers can make.

In an attempt to bring pressure on Pakistan, the Soviets struck at Afghan bases along the Pakistan border and the Afghan air force struck inside Pakistan, bombing camps in north Wazieristan and around the village of Teri Mangal. Hundreds of Afghan refugees were killed or wounded in the attacks on the Pakistani camps.

The response from the mujahideen? Freedom fighters in northern Afghanistan's Takhar Province fired 107mm rockets across the Amu Darya River into the Soviet Union, killing an unknown number of Soviet citizens.

REUNIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS...

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**. Contact: **Joseph Selovich, 1909 35th St., Kenosha, WI 53140, (414) 654-0517.**

4th Marine Division Association 40th Reunion is scheduled for **24-28 June in Baltimore, Maryland**. Contact: **Norman Grammer, 7900 Babikow Rd., Baltimore, MD 21237, (301) 686-9396.**

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.**

11th Armored Cavalry veterans of Vietnam and Cambodia second reunion is scheduled for **7-8 August in Washington, D.C.** Contact: **Reunion Committee, c/o Ron Ballweg, 1217 Hilltop Dr., Annapolis, MD 21401, (301) 974-0547.**

First Special Service Force reunion is scheduled for **13-15 August in London, Ontario**. Contact: **Bill Story, 11815 Quarter Horse Ct., Oakton, VA 22124, (703) 620-5990.**

Nebraska Vietnam Veteran Reunion is scheduled for **14-16 August in Grand Island, Nebraska**. Contact: **Jerry Kinney, 1740 Superior, Lincoln, NE 68521.**

HONOR ROLL...

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund contributors:

T-Bone Cole, Kenneth Don Schustereit, Michael Lindsay, G.A. Aden, Sgt. Scott L. Lance, "Doc" at FAFB, In honor of "Detroit's Red Bishop," Philip W.W. Herzberg, Customers of G.I. Supply, Kevin F. Lynch, Wade White, Dale F. Bruha,

Continued on page 111

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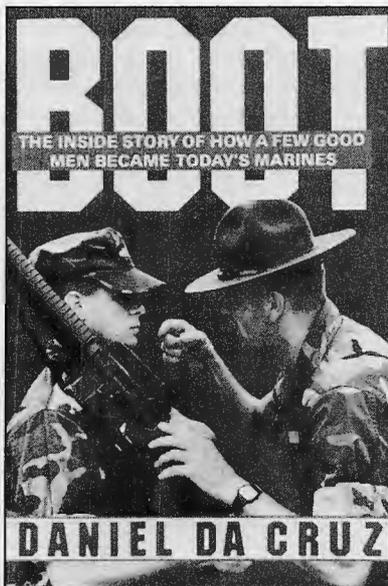
JUNE 87

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE 23

BOOT. By Daniel da Cruz. St. Martin's Press, Dept. SOF, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010. 1987. 308 pages. Hardcover. \$17.95. Review by G.B. Crouse.

DANIEL DA CRUZ has produced the most accurate, honest and complete account of Marine Corps recruit training yet written. *Boot* is the whole story, from forming to graduation: drill, hand-to-hand combat, swim qual, individual combat training, pugil sticks, PT, the confidence and circuit courses, classes ranging from Marine Corps history to personal hygiene, drill competitions, inspections, mess duty, and the rifle range. In short, if recruits do it, da Cruz has written about it.

Boot goes beyond the training. Interspersed throughout the book are short chapters on almost everything else: drill instructors and their training, weapons and equipment, food, health and dental care, Special Training Division, Marine Corps history, women Marines, a history of Parris Island, the Recruit Depot at San Diego, and a comparison of Marine Corps training to that of the Royal Marines, Foreign Legion and Soviet Naval Infantry.



Da Cruz is a former Marine, a graduate of recruit training at Parris Island and a combat veteran of World War II. Throughout the book you get the idea that the author *wants* to like the Marine Corps, *wants* to be impressed with what he sees of the "new" Corps. Sadly, however, what da Cruz witnessed at Parris Island in 1985 left him with little to cheer about.

Gone are the hell-for-leather, profane, tough-before-breakfast drill instructors and the misery they could create for recruits. Profanity is a definite no-no. Referring to recruits by

IN REVIEW



anything other than their name, job title or recruit/private is strictly prohibited, and physical contact (let alone abuse) can get a D.I. a quick ticket back to the fleet.

The old system led to abuses, violations of civil rights and on occasion the death of a recruit. What the powers that be have forgotten, and what da Cruz deftly reminds everyone, is that the old system also produced the men who waded ashore on Red Beach One at Saipan, walked out of the Chosen and retook Hue from the NVA.

But all that has changed. The old system has been replaced by the "Standard Operating Procedure for Male Recruit Training." The SOP codifies every aspect of recruit training and leaves nothing to the judgment of the well-trained, highly committed drill instructors. According to da Cruz, the SOP is "a marvel of wrong priorities, bureaucratic nit-picking, triviality and outright nonsense" and results in the enlisted ranks being "spoiled, undisciplined and demoralized."

It would be easy to dismiss *Boot* as the ravings of a veteran who disapproves of any changes in his beloved Corps. After all, criticism of "new Marines" by "old Marines" has been a fact of life since the first recruits signed on at Tun Tavern in 1775. And predictions made by the "Old Corps" about the performance of "new Marines" under fire have always missed the mark by a wide margin.

But that may not be the case this time. Da Cruz offers a convincing picture of the sorry state of recruit training. He does so out of genuine concern about the future of the Corps. His criticisms are offered not out of pettiness, but out of a hope that someone will take a closer look at boot camp and attempt to change what he sees as a "tragedy in the making."

THE BREN GUN SAGA. By Thomas B. Dugelby. Collector Grade Publications, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 250, Station E, Toronto, Ontario M6H 4E2, Canada. 1986. 272 pages, 220 illustrations. \$50.00 postpaid. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

FROM the debacle at Dunkirk to victory in the Falklands, almost half a

century of unblemished service has demonstrated the Bren to be, without argument, the finest magazine-fed light machine gun ever fielded. Dugelby's sweeping history carries us from the Bren's earliest origins in the Czechoslovakian belt-fed Praga-1, designed by Václav Holec, up to the L4 series, chambered for the 7.62X51mm NATO cartridge and employed with great success by British Marines in the Falklands.



Along the way we are exposed to the ZBvz26, ZBvz27, ZBvz30, the British trials (1930-1934), Brens Mk1, Mk1*, Mk2, Mk2/1, Mk3, Mk4, the entire L4 series and Canadian manufacture. Accouterments such as tripods, magazine chargers, optical sights, 100-round drums, antiaircraft and vehicle mounts are discussed in detail. Experimental prototypes and oddities like the Desert and Italian Brens, double-chambered barrel, captive magazine and die-cast aluminum parts are illustrated, some for the first time. Postwar developments in Czechoslovakia, which led to the VZ59 belt-fed machine gun in caliber 7.62X54R, and PRC modifications to 7.62X39mm ComBloc are also covered. Included in the appendix is a useful reproduction of a British manual on the entire Bren series and its accessories, compiled in 1969.

There is no end of fascinating information. In the section on manufacturing procedures we learn that Canadian Mk2 receivers were flame-cut into a blank that weighed 38.5 pounds. After 247 successive machining operations this was reduced to 4.5 pounds. British attempts during the early 1950s to circumvent these costly methods by investment casting with the receiver met with failure. British World War II

Continued on page 110

CLENCHING the money from the liquor store's cash register firmly in his fist, the suspect fled through the late-afternoon crowd, leaving a bleeding clerk lying in an aisle, perhaps dead.

Police officers on the scene observed the man firing randomly as he ran toward the corner of the block; he was soon out of their effective pistol range. One officer was armed with the standard 12-gauge shotgun, loaded with 00 buckshot, but couldn't fire because the scattering pellets might wound innocent bystanders. Soon the man reached the end of the block, rounded the corner and was never seen again.

This criminal, and hundreds like him each year, escaped primarily because police in the United States lack an effective, easily portable, medium-range weapon like the submachine gun. Though police armories often contain SMGs, police chiefs, seeing visions of blood-spattered pastel walls from watching too many 30-round bursts on "Miami Vice," usually keep them locked up.

The news media's thirst for sensationalism has also contributed to the negative image of full-auto weapons. This bias against machine guns for police work is a peculiarly American prejudice — just look at foreign news accounts to find German border police with Walther MPKs and Italian Carabinieri with Beretta PM 12Ss. The shoulder arm of choice for police in Europe and many other parts of the world is the SMG.

If police are in a situation where they must use deadly force, why should one type of firearm be more or less acceptable than another?

When this subject is raised at police staff meetings, the chief's response is likely to be against full-auto weapons. He'll point to some vague, unfavorable World War II experience with the ill-conceived and obsolete M3 "grease gun." This will be followed by the statement that "machine guns are military weapons." The chief will say that he can't have his officers "spraying the city with bullets," and that the 12-gauge shotgun is the best solution when something beyond the pistol is needed. Unfortunately, there will be no one at this meeting to explain to the chief that he is wrong.

When the chief places the M3 "grease gun" in the same category as the time-proven UZI and the state-of-the-art Heckler & Koch MP5, he is parking his Model T next to a Mercedes Benz.

The chief's remark that "machine guns are military weapons" demonstrates a common tendency to allow blanket categorization to replace detailed analysis. "Spraying the city with



COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Bruce Nelson

Full Auto: Edge for Cops?



Police using shotgun and SMG to guard John Dillinger in 1934. Which weapon is more effective in today's urban environment? Photo: AP/Wide World

bullets" is, of course, a matter of policy and training. The same reasons you don't spray with a large-capacity 9mm auto pistol apply here — people do in

combat what they're taught in training.

To understand the SMG and its future in law enforcement, it's useful to compare it to the weapon it would replace. Despite the myths surrounding the 12-gauge shotgun, it falls short in many ways.

At close range, the pattern is small and quite powerful, but it provides no advantage over a single projectile of sufficient power. At greater ranges, where long guns begin to provide advantages over handguns, the shotgun's power dissipates rapidly due to velocity loss. The larger, and often inconsistent, pattern causes fewer of the pellets to hit. The reliance upon pattern for hitting at short and long ranges has produced poor results.

Statistics show that police officers hit only about seven percent more often with a shotgun than with a pistol. Yet every time one round of 12-gauge 00 buck is fired, nine to 12 projectiles "spray the city." This is the equivalent of several two- or three-shot SMG bursts. If just a single two- or three-shot

TOP COP

Bruce Nelson has served as a patrol officer, detective, undercover agent and bureau commander of undercover personnel. He created and taught the California Department of Justice's Officer Survival Program, and headed its statewide firearms training program. He's a founder of the International Practical Shooting Confederation and a former top-ranked combat shooter. Nelson also makes holsters and was featured in "Bruce Nelson's Combat Leather" (SOF, October '86).

Continued on page 108

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DEPT. SOF-6



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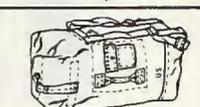
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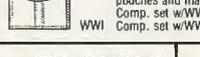
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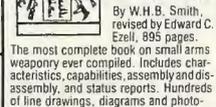
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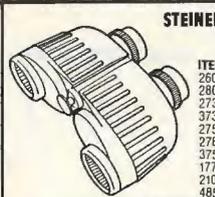
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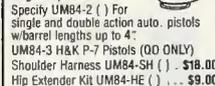
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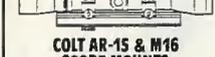
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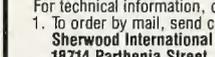
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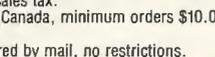
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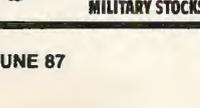
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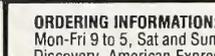
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In an effort to diversify coverage, *Battle Blades* will from time to time feature guest writers. Bill Bagwell will return next month.

IN recent months, I have noticed a new trend in orders for custom knives. Some of my customers, particularly those ordering knives for the first time, are asking for bigger blades, thicker steel and designs generally reminiscent of the classic bowie shape. When I ask about the need for such large knives, I generally get a reply referring to the adequacy of a defensive weapon capable of withstanding the rigors of hand-to-hand combat. Almost invariably, someone will talk about reach and the need to overcome the blade extension of an adversary in a knife fight.

It is usually at this point that I try to gently pry my customer away from his media-induced fantasies of desperate engagements and flashing steel. I try, as best I can, to plant his feet more firmly on the ground and to help him choose a knife size and design that will accurately reflect his real cutlery needs. In this way, we can both be assured that the knife he buys will, in fact, be useful and functional long after the thrill of "Rambo" and "Crocodile Dundee" has faded.

To be sure, I, as well as most custom knifemakers, produce blades of prodigious size and heft. I find, however, that most of these large knives are purchased by collectors, not by knife-using professionals, military or civilian. Most of my repeat customers use their knives on a regular basis. And guess what. They rarely ask for a blade longer than 6 inches. In fact, they usually want utility knives with blades of only 4 inches or so in length. Most of the orders I get from professionals who use combat knives tend to fall in the 5- to 7-inch range.

One can easily be misled by the fallacy of purchasing a larger knife in an attempt to "outreach" one's opponent. To depend on your weapon rather than your skill is a dangerous tactic. If your opponent has a 7-inch blade to your 9, yet has an arm 2 inches longer than yours, you have lost the reach advantage and perhaps the psychological advantage as well. Sure, you can escalate the size of your carry knife, but so can your opponent. How long a knife are you willing to carry around with you — always — in anticipation of an armed encounter?

No, I do not believe that the answer to personal security is a longer or heavier knife. And that is too bad, because knifemakers can get more money for a larger blade than they can for a smaller one.

"Heresy!" you may say, and yet I will wager that most knifemakers' sales



BATTLE BLADES

by Robert Terzuola

Skill Outreaches Size



Obvious winner? Don't bet your life on it! Photo: J.D. Mayfield

fall mainly in the 3- to 7-inch range. There are, of course, notable exceptions. Historical pieces, machetes and camp knives are generally longer. The true knife user, however, the person who carries his knife constantly, will most likely opt for the shortest, handiest, most comfortable blade he can get

MARK OF A GOD

Robert Terzuola professionally handcrafts knives full-time in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He completed his first handcrafted knife in December 1979, and, from then until June 1984, he made knives part-time while working as a jade carver and lapidary in Guatemala, where he had lived since 1970.

In the Indian Highlands of Guatemala, Terzuola was bestowed the honorary Maya Indian name *Chapoi Kumatz*, meaning "Serpent Hunter," and his knives bear as a mark the dragon-head glyph of the Mayan god *Etz'nab*, patron of edged tools and weapons.

away with.

A trained, determined professional, be he trapper, guide or commando, does not need a humongous knife to accomplish his chosen purpose. The skill and experience that control his blade are what make him truly effective.

Too often, I believe, media messages, both from the printed page and the silver screen, are taken too literally. We have been bombarded with endless examples of the effectiveness of bigger knives, more powerful guns, high-tech machines, etc., ad nauseam. The problem as I see it is that people actually believe the media hype. Some even feel that, armed with a 9-inch bowie-style knife of hand-forged steel, they become invincible in a knife fight. Once again, this is a very dangerous attitude to have. Too often we forget that success at any endeavor is the result of hard work. Proficiency in the use of a weapon is no different, requiring long hours of practice, sweat and familiarization under diverse circumstances.

Selection of the weapon is just as important as learning how to use it. Individual lifestyle should not be overlooked when deciding on a carry knife. The person who usually wears a busi-

Continued on page 110

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT . . .



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EYE TECHNOLOGY

Oakley, a California-based maker of high-tech eyewear, recently introduced two new designs in its line of top-quality glasses. Unlike "designer" brands, which are often good for little more than showing off the price tag, Oakley's "Eyeshades" and "Blades" are designed for

ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER



by Tom Slizewski



Blades



Eyeshades

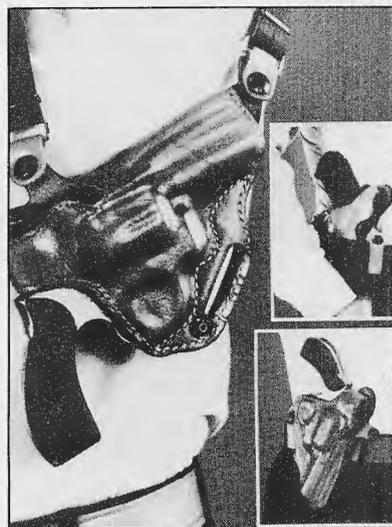
rugged outdoor use. For starters, they give 100% protection from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) and blue light rays without blocking peripheral vision. The unique design

of Eyeshades allows the wearer to fire shoulder weapons without readjusting his glasses after every recoil. Their snug fit even stops them from falling off during more rigorous activities — like running an assault course.

With scratch-resistant Plutonite™ lenses, Oakley's glasses exceed DOD and NASA flight shield impact specs, and even the frames are fully guaranteed, break-resistant Zytel™. Their unique and easily interchangeable lenses, including various colored shades as well as clear, make Oakley's perfect for day or night activities. The entire eyewear system is interchangeable, from nosepiece to earpieces, and

can be customized to your specifications.

Oakley's are made even better by their reasonable price tag of between \$60 and \$68, depending on model and color. Once you've had a pair of these you never go back — ask anyone here. Write Oakley Inc., Dept. SOF, 11 Marconi, Irvine, CA 92718.



GUNHIDE

Maximizing versatility without sacrificing comfort is the design philosophy behind the new Triple-Agent Holster System from DeSantis Leather Company. The Triple-Agent can be carried on a shoulder strap, belt or inside the waistband, giving the user three practical options for handgun concealment.

Constructed from quality vegetable-tanned leather, the holster is available for all revolvers with barrel lengths to 4 inches and small-to large-frame automatics with barrel lengths to 5 inches for just \$79.95.

DeSantis Leather Company has long held a reputation as a supplier of quality leather goods for law enforcement agencies and also offers a whole line of consumer leather products. For information or to order, contact DeSantis Gunhide, Dept. SOF, 149 Denton Avenue, New Hyde Park, NY 11040. Phone: (516) 354-8000. ☒

MARINE CHEST

What can you do to improve an ice chest? Gott Corporation has come up with a new twist on an old idea.

Gott's new 102-quart ice chest is the latest addition to its patented Marine Line, which features the unique ICEOLATOR Refreeze System. ICEOLATOR is a fancy name for two removable refreeze bottles. Placing the bottles in the chest lid allows it to function like a conventional ice chest; however, other placements are possible for customized cooling. For example, the bottles can be used to divide the cooler into three compartments, to keep the fresh fish separate from the bread, and so on.

The chest costs \$89.95 and comes in white or cobalt blue, features extra-thick insulation, heavy-duty double-wall construction and is covered by Gott's six-year warranty.

Gott products should be available at your local sporting goods store. If you can't find them, write Gott Corporation, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 652, Winfield, KS 67156.



SOG SPECIALTIES

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P R E S E N T S

The Special Forces Vietnam Commemorative MACV/SOG FIGHTER 1955-1975

The original SOG Knife was carried and used in the Vietnam Conflict by the 5th Special Forces and other elite soldiers throughout South-East Asia. When established, the Studies & Observation/Special Operations Group (SOG) was a joint service outfit drawing on the cream of all four branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. Some of the toughest, most resolute fighters available were recruited: Navy Seals, Marine Recons, Pilots from the 90th Special Operations Wing and above all, members of the Green Berets. These individuals were specialists in reconnaissance, infiltration and behind lines operations. Very little is actually known of these "OPS" due to the still classified nature and clandestine methods of this "SOG" group.

The mystique of this knife that was carried by the "SOG" trooper, has drawn attention from collectors and military enthusiasts. Engraved with the special Forces Crest (de Oppresso Libre) and 5th Special Forces Group (ABN) Vietnam, these original pieces are rapidly becoming one of the foremost collectables of all military edged weapons. With most being lost in the South-East Asian Jungle, existing pieces are extremely hard to find and will fetch in good condition up to \$1000.00 with prices still increasing.



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There were many variations of the SOG Knife produced in Japan and Okinawa between the early 60's & 70's. Started as a presentation piece for the 5th Special Forces touring in Vietnam, the knife was sometimes individualized with a troopers' name; team number; date of service; and the group he served with. It was presented upon transfer or retirement out of the individuals unit. Other SOG Knives were left completely sterile so as to insure secrecy of a mission. Brass, Aluminum, and Iron were used on the pommel and crossguard.

Our SOG-I-F commemorative is no mere souvenir. Engraved like the original, this knife is an investment collectable which has been designed primarily with practical use in mind. We felt that a proper commemorative for the Special Forces would be a working knife rather than just a paper weight sitting on a plaque. We enlisted world famous A.G. Russell and Lloyd Hale, two of the most renowned and talented knifemiths in the country to modernize and improve the original bowie design. They've created for us a legendary blade similar to the original 20 year old design but modernized into a weapon of sophistication.

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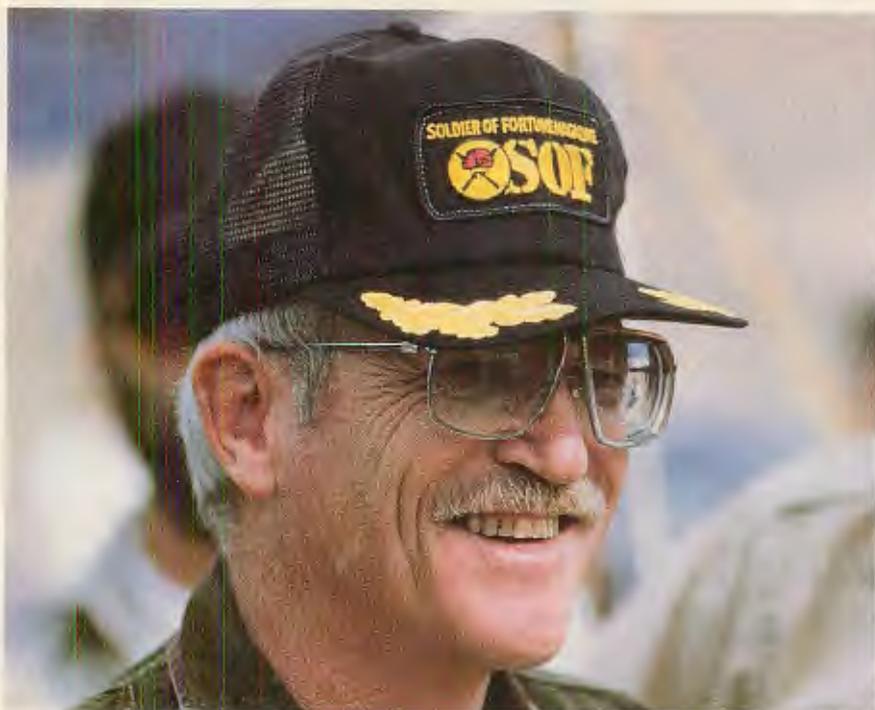
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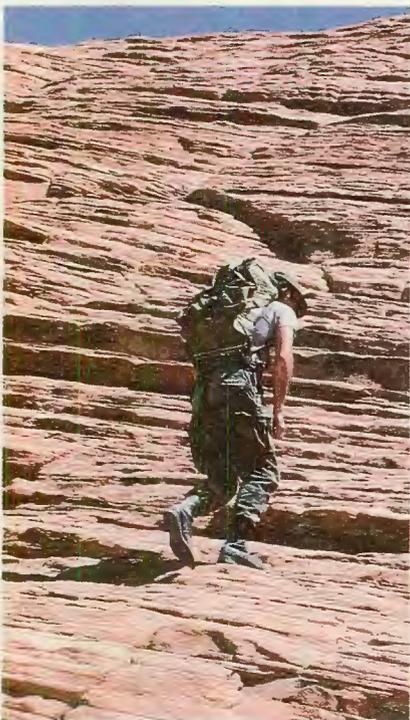
SOF



ABOVE: *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown kicks off his 1986 convention in Las Vegas. Photo: Duane Hall



ABOVE: Former Green Beret and *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine Contributing Editor Barry Sadler performs his venerable "Ballad of the Green Berets" for conventioners gathered at poolside. Photo: David McDonnell



ABOVE: *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine 1986 Convention saw return of popular Headhunter competition. Grueling competition had participants traversing desert terrain to collect 10-pound bags of sand while hill climbing, rappelling and navigating. Photo: David McDonnell



ABOVE: Representing Nicaraguan freedom fighters, Colonel Enrique Bermudez, military commander of anti-communist FDN, at convention banquet. Photo: Duane Hall



ABOVE: Dr. Khalid Akram, mujahideen commander in National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. Dr. Akram visited convention on behalf of freedom fighters in Afghanistan. Photo: Duane Hall



RIGHT: Inside Combat Weapons Expo hall at Sahara Hotel. A favorite booth was Chuck Trainer's Survival Store, featuring the voluptuous Crissa "Bo" Bozlee and her buxom companions, who pose with eager conventioners. Photo: Duane Hall

CONVENTION

1986

by SOF Staff

THE 1987 SOF Convention and Expo will be held at the Sahara Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. Registration for shooters will begin on Tuesday, 25 August at 1600 hrs. in the Sahara Hotel Space Center. Conventioneers may register beginning at 1500 hrs. on Wednesday, 26 August. The Expo will open to the public on Friday, 28 August.



ABOVE: Everyone's favorite, the nightly pugil stick competition, saw more would-be gladiators than ever before. Before it was over, all went into the pool — except for returning champion Ron West, who bashed his way to victory for the second straight year. Photo: Duane Hall

RIGHT: Among weapons on gun line for firepower demonstration was this rare Vickers .303 machine gun. Photo: R.P. Montoya

BELOW: Fred Dryer, former L.A. Rams linebacker and star of the movie "Death Before Dishonor," visits range for firepower demonstration. Photo: R.P. Montoya



LEFT: Convention banquet keynote speaker, State Department Central America expert Colonel Larry Tracy. Photo: Duane Hall



RIGHT: "Master Blaster" Contributing Editor John Donovan heated up activities at range by blowing up "enemy" school bus with gas-enhanced explosives. Photo: David McDonnell



ABOVE: Much to the delight of the spectators, the '86 pugil stick matches featured something new — female competitors. The ladies jumped into the action — and climbed out of the pool — like real troopers. Photo: David McDonnell



LEFT: Inside Convention hall, shotgun wizard John Satterwhite mans sandbagged Heckler & Koch booth to answer questions from potential buyers and lookers. Photo: R.P. Montoya



ABOVE: One of the more popular participatory events at the '86 Convention was the full-auto range. For a small fee, conventioners could fire the full-auto weapon of their choice at the Survival Store's indoor range. Photo: Duane Hall

RIGHT: Nevada summer heat didn't discourage standing-room-only crowds at firepower demonstration at Desert Sportsman Rifle and Pistol Club. Photo: David McDonnell



ABOVE: Slicing through 3/4-inch rope with a single stroke was one test at "Battle of the Blades" knife competition. Photo: David McDonnell

RIGHT: For second year, captured militaria were offered at auction after banquet to raise money for freedom fighters around the world. This Grenadian flag, recovered by SOF Washington Bureau Chief Jim Graves at Fort Rupert during liberation of Grenada in 1982, went for \$500. Photo: Duane Hall

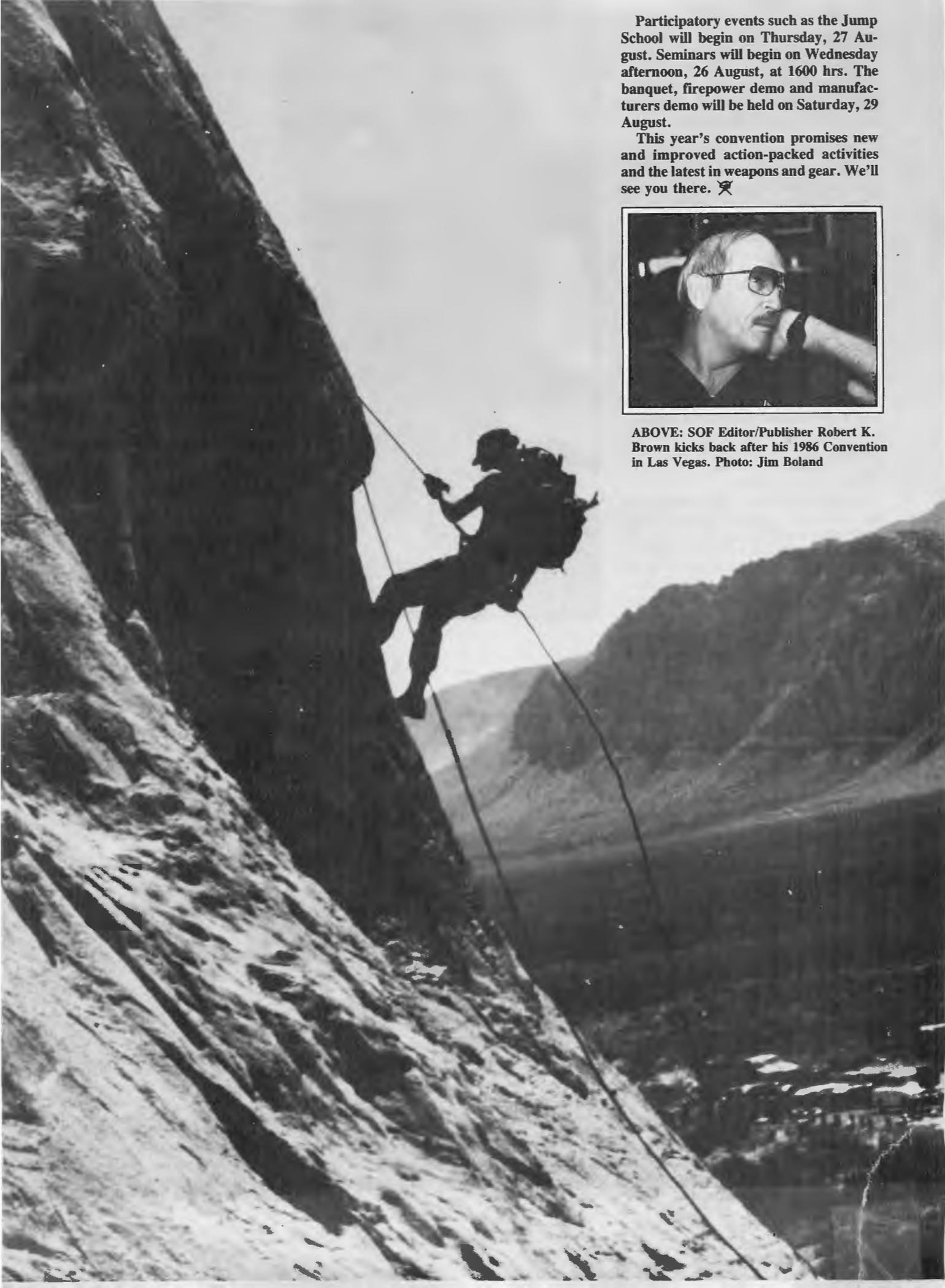


Participatory events such as the Jump School will begin on Thursday, 27 August. Seminars will begin on Wednesday afternoon, 26 August, at 1600 hrs. The banquet, firepower demo and manufacturers demo will be held on Saturday, 29 August.

This year's convention promises new and improved action-packed activities and the latest in weapons and gear. We'll see you there. ✕



ABOVE: SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown kicks back after his 1986 Convention in Las Vegas. Photo: Jim Boland



OUTSIDE of the U.S. and ComBloc territories, the "Nine" has reigned supreme for a long time. Although ridiculed by gringo pistoleros, the 9mm Parabellum cartridge has been filling chanel houses for almost eighty years. And, until it got pushed aside by the new double-action whiz bangs, the Browning High Power pistol was, without doubt, king of the 9mm mountain. It is still the weapon of choice in all "cocked and locked" circles.

Developed by John Moses Browning in the 1920s and redesigned by Dieudonné Joseph Saive of *Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre* (FN) during the early 1930s, the first *Grande Puissance* (High Power) pistols were delivered to the Belgian government in 1935. One-and-a-half million pistols later, this short recoil, locked breech handgun has changed very little.

During the years since the Model 1935 FN Browning pistol was introduced, FN in Herstal, Belgium has licensed only four foreign governments to produce it: Argentina, Canada, Nigeria and Venezuela. It was adopted at one time or another by the armed forces of numerous countries in Latin America, Europe and Asia.

During World War II, it was preferred by elite Waffen SS troops over the German Walther P38 and Luger pistols. Unlicensed copies are produced in Indonesia and Hungary. While Hungary still languishes on the U.S. State Department's restricted munitions list, Kassnar Imports, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 6097, Harrisburg, PA 17112) has obtained a temporary waiver to import 18,000 PJK-9HP pistols. It's an almost exact copy of the Browning High Power — but how does it perform?

Construction and method of operation are identical. Unlike Browning's M1911 Colt design, there is no pivoting link under the High Power's barrel. Instead, a more substantial lug on the barrel's underside has been cut with a forward and upward sloping camway. As the barrel and slide travel rearward in recoil, this "barrel nose" strikes a cam in the frame which unlocks it from the slide and terminates its rearward movement.

Shortly after production series was initiated, the forward contour of the barrel lug's cam slot was squared-off to direct recoiling forces up and into the barrel itself to avoid metal fatigue in the lug. This early pre-WWII modification has been retained by the Hungarian clone. A series of cost-effective modifications introduced by FN in 1962, principal of which was a visible extractor with roll pin and spring, has also been copied by *Femaru Fegyvar es Gepgyar* (Arms and Gas Appliances Factory of Budapest), or FEG. An older "ring"-type hammer has been retained.

Serial number markings follow the FN tradition and appear on the frame's front strap, on the right side of the slide directly upon the ejection port (double struck on our specimen) and the right side of the barrel where it is seen through the ejection port. The right side of the slide is marked "PJK-



SOF PISTOLS

HUNGARIAN HIGH POWER

A Reliable Best Buy

Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis

9HP FEG Budapest Made in Hungary." The importer's name and address are stamped into the slide's left side.

Like the early checkered walnut grip panels on FN High Powers, FEG paints the panels' interior surfaces, the only difference being its choice of a rose-colored hue in-

stead of the familiar ochre. Except for the white barrel and the phosphate-finished magazine body, all steel components have been attractively polished and salt blued. Interior surfaces exhibit unfinished milling marks to no greater extent than current-production FN High Powers, although there



ABOVE: Hungarian version of venerable Browning High Power rated "best buy" among 9mm single-action pistols.

BELOW: Field-stripped Hungarian PJK-9HP. All components are compatible with and every bit the equal of original FN Browning.



is more evidence of hand-fitting on the PJK-9HP. Its 13-round staggered-column magazine with gray plastic follower remains as difficult to load as the FN original.

While John Browning's design needs no performance testing at this late date, the proof of any pistol's pudding is still in the shooting. Black Hills Shooters Supply, Inc. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 5070, Rapid City, SD 57709) provided the ammunition for SOF's test and evaluation. We fired several hundred rounds of three different bullet configurations offered by Black Hills in 9mm Parabellum: 125-gr. Round Nose Lead, 115-gr. FMJ (Full Metal Jacket) and 115-gr. JHP (Jacketed Hollow Point). There were no stoppages of any kind.

Both the FMJ and JHP projectiles yielded an impressive average velocity of 1,100 to 1,115 fps 10 feet from the muzzle. Standard deviation was an astounding 13 fps in both cases. The heavier 125-gr. cast round-nose bullet dropped to 1,028 fps but with an even lower standard deviation of only six fps. This is match-grade performance.

At 21 feet the PJK-9HP will print 10 rounds into 2.5 inches if a strong Weaver hold is employed. Our only criticisms concern the trigger. Its loosely-fitted pin started to drift out of the frame after one magazine. Worse yet was the 10.5-pound trigger pull weight with a very nasty backlash. Of a more trivial nature are the magazines, which do not drop freely from the frame when the magazine button is depressed. All of this can be easily corrected by any competent pistolsmith. The fixed, open U-notch rear sight and round front blade are adequate and somewhat better than those usually encountered on military pistols of this vintage.

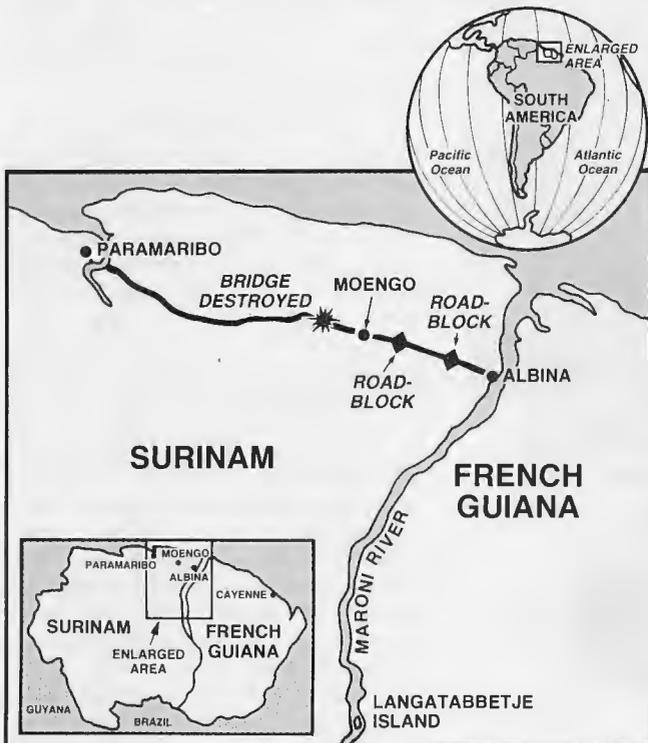
Field stripping the PJK-9HP is as simple as its FN predecessor. Remove the magazine and retract the slide to eject any cartridge in the chamber. With the slide retracted, pivot the safety lever up into the forward notch on the slide. Press up the slide stop and withdraw it from the left side of the frame. Pivot the safety lever down and push the slide assembly forward and off the frame. Push the recoil spring's guide rod forward and withdraw it and the recoil spring from the slide. Lift the barrel out of the slide from the chamber end. Depress the firing pin with a small punch and slide the firing pin lock plate down and off the slide (just as you would with an M1911A1). Withdraw the firing pin and firing pin spring. Remove the grip panels by unscrewing their retaining screws. No further disassembly is required. Reassemble in reverse order. Don't over-tighten the grip screws or you'll strip the threads; there is no bushing and the screws are threaded directly to the frame.

You should be able to locate a Hungarian Model PJK-9HP pistol complete with two magazines and cleaning rod for between \$250 and \$295. That's almost half the price of FN's classic. I rate FEG's duplicate of a reliable, proven design as the best buy in a single-action 9mm pistol. ✕

MERCS IN SURINAM

Brits Organize Jungle Army

Text & Photos by Patrick Chauvel



Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni in French Guiana, 11 November: Surinam guerrilleros will take me, by pirogue, as far as Langatabetje, an island up the river which serves as their headquarters.

Barely ten minutes after the departure there is a warning. Cutting the motor, we drift along the French bank, under cover of the jungle which borders the Maroni River, the international border between French Guiana and Surinam. We are but 800 meters — the width of



Photographer Patrick Chauvel getting too close to the action in Cambodia. Photo: Al Rockoff

COMBAT PHOTOGRAPHER OJT

Photographer Patrick Chauvel's father attempted to stop him from following in his and his brother's footsteps (his father was a combat reporter for French magazines while Patrick's uncle was a French army cinematographer captured at Dien Bien Phu) by throwing him into the game. On the first day of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967, Chauvel's father tossed him a camera, told him to climb on top of an Israeli tank and to not "come back until it's over."

"He never figured it would only last seven days," laughs Patrick, "and he didn't realize I would love it."

For 20 years now Patrick Chauvel has been getting up close to battle, and sometimes, as this Al Rockoff photo of him going down from an incoming round in Cambodia shows, he gets too close. Chauvel was badly wounded but never considered giving up combat photography. If they gave out campaign ribbons for photographers, Chauvel would have about as many as anyone, having done wars in

the Middle East, Vietnam, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Beirut, Chad, the Horn of Africa, Iran, Central America and now Surinam.

And in Surinam, as in many other wars he's covered, Chauvel got there way ahead of the pack, and went to places most journalists couldn't and wouldn't go. Three months before the guerrillas in Surinam became an item in the papers, Chauvel had already crossed the Maroni River, found that the mercenaries who are the driving force behind the war would accept him because one of them knew him from a previous conflict, and then marched off into the jungle on operations.

"Surinam is interesting," says Chauvel. "You've got guerrillas who're into voodoo led by British mercenaries fighting with shotguns, crossbows and dynamite against a Libyan-backed dictator in this incredible malarial jungle teeming with anacondas and piranhas."

But, as his father would probably admit, to Patrick they're all interesting.



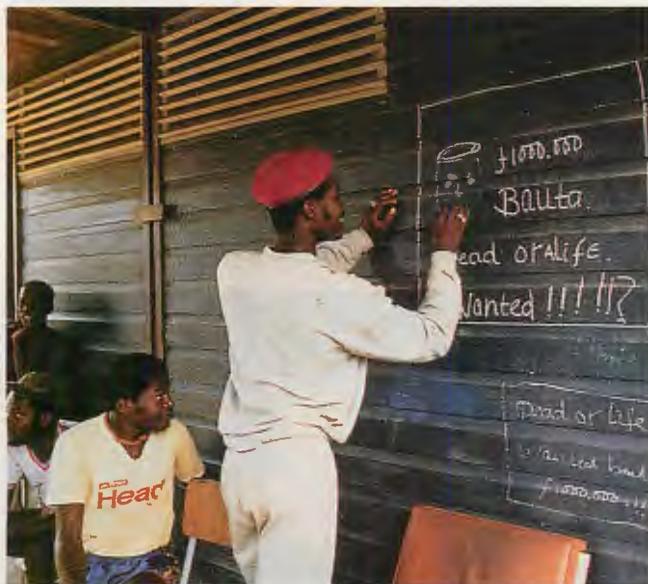
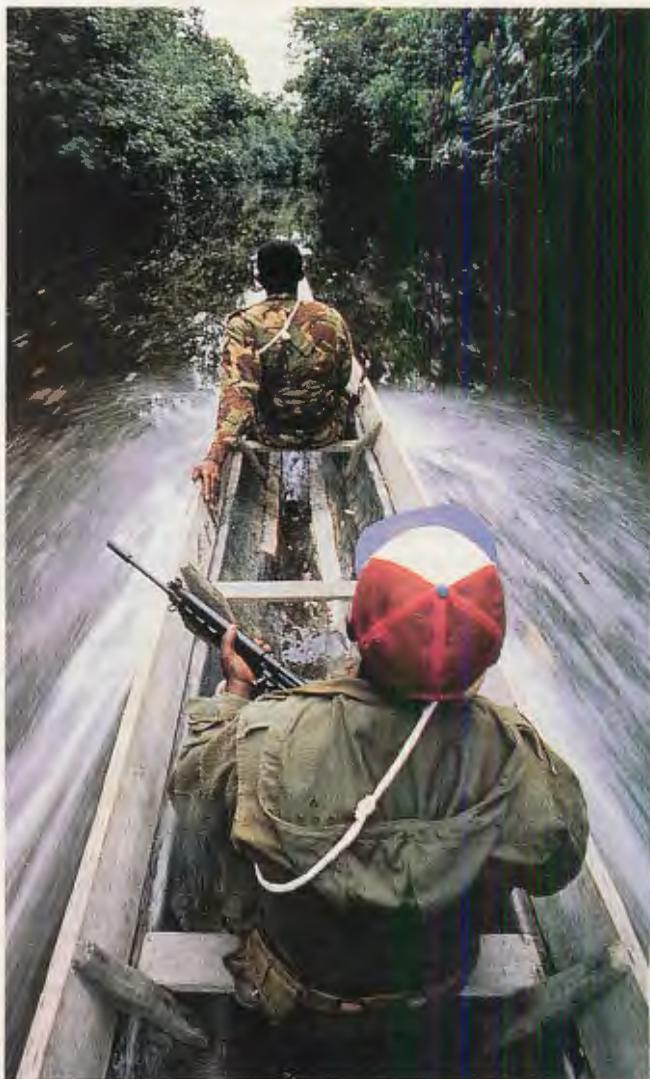
Among the weapons being used by Surinamese guerrillas are swords left over from 19th century.

the river — from Albina, a village garrisoned with 400 pro-government soldiers and four patrol boats. An “enemy” patrol boat has taken a position in the middle of the river and scrutinizes the bank. At high speed, a French patrol boat intervenes to protect the border, which, although the crew was unaware of it, was a very good break for my *guerrilleros*.

Now the Surinam patrol boat pulls alongside a small launch and

RIGHT: Surinam is covered with dense tropical rain forest. Movement is slow except by motored pirogue in the extensive stream network.

BELOW: Ronny Brunswijk, leader of Surinam National Liberation Army (SNLA), chalks up a “wanted dead or alive” poster for one Bauta. Surinamese speak a number of languages but usually either Dutch or Taki-Taki (a Caribbean Indian-Black dialect).



sails even with it along the Albina side of the river. We leave, rowing for a kilometer before starting up the motor again. For an hour all goes well, except for the discomfort of the tropical heat in this Indiana-Jones-style jungle.

Suddenly, a fresh alarm as we sight another pirogue. Immediately the rebels seize their arms. But this time they are speedily reassured by a shout: The others are also men of the guerrilla. The two boats halt, side by side, and the *guerrilleros* enter into a discussion that is totally beyond my understanding. They keep talking about "Taki-Taki."

Then they have an elderly black man get into our pirogue. Suddenly, Frank, the chief of a commando, begins to berate him and, without warning, gives him a terrible punch on the chin, using his fist. The old gentleman nearly loses his balance, and recovers to find the barrel of a pistol against his temple. A traitor, it seems, who has to be terrorized if he is to be made to speak. A little later, during a halt on an island, the elderly gentleman is given another beating, Frank adding, with the self-satisfied air of the little chief, "We will execute him later. . . ."

We resume our movement upriver toward the south. Near the Surinam bank I make out a wreck. "A helicopter we shot down two months ago," brags Frank. "President Desi Bouterse rented it in Brazil. It came down to spot us. Too far down. A hail of fire at the pilot, and the craft was on the ground!"

In spite of the risks of encountering a patrol, we go up close to the war trophy to take a few pictures of it. A lucky shot as the *guerrillero* who brought it down had only a shotgun. His shot had gone through an open door and killed the pilot. The American company that had rented the helicopter for 40 hours of "agricultural work" is probably not happy.

As we move down the river, the forest becomes thicker and thicker. We halt on another island. *Guerrilleros* emerge from all points, speak a bit with Frank, and, one after another, hit the old "spy," who remains mute and hunched up under their attacks, making himself smaller and smaller. Even when I smile discreetly at him he does not dare react.

When we leave the island, only a few minutes of navigation under power brings us to Langatabetje, the island which has been under the total and exclusive control of the rebels since September 1986. Here the top man is Leo. His domain? A village of hard construction, a dispensary abandoned by the Dutch in great haste and a little airport where a Surinam airline plane sits rotting, snatched away from the government by the mercenaries who work for the guerrilla. Leo tells me the two mercenaries captured the plane by ruse. They went to an airfield where the plane was scheduled to land and at gunpoint forced some German tourists awaiting the scheduled flight to sit out in the open to give an appearance of normality. When the plane landed and shut off its engines, the mercenaries informed the pilot the plane now belonged to the guerrilla.

As in the case of the wrecked helicopter, the Bush Negroes take up a pose in front of it to be photographed. The name "Bush Negroes," along with that of "Maroons," is the name still applied to the descendants of slaves who managed to escape and take refuge in the world of the Indians. The two peoples being among the "damned of the Earth. . . ."

Four White Men: Two Doctors, Two Mercenaries

That afternoon Ronny Brunswijk, the "Top Leader" of the guerrilla, comes into the camp accompanied by two white men bearing arms — two of the three British mercenaries who are engaged in the guerrilla. And — in an incredible coincidence due to my profession — I recognize one of them, John Richard, a chap of 30 who served in the Foreign Legion from 1977 to 1982 in Calvi (Corsica) under the banner of the Second Regiment of Foreign Paratroopers. Carl Finch, his sidekick, 35, is from Liverpool.

In the evening, as we make ready to dine on the inevitable bowl of rice, I encounter two doctors of the French *Aide Medicale Internationale* organization, Didier Pouly and Michel Bonnot, who are present, in principle, to look after civilians. After a night spent battling mosquitos, rats and even a number of cicadas, our breakfast is served by my pal, the old "traitor." Rice, of course.

A short time later we leave for the "front." Ronny Brunswijk gets in behind the wheel of an old pickup truck which bears the

FACTS & FIGURES

Surinam is a former Dutch colony (Dutch Guiana) located on the northeast coast of South America and occupying an area of 63,251 miles (about the size of England). It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the north, by the colony of French Guiana to the east, Brazil to the south and the former British colony of Guyana to the west.

Surinam has a population of approximately 380,000, about half of which lives in the capital city of Paramaribo. The original Indian population was decimated during the period when Surinam served as a typical Caribbean sugar plantation colony. Today only 2.5 per cent of its population is Indian. The largest population group is Hindus and Moslems (37 per cent), who were brought over in the 19th century after slavery was abolished. Creoles (mixed black and white people) make up 31 per cent of the population. The dominant religion is Christianity (45 per cent), followed by Hinduism (28 per cent).

The country's primary resources are bauxite, timber (generally unexploited because there are only two paved roads in the entire country) and gold. Per capita yearly income is \$1,500 — quite high for South America.

stigmata — its windshield no longer exists and it is filled with bullet holes — of a recent aerial attack. Pell-mell, we pile in: a group of *guerrilleros*, the two mercenaries, the two doctors and I. After covering 200 kilometers of trail we finally reach the camp nearest the front, Moengo. It is a little village on the side of the road to Albina. The five of us pile into a tiny hut to spend the night.

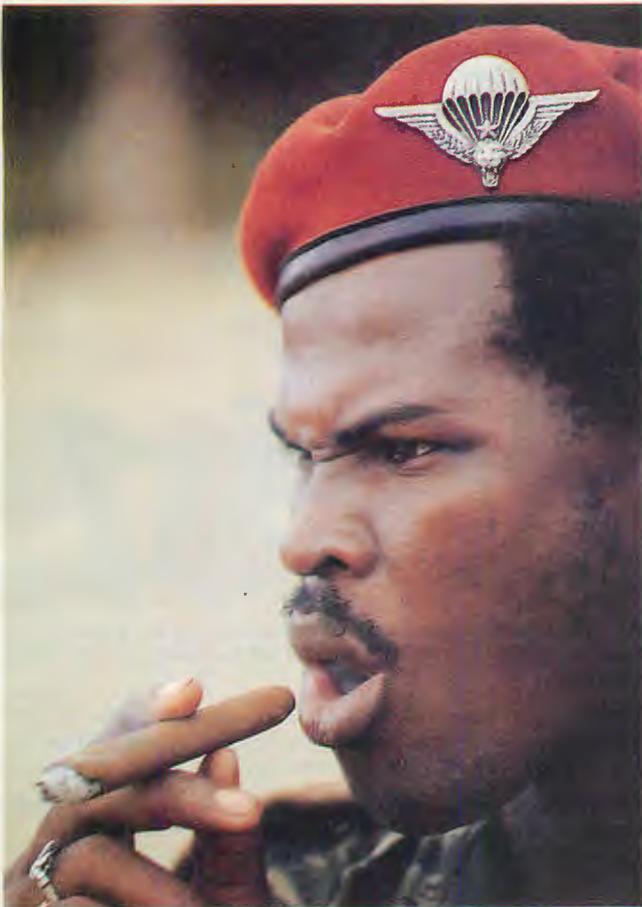
In the middle of the night Ronny Brunswijk comes to wake up the doctors. One of his men returned from Albina where, it seems, he met with trouble. One of the doctors examines him and shouts: "My



ABOVE: Carl, one of two British mercenaries operating with the guerrillas, packs an explosive charge under bridge support during night operation which cut road between Moengo and Paramaribo, the capital.

BELOW: Two young girls executed by government forces in early November. Two survivors from the three villages that were wiped out said killers were "white men." Killers were probably from 200-man Libyan detachment Muammar Khadaffi rushed to Surinam in October 1986 after guerrillas successfully cut off towns of Albina and Moengo from the capital.





ABOVE: Commander Ronny Brunswijk.

BELOW: Carl and two helpers move forward from guerrilla roadblock to place explosive-packed fire extinguisher alongside road for an ambush.



Destroyed government helicopter shot down by guerrilla with a 12-gauge shotgun on banks of the Maroni River. Shot went through open door and killed pilot.



John, former member of French Foreign Legion's 2nd REP.

God, this guy has a bullet in his head!" A bit of a problem all right.

Brunswijk and the mercenaries act as nurses. Didier Pouly begins to deal with the patient in a little room which has been made into a makeshift hospital. The man appears to be about to pass out, but his greatest concern is that no one touch his "good luck" bracelets! Since he has also been seriously wounded in the arm, Didier is forced to negotiate. Finally, the medical crew (of which I have become a member) sings a little song to reassure him! And he certainly needs that reassurance, for Didier is beginning to explore the hole in his head with . . . a screwdriver! There is no anesthetic to knock the man out. Finally, the diagnosis appears to be on the favorable side. The bullet has lodged in his nose, and the wounded man does not risk serious consequences. The proof? The following morning, he is the one who brings us our hot coffee! "Dr. Mengele's" technique was crude, but it worked.

Assault Upon a Bridge

In the morning I leave with Ronny as he makes his tour of the villages. Everywhere he is welcomed as if he were Robin Hood, or

ARMED FORCES OF SURINAM

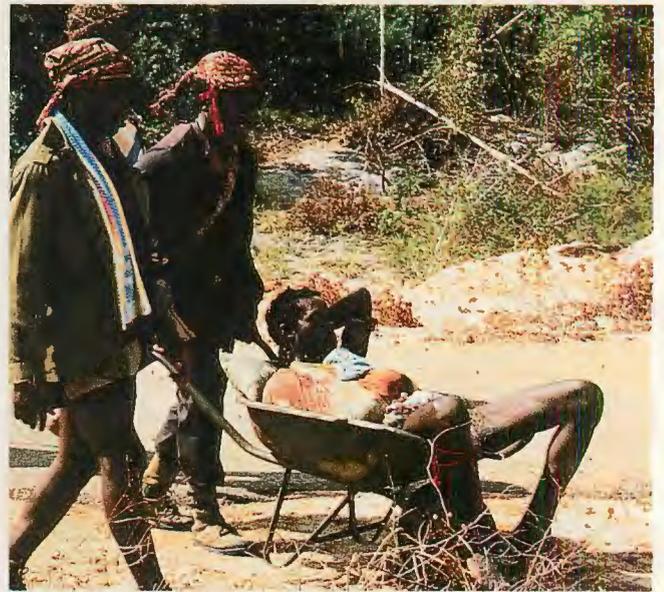
Bouterse has a total armed force of about 2,020 men.

Surinam's army consists of one battalion armed with Belgian FN-FAL 7.62X51mm rifles, six 81mm mortars and 7.62mm FN-MAG 58 machine guns. Armor support consists of three types of Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs). The army has nine Dutch DAF YP408s (eight-wheeled, 11,800-kilo APCs which mount either a 12.7mm or 7.62mm machine gun and carry eight infantry), 15 Brazilian EE11 Urutus (six-wheeled, 14,000-kilo APCs which mount EC 90mm rifled main guns and a 7.62mm ring-mounted machine gun and carry 12 infantry) and six Brazilian EE9 Cascavel Armored Reconnaissance cars (six-wheeled, 13,700-ton vehicles with an EC 90mm rifled main gun and ring-mounted 12.7mm machine gun).

The 60-man air force has four Pilatus-Britten-Norman Defender BN-2Ts (a twin-prop which can carry 10, cruises at 173 mph and operates up to 25,000 feet). While the Defender can carry bombs and rockets, Bouterse's appear to be the stripped-down version because the only reported strafing runs were with Defender crews blasting away with FN-MAGs fired out of open windows; definitely a tactic of dubious worth. Bouterse's air force did have a Canadian de Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprop passenger plane, but it was captured by the guerrillas.

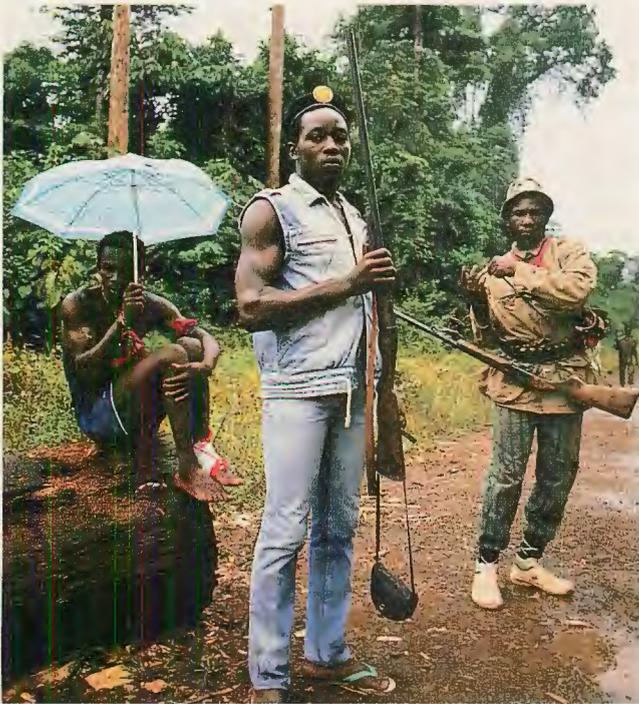
Surinam's 160-man navy crews nine Dutch-built patrol craft: three ocean-going 140 tonners (which mount two 40mm cannon and machine guns), three coastal 65-ton craft and three 15-ton river patrol boats.

Total Cuban-Libyan forces in Surinam are unknown. Reports from the guerrillas indicate they are involved in combat operations and are using some helicopters, type and origin of which are unknown.



ABOVE: Casevac in Surinam. Wounded guerrilla being hauled back for medical treatment is brought out in wheelbarrow by his comrades.

UPPER LEFT: John winding down in French Guiana after six weeks of operations in Surinam. John served in French Foreign Legion's 2nd REP, the elite parachute battalion.



LEFT: Most guerrillas are armed with 12-gauge shotguns and little else in the way of kit. Guerrilla on log sports voodoo arm bands and other charms designed to make him invisible to his enemies.

— in a more up-to-date comparison — as if he were Rambo, a nickname that is often applied to him. They could as well have used “Romeo.” When he worked under Bouterse, one of his functions was to keep Bouterse supplied with young women. While I am interviewing him in the village, these young girls come up and Ronny says, “One minute please,” grabs two of the girls and steps a couple of meters off in the bush. Ronny is not bothered at all that we can hear all the squealing.

Following day, on the 13th, we experience a more military day.

Civilians being evacuated from fighting zone to French Guiana under guerrilla escort.



Ronny checks the roadblocks along the Albina-Moengo route, shows me with pride the bridges that have been destroyed and has me attend the preparation of an ambush. While the doctors care for the injured and ill who are flooding in in ever greater number, the mercenaries prepare homemade bombs (fire extinguishers packed with explosives) and teach their jungle pupils how to use dynamite. Ronny appears to need to show some authority as when we turn around we find him directing 20 of his men in doing pushups.

Eventually each one takes up his ambush position. Thus begins an interminable wait, broken only by the arrival of a wounded man carried in a wheelbarrow, which, let it be said in passing, is enough to cause several of the valorous *guerrilleros* to take flight. The ambush is a bust. . . .

That evening, John, the ex-Legionnaire, announces a new

Continued on page 112

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

25 November 1975

Surinam is granted independence.

25 February 1980

Desi Bouterse (a physical-training NCO in the army) and Roy Horb launch a coup, with 16 men, to overthrow the civilian government of Henck Arron. The National Military Council promises elections at some future date, but from the beginning the movement is clearly connected to Cuba.

May 1980

A counter coup fails. It was launched from French Guiana by Ormskerk (a former Dutch resident of Surinam) using Dutch, Belgian, South Moluccan, Bolivian (from the Bavaria club in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, which counted among its members Nazi Klaus Barbie) and Venezuelan mercenaries.

16 August 1980

Bouterse declares a state of emergency and deposes President Ferrier in favor of Prime Minister Chin-a-sen.

4 February 1982

Chin-a-sen resigns after Bouterse, backed by the army, seizes power. Chin-a-sen moves to Amsterdam and launches the "Committee for the Liberation of Surinam."

12 March 1982

Sgt. Maj. Wilfred Hawkins attempts a coup, fails, and is shot by firing squad on 13 March.

11 December 1982

Martial law is declared and Bouterse says Surinam will take its inspiration from Cuba. He executes 15 of his political foes. Among the dead are four journalists, four attorneys, two former cabinet ministers and the dean of economics at the local university. The Netherlands suspends a \$1.5 billion aid package.

14 January 1983

Surinam is declared a Peoples' Democracy.

2 February 1983

Maj. Roy Horb hangs himself in his cell following a failed coup against Bouterse.

1983

The CIA presents a plan for approval by the House and Senate intelligence committees for the overthrow of Bouterse. Stiff opposition from House committee chairman Edward Boland, a Massachusetts Democrat, shelves the plan. Boland, also responsible for the Boland Amendment, which cut off aid to the anti-communist contras, reasons Surinam is too unimportant to justify such "extreme" action.

25 October 1983

Frightened by America's liberation of Grenada, Bouterse expels all Cuban advisers from Surinam. But by 1984 the Cubans are back, reportedly involved with Libyans in the running of a terrorist training camp located near Sipaliwini, a remote village on the Brazilian border.

1985

Libya's Muammar Khadaffi signs an agreement with Bouterse offering him \$100 million in aid if he allows Libya to open a "cultural mission" in Paramaribo. After the Libyans arrive, the French note increased dissident activity in French Guiana (where the French have a rocket base at Kourou) and on the French-controlled islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. American mercenaries working with Suri-

namese exiles in the United States are arrested in Baltimore, Maryland.

22 July 1986

Ronny Brunswijk, a former Bouterse bodyguard, begins the revolution among the Bush Negroes with an attack against a military post at Stolkertsijver, capturing 12 government soldiers. On the same day another attack against the garrison in Albina fails due to lack of weapons. Brunswijk started the war after an attempt on his life, presumably by Bouterse.

30 July 1986

FBI arrests 14 American mercenaries in New Orleans, Louisiana. Leaders Tommy Lynn Denelley and John Ambielli say they were hired by a Dutch foundation called "ANSUS." Director of ANSUS is George Baker, a Surinamese living in Amsterdam's red-light district who operates the Karel Appel 2 coffee bar. Baker is not arrested by Dutch police.

21 August 1986

Bouterse sends his elite Echo Company commando unit out to hunt down Brunswijk. The guerrillas engage Echo Company on the banks of the Maroni River, killing four and wounding five. Echo Company commander Henk van Randwijk defects to the guerrillas.

September 1986

Bouterse aide Capt. Etienne Boerenveen is arrested in Miami, Florida, by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) after being taped and filmed while offering to make Surinam and the many dirt strips built there in recent years available to drug traffickers in exchange for U.S. dollars.

September-November 1986

British mercenaries lead Brunswijk's guerrillas of the Surinam National Liberation Army (SNLA) in cutting the roads from Albina to Moengo and from Moengo to Paramaribo, and in forcing the closing of the bauxite mines. The Paramaribo airport is closed on 30 October. Bouterse brings in 200 Libyan military advisers.

December 1986

Approximately 8,000 civilians flee the war zone into French Guiana. Amnesty International verifies reports of massacres of women and children by government forces. Rebels claim Libyans are involved in the massacres. Estimates of the number of Surinamese who have voted with their feet against the communist government of Surinam reaches 180,000, most of them in the Netherlands.

March 1987

The two British mercenaries who were so successful in leading the SNLA guerrillas in the fall return to Surinam.

Sources in Europe tell SOF that perhaps as many as eight other British, French and Belgian mercenaries are in the "pipe" headed for Surinam. Mercs are recruited in Europe. By calling a telephone number in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, at a specific hour on either Wednesday or Thursday, prospective mercs can reach "Persad," who tells them to present themselves, with proof of prior service, at an address in Rotterdam. If accepted, mercs are flown on Air Maroc from Amsterdam to Rio de Janeiro via Casablanca and then on a Brazilian airline to Kourou, French Guiana, where contracts are signed.

The French Foreign Legion has the 3rd REI based at Kourou.

PRIVATE RESCUE ATTEMPTS

Flawed Execution Spoils Good Intentions

by Alan Blunt

JOIN PRIVATE DELTA FORCE

Any person or group may apply and join the PRIVATE DELTA FORCE. Train to infiltrate a target, perform recon at a POW camp, execute a rescue, excavate a crash site and move at night.

SPECIAL FORCES—MARINE—RANGER TRAINING

Navigate a 15 mile course through mountain terrain. The training area is located near Breezewood, Pennsylvania. Training begins on Friday at 6PM and ends Sunday at 3PM.

For information write:
PRIVATE DELTA FORCE

CONTRARY to popular belief, private sector rescue attempts of American POWs held in Southeast Asia didn't begin with the ill-fated mission of former Green Beret Lieutenant Colonel Bo Gritz in 1982-83. Efforts go back at least as far as 1970, beginning with a lone former G.I. while the war was still in progress, and continuing to this day. Except for an operation conducted by CBS News, all the attempts have one thing in common — failure.

In what was arguably the first private rescue attempt, a former Army paratrooper sneaked back into Vietnam in the summer of 1970, talked his way around immigration officials, masqueraded as a soldier and actually set up camp inside Cambodia before he was apprehended by the military police.

The former sky soldier, 23-year-old Joseph F. Walker of Tyler, Texas, told American officials he planned to single-handedly push into North Vietnam and rescue U.S. prisoners.

Walker had previously served a combat tour in Vietnam with the 101st Airborne in 1966, and was discharged at the end of his enlistment in December 1969.

On the afternoon of 6 June 1970, Walker, attired in civilian clothes, bought a ticket on a Pam Am flight from New York to Saigon. Deplaning at Tan Son Nhut, he skirted Vietnamese immigration officials, walked up to an MP and said he had just returned from R&R and had lost his baggage, which included all his papers. The unsuspecting MP took Walker in tow, escorted him past customs and put him on a bus for Cu Chi, where Walker said he was stationed. Once the MP was out of sight, Walker exited the bus and made his way downtown to put his plan into effect. From black market vendors he purchased uniforms, web gear, grenades, an M16 and an M79. Next stop was Cambodia.

Using the "just returned from R&R" ploy once again, he succeeded in bumming a ride on a chopper hauling supplies to U.S. troops operating across the border. Once on the ground in Cambodia, he said he "just sort of faded into the tree line," then moved to another location some distance away and began setting up what he described as his "base camp."

Walker's rescue plan was bizarre at best. According to his own testimony, he planned to move up through Cambodia, cross Laos, "work around north of the DMZ" and infiltrate North Vietnam. Once close to where he believed the POWs were housed, he "figured I would blow up a couple of oil tanks. These would be sort of diversions while I got these guys out of the POW camps."

Fortunately for Walker, fate intervened in the form of a faulty firing mechanism on his M16. During a return trip to Saigon to purchase a new mechanism, he was stopped at a random MP checkpoint. This time the R&R story didn't hold up, and he ended up

Advertisement to join "Private Delta Force."



Former Army paratrooper Joseph Walker is led away by an FBI agent following his return to the United States.

in the Long Binh stockade. A month later, after his civilian status was verified, he was turned over to the U.S. Embassy, which had him committed to the psychiatric ward of the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon. After three days he was released.

Later that week he was again apprehended, this time wearing sergeant's stripes and carrying a set of typed orders. The embassy, wishing to wash its hands of him, turned him over to the Vietnamese, who promptly deported him. When his plane touched down in the United States, Walker was arrested by the FBI on a federal warrant and charged with impersonating a serviceman.

One Army psychiatrist who treated him in Saigon noted, "There's nothing wrong with him psychologically. He's just stupid."

Next on the scene was Bobby Joe Keese, dubbed the "mystery POW" after his release from NVA captivity in March 1973.

Keese's checkered past included charges ranging from auto theft and passing bad checks to flying a stolen plane to Castro's Cuba. He had been awarded a Bronze Star as a paratrooper in Korea in 1951, and was severely wounded while attempting to rescue captured American soldiers. He later deserted from the Army while stationed at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Keese claimed to have worked as a CIA operative, but the agency publicly disavowed any knowledge of him. In 1969 he told friends he was going to Israel, where he said he had been offered a job flying planes for the Israeli government. He apparently did make a journey to the Middle East, and later claimed to have been held prisoner by Palestinian guerrillas in Jordan.

In September 1970 Keese surfaced in

TWILIGHT ZONE EAST

Reports filtering in to Bangkok from Cambodia continue to tell of two Americans — holdovers from the war years — who are working as farmers in a remote northeastern province along the Vietnamese border.

Sources claim both men have been living in Cambodia since the height of the war, speak the language and are married to local women. They reportedly farm plots of land in Ratanakiri Province, and are said to be fearful of being captured by Vietnamese troops.

American Embassy officials who have investigated the claims consider them to be false — not an unrealistic view, given the number of hucksters and scam artists working the MIA issue.

In this instance, however, some MIA activists feel the United States may have been premature in dismissing the claims. They believe the reports may be related to the cases of Larry Humphrey and Clyde McKay, both of whom vanished under decidedly bizarre circumstances in Cambodia in November 1970.

Not much is known of Humphrey's background, other than that he was a U.S. Army soldier in Thailand who deserted. He succeeded in making his way across the border into Cambodia, where he was picked up by the local gendarmerie and jailed. He later asked for political asylum.

Clyde W. McKay was an altogether different case. He was a self-styled revolutionary who had spent a few months with the French Foreign Legion and later was imprisoned in Spain for narcotics possession. While serving as a crewman aboard the freighter *Columbia Eagle*, he persuaded another crewman, Alvin Glatowski, to assist him in hijacking the ship as a protest against the Vietnam War. On 14 March 1970, as the *Columbia Eagle* crossed the Gulf of Siam, McKay pulled a pistol on the ship's captain and took command. The "abandon ship" whistle was blown, which sent most of the crew scurrying for the lifeboats. McKay forced the captain to put into the Cambodian port of Kompong Som, and he and Glatowski surrendered to port officials, requesting political asylum.

The Cambodians were perplexed over what to do with the two men. From Kompong Som they were sent to a small naval base across the river from Phnom Penh. Later they were moved to a prison ship moored on the river, where they were joined by the deserter, Humphrey.

Their confinement aboard the ship was anything but rigorous. They were allowed to send out for food, liquor and reading material, and to correspond with their families.

During this period the three also became semi-celebrities, freely giving interviews and photo opportunities to visiting pressmen. McKay did most of the talking, although Glatowski also occasionally chimed in with his version of revolutionary rhetoric. Humphrey preferred to remain in the background. During a July interview with the Associated Press, McKay claimed to be a Marxist, and said he hoped to establish a base in Cambodia for American defectors from Vietnam. In September the three were moved into government quarters.

McKay and Humphrey began making plans to escape and join up with the Khmer Rouge, but kept their intentions secret from Glatowski, who had begun showing signs of instability.

In October 1970, during a trip to a downtown Phnom Penh restaurant, the three left their guards to go to the restroom. Once out of sight, they climbed through a back window, stole a car and sped away. Glatowski was ditched in short order by the other two and, following unsuccessful attempts to obtain asylum in Sweden and Russia, turned himself in to the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh. He was subsequently sent home, tried, convicted and sentenced to ten years in prison.

McKay and Humphrey continued to evade Cambodian government patrols, and were believed headed north toward Siem Reap, where they hoped to meet up with Khmer Rouge troops.

While details are lacking, it appears that they succeeded. In 1971 both men were observed in the Sangke Kaong area of Kampong Cham Province, some 60 kilometers south of Kratie City. An enemy rallier told U.S. intelligence officials that the men had escaped from a Phnom Penh jail, and identified their photographs. Neither McKay nor Humphrey was under guard and both had free movement throughout the area.

Further sightings took place in 1973 and 1974, when both were reported to be at a new location northeast of Sangke Kaong. U.S. officials followed these developments with interest, and as late as September 1974 dispatched a controlled agent into Khmer Rouge territory in an attempt to gather new information.

The communist victories throughout Southeast Asia in 1975 brought a virtual halt to all indigenous intelligence collection activities, and it is at this point that McKay and Humphrey disappeared from sight. While many are skeptical the two men could have survived for so long, others point to the Garwood case, adding that the probability of their still being alive is enhanced considerably by the fact that they were collaborators, not prisoners.



Bangkok, where he gave a Thai newspaper details of his alleged captivity in Jordan. Moving on to Ubon, he approached Bira Air Transport and rented a single-engine airplane for \$60 an hour, ostensibly to scout possible movie locations in northeastern Thailand. Some 20 minutes after takeoff, Keesee pulled a revolver on the two Thai pilots and ordered them to turn off their radio and set a course for North Vietnam.

While flying over Laos at low altitude, the aircraft was hit by ground fire and sustained damage to the tail. The pilots pleaded

Bobby Joe Keesee, Army deserter and ex-convict, kissing American flag on his way back to United States. Photo: AP/Wide World

to return to Ubon but Keesee refused, forcing them to continue on to North Vietnam. Approximately two-and-a-half hours after takeoff, the Cessna set down on a deserted stretch of beach between Vinh and Dong Hoi, about 25 miles north of the DMZ. Keesee jumped from the aircraft, carrying what one of the Thais described as a "small

James Bond briefcase," and started across the sand toward a small village. Local militiamen, alerted by the abrupt landing, now began to take pot shots at the already damaged aircraft. As soon as Keesee was away from the aircraft, the two pilots gave it full throttle and took off for home, arriving in Ubon three hours later.

Keesee's reasons for going to North Vietnam were never made public, but friends and relatives claim he was on a "POW rescue mission." Once in North Vietnam, Keesee disappeared from view and nothing more was heard until March 1973, when he was released with a group of American military prisoners. For much of his period of imprisonment, Keesee was kept separate from other prisoners, as the communists were convinced he was on some type of clandestine mission. During repeated interrogation sessions, he was subjected to brutal beatings, and left most of his teeth behind in North Vietnam.

Following his return to the United States, he resumed his criminal activities, and was later arrested for his part in an embezzlement scheme.

A private attempt to find missing American journalists Sean Flynn and Dana Stone, who disappeared in eastern Cambodia in April 1970, was staged out of Phnom Penh in September of that year. It was underwritten by Stone's wife, then living in Cambodia, and involved a Dutch journalist, one Johannes C.G. Duynesveld, who claimed to have knowledge of the missing men.

MIA MYSTERY PHOTO OPENS CLOSED CASE

A PICTURE may be worth a thousand words, but sometimes it also raises a thousand questions. This photo, depicting one, or possibly two, American airmen at the moment of their capture, is a case in point.

Where and when was the photo taken? Who was the photographer? More important, who are the airmen and what became of them? Were they listed as captured, or is this another piece of evidence of Americans alive on the ground, who were presumptively declared "killed in action"? Were the remains ever returned? Finally, who is the American standing in the roadway? No one seems to know, or, if they do, they're not saying.

The discovery of the photo and subsequent attempts to solve its mystery have only led to more confusion and frustration.

In the spring of 1985, an Indochina militaria collector purchased a scrapbook of Vietnam War photos from a pawnshop in South Florida. One of the photos shows an American airman apparently in the process

of being captured by VC/NVA troops. The photo is tagged with a handwritten caption: "American airman, OV-1 Mohawk, captured." The collector immediately recognized the importance of the photo, and copies were placed in the hands of a number of POW/MIA activists for possible identification. A copy was also given to the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), at their request.

POW RESEARCHERS

Richard Becker, a two-tour veteran of Vietnam, and associate Leonard More collaborated to bring the story of the POW mystery photo to SOF's readers. While this is More's first contribution to SOF, Becker's previous research led to the article "Turncoat Tales" (August '85), an examination of the stories about American servicemen fighting with the NVA.

The first efforts to identify the airman came to nought. Private sources initially thought the photo depicts a May 1971 incident in which an OV-1A was downed south of Tchepone, Laos. DIA, however, indicated it could not be that incident, since that aircraft was seen to go "straight into the ground," and "no parachutes were observed."

DIA officials felt the photo is of a November 1969 incident off the coast of Tra Vinh, south of Vung Tau. In that incident, a Mohawk on a coastal surveillance mission was shot down and the pilot and back-seater, an Army lieutenant and a Navy lieutenant commander, respectively, were captured by VC forces. Both were moved around to a variety of POW camps, and the Navy officer was reported to have drowned in a canal during an escape attempt on 15 February 1970. The army officer was released in 1973 and returned to the United States.

Private MIA researchers doubted this version, however, pointing out that there are too many inconsistencies. For example, the foliage shown in the photo appears to be dense, while records of the Tra Vinh incident speak of a "low, sandy coastal area with sparse vegetation."

As it turned out, the Army lieutenant who had piloted the aircraft was still in the Army, serving in Augsburg, Germany.

Duynesveld, known as "The Dutchman" to U.S. Intelligence, had earlier spent nine weeks as a prisoner of the Viet Cong. He departed Phnom Penh on 15 September and headed for enemy-controlled territory on his bicycle. He was captured three days later, and then promptly disappeared from view.

Nothing more was heard until December, when Duynesveld was killed when the VC unit he was accompanying stumbled into an ARVN ambush near Svay Rieng. A diary found on his body contained the cryptic notation that the village where he was to meet with the two missing journalists had been destroyed by American warplanes.

CBS News mounted a successful recovery operation in Cambodia in 1970, using local mercenaries to retrieve the bodies of four employees killed when communist troops ambushed their jeep. Details of the operation were kept secret for over a decade, but finally emerged in a December 1981 court case.

According to sworn testimony, the four CBS employees were George Miller, acting bureau manager in Phnom Penh; George Syvertsen, staff correspondent; Remek Lehki, freelance cameraman; and Sam Leng, a Cambodian driver. The four were traveling along Highway 4 between Phnom Penh and the provincial capital of Takeo when their jeep was fired upon by communist soldiers lying in ambush. All four men were killed at the scene and their bodies buried.



Sean Flynn, son of actor Errol Flynn. Captured by Viet Cong in April 1970. Photo: AP/Wide World



CBS cameraman Dana Stone, captured along with Flynn. Photo: AP/Wide World

CBS officials learned of the location of the graves, but both the U.S. chargé d'affaires and the Cambodian government refused to mount a recovery operation. CBS then took the matter into its own hands. Officials for the news organization hired some 30 Cambodian mercenaries at \$20 each — plus another \$100 for their commander — to secure the road to the ambush

site and dig up the bodies. The day-long operation was a success and the recovered remains were brought to Phnom Penh, identification was established and the remains then sent on to the next of kin.

In January 1971 the Reverend Paul D. Lindstrom, outspoken pastor of a Prospect Heights, Illinois congregation, announced

Continued on page 115



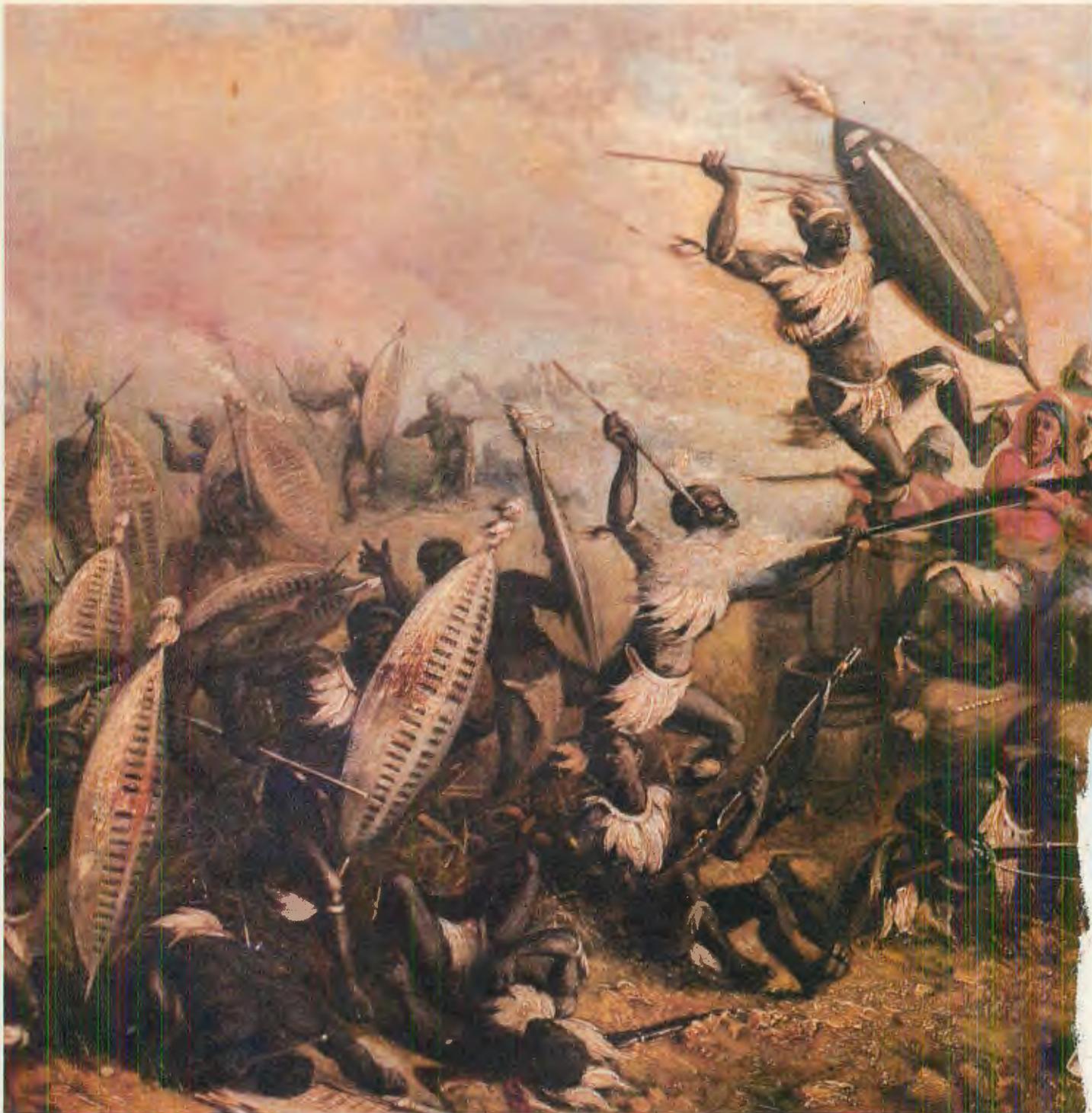
This photo, assumed to have been taken from a helicopter during an aborted rescue mission, shows one or possibly two American airmen at the moment of their capture.

When shown the photo, he denied it was either he or his back-seater.

John Hamilton of Silver Spring, Maryland, a well-known Vietnam researcher, has studied the photograph in detail and feels certain it was taken in Laos, probably along a branch of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Who took the photo? "My guess," said Hamilton recently, "is that it was taken during an abortive rescue attempt. The photographer was probably a crewman aboard the chopper." In support of his Laos theory, Hamilton points to what appear to be oil stains in the roadbed, indicating a heavily travelled route. He believes that the piles of rocks are even more significant in that the NVA were known to stockpile rocks at intervals along the trail network. The purpose was to use them as filler for bomb craters, and also to repair washed-out sections of the roadway during the monsoon season. Hamilton envisions a scenario in which an American pilot with a Lao observer was flying a reconnaissance mission along a portion of the trail when the aircraft was hit and brought down by enemy fire.

So far, no one has been able to positively identify the pilot or the incident depicted in the photo. SOF appeals to its readers for assistance in solving the mystery. Anyone who can shed light on the photograph, please contact *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*.

— Richard Becker and Leonard More



SOF HISTORY

ZULU 24th Foot **HIGH TIDE** Stands Fast

by William H. Northacker



Martini-Henry Mark I single-shot rifles in .577x.450 caliber kept Zulu at bay through much of the fighting at Rorke's Drift. With a maximum effective range of 1,000 yards, their 49-inch length also provided excellent stand-off capability for close-in bayonet fighting. Photo: Oil painting courtesy South Wales Borderers Museum, Brecon

battle, consisted of a house, storage building, bivouac, two cattle corrals (kraals), cookhouse, outhouse and a pair of outdoor ovens. Above the kraals just below Shiyane's terraced ledges, B Company of the 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment (Foot) had camped, its tents in two ordered rows.

With the army's arrival, the Swedish mission owned by Reverend Otto Witt had been transformed into a support base. His 11-room house was now a hospital supporting a handful of incapacitated soldiers. In back of the hospital was a stores building once again "impressed" into imperial service as a commissariat stores facility.

On the bank of the Natal side of the Buffalo River, Lieutenant John R.M. Chard, (Royal Engineers), Ferryman Daniels (civilian) and Sergeant Milne (3rd Buffs) were camped with two tents and maintenance stores. Chard's job was to repair the pontoon bridges (one supported on big barrels, the other on small boats) as well as maintain the roads in the vicinity. A large force from the Natal Native Contingent (NNC) at the main camp, which numbered 300-350, provided an auxiliary pool of labor and a defense force. By regulation, the natives were restricted to one rifle (Martini-Henry or Snider) per 10 men and five rounds per weapon, their standard arms being assegais (spears) and 4-foot-high cowhide shields. Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead commanded about 100 men of B Company. Under the command of Major Spalding, the entire force, including invalids, support staff and the NNC, totaled about 500.

As dawn broke on 22 January, the men at Rorke's Drift expected another routine day. Chard left early for nearby Isandhlwana to obtain orders concerning his engineering mission at Rorke's Drift and soon returned. Major Spalding, irritated at the delay in the arrival of Captain Rainforth's infantry company of the 1st Battalion, 24th Regiment from Helpmakaar, rode off to that post to get the rifle company moving. Before leaving he checked the army seniority list, and finding Chard senior to Bromhead, appointed Chard as acting officer to command in his absence. Ironically, his last words to Chard were: "I see you are senior, so you will be in charge, although of course nothing will happen, and I shall be back again this evening early."

At about noon, Rev. Witt, Surgeon-Major Reynolds and Chaplain George Smith climbed Shiyane to investigate artillery blasts and reports of a battle in progress at Isandhlwana. They could hear the camp's two seven-pounders but, at a distance of six and a half miles, identifying precise unit actions was difficult. By about 1330 they

Since I know that the white people are determined to defeat you in the end, it would be best for the King not to cross into Natal, so that I will be in a strong position to defend him, FOR YOU WILL NEVER SUCCEED IN DEFEATING THEM.

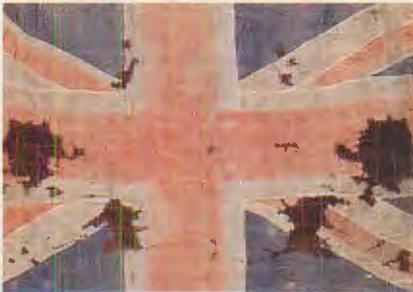
— Bishop J.W. Colenso's advice to Zulu King Ceteyweyo's emissaries mFunzi and nKisimane before the Zulu War.

ONLY hours after the slaughter of 1,360 British, colonial and allied native troops by nearly 25,000 Zulu at Isandhlwana on 22 January 1879, one of the most

courageous and resourceful small-unit stands ever taken began the same day, just six and a half miles away at a Swedish missionary station above the river ford known as Rorke's Drift.

Nestled in the postcard-perfect setting of Natal, South Africa, the mission station lay at the base of 650-foot high Shiyane Mountain, or Oscarberg. Facing to the northwest, it commanded a sweeping view of the Buffalo River (separating Natal and Zululand), the drift, a pontoon barge crossing by which the British Number 3 Column had invaded Zululand, and the miles of open flat Zulu territory that stretched to the horizon.

The camp, as it stood on the day of the



ABOVE: Defense of Rorke's Drift, 22 January 1877, where slightly over 100 British soldiers held off some 5,000 Zulu warriors in 24 straight hours of brutal fighting. Most remarkable of all encounters with the Zulu, victory at Rorke's Drift followed by only a few hours the Zulu decimation of British troops at Isandhlwana, six and one-half miles away. Photo: Oil painting courtesy South Wales Borderers Museum, Brecon.
LEFT: Actual battle flag from Rorke's Drift, displayed in South Wales Borderers Museum, Brecon. Photo: William Northacker.

could see Zulu swarming around the camp and advancing in a force of 5,000-6,000 toward the Buffalo River. Reynolds, Witt and Smith all mistakenly concluded that the advancing black force was the NNC in pursuit of the Zulu.

Chard was eating lunch at his river camp at about 1400 when the first refugees from the fight at Isandhlwana arrived. Approaching the river shouting and waving from their galloping horses, Lt. Adendorff of the NNC and a Carbineer quickly dismounted and took Chard aside, explaining that the camp was destroyed and Lord Chelmsford (Lieutenant General Frederick A. Thesiger, K.C.B.) and his advance force had probably met the same fate. Other eyewitness reports from fleeing soldiers confirmed that Isandhlwana had been taken, most defenders had been massacred and no force could withstand the Zulu. All recommended an immediate evacuation of the Rorke's Drift garrison.

After a few stunned moments, Bromhead, Dalton and Reynolds consulted on their options. With Dalton's previous experience as a Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) of line infantry, it was decided to stand and form a barricaded perimeter. Consideration was given to evacuating, but the 30-36 invalids would have slowed any necessary speed to clear the area and a stand became the only course of action.

Captain Stephenson (NNC officer commanding), Corporal Anderson and their native troops began the task of fortifying the camp. Bromhead had his tents knocked down and immediately dispatched a rider to get Chard, who was still trying to elicit accurate information from the frenzied Adendorff and his Carbineer. Chard was saddling his own horse for a ride to the mission when Bromhead's messenger arrived. Chard ordered his ox wagon in-

spanned with all the stores and tents to be placed inside. He then posted an NCO and six men on high ground above the ponts with orders to wait until otherwise told. An NNC detail assigned as guards had already left. Chard galloped to the main camp, about 1,200 yards away, and quickly read a note dispatched by horseman from Capt. Gardner (14th Hussars and survivor of Isandhlwana) advising that Rorke's Drift was indeed next on the Zulu's agenda.

As the small garrison began shoring up fortifications, the Zulu induna (commander) Dabulamanzi guided his horse along the Buffalo River, leading what had been a major portion of the Zulu reserves at Isandhlwana. Though ordered by his brother King Ceteyweyo not to enter Natal, Dabulamanzi had not yet dipped his spear that day and was certain that victory was assured at kwa-Jim (Zulu name for Rorke's Drift), since it could hardly compare with the large British force that had just been decimated at Isandhlwana.

While commander-in-chief of the entire Rorke's Drift assault force, Dabulamanzi was assisted by the *impi* (regiment) commander of the uDloko regiment, Zibhebhu. The uDloko numbered about 2,500 and were proven combat veterans. Two *impis* numbering 1,500 men of the Undi corps, uThulwana and inDluyengwe, had also been whisked from Isandhlwana by Dabulamanzi. In total, roughly 5,000 Zulu warriors worked their way along the Buffalo, pausing only briefly to take snuff before the main attack.

Back at Rorke's Drift not one second was being wasted. Bromhead, Chard and Dalton quickly dispersed the men into work parties. Surgeon-Major Reynolds, his four orderlies and all the walking wounded turned their efforts to fortifying their makeshift hospital. The walls of the one-story, thatch-roofed house were quickly loopholed to supple-

USUTHU!

William H. "Bill" Northacker, one of our contributing editors for history, is well-known to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine readers for his exhaustive account of the battle at Isandhlwana between British troops and Zulu warriors ("Zulu," SOF, January '86). Aside from two active-duty tours with U.S. Army Special Forces (he's currently an operations officer with the Army Reserve's Special Operations Command Europe), Bill has also studied extensively at the University of South Africa doing research in South African anthropology and Zulu culture.

ment window firing positions. Mattresses and 200-pound mealie bags were jammed into windows and doorways. A line of mealie sacks stacked three high (about 4 feet) linked the hospital to the commissariat stores. Two ox wagons were hooked together in the middle of the mealie wall. Mealie bags were also stacked from the outside wall of the hospital's left front in a line to the edge of the closer of the two kraals.

Each man worked at a feverish pace to maximize their defenses. Their situation was desperate, not only because they were hopelessly outnumbered, but the surrounding bush and anthill-covered terrain on the Shiyane's terraced slopes would provide ample cover for the Zulu.

Refugees from Isandhlwana continued to pass by on their way to Helpmakaar. One told Colour Sergeant Bourne, "Not a fighting chance for you, young feller."

Those NNC not otherwise engaged in fortification preparations were strengthening their courage through war dances, chanting and thunderously smashing their shields with the butt ends of their assegais. Reverend Smith assisted in passing out the 480-grain, thin-rolled brass .577x.450-caliber Boxer cartridges. Line infantry carried the Martini-Henry Mark I, a single-shot, breech-loading, state-of-the-art rifle. In the right hands it could accurately kill at 1,000 yards. At 8 pounds, 12 ounces, it was well balanced for shooting or bayonet, and its 49-inch length provided excellent close combat stand-off. Officers carried the standard army revolver.

Chard ordered his pont defense unit to retire and led them back to the post, arriving at the commissariat around 1530. At this time spirits lifted somewhat as an officer of Lieutenant Colonel Durnford's Number 2 Column and about 100 mounted volunteers arrived from Isandhlwana. Though exhausted and demoralized, they were persuaded by Chard to ride back and around Shiyane to delay the Zulu advance as long as possible and to place lookouts by the pons and drift.

At 1620 gunfire erupted behind Shiyane and the men knew their battle was about to begin. Durnford's volunteers soon flew past the post, their officer stating he could no longer control them, that their commanding officer, Durnford, had died at Isandhlwana and a standing defense was pointless. They too rode off to Helpmakaar. According to Colour Sergeant Bourne, the officer was apprehended some days later, court-martialed and dismissed from service.

Less than sure of their future well-being, the 300-350 NNC quickly bolted in a sprint for the distant hills, with Capt. Stephenson and Cpl. Anderson scrambling as well. Stephenson's horse carried him to safety but Anderson was not so lucky. On foot he ran as fast as he could, but the scene of utter desertion by over 350 NNC and 100 mounted colonial volunteers was too much for the now quite small British garrison. Amid angry shouts, a well-placed shot



Two heroic British defenders of Rorke's Drift, Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead (left) and Lieutenant R.M. Chard (right) were among 11 Victoria Cross recipients from this extraordinary battle.

felled Anderson 150 yards from the north-west wall.

Chard realized that this mass desertion shattered his perimeter defense, which had been based on a 500-man force. Excluding the hospital patients, Surgeon-Major Reynolds and Rev. Smith, he was now down to 103-110 able-bodied combatants who were expected to hold a perimeter of 214 yards. Considering the strength of their opponents' numbers, Chard quickly ordered, with only minutes separating the two forces, a line of 100-pound wooden biscuit boxes and canned meat crates to be set up at the eastern side of the position to form a tight secondary defensive enclosure should the mealie sack lines be breached.

Trooper Wall of the Natal Mounted Police (NMP), who had been sent out on picket duty, returned to the post, horse hooves churning dust, and exclaimed that the Zulu were on their way. His description has become a classic in British history. Wall's words painted the Zulu hordes as "black as hell and thick as grass."

From his commissariat rooftop vantage where he'd been posted as lookout, Private Hitch was the first to see Zulu round the Oscarberg at about 1630. Hitch had correctly figured the Zulu were as close as they could get unobserved and told Bromhead the Zulu just beyond the rise were extending for the attack. Bromhead quickly asked how many, Hitch replying 4,000-6,000. With that, a voice below Hitch's vantage quipped, "Is that all? We can manage that lot very well."

The attack did not come at the best time — the inner biscuit box wall was not quite two boxes high (about four feet) when the order had to be given: "Stay operations and fall in!" Oddly, the Zulu did not smash their assegais against their shields and loudly chant their war cries. Instead, they silently extended in a half-moon formation, posi-



tioning themselves for a rush at the south wall and hospital. Perhaps 500-600 Zulu were fully on line when they began advancing at a low slinging run.

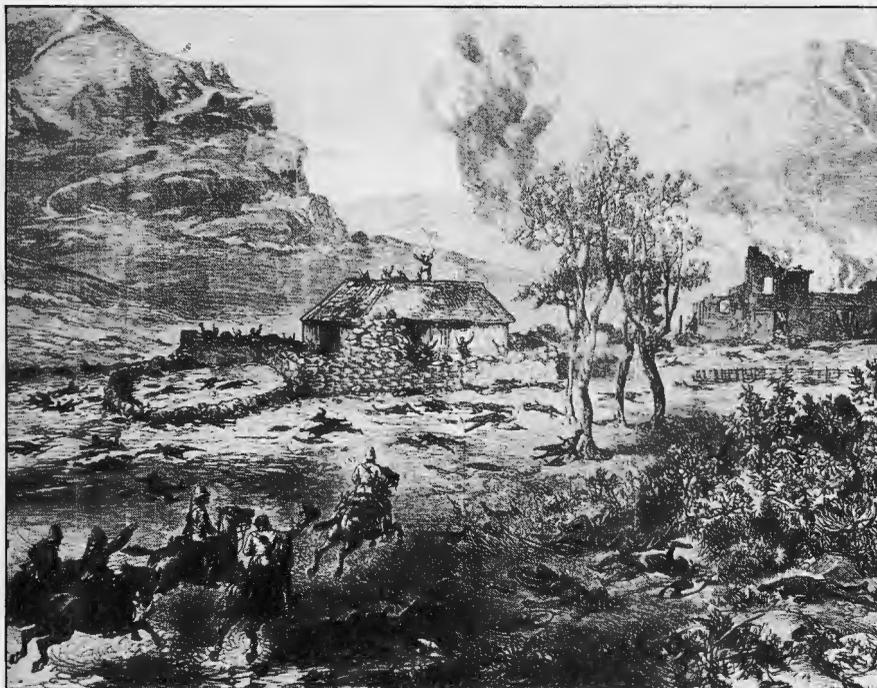
In the hospital Gunner Howard thought, "All up now," as he watched the Zulu *impi* advance. He and his fellow patients agreed to fight until the last two survivors would shoot themselves rather than be taken alive.

Hitch observed the Zulu column to be about a mile and a half deep. The leading attack force executed a right wheel and took up a skirmish line, with some Zulu taking cover on the Oscarberg and within its many caves. Upon seeing this, Hitch's men blasted away, firing three rapid shots — the first shots to be directed against the Zulu at Rorke's Drift.

With no standing orders given, each man hurled lead at the Zulu, now 600 yards out. Firing wildly at first, the men quickly made corrections. The Zulu did not fire but advanced methodically into this hail of gunfire. At 450 yards British fire knocked them down, but their ranks filled without end. Pressing to within 50 yards of the south wall, the Zulu charge was quickly slowed by the flanking crossfire between the commissariat and hospital as well as the mealie sack wall. Some made it to within 20 yards of the hospital, but the fast-firing Martini Henry 480-grain bullets checked any further advance.

Those Zulu pressing closest advanced at a stoop, faces to the ground. Some tried to leap over the mealie sacks while others grabbed protruding bayonets, only to be shot by the defenders. Corporal Lyons adjusted his fire to the Oscarberg area to keep would-be Zulu snipers at bay. The only moment he drew his eyes away from the Zulu was when he saw his friend, Pvt. Thomas "Old King" Cole, shot through the head. Cole was likely the first British soldier to die and word quickly spread, "Poor King Cole is dead." The bullet passed through his head and struck the nose of Pvt. Bushe. This Zulu occupation of the Oscarberg would serve as a constant source of harassment throughout the battle.

While the south wall attack was fended



Arrival of Lord Chelmsford and the mounted infantry from Number 3 Column at Rorke's Drift, 23 January 1879. Major Cecil Russell and Lieutenant Walsh lead their horsemen to the post. Photo by William Northacker of illustration courtesy South Wales Borderers Museum, Brecon

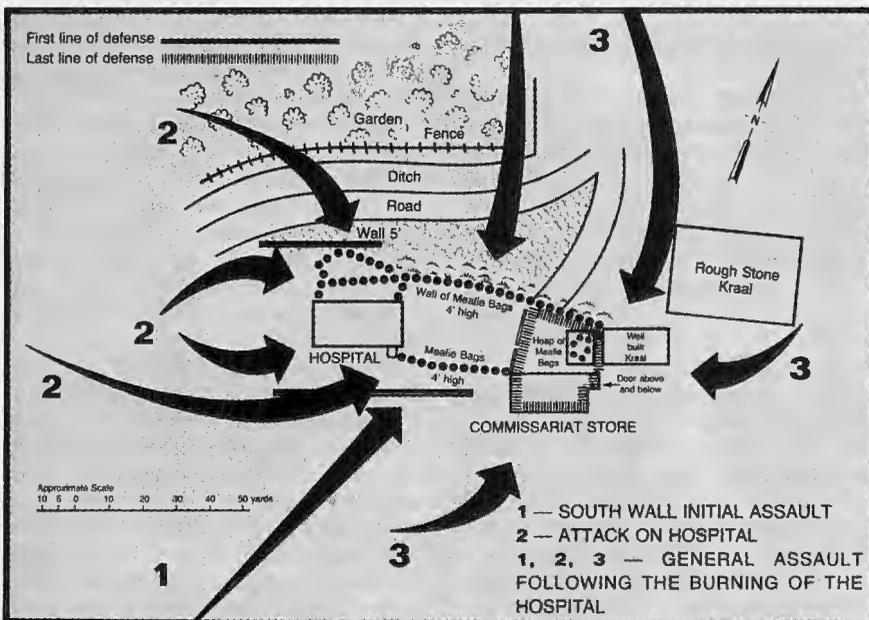
words of encouragement, ensuring that ammunition flowed freely, and expertly blasting Zulu with single head shots. Zulu bullets and assegais ripped mealie sacks open, their contents spilling out. Inside the hospital, Pvt. Hook poured a steady volume of fire from his position. The wounded native NNC patient with whom he shared the room had a broken leg. Scared he'd be finished in place, he cried out to Hook, "Take my bandage off, so that I can come." But Hook was too preoccupied with the fighting, not daring to pause except for reloading his Martini-Henry.

Hook heard the assegais whiz and rip as they sailed through the air or were thrust into sacks and walls. Bullets slapped into biscuit boxes and mealie sacks, making, as Hook called them, "queer thuds." The initial rush on the west flank grew past the defenders' control and the men were forced to retire in order to the line of biscuit boxes set up at Chard's insistence just 10 minutes before the first attack. So determined was the Zulu assault that Surgeon-Major Reynolds commented that, had the biscuit box wall not been set up, "our fort could not have held out five minutes longer." It was at the hospital during this phase of the attack that the Zulu chanted, "I fel'egumeni, I fel'emnyango!" Translated this means: "It dies at the entrance! It dies in the doorway!"

The situation was bad but not completely without hope. Still firing from hospital windows and loopholes, soldiers dropped Zulu who were on the veranda trying to smash their way inside. At the same time, the men who were now fully assembled behind the biscuit boxes resumed intensive fire. Then, with Bromhead leading, they counter-charged, driving the Zulu back out of the laager and into the garden. The Zulu regrouped and surged forward again, hundreds of them replacing fallen comrades as if fed by an inexhaustible supply. As each wave assembled, the British soldiers coolly executed their defense, firing at close range and alternating with the bayonet, as the situation demanded.

For hours the British force kept the Zulu from overrunning the camp. According to Hitch, their shooting was so devastating that, had the brush and stone wall around the camp not provided such good cover, the Zulu would not have been able to hold out as long as they did.

Beaten back into the garden again, the Zulu shifted their assault to the left around 1800 hours in an attempt to force the south wall at the commissariat and threaten the redoubt. Chard grabbed three men and enlisted Bromhead's support with several more. Together they blasted and slashed the Zulu attackers. During this and other action



off, the Zulu shifted their advance toward the hospital, their original objective. Acting Commissariat Officer Dalton, fighting at the mealie sack wall along the hospital, saved hospital corpsman Cpl. Miller from certain death. A Zulu grabbed Miller's rifle muzzle and was about to thrust an assegai through him when Dalton shifted his attention from the main attack and shot Miller's assailant.

Strength of the Zulu assault on the hospital was decidedly in their favor as the thick bush, anthills and a five-foot stone wall gave them solid cover, while the British defensive position was merely capable of providing flanking fire. The west mealie line was initially held as the defenders kept up a murderous rate of fire and the men on the sacks bayoneted, clubbed and shot as many Zulu as tried to breach the line.

Natal Mounted Policeman Trooper Hunter fought out his last minutes at this stand to

Main phases of Zulu assault on Rorke's Drift, 22 January 1879.

protect the hospital. Hunter took on several Zulu in close combat but died with five assegai stab wounds to the chest and thrusts through the kidneys. One point to be made here is that the principal manner of death for the British KIAs was gunshot. British soldiers were so well-schooled in the bayonet that they were highly successful in direct hand-to-hand fighting. Therefore, rifles and ammunition taken by the Zulu at Isandhlwana proved to be the major source of British deaths at Rorke's Drift. Colour Sergeant Bourne understood the significance of this fact, stating, "we should have suffered many more [casualties] if the enemy had known how to use a rifle."

The fight along the hospital wall and mealie line grew in intensity. Dalton hustled back and forth among the men, shouting

the Zulu repeatedly attempted to set fire to the hospital's thatched roof.

As the fight progressed, Surgeon-Major Reynolds carried armloads of ammo to the hospital defenders and at one point was shot through the helmet without injury. Still moving along the barricade, Dalton fired his rifle and cheered the men. A Zulu ran up along the wall and Dalton yelled, "Pot that fellow!" as he aimed at another. Suddenly his rifle stopped. Pale, he turned toward his men, saying he had been shot. Surgeon-Major Reynolds quickly aided Dalton, finding that the round had passed clear through the right shoulder. Dalton continued to direct fire but handed his rifle to Acting Storekeeper Byrne. Byrne immediately put it to good service, but within moments Cpl. Scammell (NNC) was shot through the shoulder and back. Scammell crawled to Chard, handing him his ammo, then asked for water. Byrne instantly fetched a drink for Scammell and while administering it was shot through the head and died instantly.

On the west mealie wall, Cpl. Schiess (NNC), a hospital patient, was already wounded but lacked nothing short of superhuman courage and power. Irritated at his hat being shot off his head by a Zulu during the latest rush, Schiess jumped on top of the mealie sack wall, bayoneting the man, then hopped down, shot another Zulu, climbed back up and bayoneted another. Despite a gunshot wound to the foot, Schiess would not leave the line for an instant, typical of the heroics of the Rorke's Drift defenders.

Chard's orders to regroup in the retrenchment biscuit box line coincided with the sun's setting. As the force adjusted its new fighting positions, the mealie sack south wall and double line on the west side became Zulu firing points. Still blasting away, the hospital defense force was clearly on its own, surrounded on three sides by the Zulu. As soon as the natives figured the British laager was cleared back to the biscuit box wall, they made a determined assault, leaping over the mealie sacks on the west with their war cry "*Usuthu! Usuthu!*" Once again the Martini-Henry rifles concentrated on the leaping masses, knocking them down as quickly as they appeared.

Around 1900 the situation changed dramatically for the men in the hospital. Since all previous armed assaults had failed, the Zulu ignited the thatched roof at about the same time the first breaches of the building occurred. Hook quickly realized his plight. He and his comrades could stay and be burned alive or make a run for it, with the only way out being a straight line into the middle of the Zulu ranks, which by now had surrounded the hospital. Forced out by fire and dense smoke, Hook sadly left behind the NNC patient he had been tending. His timely departure was immediately followed by the Zulu breaking into the room and killing the patient as he lay helpless on the floor.

In a new room, Hook had nine men to look after and he continued firing unceasingly. From a neighboring room Pvt. Joseph Williams fired through a window



Close-up of original commissariat building and loopholed stone wall, taken in 1879. Oscarberg is in background. Foreground is actual mealie sack laager area. Photo: Courtesy South Wales Borderers Museum, Brecon

until the Zulu breached the doorway and dragged him and two other patients out, completely mutilating Williams with assegais in front of his comrades' eyes. Williams did not go easily, killing 14 Zulu at pointblank range until they overtook him by sheer numbers. Privates John Waters and William Beckett took refuge in a cupboard as the Zulu breached their room. Waters had been shot in the shoulder and knee but was not about to quit. The Zulu passed through quickly and Waters opened fire once again. Private Beckett slipped out to escape but was assegaid in the stomach. Waters took a cloak belonging to Witt and ran out into the garden to hide in the tall grass.

All night long the Zulu ran over Waters, thinking him a dead Zulu. He finally worked his way to the cookhouse, but finding it occupied with Zulu, he slid into the fireplace, stood up and blackened his face and hands with soot. He remained upright in the fireplace until the Zulu left the next morning.

Private John Williams and his two patients dug their way through a plaster wall to join Hook. By this time Zulu spears were forcing the door which was the only path of escape. According to Hook, "We were pinned like rats in a hole." Williams set to work knocking a hole in the wall with a pick. There wasn't a moment to spare. Smoke and heat from the thatch filled the room. The 10 or so patients waited anxiously as Williams slammed the pickaxe into the wall while Hook guarded the door. Spears were heaved through any opening the Zulu could find, one striking Hook's helmet in the front. His helmet dispersed the spear's

energy but still gave Hook a massive scalp wound. A huge Zulu then sprang in and grabbed the muzzle of Hook's rifle. Hook wrenched it free and killed him.

Williams now had an opening cut and, as Hook fought hand-to-hand with the Zulu, got all the patients into the next room. As the Zulu pressed on they quickly spotted the hole leading to the patients' most recent refuge and attempted to breach it. Again Hook held them off by shooting at pointblank range while Williams opened a new hole in the next wall.

Williams succeeded in breaching a final room which essentially became the last line of defense. Privates Robert Jones and William Jones were shooting and bayoneting Zulu from a room facing the Oscarberg. They evacuated six patients, but the seventh, Sgt. Maxfield, was delirious with high fever and was unable to join the rest. Robert Jones made a last attempt to extract Maxfield, but upon reentering the room found the Zulu assegaiing Maxfield as he lay in bed. Jones, Williams and Hook then escaped through the small window themselves.

With the hospital already burning, cross-fire rampant and Zulu attempting to ignite the commissariat thatch roof, Chard once again used foresight to hold off the attackers. Two huge piles of mealie sacks inside the final retrenchment line of biscuit boxes could be converted into a turret, a last-ditch redoubt. Assistant Commissary Dunne helped build this mini-fort by taking the sacks from the top and creating a natural pit sufficient to hold 40 men elevated above the laager for a strong firing position.

Bromhead, Hitch and five others firing as a group were being badly mauled by cross-fire. In short order all but Bromhead were hit. One of Hitch's comrades, Pvt. Nicholas, was shot through the head, with his

Continued on page 105



Test firing one of three PA3-DM suppressed submachine guns aboard the *Nobistor* en route to Ghana. The SMGs "vanished" when seized by Federal Police in Rio de Janeiro. Photo: T.C.

SOF MERCENARIES

SOLDIERS OF MISFORTUNE PART 3

If there's a lesson to be learned from merc work, it's this — you are on your own. When you put your trust in others, or rely on outside forces for salvation, you're buying yourself a one-way ticket to the oblivion of a mercs' limbo: jail if you're lucky, a bullet in the back of your neck in some godforsaken backwater if you're not.

*On 14 March 1986, eight American mercenaries got lucky — if you can call it that. They were arrested by Brazilian Federal Police off the coast of Rio de Janeiro; their ship, the *Nobistor*, and its cargo of weapons, ammunition and other military gear impounded. Most of the men had thought their mission — the attempted overthrow of the west African country of Ghana — was over. Bad planning and misfortune had aborted the plot, and now they were going home.*

Capture, Jail and the Great Escape

by John Coleman

But the real adventure — surviving 10 months of Third World "justice" and their escape to freedom — had only just begun.

In the April SOF we brought you part one of Soldiers of Misfortune, the story of the merc who organized the plot to overthrow Ghana. Last month's ride through the misty

*and tangled shadow-world of private soldiering took the "Rio 8" from Miami to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to the searing equatorial mid-Atlantic aboard the *Nobistor* — where the grand plot finally fell apart.*

In this, the final chapter of Soldiers of Misfortune, the eight men come face to face with the one truth of mercenary work: The best-laid plans of mice and mercs oft go awry.

Julio Raul Rodriguez, Raul as the other mercs called him, was below decks of the *Nobistor*, taking what he figured was his final shower before flying back to the States. He was partly right. It would be his last shower for some months to come.

The business end of a shotgun suddenly thrust through the shower curtain and planted itself against his ear. "Hey," he

called out jokingly, soapsuds blocking his vision. "Take it easy. You're next."

Moments later, wearing only a towel and covered in dripping, soapy water, he was hustled topside by gun-toting Brazilian Federal Police. With a shotgun pointed at his head, he was forced to spreadeagle on the deck along with his fellow mercs.

Just minutes earlier, Tim Carmody and Steve Hedrick had been sunning themselves on the bridge of the *Nobistor*. This was their fourth day in Rio's harbor and they were bored. "Send lawyers, guns and money 'cause the shit has hit the fan" wailed from their tape deck while the two mercs caught some sun before flying home.

Carmody spotted a small naval patrol boat cutting its way across the harbor toward the *Nobistor*. Even from a distance they could see a number of people on board, most dressed in a variety of civilian clothes and sporting beards and long hair.

"Here comes the boat," Carmody said. "Must be immigration."

He and Hedrick and the six other mercs willing away their time on the 120-foot ocean-going tug had little reason to doubt that it was anything else.

A few days earlier, on 10 March, the *Nobistor* had dropped anchor off Rio. They weren't able to dock, the captain told them, because of a harbor pilots' strike. No foreign ships would be allowed to land.

They'd also been told that Oscar Garcia, representative of the *Nobistor's* shipping company, Geomater, would be on hand to arrange transit visas for the Americans, clear the cargo through customs and berth the *Nobistor*. A simple matter. They would be on their way out of Brazil shortly.

Also on hand to greet the *Nobistor* was Louis Kabut, the Argentine intelligence and liaison officer who had organized the

Ghanaian troops in Accra became the least of the mercs' worries once they were abandoned to the Brazilian penal system. Photo: Philip Edwards



Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, Marxist ruler of Ghana. He signalled seacoast countries, including Brazil, to be on the lookout for the mercs and their ship, the *Nobistor*.

weapons and other gear during their stay in Buenos Aires. During meetings on shore with merc leader John Early, Kabut told Early that he had another captain and crew lined up to take the mercs back to Ghana to carry out the coup against Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings.

Early told him that plan was out. Kabut was adamant that the coup attempt go forward. Early responded that other arrangements had been made with Garcia for handling the weapons. Kabut stayed only two days then flew back to Argentina.

During those first few days in Rio, the rest of the merc force sat idle aboard the *Nobistor*. The ship's captain, Eduardo Gilardoni, had collected the mercs' passports and banded the conex containers containing their weapons with customs seals given him before departing Buenos Aires. Everything, they were told, was in order. But it was taking too long; the mercs were getting nervous, sitting on top of some six tons of military gear in a foreign harbor, without any formal landing documents.

On Friday morning, 14 March, they pushed the issue. They decided to contact the American Consulate in Rio themselves and organize their own way home. Piling into one of their rubber Zodiac boats which had been destined for a beach assault against Accra in Ghana, the eight mercs gunned across the harbor to shore.

After a lengthy search for a public telephone, they finally got through to the consulate and the duty officer. After explaining their plight in general terms, the DO told them to call back later, that only the consul, Ken Sackett, could help them out.

They frittered away the next few hours, drinking coffee and trying to look inconspicuous. They were, after all, in Brazil illegally.

Their next call got them through to Sack-

ett. Could he help them out?

"Sure," the State Department man told them. "I've got some close friends in immigration. We'll take care of everything. You guys make sure you're all on the boat. We'll send you home."

They all felt better on the ride back to the *Nobistor*. They put their faith in Sackett, a career diplomat with other foreign service postings in South America.

Rodriguez went to shower, Carmody and Hedrick to work on their tans, and the rest to square away their gear before going home.

When the naval patrol boat closed in on the *Nobistor*, Carmody and Hedrick started waving. Just normal procedure, they thought. Surely the U.S. consul and Brazilian immigration were onboard, ready to stamp their passports and send them on their way.

Not quite.

When the patrol boat touched the side of the *Nobistor*, 15 H&K MP5- and shotgun-toting Federal Policemen — the "elite" of Brazil's police — swarmed onboard, safeties off, weapons ready to fire. The mercs were punched and pushed topside, then with weapons shoved in their backs, forced face down on the deck. The feds nervously clicked selector switches back and forth, knuckles white on triggers. They were ready to shoot.

The mercs were roughly searched, all their watches and money going into the pockets of the shaggy-haired and bearded police.

Within minutes the *Nobistor* was underway, heading for the police dock in Rio harbor. The mercs were cuffed to each other; the feds broke open the conex containers holding their weapons and gear.

"They went bananas," one of the mercs said later. "It was like they found a bunch of toys. Pistols disappeared into pockets, and they started loading the weapons into private cars."

With sirens screaming and lights flashing, the Federal Police rushed the eight Yanks to a holding prison in Rio. Wearing only what clothes they had on when the



A confident merc force aboard the *Nobistor* in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Back row, left to right: Steve Sosa, John Early, Tim Carmody and Raul Rodriguez. Front row, left to right: Fred Verduin, Sheldon Ainsworth and Bob Foti. Two weeks later, the mercs would be in jail. Photo: S.H.

police swarmed over them, the mostly shirtless and shoeless men were thrown into cells: team leader Early and Bob Foti into one, the other six mercs into another.

They had one visitor that night. The consulate duty officer came by to tell them: "It's probably only a visa problem. We'll get it sorted out in a few days."

"No problem," the mercs were told. It was a phrase they'd come to hate over the next months.

Most of the merc force had seen action in various hotspots around the world — Vietnam, Rhodesia, South Africa, El Salvador, Lebanon and others — so they were used to tough living conditions. But prisons are different. They had no control over their lives, no other options but to just sit and exist.

Crammed into a 12x15-foot cell with only a single caged, fly-and-mosquito-splattered bulb for light, the six mercs took stock of their situation. They quickly agreed to stick to their cover story — guards for a legally purchased shipment of arms destined for the Ghanaian Ministry of Defense — and just wait it out. They had no other choice.

Twenty-five days passed with no word from Sackett although, as the six mercs found out later, he had been in close contact with the team's leaders, Early and Foti. And each day brought new misery.

Their beds were 5-foot concrete slabs minus the luxury of bedding. Mosquitos, breeding in the dank, stagnant watery scum covering their cell floor, left golf-ball-sized welts which covered the shirtless prisoners. A crud-covered hole in the floor served as their toilet and as a source of amoebic parasites, and a rusted pipe as their water supply when the guards got around to turning it on. No soap, toothbrushes, medicines — just an increasing sense of abandonment.

Finally, the consul came to see the troops, two at a time. "It's only a visa problem," he told the gaunt, filthy men. "You won't need a lawyer." What Sackett

didn't tell them about Brazilian law, according to one of the mercs, was that after 21 days they had to be charged or released. They were on their 25th day.

"Well, what the hell are you doing for us?" Carmody shot at the neatly trimmed and suited diplomat. "Have you seen our cells? We're dirty and sick; Fred (Verduin) has a boil the size of a melon on his neck."

Sackett shrugged. The U.S. government had no authority over the Brazilian penal system.

Disgusted, the men returned to their cell.

Some 45 days later, after existing — and steadily deteriorating — on a bread, rice and bean diet, the mercs were told they were going on trial. The news came as a complete shock. Up to now the problem was, or so they'd been told by the consulate, that of illegal entry into Brazil. There'd been no mention of other charges, much less a court trial.

A mere formality, the mercs were told. They'd be going home soon. No problem.

The men were allowed to shower and change into clean clothes taken from the *Nobistor*. Under guard, they were driven to the courthouse to be met by a media circus from the Brazilian press. Then, after a quick appearance before a judge — in which the proceedings were only vaguely translated for them — the mercs were hustled back to their cells. They still didn't know what charges had been leveled against them.

Two weeks later they made a second court appearance where the prosecution presented its case: suspicion of contraband involving the weapons aboard the *Nobistor*. Judge Julieta Lunz tore into the eight mercs for the benefit of the Brazilian television

cameras set up in the courtroom. They were guilty as sin, she screamed. They had no respect for Brazil or Brazilian law. When the judge had finally vented her spleen, the charade of justice carried on.

Various police officers were called to testify. What happened to the weapons? We turned them over to the army, they said.

A Brazilian army major wearing U.S. jump wings was called next. As he passed the eight mercs standing in the back of the courtroom, he flashed a thumbs up and said, "Airborne!"

He testified that he knew nothing about the weapons. On his way out he flashed another thumbs up accompanied by a crisp "Airborne!"

The mercs shook their heads. Big fucking help.

All through the proceedings when their lawyer, selected from a U.S. Consulate approved list, tried to present any kind of defense, the judge cut him off. They had no defense, she ranted.

Their sentences came in July. They found out that they'd been convicted of suspicion of contraband and of forming a group to create that suspicion. That was all it took. John Early and the *Nobistor's* captain received five years each (one year over the maximum sentence allowed under Brazilian law) while the remaining seven mercs were each slammed with four years. News of the verdict came from Carmody's family who had read it in a San Jose, California, *Mercury News* article.

Sackett hadn't bothered to tell them.

Agua Santa — "Holy Water" — prison was their next stop. Located out in the slums of Rio, Agua Santa was the processing point to better, or worse, long-term prisons. They quickly found out their fate.

"The American consul has really fucked you guys," the warden told them. "Foreigners go to the easy prisons, but I can't send you there. You're going to Helio Gomez. It's for hard cases."

Through the end of July and early August the mercs wondered how much worse any prison could be than Holy Water. Food, when it came, was something called liver stew: a bucket filled with a grayish watery gruel with bits of unidentifiable animal floating in it. Medical treatment was nonexistent and skin diseases, internal parasites, dengue fever and conjunctivitis plagued them.

Even the other prisoners, mostly skin and bones themselves, told the Yanks that "you guys look like shit!"

The Yanks did, however, begin to learn the ins and outs of Brazilian prison life: who could be trusted, who could be bribed (money, hidden in packages, was by now reaching them from the States), who was dangerous; but mostly, just how to survive on a day-to-day basis. It was no easy task.

After a month in Agua Santa they were told to gather their few possessions and get ready to move. Helio Gomez prison, southwest of Rio along the coast, was their destination. It was a place where criminals with

One of 10 Zodiacs bought by the mercs in Buenos Aires. The Argentine government used non-payment of customs fees for the boats as their reason for requesting extradition of the mercs from Brazil. Weapon is FN MAG. Photo: S.H.

up to 360-year sentences went to serve their time — and die.

Helio Gomez was a world unto itself. Filth, disease, rats, torture and gang violence were the orders of the day. Medicine and food were available — for a price. Some packages from the States, including those sent by the *Soldier of Fortune* staff, made it through after a thorough ransacking by the guards. The U.S. Consulate supplied little; in fact, it had been months since the mercs had seen Sackett. Except for family and friends back in the States, they were completely on their own.

Days, then weeks, and finally months passed. The mercs settled in as best they could, making contacts and friends among the Red Commando, the main gang which controlled nearly every facet of prison life. Their cell leader, a hardened killer called “21” for the 21 murders he had committed, took most of the mercs under his wing and showed them the ropes.

“I can’t believe you’re here,” he told them. “The only other foreigners to come to Helio Gomez were an Englishman and an Italian, and they died last year from hepatitis.”

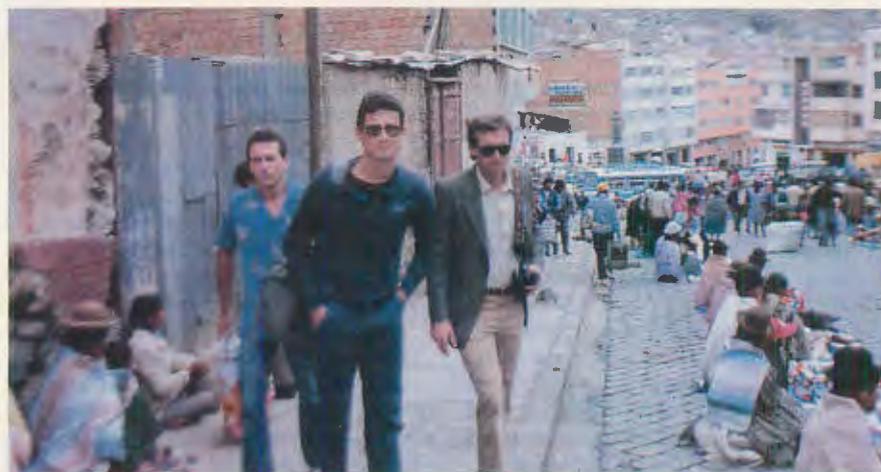
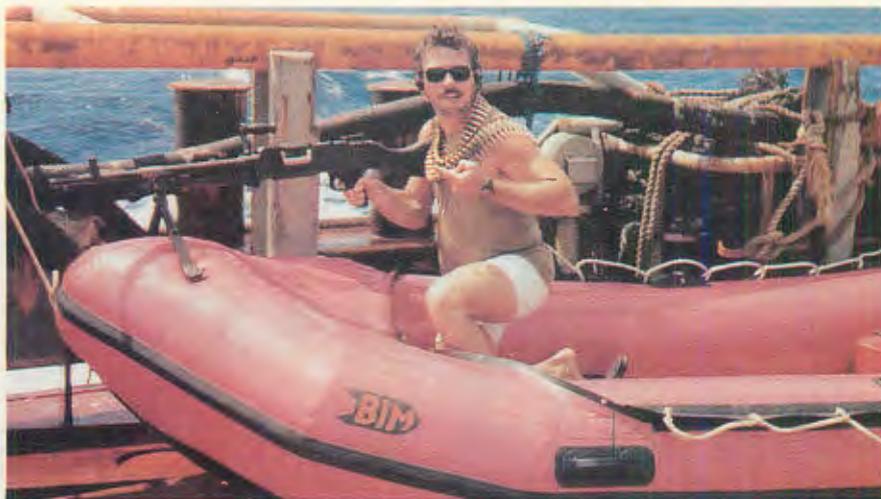
All foreigners, he continued, were able to buy their way into Brazil’s version of country-club prisons where it was easy to buy your way out or escape. He’d found out through his connections that the mercs had been sent to Helio Gomez on the highest authority. It was obvious that someone, or some government, wanted them “vanished.”

Based on their treatment from Ken Sackett of the U.S. Consulate in Rio and the stonewall their families faced from the State Department, many of the mercs believed Uncle Sam wanted them kept quiet and out of the way. If this was a government-sanctioned operation, too many embarrassing questions might arise if the mercs were on the loose and free to talk.

By early October the mercs had established themselves in Helio Gomez. In return for favors and protection from another prominent prison gang, they passed the time by teaching Red Commando members — mostly city-dwelling bank robbers, hit men and smugglers — the rudiments of military skills: small-unit tactics and small-arms techniques, land navigation and homemade weaponry. As foreign mercenaries, and because they didn’t use drugs — rampant in the prison — or the freely available transvestites, they were given favored status.

Through it all, though, suspicions about their team leader, Early, were mounting. He had consistently told the rest of the mercs that all the money he had, mainly the force’s operational fund, had been stolen by the Federal Police when they were arrested.

But throughout their imprisonment Early



SOF Senior Editor John Coleman (right) and two escaped mercs in La Paz, Bolivia. Coleman transported funds used by the mercs to buy their way to freedom. Photo: T.C.

seemed to have access to funds to buy better food and medicine than the rest of the men were able to obtain. (Several letters received by *Soldier of Fortune* from a number of the mercs during their imprisonment in Brazil state emphatically that Early withheld funds which his compatriots desperately needed for food and medicine. In essence, the letters state, Early deserted the other mercs.)

Finally, they searched Early’s belongings. Inside cigarette packs they found \$100 bills amounting to more than \$2,000. When word spread through the prison grapevine, members of the Red Commando offered to kill Early, making it look like an accident. The other mercs declined the offer, but from that point on Early was ostracized and left on his own. [Editor’s note: Early denied misusing team funds and stated that the other team members had an ax to grind in their accounts of the story.]

There was yet another disturbing element that haunted the eight Americans, one which made them fear for their lives over and above the day-to-day hell of Brazilian

prison life. Argentina, its military intelligence and other agencies deeply involved in the Ghana coup plot, wanted them extradited for failing to pay customs duties on their Zodiac rubber boats. The real reason, they felt, was to simply make them vanish so as not to embarrass the Argentine government. And “vanish” meant a bullet in the back of the head.

Days filled with uncertainty crept by while scorching heat, disease and a nearly nonexistent diet ground the men apart. Prisoner riots erupted frequently and were brutally crushed by the guards. At night, scores of insane prisoners were let loose to wander the hallways, constantly moaning and crying out. They were the guards’ early warning “geese”: If prisoners tried to escape, the geese would put up a horrendous racket. It was bedlam, and the mercs knew they’d never live out their sentences.

Then, in the first week of October, they found the light at the end of the tunnel. A Brazilian court of appeals, reviewing their travesty of a trial, overturned their convictions. They had violated no Brazilian laws, the court found. They were free men. Or so they thought.

After hurried farewells to their Red Commando cellmates, the mercs gathered their few possessions and were hustled downstairs to outprocess from Helio Gomez. Awaiting them were Brazilian Federal Police.



"The Brazilian Supreme Court is reviewing Argentina's request for extradition," the men were told. "You will be detained until a decision is made."

Chained and under heavy guard, the eight men were driven back to the Federal Police prison in Rio. From jail to freedom and back to jail again in a few short hours. It was about as much as they could take.

Days of waiting grew into weeks of waiting, and still no word came as to their fate. Rumors were rampant: They would be released, they would be expelled, the supreme court has granted extradition, the court has denied extradition. Uncertainty was as certain as the hungry mosquitos that hovered over them every day and night.

In the third week of November their cell doors flew open in the middle of the night. Guards yelled at them to get dressed. They were to be moved.

Bleary-eyed and groggy, the eight mercs were chained and led outside to a waiting van. They had no idea of where they were going until the van screeched to a halt at Rio's airport. Extradition to Argentina? The thought crushed them like an ice-cold vise. Expulsion back to the States? No one would say.

At 0600 they knew at least part of the answer. Still chained and under armed guard, they boarded a civilian flight to Brasilia, the capital. They had no idea why.

The mystery behind their sudden move remained just that, even as they were processed into their new home — another federal prison. This one, however, was a far cry from the stench and misery of Agua Santa, Helio Gomez and the Federal Police jail in Rio. It was, by Brazilian standards, a country club.

They were allowed outside to sun and exercise, and given decent meals and hot showers. Cells were clean and bedding provided, and within days their physical and mental condition improved dramatically. But what was behind it? Were they going home? Did the Brazilians want them cleaned up and healthy before booting them out?

After a week of wondering, the answer came. A PBS (Public Broadcasting System)

Guns, beer and tape players — merc work 1980s' style. Photo: S.H.

film crew from San Francisco was coming to record their story. It was to be show and tell; the Brazilians wanted to make damned sure that the American public saw how well the men were being treated.

But the big question that loomed over their heads was that of extradition to Argentina. What would the Brazilian Supreme Court decide? Their verdict was announced on 10 December — Human Rights Day. On a 9-0 vote, the court granted Argentina's request.

For some of the mercs that decision was unacceptable.

The Great Escape

Escape is never far from most prisoners' thoughts. From the time of their sentencing, the mercs who had not been beaten down physically or mentally by the inhumanly harsh Brazilian prison system continually planned their break to freedom. Through coded letters to friends and family back home, plots were hatched, examined and then discarded as unworkable.

One key problem continued to plague their stateside contacts and the mercs themselves: If they could escape, how would the men get out of Brazil's 3.3 million square-mile countryside undetected? Contacts made in Rio, where the Americans spent most of their incarceration, wanted thousands of dollars per man to help. But could they be trusted? The lure of large rewards for the escaped Americans might prove too tempting.

A few private security organizations around the world were contacted, but their fees were just too high. Boats, planes and other transport were considered, but all were rejected for a number of reasons. The problem, it seemed, was insurmountable.

If — and it was a big "if" — the men could break out and stay free, there was an escape network available across the border in Bolivia. It had taken months to set up and had cost acquaintances back in the States a

hefty sum, but it was viable. And it was, as far as South American underground networks went, reasonably trustworthy.

The mercs only had to get there.

When word of their impending extradition to Argentina reached them a few days before the official announcement, the five-man escape committee — Tim Carmody, Fred Verduin, Steve Hedrick, Sheldon Ainsworth and Steve Sosa — knew they had to act fast. (John Early was not included in the plan, Bob Foti chose not to participate, and Raul Rodriguez was too physically debilitated to take part.)

Through various methods they had managed to keep their escape kit — \$800 smuggled in from outside, Brazilian-made clothing and small carry bags, food, vitamins and medicine (C-rations, MREs, hard candy and other gear provided by the *Soldier of Fortune* staff) and various forms of identification — out of the anxious grasp of the none-too-bright Brazilian guards. More important to their plan, though, were four hacksaw blades sent by Carmody's wife, Melody, secreted inside a box of powdered milk and delivered, albeit unknowingly, by U.S. consular officials.

Two major problems now confronted the men. They weren't familiar with their new prison's layout or routine, and they still had no plan for making their way to the relative safety of Bolivia. But desperation made the choice for them. It was either break out now or face a cloudy — and potentially deadly — future in Argentina.

One major factor working in their favor was the laziness of the guards. They lived in their own cell block and, after the first few days, the guards' check of locks became cursory. They also had all-day access to the shower block at the end of their hallway. Its roof, they quickly noted, was caged but open to the outside. If they could only cut through the bars on the roof. . . .

For days the escape team worked frantically, some sawing on the shower room ceiling and others cutting the locks on their cell doors. To cover the noise of blades grating on metal locks and bars, the men sang every song they could remember — and made up words for those they couldn't — at the top of their voices. To camouflage the cuts, they devised a type of putty made of toothpaste, metal shavings and dirt.

On Saturday, 13 December, everything was a go. One good yank on their escape hatch in the shower room ceiling would break it free. Dummies made of bedding were fashioned to stick under blankets to cover their absence. Gear was made ready to pack at a moment's notice.

But they hadn't counted on the unexpected. That day, riots broke out in the streets of Brasilia. A complete lockdown went into effect as extra military police guards were added to handle the influx of new prisoners. Dog patrols and searchlights swept the prison as evening fell. They waited anxiously for guards to roust them out and search their cells, but their part of the prison remained quiet. Still, there was

no hope of getting out undetected that night. Five disappointed mercs settled in to bide their time.

After a long and restless night, Sunday morning broke cloudy and cool. Quiet blanketed the prison. The riots were broken; back-up policemen and soldiers were released from beating heads and went home. As the mercs expected, a particularly lazy and inept guard crew came to pull Sunday duty.

All day they carefully watched for changes in the guards' routine, any indication that word of their escape plan had leaked. Nothing. Around 1730 they put their plan into action.

Lockdown of the shower room and cells was supposed to take place at 1800 followed by a guard changeover. Fred Verduin went into the shower room just before 1800 and busily soaped himself up, delaying the changing of the guard. Rodriguez kept up a constant chatter with the guards, asking for coffee, cigarettes and reading material — anything to keep them busy and off balance. Verduin by now resembled a prune but kept on showering, telling the guards he'd lock himself in his cell when he was finished. The other mercs made a show of locking themselves in, the jimmyed locks failing to close completely. Finally, the harassed guards told the Yanks not to bother them anymore that night, and left.

Verduin, using the shower noise as cover, stood up on a flimsy stool and gave the pre-cut escape hatch a healthy yank. The section of bars came free in his hand. He went back to his cell, the cleanest man of the bunch.

Phase one completed successfully.

Around 2130, with the prison quieting down around them, four of the five mercs planning to go over the wall silently packed their gear and stuffed dummies in their beds. Steve Sosa, for his own reasons, opted to sit this one out.

Their cell doors opened without any problems and the four mercs crept down to the shower room. A slight drizzle was falling and searchlights haphazardly punctuated the brownish mist. Steve Hedrick was boosted up through the roof and lay flat, scanning the outer courtyard.

Guard-dog patrols had been their biggest worry, but Hedrick could see that everyone, dogs included, had taken shelter from the rain inside the guard hut. Hedrick also saw that the klieg lights used to illuminate the grounds pointed out and away from the prison buildings, effectively blinding the guards. And the stretch of wall they'd be climbing down was located between two of the high-intensity floodlights, giving them some shadow for cover. So far so good.

Hedrick flashed a thumbs up to the three other mercs waiting below in the shower room. They handed up their ad-hoc escape rope: white sheets tied together, with a bar of soap acting as the weighted end. Hedrick tossed the sheets over the side, the soap yanking it down into the bushes below.

Carmody, Ainsworth and Verduin



The four mercs who didn't make it over the prison wall in Brasilia — Steve Sosa (top right), Bob Foti (center right), Raul Rodriguez (bottom right) and John Early (not shown) — were cuffed and extradited to Argentina. Photo: AP/Wide World

climbed up to join Hedrick, getting their first look at the prison's no-man's land they'd have to cross. It was wide-open courtyard to the first checkpoint gate of the inner wall, located some 50 meters away. Beyond this they could see a series of buildings ending at the outer wall of the prison. After that, Brasilia — and freedom.

Keeping as flat as possible against the whitewashed wall, the men started lowering themselves one by one into the darkened bushes below. With the weight of each man, the sheets started ripping. They prayed their rope would hold out, and it did.

Once they were all down, Rodriguez pulled the sheets back inside, untied them, and spread them back onto the bunks. With luck, the guards wouldn't notice anything amiss until the next morning.

It was now time to put the big bluff into play. Silently, the four men changed into their Brazilian-made clothes, stuffing everything else into their small tote bags. They would go two by two, Carmody and Ainsworth leading, and simply walk out of the prison. Dozens of Brazilian military policemen in civilian clothes were continually moving in and out of the prison, heading for home or coming back from town. With their tote bags — normally used by the Brazilian police to carry submachine guns — they hoped to pass as cops.

The rain picked up as Carmody and Ainsworth approached the first guard shack. They slouched and sauntered, doing their



to the States to set the Bolivian escape network into motion, they boarded a jam-packed bus for the 22-hour trip to Campo Grande, located about six hours from the Bolivian border. Brazilian bodies crammed into every niche; the driver charged for seats, standing room in the aisle, and even a seat on the toilet. At every stop, more bodies wedged their way onto the rickety bus, keeping the three men standing upright for most of the journey.

Two days later and nearing exhaustion, they pried themselves out of the bus and stepped onto the bustling streets of Campo Grande. The town swarmed with federal and military policemen. All roads to the border converged through Campo Grande, and there was a continuing high-profile anti-smuggling operation in place. And to make matters worse, their pictures appeared in the newspaper. The odds against a clean escape were rising fast.

Through previous arrangements the men were to meet a pilot who had been paid to fly them over the border into Bolivia. They met up with him in a local park. The pilot immediately recognized the mercs from the photos in the paper and turned them down flat. He'd run drugs or guns but not three mercenaries just escaped from jail.

Their contact in Campo Grande, an American from the States who literally put his life on the line to help the mercs out of Brazil, found another pilot who would fly them to the Brazilian border town of Corumba — the smuggling capital of that part of the world.

A quick hop in the pilot's single-engine plane put them in Corumba's small airport, followed by a short taxi ride into town. It was like the Wild West: Bars, warehouses, guns, cops, soldiers — and the occasional shootout — made it easy for the three to keep a low profile. To avoid having to produce their passports, which had been taken by the Brazilian police months ago, they again found rooms in a warehouse. It was, unfortunately, across the street from a military police battalion barracks, and MPs filled the place around the clock. But even with their photos now prominently splattered across the front page of the papers, no one bothered to notice them.

Bolivia was now only a 15-minute drive away. They spent the night going over their options. According to their contact from the States, Brazilian police manning the various contraband and border checkpoints had been bribed to let them pass through unmolested. A local taxi driver had also been organized to drive them across. They'd give it a try. But they also agreed that if anything went wrong they'd do whatever it took to break out of Brazil. One way or another, they weren't going back to jail.

The next morning they met their cab driver. "No passports, no problem," he told them. "Everything's OK."

Adrenaline surged through the mercs as they approached the first MP checkpoint. If they were stopped, they'd try to bribe the guards. If that didn't work . . . they kept

best to look like bored MPs finished with their shift. The pungent aroma of marijuana met them as they neared the guard hut. They waved at the glassy-eyed and indifferent uniformed MP. He waved back.

They walked through the gate and into the next courtyard. "God, these guys are stupid fuckers," Carmody whispered to Ainsworth.

The outer gate, open for vehicle traffic, was more heavily guarded by MPs and their dogs. But without a second glance from guard or dog, the Americans shuffled past the bored sentries and out into the street. They were free.

Ten minutes later, Verduin and Hedrick joined them near the hospital complex across the street from the prison. Their escape, though just as nerve-racking, was just as easy.

Phase two completed successfully.

Phase three would now become a plan-as-you-go operation. The mercs had a small map of Brazil torn out of a local paper and not much else. Their most immediate step, though, was to get as far away from Brasilia as they could before the alarm went out. Their direction of movement would be west — toward Bolivia.

A cruising taxicab stopped for the men a few minutes later. In their best pidgin Portuguese the mercs offered the driver the equivalent of \$120 U.S. to drive them to Goiania, a sleepy little town 200 kilometers southwest of Brasilia.

Fred Verduin, who had previously made connections in Rio de Janeiro and felt he might have better luck on his own, left the group at a downtown hotel. (Verduin's odyssey across Brazil, under a foreign passport, would finally take him to freedom about a month later.)

Minutes seemed to drag by as the other three mercs — Carmody, Ainsworth and Hedrick — bounced along in their hired taxi toward Goiania. They knew that within a few hours a country-wide alert would have every policeman and soldier searching for them.

Once in Goiania they were able to catch a bus onward through Rio Verde and then to the tiny village of Jatai, about 500 kilometers southwest of Brasilia. There, they found out, they wouldn't be able to catch a

When the mercs were arrested in Brazil, the weapons seized from their ship, including this MAG, formed the basis of their conviction for suspicion of contraband. Photo: T.C.

bus out until the next morning. Without proper identification, they couldn't check into the local hotel without raising too many questions. After a few enquiries the men holed up in a warehouse for the night. No questions about their identity were asked.

By that time news of their escape had been broadcast on radio and television. Photographs of the mercs taken in prison were flashed on the screen: Sullen, long-haired and scruffily bearded faces stared out at the three clean-shaven and short-haired mercs while they sat in the bordello's dimly lit, smoke-filled bar. They had taken the time on the evening of their escape to shave and trim their hair. It was a small thing, but now it was paying dividends. Even the off-duty policemen lounging around the bar didn't throw them a second glance.

The next morning, after a phone call back

Escape route of mercs Tim Carmody, Steve Hedrick and Sheldon Ainsworth as they traveled by taxi, bus and light aircraft from Brasilia to La Paz, Bolivia.



their eyes on the MPs' weapons. The cab driver waved at the guard. He motioned them through.

A few minutes later they could see Bolivia — and the Federal Police border checkpoint. Cops and MPs were everywhere, searching trucks and cars. A load of bus passengers was spreadeagled against a wall, police tearing through their baggage. A Federal Policeman, his mirrored sunglasses flashing in the noonday sun, motioned their cab over. If anything went wrong at this point, the mercs would bail out of the taxi and run like hell for Bolivia. With luck, they might escape a bullet in the back.

The cabbie threw the guard a thumbs up. The guard returned the gesture and smiled. A few minutes later, Carmody, Ainsworth and Hedrick walked across the border into Bolivia.

Ten months after their arrest, they were finally free men.

Epilogue

Using the escape network that had been organized from the States, the three men made their way into Santa Cruz, Bolivia, a few days later. The problem they faced now was money to pay off various agents who had helped them along.

Back at our office in Boulder, Colorado, *Soldier of Fortune* Editor/Publisher Bob Brown and I carefully monitored their progress from Brazil to Bolivia. From our sources we knew the three mercs needed cash — and needed it fast — if they were going to make it out of Bolivia before the government found out about their presence. If they were picked up inside Bolivia without passports or entry documents, and with word of their escape making headlines around the world, the Bolivians would certainly send them back to Brazil.

We checked out every option for sending the needed funds — \$2,500 held by a family member in another state — down to Bolivia, but none of the routes guaranteed delivery. I volunteered to courier the cash down South.

After 10 months of working behind the scenes to help the imprisoned Americans, Brown quickly made his decision. "OK, Coleman," he told me. "Put a ticket on my American Express card. I'll front the money they need." That's the way Bob Brown works. He simply wrote off more than \$2,000 in airline tickets and travel expenses to pull three guys he didn't know out of the shit.

With \$3,500 in \$20s and \$50s stuffed inside my jacket pocket ("Better take an extra grand," Brown told me. "You might need it."), I began my 17-hour journey to La Paz, Bolivia, where I'd make contact with the three men.

My only worry was a search by Bolivian customs. Thirty-five hundred dollars in cash, although small change in one of the drug capitals of the world, would no doubt lead to questions I didn't want to answer. I'd wait and see what developed.

My flight finally touched down at La Paz around 1100 on 23 December after a brief immigration stop at Santa Cruz. I had only one carryon bag, and two green uniform-



Mercs Tim Carmody (left), John Early (center front) and Bob Foti (entering van) leaving Rio's Federal Police prison en route to the courthouse. Early was sentenced to five years imprisonment and the other seven mercs received four years each. Photo: Agencia O Globo

clad customs officials stood nearby eyeing me warily. I walked toward their wooden benches when I felt a tug on my arm.

"Señor Coleman?"

I nodded. It was my contact from the escape network. We walked past customs and out into the cool afternoon. Tim Carmody was waiting on the airport steps, looking some 30 pounds thinner than when I'd seen him nearly two years earlier.

"Thanks for coming," he said.

"You look like shit," I answered.

"Watch out for South American package tours," he tossed back. Ten months of Brazilian prisons hadn't broken his offbeat "fuck you" spirit.

Things moved fast after that. I passed the money over to the mercs and caught a Lufthansa 747 back to the States at 0530 the next morning.

One more hitch awaited Carmody, Ainsworth and Hedrick. Without passports, the clerk at the La Paz Airport Eastern Airlines counter wouldn't let them board their flight back to Miami.

"Hey, the flight's leaving in 20 minutes," Carmody told the clerk. "Call the U.S. Embassy and clear it with them."

It was Christmas Eve and no one was home except for a Marine corporal pulling phone duty. He said he'd call the duty officer at his house.

A few minutes later the DO called the airline clerk. "I've got three Americans without passports," the clerk told the embassy man. "They said they were stolen in Santa Cruz."

The DO wanted to talk to Carmody. "Did you report them stolen?" he queried.

"Sure. We called Jim Ritchie [consular officer with State's Citizen's Emergency

Center] back in the States. He OK'd our coming home." It was a bluff, but they had nothing to lose at this point.

Carmody could almost feel the third-string diplomat sit to attention.

"Well, if Jim Ritchie OK'd it, it's OK with me."

They made the flight with only a few minutes to spare.

United States Customs and Immigration in Miami was their final hurdle. Without baggage and passports, they were sure to attract someone's attention.

"U.S. passports?" the immigration official asked. They nodded. He passed them through.

"Anything to declare?" the woman customs officer wanted to know. They shook their heads.

"Well, Merry Christmas then." She smiled at them.

It was Christmas Day, and they were home.

The four mercs who remained in Brazil — Early, Foti, Sosa and Rodriguez — were extradited to Argentina. After paying between \$7,000 and \$9,000 for bail, the men were given their passports and allowed to leave the country. They returned to the United States earlier this year.

As we go to press, an investigation by the FBI, U.S. Customs and a number of other agencies into the Ghana coup attempt is underway. If the investigation is pursued it will probably take months — and possibly years — to uncover the worldwide web of governments, intelligence agencies and private sources that manipulated the plot. That's if they're lucky.

And the Rio 8? A few are already looking for the next adventure that promises a little money and a lot of action. But they've all learned the one immutable law of merc work.

"Don't think you're being hired because you're the best," one of the mercs told me. "You're hired because you're expendable, because you can be thrown away."

So be it. ✎

ARMY BLACK HAWKS IN BOLIVIA

U.S. Cracks Down on Cocaine

by Charlie Harris

UNITED States Army Black Hawk helicopters spiral down into a jungle clearing in Bolivia, disgorging troopers of the elite National Police Mobile Unit, nicknamed the "Leopards." Their mission — codenamed Task Force Janus — is to raid manufacturing laboratories of the massive cocaine industry, which are scattered throughout the boonies of eastern Bolivia.

Essentially a light infantry unit, the National Police troopers storm the now-abandoned laboratory, confiscating the chemicals and the raw supplies needed to make cocaine destined for export to the United States. Shots are ex-

LEOPARD CHASER

Charlie Harris is a former major in the U.S. Marine Corps who served two tours of duty in Vietnam as an adviser and helicopter pilot, respectively. After military service, Charlie worked for 10 years in Latin America as a U.S. government employee. He now is a freelance writer who contributes frequently to *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine on Latin American affairs (see "Peru's Sendero Luminoso," March '87).

changed with the fleeing *picheteros* but no arrests are made as the deep jungle swallows up the processing crew.

When the area is declared secure, the Black Hawks return on call from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officers who are acting as interpreters and liaison between the Bolivians and the U.S. Army pilots. A thorough search of the laboratory

U.S. Army General John Galvin arrives in La Paz to meet with Bolivian President Victor Paz Estenssoro, signaling beginning of Task Force Janus in early summer 1986.



site and the surrounding jungle consumes the rest of the afternoon. The birds lift off toward the Leopards' home base just before dark.

Until recently, Bolivia's National Police, in charge of anti-narcotics operations, had no means of reaching most of the cocaine labs which operate in the eastern provinces of Beni and Santa Cruz. A large roadless plain laced with rivers and streams, eastern Bolivia is completely cut off from the rest of the country for at least six months out of the year, during the torrential rains which flood this sparsely populated region. Consequently, the government has only been able to exert a minimum of effective control here.

But with an increasing drug addiction problem in his country and under pressure from the Reagan administration to suppress cocaine traffic, Bolivia's President Victor Paz Estenssoro requested U.S. military assistance in early summer 1986 to combat the burgeoning drug trade. What he received were six U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters and a company-sized contingent of American soldiers from the 210th Aviation Battalion of the 193rd Infantry Brigade, stationed at Fort Clayton in the Canal Zone. With this increased mobility, the National Police can now reach those cocaine laboratories which had once been operating with impunity.

"We're just providing transportation," the American officer for Task Force Janus Public Affairs told me when I visited the rear base in Trinidad, capital of the Beni Province. "The Bolivians pick the targets, set the dates, and we do the hauling. And we've done the hauling, a lot of hauling, since we arrived. The birds have averaged a strike every two days. There has never been a mission scrubbed for lack of aircraft, nor have we had to downsize the troop package to accommodate the number of birds



Extensive U.S. support apparatus keeps birds flying and morale high.

available."

As I walked around the dusty camp pitched next to the runway of Trinidad's airport, I was amazed by the Army's extensive support apparatus for keeping the birds flying. The total U.S. troop commitment of 170 men included a platoon of infantry to act as security for the helos, an ordnance and supply detachment, an aviation maintenance section, cooks, bakers, a water purification and bath section to keep the showers running, a flight surgeon, a medical section, and a vet to inspect the beef.

Several hundred miles away from the scene, at the capital in La Paz, I spoke with Irving Alcaraz del Castillo, the Bolivian Sub-Secretary of Information, about Task Force Janus. He stated, "The narcotics suppression campaign has been very successful. With the assistance of the American

helicopters, the National Police has essentially paralyzed the processing of coca leaves into cocaine. The price of the raw product has been driven way down, the *campesino* farmers are getting only a fraction of the usual price for their coca leaves, and many of the lab workers are returning to their villages to work as ordinary farmers instead of at the labs, where they were making triple wages. The top traffickers are moving their operations into Brazil and Peru where the pressure is less."

As I sipped *mate de coca*, a drink made of coca leaves and guaranteed to prevent the altitude sickness that inevitably accompanies a visit to La Paz, I asked, "How many kilos or tons of cocaine have been seized since the operation commenced in June 1986?"

"Not so much, really," he replied with a shrug. "Cocaine is too easily transported. The traffickers take it with them as they flee the police. What we do get are the all-important chemicals used to process the stuff. Considering that each barrel of chemicals, or maybe two barrels, constitutes a load for a light airplane flying it out to the lab, you will see how we have managed to paralyze the processing effort here. Since June we have seized 1000 barrels of sulfuric acid, 200 barrels of hydrochloric acid, 20 barrels of acetone and 1500 barrels of ether. In addition, we have raided and destroyed 17 laboratories and 23 transshipment points, as well as confiscated 16 ranches where trafficking has been going on. We also acquired two light airplanes abandoned by traffickers on strips that we raided. There's never been any effort to match this one

Six U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters permit Leopards quick access to remote regions of eastern Bolivia, where cocaine labs have operated with impunity for years. Photo: Sikorsky Aircraft



in the history of the country.”

In contrast to this glowing report, an old friend of mine who was the Minister of Interior in a previous Bolivian government gave me a less-obviously slanted interpretation of Task Force Janus' success. “The police are corrupt at every level. No wonder cocaine is not being seized — the traffickers almost certainly are being warned. There is no real way for them to get the chemicals out of the labs, so they leave them.

“If you notice, there haven't been that many arrests either. President Paz is quite serious but he isn't getting too much cooperation from the National Police. He recently had to sack the Police Commanding General and the Chief of the Narcotics Squad in Santa Cruz for obvious corruption.

“Perhaps it will have some effect, but until there is a general housecleaning, there isn't much that can be hoped for from the police. The Leopards are a single unit, supported by the U.S. administration and the Drug Enforcement Agency. They work well, but they cannot be everywhere, even with the Yankee helicopters.”

Knowing that he always preferred to take a bold approach, I asked him, “How would you deal with the problem?” I was surprised by his reply.

“There is no real solution, *amigo mio*,” he smiled ruefully. “This country is so poor, the traffickers so rich, that they have immense influence. They can buy almost anything. We even had a president a while back who sold out to them. I would suggest sending our armed forces into the fight, but it would just corrupt them in turn.

“And, even if the cocaine traffic were somehow wiped out, then what would happen to our economy? This is a country where a substantial percentage of the population depends on the coca leaf, either chewing it, or selling it, or transporting it, or processing it into cocaine, or sending its derivative, cocaine, out of the country and up somebody's nose. What would they all do if the cultivation of coca was shut down?

I don't think the United States has got enough money or enough interest to find a substitute crop or some other way for the *campesino* to make a living.

“In any case, it wouldn't make any difference because the traffickers would just move next door into Peru and redouble their efforts. Until you Yankees clean your own house, you'll never solve this problem. Most of our cocaine goes straight to the United States. You're the biggest market.”

He continued, “The government is getting into an increasingly difficult situation. Coca is a way of life here, and the people are hidebound traditionalists; they resent the Yankee intrusion which is threatening the only prosperity they've ever seen. Life is rough in the rural parts of Bolivia. There is a lot more loyalty to a cousin who is a trafficker and brings them work at triple wages than there is to a central government that they only see at tax collection time.”

With these conflicting stories concerning Task Force Janus, I decided I'd just have to go out and see for myself. But when I requested to go along on a Leopard operation, I was stonewalled by the American Embassy press attache, the U.S. Army, the National Police and the Ministry of Information. Apparently a firm decision had been made at the inception of the operation that no news reporters of any sort would be allowed to participate in an actual strike.

I must have voiced my despair louder than I thought, because the owner of my hotel, a jolly Bolivian desperado who had been educated at Texas A&M, finally approached me and said, “You really want to see what those guys are doing when they go out, and where they go? My cousin, Don Roberto, takes a big interest and he says

Forward operating base for Janus missions with Black Hawk chopper (left), DEA aircraft and Bolivian air force C-47. U.S. DEA officers serve as interpreters and liaison between Bolivian troops and Army pilots.

he'll talk to you so long as you don't tell the Yankees about him.”

Jumping at this opportunity, I soon found myself bouncing down one of the few passable roads in the lush plains of the Beni with my host in his Toyota Land Cruiser. “No cameras, please. But otherwise you can talk about anything you want,” he told me. “Roberto likes Americans. He was educated in the States, too, and used to vacation up there all of the time. Last few years he has been going to Europe, though.”

After a couple of hours, we turned off the main road onto a side lane which improved as it wound back into the low-lying plains. “Notice anything odd about that hut over there?” my host asked me. I looked in the direction he had indicated and saw a discreet FM whip antenna sticking up a short pole at one corner, so I replied, “Yeah, that one has got a radio.”

“Roberto is careful,” he told me. “He has plenty of resources, and he likes to be informed before ground visitors arrive at the hacienda. Can you imagine the problems keeping a little net of radios working out here, running them off batteries 'cause there is no power except at the main house, and it rains nonstop here several months a year?

“Nevertheless it's just one of the things that keeps him on top of the pile: attention to detail. He also commands the loyalty, unquestioning loyalty, of several hundred *campesinos* who live here on the place. He has given them a better life than ever before, dispenses justice fairly and allows no one to interfere. This is a cattle ranch and he spends a bit of time here each year in the dry season. You're lucky it's not raining or you might have had to find him at the Ritz Hotel in Madrid.” My host laughed as we hit another bone-jarring pothole, and I decided perhaps Madrid might not be so bad.

A full 15 miles past the guard hut, we arrived at the hacienda, a white stucco building with a red tile roof sitting on a low rise in the tree-dotted plain. At some distance was a little hamlet and scattered about were other humble homes and outbuildings — a veritable town.

An airstrip lay to the south with skinning sheds for the beef, slaughtered on the spot, to hang while awaiting transport to market. An AeroCommander twin was lounging under a makeshift shelter of palm thatch alongside the runway. In the mid-afternoon sun there was little movement and the only incongruous note was a tall radio mast at some distance from the main house. Otherwise I might have stumbled across a 19th-century cattle baron's establishment in south Texas.

We passed by corrals where a pair of hard-looking cowboys were lounging on the edge of a herd of zebu cattle. Their ponies were scrubby little native *mestizos*, hardly 14 hands tall. They saluted languidly as we dusted them down and wheeled up to the main door. I discovered the house to be rather larger than it appeared at a distance; the entranceway giving off a corridor into a



most pleasant shaded patio surrounded on all sides by the wings of the home. The plump little servant girl who showed us in said, "Don Roberto is coming soon. He has been waiting lunch for you."

The clatter of boots on the tile floor announced the arrival of the master of the hacienda. I was surprised and perhaps slightly disappointed to find before me a rather ordinary-looking fellow in a pair of worn jeans, work boots and a frayed cotton shirt. The only clue to his identity was the commanding note in his voice. "Welcome to my ranch, cousin, and I'm happy to meet your friend. Come, lunch is ready!"

We broke the ice over a fine meal of beef and fish from the nearby river and fell to talking about the joint U.S.-Bolivian effort against the traffickers. "As my cousin has told you, I'm a simple cattleman, but then I know a lot of fellows who are involved in the business."

He smiled broadly with this admission and went on. "The Yankee effort has shut down the processing in most of the Beni and Santa Cruz as well. It's just a matter of prudence to suspend operations for a while. The old *presidente*, Paz Estenssoro, can only take the heat for so long and will have to call off the foreigners pretty soon. Then everybody will be back in business as always. A number of the labs have simply been re-established in western Brazil where there is scant control of any sort.

"The biggest single problem with running labs in this area is the lack of access. It's plenty tough to get supplies in and the cocaine out. To put together a big lab, which is where the real money is, takes a lot of organizing and many flights in by light airplane. Of course there is a shortcut. If you're close to a river you can bring the stuff in by barge or launch and then fly the coke out. The government isn't as cooperative as it was once and the lab locations in the past ten years have become more remote; they used to be just a few hundred yards off the main road. But then nobody used to look for them."

Taken aback by the casual manner with which he discussed the intricacies of the drug business, I asked him, "What is the usual route for coke out of Bolivia and where is your preferred market?"

"Most of the local stuff is flown by private plane up to Colombia. But there is also a lot of dealing directly with importers coming down from the States, and there has been a real effort to develop a market in Europe, particularly since the United States has gotten tougher about coke. Mind you, I don't see any lessening of demand in the States — it's just that the Colombians are determined to lock up that market, and we find it safer not to try to compete too directly with them. They're tough bastards, been known to take offense, and dead people turn up in their wake. As it is, they will buy our stuff and resell it. Lots more coke is being produced than ever before and we are seeing a price war. The price is particularly low



Member of Bolivian National Police Mobile Unit.

here in Bolivia. There is a good demand in the cities for the stuff, but the price is low 'cause it is the easiest market to sell it.

"A lot of the stuff used to go out of Santa Cruz direct to Miami by commercial air, but the U.S. Customs are much better than they used to be about finding the shipments. Another problem is dealing with Americans who come down here to buy. They may have a sort of an introduction, but you can't ever be sure that they are okay. The typical routine is to let them sit in Santa Cruz while we see who they are calling, and whether anybody comes to see them. The DEA likes to run little sting operations with co-opted American traffickers that they have twisted into working for them. It's just easier and safer to sell to somebody who is known and reliable."

"Is the DEA much of a problem for traffickers here?" I asked.

"Sometimes they are a big headache," he admitted. "But it mostly depends on who they are working with. They have to use the local police, or sometimes the military, and we usually are better plugged in than they are. After all," and here he made the universal money sign and chuckled, "they're on a budget, so we can outspend them.

"But, you know, this is my country, my

way of life," his eyes glinting with a spark of madness. "And I get most things without paying for them. I just ask, and for family reasons, or past favors done, or simple friendship, my wishes are obeyed. For example, my cousin tells me you wanted to go on a raid with the Leopards. I was quite curious about them when they started their operations with the helicopters; I was even concerned, so I found a friend who gave me their radio frequencies and another friend explained that the missions are picked by the Ministry of Interior in La Paz based on intelligence provided by the DEA. I know somebody who talks to the DEA, so I passed along some information about an old site. Sure enough, in about three weeks a strike was planned and done. They didn't come up with much and it confirmed their system of operation for me.

"The choppers and Leopards have reached a point of diminishing returns now. Initially they played hell with some labs, but everybody is shut down waiting for the U.S. Army to go home."

"I've been told by American Embassy officials that these Army Black Hawks are going to be replaced by several UH-1D 'Huey' helicopters so the operations can go on," I replied. "They will be on a long-term loan to the Bolivian air force, and there will be pilots trained to fly them and so forth."

"It's of no concern," he sneered. "The impetus will die with the departure of the Americans. The military are not very committed to fighting this major source of national income. For example, did you know that right now, if the Bolivian air force sends an aircraft to assist in the current operations, they are charging \$500-\$800 per flight? What kind of dedication is that?"

"Frankly, it's just not worth your time to run around with those guys." He laughed, good humor restored. "You'll learn more about coke from a simple rancher like me than from thousands of kilometers of travel with Leopards in their fancy helicopters."

As we bounced back to town over the double-rutted road, I thought about what Don Roberto had said. Without question the U.S. Army had performed its assigned mission very well. It had won every battle, but was going to lose the war. Somehow the United States had gotten sucked into a situation where the host country was not as committed to the project as we were, and the inevitable outcome was failure.

The Leopards had been hauled dutifully about, but at considerable political cost to the old President Paz Estenssoro. Pessimists claim the Yankee invasion will cost him the next election.

Corruption is rampant in this poverty-stricken country. The cocaine trafficking community has the only viable crop and wields immense influence as a result. Until the country enjoys prosperity derived from some other enterprise, there is little likelihood of putting a permanent dent in the Bolivian cocaine trade. ☒

PROBING

Soviets Pressure Pakistan

Text & Photos by Mike Winchester

CAMP FOLLOWER

Mike Winchester travels widely from his base in Bangkok, following the wars. His previous SOF offerings have covered action in areas from Burma to Afghanistan, the last being "Guerrilla Theater" in SOF, April 1987.



ABOVE: Pro-Soviet left-wing Pakistani politician harangues crowd in Karachi, advocating expulsion of Afghan mujahideen and refugees from Pakistan.



RIGHT: Anti-communist Afghan mujahideen freedom fighters at Teri Mangal base camp on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.



LEFT: Pakistani policeman patrols the streets of Quetta, in Baluchistan Province.

BELOW: Teri Mangal base camp on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. This mujahideen staging post has repeatedly been the target of communist air strikes.



PESHAWAR

FOR camp followers of the Afghan War, "Greens" on Peshawar's busy Saddar Bazaar is not just another second-rate hotel. It's one of those listening posts that sooner or later everyone discovers. Journalists and photographers, would-be mercs and war freaks, Afghan mujahideen spokesmen and Peshawar-resident "freedom fighters," relief people, and doubtless the spook fraternity, eventually they all make it — to

talk, listen, swap news, lay plans and drink lukewarm Nescafé.

They don't, of course, go to Greens for the war itself, but last July the war came to Greens. It arrived in the form of a smallish bomb planted on the steps of an airline office next door. Small, but quite big enough to demolish the hotel entrance, shatter the plate glass windows of Lala's Grill (where all the talking is done) and see every-

one hit the floor — unharmed but looking pretty sheepish.

If the message hadn't been clear before, it became very clear then: The war in Afghanistan is moving across the rugged Afghanistan-Pakistan border into Pakistan.

Over the past year the embattled Soviet-backed regime in Kabul has been hitting back at Pakistan — the main sanctuary and arms conduit for the anti-communist mujahideen —



in a concerted campaign of destabilization, subversion and terrorism. The message to Islamabad has been brutally clear. Back off support for the Afghan resistance and back off providing sanctuary for Afghan refugees. Also implied has been a demand to open direct negotiations with the Soviet-installed regime in Kabul, amounting to *de facto* diplomatic recognition.

Military Attacks

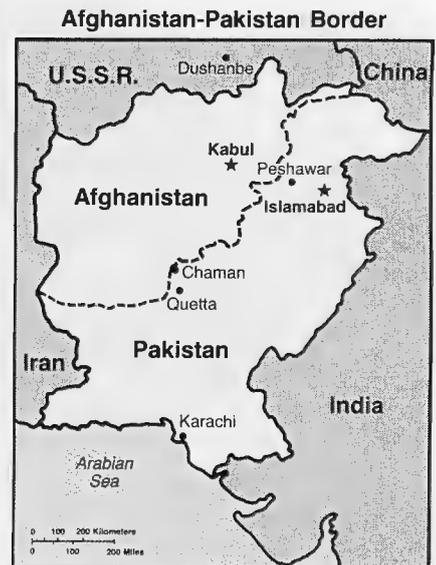
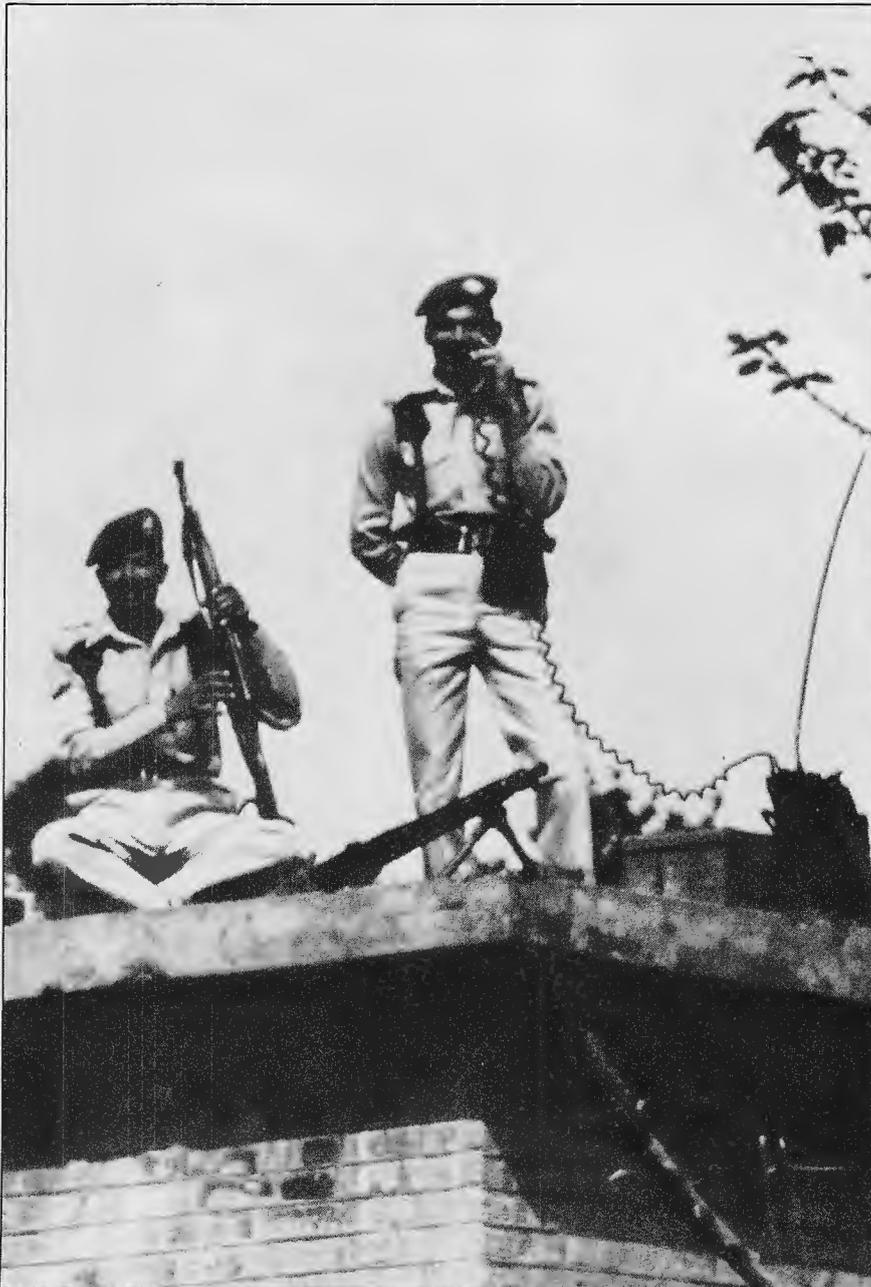
The communist assault has been a multi-pronged one. Broadly, it involves three distinct, well-coordinated thrusts. First and most obvious has been a dramatic escalation of military pressure along and across the rugged 2,400-kilometer Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Mostly that has meant air strikes and, as Soviet-spearheaded forces have battled to overrun mujahideen strong-

holds near the frontier, a sharp increase in cross-border shelling. The statistics speak largely for themselves. In 1983 the Pakistanis recorded a total of 89 aerial incursions from across the border. In 1984 the figure was 88. Then in 1985 it spiraled to 251. By the end of October 1986 it was at 650 and rising.

The change has been qualitative as much as quantitative. Early in the war, cross-border strikes were targeted mainly against Afghan refugees and mujahideen staging points inside Pakistan. But, as of 1986, Pakistani military personnel and civilians on the border have been finding themselves increasingly in the line of fire. Indicative of growing communist cockiness was one incident early in 1986 when two communist gunships spent about 45 minutes conducting

a leisurely rocket and machine-gun attack on the Pakistani border town of Parachinar — some 15 clicks from the actual borderline — before cruising back to Afghanistan unopposed.

Pakistan's response has been restrained, to say the least. A perennial problem for Islamabad has been the lack of AWACS (airborne warning and control system) aircraft to conduct aerial surveillance of the border area, which would permit advance scrambling of interceptors to meet intruders. There has also been a clear reluctance to further inflame an already tense situation by making a habit of tangling directly with the communists. The result has been a paper-throwing war in which Islamabad's foreign ministry deluges Kabul with diplomatic protests, which the communists promptly



LEFT: Pakistani army machine gun crew keeps rooftop watch over an anti-government political demonstration.

RIGHT: Pro-Soviet Pushtun tribesmen rally against the Pakistani government in Quetta, in Baluchistan Province.

BELOW: Anti-government Baluch political rally in Karachi.



consign to the nearest trash can.

Even so, there are indications that Pakistani patience is beginning to wear thin. In January 1986, at least one MiG-21 raider was hit by ground fire over the explosive Parachinar Salient southwest of Peshawar, and went down inside Afghanistan. Then, in May, a Pakistani F-16, recently purchased from the United States, brought down an intruding Su-22 well within Pakistani airspace. On the ground, Pakistani border units are now equipped with both Redeye and Stinger shoulder-launched SAMs. The popularity of communist joy rides to shoot up Pakistani border towns is likely now to drop off fast.

Subversion

Probably more worrisome for Islamabad has been the second prong of Kabul's offensive — an effort to destabilize the largely autonomous Pushtun (Pathan) tribal areas on the Pakistani side of the border. The Pushtun tribes, never effectively brought to heel by either British imperial power or the Amirs of Kabul, straddle the borderline. For Pushtun nationalists in Kabul who've never really reconciled themselves to the creation of Pakistan, stirring up trouble across the frontier is nothing new. Afghan efforts to establish a separate state of "Pushtunistan," including large chunks of Pakistan's tribal areas and North West Frontier Province, date back to Pakistani independence in 1947. But the latest push by the communist leaders in Afghanistan — in particular by new Communist Party boss Najibullah, himself a Pushtun — marks a new high. It

has also widened to include support for dissident Baluch tribes, located in Pakistan's strategic western province of Baluchistan.

Kabul's current campaign to portray itself as a champion of Pushtun and Baluch nationalism has involved the staging of large tribal "jirgas" (assemblies) in Kabul. In April 1985, Afghan communist bosses trumpeted a "Grand Jirga" of the tribes. Then, in September, they followed up with a jirga of border tribes, with the emphasis on enlisting Pushtun tribal support to help seal key southeastern stretches of the border.

When you're handing out ready cash like Kabul does these days, you can't fail to make a few friends — at least for a couple of months. It came as no surprise to anyone then that a bunch of tribals from the Pakistani side of the border fronted up on the appointed days, clapped at the right moments and were told they were heroes. On their way home they were presented with crate-loads of free Kalashnikovs (going price on the frontier — \$1,000 apiece) with which to "defend their rights" — i.e., attack mujahideen resistance groups passing through Pakistani tribal areas en route to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, agents from Kabul's Ministry of Tribes and Nationalities and from the state secret police, KHAD, have been operating among the Pakistani tribes — busily fanning the new Pushtun nationalist line, setting up terrorist cells, recruiting anti-mujahideen militia units and handing out free tickets for "education" in the Soviet Union.

Terrorism

The third prong of the Soviet-backed Kabul offensive has been simple terrorism. In practical terms that has translated into a sustained campaign of bombings. Directed first at the tribal areas where many of the three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan are housed, it soon spread to Peshawar, the ancient city at the foot of the Khyber Pass that currently serves as home-in-exile to the leading Afghan resistance parties. Since early 1986, KHAD-controlled bombers, recruited from among local Pakistanis and Afghan refugees, have struck at a lengthening urban hit list. First came hotels, tea houses and cinemas frequented by Afghan refugees. Then came specifically Pakistani targets — the television station, the Pakistan International Airlines offices, the airport, the railroad yard, public buses, a major hospital, and even old Greens Hotel.

The message to the local citizens needed no elaboration: Afghan refugees and mujahideen in town meant exploding bombs; send the refugees and the resistance fighters home for "re-education" and — Presto! — no more bombs. Subtle stuff.

Limited Results

So much for the bad news. The good news is that, despite a coordinated campaign that has escalated steadily for over a year, the communists in Kabul have pre-

vious little to show for their effort.

In the tribal areas an immediate and crucial objective has been to incite Pakistani tribesmen into hitting mujahideen logistics lines passing from Peshawar through their areas into Afghanistan. The plan was to parallel stepped-up military pressure by Soviet and Kabul forces against resupply trails on the Afghan side of the line. But, while Soviet Spetsnaz and commando units have had some success ambushing mujahideen caravans inside Afghanistan, tribal operations against the mujahideen in Pakistan have been conspicuously unforthcoming. As one Western military analyst put it: "Compared to the success of ambushes along trails inside Afghanistan, interdiction on the Pakistani side of the border has been a flop."

Nor have cross-border air strikes achieved much, if anything, militarily — aside from prodding Islamabad into beefing up its own defenses. To date, Pakistani fears that shelling might spill over into ground incursions, particularly in the sensitive Chaman area on the Baluchistan border north of Quetta, have not been realized. Nor is there any evidence that the Soviets are ready to up the ante by launching cross-border helicopter assaults on mujahideen base camps inside Pakistan — yet.

Soviet-Kabul pressure tactics have scored points, though, in the war for Pakistani public opinion. Where once Afghanistan stood merely as a sideshow in Pakistani politics, the border incursions and bombings, reported daily in the press, have pushed the issue of Pakistani support for the mujahideen to the forefront of national debate. And, since the end of martial law in Pakistan in December 1985, political debate has become an increasingly noisy, vitriolic and violent affair. There is no lack of left-wing politicians anxious to see the present military-backed Pakistani government toppled and to enter into quick-fix negotiations with Kabul — negotiations that would pull the mat out from under the mujahideen and pack the refugees off home. Kabul's bombings and air raids have been calculated to provide those left-wing politicians with plenty of political ammunition to fire at the government in an effort to force a change in Pakistan's Afghan policy.

For the present, the leftist rabble-rousing has failed to rattle General Zia ul-Haq, who, as Pakistan's president and army chief of staff, remains in effective control of Pakistani policy on Afghanistan. A shrewd political operator who is under no illusions about the dangers of communist consolidation in neighboring Afghanistan, Zia is likely to remain in control in Pakistan through 1990. With general elections scheduled for that same year, the current Pakistani government is also likely to see out its full term. And that, in a nutshell, adds up to continued support for the mujahideen war effort against the communists in Afghanistan. ✕



SOF SOUTHEAST ASIA

ASSIGNMENT CAMBODIA

I Was a Mercenary for *Rolling Stone*

by Jim Morris



It was the summer of 1973. The Phnom Penh press corps gathered every evening at the little outdoor café in front of the Ministry of Information. As a service to the press, the ministry posted daily a single sheet of double-spaced typewritten paper, a summary of the day's military activities, written in French. Someone who knew a little French would get up and stroll over to see whether it contained anything newsworthy, which of course it never did.

The gang of journalists at the café included Malcolm Browne, the distinguished Far East correspondent of the *New York Times*, and Dieter Ludwig, a cameraman for German television wearing a Rolling Stones T-shirt and blond hair to the waist. The rest of the journalists represented all politics, fashions and lifestyles in between.

As for me, I had legitimate credentials from *Rolling Stone*. But I had my own reasons for being in Cambodia. Reasons that had little to do with the typical fare of *Rolling Stone Magazine*.

I was helping to plot a revolution. It had started with a call from Kpa Doh, who had been my interpreter when I was with 5th Special Forces during the early days of the Vietnam War. He was attending the infantry officers' advanced course at Fort Benning. Kpa Doh had been busy since I had seen him last. He'd skipped over the Vietnam-Cambodia border with a brigade of dissident Montagnards and was now serving as a major in the Cambodian army. I decided to go to Fort Benning to see him. During our reunion he invited me to Cambodia to help plan a revolution against the South Vietnamese, assuming of course that they defeated North Vietnam.

After arriving in Cambodia I found myself hanging out with Al Rockoff, a gnome-like freelance photographer with crinkly hair tied back in a ponytail, and an overwhelmingly healthy young man who turned out to be a veteran of Special Forces. Except for blue jeans, a sly smile and a predatory glint in his eye, he looked a lot like Superman. He has since become immensely respectable and would rather his name didn't get printed, so I'll call him by the nickname he acquired, Captain America.

Over coffee one morning, Rockoff asked Captain America and me if we'd like to go out to the Battle of Ang Snoul. It struck me as funny, going to a real battle like you'd go to the drive-in, so I agreed. As always, Captain America was eager to go.

For the Cambodian army, the war consisted of trying to keep the roads open to the cities it still controlled: Phnom Penh, Kompol Som, Battambang.

We walked to the market and got a ride on the back of a three-wheel Lambretta minibus. The sounds of battle were audible a long way out. Our driver wouldn't go any nearer than a mile from Ang Snoul, so we got out and walked along the blacktop high-



Author Jim Morris taking cover behind a rice paddy dike during battle at Ang Snoul. Photo: Al Rockoff

REVOLUTIONARY WRITER

Jim Morris served with Special Forces in Vietnam, picking up a Bronze Star and four wounds in the process. In addition to his military service, Morris is the author of *War Story*, a former foreign correspondent for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* and is now an editor for Dell Publishing. Oddly enough, his trip to Cambodia in 1973 was his first and last assignment for *Rolling Stone Magazine*.

way, listening to the noise of the battle get closer.

Television doesn't convey that noise, nor do motion pictures. There were tremendous shock waves from 106mm recoilless rifles and mortars that left your ears ringing, shook the ground under your feet and hit your stomach with palpable tremors of moving air.

I hadn't heard those sounds in five years, not since the NVA mortared a field hospital while I was on the operating table. Al announced he was going forward to get some shots of the fighting. Once past the town, the layout of the battle became clear. The Khmer Rouge had the road from about a mile out of Ang Snoul and apparently controlled the woodline on the other side of the paddies that lay just outside the town. The

Cambodes were drawn up in a long line, pretty much out in the open, about a hundred and fifty yards from the woodline. A frontal assault had broken down and they were all holding their ground behind some paddy dikes.

Way off to our right, 106mm recoilless rifles, mounted on armored personnel carriers, slammed away at the woodline. "I'm going out to those 106s," Captain America announced, strolling across the paddies toward the battle.

"I'm going forward for some shots of the infantry," Al said. I stuck with Al—he was the guy who knew the territory.

Both of them had fought in paddies before. I had not. I had fought in jungle-covered mountains, the brush sometimes so thick you couldn't see somebody three feet away. This was a whole different game—flat, with no cover. If you walked around, you had to do it in full view of an enemy 150 meters away.

Al walked boldly down the road, although the firing now came from our right rear. He pranced across the paddy dikes out toward the troops who were flat on their bellies. They looked at us as though we were insane, a position with which I was in total agreement. Any half-trained sniper could have taken us out, and they usually go for the obvious target. I walked crouched over and hunkered down.

"Hey, man!" I called to Al.

He turned around and said, "Just keep on the dikes and you won't get your feet wet."

"I wasn't thinking about that. Those fuckers can see us."

He explained that firing broke out sporad-



ically at different parts of the line and that you could walk around when they weren't firing on your sector. When they did fire at you the thing to do was get down.

"What about snipers?"

He shrugged. Apparently his regard for Cambodian marksmanship was low.

We settled in by a big tree in the middle of the field and Al started taking pictures of the Cambodians.

Psnap! Psnap! I knew that sound for sure — two bullets passing about six inches from my head.

"Hit it!" I yelled. I was flat on my face behind a paddy dike with no recollection of having moved at all.

After a while the firing drifted off again. Captain America strolled over. He'd borrowed an M79 grenade launcher from one of the Cambodes. He and Al got into a contest to see who could come the closest to a little house that had somehow remained standing to our left front. It took them six grenades to totally destroy it.

The battle had been interesting, but it was time to get down to the business at hand.

A few days later my Montagnard friend, Kpa Doh, took me to meet his general. Brigadier General. Les Kossem's villa sprawled behind a low wall, just off Monivong, one of the main streets of Phnom Penh. Cambodian guards lounged in the courtyard, wearing a variety of knives, grenades and automatic weapons, mostly AK-47s. In the courtyard there was also a jeep-mounted recoilless rifle, a couple of .30-caliber machine guns, a 60-millimeter mortar and a number of the general's sleek, happy children, playing.

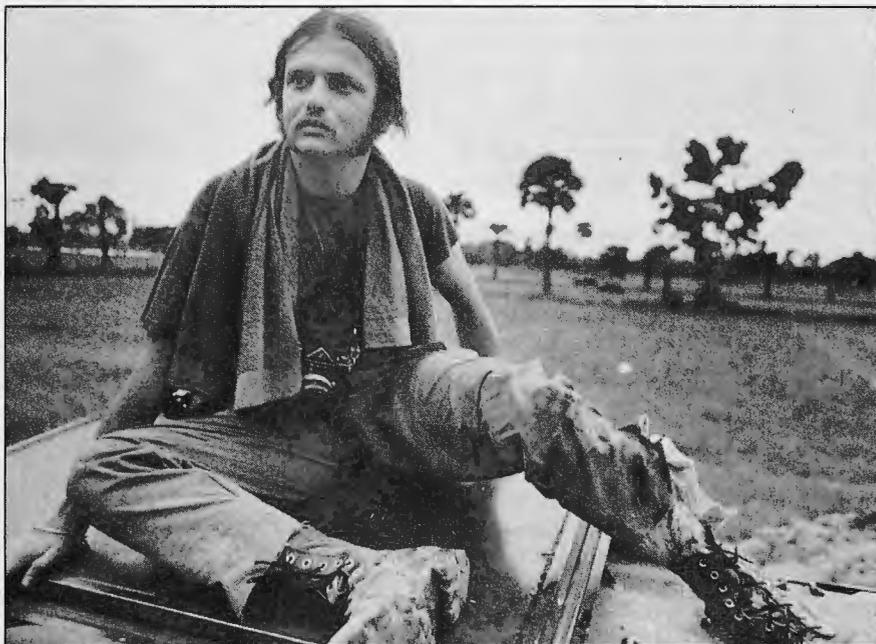
General Les Kossem advanced through the door, slender, tall for an Asian, maybe 5 feet 11 inches, looking about 27 years old except for a deepness of the lines around his eyes and mouth. He wore a blue baseball cap, sky blue jumpsuit and a .45 in a shoulder holster. His smile was boyish, friendly and eager.

His people, the Cham, were coastal fishermen from central Vietnam. His father had come to Cambodia as a political refugee.

I had first read about Les Kossem in 1968 in a top-secret CIA report about *FULRO (Front Unifié de Lutte des Races Opprimées, Unified Fighting Front of the Oppressed Races)*. *FULRO* had been conceived as a revolutionary organization of ethnic Vietnamese nationals, both in Vietnam and in exile. They were Cambodians, Cham and Montagnards — peoples who had been subjugated by the Vietnamese.

The general's house was a meeting place for cabinet ministers, university professors and high-ranking army officers, all from families originally from South Vietnam. They sat around on the verandah in their white shirts and ties, sweating freely, fanning themselves and plotting revolution

An 81mm mortar round leaving the tube.
Photo: Al Rockoff



Combat photographer Al Rockoff with a leg wound, one of ten he picked up in Cambodia.

against the government of South Vietnam.

When I was there we drank copiously of a bottled orange drink called Howdy Cola, poured into huge iced glasses. They talked slowly and reasonably, citing historical precedent, unreeling this pipe dream that had no relation whatsoever to political or military reality.

FULRO, and more specifically Kpa Doh's Montagnards, lacked two of the essentials for a successful revolution: They had no serious backers and, being ethnically dissimilar to the Vietnamese, they could not blend into the general population. Also, the Vietnamese outnumbered them fifteen to one. They had no chance within the present equation.

I told Kpa Doh that if he tried to go back and lead a revolt he would fail, and he would get a lot of people killed.

He shrugged. "I must still try."

Okay, what were the Vietnamese's weak points? The main one was that, whatever Vietnamese were in power, they would be heavily dependent on U.S. aid for survival. Aid was controlled by Congress, and Congress was influenced by public opinion.

In small ways I'd been able to affect that before: Good PR had kept the Pentagon from disbanding the Green Berets, and I'd been part of that. Maybe we could use the press to pressure the Vietnamese into granting Montagnard autonomy.

Toward that end I convinced Haney Howell, a CBS reporter, to do a story on one of the Montagnard battalions which had come over the border with Kpa Doh. This battalion had been the Strike Force at a Special Forces camp called Buon Sar Pa. During the Montagnard revolt of October 1964 they had machine gunned their Vietnamese commanders and dumped the bodies down a three-hole shitter. That had

made it awkward for them to stay in Vietnam when the revolt failed.

The plan was for me and Captain America to stay in the field with them for a couple of weeks after the TV crew went home, to function as freelance advisers.

"Okay, let's go!" the Cambodian colonel snapped crisply. I strode out through his front office and stopped on the second floor balcony overlooking the security detail. The security detail was definitely professional. The men were neither overexcited nor oblivious to the fact that we were heading out through country where ambush was not just possible but likely. They stood, smoking calmly, weapons draped casually across their bodies. They wore crisply tailored fatigues and old green berets mashed down over their flat brown noses.

Most of them wore U.S. parachute wings from their days in the Mike Force in Vietnam and Thai wings over their right pockets, earned when they trained with the Thais after joining the Cambodian army.

Kpa Doh's wife, Miss Mlo, came out of the house on the other side of the headquarters building. She scooped up her smallest son and took him inside the house where the oldest couldn't beat on him for awhile.

I smiled. She was one of the prettiest women I have ever known — slender, graceful, with huge eyes and long glossy black hair. She didn't look old enough to be the mother of three wispy roughnecks or a son who had died while Kpa Doh was in the States. He had told me about it the night he invited me to Cambodia. "When I get letter . . . I cry," he said.

I remembered the night the first one had been born, almost ten years before. Kpa Doh was on patrol and Miss Mlo panicked. She wanted him home. He was 20 clicks into VC territory and I had to tell her to forget it. I was still maybe not her favorite person.

I stood in the steamy heat on the balcony for a long time while the soldiers below

became more and more impatient. Apparently what the colonel meant when he said, "Okay, let's go!" was okay, let's begin to get ready to think about it. The cockiest of the soldiers took off his armored vest and began to run through a series of karate forms, punching the air, kicking a jeep tire.

"I tell you Morris, I never see army like this before," Kpa Doh said as he came up beside me. "Supply officer no want to give gas for operation. Now we have hard time to go because he want to sell gas. He want to give money to the girl downtown. My men know the girl he have." His voice grated harshly, the result of a round he'd taken through the vocal chords in '65 or '66.

Before he got caught up in the war, he had sung professionally, propaganda songs on the radio for the Diem regime. He had detested Diem, but it was a gig, and nobody took the songs seriously. That was where he met his wife; they sang duets.

He pointed out a fat Cambodian in fatigue pants and an undershirt, poking avariciously around the vehicles, a cigarette dangling from his lips.

Every worthless officer debutante in the Cambodian army tooted around Phnom Penh on government gas in a jazzed-up jeep with glossy olive drab paint and white sidewalls. Except for Kpa Doh: He drove a beat-up old civilian jeep passed on to him by an American friend in the USAID program. Kpa Doh bought his own gas, usually heavily laced with water, in one-liter bottles from street vendors.

"Why don't you just shoot the son of a bitch?" I inquired.

He gave me an reproachful look. "He is my colonel's cousin."

"Okay, kidnap the girl and sell her back to him for the gas."

He looked interested.

"If I were you, Kpa Doh," I said, "I'd be picking myself an escape route. This country is going to fold."

I only said it once. I wish I'd said it a hundred times.

The colonel must have persuaded his cousin, because we finally got started — three army trucks and the TV crew's grey Peugeot — toward the river.

The Tonle Sap River was wide, brown and flat, the shore cluttered with sputtering Hondas, throbbing military vehicles and pushcart vendors selling square coconut popsicles on bamboo sticks to the throngs waiting for the ferry.

Drifting across the river on the ferry we passed what was left of a beautiful steel and concrete bridge. The North Vietnamese had blown it up, dropping three spans out of the middle. Twisted steel shot off the end of the bridge into space. It had been built with U.S. money and the North Vietnamese had sacrificed 86 men to destroy it.

It had been a long time since I'd been out



Cambodian soldiers firing on Khmer Rouge positions. Photo: Al Rockoff





with an M16. We were okay as long as there were civilians going up and down the road. Generally, civilians do not wander through the kill zone of an ambush. But they soon petered out and we were out there by ourselves with nothing on either side but rice paddies. Low jungle started one or two hundred meters back from the road. Occasionally we passed a farmer working a water buffalo, sometimes houses up on stilts, built open to catch the breeze.

"Isn't this beautiful country, Morris?" Kpa Doh asked. "Yeah, beautiful for ambushes," I muttered, chewing nervously on a toothpick. I jacked a round into the chamber, selector on safe, my finger on the switch.

About five minutes after I armed my rifle, the others did too. They knew the country, so I hadn't missed it by much.

We crossed a little river and entered a fair-sized village. We pulled into a schoolyard ringed by wire and trenches. The battalion's mission was defense of an administrative district and it had inherited the school as its headquarters from the previous battalion.

Brigade headquarters had been informed that a TV crew was coming and every staff officer for a hundred miles, including the crooked supply officer, came out to pose for American television.

They crowded in front of the camera, guns holstered low, glancing at the camera from the corners of their eyes.

Haney led me aside and said, "Sorry Ace, but we've been shooting without film for half an hour. We can't get anything with these shithheads along."

"Yeah," I muttered. "I can see that."

He slapped me on the shoulder. "But I know Kpa Doh now, and if this outfit ever gets in some heavy action I'll hurry down and shoot that. We can use the action as a carrier for the Montagnard story."

You take what you can get. I thanked him.

Before they left, Joe Yue asked me and Captain America if we wanted to go back to town. There were rumors that the battalion was to be assaulted that night.

We both laughed and shook our heads. This was the best dug-in defensive position we'd seen in Cambodia and there weren't enough Khmer Rouge in the province to overrun it.

Haney and his crew jumped in their air-conditioned Peugeot and headed back to Phnom Penh with our escort — and our rifles, mine and Captain America's. We were to draw others from the battalion.

As soon as the TV crew left, we went inside headquarters and borrowed a couple of rifles and some ammunition. That was when the holes in their defenses started to appear. They could only give us four magazines apiece. In a serious firefight that



Cambodian army truck. "Girl" at left is actually a movie poster cutout taped to windshield. Photo: Al Rockoff

would last maybe ten minutes. Then we'd be lying in the dirt, in the dark, trying to load magazines by the intermittent light of drifting flares, frantic to get the weapon back in operation before the next rush.

They were short of magazines because the supply officer who hadn't wanted to provide gas to come out here had sold them. The only possible buyer was the enemy.

I was beginning to understand how this war worked. The Khmer Rouge didn't get supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It was much easier and cheaper for the Chinese to send them money to buy stuff from the Cambodians. The United States was, in effect, supplying both sides. The Khmer Rouge let the Cambodians hold the cities while they consolidated their hold on the countryside.

When we made the rounds of the defensive perimeter that night with the battalion commander Y Bun Sur Paul, Captain America pointed out a number of minor flaws, poor fields of fire, things like that. He had never worked as an adviser, and he did a less-than-tactful job of explaining the deficiencies to Y Bun, which is not the best way to advise. You almost have to apologize for suggesting you might know something your counterpart doesn't. Then you explain that, although you have learned far more from him than you could possibly teach, there is this one little thing that he might find helpful.

After a supper of rice, an indecipherable goulash and Howdy Cola without ice, Captain America and I sat on the verandah of the headquarters enjoying the sunset and the evening breeze.

Y Bun and Kpa Doh came up to tell us, as tactfully as possible, that we would have to return to Phnom Penh the next day. Y Bun said that if we got waxed and there was a diploma-

tic flap over it, he would be in serious trouble, which was true. He also said that the local people hated Americans so much because of the bombing that our presence was threatening the rapport he was trying to build with the people of the district.

The Cambodian battalion which had preceded them had lost no opportunity to alienate the population. He figured that 85 per cent of them were with the Khmer Rouge. During the short time he'd been here, he'd been winning them back by being nice and having his soldiers be polite and helpful.

All this was part of the Civil Affairs/Psychological Operations program I had laid out for him when I had first visited the battalion. I was pleased that he'd listened and that my advice was working.

But I should have realized they didn't need a junior von Clausewitz to tell them how to run raids and ambushes in their own jungle after ten years of war. We had already done that job.

Captain America thought I was nuts. I was on an *adventure*, in Cambodia, for Chrissakes, and what did I want anyway? Maybe he was right.

Our only hope for a little action would be if the Khmer Rouge hit the camp that night. Captain America went to sleep out on the perimeter.

I lay down in the headquarters with my boots on and my rifle beside me. I couldn't sleep, though. After a while I got up and went outside to listen to the troopers and their wives talking in their coughing language, laughing in the cool evening air, which was scented with tropical blossoms and woodsmoke. The kids were asleep by then. The soldiers kept their families dug in behind the perimeter.

I had missed those sounds and smells and would miss them again.

Around 0430 Captain America saw something poking around the perimeter and

Continued on page 111

Cambodian armored personnel carrier driver in a tense moment. Photo: Al Rockoff

FLIGHT OF THE LADY ELLEN

Getting to the War Can Be Half the Battle

Text & Photos by Jim Graves

PRESIDENT Ronald Reagan once emphasized the danger inherent in the establishment of a communist regime in Managua by remarking that Nicaragua is only a two-day drive from the American border.

Well, it may take only two days for Danny Ortega and his friends to reach the Rio Grande by car, but if you're traveling north-south in a helicopter destined for delivery to the contras, it takes weeks, not days. And you had better be a first-class schemer.

The difference is made by what are politely referred to as "civil servants," and the ones on the gringo side of the creek are the bigger problem.

In early 1985 Ellen Garwood (the daughter of the man who created the Marshall Plan, which saved central Europe from communism following WWII) decided to follow up on her father's work by contributing funds to buy a helicopter for Nicaragua's freedom fighters.

The 25-year-old UH-1B was rebuilt with funds provided by other American conservatives and dubbed the *Lady Ellen*. It was to be used for medevac. Late in the

afternoon of 17 April 1985 it touched down at McAllen, Texas. The intention was to set out on the two-day journey the next day.

But as it settled down on the pad in front of the McAllen civil aviation terminal, the *Lady Ellen's* reception party and trouble came rushing out.

Leading the pack was Rocky Nesom, an old friend of Ed Dearborn, our aircraft's commander. Nesom's assignment was to act as a ground expeditor during our intended overnight stay in McAllen.

That he was at the airport waiting, when we were hours overdue and had been out of contact since the previous night, was encouraging. That officialdom was swiftly closing on his tail was not.

Our reception party came to a halt while Dearborn and Mike Timpani, our copilot and navigator, went through the process of powering down the Huey. Turbines, unlike piston engines, have to cool off before they can be safely shut down.

As soon as Mike hit the master switch, Rocky charged up to Ed's side window and said, "He's customs and he's trouble."

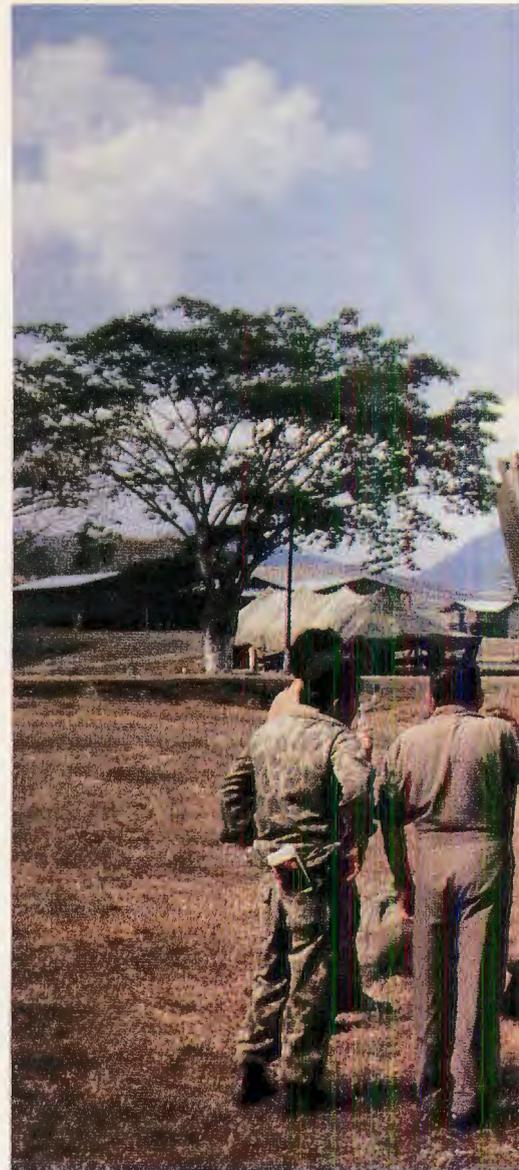
Seconds later, trouble, in the form of Air

Operations Agent Tom J. DeMichele, arrived with a full set of "Who are you?" "Where are you going?" "Where are your papers?" questions. We couldn't help noticing he was packing a .45 automatic, as were his two acolytes, who casually positioned themselves a couple dozen yards behind him on either side of the *Lady Ellen*.

Ed went out the left door and started supplying answers. I went out the right rear door, circled around and squeezed off a few photos.

I got a nice shot of DeMichele trying his best "Dirty Harry" routine on Ed, who outstood him and outweighed him a bunch and who doesn't react well to harassment, about the time DeMichele noticed me. "Who are you? Put that camera down." "I'm Jim Graves, *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*," I said, clicking off a couple more shots, "Who are you?"

DeMichele's scowl clearly indicated he wasn't ready for that, nor was he any happier when I asked for his credentials. He flashed his badge, dropped the subject of photos and went back to grilling Ed. Clearly he had trouble believing: 1) we were a crew





of pilot, copilot/navigator and Spanish speaker/journalist; 2) the Huey was civilianized and legal; 3) we had all the papers; and 4) we were on our way to Central America.

DeMichele seemed convinced we were up to no good and dangerous no-good at that — why else the artillery? We learned later that an informant — we suspect the field operator near Beaumont, Texas, where we had refueled earlier in the day — had called in and told DeMichele that three suspicious types in a military chopper with long-range tanks were headed his way.

I had trouble believing he was so out of touch that he hadn't been notified by customs in Florida, which had investigated the *Lady Ellen* while it was being rebuilt the previous fall.

For that matter, Florida customs agents were also aware when the helicopter left Florida just four days earlier en route to New Orleans. In New Orleans we had "hidden out" for three days on the civilian helicopter pad about 200 yards from the main runway at New Orleans International. If customs, which closely watches the contra representative in New Orleans, had not

Lady Ellen on the ground in Aguacate, Honduras, is examined by contra troops. The chopper, which was "civilianized" (guns and munitions removed) before leaving the United States, is named after Ellen Garwood, daughter of the man who created the Marshall Plan, who contributed the funds with which it was purchased.

noticed the *Lady Ellen*, then it was clear that our olive-drab base and red-cross-on-white-field camouflage was working wonders.

It was even possible DeMichele was telling the truth when he claimed not to have seen any of the photos in *Time*, *Newsweek* or his local newspaper the week the *Lady Ellen* was sitting in front of the Capitol in Washington as a static display while the contra aid vote was going on.

Finally, Ed, by now much exasperated, asked: "Why are you giving us such a hard time?" When DeMichele mumbled something about our long-range tanks and dope, Ed, who abhors dopers, went to Pissed Level 2.

Backing away from the tongue lashing he had triggered, DeMichele reached for a

compromise, the main elements of which were that: 1) I quit taking photos and give him the ones I had taken and 2) we agree to stay in McAllen while he checked with Washington. In return, 3) he would not seize and lock up the *Lady Ellen*. Ed wanted to avoid that because he knew it would be a fight to get it released again. Since we had planned all along to stay overnight in McAllen, we agreed to that, but I told DeMichele I was keeping the photographs I had taken. Sensing that DeMichele and I were about to lock up over the film, Ed sent me off to telephone a hotel.

While making the call from a telephone just outside the terminal, I slipped on a long-range telephoto and aimed my autofocus Maximum 9000 camera back toward DeMichele and Ed for a few more photos.

That finished, I returned to the helicopter at the same time a local TV news crew showed up. Ed went to Pissed Level 1. He was operating under the theory that the *Lady Ellen* had received enough publicity and more in McAllen might alert Mexican authorities just across the river in Reynosa. Furthermore, Ed was concerned about how

the civilian airline that currently employed him would react if they found out he was driving choppers to Central America.

Ed, like me, thought DeMichele had tipped off the TV people. DeMichele denied he was behind their appearance — but then offered to keep the TV crew away from the *Lady Ellen* if Ed would get me to give up the film.

I knew it was a mistake, but from Ed's handdog expression I could tell he was going to call in a chip. I pulled Ed aside and told him that the guy was a twit and was going to cause us as much trouble as he could no matter what we did. Both of us knew if he had any legal grounds at all we would have already been in handcuffs. I also knew that there was no way he was

going to try to force me to hand over the film with the TV news crew in sight.

Ed said "Yeah, I know, but," and with that my film went to DeMichele and he told the TV crew to take off.

Shortly thereafter, we parted company, each going off to call his respective power sources back in Washington.

Three hours later Ed was still trying to

THE KAPLAN CAPER

The evening rain and a movie entitled "The Altar of Blood" had drawn most of the 136 guards on duty at Santa Marta Acatitla inside when a Bell 47G helicopter clattered into the courtyard of the maximum security prison near Mexico City.

Since it was painted in the same blue and white pattern used on the helicopter of the Mexican Attorney General, the guards saluted as two prisoners sprinted out of a hiding place and jumped aboard. Not a shot was fired as it cleared the prison walls.

About an hour later, pilot Roger Hershner landed the Bell near the village of Venta Prieta, where the two men — Joel David Kaplan, 42, in jail for murder, and Carlos Antonio Conteras Castro, 36, a forger and counterfeiter — transferred to a waiting Cessna piloted by Victor Stadter.

Stadter flew north to La Pesca, near the Texas border, where Conteras transferred to another light plane and headed south for Guatemala. Stadter flew Kaplan to Brownsville, Texas. There the two men reported in to U.S. Immigration authorities under their real names and that led to a thorough search by customs since Stadter had a criminal record. When nothing was found in the Cessna, Stadter and Kaplan flew off for California.

An astonishing jailbreak if there ever was one, but the escape of Kaplan on 19 August 1971 is just one more facet of a mystery stretching over 25 years.

The mystery began in 1961 when Joel Kaplan entered Mexico using a false British passport and established in Mexico City a business named the American Sucrose Company. Associated with him in the enterprise was one Luis M. Vidal, a native Puerto Rican but a New York resident.

Later in 1961, while Kaplan was in Spain, Vidal disappeared. Kaplan was charged by the Mexican authorities with Vidal's murder and was extradited back to Mexico to stand trial. Kaplan contended during his trial that Vidal — who he said was a drug smuggler and gunrunner — had actually faked his death to disappear. Kaplan also contended that the body which the Mexicans claimed was the mortal remains of Vidal was not Vidal. There were some dissimilarities. The corpse appeared to be that of a bald,

heavy man of about 80, with a straight nose and bad teeth. Vidal had dark and full hair, was in his 30s, with a flat nose and good teeth. The Mexicans never bothered to match fingerprints or dental X-rays, and Kaplan was convicted and sentenced to life in prison for murder in October 1961.

At the time, it was speculated that Kaplan was convicted in spite of the evidence because he was a millionaire, the son of a New Englander who made a substantial fortune in the molasses and sugar trade, with a one-third interest in the family foundation, or because he was, as he claimed, an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency. Either reason — greed or politics — would explain why the Mexicans decided to hang on to Kaplan.

Over the next nine years — while Kaplan's health deteriorated progressively in the tender care of the Mexican federal prison system — numerous attempts were made to either break Kaplan out of jail or to effect his release through bribery. At one point an American adventurer hired to spring him had offered \$120,000 for his release. Earlier in 1971 Kaplan even tried to get out by hiding in a laundry truck.

After going through hundreds of thousands of dollars, the person or persons behind the plots turned to Victor E. Stadter, himself just recently released from jail following a conviction for the sale of narcotics in New York.

Investigators learned that Stadter bought a Bell 47G for \$25,000 from the Natrona Services Company (uranium exploration) in Casper, Wyoming, and a Cessna from a company in Arizona.

On the day before the Bell dropped in unexpectedly, Kaplan was visited by his Mexican wife, Irma Vasquez Calderon de Kaplan. He was at the same time married to New York model Bonnie Sharie but had married the Mexican woman in order to qualify for visitors. With Calderon that day was one Harvey Orville Doyle, who spoke privately with Kaplan during the visit, presumably going over the final escape plans.

Presumably someone must also have talked quietly with the prison authorities as for the first time in two years it was decided that a movie would be shown on 19 August.

The first press reports following the escape said that the FBI was pursuing

Kaplan, who disappeared heading for California; that Calderon was under arrest and being questioned; that Doyle had disappeared but was being sought; that all 136 guards and the prison administrator were under arrest and being questioned; that the Mexicans were searching in Guatemala for Conteras; and that they were searching for the helicopter and its pilot, Hershner.

Subsequently it was learned that Hershner had crossed into Mexico legally at McAllen, Texas, and on his way back — after abandoning the helicopter near Matamoros and catching a ride on a milk truck — had legally reentered the United States and then disappeared.

Kaplan's Mexican attorney was claiming that there was nothing illegal about what had happened since, through a little quirk in Mexican law, it was not illegal to escape or aid an escape as long as violence was not used against Mexican guards or property. All of the principals — Hershner, Stadter, Kaplan — had entered the United States under their own names and with their own papers so there were no U.S. charges to face.

The only outstanding charge was Kaplan's original murder conviction. But shortly after the incident, the Mexican attorney general was dismissed and Mexico never asked the United States to extradite Kaplan.

It was also learned that Kaplan's sister, Judith Dowls, was the driving force behind the rescue and there was speculation about the possible role of legendary San Francisco attorney Melvin Belli, who had power of attorney over Kaplan's one-third share of the Kaplan trust fund.

J.M. Kaplan, Joel Kaplan's uncle, claimed no knowledge of the events. He stated his nephew had once claimed to have been a CIA agent and admitted that his J.M. Kaplan Fund had been used to channel \$1.3 million to a CIA front in Costa Rica, but said there was no connection between his nephew's possible status as a CIA agent and his actions on behalf of the CIA in the early 1960s. In congressional testimony in 1964, the use of the Kaplan Fund by the CIA was detailed.

Sounds like a wild movie adventure dreamed up in Hollywood? Hollywood did it: Charles Bronson starring in "Break Out." Watch it carefully.

locate Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, head of the United States Council for World Freedom (USCWF), who owned the helicopter and for whom Ed and Mike were working. DeMichele appeared to have had better luck locating his power sources; he had enough confidence anyway to order the *Lady Ellen* chained up.

It was while Mike and I were watching customs clamp the *Lady Ellen* in irons that I began to believe that customs was as far behind the information curve as they claimed. One of the agents kept asking, "Are you guys sure you can't give us a number to call in Washington that will enable us to let you fly out of here?"

I knew Ed wasn't working for the CIA, or on CIA-approved business, but since they obviously thought there might be a chance he was, and were a little scared of tromping on the spooks' bureaucratic toes, I thought maybe Ed would pull this off after all.

Ed was not doing anything illegal, but he was running the edge to move the *Lady Ellen* down.

The *Lady Ellen* was legally owned by the USCWF and had been civilianized (guns and munitions removed) by the U.S. government years ago, so presumably its owners should have been able to fly it anywhere they wanted to as long as they had a valid U.S. registration.

However, the USG had failed to do a perfect job of civilianizing the Huey when it was decommissioned. It still had the hard points, the reinforced mounts on the side from which you can hang machine guns or winches. In theory, if the craft has hard points you have to have an export permit from the State Department's Munitions Control Board to take it outside the United States. Ed argued that the hard points were needed for operating a winch for lifting out stretchers, but if their presence was the only hang-up, we'd saw them off. While a problem, Ed knew they could be welded back on.

Singlaub's USCWF held legal title to the Huey, and we did have a United States "N" number (civilian registration) issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). However, due to a paper mix-up at the FAA, the records showed that the "N" number which we had belonged to Bell Helicopter, and Ed didn't have the registration papers. The FAA admitted that it had lost Ed's first application for an "N" number, and while his second request was going through their paper mill, they had given him an "N" number to use and promised to send the final papers along later. Essentially, Ed had a legal license plate, but the pink slip was in the mail.

Customs also didn't like our auxiliary fuel system — three 55-gallon fuel drums lashed into the crew compartment with a pumping device enabling fuel transfer to the main tanks while in flight. The system was necessary because the Huey's main tanks held only 150 gallons, about enough for a one-and-a-half hour flight at 105 mph. Since fuel would be hard to come by in Mexico and Central America, we had to



ABOVE: Flight deck of the *Lady Ellen*. It should be a familiar sight to thousands of troops who rode into combat on UH-1s in Vietnam.

BELOW: The *Lady Ellen*'s jury-rigged auxiliary fuel system consists of three 55-gallon drums and a pump lashed down in the crew compartment. A glitch in the system briefly aborted our initial attempt to fly south, forcing us to return briefly to Reynosa on the Tex-Mex border.



have the extra range the auxiliary tanks gave us to get to Honduras.

These days customs always gets suspicious when they see long-range systems, but auxiliary tank systems like the *Lady Ellen*'s are fairly common for ferrying aircraft of all types.

While the technical problems and paperwork requirements were annoying, they were not the real reason Ed was having a problem getting clearance to fly the *Lady Ellen* out of the country. The real problems were bureaucratic and political, and back in Washington.

At the top of the list was bureaucratic caution (or tail-covering, as it's less kindly known). Mid-level bureaucrats were not anxious to stake their careers on allowing the chopper out. While thousands of UH-

1Bs have been exported in government-to-government deals and thousands of Bell 204s (the civilian equivalent of the UH-1B) have been sold abroad to private individuals, no one had ever delivered a decommissioned UH-1B to private individuals. Good bureaucratic practice is to never be the first to approve a first.

The second problem was political. Everyone knew that the *Lady Ellen* was going to the contras. Everyone agreed this was probably legal. But not everyone wanted the helicopter to go to the contras, and even those who did were a little nervous that once there it might be used improperly. For instance, if the contras used it as a gun sled instead of a medical evacuation bird, there could be a political backlash — anyone who helped pry the *Lady Ellen* out of customs' clutches could get stung.

Thus for ten days the *Lady Ellen*'s crew became prisoners in the McAllen Hilton. The routine was up early — Rocky still thinks he's an NCO in Special Forces and provides 0600 wake-ups — to get through on the phone to Washington (to find out who was on our side that morning) and to bed late (after finding out who was giving DeMichele another excuse to hold us up).

The questions were endless, redundant, circular and sometimes idiotic. "You don't like the auxiliary fuel system? We'll unhook it until we get across the Rio Grande." "Hard points hold winches and aux fuel tanks as well as machine guns. And what can be sawed off can be welded back on, so what's the purpose in sawing them off anyway?" "Does the *Lady Ellen* have a military engine or a civilian engine? The *Lady Ellen* has the same engine as the Bell 204, which has the same engine as the UH-1B."

Not surprisingly, the first one in Washington to weigh in was CIA Director William Casey. He said, truthfully, "They're not mine." But reportedly he added the thought that we should not be hindered. We also heard that Sen. Jesse Helms, a conservative from North Carolina, thought we shouldn't be harassed. This came as a surprise since neither he nor any of his staff were contacted by us or our supporters for assistance.

Eight days of telephone consultations and



arguments with various paper-pushers left Ed on the verge of conceding victory to the timid, when the problem of what to do with the *Lady Ellen* and its crew worked its way up to the Commissioner of Customs, Walter Von Rabb. He was emphatic in his opinion that there was no legal justification for preventing us from crossing into Mexico — and suddenly we were back in business.

We were in the process of rounding up all the miscellaneous gear needed for the trip through Mexico (pesos, bottled water, engine oil, etc.), but a last-minute round of panicked Rolodex rifling was set off when an anonymous bureaucrat bucked the problem from customs to State.

The final attempt to ground the *Lady Ellen* — based on the hard points — didn't fly well with Undersecretary of State for Latin American Affairs Elliott Abrams. He saw the loan of the *Lady Ellen* as a perfectly legitimate private-sector activity and the long delay in McAllen as bureaucratic nit-picking.

After signing a few papers the next day (relevant to the export permit granted by the Munitions Control Board), we gave the boys from customs a friendly parting gesture — we had a special flourish reserved in case DeMichele showed up, which he didn't — and headed south on the short flight across the Rio Grande to Reynosa.

The *Lady Ellen* drew a crowd of Mexican workers, soldiers and officials in Reynosa. We were expecting some difficulty with "papers" but those are usually quickly solved in Mexico with handouts, as in "Here's a crisp \$20 for you, and \$20 for you, and you." As the Spanish speaker I was also the designated briber and was supposed to "gong" everyone in a uniform or anyone with a badge.

But that was not the way it was going to work, explained the airport manager. We had reckoned without the "Kaplan" law. The regulation is named after an American named Joel Kaplan, who leaped aboard a helicopter in a Mexican prison courtyard in 1971 and flew off into freedom, ending prematurely his life sentence for murder at nine years. (See the accompanying "The Kaplan Caper.") Since that time, transiting Mexico by helicopter has required a written application to Mexico City at least two

ABOVE: Nothing quite compares with flying 150 feet off the deck in a chopper at 105 mph! This is flight as it ought to be.



ABOVE: Mission accomplished! *Lady Ellen* commander Ed Dearborn gives the thumbs-up sign over Honduras. A year later, the UH-1B was plucking contra casualties out of harm's way.

BELOW: Mike Timpani, *Lady Ellen* copilot and navigator. Timpani flew Bell 500M helicopters in the U.S. Army until 1984, including the liberation of Grenada.



weeks ahead of the proposed flight. The rule is not in the flight guide for Mexico.

To Ed this was unacceptable. The contras wanted the Huey as soon as possible due to the level of activity in Nicaragua, and no one was up for giving U.S. Customs another shot at the *Lady Ellen* while we went off to Mexico City to file more papers with more bureaucrats.

Ed went into action again. Pointing to the red crosses on the *Lady Ellen's* sides, he patiently explained that its mission was

strictly humanitarian, that we didn't even know anyone in jail in Mexico and that we would fly as strict a route as the Mexicans desired while crossing their country.

Ed could make a fortune speaking to feel-gooders about the plight of the poor refugees escaping from Nicaragua and the deplorable facilities for evacuating contras wounded from the clutches of the evil Sandinistas.

The speech was so effective that the Reynosa airport manager went to work on Mexico's erratic phone system trying to get through to someone high enough in Mexico's *Departamento de Gobernación* to verbally approve the *Lady Ellen's* transit. I gave him high marks for his dedication to doing the right thing, but being somewhat familiar with *Gobernación*, Mexico's phone system and the probability of locating anyone in a Mexico City office on Friday afternoon, I didn't rate his chances high.

We were on the verge of chucking it in for the day some hours later when, to my surprise, the airport manager announced he had gotten through and had obtained permission for us to over-fly Mexico. The state department counsel in northern Mexico had also encouraged the Mexican government to waive the requirement. After leaving his office we went down to "gong" the *Inmigración* and *Aduana* (customs) boys and arrange for refueling the *Lady Ellen*.

Having learned how to politely handle *mordida* (it means "the small bite" in Spanish, "a bribe" to gringos) while living in Mexico City, I counted heads, folded up bills, palmed them and passed them while shaking hands. A total waste of effort since they unfolded the bills and split up the take seconds after receiving it, and in full sight of everyone. It's a different way of doing business, but I couldn't help comparing the 10 days it took us to cut through the bureaucracy in McAllen with the four hours it took in Reynosa.

While Ed and I cleared up the official business, Mike hooked up the auxiliary system so we were able to take off for Tampico, originally intended as a refueling stop but now moved up to an overnight stop.

We were no more than 30 minutes out of Reynosa and in a buoyant mood, with nothing more than routine flying problems for the rest of the mission, when Ed tried the auxiliary fuel system. It didn't work.

We were faced with the choice of setting down in a field to check it out or turning back for Reynosa. Ed thought it could create problems with *Gobernación* if we landed anywhere except where they had people to keep an eye on us, so he elected to radio that we were aborting and turning back.

As we lined up for our approach into Reynosa, we saw there was a considerable reception committee — a fire truck, a panel truck with some soldiers and the airport manager in a jeep — waiting for us on the ground. Our apprehensions about the reception evaporated quickly when we learned they had become alarmed only because we had radioed we were turning back due to a

mechanical problem and because the *Lady Ellen* was throwing out a lot of black smoke on approach, which is a characteristic of the UH-1B and not indicative of any problem. The Mexican mechanics located our problem quickly, a simple vapor lock, but we couldn't lift out until the next day.

We were up and flying at 0830 the next day (the earliest they would let us take off) and headed south toward Tampico at over 105 mph at 200 to 800 feet. Our flight plan kept us in sight of the Gulf of Mexico most of the way. Along the way we spotted scores of clandestine airstrips. The strips, some just clean sections of the beach, others graded grass fields, are used primarily by Americans smuggling electronic equipment, whiskey or cigarettes into Mexico. Mexican import duties make those items prohibitively expensive and smuggling them lucrative. The *contrabandistas* bring the goods down from the U.S. border in single- or twin-engine aircraft at night. Flying heavy loads onto marginal fields lit by flare pots is a bit tricky, and we spotted a few planes that didn't make it.

At Tampico, Veracruz (where we over-
nighted) and Minatitlán, our refueling points, the *Lady Ellen* and its crew were objects of curiosity and questioning glances from the uninformed and some pointed questions from the informed. It was clear that *Gobernación* was keeping a close eye on the *Lady Ellen* as it moved down the line.

Minatitlán, our last refueling stop on the Caribbean coast, has a modern but little-used airport — built when the Mexicans went on a public works project building spree to burn off some petrodollars in the '70s. It sits at the head of the Tehuantepec pass, the only practical route for an old helicopter between Mexico's Caribbean and Pacific Coasts.

As we cautiously climbed up the Tehuantepec pass, which separates Oaxaca's range of the 16,000-foot Sierra Madre del Sur mountains from Chiapas' range, we saw fewer and fewer Indian huts and no roads at all below.

With a full load of fuel aboard (330 gallons), our flight attitude (nose hard down due to the combined weight of the fuel and three crewmen) made the increasingly turbulent conditions over the 4,000-foot ridges in the pass nerve-racking, especially for Mike, the navigator. He kept cautioning Ed to cut back on the air speed to prevent the Huey from going into a guaranteed fatal forward roll. As an acrophobic with 42 years in grade, I kept wondering just what possessed me to do silly things like this.

As the ground dropped away through 4,000 feet, revealing the remote Mexican mountain outback below — made famous in "Treasure of the Sierra Madre" — I couldn't help wondering whether we'd starve to death or get whacked by bandits if we had to touch down for an emergency and walk out.

It was, therefore, with considerable relief that we cleared the last big ridge line and sighted Tapachula, our next refueling spot



ABOVE: Contra birds at Aguacate. Shown are a C-47 cargo plane, two Maule STOL aircraft and an OV-2 Bronco.



ABOVE: Smuggling in Mexico isn't just dope; scores of clandestine airstrips serve light aircraft illegally spiriting gringo whiskey, cigarettes and electronic equipment into the country. The planes that didn't make it could be seen from the *Lady Ellen* as it made its way south.

BELOW: Maritime smugglers don't necessarily fare any better.



ABOVE: It isn't the aftermath of an air strike, but the smoke from the slash-and-burn agriculture practiced throughout Central America obscured visibility for hundreds of miles along the way, making the flight of the *Lady Ellen* far more hazardous than it otherwise would have been, particularly over mountains.

and check-out point for Mexico.

We had been warned by other Americans that clearing out of Mexico could be a bigger problem than going in. The small bite (bribe) was reportedly quite huge in Tapachula.

Therefore we were not surprised when the airport manager, a pistol-packing officer and a couple of rifle-toting soldiers rushed out to greet us. The officials spoke no English at all, so Ed didn't realize that my horrified expression had nothing to do with the size of the necessary bribe but instead with the fact that Mexico City officialdom had finally gone back into character and had failed to let Tapachula know that we had been cleared. Even our note from the airport manager in Reynosa did no good at all. They had probably never seen his signature after all, and the document, which didn't have the wax stamps and ribbons that Hispanic officials dearly love, didn't look all that official. It was pretty obvious that these guys were not going to allow another "Kaplan" caper to go down in their jurisdiction.

My limited Spanish was severely taxed trying to explain why three gringos had dropped out of the sky into Tapachula in a green military helicopter. But finally the officer grinned and said, "Guerrillas, si?" "Si, si," I responded. "Es para los guerrillas en Nicaragua. Es para asistencia los refugiados. No es para la ataque."

Truly awful Spanish, but it was clear enough to convince the officer that we weren't going south with any Mexican prisoners and that, while the helicopter was going to the contras (the Mexicans see them, quite correctly, as guerrilla fighters, not terrorists), it was for humanitarian purposes. Nonetheless, while we were refueling, the officer looked through the baggage, presumably in search of something that went bang. Then, to my surprise, he signed off on the exit papers without even hinting that a bribe was required.

The flight plan Ed had chosen involved a nonstop flight over Guatemala to avoid any possible problems with its government over allowing a contra helicopter to transit. For that reason (and to avoid the guerrilla country of northwestern Guatemala), Ed had decided to fly southeast out of Tapachula until

Continued on page 100

FIGHTING WITH FOLDERS

A Practical Guide to Lockback Combat

Text & Photos by Ernie Franco and Lynn Thompson

THOUGH a great deal has been written about knives in the pages of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine*, little has been said concerning the most commonly carried knife, the lockback folder.

At the 1985 SOF Convention, virtually all of the participants in the knife combat seminar showed up carrying folding lockbacks instead of vastly superior fixed-blade knives. When we asked them about their choice of knives, many were not familiar with the lockbacks' strengths or weaknesses, nor did they know how to use them effectively in a self-defense situation.

The overwhelming advantage to carrying a folding knife can be summed up in one word — convenience. Like pocket pistols, folders are small, flat, lightweight and a cinch to hide and carry.

To open the blade one-handed, pinch it between thumb and index finger while pushing handle away from blade with middle finger. Once you've got the blade partially opened, snap wrist downward, then up.



The largest disadvantage is the folding lockback's inherent mechanical weakness. A lockback is dependent on three key components to hold it open: the pivot pin, lock mechanism and back spring. Any one, or all three, of these parts can be overcome or broken under the strain of combat.

For instance, a sudden sideways twist of your blade when embedded in a target can easily snap the blade at pivot pin/bolster junction. Or a forceful blow to the back of the blade can overcome the spring, allowing the blade to fold up on your fingers. Even the point can cause the blade to collapse when it encounters heavy resistance like bone, metal or plastic.

Since all three of these parts can break or fail at any time, a strong case can be made for concentrating on slashing and cutting techniques and saving heavy thrusting moves for appropriate battle blades.

When using a folder, your first task for self-defense is to get it into action fast. The way you carry your knife will have a big impact on this.

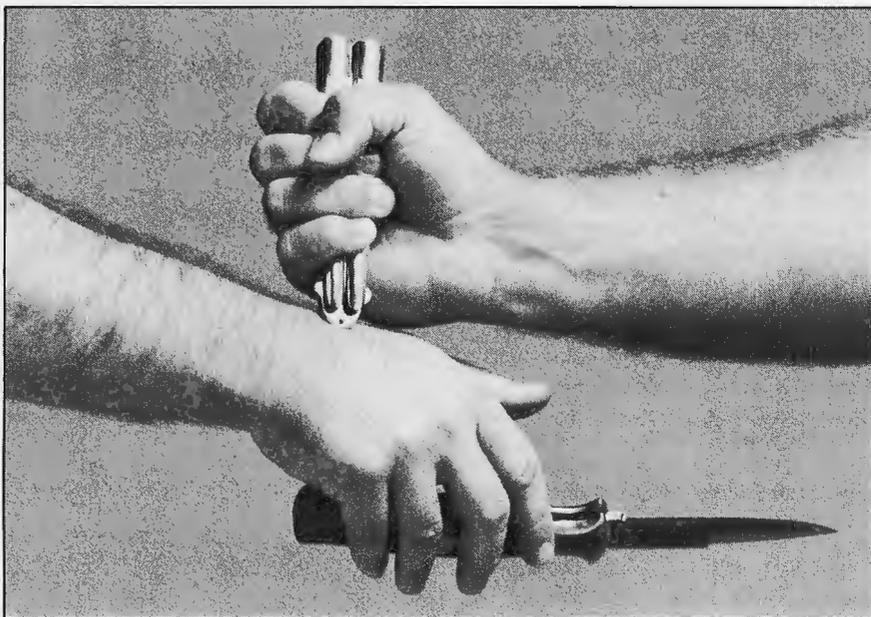
The pocket carry is probably the most con-

venient for short trips and outings. However, it has one major drawback — it's dangerously slow to put into action. One way to remedy this is to tie a lanyard cord to the butt of your knife and leave it outside the pocket. In this way you can draw your knife just by pulling on the cord. If you don't prefer this method of carry, you should at least tuck your knife into an accessible pocket and refrain from piling junk on top of it.

Carrying your knife in a belt pouch is the most practical method for all-day wear, as it supports the weight of the knife easily and gives you optimum accessibility. The preferred method of carrying knives on a belt is with the pouch upside down. That way all you need do is open the pouch and the knife falls into your hand.

Due to lack of time and the panic factor, you may be unable to open your knife and put it into action before your assailant be-

Don't have time to open your folder? Grab the closed knife in the middle and use the ends to strike with.



gins bearing down. If this is the case, you'll have to know how to hit with your knife closed. One of the ways often touted is to strike with your fist and use the closed mass of your knife as a filler to take up dead airspace in the fist. The idea is to reinforce the closed fist, making it harder and more destructive. On the street this method is called a fist pack and a roll of nickels is often substituted for a knife. What we suggest instead is to use the ends of your knife to hit with as well as your fist. To make this work, grasp your knife in the middle so that a half inch or so of the bolsters projects from the top and bottom of the fist. Next, use these projecting tips like you would a hammer to strike blows capable of destroying major muscle groups and breaking bones. Some of the major target areas to keep in mind are: back of the hand, forearm, biceps, triceps, jaw, temple, behind the ear, kidneys, thigh, groin, ankle and top of the foot.

Hopefully time and circumstance will allow you the opportunity to open your blade. One of the ways to do this quickly is to practice one-handed openings. Some people like to thumb open the blade, while others prefer to pinch the blade between the thumb and index finger, then use their middle finger to push the handle away from the blade. As the handle moves away, they snap their wrist downward, causing that handle to fly backward and fully extend.

Some knives just won't open as easily as others, so you may find it easier to push the handle of the knife away from the blade and then use your side or leg to snap it fully open. Never use a one-handed opening if you are not 100% confident it will work. If there is the slightest doubt, take the time to use both hands because, if you drop your blade, it could cost you the fight.

Folding lockbacks like the Al Mar SERE and the Gerber FS11 are most useful when you can bring the blade to bear on your opponent.



BLADEMASTERS

Lynn Thompson is a martial artist who studies Western and Thai boxing along with Filipino Kali knife fighting. Thompson spent his early years in north-eastern Brazil before moving to the United States and establishing Cold Steel Inc., makers of the Tanto fighting knife.

Ernie Franco, close-combat adviser for Cold Steel Inc. and senior staff designer for Pacific Cutlery, teaches knife and defense seminars around the country. He wrote the book *The Defensive Edge* as well as numerous other knife and martial arts articles.

Once you've successfully opened your knife, try to break ground. Use your feet and move backward or sideways to gain distance. Even if it's not possible to move to a safe place, don't stand still. Keep moving and use your feet to maneuver to the side or, better yet, behind your adversary. If space is really tight, you may find it helpful to grab your adversary's elbow and push or twist him out of the way as you move to a better position. Never, never grab your enemy's blade hand as this is one way to get severely cut.

The goal in a self-defense situation is never to use unnecessary force or unlawfully maim or kill someone. Remember that your only justification for using maximum force is to prevent your antagonist from employing deadly force against you and to insure your escape.

When cutting and slashing, the main thing to remember is to hit, cut or slash anything your adversary throws at you. If he attempts a punch, slash his attacking arm. If he kicks, cut his ankle, calf or whatever other part you can reach. If he attempts to cut or stab, you respond by cutting the incoming arm. Never ever attempt to parry blade to blade — leave that to the movies. If you must parry, use your empty hand while

you simultaneously cut him.

If you can't pull this off, cut him immediately after your parry. Don't let him get away without landing a telling blow of your own. To maximize the effect of your short blade, it's important you use a knife with a thick, stiff blade that has been honed and buffed until it's shaving sharp. But a sharp knife isn't enough if you want to be able to do significant damage. You must have good technique.

The following strokes should be practiced continually and their effect tested regularly. One simple test is to cut large, double-thick cardboard boxes. If you have good form, a sharp knife and hit with your edge perfectly straight and square, you'll make deep cuts that would be devastating to flesh and bone.

Draw Cut — This cutting stroke is generally used with strongly curved knives and swords. To implement it, strike your target with your blade's edge near the handle. On contact, draw the butt of your knife back in toward your body in an arc that scribes a semicircle. This motion will pull the entire cutting edge of your blade through the target, lengthening the depth of your cut.

Snap Cut — The snap cut is a light, quick cutting stroke used primarily at medium to long range. To execute it, use your knife like a cat would use his paw on a mouse and snap it in a vertical, horizontal or diagonal line. Just prior to reaching your target, your wrist should turn quickly downward, driving the first quarter of your knife edge (near the tip) into the target. Once you've made the hit, retract your arm in the same line with equal speed. The primary

Continued on page 98

Cuts like these are easy once you get the draw cut technique down. The key is to resist the impulse to "chop" at the target. Instead, keep your cutting arm moving and pull the entire edge of your blade through the target.



JOHN Heath hurt. A hangover that qualified as a war crime churned his gut, and the hounds of hell howled inside his throbbing skull. An irresistible force kept trying to squeeze the pain out of his head through his eye sockets. The dirty brown goop in the coffee cup was brackish and lukewarm. One sip and Heath let the cup drop to the floor.

It was 0400 hours on a summer morning in 1979, and Heath sat with his hangover and the problem causing it in a hotel room near Schipol Airport, outside Amsterdam.

Or more precisely, the eight problems.

The eight 9mm Parabellum pistols, equipped with suppressors, lay in Heath's suitcase on the couch. Within several hours Heath was to smuggle the pistols aboard a KLM flight to Tripoli, Libya, for delivery to Libyan intelligence officers. Murder weapons, bound for Muammar Khadafi's killers.

Heath thought about the three-year sequence of events that had turned him into a key lieutenant of Edwin P. Wilson, the renegade arms dealer. In 1976 Heath was winding up twenty years in the United States Army. He was a master sergeant skilled in explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), "one of the best boom-boom men in the business," other soldiers called him. The tall, silver-haired sergeant was so good, in fact, that he frequently drew Secret Service details for presidential protection.

But troubled by a collapsing marriage and tired of defusing increasingly sophisticated bombs, Heath accepted Wilson's offer of a \$25,000-a-year job in "the national security interest" in Libya. The salary was almost double his military pay. Once in Libya, Heath found Wilson wanted him to teach terrorists to make bombs and sabotage devices — "cowards' weapons." Furthermore, the operation had nothing to do with the U.S. government or U.S. national security; its purpose was to make a fortune for Ed Wilson.

Trapped, Heath swallowed his conscience and became a key Wilson functionary, buying weapons and non-lethal military gear throughout Europe and shipping it to Libya. Much of the equipment — grenade launchers, bayonets, field radios and the like — could be purchased and shipped legally from complacent Belgium, whose arms laws are crafted to encourage foreign sales.

But 9mm Parabellums with suppressors — Heath knew these were intended for use by assassins. Weeks earlier Khadafi had publicly announced he intended to hunt down and murder Libyan dissidents abroad. Soon after the announcement, Wilson telephoned Heath in Belgium and ordered him to pick up the Parabellums from an intermediary. Just how Heath was to get them to Libya was Heath's problem.

Heath had sufficiently hardened his conscience so that working for a death merchant gave him little pause. What troubled him was how to smuggle the pistols through Dutch customs undetected; loyalty to Wilson did not extend to spending his golden

The Death Merchant

Ed Wilson's Bizarre Tradecraft

by Joseph C. Goulden

years in a Dutch jail.

Heath pushed aside the pain and analyzed the problem with soldierly precision. "You begin with the premise that checked luggage gets far less attention than carryon stuff. So the bottom line was that I'd put the stuff into a large bag."

He packed the suppressed pistols interspersed with an outsized portable radio, a tape recorder, his razor, his spare clothes and all the stray clutter he could find in the hotel room — ashtrays, empty soft-drink cans, even the disassembled coffee pot. As an afterthought he took the batteries from the portable radio and scattered them loose in the suitcase. "The more items they see on the X-ray machine — if they use it — the greater the confusion. The pistols become blurs."

Amateurs try to fool X-ray machines by putting aluminum foil over items they want to conceal. Heath knew this technique could cause problems. "You've got this big solid spot on the screen, and if they're a reliable operator, they're going to say, 'Let's take a look at that.'"

So much for the X-ray machines. "Regardless of how carefully you pack, you still run no better than a 50-50 chance of getting it through. I wanted to run the odds out just a

bit more in my favor so I wouldn't be cooling my happy butt in a Dutch jail."

Some days earlier Heath had heard Wilson's aviation mercenaries talk about a boisterous carnival held that very week in the hamlet of Bergen op Zoom, a few miles from the airport. Somber most of the year, the Dutch party seriously during carnival, with schnapps flowing until dawn. "This is one of those times I had a 'white flash' idea," Heath recollected. "Hell, I'd be so debauched by carnival that I couldn't find my ass with my elbow, or vice-versa."

Heath checked out of the hotel and stopped at the bar. There he bought a flask of Scotch. A shuttle bus ran from the hotel around a circle to the KLM terminal, several hundred yards distant. Heath ignored it. Carrying the 60-pound suitcase and walking as fast as he could — the better to break a sweat — Heath went cross-country, even climbing over a fence. He arrived at the terminal entrance panting, found a dark corner and took hyperventilating breaths as beads of sweat pooled on his face.

Heath opened the Scotch, took a mouthful and gargled. He threw back his head and spewed whiskey skyward, closing his eyes as it splattered down on his face. He repeated this process several times, then drained the bottle with a slug. He poked at his contact lenses until his eyes burned. He moved so he could see his reflection in the glass door. "I saw a messed-up drunk who shouldn't have been loose on the street, and I smelled as raunchy as I looked."

SPY WRITER

Joseph C. Goulden is a former newspaperman and the author of a number of books, including *Super-Lawyers and Korea*, *The Untold Story*. He has written extensively on spies and intelligence agencies. His book *The Death Merchant* details the career of renegade ex-CIA officer Edwin P. Wilson.

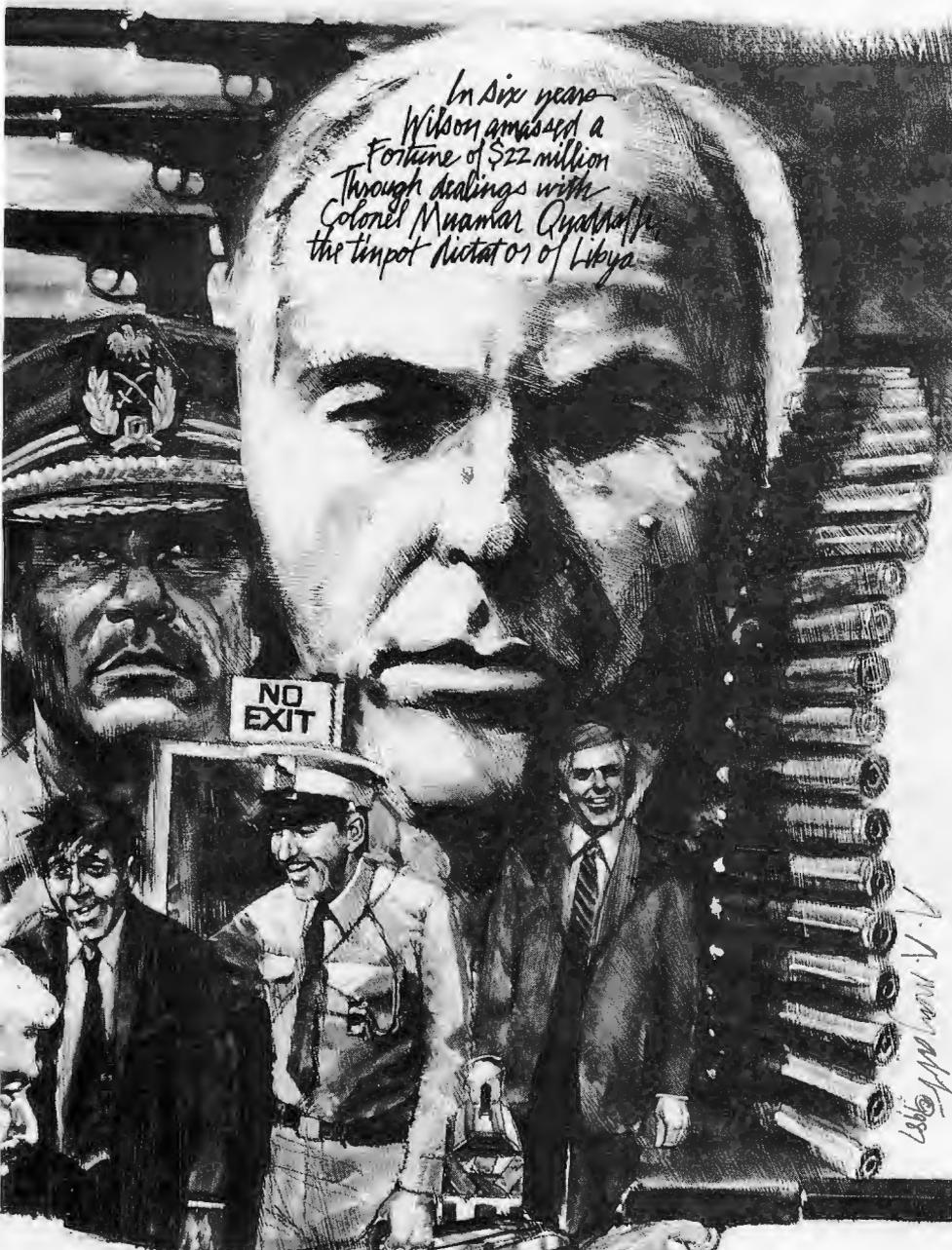


Illustration: Darrell D. Mayabb

Suitcase dangling loosely from his arm, Heath staggered to the KLM counter, a drunk and confused American in a jam. He murmured incoherently about how friends had kept him late at the carnival. He tried to check his wrist watch (he had stowed it in his jacket pocket) and he moaned, "Oh, God, I've lost my watch in Bergen op Zoom. What time is it? Can I make the plane?"

KLM responded with sympathy. An employee snatched up the heavy suitcase, took Heath by the elbow and hurried him aboard the waiting flight. No one looked at the bag. Heath slept until the flight arrived in Tripoli, handed the pistols over to Libyan officers at the airport, and was ordered to return to Europe on the next flight.

"I walked across from Incoming to Outgoing and boarded the same KLM plane. I found the same crew that had brought me

down. The steward asked why, and I said, 'I dunno — those damned Arabs, I got my visas, but they won't let me in.'"

"Oh, what a bother," the sympathetic steward said. "I'm not supposed to do this, but how about a drink on KLM?"

When I began to research *The Death Merchant*, the little I knew of the operational techniques of Edwin P. Wilson consisted of a large splash of media moonshine. With other Americans I read about the "skilled intelligence operatives" who used "the arcane tradecraft taught at America's most sensitive spy centers." Wilson came across as a super-spook who could outwit the CIA, KGB, MI-6 and Mossad over lunch.

In reality, I quickly discovered, the truth was something entirely different — but not a whit less interesting. An agent handler at

the CIA or any other intelligence service would not give Wilson good marks. His "tradecraft" consisted of a melange of guile, improvisation and common sense, and occasional bursts of pure dumb luck. The "organization" Wilson boasted he led never existed. He "commanded" a hodgepodge of mercenaries and free-booting businessmen out to cheat him and one another before being bilked themselves — truly a "gang that couldn't shoot straight."

Nonetheless, with smoke, mirrors and adroit salesmanship, Wilson, in six years of dealings with Colonel Muammar Khadafi, the tinpot (and perhaps insane) dictator of Libya, amassed a fortune of \$22 million. For Khadafi, that's petty cash, of course. He still rakes in \$12 billion a year in oil revenues with which to finance his international mischief.

How did Wilson do it? He violated every operations manual ever written. He never thought out a mission plan in advance. He would tell one of his mercenaries, in broad terms, what Libyan intelligence wanted — this many guns, this sort of guerrilla raid in Chad. How the task was to be pulled off was the problem of the guy who drew the assignment; you might say Wilson liked to delegate, but that would be overly kind.

Yet Wilson did recognize some truisms of intelligence and smuggling, and they served him amazingly well considering his seat-of-your-pants management style. Among them:

- The less complicated the scheme and the closer it tracks a legitimate transaction, the better its chances for success. Hence Wilson liked to involve "straight" but corrupted businessmen in his deals.

- White men who wear business suits, carry briefcases, speak English and bathe more or less regularly are less likely to be hassled by European airport guards than folks who don't. This is not racism; it is street reality.

- Bearded men get a second glance from security guards — and men carrying no-nos such as pistols on international flights do not need second glances. Wilson forbade anyone working for him to grow whiskers.

- Walk and act like you own the place, or at least have a first option to buy. To act suspicious is to invite suspicion.

- Don't be ashamed to act dumb. Ignorance is an acceptable excuse if the guard says you shouldn't leave an airport through a door marked NO EXIT. At the Madrid airport a Wilson hireling tried to sneak through a no-exit door so customs officials would not open his suitcase, which was crammed with sensitive electronics equipment. The guard who stopped him was so touched by the man's fawning apology that he actually carried the heavy suitcase part of the way to the proper exit — and handed it over unopened.

- And, finally, if a situation can be salvaged only by peculiar conduct, misbehave to the extreme. Act so wall-banging, hooting-and-yelling, girls'-butt-pinching crazy that you will be taken for the village idiot on leave. The last thing anyone expects a vil-

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lage idiot to be engaged in is smuggling evil items into adjoining villages. Which is exactly what saved John Heath in 1979.

Another pistol-smuggling assignment went to Reginald Slocombe, Wilson's shipping manager that same summer. The Canadian-born Slocombe, known to colleagues as "The Ice Man," was prototypical of the man who can go unnoticed in any crowd—slightly built, with direct but non-challenging eyes; neither tall nor short; always dressed in muted grays and browns.

Libyan intelligence had given Wilson a tentative contract for 500 pistols, but with conditions. The guns had to be "clean," that is, obtained outside normal commercial channels; and they had to be of American manufacture. As one Wilson aide put it, "The Libs liked to use American guns in their murders; this was their way of rubbing Uncle Sam's nose in their own dirt." To prove he could fulfill the contract, Wilson had to supply half a dozen specimen pistols. Wilson's troops got their marching orders.

A Wilson employee, retired Special Forces sergeant Wally Klink, bought the pistols from volunteer firemen around Fort Bragg, and took them to Virginia, where he turned them over to Slocombe.

Slocombe had specific ideas on how to smuggle them out of the United States and into the hands of Libyan agents. He drove to the Nichols Hardware Store in rural Purcellville, Virginia, a few miles from his own farm, and bought a metal toolbox a foot long and six inches high and wide.

"I took it home, took the handguns, wrapped them in sponge rubber, got some old tools, got some pieces of pipe, wrapped them all in sponge rubber, put some cardboard in there, put all that in the toolbox, put it in my strapping machine and put some metal straps around it."

Slocombe now had a packed and sealed toolbox; nonetheless, "I was taking quite a chance . . . going through a couple sets of customs."

But he felt he could pass casual inspection. "If they thought I had tools, and they shook them, they would sound like tools," he said. "They weighed a lot, they felt like tools. And if they X-rayed them, they would probably show up as tools."

Slocombe had a story ready should he be asked why he was taking tools to Europe. He owned a shipping firm based in Houston, and he carried ID with a Texas address. He would be one of the countless hundreds of Texans going through Holland en route to the North Sea oil fields. (He did not have to use the story.)

Slocombe flew from Washington's Dulles Airport (where outgoing personally checked luggage gets only a cursory look) to Heathrow (where in-transit personal baggage is put in a storage area without inspection). A commuter flight took him and the still-sealed box of guns to Rotterdam. There, another Wilson aide, former U.S. Army Lieutenant Peter Goulding, met him

Continued on page 92

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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. SOF is interested in what its readers think about the subjects of the articles in the June 1987 issue and how well the readers feel the authors handled those subjects.

A) How interesting did you find the subject matter? Circle the number under the appropriate heading.

Title	Very Interesting	Somewhat Interesting	Not Interesting
SOF Convention 1986.....	1	2	3
Hungarian High Power.....	1	2	3
Mercs in Surinam.....	1	2	3
Private Rescue Attempts.....	1	2	3
Zulu High Tide.....	1	2	3
Soldiers of Misfortune — Part 3.....	1	2	3
Army Black Hawks in Bolivia.....	1	2	3
Probing Peshawar.....	1	2	3
Assignment Cambodia.....	1	2	3
Flight of the <i>Lady Ellen</i>	1	2	3
Fighting With Folders.....	1	2	3
The Death Merchant.....	1	2	3

FIRST FOLD → DOWN

B) How do you rate the quality of the features (how well did the author handle his article)? Circle the number under the appropriate heading.

Title	Excellent	Good	Poor
SOF Convention 1986.....	1	2	3
Hungarian High Power.....	1	2	3
Mercs in Surinam.....	1	2	3
Private Rescue Attempts.....	1	2	3
Zulu High Tide.....	1	2	3
Soldiers of Misfortune — Part 3.....	1	2	3
Army Black Hawks in Bolivia.....	1	2	3
Probing Peshawar.....	1	2	3
Assignment Cambodia.....	1	2	3
Flight of the <i>Lady Ellen</i>	1	2	3
Fighting With Folders.....	1	2	3
The Death Merchant.....	1	2	3

SECOND FOLD → UP

3. 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"/> Other Weapons (Tanks, Planes, Artillery) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elite Units | <input type="checkbox"/> Personality Features |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical (not including Vietnam) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pistols |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How Tos | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Affairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knives | <input type="checkbox"/> Rifles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement | <input type="checkbox"/> Test and Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercenary/Soldier of Fortune | <input type="checkbox"/> Terrorism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military Affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam War |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movies | |

B) What is your definition of Military Affairs? _____

C) Of the above topics, which would you eliminate and why? _____

4. If you were going to assign a writer to do an article on weapons other than knives, pistols or rifles, what would you have him write about? _____

5. Do you want to read articles about SOF staff projects:

- Training Teams
- Parachute Jumps
- Freedom Fighter Assistance

Place an X in the space provided next to those subjects you want to read about.

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE



6. 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"

7. Do you think any of the major articles in this issue are too long? _____

8. A) Was this issue Excellent ___ Average ___ or Poor ___.

B) Why? _____

9. 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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in a rental car. They headed for Bonn.

Once en route, Slocombe took the pistols from the tool box and hid them beneath the seat, "on the chance now that I might be stopped at the border and asked to open my luggage." The border guards did not challenge the clean-cut Americans; they drove on into Germany.

In Bonn, Slocombe followed Wilson's orders and met a Libyan intelligence officer at the railroad station and gave him the pistols. He then telephoned Wilson in Tripoli and told him, "The package has been delivered."

A year later a Libyan gunman shot down a Libyan defector on a Bonn street. A brave German passerby grabbed the murderer and held him for police. His pistol was one of the Wilson Smith & Wessons that Slocombe had smuggled from Virginia.

Given his background in legitimate shipping, Slocombe usually preferred less risky operations. The ideal situation, in his estimation, was one where he could disguise a Wilson munitions shipment as commercial cargo. Such was the case with the most deadly single consignment Wilson supplied to Khadafi — forty thousand pounds of C-4, *plastique*, for Libyan terrorists.

The scheme depended on the corrupt cooperation of Jerome S. Brower, a respected California explosives broker who

had served as president of the Society of Explosives Engineers. Acting for Wilson, Brower bought the C-4 through normal channels and had it trucked to his bunkers in Fontana. C-4 may be sold abroad only under strict federal licensing; Brower knew he stood no chance of getting a permit to ship it to Libya. So he flew to Houston, where he and Slocombe looked for a way to sneak 20 tons of explosives out of the country.

During a stroll around Slocombe's shipping warehouse at Houston International Airport, Brower saw a number of drums of oil-field drilling mud, a compound used to cool drilling bits. "I've got the solution," he told Slocombe. He pulled the label off one of the drums and returned to California and had an unwitting printer run off a thousand or so copies. Then he bought drums of the type used to ship the mud.

The C-4 had come packed in plastic bags inside fiberboard cartons. Brower dared not use his regular employees to repack the C-4 into the drums; someone might talk out-of-turn to one of the federal explosives inspectors who came around occasionally.

No problem. An active Mason, Brower phoned a friend who ran the local chapter of DeMolay, the Masonic youth organization. "I've got a weekend deal for your kids if they'd like to make fifty bucks or so," he said.

So teenage boys spent the weekend removing the *plastique* from the original containers and repacking it into drums. (To

Brower's credit, C-4 is inert, so the lads ran no risk.) Now disguised as shipping mud, the C-4 was trucked to Houston and flown out on a chartered freight plane, ostensibly bound for Portugal. Customs officials did nothing more than scan the bogus shipping manifest, for they knew Slocombe as a legitimate freight forwarder who frequently shipped drilling mud by air.

The plane touched down in Portugal to take on fuel, then flew on to Libya — where the *plastique* was handed over to Libyan terrorists.

With a cunning born of necessity, Wilson and his associates constantly looked for loopholes in airport security procedures as they moved around Europe. "Security" is a loose word. Regardless of the stringency of *stated* procedures, in practice they can be something else entirely. Officers become bored with humdrum routine. When crowds of noisy people press in on them, jabbering complaints in odd-cadenced languages, officers are more concerned with clearing the jam than following the book. Guards take coffee breaks and go to the john and ogle pretty girls. They are human.

Wilson needed all his accumulated knowledge of security procedures — real and theoretical — in 1980 during an emergency flight from Malta to Great Britain. After his indictment on arms smuggling charges in 1979, Wilson had stayed close to Libya, knowing he faced arrest and extradi-

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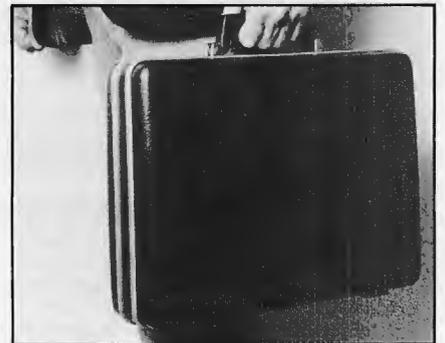
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tion if caught in a country with which the United States had diplomatic relations. Because of his work with the Palestine Liberation Organization, however, Wilson considered Malta a safe haven, and he even considered moving there to escape abysmal Tripoli. He traveled to the island several times.

Then, in 1980, a slip-up. E. Lawrence Barcella, a U.S. attorney in Washington, had hunted Wilson with the tenacity of Captain Ahab's pursuit of the white whale. Barcella learned Wilson was in Malta, and applied enough diplomatic pressure to have him arrested. Wilson quickly bought his freedom with a \$29,000 bribe, but with the proviso that he leave Malta on the next flight, which, unfortunately for Wilson, was for Heathrow Airport outside London, where he faced certain arrest if detected.

Wilson had no choice, so he flew into Heathrow at the worst possible time — the early morning hours, when passenger traffic is sparse and immigration officers have ample time to scan their "watch lists" of suspect persons.

Wilson, however, knew a way to beat the Heathrow system.

It was a simple tactic he and employees had used countless times. An hour out of London, the stewardess distributed landing cards for passengers to fill out. Under "destination" Wilson wrote "In Transit," and listed an early-morning connecting flight to Holland.

Wilson knew an in-transit passenger at Heathrow was not required to go through immigration, although he would have to pass a customs checkpoint. The customs official could either let the person walk through unquestioned or hold him up while he checked the watch list. In this instance, he waved Wilson through. As explained by Alexander W. Raffio, a long-time Wilson associate, "Wilson is wearing a business suit; he looks OK. So he is lucky, and the Brit doesn't check the book. It's Russian roulette. Three times, maybe, of ten he checks the book. The best time is in the middle of the morning when Heathrow is running at 120 percent capacity and people are lined up at the booths 20, 30 deep. Wilson was lucky. But he made it."

Wilson walked on through the terminal with the confidence of a man with nothing to hide. Technically, he should have been challenged when he left the in-transit lounge. No one did so. If he had been questioned, he had a ready explanation: "I have a couple of hours to kill, and I'm going over to Terminal Two. I like the cafe there better."

Wilson caught a cab to Piccadilly Circus and called an employee. "Go to the Portman Hotel and get the largest suite they have," he told her. "I'll join you." Wilson realized that police would not look for a fugitive in one of London's most lavish hotels.

Ten days later he sneaked back into Libya

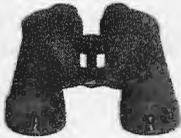
by posing as a flight engineer on a private plane.

Other frontiers proved equally porous for Wilson and his associates. Alex Raffio, for instance, routinely needed a discreet means of entering the United States. He had not paid thousands of dollars in child support and alimony, and a New York court had issued a warrant for his arrest.

"Every time I had to come to the States," Raffio said, "I'd book a flight to Montreal. When I hit the terminal I'd walk around the car agencies until I found an auto with New York plates. That's the car I'd rent." Raffio would then load the car with clutter suggesting a hurried two-day business trip — a suitcase and dirty clothes on the back seat, a road map and business papers on the dashboard, a crumpled fast-food carton on the floorboard. He would time his driving so that he crossed the border during the morning or afternoon rush. "I'd wave my New York driver's license at the guy, he'd wave back. Never, in dozens of trips, did I have to do anything else."

Raffio also found a way to enter Great Britain without going through passport control. On flights from Canada back to Europe, he bought a ticket from Shannon Airport, in Ireland, listing that country as his final destination. The Irish pay no attention to visiting Americans, and do not use the British watch list. Once in Shannon, Raffio would retrieve his luggage and buy a ticket to London on an Aer Lingus flight.

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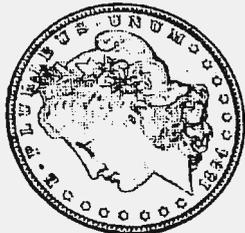
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Shannon-London flights are considered "domestic" by the British, so there is no passport check.

Passengers are required to show identification such as a driver's license. Since Raffio resided in London, he carried a British license, and he could rally enough of a British accent to pass as a local.

A former Wilson associate who begs anonymity tells of an embarrassing but apparently can't-miss means of getting through a customs line without inspection. He used it only once, when bringing pistols into Orly airport outside Paris. "The customs people seemed to be doing tighter checks than usual and I was afraid they'd make me open up. So I went into this dance as if I was about to make a mess in my pants. 'Stomach,' I said. 'Very bad stomach. I'm having an attack of diarrhea, and all the bathrooms on this side are full. Please, let me through in a hurry.'

"I did another dance step as if I was about to drop a load right on the floor at his booth. He banged my suitcase with the stamps and gestured toward a rest room down the hallway. I went toward it bent over like a crab.

"What would I have done had he not let me through? Well, I'd made a bluff, and I suppose I'd had to call it. Crapping your pants might be unpleasant, but I'll bet it beats hell out of a French jail." ✂

LOCKBACK COMBAT

Continued from page 85

purpose of this stroke is to allow its user to land damaging blows with minimal commitment of body weight.

Vertical Whip — Skilled knife fighters will use the vertical whip like a boxer, to create openings, fend off attacks and weaken the will and physical strength of the opponent. It can be used when moving forward or to the rear and from side to side with little body commitment. The arc of your blow should be elliptical and travel from a high position to a low position where it returns rapidly to the body. To put this into action, try snapping the edge of your blade forward, chin high with a back-handed motion. Just before contact with your target, pull your knife hand downward suddenly while simultaneously withdrawing your entire knife arm back close to your body. The combination of the above two movements "whips" the edge of your blade through the target very quickly and efficiently, leaving you perfectly positioned for a follow-up strike.

Since our subject is self-defense, we will dispense with committed full-body thrusts as they are intended only for termination and are not practical for use with most folders. Instead, we will concentrate on the defensive use of the speed jab with the tip.

The speed jab is used much like a snap

cut. The object is to sink the point of your blade into the target with great speed and no body commitment, which would slow your recovery from the blow. To execute a speed jab, it's important you keep your knife arm totally relaxed because even the slightest bit of stiffness will slow you down. Next, concentrate on your point arc — think HIT.

Don't ever telegraph your intentions by drawing back your knife arm or dipping the shoulder or adjusting your feet. Hit or jab from whatever position you find yourself and concentrate only on getting the tip, not the rest of the blade, to pierce the target. Immediately upon contact, withdraw your arm with identical speed. Speed is your ally in avoiding counter cuts, so jabbing attacks should be well set up and used judiciously.

Since every altercation involving deadly force differs, let's concentrate on the one strategy most consistent with our objective of legitimate self-defense — the "cut him and run" maneuver. To insure your safety, use distance whenever possible as an ally. Move your body and its vital organs just beyond the reach of your antagonist's weapon hand. As your opponent attacks, use the appropriate cut or jab to cut him. This is where your cutting practice will pay off, because a strong deep cut will disable or disarm your enemy and generally give you the opportunity to run to safety. Remember, don't hesitate a moment before attempting to escape, just cut him and run.

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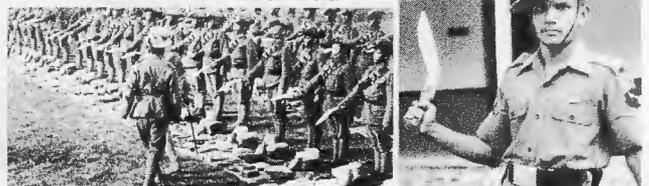
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possible moment so you can lead your family to safety. Often, the local citizen is the last to know. If this concerns you, then you need **SURVIVOR**. After all, it may be your only alternative to not knowing.

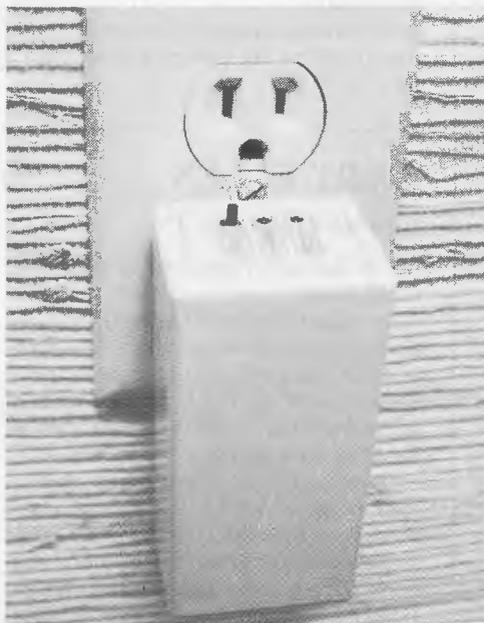
Possible Sources of Radioactive Contamination

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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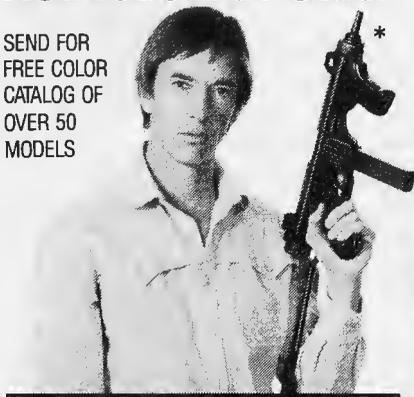
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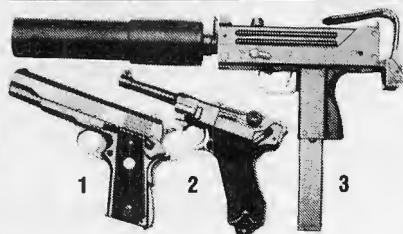


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LADY ELLEN

Continued from page 83

we hit the ocean and then to follow the beach south.

En route to the border town of Ocos, we got our first whiff — literally — of a problem that was to plague us for the next two days. In April, the Indians throughout most of Central America burn brush to clear new fields for corn planting.

Slash-and-burn farming has enabled them to grow corn for thousands of years, but it plays hell with visibility in the age of airplanes. It gets so bad that major international airports in the area like Tegucigalpa, Honduras, are shut down for days at a time. It was therefore a great relief when we finally reached the beach. The visibility improved remarkably along the shore, and as Ed brought the *Lady Ellen* down to under 100 feet, the ride smoothed out. Directly atop the surf line at low altitude there was almost no turbulence. With a cool breeze blowing in through the open windows, the flying became pleasant. There is also an exhilarating ground rush at that altitude. Higher up, helicopters seem to poke along. Down at 50 to 100 feet, the trees whip by at 105 miles per hour.

Guatemala's coast is 150 miles long and undeveloped, but not unpopulated. There are only five major villages along the coast, but all along the beach are small clusters of 10 or so mud and palm frond huts. It appeared that most of the people make their living from a little fishing, a little farming and a little salt making.

The emphasis is on little. Flying that low we were right on top of the settlements before the people heard us and we caught most of them frolicking in the surf. Ed seemed to be having a blast waving at all the kids as we zoomed by, and laughing uproariously at the village dogs darting out of their shade spots, running along the beach and barking furiously to drive away the strange intruder. "It's the first time I've flown low enough to be chased by dogs," he laughed.

Just after crossing into El Salvador we turned northeast and started gradually gaining altitude to get over the mountains which surround its capital of San Salvador. Smoke from the burning fields not only made visibility awful, but the rising heat created turbulence in the mountains. Our nerves

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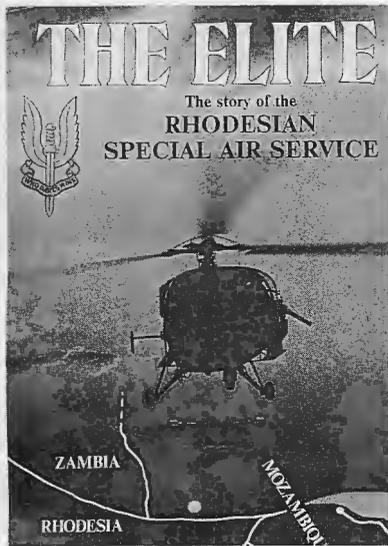
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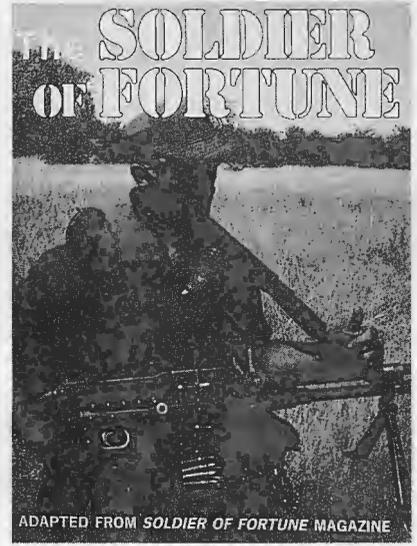
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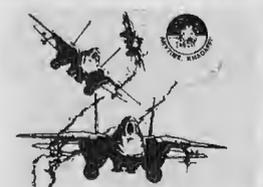
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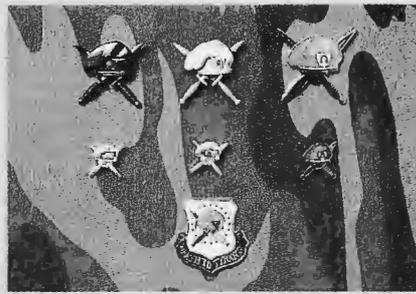
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were ready for a break when we cleared the final ridge and lined up on Illopongo airport in San Salvador.

Shortly after touchdown we made contact with a contra liaison officer who was ecstatic to see us — the last they had heard we were hung up in Mexico — but not so ecstatic that he didn't forget to play the game they always play with pilots ferrying aircraft to Honduras. According to the plan, he was to pay for the last load of fuel, but he claimed he had not known that and didn't have sufficient funds on hand to do so. Ed, who was out of operational funds due to the long delay in McAllen, and who had been through the drill before, had tipped me that this would probably happen. I knew that I would come to the *Lady Ellen's* rescue with the travel funds I had from *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, but held off telling the contra officer until we were having drinks in the hotel where he dropped us off. I get irritated at the money games the contras always play with the American volunteers, and had decided to let him sweat it out a little.

Eventually I told him I'd take care of the fuel problem. With that settled, we left the bar area and headed for the dining room. But when I went up to settle the bar tab, I noticed a Western journalist sitting at the bar and I stopped to chat with him about the local situation while Mike and Ed took the Nicaraguan into the dining room.

Since we were scheduled to fly over Morazan province (serious guerrilla country) the next day, I thought it would be a

good idea to find out whether the Salvadorian army was operating along our line of flight. The *Lady Ellen*, an OD green UH-1B, would look very much like a Salvadorian air force OD green UH-1H from the ground, and from time to time the guerrillas do shoot down a helicopter.

Our contra contact, who'd had a few too many by the time I joined them, asked who I had been talking to. I told him the guy was a journalist, and he came unglued. He furiously scribbled my name into his notebook and was on the verge of telling me I could not continue into the contra camp, which he could have done. Since I was tired — helicopters are not built for comfort and ride hard — and wasn't particularly looking forward to the next leg — mountains and bigger mountains — I didn't really care one way or the other. But for Ed's sake I patiently explained to him that all I wanted was information on government and guerrilla activity in Morazan and thought the journalist might know, and I was buying the last tank of gas.

He saw the logic and changed his mind. I was tempted to tell him that I, too, was a journalist just to watch him freak out.

The only disagreement among the crew on the entire trip came later that night as we talked over the course for the next day. Mike, who was a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army until 1984, was concerned about the *Lady Ellen's* ability to handle the 8,000-foot mountains we would have to fly over if we took the northeast passage. He also liked

to fly low and slow in general. I was not enthusiastic about crossing the big mountains or over-flying Morazan. Ed, who can fly just about anything but who is basically a fixed-wing man, believes the only way to fly is along a straight line from A to B, high and fast.

Ed ended the argument the way captains usually do after they've given the crew their allotted bitch time by saying, "Do what I told you. Plot a course from A to B, 500 feet above the highest ridge line."

Fortunately an American military pilot asked Ed about our flight plan the next day. When Ed told him northeast over Morazan, he told us that the smoke along the route would be impenetrable, and furthermore that Salvadorian UH-1Hs, a much newer and stronger Huey than our UH-1B, had difficulty clearing those mountains. He suggested flying due east to the *Gulfo de Fonseca* and then north through a pass that would avoid the worst mountains.

Good pilots listen to local expertise. We went east.

But there was no way to avoid the mountains around Tegucigalpa. We planned to avoid the city to prevent the officials there from getting excited, but we couldn't fly too far east since Ed wanted to stay well away from Nicaragua's border. That forced us to go over three big ranges, south, east and north of Tegucigalpa. Although the haze was thick all the way, it was the third and final ridge that produced the only really scary moment on the trip.

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Skimming over the top of a 7,400-foot ridge, Ed came up on the intercom and said, "Get ready, we're going to get a big drop on the back side of that ridge." Pressure ridges along a slope can cause a helicopter to lose lift and drop violently. If the drop exceeds one-and-a-half gravity, the main rotor blades will snap off. Without blades helicopters fly just like rocks.

Ed was right. Just after passing the crest we dropped violently, but only at a rate of about one-fourth a gravity.

In one heart-stopping millisecond it was over, and we dropped down into the greenest, flattest and most beautiful valley I have ever seen, with a short straight shot into the contra base.

EPILOGUE: The contras kept their word and have not hung any guns on the Lady Ellen. It is still being used today, one year later, to bring out casualties. That is remarkable since the contras have extremely limited repair and maintenance capability, and spares are non-existent.

But perhaps it's not amazing. On the long flight down, we came to realize the Lady Ellen has a lot of heart. ✕

ZULU

Continued from page 53

brains literally "scattered all about us." It was during another Zulu charge that Hitch noticed a Zulu to his left level a rifle at him.

The round ripped into Hitch's right shoulder. He tried to stand but couldn't, lying at the mercy of the attacker who was preparing to assagai him. Bromhead quickly interceded, dispatching the Zulu with a single revolver blast. Hitch secured his right arm under his waist belt and rejoined the fight using Bromhead's revolver. With Bromhead doing the reloading, Hitch continued dropping Zulu for as long as he was able.

During the early evening, the Zulu increased the breadth of their attack by moving in from the east. They assaulted both kraals and took them. Chard brought everyone together inside the stone wall and biscuit box perimeter. This tightened their defensive position, making it fully controllable and much more to their advantage. Occupation of the kraals was of no use to the Zulu who, upon raising up over the wall, were immediately picked off by the garrison.

Attacks continued and, as the flames of the hospital lowered somewhat, the Zulu prepared for their last major charge at about 2100. Hook observed their regrouping for an earthshaking war dance before they came on in a rush yelling "Usuthu!" They approached from one side then the other, back and forth, so that the rifle fire had to be directed everywhere. Flames from the hospital served as an excellent source of illumination, handily marking Zulu for hundreds of yards around.

Unfortunately, since there was no upper handguard on the Martini-Henry rifles, men

had to wrap whatever they could find around the barrels to avoid burning their hands. As the rapid sustained fire heated the weapons, the thin-rolled brass shell casings expanded, causing weapons to jam. Hook cleared his own rifle with a ramrod several times to maintain fire. Their standard three-sided 17-21.5-inch "lunger" bayonets bent and twisted under heavy hand-to-hand combat. In some instances, Zulu were actually pinned to the ground by determined troops as the "lungers" were thrust home.

Between 2200 and midnight Chard and Bromhead felt there was insufficient light from the hospital's flames to give adequate direction of the defense. Fully exposed to Zulu rifle fire, they mounted the mealie sack redoubt for a more commanding view of the area.

At midnight or shortly after, the intensity of the Zulu firing died down to intermittent shots. Since the post was down to basic pouch loads and four cases of spare ammo, fire was returned only if it would prove effective. Word was passed: "Stand to your arms! Don't fire a shot at random. . . . Make every shot tell!"

Chard still had no feel for how long the attacks would continue, how many men were left and whether he would be reinforced by Helpmakaar. The refugees' statements from the previous afternoon and the savage carnage before him left little hope of seeing any of Lord Chelmsford's column come to their rescue. Smoldering hospital thatch would briefly flame during the early

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hours, casting some light on the white tropical helmets. But eventually even these welcome flares died out completely.

Zulu firing continued on a sporadic basis until about 0400, then stopped. A solitary warrior rose up near the commissariat store, a torch tied to his assegai to burn the roof thatch. As he began to heave it, one of the defenders shot him. He was the last Zulu to die that night.

At daybreak's welcome first light, only one Zulu was left. He fired a shot and ran off to the river, the garrison blasting away trying to get him, without luck. Meanwhile, the Zulu *impis* quietly moved off to the southwest, their assembly area blocked from view by the Oscarberg. Chard and Bromhead, cautious of a Zulu trap, immediately sent out patrols to reconnoiter the area and began rebuilding the camp's barricades. Mealie sacks were placed on biscuit boxes to form a higher breastworks, thatch removed from the commissariat roof to avoid a burning such as the hospital, and ammunition redistributed.

Back in the camp the men ran ropes through the hospital wall loopholes and pulled down the walls. Chunks were used to reinforce the retrenchment lines and the men were collected in the perimeter to wait for another Zulu attack, should it come. Two men were posted on the commissariat store roof to provide advance warning to the defenders.

The men stood to arms waiting. By now

only a case and a half (900 rounds) of rifle ammunition plus the individual pouch loads were at hand. Around 0700 the men could see the Zulu *impis* assembling on the hills to the southwest. Within moments, the lookouts posted on the commissariat roof wildly flapped their signal flags, shouting, "There are thousands of them coming in from Buffalo Drift!" Hearts sank. A fugitive NNC member, who had hidden all night in a cave, came in. Pontman Daniels, wielding Maj. Spalding's sword, interrogated him. Chard sent the native running to Helpmakaar with a note explaining their desperate position and need for immediate reinforcement.

Surveying the flat beyond the Buffalo River, Chard could not be sure whether the approaching large black force and accompanying lesser numbers of redcoats were Zulu or their own. The feeling was quite mutual. Unknown to Chard and the garrison, the blacks were actually NNC and the redcoats the imperial infantry. Lord Chelmsford, leading his advance force of survivors of Number 3 Column, had just spent the night at Isandhlwana and expected nothing but more of the same disaster at Rorke's Drift.

Lieutenant Henry Harford (NNC) described Chelmsford's view as the force approached Rorke's Drift. "As we approached the drift and reached the hill overlooking the river and the post, the excitement became intense, all eyes were strained and field glasses raised, to see if there was

any sign of life in the fort. Then, as we drew nearer, a man was seen on the bared roof of one of the buildings, signalling with a flag, which was hailed with a tremendous cheer from the whole column as we knew then that the garrison had not been wiped out."

The men of Rorke's Drift waved a white flag, red coats, white helmets, and loosed continuous roaring cheers until the arrival of Maj. Cecil Russell and Lt. Walsh and their mounted infantry around 0800.

Because Lord Chelmsford had reinforced the camp, the Zulu up on the hills southwest of Rorke's Drift considered any further attack pointless, and slowly melted away back to Zululand. The general (Lord Chelmsford) personally addressed the gallant defenders, giving special personal thanks to Chard, Bromhead, Surgeon Reynolds, and Pvt. Hitch as he came to from shock and blood loss. The nightmare had ended — the British defenders had prevailed.

Ponts were placed in operation, ferrying troops back into Natal, and the garrison quickly set about preparing a more permanent defensive position, no one certain about Zulu intentions. Body details were formed and, while British dead were gathered, the bulk of the work was directed to setting up loopholed stone walls to replace the mealie sacks with the arrival of Lt. Porter and half the 5th Company Royal Engineers.

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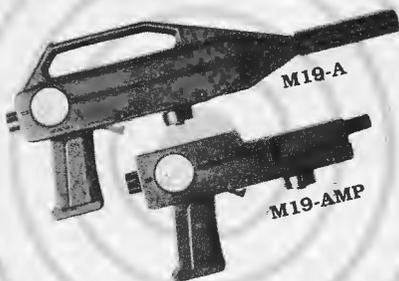
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the Zulu was the seared hands and badly bruised shoulders of all who had raised a rifle. Those severely wounded were given the best available care, Bromhead favoring attention to Pvt. Hitch during Hitch's initial recovery. As soon as the sappers arrived, they constructed a wooden cross for the defenders killed and placed a neat fence around the graves. A stone marker replaced the cross soon after and it is still in place today. Zulu were buried en masse the next day.

Private Waters described the Zulu dead as lying around in heaps. The body count reported by Chard, those Zulu around and inside the immediate perimeter, numbered 351. For days, additional bodies were discovered on the Oscarberg, in caves and scattered in the area. Sergeant Smith wrote of 800 Zulu dead in the general vicinity. While his count was more likely based on general rumor, the Zulu themselves reported the uDloko alone lost 1,000 between their brief time in contact at Isandhlwana and all night commitment at Rorke's Drift. Add to those numbers the additional casualties from the other Zulu *impis* and it would be safe to assume at least 1,600 Zulu were killed out of a total force of 5,000 between 0430 on 22 January and 0400 on 23 January.

The British garrison also sustained its share of casualties. There were a total of 17 dead and eight wounded out a force of 139, based on official army records (Chard's own roll showing 141 present). Considering several of the dead were vulnerable hospital patients, the Rorke's Drift defenders stood as second to none against the Zulu hordes.

The successful defense of Rorke's Drift couldn't have come at a more opportune moment. First, it occurred on the same day as the worst defeat ever experienced by the British army at the hands of natives during the empire's colonial years. The impact of this handful of combatants cut off from all help and standing off repeated attacks from 50 times their number turned colonial morale around 180 degrees. Secondly, while King Cetweyo had, under Bishop Colenso's counsel, decided not to attack Natal, Cetweyo had his warriors drive the British back into Pietermaritzburg, which is deep in Natal. With a standing Zulu field force of 40,000-50,000, Natal was thrown into a general panic after the first reports of Isandhlwana were received. The Rorke's Drift heroes helped to abate those fears and certainly convinced Cetweyo that Isandhlwana was a fluke, not a trend.

Politically, the gallant examples of bravery at Rorke's Drift provided buoyancy for Lord Chelmsford, who was about to suffer tremendously from the Isandhlwana disaster. Recommendations for awards came instantly. Eleven Victoria Crosses, the British equivalent of the Medal of Honor, were awarded to the defenders of Rorke's Drift. In B Company, 2nd Battalion, 24th Regiment (Foot), they went to Lt. Bromhead, Cpl. Allen, Pvt. Hitch, Pvt. Hook, Pvt. W. Jones, Pvt. R. Jones and Pvt. John Williams. The other recipients were Lt. Chard, Royal Engineers, Cpl. Schiess, Natal Na-

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tive Contingent, Acting Commissariat Dalton and Surgeon-Major Reynolds.

In final recognition, the 24th Regiment, badly scarred at Isandhlwana but highly victorious at Rorke's Drift, was presented the legendary Wreath of Immortelles by Queen Victoria. In lasting tribute to the two lieutenants (Coghill and Melville, both posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross) who evacuated the Queen's Colours from Isandhlwana and to the defenders of Rorke's Drift, both battalions of the 24th were authorized permanent silver wreaths to be retained on the staffs of their battalions' colours. Thereafter, the cap badge and all other appropriate insignia of the regiment sported the wreath as well.

Against nearly overwhelming odds, two British officers and a handful of troops had made their stand. Rorke's Drift wasn't merely a battle between colonial firepower and savage natives, it was more a statement of spirit. It became everything a soldier must be when put to the ultimate test of battlefield survival. Rorke's Drift had all the elements of potential disaster to the very end, yet the professional performance of its officers, and the gallantry and sacrifice of its men proved that staunch men can triumph in the face of almost impossible adversity.

Colour Sergeant (later Lieutenant Colonel) Bourne reflected: "I was moving about amongst them all the time, and not for one

moment did they flinch. Their courage and their bravery cannot be expressed in words: For me they were an example all my soldiering days." ✕

COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

Continued from page 26

burst hits, aided by the greater accuracy of a rifled barrel, the problem is solved. Should exact placement be necessary because bystanders are present, a flick of the SMG's selector to semiauto allows precise shot placement, with accuracy well beyond the useful range of a shotgun. This versatile selective-fire characteristic of all modern SMGs beats having a magazine tube full of 00 buckshot.

An additional advantage of the SMG is that, while police shotguns generally hold five to seven rounds, most SMGs hold 30. This amounts to 10 three-shot bursts, 15 two-shot bursts, or 30 rounds on semiauto.

Sight picture recovery and subsequent speed of shooting also favor the SMG with its mild recoil. At the same time, the "synergistic" effect of simultaneous multiple hits provides substan-

tial stopping power.

Bailing out of a car with a standard-sized shotgun has always been a bit difficult. The comparative compactness of an SMG is a real plus in the restricted space situations typical in police work.

Unusual as it may sound, training an officer with an MP5 is easier than with a Remington 870. This is especially true for small officers, who find the dimensions, operation and recoil of the pump shotgun tough to master.

Though there will certainly be more shooting incidents pointing to weapon deficiencies before changes are made, the trend toward full-auto is here. As with the gradual movement to the auto-pistol and away from the revolver, the acceptance of automatic weapons in the police arsenal will take time. Good training from expert instructors is an important step, and Clint Smith of International Training Consultants (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 528, Hometown, Indiana 46748) has already seen an increase in departments retaining him for SMG instruction.

In the future, when a properly trained officer steps from his unit with a well-designed SMG, he will finally have the edge needed to combat crime and survive on the streets. ✕

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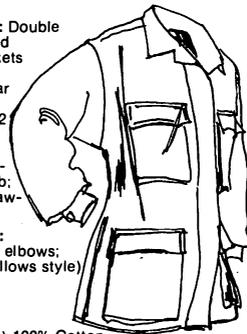
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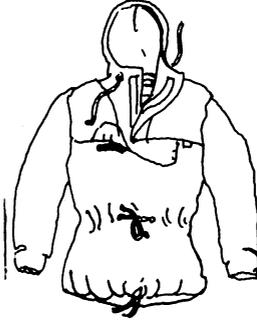
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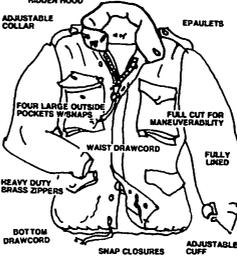
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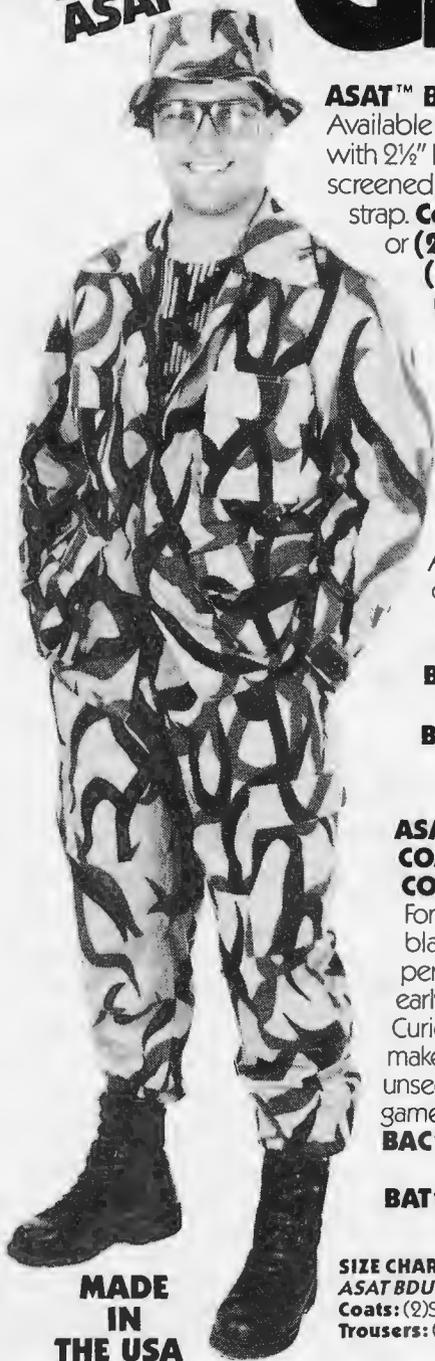
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BATTLE BLADES

Continued from page 28

ness suit will have different requirements than the one who wears BDUs, overalls or blue jeans. Concealment may or may not always be a consideration, but comfort in the normal carry position should always be taken into account. If a knife is constantly in your way or bruises your ribs when you sit in your car, you will probably not wear it as often as you should. Even the finest, biggest knife in the world is useless if it's sitting at home in a dresser drawer.

Most custom knifemakers today make practical tools and weapons for real-life people, and would not have it any other way. For a tool to be truly useful, it must be suited to the needs and lifestyle of the user. Blanket statements that a knife of such-and-such a size, configuration and material is mandatory commit a severe disservice to the public in general and to the professional knife user in particular. None of these factors are fundamental to the effective use of a knife, be it a battle blade or a caper.

What are fundamental to the effective use of any knife are the skill and determination of the user. A combat weapon is only as effective as the person wielding it.

Those who would become proficient in the use of a knife, particularly a combat knife, would do well to spend the necessary time and energy training themselves, developing the judgment and reflexes that such a skill requires. They would also do well to recall a line from the movie "Rambo":

"The mind is the greatest weapon of them all." ✕

IN REVIEW

Continued from page 24

Bren manufacturers' codes and the specific components they produced are also explained in this chapter.

Encyclopedic as it is, there are some small omissions in Dugelby's exhaustive magnum opus. More detailed coverage of the 1931 British trials would have been interesting and collectors would have appreciated an explanation of the letter prefix found on Enfield production serial numbers. Even more important, there is no mention of the 7.92mm-caliber Brens manufactured by John Inglis Company, Limited, for the CIA and Bay of Pigs caper, that were devoid of all markings (including serial numbers and manufacturer) except for "7.92 BREN Mk.1."

Even so, this remains a hallmark work, copiously illustrated and provid-

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ing information found nowhere else. I highly recommend this book as an essential addition to the library of every serious student in the field of military small arms. ✕

CAMBODIA

Continued from page 77

squeezed off a burst. Scared hell out of the whole camp, but nobody fired back.

The next afternoon we went back to Phnom Penh. I got ready to leave the next day. Maybe I could get these people some good publicity from home.

Before he said good-bye, Kpa Doh asked me if I would forward a letter to John Wayne. While he was doing research for "The Green Berets," Wayne lived for two weeks with the Pleiku Mike Force which Kpa Doh had commanded. He wore the Montagnard bracelet Kpa Doh gave him until he died.

Kpa Doh was angling for an assignment to the Command and Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. If he got it he would need a dress uniform, and he couldn't afford one. His letter asked John Wayne for two hundred dollars to buy a dress uniform.

Captain America urged me to stay, said we could go out with Cambodian units and do some fighting. I said no. In my opinion the Cambodians were going to lose, and deserved to lose. I'd been shot four times in Vietnam; I might risk it again for the Montagnards, but if they didn't need me, I sure wouldn't do it for fun.

In the end, my plan to publicize the Montagnards failed. I couldn't even sell my story to *Rolling Stone*. When their editor read it he realized that, in essence, they had financed a mercenary for the Lon Nol government, which was not in keeping with their editorial policy.

John Wayne's secretary wrote me later that he had sent Kpa Doh the two hundred dollars, but Kpa Doh never made it to Fort Leavenworth.

Rockoff said that Kpa Doh's unit was one of the last to break up when the Khmer Rouge took the country. He changed to civvies and took his family to the French Embassy. They were among the roughly 200 Cambodians ejected from the embassy in the final days, led away for execution by the Khmer Rouge. ✕

BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 22

Gary Napier, Ken Matthews, Rickey T. Keller, Courtney B. Owen, Sherwin Greenberg, In response to the G.R. Dominicans.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund contributors:

In memory of Maj. Kenneth Johnson, killed 14 November 1986 in a helicopter accident; Ted Bartlett, David

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**THE GREMLINS
ARE STILL WITH US...**

We usually keep them out of Editorial, but we forgot to check over in our Production department last month and one nailed us good: rechambering Colt's .357 Cobra to .45 in the T&E on page 79. Sorry about that, readers.

**SOUND OFF,
PART III...**

We want to hear more from you — and from more of you — about what you like and don't like about SOF, so tell us. This month's SOF Wants You! reader survey form is on page 89. ✕

SURINAM

Continued from page 43

project: blowing a bridge north of Moengo to isolate the city from the capital, Paramaribo. To me the problem is not one of knowing where I am going but rather of knowing how to work. Doing flash shots behind the enemy lines is not highly recommended. John discusses it with Carl, an explosives expert, who figures that I should be able to use my flash during the several seconds of the dynamiting without attracting attention. I equip myself very lightly: my Nikon, with a 24mm and flash, in addition to a flask — only the necessary minimum in order to be able to run faster.

At 2000 hours a car deposits us near Moengo at the last barrier held by the rebels. We are seven in all: an unarmed guide; two *guerrilleros*, one carrying a hunting gun and the other an assault gun; Carl with his kilograms of *plastique*; John with an assault gun and a dagger; and Radjed, a Dutchman of Hindu descent and the Number Two man in the guerrilla. After nine kilometers on the road we pass within 50 meters of the barracks. Suddenly a pack of dogs sets off total confusion. Their howling alerts two Brazilian Cascavel reconnaissance APCs emerging from the camp, whose powerful headlights sweep over our sector. After an hour of hide-and-seek, Carl suggests that we abandon the operation. The trouble is, the soldiers have certainly thought of cutting off our return route. There remains but one possibility: Crossing the river to go see whether or not the army has thought of protecting the other side.

In the village we get a pirogue, which makes it possible for us to cross to the other side. In the distance, armored vehicles keep hunting for us. As for us, everything now

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moves very fast. John and a man who have gone off to scout return stupefied. There is no one to protect the bridge! Carl snickers, "All those guys are shitting in their pants they're so scared!" And we speed toward the objective. Quickly, Carl places three kilograms on one side, three on the other. As soon as the fuse is unwound and lighted we are off on the double.

There is a fantastic explosion. The bridge is down and Brunswijk's men have scored another point.

When we return to the pirogue the armored vehicles have approached the bank and are firing blindly. A difficult hour on the river, then things grow a bit calmer on the branch of the river protected by the jungle. We come close to the road south of the city. But the tanks are there, forcing us to make a detour of over three hours via the jungle. After a halt in a bauxite mine operated by an American company, we finally locate a car to take us back to our base camp, arriving at 0600. It seems that the Dutch radio has already announced the destruction of the bridge following the "action of a very important commando. . . ."

We go out the next day to destroy one of the APCs stationed at Moengo. John and Carl have noticed that the commander of the tank has fallen into the habit of driving up to the same spot, where the *guerrilleros* have blocked the road to Albina by felling huge trees, to fire its 90mm cannon at *guerrillero* positions farther down the road. The plan is to bury one of the dynamite-packed fire extinguishers under the spot where the APC stops to fire. I go to the one side of the road, about 20 meters away, to take the photos. The *guerrilleros* with the detonator are on the other side of the road.

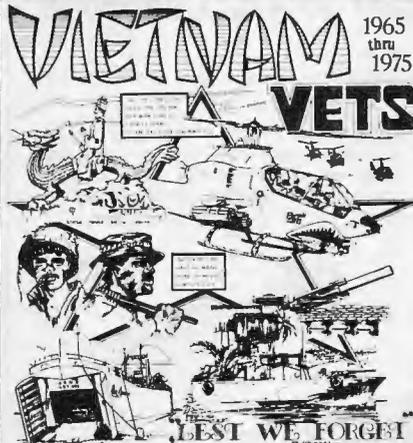
Time passes slowly with no activity on the road, but finally two APCs emerge and move up to the logs, exactly where the charge is buried. I prepare myself and get ready for the explosion. Nothing. The APCs begin to fire their cannon and the 12.7mm heavy machine guns also open up. Nothing. Finally, I realize something is wrong. I carefully and slowly crawl back toward the protection of the jungle, then move back toward the *guerrillero* positions. There I learn that the *guerrilleros* with the detonator got tired of waiting in the sun for the APC and went back. John and Carl are furious. I want to kill them.

John and Carl tell me my experience is not unique. Earlier, when there were three mercenaries, they had taken a group of 80 *guerrilleros* out to ambush the road near Albina. A truck followed by a tank came out and when the *guerrilleros* saw the tank, they ran off. John and Carl were furious and opened up on the truck, killing the driver, then one by one 39 of the 40 men in the truck. The tank stopped way down the road and fired on them, but it was driven off when the third mercenary, Charles, moved through the jungle and got close enough to kill the commander. John and Carl left one alive deliberately. They kicked him in the ass and told him to go back to Albina and tell

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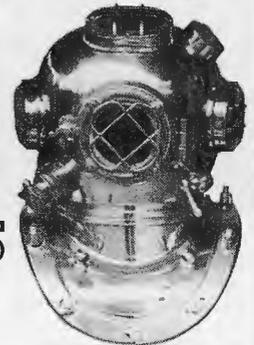
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the other soldiers what happened.

John and Carl said Charles dropped out of the war not long after the road ambush. They were having tea one day and Charles wanted a second cup. The tea boy was not there so he went to the cook shed to get the water himself. Lifting the lid he found the head of a pro-government prisoner, who had been executed, boiling away in the tea water. He left in disgust the next day. The Brits take their tea seriously.

The *guerrilleros* take their voodoo as seriously. Before every operation they bring in a voodoo man who throws a stone in the air, dances around and then decides whether it's a good day to fight or not; usually it's not. One soldier tells me his voodoo charms make him invisible. He says if he ever encounters a tank on the road he'll just step aside and they won't see him. The government soldiers are the same.

The government soldiers are also savage. The day following the failed APC ambush, we go into three nearby villages where two helicopters had landed some 60 men the previous night. All of the residents from the three villages were rounded up and killed, except for two children who managed to get away into the jungle. They tell us the killers were "white men." Probably they were some of the 200 Libyan musicians Muammar Khadaffi has stationed in the Libyan Cultural Center in Paramaribo. John and Carl promise me that when they take Paramaribo they'll hang the musicians by their balls, and do it in the sun so I'll have a good light for my camera.

A few days later the mercenaries decide to leave for a little rest in French Guiana. The guerrilla diet has freed them of ten kilograms during the five weeks they spent in Surinam and they want to make certain that their London bank accounts have received deposits. John and Carl decide to go directly via Albina, a two-hour walk, making it possible for them to avoid a detour by the isle of Langabbtje.

The sector is infested with soldiers, their nerves raw. The Brits have forgotten their passports on the island and risk problems with the French authorities. Who cares? The heroes are weary...

Around 1800 Brunswijk accompanies us to the last barrier on the road. The arrival of an armored vehicle sends us back into the jungle. We have to walk for four hours through forests and swamps. Several times we meet with patrols, and when we finally arrive at an abandoned village on the bank we hear the voices of the soldiers who have been assigned to keep watch over the river. With a pirogue we slip across to the French side.

The next day John and Carl's adventure comes to a sudden end. The PAF (Air and Border Police) check our car. The two Englishmen have no papers. They are expelled to Paris the following day, 18 November.

Ronny Brunswijk's guerrilla has just lost two of its most effective fighters. The Robin Hood of Surinam will have to begin following the want ads if he is to find other mercenaries. ☒

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POW/MIAs

Continued from page 47

the formation of a "Douglas MacArthur Brigade" to rescue prisoners in Southeast Asia. Lindstrom, who earlier had been involved with the 1968 "Remember the Pueblo Committee," said his brigade was composed of "ex-marines and European mercenaries," and numbered 125 men. Decrying what he saw as the U.S. government's lack of interest in rescuing prisoners, Lindstrom said his brigade would act if the government didn't. His comments, predictably, drew widespread media attention.

In July 1972, speaking from Stockholm, Sweden, Lindstrom told reporters that a group from his brigade had launched a "release operation" the previous week. "The team is operating as an experimental force in enemy-held territory in Southeast Asia since July 3rd," he said, "in an attempt to release American POWs from communist prison camps. I cannot say when the team will return." He declined to name the country involved, or to give any specifics about the mission or the men involved.



Johannes Duynesveld, "The Dutchman." While searching for Stone and Flynn, Duynesveld was killed when VC patrol he accompanied was ambushed by South Vietnamese troops. Photo: AP/Wide World

Pressed by reporters, Lindstrom did say that four "reconnaissance teams" from the brigade had made excursions into North Vietnam earlier in the year, and that "all had returned intact." Each of the four teams was reportedly composed of four men, all heavily armed.

While it all made good copy, there wasn't any substance to Lindstrom's story. Despite his consistent claims that he had access to important prisoner information from what he called "highly placed military men," one investigative reporter who looked into the matter at length concluded the brigade was "hype, nothing but hype."

When it became apparent that the communists had not released all of the American POWs in 1973, efforts were renewed in the private sector to mount additional rescue attempts. They proved to be no more successful than earlier efforts.

Retired Air Force Colonel Albert Shinkle was next on the scene. A highly decorated officer who spent much of his career in intelligence, Shinkle began collecting information on Americans held by the Pathet Lao and NVA while he was stationed in Thailand.

According to Shinkle, a government-sponsored 1972 heliborne operation into a known Pathet Lao prison camp was unsuccessful because of CIA interference. When the "clandestine collection team" entered the camp they found it empty, the American POWs having been moved the previous day.

Shinkle later testified before a panel of congressmen that, prior to leaving Thailand in 1973 for retirement from active duty, he decided to make a last, personal rescue effort. "I knew . . . at the worst I could do no less than the U.S. government," he said, "because our official agencies had not recovered one U.S. POW from the Pathet Lao. They still have not done so to this very day [1976]."

Shinkle's first move was to recruit Laotians he believed were reliable and trustworthy. Once his team was selected, they were briefed on the mission and began to methodically analyze the situation. They concentrated on identifying Pathet Lao officials who would have knowledge of the existence and location of U.S. POWs. Shinkle claims his agents were successful in identifying and targeting a specific Pathet Lao commander, who told them he not only knew about American POWs, but in fact was himself holding "several tens" (30 to 50 personnel).

According to Shinkle, he kept the commander, U.S. Military Advisory Group, Thailand, fully apprised of his rescue plans, and was given the go-ahead, being told unofficially that he "would receive any required backing by the U.S. Department of Defense."

That didn't prove to be the case, however, at least according to Shinkle's version of the story. He said that when the CIA received word of what he was doing, he received a personal visit from a mysterious stranger from the United States, who told him in no uncertain terms that "we know" and "don't like what you are doing; it is counter to U.S. policy and, if you don't stop, you're going to be in a lot of trouble."

Shinkle said he was not deterred by the threats, but shortly afterward the North Vietnamese launched their final offensive against South Vietnam and, on 11 May 1975, the Pathet Lao, with NVA backing, came to power in Laos. Shinkle's Laotian network immediately broke contact and went underground. Some of his agents, however, later managed to escape to Thailand and, eventually, to the United States.

From 1975 to 1981 a number of small-scale rescue attempts were mounted, primarily by MIA activists and MIA next of kin. All that the participants succeeded in doing was getting fleeced for thousands of dollars by slick Thai con artists, who frequently masqueraded as members of the

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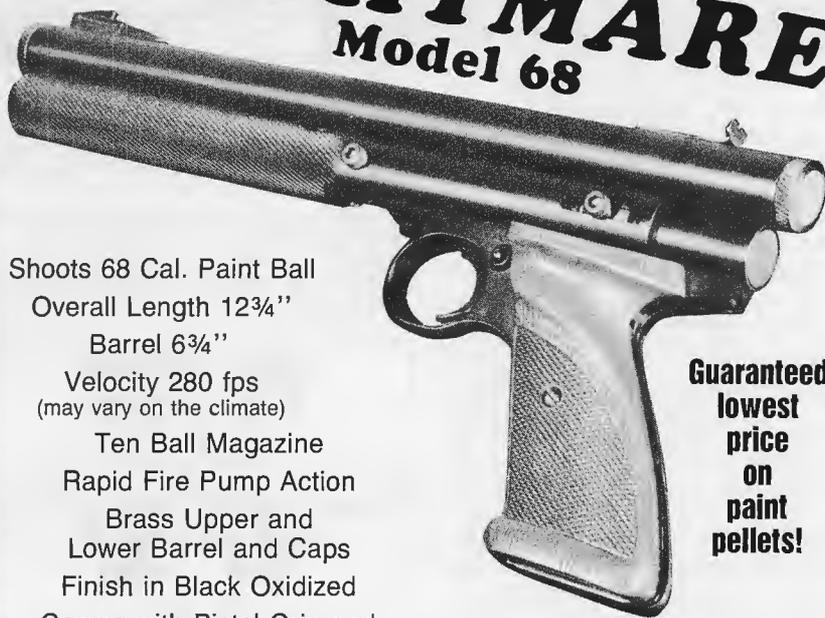
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In one 1980-81 escapade, Bo Gritz and Ann Mills Griffiths, a prominent National League of Families official, joined forces to train individuals in Florida for a POW rescue attempt. The mission ended when Gritz called in the media to publicize their efforts. Weeks later, however, Griffiths was still insisting the mission was "definitely on."

Bo Gritz, former Special Forces officer and bona fide war hero, came into prominence once again in 1982-83. Gritz's plan to rescue prisoners had all the makings of a great adventure novel. It featured a number of decorated Vietnam vets, a mysterious individual known as "Dr. Death," a beautiful blonde, clandestine meetings in exotic settings, large sums of money and sophisticated "spook" equipment. Depending on whom you listen to, Gritz's mission also had the backing of the CIA, the State Department, or both. Gritz and his team intended to penetrate a vast cave complex near Sepone (Tchepone), which they believed housed more than a hundred U.S. prisoners.

In the end, the mission accomplished nothing. Gritz and his companions were jailed by the Thais, fined, then declared persona non grata and expelled from the country. Nor were any of Gritz's allegations ever substantiated. The POW bones he gave to authorities turned out to be a combination of Asian skeletal remains and chicken bones. Gritz had also announced at one point that he had rolls of film that positively showed American prisoners in Laos, but later lamely explained to investigators that none of the photos came out as they were shot at the "wrong light setting."

Periodic reports continue to surface that Gritz is putting together another POW rescue force, and he has reportedly been sighted in Hong Kong and Bangkok. He is known to keep in contact with various MIA groups.

Another abortive rescue attempt took place in May 1983, when three self-professed "American soldiers of fortune" crossed the Mekong River into Laos in an attempt to find and extract U.S. POWs.

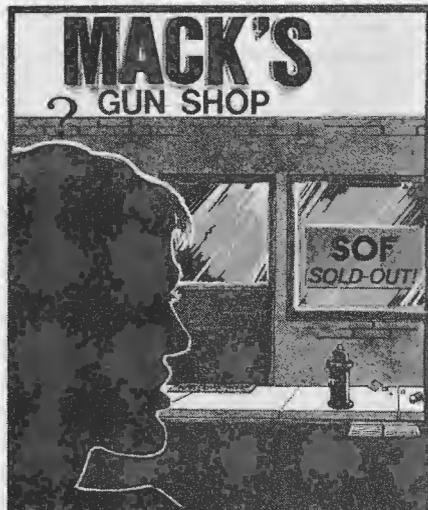
According to Thai police authorities in Nakhon Phanom, the three crossed the river on 24 May and were believed to be the lead element of a seven-man team that had flown into Bangkok a week earlier. Thai authorities identified the men as Peter Titno, Charles Kerr and Jim Dunhill. Despite rumors, it was not known if the men had any connection with Gritz.

The three men allegedly spent a month inside Laos, and when they crossed back to Thailand on 7 July they were met by a car on the Thai side of the border and driven away. Thai police later admitted confiscating some radio equipment from the three, but refused to provide any details. The men returned to Bangkok and reportedly re-joined their companions, and all seven left the country in the middle of July. It is not known if they were affiliated with known

Continued on page 122

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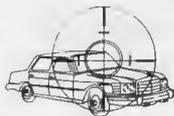
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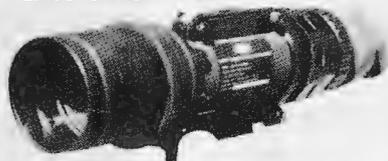
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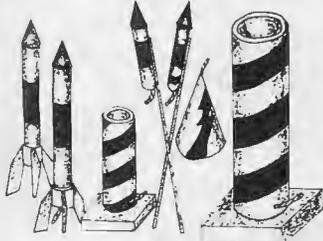
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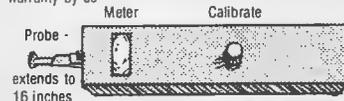
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MIA groups.

The Sam Neua cave complex in northern Laos, which served as a Pathet Lao headquarters during the war, is frequently mentioned as a current repository for American prisoners who never returned home. In late 1984 members of one Midwest MIA group flew to Thailand to contact Lao resistance leaders. They wanted to finance a "recon mission" by Meo tribesmen into the Sam Neua area, to document the presence of American MIAs. Plans were aborted when Thai police intervened.

A bit player in numerous POW/MIA rescue dramas, including the Gritz mission, is Scott Barnes, whom veteran journalist Alan Dawson dubbed "my favorite flake." To many, that description still fits. Barnes changes personas as easily as others change socks. He claims to have been a Green Beret, Navy SEAL, Army MP, CIA contract assassin, etc., and at one time or another has contacted virtually every MIA group in the country. His tales vary, ranging from POW sightings and escapes to CIA bungling of rescue attempts.

Barnes' most recent tale involves his being taken to a Khmer Rouge camp deep in Cambodia, where he claims to have seen crates of weapons and munitions supplied by the U.S. Defense Attache's Office in Bangkok. Barnes claims the crates had U.S. markings on the sides, and insists the United States was (and is) supplying the Khmer Rouge with clandestine weapons shipments. He says he has numerous photos, not only depicting the crates, but also illustrating other "illegal" activities he observed while a guest in the camp. He has yet to produce a single photo.

Another name that crops up frequently in MIA affairs is Jack Bailey, known as "Akuna Jack" to his friends. Bailey was a good friend of Phoumi Nosavon, former deputy premier of Laos who lived in exile in Bangkok. Upon Phoumi's death, Bailey took up with his son, Phoumano. Phoumi's death made little difference in the reliability of the information supplied to Bailey: Phoumano's is every bit as suspect as his late father's.

Bailey presents himself as a committed American who sails the Gulf of Thailand in his private vessel, fighting off pirates while rescuing unfortunate boat people and coincidentally picking up loads of MIA data in the process.

The other side of Jack Bailey emerged in a recent book by Chuck Patterson entitled *Heroes Who Fell From Grace*. Patterson was second in command of the Gritz mission, and Bailey was one of their contacts. Patterson calls Bailey a "phoney" who "drank too much . . . was a loud mouth and braggart. He was always making promises he couldn't deliver."

Nevertheless, Bailey's operation takes in considerable money. His calendar year 1985 budget claims total expenses of \$637,000. However, in looking over the

actual budget sheet, a number of discrepancies are readily apparent. Bailey claims "administrative expenses" of \$134,580, yet only a paltry \$1,200 is earmarked for "refugee food and medical" expenses.

The most recent MIA rescue attempt occurred in early December 1985. Five to seven Americans, all MIA activists, attempted to enter Laos from the Thai border area. They were immediately spotted and taken under fire by communist troops, and they fled in disarray back across the Thai border. Most of the individuals involved were believed to be connected to the so-called "Rambo Faction" of the National League of Families, an MIA splinter group whose thinking tends to fall along the lines of the movie. At least one of the raid's participants was said to have been wounded in the foray, but this could not be verified.

At this writing, there are at least two private rescue attempts in the works. One is being orchestrated by the "Private Delta Force," which operates out of a post office box in Vienna, Virginia; the other involves Vietnam vets in the Los Angeles area.

Little is known of the West Coast group. MIA insiders say the Private Delta Force is a group composed of various elements, including a number of "crazies," who periodically meet and train near Breezewood, Pennsylvania. Convicted collaborator Bobby Garwood is known to have close contact with several members of the group. According to one individual who spoke on condition of anonymity, Garwood's fluency in Vietnamese makes him the force's liaison with the large Vietnamese community in northern Virginia.

The Washington rumor-mill says the Private Delta Force is poorly equipped and lacks any intelligence capability, but is determined to launch a rescue attempt, "if for nothing more than to get their names in the papers." With regard to the Private Delta Force, one well-placed official said that "I hope they don't, I really do. If they insist on moving forward with this hare-brained scheme, they'll only succeed in getting a lot of people killed. Laos is not a Hollywood lot. The commies play hardball."

Much of the recruiting work for the PDF is done by Michael Van Atta, who runs a local electrical contracting firm. Van Atta is well-known in MIA circles. He publishes a periodic newsletter, *The Insider*. Van Atta is also one of the individuals behind the formation of the Private Delta Force. In the May/June 1985 issue of his newsletter, he offered to "put together, train, and conduct a rescue mission" by raising a private force of "battalion size."

Professional soldiers are openly dubious of private rescue attempts. Examining the track record of the groups that have tried in the past, it's easy to see how they arrive at that conclusion. If prisoners are still being held in Southeast Asia, it's clear that it's going to take more than an alliance of old soldiers, good intentions, Thai con men and the bank accounts of grieving families to bring them home. ☒

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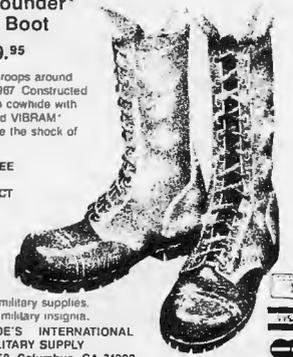
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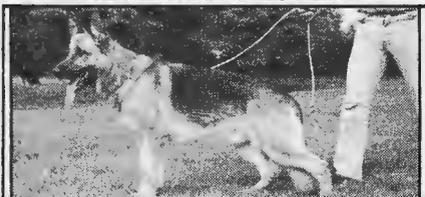
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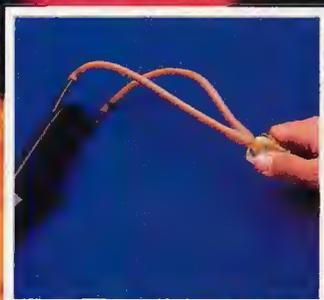
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