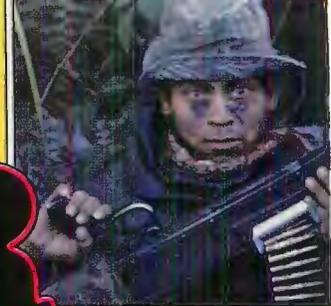


**SOF IN GUATEMALA**



# **SOLDIER OF FORTUNE**

**The Journal of Professional Adventurers**

**AUGUST  
1987**

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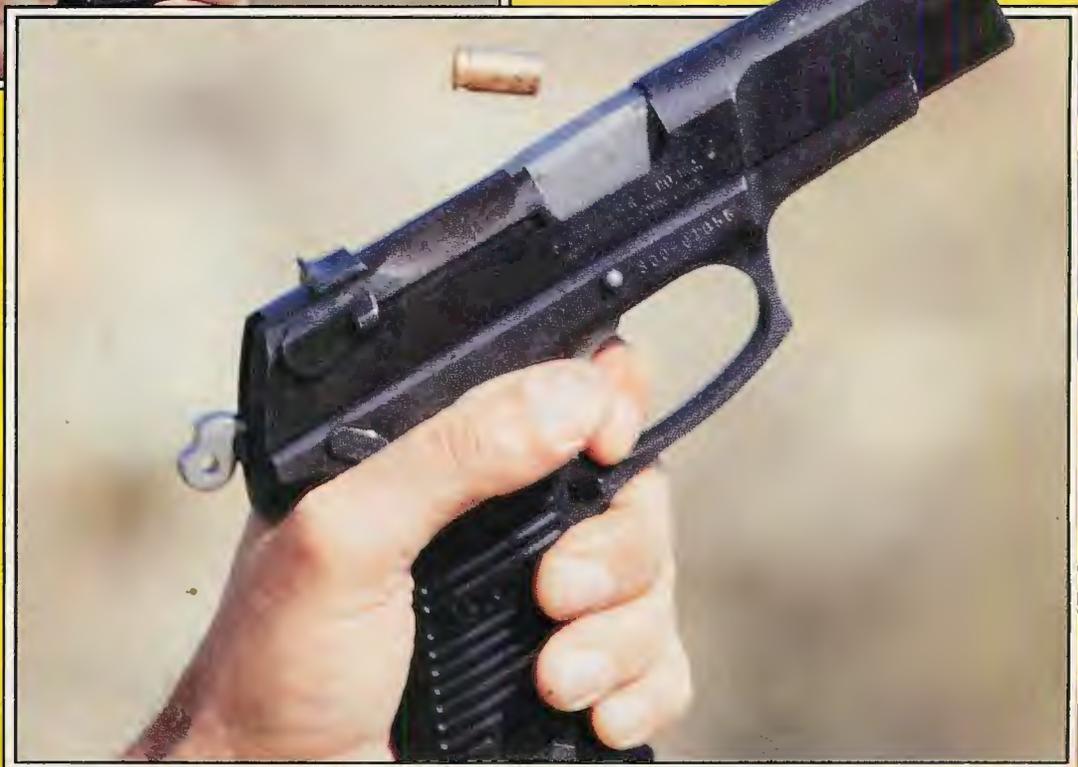
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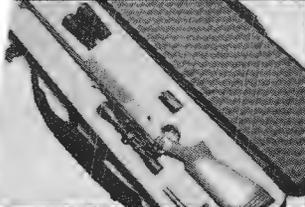
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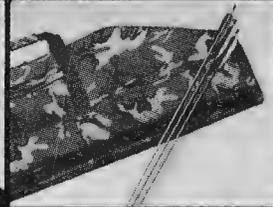
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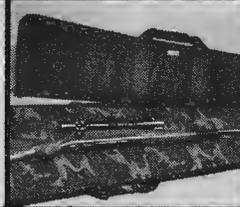
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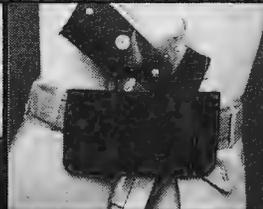
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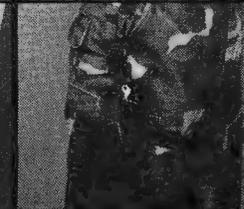
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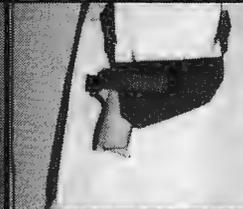
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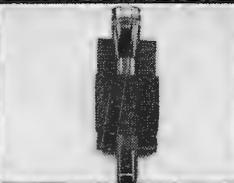
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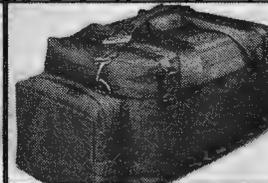
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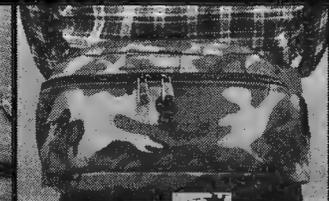
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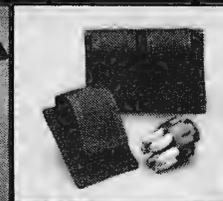
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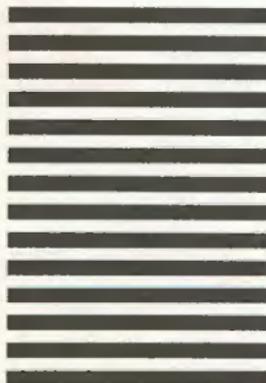
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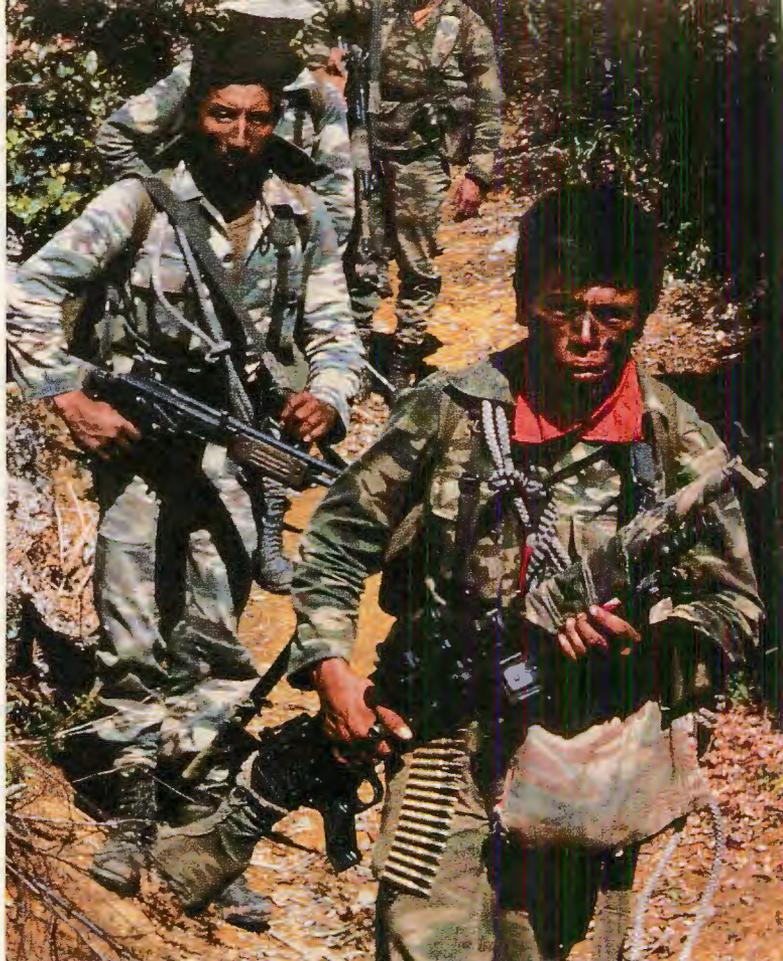
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**COVER:** SOF Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis tests and evaluates Ruger's new P-85 pistol, possible successor to the U.S. Army's current sidearm of choice, the Beretta 92SB-F. Check out the full report on this hardy handgun beginning on page 50. Photos: Peter G. Kokalis. **COVER INSET:** SOF Foreign Correspondent Steve Salisbury beats the bush in El Quiche with a Guatemalan army patrol. Story on page 54. Photo: Steve Salisbury

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# COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Robert K. Brown

## Just the Facts — Please

**I** KNOW many of you have seen and heard news stories during the last several months concerning certain classified ads that have appeared in *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine in the past, and about the lawsuit against us in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

I've decided to address this issue right now, because the media persists in portraying it in its typically sensational and inaccurate manner. However, because of the pending lawsuit, I must keep some of my more acid comments necessarily restricted. For now, at least.

First, all of the allegations and accusations made against us are unfounded, and we intend to prove that beyond any doubt in a court of law.

In essence, the Fayetteville lawsuit contends that we did know, or should have known, that by running the personal services classified advertising concerned with this case in SOF that someone might be hurt as a result. This claim, to put it as mildly as I feel I can, is outrageous.

My staff and I were totally unaware of any criminal activity connected with the classified advertising section of SOF. It was only after we cooperated, in the fullest sense, with law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation that we found out our classified advertising may indeed have been misused.

Of course, no criminal charges have ever been brought against SOF in this matter.

And the media? Have they objectively reported the facts of this situation in a fair, unbiased and responsible manner? Not on your life! And I'm not really surprised.

Certain segments of the "news" industry are far more interested in sensationalizing their blind-eye version of the truth for the sake of

increased sales and ratings rather than simply reporting it as they should. I feel that CBS and ABC are the prime culprits, and this leads to the question of "why."

For years, certain segments of the media have enjoyed dropping the hatchet on SOF as we actively and vocally support causes they oppose. Example: We steadfastly support Nicaraguan freedom fighters — the contras — and many other anti-communist groups from Angola to Afghanistan. Yet the supposed "unbiased coverage" of their fight for freedom which we watch on nightly television consistently falls prey to the distinctly left-leaning bias we've come to expect from these major purveyors of the "news." Furthermore, those same self-serving bastions of "the right to know" under the First Amendment of the Constitution consistently oppose our well-known and uncompromising support of the right to keep and bear arms under the Second Amendment.

In other words, in the mainstream media's eyes, they're right and everyone else — especially SOF — is wrong. And now that they've got the golden opportunity to distort the truth and misrepresent the facts concerning our classified advertising, they're jumping on the ratings bandwagon with vindictive glee.

Let me state once again in the strongest terms that we have never knowingly permitted our advertising to be used as a conduit for an illegal activity. If the thought that personal services ads might be used for an illegal purpose had ever crossed our minds here at the magazine, then those ads would never have seen our printer's ink, much less the light of day. ☒

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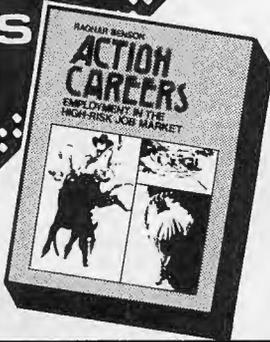
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# ACTION CAREERS

## Employment in the High-Risk Job Market

by Ragnar Benson

The woods are full of people who wish they had taken a shot at adventure when they had the chance. Security and the road to a steady career be damned, they say now. But it's not too late. Ranging from the most laid-back (hunting and fishing guide) to the more difficult in terms of preplanning and aptitude (test pilot), **Action Careers** covers such jobs as PI, bounty hunter, stunt man, gunrunner, rodeo cowboy, explosives handler and government trapper. The action careerist has little to lose but boredom, and the rewards are often great. There is a good living to be made, plus the realization that you're not out there scratching dirt with the chickens. If you crave for something more, leave your humdrum life behind, and go for it! 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, hardcover, 360 pp. **\$17.95**

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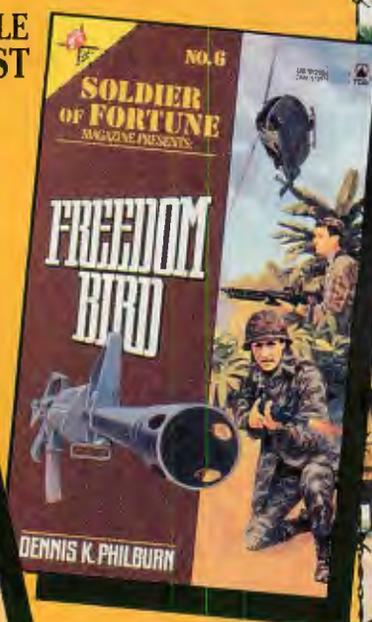
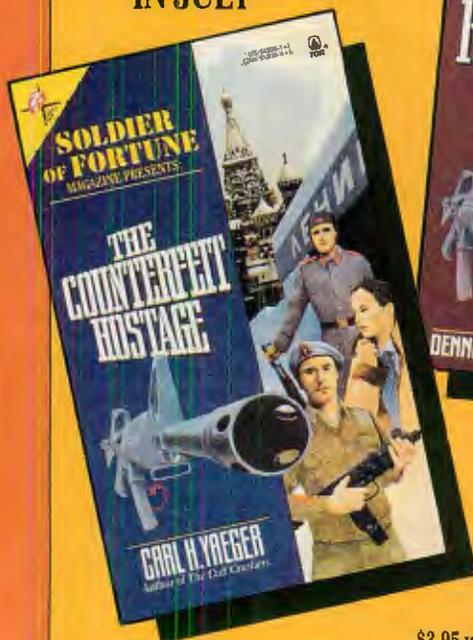
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## SOLDIERS OF MISFORTUNE PART 4...

Sirs:

I must say that the final part of "Soldiers of Misfortune" in the June issue was the best article I've seen in SOF in years.

I could empathize with the situation because I was incarcerated in Ecuador in 1985 after assisting in the legal takeover of a 10,000-acre shrimp farm. U.S. officials knew I was going in; knew that I would work with them before, during and after getting control; and wished me well.

Some key items one must consider are:

- Whether you go in on your own or with U.S. approval, figure that you'll get zero official assistance on getting out if there should be a "problem."
- Consular officials will only come to visit you in your cell to report to Washington that you are indeed there.
- Your family will be instructed to stay away and to send money to Washington, which will attempt to give it to you for food expenses. The only thing they gave us was one bottle of vitamin pills.

Basically, you'll have to get out by your own devices and will be hindered by your own government. If it hadn't been for my own "people" and satchels of cash for "bail," we'd still be doing the 20 years that we were each sentenced to in absentia as "international terrorists."

Name and address withheld by request



# FLAK



## UNDERMINING THE CONTRAS...

Sirs:

There has been an enormous push within the United States to undermine the contras. But what will the elimination of Nicaraguan internal resistance mean? The communists will be able to step up their expansionist activities in the region. The likely outcome of this is the injection of U.S. Marines to fight in a war much bigger than it is at present. Who is more likely to set up a truly independent government, internal resistance groups or U.S. Marines?

I'm not saying that the Marines are the same as Cuban troops or that the United States is imperialist like the Soviet Union is. I am saying that the contras are Nicaraguans and Central America's best line of defense against hegemony from world powers.

Carl Thomsen  
Lancaster, California

*For another perspective on the United States' role in Nicaragua, see SOF's interview with Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, beginning on page 30.*

## MORE CITIZEN SOLDIERS REPLY...

Sirs:

Congratulations on the exposé of the workings of the Texas State Guard [SOF, May '87]. I was a member of the TSG in '75 as a 2nd Lt. and Company XO. You missed a few items but hit the vast majority on the head.

For me, the last straw came during a civil emergency in a small town which had received a direct hit from a tornado. We were sent to provide security against looters. Now get this, after our CO took away our billy clubs and rode off into the sunset to socialize, we were sent into an area of known armed looters with nothing but our whistles! After the first shots rang out, I took my men to the nearest cafe. I felt that it was our turn to socialize. I resigned my commission shortly after that.

The worst thing that Holloway could do is merge his Texas Reserve Militia with the TSG.

Stephen R. Rose  
Houston, Texas

If you were to substitute the name "California State Military Reserve" for "Texas State Guard," you'd have a story that wouldn't be too far off.

As of January '87, SMR personnel are not authorized to carry weapons while in an official SMR status during drills or field exercises, there is no requirement to qualify with any type of weapon, and rappelling and tactical exercises are not part of the CSMR's mission and will not be conducted. However, the rank and file are expected to carry weapons for color guard duty when the brass want to embellish their Napoleonic fantasies in military ceremony.

We in the CSMR have proved ourselves in the past, including as an effective OPFOR for Special Forces, and there is no reason we cannot be incorporated into the total force concept and save money on the defense budget. I am sure that other state defense forces have stories to tell also.

Frustrated California "Smirf"

## LOCKBACK FEEDBACK...

Sirs:

It's about time someone wrote an article about fighting with folding knives! [See "Fighting With Folders," SOF, June '87.] The article was very informative as well as useful. Although I do own a 9-inch bowie and a 12-inch kukri, it's illegal to carry them where I live, so I must carry a 6-inch knife. Everyone should examine his personal situation, then buy the knife that best suits his needs. Any knife that you train with and become a master at using can be deadly, and that is what you should carry.

Mark Franzen  
Joliet, Illinois

The June '87 issue was the best knife-fighting issue you've ever done. Ernie Franco and Lynn Thompson's article was superb. All of us who can't carry a bowie around all day are best served by a good folder and the proper training to use it.

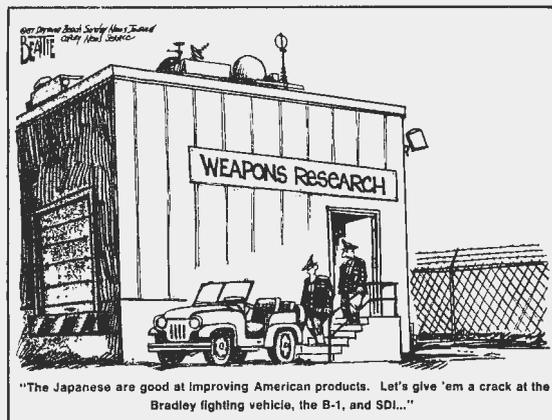
Considering Thompson and Franco's association with Cold Steel Inc., it was most admirable that Cold Steel's excellent knives were not pictured or mentioned in their article. That takes class. David W. Cohen  
Las Vegas,  
Nevada

## PASSWORD BY THE BOOK...

Sirs:

I hate to be picky, but it seems to me that Jack Thompson's "Password by the Numbers" [Combat Weaponcraft, SOF, February '87] neglected to give readers probably the most important piece of advice: Passwords should be changed as frequently as practicable (this goes for bank safes too, not just camp perimeters). I am always amazed at the number of people who use the same code for six months, then are surprised when the rest of the world knows. I would hope remote military outposts change theirs once a day.

Ron Aryel  
Coral Gables, Florida



## BLACK HAWK DRUG BUSTS...

Sirs:

I had been looking forward to Charlie Harris' article "Army Black Hawks in Bolivia" in the June SOF because I was a part of that mission. I was with 1st Battalion 187th Infantry, and our mission was to guard a Bolivian air force airstrip in the rear operating base. Our unit did not do much of anything.

However, our Black Hawks did a lot of work looking for possible raid areas. When an area was found, the officers had to go see it. A couple of guys in my platoon were doorgunners on the Black Hawks, but they were replaced by senior NCOs. I still cannot figure out why we, the infantry, were sent there to do a job and then were not allowed to do it. The Drug Enforcement Agents and the Leopards went on the drug raids, but the boys in green who were trained to fight and kill sat on their butts getting bored. The mission to my platoon was senseless and close to worthless.

Name withheld by request  
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

## DREAM BATTERY...

Sirs:

Peter Kokalis' "Dream Battery" [Full Auto, SOF, April '87] is one pragmatic and lucid answer to the predominant opinion that engineering elegance is an important priority in small arms design.

However, I'd like to propose that instead of the SS109, we could use one of the 6mm SAW experimental rounds, such as the XM732. The heavier mass of the projectile (106 grs.) would improve its ability to pass through heavy vegetation and light cover, with an intact trajectory, over that of the SS109. Grafting the HK Löffelspitz asymmetrical ogive technology onto the heavier round might put its lethality on par with that of the SS109.

While per round weight of this round is higher than that of the SS109, the increased target opportunities with maintenance of the projectile's integrity through light cover might offset this disadvantage.

Eugene Herron Jr.  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis responds: "The 6mm SAW cartridge, developed in the 1970s, was indeed a significant improvement over the 5.56x45mm round. Retaining the 5.56mm's lethality, it offered increased range and penetration. It was apparently abandoned for political and economic reasons. Another superior alternative would have been the .280 British (7x44mm) cartridge designed for the EM2 bullpup rifle. Eventually improved into the 7mm High Velocity (7x49mm), it got lost in the 7.62x51mm NATO shuffle. FN chambered this round for the FAL, but was able to sell it only to Venezuela."

## LETTERS

Your input has made FLAK one of SOF's most popular columns. Tell us what you think — about SOF or any other subject you consider worth our readers' attention. If you'd like to see your letter in print the way you wrote it, keep it brief and to the point. Send letters to FLAK, c/o SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. ✕

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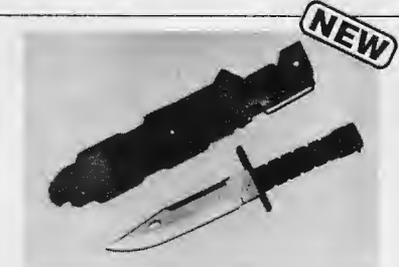
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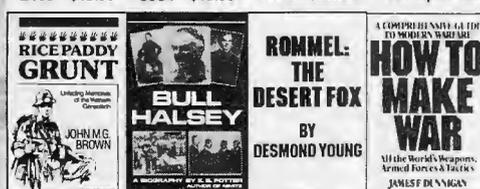


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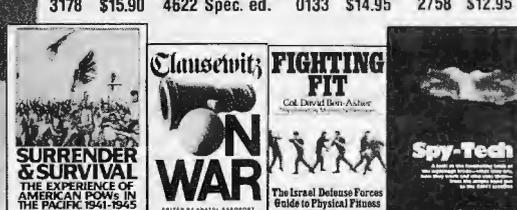


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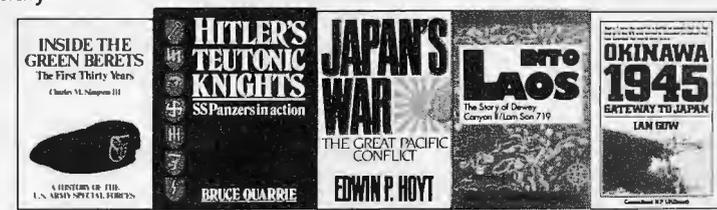


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## WHAT WAS SOF DOING IN CHINA?...

An SOF team consisting of Robert K. Brown, Peter G. Kokalis and Bob Jordan has recently returned from a trip to the People's Republic of China, where they test fired and evaluated a number of small arms never seen before in the West, including a revolutionary lightweight 12.7mm machine gun, a new assault rifle and SAW system, and suppressed submachine guns.

They were the first foreigners invited to visit the People's Liberation Army Small Arms Research Institute outside of Beijing (Peking).

The first article on this unique trip will appear in the next issue of SOF.

## VIETNAM VETS SUPPORT GROUP...

A new veterans organization is being established for former military advisers and civil affairs personnel who served in Southeast Asia. The purpose of the organization is the lending of mutual support based on their unique experiences and the provision of moral and physical assistance to refugees and émigrés displaced by the war.

For additional information and membership, contact: Co Van My, 1462 West University Drive, Mesa, AZ 85201.

# BULLETIN BOARD



SOF team poses with never-seen-before Type 77 lightweight 12.7mm machine gun and, from left to right, Type 81 SAW, Type 67-2 GPMG and Type 69 grenade launcher.

## IVAN IN AFGHANISTAN — AND VICE VERSA...

The Soviet Union, which has never been a contender for the Mr. Congeniality award in Afghanistan, is being ugly even by its own standards in its response to mujahideen raids across Afghanistan's border with the Soviet Union.

The Soviets have launched reprisal raids across the border with the apparent intent of depopulating areas on the Afghan side of the frontier, according to Western diplomats in Pakistan.

Mujahideen sources said Afghan villages on the border in Kunduz and Tekhar provinces have been wiped out and hundreds killed.

Uncharacteristically, the Soviet news agency admitted in May that the mujahideen had crossed into Soviet Tadzhikistan near the town of Pyandzh and killed two Soviet border guards on the night of 8-9 April.

Earlier the Soviets had admitted that the rebels had fired rockets across the border at a factory in Pyandzh.

Meanwhile, U.S.-supplied Stinger surface-to-air missiles continue to blow away Soviet helicopters at a satisfying clip. According to Western diplomatic sources, mujahideen marksmen bagged 11 and possibly 15 choppers in widely scattered fighting in late March and early April. They may also have nailed four fighters.

Mujahideen sources in Peshawar are admitting privately that well, yes, U.S. Stingers may have had something to do with the success of the Hind shoot.

For their part, the Soviets appear to have a success of their own to crow about. The bad guys say they downed a Pakistani F-16A and that it came down on the Afghan side of the line.

If true, it would be the first time an F-16 has been lost in combat anywhere, and the first time one has fallen into communist hands.

In the seven years since the plane achieved initial operational capability, F-16 drivers (mostly Israelis tangling with Syrians) have racked up something like 40 to 50 victories in air-to-air combat with Soviet types.

## HONOR ROLL...

El Salvador/Nicaragua Defense Fund contributors:

United Conservative Action Group, Kenneth Schustereit, Harold Call, James H.F. Gunn, Sgt. B.L. & LCpl. A.W. of STEM Team, Survival Store, Thomas L. Eberlein, CFRS 8704, Travis White, Captain S. Zack, Tim Voss.

Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund contributors:

Gary Olivieri, John A. Dickens. Numerous donors requested their names not be printed.

## VIETNAM ON \$5 A DAY...

Twelve years after the Vietnam War's end, the United States has still not established diplomatic relations with Hanoi — there is the business about POWs, MIAs, and invading and occupying Cambodia, you know — but it is apparently possible for Americans to visit Vietnam as tourists.

A firm called Travel Management International says it's taking bookings for American tourist groups to Vietnam. Tours are scheduled every month from June through December 1987. Tour itineraries are varied but include Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Hanoi, Delat, Da Nang, Hue, Cu Chi, Hoi An and Nha Trang. English-speaking tour guides accompany each group.

Family home visits for Vietnamese who live in the United States are also available and allow extra time for visiting relatives.

Since the United States and Vietnam have no diplomatic relations, visas must be obtained overseas, and are arranged by the Indo-China Consulting Group, the tours' organizers, usually in Bangkok.

The cost, which includes hotels, meals and round-trip airfare, starts at \$2,650.

Travel Management International's press announcement of the tours supplies no additional information about itself or the Indo-China Consulting Group, nor does it give an address where it can be reached.

It does supply a 24-hour telephone number, with an eastern Massachusetts area code, that can be called for further information and bookings: (617) 661-8187.

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D.R.

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S.C.

"Before I bought my Ek, I used various Gerbers (4 of them down the drain), and an uncounted number of Camillus K-bars and Mk3 Models. My Ek proved to be so far superior, in blade and point strength . . ."

FTG2 P.S.

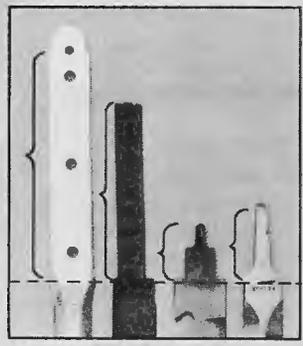


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Jack Wheeler, a friend of SOF, will lead 12 intrepid adventurers on a never-to-be-repeated 5,000-kilometer expedition across the entire breadth of China and Tibet. "Peking to Kathmandu Overland: Tibet and Mount Everest North to South" will take place from 25 September to 16 October 1987. The cost is \$7,250. For further information, contact: Jack Wheeler Expeditions, Wheeler-Blanchard Adventures, Box 8469, LaJolla, CA 92038; phone (619) 454-0130.

## **E**AST BLOC BARGAINS...

Thailand, a U.S. ally, is buying between 50 and 60 Type 69 main battle tanks from the Chinese at an undisclosed "friendship" price (i.e., cheap), according to *Jane's Defence Weekly*. The Thais are also buying a large number of Chinese antiaircraft guns. The announcement came shortly after the Pentagon approved the sale of 40 old M47A5s to the Thais last March. The Type 69 mounts a 100mm gun rather than the 105mm (apparently British) weapon that's been seen on some Chinese tanks recently. The tank has been sold in large numbers to Iraq.

Thailand isn't the only American ally that's gone shopping for East Bloc arms lately. Egyptian arms buyers were reportedly in Moscow in April looking for some \$200 million in undisclosed weapons.

## **M**ASS SURRENDER IN MALAYSIA...

*Asiaweek* reports that on 15 March, 89 members of the Communist Party of Malaysia surrendered in the southern Thai province of Songkhla, handing over about 200 rifles. Apparently both the Thai army and the insurgents agreed not to publicize the capitulation, but the press was tipped off and the news got out quickly.

The communists are remnants of a major insurgency in Malaya in the 1950s, and have used jungle bases to stage hit-and-run raids on both sides of the border. Operations against them have cost the Thai army dozens of casualties every year, mainly to booby traps and land mines. Total communist strength along the border is estimated at 1,500-2,000 fighters.

Let's hope this idea catches on in some other countries.

## **C**OLORADO OUTDOOR JOURNAL...

Former SOF staffer Galen L. Geer is now executive editor of *Colorado Outdoor Journal*, an outdoor magazine covering Colorado.

Long-time SOF readers will recall Geer's trip into Afghanistan in the spring of 1980 and his many other contributions to SOF over the past several years.



Geer's new magazine has grown from in-state to national distribution in less than a year. It promotes the right of gun ownership, public access to public lands and the preservation of hunting rights.

*Colorado Outdoor Journal* is published every two months. Subscriptions cost \$17.95 for six issues and \$24.95 for 12 issues, and can be obtained by writing: Galen L. Geer, Executive Editor, *Colorado Outdoor Journal*, Dept. SOF-BB, P.O. Box 432, Florence, CO 81226.

## **T**HANKS TO TED "GUINNESS" KELLY...

Refugee Relief International gratefully acknowledges the donation of a significant amount of medical supplies and material in memory of GySgt. Ed "Guinness" Kelly, USMCR, a veteran of Korea and Vietnam. "An inspiration to all who love life."

## **B**UY RUSSIAN?...

With all the huffing and puffing in Congress over trade, you'd think that about the last thing a congressman would want to do is make a congressional committee's hearing room available to a foreign trade delegation out to lure business away from U.S. companies.

But that is exactly what liberal Representative George Brown Jr. (D-Calif.) tried to do in May. And what's more, the foreign trade team that was the object of Brown's hospitality was from the Soviet Union, of all places!

Brown, who sits on the House Science, Space and Technology Committee (and is not above dabbling in military bashing when the occasion arises, which is often), tried to make the hearing room available to a band of visiting Sovcoms who were in town to brief prospective U.S. commercial satellite customers on using the Soviet Union's proton military space launcher to put their birds in orbit.

The Soviets have been after a piece of the U.S. satellite launch market — as have the French and Chinese — ever since the Challenger explosion set the U.S. satellite business scrambling for alternative ways to get the hardware into orbit.

"Go into orbit" is what U.S. aerospace industry representatives and federal officials (other than Brown) did when they heard what was about to happen.

The flap apparently got so messy that it embarrassed the Soviets. After an attorney for the Department of Commerce complained, the Soviets got the Washington law firm of Heron, Burchette, Ruckert & Rothwell, which represents their interests in the capital (it's a dirty job, but somebody has to do it), to scrub the idea of using the hearing room in favor of a hotel or other site.

## **V**IETNAM BIBLIOGRAPHY...

F.C. Brown and B. Laurie have compiled an *Annotated Bibliography of Viet Nam Fiction*. The bibliography lists and briefly describes some 500 books on the Indochina conflict. Copies are available at \$4.00 apiece from F.C. Brown, USNH, Box 5, FPO San Francisco, CA 96652-1600. ☒

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“Doing the door,” as building entries are known in the narcotics enforcement business, is one of those events of consequence which demands speed, precision and, above all, a good plan. I’ve been there when all three were missing.

There are really two types of building entries. The first is best characterized by the British SAS forced entry of the Iranian Embassy at Princess Gate, London, in 1980. In instances like this, when lethal force is decided upon in advance, the use of explosives, stun grenades, tear gas and armored vehicles equipped with battering rams is effective and justified.

The second and more common entry is the type narcotics officers do on a daily basis when seizing evidence and making arrests. Even if the occupants are wanted for murder, the law requires the use of only the minimum force required to do the job. This rules out destroying the building in order to enter it. Of course, breaking down a door is permissible but using explosives that could cause injury or death must be reserved for extraordinary circumstances. Instead of explosives, tear gas and automatic weapons fire, subtler techniques must be employed.

In any building entry scenario, the first step is a good plan. The most important part of your plan is deciding whether to force entry at all. It may be better to conduct surveillance of a building until your suspects leave, and then arrest them in a more tactically favorable location. They can then be taken back to the building for seizure of evidence. This strategy doesn’t always work since all suspects may not leave at once. Also, investigative time-demands may not permit a long surveillance or it might be necessary to arrest suspects at the residence to link them with evidence. Initially, however, this non-entry option should always be considered because it places officers’ lives at less risk.

After deciding you have no alternative but to “do the door,” collect as much intel as possible beforehand about the building and its surroundings. The best informant I ever had carried a notebook with him and, after visiting the building in question, drew detailed floor plans which included the location of door locks, windows, weapons, narcotics and other useful details. Such intel gathering is time-consuming but it helps stack the odds in your favor, especially when dealing with experienced criminals.

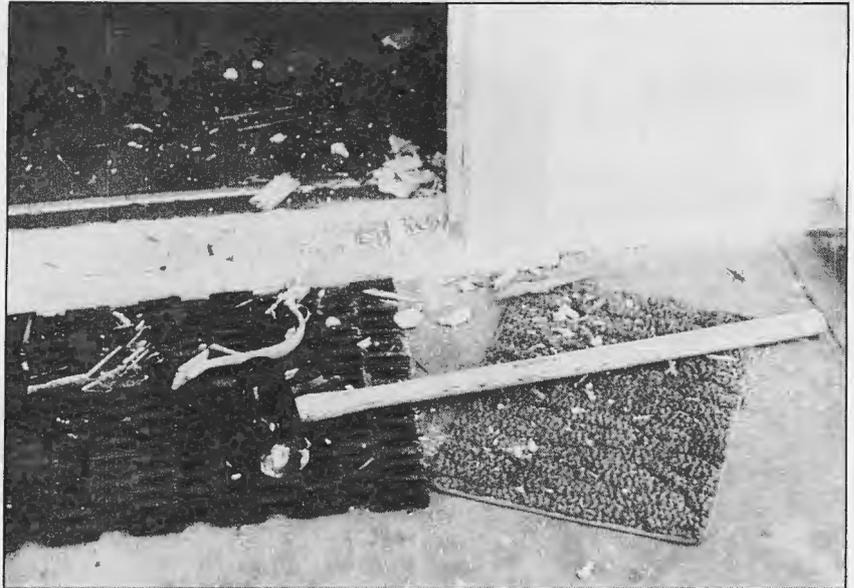
Though building layouts vary widely, making it necessary to tailor your



# COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT

by Bruce Nelson

## Doing Doors



**“Doing a door” doesn’t necessarily mean kicking it in. Sledgehammers or weighted steel pipes can do the job with less effort and less risk of injury to officers.**

entry technique to an individual situation, there are certain principles that apply to all entry situations:

- Entries should be made from one direction so if shooting starts, you won’t get caught in a crossfire. I know two officers who were accidentally shot by other members of an entry team

### THE ENFORCER

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 (IPSC) and a former top-ranked combat shooter. Nelson also makes holsters and was featured in “Bruce Nelson’s Combat Leather” (SOF, October ’86). For more insight into law enforcement tactics, check out his other Combat Weaponcraft columns (SOF, June and July ’87).

because a consistent direction of fire was not observed and the interior walls of the house did not stop the bullets.

- All avenues of escape must be covered. This is best accomplished by a “stop group” covering the other sides of the building. This must be done from cover or from a prone position, again to prevent accidents resulting from crossfire.

- Make specific assignments for systematic room clearing and for who should make arrests. This sounds elementary and is routine for SWAT teams, but quickly assembled groups from several agencies sometimes have difficulty coordinating their efforts. I’ve actually seen entire rooms passed by without being cleared, and an officer shot in the back as a result. I also assisted on a search of a residence when the suspect was found hiding in the house an hour after our entry.

Weapons choice is the next critical concern. Shotguns are popular for building entries, but they do pose some problems. Any shoulder weapon must be compact and maneuverable. Most shotguns are not. Also, in close quarters the shot-pattern spread is negligible, which means aim must be nearly as accurate as with a rifle, and that missed shots might penetrate

*Continued on page 78*

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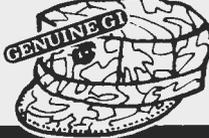
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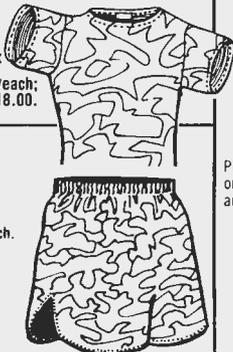
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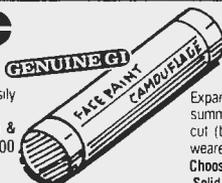
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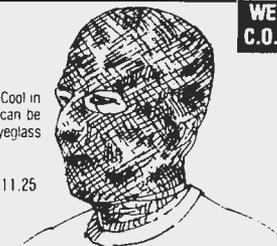
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**TAKE THAT HILL! — Royal Marines in the Falklands War. By Major General Nick Vaux DSO. Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, Dept. SOF, Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523. 1987. 261 pages. \$19.95. Review by G.B. Crouse.**

**B**BRITISH victory in the Falklands was hardly inevitable. In the end, the issue was decided not on the basis of industrial might nor by superior numbers nor by world opinion. The margin of victory on the ground was provided by the skill at arms of Britain's soldiers and marines.

Britain's extremely fit, well-trained, well-equipped marines, paras, guardsmen and Gurkhas, led by genuinely professional officers, prevailed in the face of horrendous weather and a numerically superior force. The actions of one group, 42 Commando, Royal Marines, provide the story for a new book on the Falklands, **Take That Hill!** Written by Major General Nick Vaux, who led 42 Commando in the retaking of the Falklands, the book details the exploits of "Four-Two" from then-Lieutenant Colonel Vaux's order "To the South Atlantic — quick march!" to the final victory at Port Stanley.

The story of men going to war is a timeless one, and that is certainly true of **Take That Hill!** The book's venue could just as easily have been Gallipoli or India or the coast of occupied France. Aside from providing a textbook example of how to lead troops in battle and a detailed — yet fast-moving — account of the war on the ground, **Take That Hill!** really differs from other books of its kind in that it is truly enjoyable to read. Vaux strikes a balance between his military expertise and his obvious talents as a writer to tell the story in a way that is coherent to laymen and yet still valuable for soldiers. The book is not unlike parade ground commands, containing only the necessary information yet delivered with a color and a flourish that distinguish the source as a professional.

Vaux tells the story with an eye for humor and humanity, and with an unbridled pride in his men. He talks about his "lads" with respect and affection — a regimental sergeant major whose quick thinking saves Vaux's life, a company commander with a streak of independence wider than the English Channel, and an aide whose cooking could lead a glutton to fast. His respect for his fellow officers is apparent as well. The seemingly eccentric yet eminently qualified landing craft commander Ewen Southby-Tailyour rep-

resents a breed of officer long since gone from (and sorely needed by) the American military. With men like these, it is little wonder that success seems always to follow in Four-Two's wake.



**Royal Marine Lt. Col. Nick Vaux (with his signaller Cpl. Adams) in the Falklands.**

Vaux's book is highly recommended. Whether you are interested specifically in the Falklands War or generally in men going off to fight, **Take That Hill!** will give you valuable insight into what it is to be a soldier and what leading men in battle is all about.

**SOVIET AIRLAND BATTLE TACTICS. By William P. Baxter. Presidio Press, Dept. SOF, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, CA 94947. 1985. 304 pages. \$18.95. Review by David C. Isby.**

**T**HE Soviets do things differently from most armies. Their ideas and concepts are their own, and attempts to "mirror image" onto the Soviets our own way of looking at things as broad as a world view or as narrow as small unit tactics are normally misleading. Any army in which summary execution is company punishment is going to exhibit some fundamental differences from what we know in the West.

**Soviet AirLand Battle Tactics** deals with a subject broader than its title suggests. While its aim remains to show tactics and their context, it can also serve as a concise, well-written and highly accurate introduction to the

Soviet Army, the keystone of today's only great military empire. Of the book's nine chapters, five deal with the tactics themselves; the remainder provide the background and context for them, as well as brief analysis of their vulnerabilities and how the West might exploit them in any future war.

William Baxter is an experienced Soviet analyst as well as a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel (with a Distinguished Service Cross). Although this book is based on the series of magazine articles that appeared in *Army* magazine in the early 1980s, it is not just a collection of articles. The interrelationship between the chapters reflects much of the basic structure of Soviet military thought. Where the West tends to divide its way of war — into air, land and naval strategy, for example, or between what is the responsibility of soldiers and what of civilians — the Soviets stress unity and singleness of purpose. There is only one Soviet strategy, just as there is only one military doctrine, and the line between military and civilian was blurred long before Stalin became *generalissimo*.

This book offers little support for the comfortable view that the Soviet Army is a bunch of boobs and black marketers. Soviet tactics are, to a large extent, attempts to create an effective fighting force despite their limitations, to rely on what they are good at and work around the areas where they are weak.

A longer discussion of the impact of the Afghanistan War on Soviet tactics — vital to the question of why the world's largest mechanized army has found it so difficult to suppress a popular uprising by the people of a small, poor nation — would have been welcome. The changes in Soviet tactics in recent years have been subordinated to the discussion of the basics. The book's emphasis is obviously on background. This book is not a stand-alone guide to the Soviet Army; it is an accurate and concise survey of *what* Soviet tactics are and also *why* they are the way they are.

The Soviets know all about the West's armed forces — their own military magazines are full of detailed information. In wartime, comfortable lies or illusions about the enemy tend not to survive. Neither do the people who believe them. **Soviet AirLand Battle Tactics** is a useful starshell of illumination on a vast and occluded subject, the Soviet Army. ✕



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**K**EEPING a keen, useful edge on a knife seems to be a problem for many people. While most realize that a sharp knife works better than a dull one, few really understand what a dramatic difference a truly good edge can make. Fewer still know what it takes in the way of equipment to properly sharpen a knife. While we can't sharpen your blade for you, we can give you an idea of some of the sharpening aids that are available and the relative merits of each.

The old standby and the standard by which sharpening stones are judged is the Arkansas, or Ouachita, stone. (You might see this spelled as Washita sometimes.) This is a natural stone called novaculite and is quarried in the same manner as marble or granite. Novaculite comes in several different grades of coarseness from soft, medium and hard, which are the most common, to the hard black surgical grade, which puts the finest edge of all the natural stones on your blade.

My personal favorite among the Arkansas stones is the medium grade, which has a surface texture that feels about like the shell of a smooth egg. With a minimum amount of effort this stone will give an aggressive, biting edge that will shave hair from your arm, and it has the further advantages of being relatively inexpensive and commonly available. A good place to get a good Arkansas stone is a hardware or sporting goods store that sells Buck knives. Buck sells a reasonably priced honing kit — containing both a medium and a hard Arkansas stone as well as a small can of honing oil — that will put a superior edge on your knife with little effort.

Synthetic stones have been around awhile, and my first memory of a whet-rock was of a small pocket stone made by Carborundum. I was six years old and bought the stone, complete with a genuine leather carrying case, for a quarter. I spent a lot of time rubbing the blades of a number of different knives up and down that stone trying to get a shaving edge, and don't recall that I ever did. What I didn't know then was that the stone was too coarse to give the fine shaving edge I was seeking. The Carborundum stones are quite aggressive and give a quick, coarse edge that is well suited for tools such as axes and hatchets; a machete will generally respond well to a stone of this type. These stones give a good, quick, coarse utility edge; a keen shaving edge it is not.

Another synthetic stone that has been around awhile is the India stone. I have one of these India stones, made by the Norton Abrasives Co., as a bench stone in my workshop. This is a fast cutting stone that gives an ex-



# BATTLE BLADES

by Bill Bagwell

## Keeping It Sharp



**The magic angle for sharpening a blade isn't the same for all knives. Spyderco's Fold-A-Vee sharpening aid offers a solution to the problem of those people who just can't sharpen their knives properly using a handheld stone.**

tremely aggressive edge, an edge that bites into both hard wood and flesh and cuts hair. Not all shaving edges will hold up when called upon to whittle something like seasoned hickory, but Norton's India stone gives an edge that will. You can find these stones at better hardware stores and industrial supply houses. I frankly would be at a loss without the one in my shop.

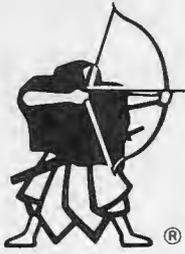
A newer generation of synthetic stones is being spearheaded by Spyderco, Inc., of Golden, Colorado. These stones are of a high-alumina ceramic composition and come in a wide range of grits. My personal favorites among the Spyderco offerings are the gray stone in 500-600 grit and the white stone in 1200 grit. I find that Spyderco's gray stone works in much the same fashion as the India stone in that it gives an edge which is both keen and aggressive. The Spyderco gray stone gives an edge a bit finer than the India stone, and Spyderco's stones have the added advantage of having

been designed to be used dry. Steel cuttings from the blade do not clog the pores of the high-alumina ceramic composition as they do other stones, so the need for a lubricant to keep the cuttings in suspension is eliminated. To clean one of the Spyderco stones, you merely wipe it with a rag and go on about your business.

A word of caution is in order at this point. An edge is a very simple thing, so simple that most people don't grasp what is required to apply and maintain one. When it is time to put an edge on a knife, most people, not understanding what is required, look for a crutch — a gadget. This is usually some sort of clamp or guide that fastens onto the blade to enable you to maintain the magic 17½- or 25-degree angle that is supposedly required to give a shaving edge. The truth of the matter is that *the magic angle is not the same for all knives.*

Some knives are thicker than others, and the optimum sharpening angle for a knife with a blade that is 3/32-inch thick is different from one that is ¼-inch thick, and a properly made battle blade that tapers in thickness from ⅜ inch to ¼ inch presents a completely

*Continued on page 80*



# Brigade Quartermasters **ACTION GEAR**<sup>SM</sup>



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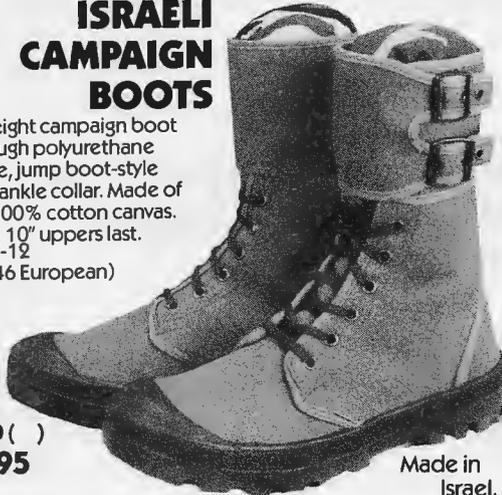
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**V** IETNAM, summer of '70: Back in the world, the politicians had already surrendered to get a few votes, Kent State was getting high ratings on the nightly news, and everyone was making good bucks off the war.

Killer Carter had just graduated from division sniper school and was looking to zork some dinks. New snipers were always pretty well fired up when they left the school with their XM21s, ARTs and Starlight PVS-2As, and Carter was no different. Knowing you could reach out and touch someone 900 miles away made you feel like King Kong.

It took Carter no time at all to score his first kill, and he had a notch inlaid on the stock of his rifle by Gunnarson, the sniper school gunsmith, to keep track. Carter was back in the AO he knew and Bravo Company was going out to take one of the hills the jets had fired up the day before. The high-fliers had put down 750s and two napalm tanks each, then hosed the area with 20 mike-mike.

It was a good operation, classic hammer and anvil. First platoon moved into blocking position and third platoon attacked. A piece of cake. Seven dead dinks were found and Bravo Company claimed them all. Screw the jet jockies. A cache of rice was found, too, and after the company base was set up a few of the grunts cooked the rice in their canteen cups. Mixed with Charlie Romeos, it wasn't too bad.

Having more guts than good sense, Carter volunteered to recon the other hill. The Kit Carson scout didn't volunteer, but he knew Carter would step on his own dick if he went with anyone else.

Soon they were easing through the dense foliage about five meters off the trail that connected the two hills. As they started up the larger of the two hills, the Kit Carson froze when he sniffed the pungent odor of NVA food.

"Beaucoup dinks," he whispered.

In just a few steps they could see the trail. There were fresh tracks leading toward Bravo Company. Very carefully they crossed the trail and started back toward base camp.

Then, there he was! The son-of-a-bitch dink was sitting on the edge of a bunker, looking down the trail with his back to Carter. Killer put the rifle to his shoulder and fired. The dink's eyes looked as big as garbage can lids when the 7.62mm bullets half spun him into the fighting position. Another NVA popped out of the bunker only to suffer the same fate as his partner.

It seemed an eternity, the XM21 firing, the bodies being thrashed by the 173-grain slugs, the leaves and branches falling around Carter. Then, silence — for an instant.

Carter didn't hear the grenade explode, but the sound of an AK-47 on



# I WAS THERE

by Leven Braveaux

## Killer Carter's Love



**Aftermath of a U.S. Army sniper strike — or did a mail clerk do this? Photo: Dept. of Defense**

full auto brought him back to reality. The Kit Carson was already running past the two dead dinks as Carter started to beat feet, thumbing the trigger of his rifle pointing backwards over his shoulder.

There must have been a world record set for the dash that day. The grunts in the platoon said the Kit Carson and Carter were kicking up as much dust as an M48 tank as they motored down the trail into camp.

"What da fuck happened?"

"How many'd ya get?"

Killer Carter was high! Shit, he'd just wasted two dinks, got shot at and made it! There's just no high like a fast fight when you come out on top.

"Goddamn! There's blood all over your back, Killer!"

"Shit. Call a dust-off."

A week or so later, Carter showed up at the sniper school with a smile, a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star for valor. He had been in the hospital at Qui Nhon. Luckily, the grenade fragment had hit him in the head and hadn't hurt anything.

I handed him a beer and congratulated him. The sniper school had a hit board with all the snipers' names and the number of kills they'd each got. Carter's were the latest numbers on the board.

"I'm in love, Sarge," he confessed. He looked like some yardbird at Fort Benning who'd just come off a night on

Victory Drive on his first weekend pass. "No shit. She's a nurse at Qui Nhon. Wanna see her picture? Her name's Mary."

Now I had to admit she was a good-lookin' gal, but Carter had no business screwing around with a lieutenant. Still, there were some trucks going to Qui Nhon the next day so I got him a ride back there. I could cover a couple days' AWOL for him to his CO.

This went on for a month or so. Every two weeks Carter would come to the school to re-zero his rifle. Hell, he wouldn't even slow down before he'd be zingin' down the road to the coast.

One day Doland, another sniper, and I had to pick up some ammo for the school from the supply base near Qui Nhon. We were in the hospital compound there looking for the PX when Doland spots Mary. I asked her if she knew Killer Carter and she tells me she knows a mail clerk — a mail clerk! — named Carter. She had this kind of peacenik look as she told us how this mail clerk Carter hated the war and how he'd been wounded while saving a Vietnamese kid during an attack.

Well, hell, she sure didn't like it when Doland and I got to telling her how Killer Carter was the best damn sniper in the whole division. The more we lied the madder she got. Hell, when we were through, John Wayne looked like a pussy-footin' wimp next to Killer.

Three or four days later, Carter blew by the school on his way to Qui Nhon. That same afternoon, though, he returned to the sniper range all ready to re-zero his rifle and head right back out to the field with Bravo Company.

We went hunting a couple times after that, but I never did tell him about talkin' to Mary.

The last time I saw Carter he turned in his rifle with 12 inlaid notches and headed for Cam Ranh Bay to catch a bird back to the world.

He's a helluva brave dude and I wish him well.

*The author was an instructor at the 4th Infantry Division sniper school from January to December 1970. He worked with Killer Carter out of Fire Base Football. ☘*

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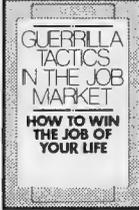
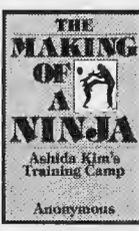
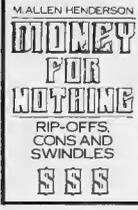


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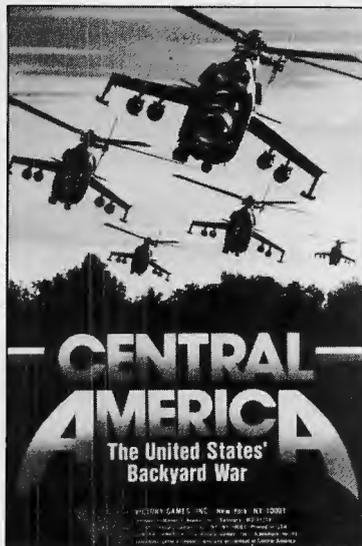
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by Tom Slizewski



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Because NDI test procedures are not quite as rigorous, there exists a minor risk that problems can arise after the product has been type classified. But in most cases the NDI process has proven to be a cost-effective method for the speedy acquisition of military equipment.

An example is the current U.S. Army's XM24 sniper rifle project. However, only two rifles have entered the competition: Steyr's SSG and the Remington Model 700. That both are bolt-actions is merely coincidental, as the method of operation was not specified in the bid solicitation.

My personal choice would be the Steyr SSG. In service with the Austrian army and special operations groups of the SADF (South African Defence Force), it's a formidable weapon. With Norma's match ammunition, which is loaded with 42 grains of IMR-type powder behind a 168-grain hollowpoint boattail (HPBT), my SSG will consistently turn 0.5 MOA (minutes of angle).

But, as equipped for the XM24 trials, the SSG has no feet upon which to stand. And, bipods are essential appendages for military sniper rifles, which should, in most scenarios, be fired from the prone position. Unfortunately, most commercially available rifle bipods, such as the Harris, are little more than flimsy sticks. Only one bipod of milspec quality is currently available.

Parker-Hale, a British manufacturer of sporting rifles and accessories, has designed a military-type bipod that closely resembles the one attached to the famous Bren Light Machine Gun. With a suggested retail price of \$177, this sturdy device is equipped with handstop, quick-disconnect sling swivel and adjustable legs that extend from 8½ to 10⅝ inches. The head can be swiveled and canted approximately 14 degrees in either direction without altering the leg position.

The bipod attaches to a spigot on the handstop with a heavy-duty quick-release catch. Distributed by Gun South, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 108 Morrow Avenue, Trussville, AL 35173), the unit's handstop slides directly onto a rail on the underside of the Steyr SSG PII's black synthetic stock. This so-called "police" version of the SSG is equipped with a heavy match barrel, extended bolt handle with cone-shaped knob and has no iron sights. At 9 pounds, 6 ounces, it weighs 6 ounces more than the standard SSG. I prefer



# FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

## Sniper Specialties



**Swarovski RZFM-6 6x42mm scope features reticle rangefinder patterned after Dragunov/RPG-7. Mounted to FN FAL by means of A.R.M.S. mount which completely replaces FAL's sheet-metal receiver cover.**

the standard SSG with its green stock. Not only is it somewhat lighter, with superior characteristics, but every bit as accurate, as far as I can determine.

As issued, the Parker-Hale bipod cannot be mated to the standard SSG. There are times when we can have the best of everything, however. Bill Wittstein (Billistics, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 944, Wallingford, CT 06492, phone (203) 269-3365) alters the standard SSG to accept the Parker-Hale bipod and in so doing improves both. Wittstein removes the spigot from the bipod's handstop — a heavy and completely unnecessary component — and installs it onto the front of the stock. The front sling swivel, usually mounted at this location, is moved under the stock to retain the attaching swivel. The handstop, now little more than a paperweight, is discarded. None of this affects the barrel's vibrational harmonics as it remains free-floating within the stock.

Wittstein's installation is just as precise and professional as his Title II conversions (see "H&K Clones," SOF, February '87). If you supply both the SSG Marksman stock (green or black) and the Parker-Hale bipod, this installation costs \$60 with a guaranteed turnaround time of no more than 14 days. If you want Wittstein to supply the stock, the cost is \$205 with your bipod installed. If you need both the stock and bipod, the complete price is \$382. All those who shoot what Jeff Cooper referred to as the "gradely green gun" (see "Gradely Green Gun," SOF, April '79) would be well advised to have Bill Wittstein install one of these rugged bipods on their

pet. Let's hope the U.S. Army picks up on this slick combination as well.

### Sniping Optics

Every belligerent who participated in World War II fielded a sniper rifle of some sort. All were standard infantry rifles fitted with optical sights. There is little evidence to suggest that any were special with regard to accuracy or suitability. Military organizations throughout the world have continued to slap scopes on service rifles with undying fervor.

A prominent example is the FN FAL. Adopted by the armed forces of more than 70 nations, optical devices from the Singlepoint Combat Gunsight to the Leatherwood ART II have been attached to its sheet-metal receiver cover. And that's when the problems commence. During the recoil momentum, there is simply far too much flexing of the relatively insubstantial receiver cover to hold zero. Increased vertical dispersion is the inevitable result. Vertical "stringing" of 8 to 10 inches at 100 yards is the norm. This translates to 30 inches at 300 yards. Completely unacceptable. Can the FN FAL be fitted with optical sights in a manner which will reflect the rifle's inherent accuracy potential?

A.R.M.S., Inc. (Dept. SOF, 230 West Center Street, West Bridgewater, MA 02379, phone (617) 584-7816) specializes in the design and manufacture of milspec scope mounts for modern military rifles. Its FN FAL mount replaces the sheet-metal receiver cover and provides a low-silhouette Weaver-type rail system. Fabricated from heavy-gauge, black hardcoated aluminum, it will neither torque nor bend during the recoil cycle. Steel rails, bonded and riveted to the aluminum body, slide snugly and securely onto the FAL's upper receiver. The Weaver-type base, integral with the mount's

*Continued on page 84*

**JOHNNY RUTHERFORD:** Husband, Father, Race Car Driver,  
Three-time Indy 500 Winner,  
Pilot, Network Commentator, Member of  
the National Rifle Association.

"I grew up learning how to handle guns bird hunting  
with my dad in Kansas. Now my family  
enjoys hunting, too, what few chances we get. If we had  
more time, I'm sure it would be a family affair.

"Shooting parallels racing in many ways.  
It's a very serious sport, a challenge you can't take lightly.  
You have to put your skills and strength of concentra-  
tion against it. And of course, safety is number one.

"My son and I joined the NRA not only for the  
literature and programs it offers, but also because we like  
what it stands for. Being an NRA member is important  
for everyone who wants to ensure our freedoms to own, enjoy  
and compete with guns. I just can't  
fathom it any other way."

**I'm the NRA.®**



The NRA's programs, activities and publications help teach millions  
of outdoor enthusiasts about hunting safety, good sportsmanship and the principles  
of responsible wildlife management. If you would like to join the NRA and want  
more information about our programs and benefits, write J. Warren Cassidy, Acting  
Executive Vice President, P.O. Box 37484, Dept. RU-49, Washington, D.C. 20013.

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# MAJ. GEN. JOHN K. SINGLAUB

## Congress, Contras and the CIA

by SOF Staff Photos by Derry Gallagher

**R**ECENTLY *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine's Robert K. Brown and Derry Gallagher met with retired U.S. Army Major General John K. Singlaub. The topic of conversation, as you might expect, was the state of the anti-communist insurgency in Nicaragua. General Singlaub is well-known for his anti-communist activities and most especially for his efforts to assist freedom fighters around the world, particularly in Central America.

**SOF:** It's been suggested that the Central Intelligence Agency has imposed on the contras in Nicaragua the "Laos model" — that is, instead of developing a guerrilla force designed for independent low-intensity warfare, they created a conventional force which required constant CIA supervision and support. One result of that would seem to be the contras becoming prisoners of their own air-resupply system. Do you feel that the Agency has been remiss in the manner in which they structured the insurgency?

**SINGLAUB:** Yes. I don't think there is any question that they lacked either the patience or the ability to train the freedom fighters to do their own work. When the assistance was withdrawn this was most apparent.

In some areas the Agency had been providing every bit of support. They did the tactical planning, logistics planning, personnel planning, maintenance of radios, maintenance of aircraft and were even flying the aircraft. Everything was done for them [the contras]. Not enough training was given to the freedom fighters so that they could do it themselves, so that they could sustain the operation.

When aid was cut off, all of these advisers — and they were more than advisers — left and some of the units just had to stop operating. That is clear with Eden Pastora, with Fernando "El Negro" Chamorro's group and with the Creoles in the south. It was only the FDN — because they had a few veterans of the National Guard — that was able to do anything.

As impatient Americans — in Laos, in Vietnam — we did the same thing. We felt it was just too much trouble to train the people



"As impatient Americans — in Laos, in Vietnam — we did the same thing. We felt it was just too much trouble to train the people to do it themselves."

to do it themselves.

**SOF:** Why didn't the CIA do more to train the freedom fighters?

**SINGLAUB:** You have to understand that when the Agency started this operation, they had been stripped of all of their experienced personnel under [former President] Carter and [former CIA Director] Stansfield Turner. The CIA was gutted of nearly a thousand case officers. Most of these were in the so-called covert action or the paramilitary side of things. And most, or a high percentage of, their human intelligence people were discharged.

The result is that when the Reagan administration came in they had to create a human intelligence (HUMINT) capability, because you can't run a paramilitary operation on the basis of intel collected from satellites or electronic surveillance.

They were lucky to find someone that knew how to operate a radio, let alone someone who knew how to teach a Spanish-speaking peasant how to run a radio. So I think that, under the circumstances in which the resistance movement started, we were lucky they were able to get anything done.

**SOF:** Why wasn't there more effort to establish an underground?

**SINGLAUB:** The withdrawal of the Agen-

cy people created the principal problem. The limited efforts that were made by the contras were unsuccessful. The contras brought people out of Nicaragua for training, but their absence was noted by Sandinista security forces and that made it difficult to reinsert them. What was needed was to train people who were already out of Nicaragua to go back in and establish a training base near Managua to train people from the city in tradecraft for a short period of time.

That's a long-term project that takes certain skills. I was personally underfunded to do that. It's what I'd really like to have done, but I was not encouraged. The Agency sent a signal to me saying they didn't think such a program was necessary. I thought that maybe the CIA was already doing it since they were less enthusiastic about it than some of the other things I suggested.

And I have to fault the Agency because they did not take the opportunity to task DOD with providing some of the people that they had trained in developing underground guerrilla forces. The Defense Department retained a fairly large number of experienced people — SF guys on the Army side — who have experience in this and in other parts of the world.

**SOF:** Why weren't they used?

**SINGLAUB:** Many years ago, in the years when I was with the CIA, 90 percent of our paramilitary operators came from the armed forces. However, it was traumatic every time the Army or Navy or Marines would say, "Listen, you've had that guy for three years, it's time for him to return to his career field," and took him back.

The Agency kept losing people who had tremendous experience. They later made a conscious decision to develop an in-house capability, and that decision was probably a good one at the time. They took a lot of people — damned good people — from the military and offered them career status. But those people were released by Turner and Carter and were not available. What they are doing today is recruiting a kid in college, in his sophomore or junior year, letting him finish and then after he graduates they send him off for paramilitary training in Agency schools. Then he has to get several years' experience, so you're talking a five- to six-year lead time to develop a paramilitary capability.

**SOF:** Why, after Reagan took over and the Agency started building their covert paramilitary capability, didn't the Agency on an interim basis go to DOD and say, "We want to go back to the way it was"?

**SINGLAUB:** That's a good question. I went to General Stilwell [the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy] and asked him if that was a possibility, if the DOD would cooperate if the Agency asked for people. Stilwell understood this because we had been in the Agency together. He said, "Absolutely." If Bill Casey made the request, DOD would either give them individuals that they knew about who have the

capabilities, or they could request a specific specialty from the armed forces, or they could just task us to provide them with a unit or a capability or whatever. We would be happy to comply.

I know that Casey thought this was a good idea, but I suspect that when he discussed this with his staff, who were part of that policy of developing in-house capabilities, that he was probably talked out of that.



**"There is a psychological acceptance of special operations or unconventional warfare on the part of the Soviets, while we have people in our Department of State who believe it's either immoral or not in accordance with the Marquis of Queensberry Rules."**

**SOF: Did the CIA think the funds for the Nicaraguan resistance were not going to get cut off and that they were going to be able to maintain their contracts in areas of maintenance and communications?**

**SINGLAUB:** I am confident the Agency assumed that even if the overt funds were cut off and the Department of Defense taken out, that there would be some special funds to keep them alive. They were, I'm sure, convinced there would be some funds made available from sources available to the president. But the Boland Amendment — which I believe is unconstitutional, by the way — was carefully crafted to prevent that.

**SOF: Does Washington in its various forms — DOD, CIA, State Department — have the capability to run Third World insurgencies?**

**SINGLAUB:** When the Reagan administration came to power they had a very limited capability and it was being phased out. They began building up in DOD and the CIA immediately. The other agencies began developing their own ideas, but there wasn't any one person or one organization that was given the responsibility for the conduct of unconventional warfare or insurgency in the Third World.

This is why I have been advocating it for so many years. It's not just a military effort. You've got to integrate the military campaign with psychological campaigns, black and gray and white. You have to integrate political activities. You have to integrate economic pressures. It has to be a fully

integrated program. You have to be able to influence the media to be helpful rather than destructive.

Someone or some organization has to be put in charge. The closest to that was the National Security Council. The need forced people like Oliver North into an operating role when in fact the NSC is not supposed to be running operations. The absence of a place to run covert actions from is the problem.

**SOF: What should the State Department's role be in this scenario?**

**SINGLAUB:** State should be a player through the embassy's overseer roles and the departments dealing with information services and aid activities. They've got to be players in those roles to make it a fully integrated U.S. effort.

Defense should provide paramilitary capabilities that don't exist in the Agency. And there will be many times when overt support from Defense would be necessary — the use of electronic and photographic surveillance and intelligence as well as their ability to move people and things from one part of the world to another.

**SOF: Should the Agency develop its own in-house paramilitary or should they go back to using DOD assets?**

**SINGLAUB:** I think that there are many advantages to having an in-house capability, but it cannot be expected to cover all parts of the world. I'd have to think about what the limit should be. Definitely, they ought to have limited capabilities so they can respond immediately in a totally clandestine way, which they cannot do if they are borrowing assets from DOD.

**SOF: Why is the Soviet Union so much more successful in running insurgency operations?**

**SINGLAUB:** They are not faced with the problems of exposure. Security is something that is built into their system. There is no question about who is in charge. Realize, too, they have 250,000 hard-core Spetsnaz [special purpose] troops. Taking all the special warfare assets of all of our armed forces, we probably don't exceed 30,000. When the Reagan administration came in, there were less than 10,000.

They [the Soviets] have recognized unconventional warfare as a very, very important part of their total campaign. There is a psychological acceptance of special operations or unconventional warfare on the part of the Soviets, while we have people in our Department of State who believe it's either immoral or not in accordance with the Marquis of Queensberry Rules, or inappropriate for respectable nations such as ours to engage in covert activities.

The fact is, we are in a war. It may be unconventional and low-intensity, but nonetheless, a war has been launched against us. The sooner we realize we are in a war and start fighting the war we are in — rather than preparing for the war that is never going to come — the better off we are going to be.

**SOF: Should we play by their rules as far as covert war?**

**SINGLAUB:** You mean no rules? I think that there are certain things that a democracy cannot engage in. Assassination is probably one of the things that would be very difficult to justify to the American people.

We (as Americans) have to realize that, even though this is a low-intensity war, we are engaged in a struggle for national survival. I don't mean we are struggling for someone else's survival. I'm talking about *our* survival. We have to take whatever steps are necessary to win. There is no substitute for victory.

**SOF: With the investigations and congressional reports coming out recently, there seems to be a question about how effective the private sector support was. Can you give us an idea of how effective the legitimate private sector was in supporting contra operations, as opposed to the allegedly illegal government diversions in supporting contra operations?**

**SINGLAUB:** I am not prepared to admit that there were any diversions. I've seen no evidence of any diversions taking place. I have said that I'll be very, very upset if I find out there were funds available and we couldn't use them to solve the problems we had. We broke our backs getting funds.

Yes, the private sector was effective. It kept them alive and I know that the best deal they got came from the private sector.



**"The need forced people like Oliver North into an operating role when in fact the NSC is not supposed to be running operations. The absence of a place to run covert actions from is the problem."**

**SOF: What percentage of the private sector aid were you responsible for?**

**SINGLAUB:** My organization may not have contributed as much as others, but it did rally the conservative community to support the contras.

**SOF: Is there a role today for the private sector with the contras?**

**SINGLAUB:** I suspect that there is. One of the roles that we will continue is the people-to-people programs, such as the freedom fighter friendship kit, so that individual freedom fighters get a personal donation from someone in the States. There are peo-

*Continued on page 82*

*Publisher's note: The following story was extracted for the most part from my diary compiled in the steamy hellhole of Surinam, the land that God did not forget — only because he was fortunate enough never to have known about it.*

**B**OOM! I opened one eye from my siesta and groggily speculated on what foolishness the guerrillas were up to now. Another boom . . . and a third. No commie aircraft overhead, so it had to be the Gs. The hell with it. Back to sleepy bye.

Later, the SOF team — myself, Derry Gallagher and Bob Jordan — was told by the Brit mercs the boom-booms were the result of the Gs' leader, Ronny Brunswijk, detonating homemade rockets made by the mercs to impress his followers.

#### Warning Order

This was another example of the foolishness, fantasy and frustration we'd been threading our way through ever since we left headquarters in Boulder, Colorado, a week before to visit an obscure, primitive anti-communist insurgency deep in the jungle of South America.

This latest SOF adventure had started innocently enough. SOF's G.B. Crouse, a former Marine, had contacted Sygma Photo Agency seeking photos to supplement a number of articles we had in inventory.

"Interested in a story on the war in Surinam?" the Sygma editor queried Crouse during the course of the conversation.

"I'd like to look at it," replied Crouse.

"I'll send it out for your amusement," shot back the Sygma rep.

A few days later we had a story on a handful of Brit mercs and ill-equipped anti-communist bush commandos, by French military photojournalist Patrick Chauvel. It piqued our interest.

A phone call to Chauvel. "Can you get us in?"

"A piece of cake," Chauvel replied.

Chauvel flew to Boulder, where we debriefed him, and then phoned the leader of the Brit mercs, Karl Finch, who got our adrenaline pumping.

"If you get down here in the next three days, you can get in on something big," Karl hurriedly explained. Time to go. How could we miss an anti-communist *coup de main*?

Calls to Al Mar, Brigade Quartermasters, Pacific Cutlery, Kaufman's West and Alcan to round up miscellaneous equipment. Leaving in 48 hours. Federal Express gear to Miami. Malaria pills. Plane tickets. Visa requirements.

To Cayenne, French Guiana, by way of Miami and Puerto Rico.

Cayenne, administrative capital of French Guiana. A slow-paced tropical

**Brit merc checks MAG machine gun to be used in strafing attack on Surinamese gunboat. Guerrillas also planned to drop the homemade bomb (made out of LP gas canister) on Albina. Operation did not get off the ground. Photo: Patrick Chauvel**

## SOF SURINAM

# A SLOW BOAT TO A SLOW WAR

## SOF Scores Coup — First American Team to Rebel Headquarters

by Robert K. Brown



town, hot and humid, with the required amount of sea and sun. Only eyebrow-raisers for the jaded SOFers are the bare-breasted French beauties lounging around the hotel pool.

A week of waiting, pacing . . . more waiting. . . Rendezvous firmed up and off to St. Laurent, at the head of the Maroni River across from Surinam.

#### Into the Heart of Darkness

SURINAM NOTES — 14 March 1987

After a sleepless night in a \$6.00 room — no charge for the roaches — located over the town's disco, which boasted a three-piece band and one chubby hooker, we overloaded our gear on a leaky pirogue and shoved off for guerrilla HQ.

"Gunboat on the starboard," Chauvel muttered.

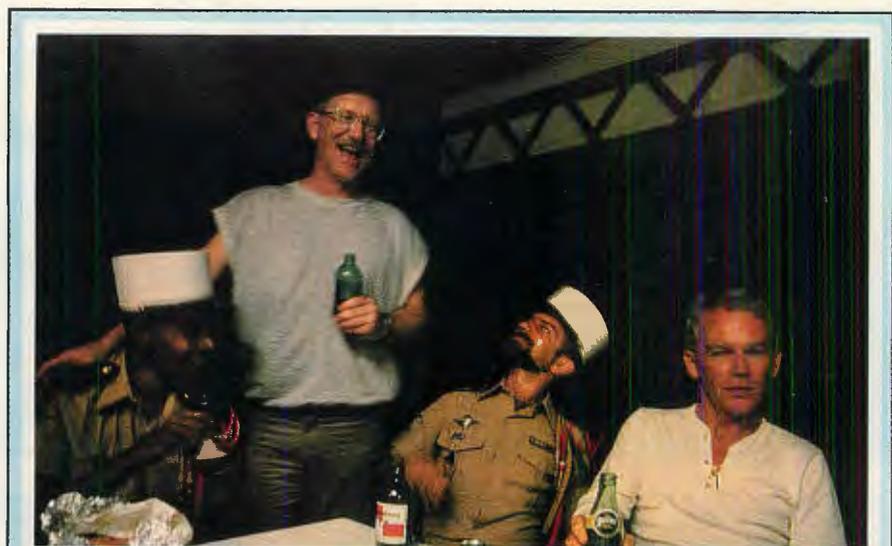
Our adrenaline level rose slightly as the communist gunboat moved out into mid-channel. However, we lost her in a maze of jungle river channels in a few clicks.

So what's our course of action if we're ambushed at a narrow portion of the river? Over the side? Not to worry. Piranhas don't attack unless there's blood in the water. Hmm. . . . Point our cameras toward the ambush and hope the bad guys will realize we're journalists? Hmm. . . . Oh well. Buy your ticket and take your chance.

● 16 March 1987

I had a 1½-hour interview with Michel Van Rey, Brunswijk's military adviser, graduate sociologist and former Surinamese army lieutenant, whom the mercs consider a "snake" and whom Karl had threatened to kill, apparently because Van Rey wants to get rid of the mercs. Van Rey stated that the guerrilla headquarters had radio contact with five of 11 guerrilla commandos scattered throughout the northeast of Surinam. He also provided an estimate of the situation, which boils down to insufficient arms to overthrow the Marxist regime, headed by Desi Bouterse, which has been in power since 1980.

Lunch consisted of a few cans of whatever got thrown in the pot. Beans, carrots, peas, sausages. A young guerrilla in a red



#### REI

While coordinating the trip into Surinam's insurgent stronghold, we decided to visit some of the French Foreign Legionnaires stationed in French Guiana. It didn't take a great deal of common sense to figure out where they could be found.

We entered a local pub to find white kepis very much in evidence, and RKB, in his normal reserved manner, greeted a couple of troops with, "Can I buy you guys a drink?" The legionnaires, although suspicious of strangers, decided that free beer took priority. They joined us and ordered something called "Vitamin K" from the barmaid — we soon learned that Vitamin K, in legion parlance, meant Kronenbourg beer. Ill-advisedly, and without much success, we tried to keep up with the legionnaires. The payback came the next morning as the tropical heat beat on vitamin-swollen heads.

The French Foreign Legion has a well-deserved reputation for producing hard-core soldiers with a taste for combat. Once the legionnaires decided that the editor/publisher of SOF was not in the area to get a suntan, they made it clear that, if assistance were needed, there would be no shortage of volunteers — provided, of course, that there was combat. Combat seemed the one thing that duty in Guiana lacked. Legion duties included guarding the Ariane launch installation, building bridges, repairing roads, staffing the jungle warfare school and, more recently, looking after refugees from Surinam.

In his usual generous fashion, RKB littered the pub with SOF T-shirts, patches and magazines, and we all agreed that a follow-up visit the next night would be in order. RKB, suffering

from an overdose of vitamins, opted out. However, other members of the staff felt duty-bound to return to the pub. Duty also called some uninvited members of the French *Sécurité Militaire* along, to ensure that SOF wasn't recruiting any legionnaires. In fact, at one stage the spooks outnumbered the troops. Tiring of the surveillance, we crawled to the *Kepi Blanc*, a bar run by a former hooker.

We had certainly given the PMs and spooks something to listen to, but it had nothing to do with recruiting. One of the most loudly discussed topics was SOF advertising. A specific complaint came from a particularly large Brit. It seems he had purchased a book on Ninja techniques through an ad in SOF. The book promised to make the reader invisible and able to leap tall buildings with a running start. One technique that appealed to the Brit prescribed standing on one foot and configuring arms and legs to resemble branches, whereby any observer would see only a tree. During a stint in jail, the Brit tried all of the things suggested in the book and was, unfortunately, still in the jail. He even picked up a few extra days when the tree ruse failed to amuse the guards during bedcheck. He accused SOF of false advertising, and suggested that we should pay for his discomfiture. Various forms of payment were discussed; most seemed to involve blood. There are occasionally times when a glib tongue comes in handy, and we eventually parted the best of friends.

— Derry Gallagher and Bob Jordan

LEFT: SOF team with homemade bomb dedicated as present to communist government from SOF. Guerrillas added the dedication after SOF team gave away their web gear as presents to the poorly equipped guerrillas. Photo: Patrick Chauvel



SOF team and Brit mercs. From left to right: Gallagher, Brown, merc Charlie Mosley, Jordan, mercs Karl Finch and John Love. Note field-expedient "camo" on plane. Photo: "K"



beret, with whom I traded badges, was making a voodoo charm out of metal cable. Kid said the charm will have more power if it's made in the presence of a white man.

Earlier in the day, the French pilot contracted to fly the captured Cessna 204 flew a practice bombing run with homemade rockets. Did not explode as they did not land on the detonator due to the crude firing pins and the lack of fin stabilization. Ground party could not find all of those rockets and apparently they're still there — armed. Perhaps the plane will find one of these rockets with its wheels when it's landing or taking off. Hmmm...

Karl's disillusioned with Brunswijk's inactivity; plans to move with 20 Hindus to the west, carry out an ambush and blow up a POL (petrol, oil, lubricants) facility. Karl says the Hindus speak English and have a higher level of education; he envisions organizing this group into a 200-man nucleus and seizing the predominantly Hindu western part of the country. Idea is to further shut the economy down. Karl plans to leave half the weapons captured in the ambush in a cache in the jungle; he'll send two of Ronny's men back to the cache, and the rest of the captured weapons will go with Karl and his Hindu cadre to the west. Sounds interesting, as Ronny is inactive. Charlie Mosley, a three-tour veteran of the Coldstream Guards and who served with Grey's Scouts in Rhodesia, says Ronny has a "movie star" mentality.

**Brit mercs adopted Surinamese war orphan. Menu consisted of whatever was available thrown into one pot. SOF presented merc "OIC" with Al Mar SERE knife. Photo: Patrick Chauvel**

**Anecdotes:**

1. Ronny taxis airplane after landing so his men think he flies it. Hmmm...
2. His #2 voodoo doctor, a Hindu, goes into a trance and then says Ronny should not go into battle. Hmmm...
3. Merc says Ronny fires bullets into a shirt, then has a man put it on to demonstrate that he is impervious to bullets and therefore Ronny has powerful voodoo. Hmmm...
4. Bush commandos believe that if they stand on one leg and put a leaf in their mouth they are invisible to their enemies. Charlie tells of four of them caught in the middle of the road by a government armored vehicle. They utilized this technique and were all blown away. Observation: Perhaps they had the wrong type of leaf. Hmmm...
5. Ronny had blown up most of the rockets and bombs because he likes to make loud noises to impress his followers. Hmmm...
6. Karl captured a spy in St. Laurent, got him to confess to throwing grenades in Cayenne which resulted in his control, the Surinamese consulate in Cayenne, being expelled. Ronny has made the spy the jailer and storekeeper in his guerrilla headquarters. Hmmm...

A homemade napalm air attack is planned for Albina Wednesday night. The mercs plan on using an LPG canister with field-expedient drogue chute to stabilize the bomb into a nose-down attitude. It will be dropped on Albina, then they will strafe/machine-gun the gunboat with the single guerrilla MAG out the door of the plane. Pilot doesn't know about this phase of the mission and we haven't been told how they will convince him to fly it. Perhaps a pistol to the head.

Night before last, some type of accidental discharge resulted in a 9mm slug ending up in somebody's leg, no further details. Oh well. I assume Ronny wants to keep the mercs as they are the only ones willing to fight, at least that is how it appears from here. Mercs say bush commandos all run off at first burst of gunfire. Varying reports concerning number of guns available for the guerrillas. Initially, we were told they had 30 FALs. Karl says they have 60 FALs. Problem with FALs is that they have no ammo.

Dinner last night consisted of oatmeal with sugar, some kind of vile porridge. No need to worry about gaining weight on this diet.

The "plan" calls for us to leave for St. Laurent by pirogue the day of the napalm attack so we can photograph the attack from across the river. We will then link up with the SOFer on the plane after it lands at a small strip outside of St. Laurent. We will then proceed to Cayenne where we will leave this shithole.

We need to figure out commo with Karl so when we go back to Surinam at a later

**Brit merc Karl Finch carries Beretta Series 70 in 5.56mm. Guerrillas are short on weapons and use whatever shoots. Photo: Derry Gallagher**



date, we can link up.

Mercs sincerely appreciated the web gear and equipment we brought as they had none and desperately needed that equipment in order to facilitate their move to the west. Good rapport has been established since arrival. Guerrilla headquarters on the island is in a former Dutch administrative center for this isolated area. Admin HQ has a small dirt strip that will take a single-engine Cessna, a hospital, guest houses where the mercs are billeted, and a radio station.

● 17 March 1987

Interview with witch doctor:

C. K. Salanma is a 35-year-old witch doctor who makes charms which he claims protect the wearer from bullets. He can also "sort out problems" and is involved in "counseling." However, he did admit that he couldn't help me grow new hair. I asked him, "Can you solve problems with women?"

"Oh yes!" he replied, but was unable to elaborate and had no advice regarding AIDS or herpes.

He learned the witch doctor trade from his grandfather, "has all the power of his father from his grandfather," and has been practicing 15 years. Works with flowers; each flower has power, a specific flower is used to treat a specific ailment. I suspect inventory of local flora includes mucho marijuana. Describes himself as a "commandant of medicine." He says he wears his charm only in battle; doesn't wear it all the time because it makes him "too strong." The most powerful charm is in the form of a metal bracelet worn around the upper bicep; it's made from metal that has been taken from a weapon. Hmmmm...

A Cessna 204, captured by the guerrillas, operates on the small airfield at guerrilla headquarters. It was captured by Sergeant Major Henk Van Rendwick, who was the OIC of Echo Battalion, Bouterse's version of Special Forces. Van Rendwick had been captured during a guerrilla ambush in which three government troops were killed, and had agreed to join the guerrillas. After three months, according to Charlie, Brunswijk gave him 300,000 guilders to buy weapons in Brazil. Instead, he split for the fleshpots of Holland.

"Brunswijk figured Van Rendwick had 'turned around,'" Charlie noted sarcastically. "But he went the wrong way and became a crook."

1415 hours. We are at the airplane on the strip, photographing the mercs rigging the drogue chute with the homemade bomb, the chute cobbled up from a shower curtain and shroud lines made from heavy monofilament fishing line. The "bomb" is to be kicked out of the plane's door, the drogue chute will deploy and stabilize the bomb in a nose-down position which, with luck, will ensure that the firing device impacts on the ground.

For the practice run, the LPG cylinder is filled with water to approximate the weight of the bomb when filled with napalm. The "plan" is to make an approach between 500



Gold dredge on Maroni River, which separates Surinam from French Guiana. Each dredge produces about 50 grams of gold per day. Photo: Robert K. Brown. Inset photo by Derry Gallagher.



## TREASURE OF THE MARONI RIVER

Gold. Everybody dreams of finding a chest of it. Nobody has enough. If you're in the mood to play Humphrey Bogart in the Sierra Madre, you might well consider the Maroni River, which separates Surinam from French Guiana.

We saw a number of gold dredges as we motored up the Maroni, but didn't get a detailed briefing on gold mining until we visited a French police outpost an hour up the river from guerrilla headquarters.

According to the French police lieutenant we met, there are 10 dredges on the river, each producing about 50 grams of unrefined gold — 95 percent pure — per day, which totals out to 5.7 pounds of gold per week based on a five-day work week. The gold is sold to anyone

for the equivalent in francs of \$10 per gram, or \$4,350 per pound, or roughly \$24,795 for a week's production. This amount of gold on the world market, figuring gold at \$460 per ounce, would bring \$42,022 per pound. According to my abacus, this would provide a gross profit of \$17,227 per week. Not a bad turnaround on your investment.

So, for about a 20-grand stake, you could emulate a seedy character out of a Somerset Maugham short story, replete with frayed white linen suit, soiled Panama hat, a gin and tonic in one hand and a scale in the other, sitting under a leaky thatched roof as the gold miners line up with the week's take.

I asked the French lieutenant why the locals weren't cashing in on this bonanza.

"Simple," he said. "All the smart ones are in the dope business."

Anyone for gold dredging?

and 600 feet and kick it out so we can observe chute deployment and confirm the nose-down position of the bomb upon impact.

Bomb is loaded. Chute is rigged. Kicker boards. Pilot takes off. Plane approaches off course. Bomb kicked out. Chute tears away. Bomb tumbles into jungle, lost until searchers dig it out tomorrow. Fortunately, mercs are more adept at blowing up bridges than conducting air ops.

Anecdotes:

1. Voodoo rules and regulations: not supposed to have sex till after washed by voodoo man after voodoo ceremony. One chap who violated this rule died the next day, according to the voodoo man. The transgressor gave his weapon to another guerrilla who started "cleaning" it underneath the house. It discharged, the round went up through the floor and hit the man in the ass, killing him. Voodoo doctor claimed this happened because he disobeyed voodoo rites. Hmmmm...

2. In the course of making homemade grenades out of dynamite and fuses, one chap lit the fuse but didn't realize it was burning. He blew off his arm and head. Hmmmm...

3. After Karl's troops bugged out during an ambush of a Brazilian-manufactured armored car, he decided to destroy it with an improvised land mine consisting of 11 pounds of dynamite, 15 pounds of gunpowder and 100 feet of det cord packed into a fire extinguisher and activated by a field-expedient clothespin-type electrical switch. Since the wet climate would corrode the contact points on the switch, Karl cleaned them daily after disarming the mine.

Karl gave a detailed demonstration of this procedure to the guerrilla placed in command when Karl had to leave the area for a few days.

A few days later the jungle commando decided he should clean the switch. He started to scrape off the contact points — and proved to all that Karl's mine worked.

He had forgotten to disarm it. There wasn't even enough left for a burial. Even lost the screwdriver. Hmmm...

Mercs speculate that the reason the petrol for the napalm bomb has not arrived is that the people buying the petrol for the plane own a block of houses in Albina, and they are not too enthusiastic about having their real estate destroyed with homemade napalm.

Karl says, "Probably have to steal the gas for the plane." The French pilot could buy the av gas for the plane. (Av gas sales restricted to French citizens.)

● 18 March 1987

Last night Karl said a guerrilla-initiated action killed 16 of Bouterse's men, that Bouterse's #6 man was burnt alive. The others were shot. No further details.

Ronny has left the guerrilla base camp, and we speculate why he left so quickly. Maybe to make calls concerning arms deals in Holland, maybe to try to make a deal for the Twin Otter, maybe to visit one of his girlfriends. The French pilot comes in and tells us the left front tire is flat. Maybe Ronny went to get a spare. Ronny says he needs two days in St. Laurent, and that means we are hung up here.

An anti-Bouterse Hindu businessman is very frustrated with Ronny as he has been asking for arms and uniforms for two months. The Hindu allegedly has 200 men but no weapons near Nickerie west of Paramaribo. This is a prosperous agricultural area where the majority of Surinam's farming is conducted. Karl will use explosives that have been cached at jungle camps to attack the oil refinery.

"I don't know what happened to Ronny. He has lost all interest in the war. He is waiting for something, and we don't know what it is," Karl said.

We have given the mercs the rest of our gear. As stated earlier, they are most appreciative of the rucks, web gear, etc. as they had nothing. This will assist them when they make their move across the country.

Last night they made a practice run with the homemade bomb. The pilot was off course and the bomb broke away from the drogue chute as the suspension lines were not strong enough. The bomb was lost someplace in the jungle but was recovered today. Discussed carrying out the strafing run on the gunboat. Apparently, nothing is going to be done.

Karl mentioned that in December or January one merc and a team of guerrillas blew up the electrical pylon carrying electricity to the bauxite mines. Unknown if they had been repaired. Pylon located between the hydroelectric plant and a hydroelectric station on Van Vlomestein Lake in Paramaribo.

More Anecdotes:

1. Ronny broke all the bolts for his Barrett crossbow shooting them into the door of his house. Hmmm...

2. Ronny refines his military prowess nightly — by playing Atari games with his staff. Hmmm...



**TOP:** Brown has just awarded Jordan a new MOS — "Bailer, First Class." Jordan noted, "I didn't do enough night bailing to receive my 'Master' badge." Photo: Patrick Chauvel

**ABOVE:** Brit mercs captured Surinamese Twin Otter and attempted to sell it in order to purchase additional weapons. Photo: Bob Jordan

About 1130 we caught a canoe to French outpost on Maroni River and spent the afternoon with the French commander talking mechanics and finances of buying and selling gold nuggets/dust dredged from rivers. No boat to St. Laurent today, "maybe" tomorrow.

● 20 March 1987

After a 10-hour ride down the Maroni River, made interesting by our jovial boat crew, who were snorting, sniffing, smoking and drinking the entire trip, we finally arrive in civilization. I'll take a Huey any day.

● 21 March 1987

Interview in St. Laurent with Dr. Eddie Josefzoon, a political adviser, and Michel Van Rey:

They say that two weeks ago demonstrations were held against the government by students in Paramaribo. They claim four students killed, one permanently injured. According to our sources, a leading Dutch paper said the Dutch Communist Party will support Bouterse and try to pressure the Dutch government into releasing the Dutch subsidy that has been held up since 1981 because of 11 people murdered by Bouterse.

Doctor Josefzoon was formerly an adviser to the minister of education. He is a representative of the Bush Negro groups: largest group is the Creoles, second largest the Hindus, and third largest is the Javanese. He claims 35 percent of the population of Surinam is in the Netherlands, the majority of whom left in 1975 because of the uncertainty about their future once Surinam became independent. Claims about 180,000 exiles in Netherlands from Surinam. Josefzoon describes the conflict as a "civil war" rather than a revolution to overthrow the present government.

"When the war started the thought was it would take two to six months. We were too optimistic," Josefzoon stated. When it started the guerrillas were short of money and weapons, but "we were convinced we were fighting for a good cause: democracy. We thought we could get help from France, U.S., Brazil, Venezuela or Holland. Western democracies. We were obviously overly optimistic. All these countries opposed Bouterse. The Dutch government compared Bouterse with an animal. You hear that kind of statement and then you tend to believe you'll get help from these countries.

"The Dutch say they are sympathetic and understand what is going on. They agree that we want to bring back democracy but they can't give anything more than moral support," he continued. (Sound familiar?) "After this disappointment," Van Rey said, "we decided to do things ourselves, to buy weapons; solve our own logistics problems."

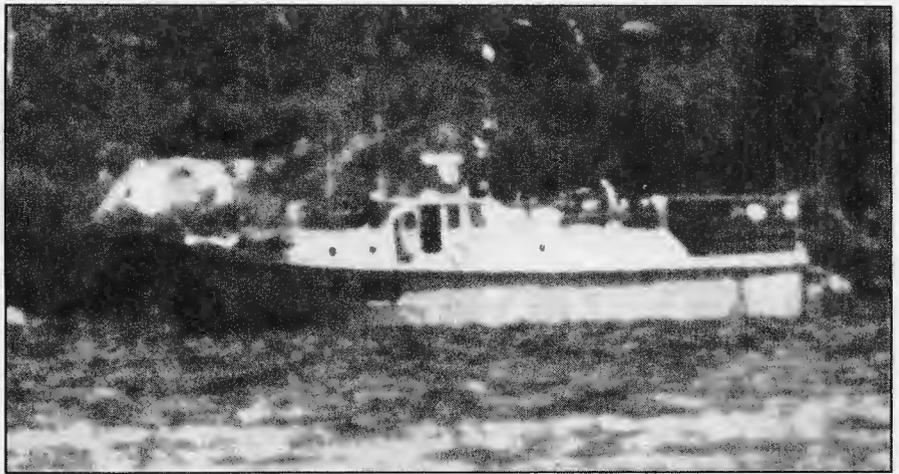
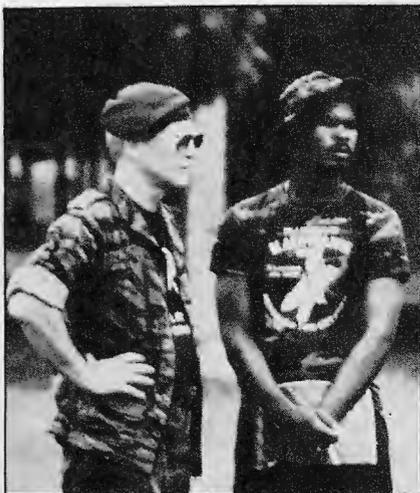
Ronny started with 40 men in July 1986,

and at this moment claims to have 1,500 men. Lack of weapons and ammunition is the main problem and the main problem is not being solved. In the last few months the guerrillas have lost between one and two million guilders that have been ripped off from them by unscrupulous arms dealers or people alleging to be arms dealers. Van Rey believes that additional pressures applied to Bouterse will cause the people to rise up against him, and makes a comparison to the Philippine situation where Aquino was successful. Van Rey believes they can be successful if they obtain \$500,000. Van Rey says the government has 2,000 men but morale is bad; the troops are too poorly trained. One U.S. pilot, a 63-year-old Vietnam veteran (name unknown), is flying one of their choppers. Bouterse has four other pilots, all foreigners.

Josefzoon says there's no conflict between Ronny and the other guerrilla commanders. (This contradicts the information that Patrick Chauvel received in a letter from an acquaintance. It stated that four bush commanders had told Ronny that they were no longer going to follow his orders unless he came to the front and showed up with weapons.) Van Rey says 10 well-trained officers are waiting to come from the Netherlands and a lot more are standing by. He says the above-mentioned individuals are not interested in fighting this type of war. (What does he mean by "this type of war"?) We apparently have a Catch-22 situation here: Van Rey says that the people in the Netherlands who are going to come have stated that they "must have well-trained soldiers and then we will help."

Van Rey says Bouterse is more incompetent than Ronny. Josefzoon feels that military pressure is being kept on Bouterse and that Ronny commands the loyalty of the men. He is not in favor of using mercs but needs personnel to conduct training. Josefzoon says, "Foreign countries want us to get rid of the mercs but they do not provide any assistance." He claims there are 60 Libyan mercs and 14 blacks from Angola working for the

**Brown and guerrilla leader Ronny Brunswijk observe morning training — such as it was. Photo: Derry Gallagher**



**TOP: Enemy to starboard! Surinamese gunboat caused pulse to quicken prior to infiltration. Boat was to be target of aborted bombing/strafing run. Photo: Derry Gallagher**

**ABOVE: Brown observes "close order drill" of guerrilla troops — with some curiosity and considerable amazement. Photo: Patrick Chauvel**

Bouterse government. "These are mercs but nobody says anything about them," he complained. "One of the conditions for help from Western democracies would be unification of the various exile groups, but no similar provision or requirement is made of the Afghan rebels. It's unfair."

#### **Estimate of the Situation**

Even though the ragtag rebels are outnumbered, poorly trained, ill-equipped and led by a charismatic but mercurial leader (one merc described Brunswijk as a 25-year-old with the brain of a nine-year-old), they have still managed to force Bouterse's Marxist government into a military stalemate.

Bouterse's 2,000-man army is also poorly trained, and has neither the stomach nor the strength to conduct effective counter-guerrilla operations in Surinam's dense jungle terrain.

Government forces have ceded control of the entire northeastern section of Surinam to the guerrillas, maintaining a single isolated outpost in Albina, located on the mouth of the Maroni River which borders French Guiana.

Guerrilla operations, haphazard and amateurish as they are, have nonetheless almost brought the economy to a standstill. The guerrillas have forced closure of

Alcoa's bauxite mine, which provided some 80 percent of the country's foreign exchange; cut power lines to the capital; and rendered all but one of the major roads impassable. Raids on palm oil plantations, lumber operations and the aluminum industry have cost Bouterse's regime at least \$150 million.

Guerrilla forces are too unsophisticated to capitalize on the growing discontent in Paramaribo, which has been fueled by political oppression and import shortages.

Brunswijk's Surinam Liberation Army is aligned with an exile group in Holland led by Henk Chin-a-sen, who served as president under Bouterse. He met with U.S. State Department officials this spring seeking support, but as one might expect, received no promises of assistance.

The wild card in this conflict is the French, whose interests in Surinam are obvious. The French space station is located at Kourou, and the Libyan troublemakers who have been tied into supporting an embryonic independence movement in French Guiana have prompted the French to allow the Surinamese guerrillas freedom of movement in and out of St. Laurent for purposes of resupply.

Highly placed French sources have suggested that if the Libyans are killed or captured in combat, the French might be willing to do more.

The tragedy of this obscure little war is that a primitive people who simply wish to return to democracy cannot elicit \$500,000 worth of arms and supplies from weak-willed Western democracies.

Anyone out there got a half-mil for a worthy cause? ✕

Text &amp; Photos

by Jake Border

# BATTLE AT THREE PAGODAS PASS

**I**F you trace the route of the infamous World War II Japanese Death Railway northwest from Kanchanaburi (two hours' drive west of Bangkok and site of the bridge on the River Kwai), you arrive at a place on the Thailand-Burma border marked by a trio of historic coneshaped stone and plaster Buddhist edifices — Three Pagodas Pass.

These pagodas, or *chedis*, mark the spot from which centuries ago the Burmese used to periodically romp into Thailand on their traditional invasions.

The Burmese are developing yet another tradition in Three Pagodas Pass these days, with nearly annual attacks against the Karen and Mon peoples who have carved out a tenacious, semi-autonomous existence on the Thailand-Burma border. The attacks are launched in December, allowing a month or two of campaigning before the monsoon turns jungle tracks into slippery nightmares and makes fighting impossible.

An estimated 250 Burmese from 31 Battalion initiated the hostilities on 12 December 1986 by overrunning the deserted but booby-trapped front-line Mon outpost of Kreg Thaw, about 15 klicks northwest of Three Pagodas Pass.

The insurgent Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA) soldiers left Kreg Thaw rigged with "bottle-bombs" — homemade antipersonnel mines made from dynamite and a blasting cap powered by two 1.5-volt flashlight batteries, which explode when two copper-wired bamboo sticks are pressed together. Very simple but highly lethal.

The Burmese took their knocks clearing

**LEFT:** Porter moving consumer goods into Burma along the "Aji-no-Moto trail."



## BORDER PATROL

Jake Border has traveled extensively in South Asia, and it would seem that combat is always on his itinerary. Border's previous articles for SOF include a report of his mission with the Afghan mujahideen to Kandahar inside Afghanistan ("Afghan Attack," SOF, September '86), and an account of KPMLF skirmishes along the Thailand/Cambodia border ("Cambodian Recon," SOF, October '86).



Kreng Thaw, then advanced down the rugged (but passable) dirt track to Three Pagodas township. They were held up just south of Kreng Thaw at the heavily bunkered Mon outpost of Ju-jblu, where 200 MNLA soldiers under the command of Major Nai Sai Rod put up a stubborn defense.

After three hours of fighting, the Burmese withdrew and established a jungle base on a hilltop to the west. On 14 December at 0200 hours they launched a second attack against the Mon which lasted until 0645. It was an apparent attempt at a surprise outflanking, but the MNLA had also taken the precaution of digging in around Ju-jblu village and managed to repulse the Burmese once again.

After some intense shelling from 81mm and 60mm mortars and 75mm recoilless rifles, in which the Mon suffered two KIA, they withdrew to establish a defensive perimeter around the outskirts of Three Pagodas township, a tactical move in light of a second Burmese column moving down from the north.

These Burmese were from 62 Battalion which, simultaneous with the assault on Kreng Thaw, had swooped in to occupy the undefended Karen No. 5 antimony mine about 40 klicks north of Three Pagodas. Now they were heading south in what was shaping up to be a classic two-pronged thrust.

Mixed elements of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) — Mon allies — followed the Burmese advance southward to the Mae Kasa antimony mines, 15 klicks north of Three Pagodas. Because the Burmese had peppered the trails with antipersonnel mines, the Karen were obliged to take a slower, indirect route following little-used jungle paths known only to Karen game hunters.

What happened when the Karen finally came upon the Burmese is typical of the bungling that can occur in jungle warfare. Karen commanders had gone forward to recon the terrain when the Burmese spotted them and opened fire. Karen soldiers, tired and hungry, began an angry but uncoordinated counterattack which proved inconclusive after three hours of fighting. The Karen lost two men KIA and 10 WIA, with estimated Burmese casualties of seven KIA and 11 WIA.

The 250-man KNLA force then pulled back to link with the MNLA and wait for the final Burmese thrust to Three Pagodas but, for reasons best understood by the Burmese, the final attack never came. At 1300 hours on 17 December, the Burmese 31 Battalion had advanced sufficiently to clash briefly with the MNLA, while their 62 Battalion counterparts withdrew from Mae Kasa,

**LEFT:** MNLA soldier Sein Myint wearing bush hat captured from the Burmese 31 Battalion.



**TOP:** Mon soldier with Burmese-made G3 rifle.

**ABOVE:** MNLA troops at Nam Khok headquarters.

**57mm recoilless rifle and Mon gunnery commander.**



completely avoiding the track leading south to Three Pagodas. They joined up with 31 Battalion in the evening, bivouacked in the jungle, and on 18 December both units retreated to their headquarters at Akyaing near Mezali village, 30 klicks from Three Pagodas township.

My timing was just a week off. I'd written to the Mon of my intention to visit and had received an invitation to come before the end of the year if possible. I'd just come down from northern Thailand when I heard of the Burmese attack, so I raced for the border, arriving the day following the Burmese pullback.

On my first visit about a year ago, getting to Three Pagodas was a real hassle. The road ended at the nondescript Thai town of Thong Pha Phum, a three-hour local bus ride from Kanchanaburi driving parallel to the mist-enveloped Bilanktaung Ranges, whose promise of torrential rain was never broken. Here I entered into negotiations for the next stage of the trip, to the district capital of Sangkhlaburi.

A recently constructed hydroelectric dam at Thong Pha Phum had put the old town of Sangkhlaburi underwater and created a huge manmade lake, which called for a long-boat ride. The lake was eerie, dotted with islands that were once hilltops, while branches wreathed in natural bouquets of wild orchids projected from drowned trees.

Approaching "new town," as the relocated Sangkhlaburi is called, a large, deceptively archaic-looking temple arises from a hillside, conjuring images of the Khmer Angkor complex. Actually it is a new Buddhist temple for those distant cousins of the Khmer, the Mon, but it held promise of things to come.

Next day, after a welcome hotel stop, a swamp posing as a road had the vintage four-wheel-drive jeep axle-deep in mud. Two Karen women smoking pipes and packing babies on their backs glided past on foot, barely condescending to give us a side glance as we lay trapped like a dinosaur in a tar pit. Eventually, with a herculean effort, we manhandled the vehicle clear and arrived at the village of Sangkria, from where I mercifully was able to continue on foot.

Following the contraband consumer goods that porters carried across the pontoon-bridged river to waiting trucks bound for Burma, I set out for the village of Nam Khok, an hour's walk away. The contra-



Returning from the jungle, a Mon grenadier with M79.

band would arrive much later, as it was necessary to transfer it again from the trucks to ox carts at the pulped portions of the road, where I sank thigh-deep in mud ruts.

Nam Khok has the distinction of demarcating the tortuous Thailand-Burma border, which bisects this village of predominantly Mon population.

From here on it was simple, just a matter of two to three more hours of walking through the jungle, following the cuttings made by the Allied prisoners when the Japanese had them working on the now-dismantled railway line.

Strictly speaking, this route is in Burma, running parallel with the border. Due to an anomaly of the border, the three small *chedis* are situated in Thailand, or at least on the edge of a protrusion of Thailand that juts into Burma. Thus I left Nam Khok — designated the "pass" on maps — walked (in Burma) up to the three *chedis* (in Thailand), and then down a small slope into Three Pagodas township — in Burma again!

Now it is much easier to get there. Buses drive direct from Kanchanaburi to Sangkhlaburi, from which small pickup trucks carry you nonstop, on a newly constructed road, to Three Pagodas.

This time around however, because of the Burmese offensive, the pickup I was in stopped short of Three Pagodas township and parked 200 meters away, in a settlement that is currently being built by the Thais. I was handed over to the Thai Border Patrol Police, whose duties include narcotics suppression, interception of illegal immigrants and interrogation of suspicious foreigners lurking around the nation's frontiers.

The police were cooperative, and after offering refreshments and practicing their English, an officer escorted me down the road to Three Pagodas.

Before the entrance to the town I was surprised to see that the Mon had erected a signposted gate and a guardhouse. Previously there was no overt sign of the military until you were well inside the town itself.

Luckily there was someone at the gate whom I had met at headquarters during my last visit and I was welcomed inside, no doubt to the relief of my Thai escort, who returned to his side of the border. Nominally I was now in Burma.

My new escort and friend, Nai Soe Myint of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) — political wing of the MNLA — led me off to be introduced to others and to be briefed on the current offensive, but I was keen to get out to the front lines to see what was happening in the field.

A short excursion was organized and I was taken out to the defensive perimeter of Three Pagodas, where front-line commander Major Nai Pan Nyunt, whose expression never seemed to change from a beatific smile, led me through the jungle visiting Mon defenders scattered about in foxholes in groups of twos and threes. They were well-armed and dug in. Light weapons were mostly M16s and AKs, but some captured Burmese G3 rifles (H&Ks made under license) were pointed out to me. The heavier stuff included Chicom RPDs, RPGs, and a homemade two-and-a-half-inch (roughly 60mm) mortar.

Elsewhere on a hilltop were split trenches linking a U.S.-made 81mm mortar and a 57mm recoilless rifle. But this was tame stuff — how about the front line, I persisted. After some debate they agreed I could go, but I'd have to wait till next morning. That was okay, for in the meantime I had an offer from the Karen to make a trip to Mae Kasa.

We set off in a Toyota pickup along a track that was covered with talcum-fine red dust. Within minutes my sweat-soaked jungles were no longer green but mud-brown in color. We stopped short of Mae Kasa (it was now deserted) and waited in a jungle clearing. Just as I was about to start cursing this waste of time there was a snake-like rippling in the jungle undergrowth.

Next thing, the full contingent of the Karen force — 250 men — was streaming out into the clearing. The force was made up of the 6th Brigade KNLA regulars and their equally well-armed auxiliary groups: the French-trained, black-scarved 6th Brigade Commandos; the blue-jeaned village volunteers known as "urban guerrillas"; and a squad of the 786 Kawthoolei (Karen State) Muslim Liberation Force.

They'd just come down from the mountains after five days of nonstop foot-slogging and skirmishing. To a man they were haggard and weary and laden with equipment, resembling a walking international arms bazaar. They carried M16s, Russian and Chinese-made AKs, M79s, Chicom RPDs and RPGs, M1 Carbines, Burmese G3 rifles, LAW rockets, U.S. fragmentation grenades, mortars and even one classic veteran piece, the Browning

Automatic Rifle. Though most of the men wore rubber slippers instead of boots, they all carried the regular accouterments of water canteen, bandoliers of ammo, pack, and rice ration stowed in a sausage-like stocking tied around the waist or shoulder.

They were due for R&R, though the latter wouldn't be much more than a handout of Burmese cheroots and tobacco.

Next day I got to visit the Mon front line with MNLA operations commander Colonel Nai Ong Nai, who for some reason — his beard maybe — reminded me of Errol Flynn. We trucked up to Ju-jblu and took it from there on foot. In contrast to the Karen, the Mon troops were visibly less fatigued, but then they had the advantage of fighting from fixed positions.

We were shown the extent of the Burmese advance on Ju-jblu village — their forwardmost men were only ten to fifteen meters from the Mon foxholes. I spoke with Sein Myint, a 20-year-old who cranked off 400 rounds with his M1 in the early morning battle. He showed me the position where he had capped a Burmese soldier — I measured the distance as 10 paces — and through an interpreter he added: "I saw his brains on the ground."

Everywhere was scattered the debris from the Burmese attack: piles of spent ammo cases (including M79s), numerous unfired 7.62 rounds, bloodstained boots and cloth, and fuse-pins from rifle-launched 51mm grenades. Some Mon soldiers were wearing captured Burmese bush hats with the 31 Battalion badge intact. The personal papers and a photograph album belonging to Burmese Major Han Tint, reportedly second-in-command of 31 Battalion, were recovered.

Nai Soe Myint and I got left behind the main party as it exited Ju-jblu while I was photographing an antipersonnel mine laid by the Burmese but retrieved intact. As we left to catch up with the others, we were prevented from taking the main track and directed to the side-paths. "Mines," they explained. Sure enough, the old Dodge that lumbered up behind us set one off right where we were going to walk.

Between Ju-jblu and Kreng Thaw putrid odors in the air betrayed the presence of unclaimed corpses, and the track was littered with cardboard packing tubes used for rifle grenades and mortar bombs, along with the small gauze-wrapped mortar charges. Lost personal effects were found too — Col. Nai Ong Nai picked up an ear cleaner and pocketknife on a chain.

We made it to Kreng Thaw. There was nothing now between us and the Burmese but jungle. They were out there somewhere, at least 15 klicks away, according to the



*Longyi-clad Mon grenadier with M79.*

Mon. That was good enough for me. I remembered Kreng Thaw from my last visit. There were a few civilians there then, with food stalls set up for the porters and merchants carrying the black-market goods into Burma proper. I had braved the monkey stew — said to be a local delicacy — and

wished I hadn't. It tasted like a concoction brewed up from the missing link and smelled just as ancient.

This time the village was deserted save for the occupying troops. I watched a 20-year-old deactivate a bottle-bomb hidden behind a tree, and was shown where others

had exploded. All that remained were small craters, bloodstains and, at one booby-trapped water bowl, a broken watch strap and fragments of an M1 Carbine, indicating a Burmese officer had bought it there.

Normally Kreng Thaw is a tranquil, picturesque spot. It lies at the confluence of two small rivers, and there is a waterfall just beyond. But on the path that leads down to the rivers, two civilians had been killed by the Burmese, a girl and a baby. The Mon claimed the girl had been raped and dismembered.

Down at the rivers were more discarded packing tubes for 60mm and 81mm mortar bombs and some heavily bloodstained rocks, among which I picked up an empty vial of Burmese-issue penicillin. "Bottle-bombs," said the Mon, nodding with satisfaction.

While others went foraging in the jungle, a few of us took to the water for a welcome swim, and it wasn't just the grime of the journey I wanted to wash off. Soon the Mon reappeared with more war booty apparently dropped or thrown away by porters — five live 51mm mortar rounds and two bundles of fresh chillis and onions together with a bottle of cooking oil.

Two domestic pigs that had been left behind in the civilian evacuation — and obviously overlooked by the Burmese — were dispatched with rifle shots and loaded in the back of the truck for the return trip to Three Pagodas. It was just 15 clicks but took us an unbelievable four hours.

Statistically the losses and gains as claimed by the Mon and Karen in this December conflict ran to five Mon WIA, seven Karen KIA and 23 WIA, an estimated 50-60 Burmese casualties, and Burmese munitions consisting of 10,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammo and more than 150 rounds of mixed-caliber mortar bombs captured.

Not the least of the victims, however, were the estimated 6,000 civilian refugees who fled Three Pagodas township and all the villages up to and including Kreng Thaw and beyond. Their evacuation began on 10 December 1986 after NMSP officials advised of the imminent Burmese attack.

When I first arrived in Three Pagodas it was a ghost town. Not only was it deserted of all inhabitants, but their goods and belongings as well. All shops had packed up and shipped out their merchandise and headed for the sanctuary of Thailand. By 21 December the civilians were allowed to return and on the 22nd some food stalls were operating, but most still refused to leave the safety of their jungle camps. These camps were scattered about the Thailand-Burma border or in the border villages of Nam Khok and Sangkria, where the NMSP, with the assistance of some international aid agencies, set up relief centers dispensing essential food rations and medicines.

Furthermore, in common with all Burmese operations against the ethnic minorities, the border battle has spawned a host of other innocent victims. These are the civilian porters — men, women and children —

## ANCIENT ENMITY — MODERN HOSTILITY

Historically, Mon-Burmese enmity goes back a millenium or more. The Mon, a Mongoloid stock, are thought to have migrated, along with their Khmer cousins, from the southern China region about 5000-6000 B.C. The Mon settled around the river mouths of lower Burma, establishing kingdoms there as well as in neighboring Thailand long before the later migrating ethnic Burmese and Thais. Conflict with the Burmese was periodic and Mon dynasties flourished and fell, culminating in the final loss of Mon independence when their last kingdom, known variously as Rehmonnya, Hongsavatoi and Pegu, fell to the Burmese in 1757.

Ironically, the Mon cooperated with the Burmese in attempts to win independence from the British. To this end the United Mon Association was formed in 1946, and in 1947 the Mon Freedom League and Mon United Front were set up by Nai Shwe Kyin and Nai Hla Maung respectively.

In the same year a seven-point demand for the safeguard of their rights was put by these groups to the interim Burmese government, the AFPFL, but the Burmese slyly insinuated that the Mon and the Burmese were indistinguishable in racial identity and characteristics, and so separate minority rights should not be contemplated.

Although the Mon were unified in their demand for a Mon State, Burma achieved its independence from the British in 1948 without paying heed to minority voices — in fact imprisoning and assassinating many Mon, including Buddhist monks.

At the beginning of August 1948, the Mon and the equally determined Karen pledged a joint effort to attain their separate states. Days later, 19 Mon leaders were arrested and detained in Moulmein jail. This move prompted the Mon and Karen to occupy the cities of Thaton and Moulmein, together with a substantial part of present-day Karen State.

The Burmese countered by announcing an official enquiry into minority claims for regional autonomy, but little was achieved except that the Mon and Karen national defense organizations (now their military wings) were declared illegal and the Burmese regained control of the cities. Thus the unconstitutional armed struggle was underway — offi-

cially on 31 August 1948, now celebrated annually as Mon Revolution Day.

In different parts of the country scattered groups of armed Mon operated independently of each other, until by 1953 they were gradually assimilated into one group, the Mon People's Front (MPF), whose president was Nai Oung Htoon. In 1958, after minor language and cultural concessions were made by the Burmese and Prime Minister U Nu talked of creating a Mon State, the MPF mostly surrendered.

But certain parties held out and combined with elements still left in the jungle to form in the same year the New Mon State Party (NMSP), presided over by Nai Shwe Kyin. That year too the NMSP formed an ineffective alliance with the communists in order to overthrow the U Nu regime. Later in 1970 a united front with the Karen and deposed U Nu forces was formed to take on the Ne Win regime which had come to power by a military coup in 1962. The united front collapsed in 1977.

In January 1974 the Burmese government created a Mon State comprising the districts of Moulmein and Thaton, but the NMSP claims also the district of Pegu and the Mergui-Tavoy districts of the Tenasserim Division, being the greater part of the traditional Hongsavatoi Mon homeland.

The principal aim of the NMSP was (and still is) to establish an independent sovereign Mon State comprising all the above districts, unless the Burmese government is willing to grant all the minorities a federation of free nationalities exercising full rights of self-determination, including the right of secession.

In April 1981 irreconcilable factionalism within the NMSP culminated in a split. In the early days this was exacerbated by internecine feuding between the troops (mostly the Headquarters Security Unit) loyal to the then-NMSP President Nai Shwe Kyin and the majority of the MNLA, which is now headed by the new NMSP President, Nai Nonla. In 1982 the Nai Nonla faction joined the National Democratic Front (NDF), an alliance of nine ethnic minorities in Burma waging war against the Ne Win regime for federation. The Nai Shwe Kyin faction remains independent.

The Burmese have always resisted the minorities' attempts at Balkanization, and so the host of bush wars that have flared along Burma's border zones since independence continues unabated.



prospects here is a medley of races which gives Three Pagodas a certain ethnological charm. Apart from the Mon, Karen and Thai, there are Yunnanese traders, Sikh textile merchants, Bengali tea-shop proprietors, Shan miners and Arakan betel-nut sellers. There are even a couple of Wa from the extreme north of Burma bordering China, whose "wild" ancestors were feared as headhunters. One of the Wa sported a Boy George T-shirt, a rather dubious cultural leap forward.

The most important trade item from Thailand is the food seasoning agent monosodium glutamate (MSG), known here as *Aji-no-Moto*. From Three Pagodas an army of ox-carts and porters, the latter burdened under three to four 10-kilogram tins each, carries it on a seemingly endless procession into Burma. Most seems destined for Moulmein.

One porter I spoke to on my previous trip, a 25-year-old Karen from Mudon (30 clicks from Moulmein), was making his first trip in order to supplement his income from rice farming. Along with 10 others he had contracted to carry three tins of *Aji-no-Moto* at 100 *kyats* (U.S. \$3) per tin for the four-and-a-half-day walk from Three Pagodas to the Burmese township of Kya-in Seikkyi, from which it would be shipped by steamer to Moulmein.

Food is provided by the merchant, though sometimes the porter must carry it himself. Sometimes the porters must sleep out in the jungle, and always they have to remain on the alert for the presence of Burmese soldiers.

Both the Mon and the Karen maintain "customs gates" in Three Pagodas to levy "taxes" on goods entering or leaving the town. Rates vary according to the goods and the gate; that is, one tin of *Aji-no-Moto* is taxed equally at 28 Thai *baht* (U.S. \$1) by both the Mon and Karen, but polyester cloth goes for 1.5 *baht* a yard with the Karen but only 1.0 *baht* a yard with the Mon. The Mon also have gates along the coast and additional revenue comes from a household tax of villages under NMSP supervision. The Karen raise extra cash from the sale of antimony mined at Mae Kasa and farther north, although present hostilities have put the damper on those operations for the time being.

I was invited to stay at Mon headquarters by NMSP President Nai Nonla. I've always enjoyed that: There is a chance for a decent wash, a quiet sleep and the food is excellent. HQ is at Nam Khok village, presumably on the Burmese side of the border to preserve formalities. There is a training camp, signals post, hospital, women's barracks, arsenal, vegetable gardens, offices and the president's bamboo-shrouded residence.

This time the parade ground, which is overlooked by a sign exhorting the sage military maxim "One bullet, one enemy," was empty. Last time I was here, 30 soldiers were drilling while nearby, among the grazing cows, a unit of 20 women soldiers — from a total complement of about 100 —

heavy abrasions to the face and a suspected fractured arm. I asked him why he did it. Phar Da said that the Burmese knew he had two sons in the KNLA and that an officer had given orders for him to be shot as punishment.

This isn't the first time that Three Pagodas has been under siege. Previous Burmese moves were made against it in April 1980, May 1984, and April and July 1985, with varying degrees of success. This little border settlement provides not only sanctuary for the insurgent forces but also revenue for their struggle from the taxation of black-market goods.

In the good times Three Pagodas is packed with such a miscellany of goods that I can't decide if they are bizarre products in a jungle market or jungle products in a bazaar. In the numerous general stores that occupy this sprawling one-track emporium, you can find fresh bamboo shoots and fungi from the jungle alongside *longyis* (Burmese national dress) and gawdy paintings from Rangoon.

There is the full spectrum, from essentials (curiously all with animal brand-names) to luxury goods: Donald Duck batteries, Bear candles, Elephant rubber sandals, Crocodile biscuits, Peacock combs, Rabbit cheroots, Turtle mosquito nets and Zebra pots and pans. Even gunpowder for homemade shotguns is available.

Attracted by the lucrative commercial

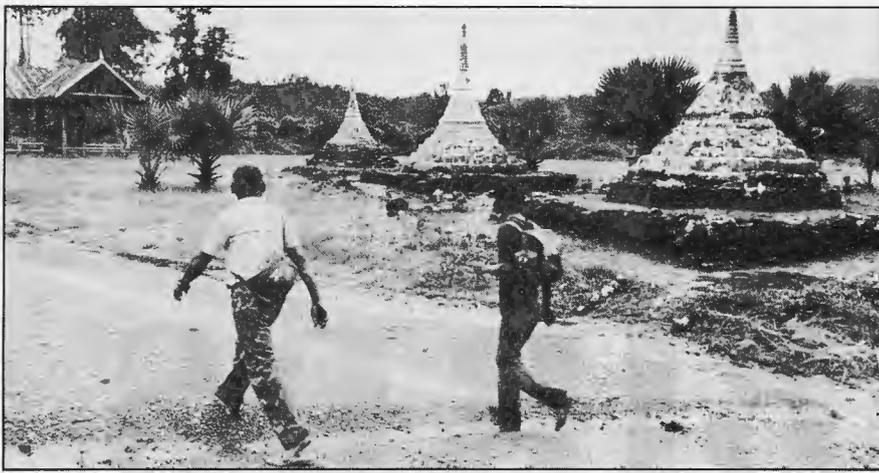
TOP: Area around Three Pagodas Pass. Scene of latest fighting between Burmese and Mon and Karen forces.

ABOVE: Enlarged area straddles Thailand-Burma border west-northwest of Bangkok.

who are pressed into service by the Burmese army to carry food and ammo for the duration of the campaign. The day I arrived in Three Pagodas a jeepload of Mon turned up with one such porter whom they had intercepted in the jungle after he had escaped from the Burmese. He told me his story.

Phar Da is a 38-year-old Karen from Apolon village, midway between Kreng Thaw and Mezali. He was taken at gunpoint on 11 December while walking to his rice field, in a roundup that netted five fellow villagers. Phar Da said that at first he had to carry a soldier's pack, and later rice. He was fed twice a day — rice and salted fish — but received no monetary payment.

In the act of running away from the Burmese he had leapt off a cliff and suffered



practiced ambush and assault tactics at a footbridge and stream.

It was amusing to listen to the women's falsetto voices crying "boom-boom" as they fired bamboo sticks in lieu of real weapons, but their enthusiasm and vigor were not dulled by the repeated plunging through the stream waters or stalking through wet grass as the training officers bellowed commands at them punctuated by live rifle fire.

A winding path leads off through the jungle from the new main road now passing through Nam Khok. It brings you to the sentry-posted entrance of Mon headquarters. As in Three Pagodas, the guards were women soldiers, a home guard if you like. Gone were the bamboo sticks. Each was armed with an automatic weapon. Waiting for night to fall I wandered over to the NMSF hospital to check on the patients. As hospitals go it's nothing too grand, but at least there is concrete on the floor and a tin roof. There was only one war-wounded; the rest were malaria cases. This guy had had an AK round taken out of his thigh, and the medic was now inserting a gauze-wrapped probe to clear the wound of putrefaction. Judging by the patient's reaction to the six inches of steel moving inside his leg, he wasn't under much sedation.

The serious cases requiring major surgery are sent to a mission hospital several hours' drive away, where a staff of foreign doctors

**TOP:** The three Buddhist *chedis* which give the Three Pagodas pass and township their name.

**ABOVE:** Karen soldiers returning from the mountains near Mae Kasa.

ask no questions, just administer their much-needed skills. Mostly they have to perform amputations resulting from antipersonnel mine injuries. The youngest soldier there was a 12-year-old Karen. I'd seen him brought in from the field with his left leg looking like spaghetti. The doctors had already cut below the knee but confessed they might have to go a bit higher.

In the evening I spoke with NMSF President Nai Nonla and a member of the Moulmein district committee, Nai Aung Htin, who doubled as an interpreter for the finer points of the interview.

Regarding Burmese intentions in this current offensive, Nai Nonla had this to say: "As far as I am concerned, the enemy want to take Three Pagodas and to settle here. They want to control the border . . . and to control the trade that goes on here." The pertinent point here is that by hitting at the economic base of the insurgents, the Burmese are effectively spiking their guns.

Further, the Mon claim the Burmese are embarking on a village collectivization policy reminiscent of the so-called "strategic hamlet" system operated by the Americans in Vietnam. "They don't like villages under

our control," Nai Nonla said about the Burmese. "They want to destroy our influence on the people." The Burmese are also reportedly confiscating the entire rice crop of the people after harvest, save the barest minimum for survival. Many villagers are forced to buy at inflated prices on the black market to feed their families adequately — others have chosen to flee to the border.

Regarding future tactics, Nai Nonla said: "We are now considering to make a combined NDF [National Democratic Front; see the accompanying "Ancient Enmity — Modern Hostility."] Southern Command to defend our territory along the border, and to make an offensive of our own." This group would consist of Mon, Karen and Arakanese, together with the Muslim force attached to the Karen 6th Brigade.

The 786 Kawthoolei Muslim Liberation Force, presided over by Dr. Abdul Razak, has no political axe to grind — their *raison d'être* is religious oppression. Hafiz Hussein Ashad, the 37-year-old 786 Force military commander in Three Pagodas, told me Muslims are being systematically driven out of the predominantly Buddhist-populated Burma through a policy of persecution and burning of mosques. For their survival they must band together with the minority armies.

Combined action is clearly an advantage for the smaller, undermanned groups. Even the Mon, with a claimed total of 3,000 men under arms (a figure including village militia) are relatively impotent if pitted against the superior government forces.

As we sipped our coffees, Nai Nonla went on to address the problem of the split in the NMSF, an absurdity in light of the proposed combined NDF command. With a smile Nai Nonla hinted that a rapprochement between the two factions may be imminent. In early December 1986, talks were held at the new Mon temple in Sangkhlaburi, 22 klicks from Three Pagodas, in which the potential reunion of the two sides was rated as "agreed to in principle and now under consideration."

Nai Nonla also expressed concern over the recent Burmese attacks, noting their continued presence in Mezali as a sign that "it is very likely that they will expand their operation and attack again."

Prophetic words indeed, for five days later the northernmost No. 5 antimony mines of the Karen were occupied again — this time, according to Karen sources, by reinforcements from 62 Battalion headquarters at Mudon.

Also on the march were the Burmese troops of 31 Battalion, who left Mezali and arrived on the following day, 28 December 1986, at Yapru, about 10 klicks east of Mae Kasa and only a few klicks short of the Thailand-Burma border, prompting Karen speculation that the Burmese might be contemplating an outflanking maneuver via Thai territory.

This did not happen either. On the eve-

*Continued on page 77*

**W**E took off early that morning, just as the first hint of a tropical day pierced the African gloom south of Angola. It was a day without omen.

Having cleared the ragged row of makalani palms at the southern end of Ondangwa Airport in Ovamboland, the left wing of our old Dakota dipped and we swung to port.

The "Rum Run" — delivery of supplies, to the uninitiated — had never been a favorite chore, especially not when we were required to hug the deck all the way to our destination at an average height of about 50 feet. Sometimes a little lower. *Never higher.*

Too many C-47s, I knew, had returned to base with holes in their fuselages, usually made by AK-toting SWAPO terrors intent on claiming the distinction of being the first to have shot down an operational "Dak." In the past they had tried and, from what I gathered, hard! But they hadn't succeeded — yet.

It wasn't the prospect of being shot at that bothered me most; all on board were conscious enough of that possibility. Rather, what worried me was the fact that we would go into at least two extremely short bush strips and take off again — with maximum weight.

One of these primitive airfields — so we had been cautiously advised before we left Ondangwa — had been "blessed" that bright morning with a crosswind of about 20 knots. That was hairy. But supplies were needed and we had to go in.

Our pilot, Major Dries Pienaar, had earlier calculated the load factor carefully while we drank our coffee in the ready room. Even with only 400 gallons of fuel, he told us, we were allowed to lift off with just less than 7,000 pounds of cargo, myself included. Under normal circumstances these margins were reasonable, but with the crosswind... It didn't seem to bother the major unduly.

We weren't shot at that day. Nor did we plough into one of the huge camelthorn trees which speckle the horizon of so much of this primeval territory south of Angola where conflict rages. We did, however, contribute substantially to my innate fear of flying, which had been involuntarily nurtured during a quarter century of covering the African news beat, often in aircraft you couldn't sell as scrap in some of the more developed corners of the globe.

Travelling that day over what seemed to me to be about half the distance across Africa — so close to the ground that there were times when you could almost reach out and touch the mopani trees below — was hardly a means of inspiring confidence. Even if Major Dries was the skipper.

Nor were my fears stilled by earlier reports of one of these aging "Gooney Birds" having gone down onto a bush strip a couple of months before: Apparently the runway proved too short for the aircraft and the Dak hit a tree which tore off about a yard of wing tip. Undaunted, the flight engineer responsible for keeping the old bird flying simply trimmed off the rough edges and

## SOF AVIATION

# GOONEY BIRDS

## Venerable C-47s — Third World Mainstay

Text & Photos by Al J. Venter

bound up the splintered tip with masking tape. The plane took off and, contrary to all expectations, completed the assignment.

Having become a latter-day legend in almost every far-flung corner of the world, the Douglas C-47 Dakota — sometimes called "Methuselah with Wings" — is used extensively in support and supply roles by several African air forces in the operational areas adjacent to the Angolan, Mozambican, Zimbabwean and Zambian borders. For years these old craft have ferried men and equipment into some of the remotest postings on God's earth.

In reality, the South African Air Force remains one of the international community's largest C-47 operators, mainly because the United Nations-imposed arms embargo has prevented that country from obtaining more modern military transport planes in quantities which would make it economically feasible.

It has long been argued by those who fly

these machines that the only replacement for a Gooney Bird is another Gooney Bird. The South Africans have proved it. At the present time that country must have several dozen of these craft in operation at the southern tip of Africa. And rumor has it that there are dozens more in Air Force reserve.

That one African nation isn't alone in its fancy. Some European enthusiasts have also entered the scene. Scheduled for inauguration later this year is a regular run between London and North Africa for *aficionados* of "Old Fatso." There has been no shortage of takers for seats, either, even if the price is \$1,000 a head for a package holiday.

Regarded more as a sentimental journey than much else, the trip out will take three days. It will allow old Dak hands a leisurely chance to get thoroughly reacquainted with a member of this elite breed. For many of them, it will be a trip down memory lane.

A few of those old greybeards who take advantage of this new opportunity will recall CBS radio news correspondent Charles Collingwood enthusing on that awesome morning, 6 June 1944: "The sky is darkened with swarms of cargo planes and the roar of their motors is like the thunder of the war gods."

There were over a thousand of these aircraft in the air en route to Hitler's Europe. In

### AFRICA EDITOR

South Africa-based writer/photographer/cinematographer Al J. Venter is *Soldier of Fortune Magazine's* contributing editor for Africa.



**TOP:** South African Air Force flies several dozen of these aging DC-3 Dakotas operationally and internally. Cape Town makes a picturesque background.

**ABOVE:** Paratroops onboard a Dak prepare for a jump. Gooney Bird remains one of the favorite aircraft used by skydivers.

**RIGHT CENTER:** Looking out from a Dak gunship from Rhodesian war period. These were used on numerous occasions to counter menace from the ground against fixed-wing aircraft.

the first 50 hours of the European invasion they ferried across more than 20,000 airborne troops and every item of their equipment.

For the Gooneys, it was certainly a fine and momentous hour. Many of the planes that took part in that airlift are still flying. One of them, until recently bedecked in the colors of the Rhodesian Air Force, took part in the aborted paratroop drop on the Dutch city of Arnhem. I am told it is still flying.

The Dakota had its origins in an uncertain period before World War II.

The first Douglas Commercial — the DC-1 — was a controversial product of a small amount of money and a tiny rented

room behind a Los Angeles barber shop. It never got beyond the prototype.

Its successor was designed in 1934 but was found by its backers to be seriously underpowered. Nevertheless, its potential was spotted by the head of a large airline company, William Littlewood of American Airlines. He proposed that the Dak should be adapted for commercial service.

The successor design was made wider and fitted with bigger engines. The first DC-3 — with the serial number DST14988 — made its maiden flight seven days before Christmas 1935. Six months later, a non-stop service between Chicago and New York had been inaugurated, complete with sleepers and meal service en route.

World War II put this reliable old lady with few vices into uniform.

In the past half century, tens of thousands of these aircraft have been built. So many, in fact, that though they were adopted by most civilian airlines of the world after hostilities ceased, Douglas was never again obliged to open production lines. There were enough spares around internationally to cope with demand.

Others built them, too. The Russians constructed more than 2,000 under license with American aid and called them the Lisunov Li-2. So did the Japanese; they built almost 500 which flew under the emblem of the



**ABOVE:** When a Dakota's engine won't start on its own power, you wind it up and pull it into activity with a tractor. This procedure, photographed at Ondangwa Airport, was a daily occurrence with one of the recalcitrant old girls.





ABOVE: Camouflaged South African DC-3 Dakota flies above the Atlantic coastline.

BELOW: Aircrew pilots a Dakota over the Kaokoveld desert area.



Rising Sun, though Americans always differentiated between their own Gooney Bird and the Japanese "Tabby."

Vietnam saw a re-emergence of the old girl in a new guise. Fitted with rapid-firing Gatling guns, "Puff the Magic Dragon," at the request of ground forces, routinely pounded away at enemy targets with saturation fire that certainly killed tens of thousands of Viet Cong. There is no doubt that the Dak brought comfort to many an isolated GI outpost in the heart of "Goon" country.

Perhaps the best-remembered story about the old piston-engine freighter also emanated from Asia — but in another war which had taken place a generation earlier, the Japanese war with China.

Early in 1941, a Dakota on a flight between Hong Kong and Chungking on the mainland was forced down in a field on the way into the interior. Repair work went on around the clock, but suddenly the area was strafed by Jap fighters; when it was over, the Dak had been peppered with bullets and one of the wings completely shattered by gunfire.

Time was vital. Having been spotted, it was only a question of waiting for the Japanese to return.

Radioing back to base, the pilot called urgently for spares. Nothing for the DC-3, he was told, but there was a derelict DC-2 wing. It might just work — even though it was a good 10 feet shorter than the original asked for.

The drop was made. The DC-2 wing was carefully bolted to the fuselage, the holes were patched, and the lumbering monster took off on a flight that took it over the mountains to Kiunchuan.

That hybrid aircraft, astonishingly, is officially recorded as a DC-2½ in the record books.

A year later another notable event took place. This time the celebrated Colonel (later General) James Doolittle found himself stranded in China with the Japanese immediately on his heels. For months, he had been bombing Japanese targets with his B-25 Mitchell bombers and, had he been caught, Tokyo certainly would have "rewarded" him appropriately.

Stuck on an airfield with a single operational Dakota — which normally carries 21 passengers — Colonel Doolittle was faced with the problem of getting 74 people away from the imminent threat of internment and possible execution. He compromised.

First, the side arms of all seats on the aircraft were removed. This allowed three adults to sit in a double seat, making space for 28 persons. Another 22 passengers — mostly Indians — then sat in the laps of the seated passengers. Another ten rode in cargo spaces, six in the forward mail compartment and four in the cargo bin. That left 14 others standing in the aisles.

Incredibly, the plane flew. Not very far, but far enough to take the refugees to safety — and for the exploits of another Dakota to attain immortality. ✕

**SOF PISTOLS**

# **RUGER'S P-85**

**Another New Pistol  
for America's Military?**

**Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis**



**T**HANKS to Smith & Wesson, Bill Ruger's new P-85 9mm Parabellum pistol may very well end up as the next U.S. military service sidearm. The Joint Service Small Arms Program (JSSAP) began in 1977. Its goals were to promote commonality of requirements, reduce development costs and time, improve the acquisition system and achieve interoperability with NATO. The first JSSAP pistol trials commenced in 1979 at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. They did not satisfy DOD (Department of Defense). After a great deal of foot dragging, a second series of trials finally drew to a close in September 1984.

One by one, the entries — Steyr GB, Walther P88, H&K P7M13, FN, Colt SSP and S&W 459M — either dropped out or were eliminated for a multiplicity of reasons, ranging from insufficient reliability to inadequate firing-pin energy. Only two "technically acceptable finalists" remained, Beretta's 92SB-F and Maremont's SIG-Sauer P226. Apparently on the sole basis of a lower bid on spare parts and magazines, Beretta emerged as the cloudy winner, with a \$56.4-million, five-year contract to produce a total of 315,930 units. Maremont and Smith & Wesson immediately screamed foul. Arguing that it was unfairly eliminated, S&W convinced two congressmen from its home state (Massachusetts), Reps. Silvio Conte and Edward Boland, to drive a pork-barrel amendment through the Congress canceling the Beretta contract after the initial five-year purchase agreement and reopening the competition.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, STURM, RUGER & Company, Inc. (Dept SOF, 49 Lacey Place, Southport, CT 06490) was busy designing and developing a 9mm double-action pistol that meets or exceeds all of the Joint Service Operational Requirements published in connection with the U.S. military's Personal Defense Weapon Program. Ruger's P-85 will be hard to beat.

Ruger is the world's established leader in cost-effective investment casting ("monolithic shell molding"). Developed at its Pine Tree Castings Division in New Hampshire, Ruger's metallurgical processes are without equal. Strengthwise, modern in-

vestment-cast components are every bit as good as, and in many instances better than, forgings — and far less labor intensive.

In addition, castings do not have the lengthwise grain structure that sometimes induces longitudinal cracking in forged components. Far fewer machine and gauging operations are required to finish an investment casting. An example of Ruger's advanced metallurgy is the P-85's spring-loaded firing pin, which, cast to a 48 Rockwell C hardness, can be bent 90 degrees without rupture. This combination of high strength with ductility cannot be matched by the competition anywhere. By these methods, Ruger has continually placed rugged and dependable firearms into the public's hands at reasonable cost.

Of the P-85's 50 components, 15 are investment castings. Although an all-titanium prototype was fabricated for experimental purposes only, critical internal parts on production series pistols, such as the trigger, trigger block and bar, hammer and sear, are cast from 415 stainless steel. The slide and most of the small internal components are investment cast or stamped from 4140 chrome-molybdenum, ordnance quality steel, heat-treated for hardness. Our test specimen's slide was blued with a black oxide finish. Production series P-85 pistols will feature a stainless-steel slide with a matte gray surface. All springs have been fabricated from strong music wire. The frame is a lightweight T-61 aluminum investment casting, hard-anodized with a matte black, glare-resistant, satin finish. Production series frames will match the stainless steel slide in appearance. Using CNC (Computer Numerical Control) equipment, all components are machine-finished and assembled at Ruger's new Prescott, Arizona, facility under the supervision of well-known barrel-maker Bill Atkinson.

Method of operation is by conventional locked, short recoil. A rectangular locking lug above the barrel's chamber engages the slide's ejection port while the slide stop's axis pin mates with a recessed area on the barrel's underlug. During recoil, the slide and barrel remain locked for only a short distance until the slide stop, which passes through a swinging link pinned to the barrel's underlug, tilts the barrel downward out



**ABOVE:** Ruger P-85 slides into Bianchi's M12 holster adopted by U.S. military.

**BELOW:** In such holsters as Nelson's #1 Professional, the P-85 will be carried by numerous law enforcement personnel.



**BELOW:** Ruger P-85, right side.



of battery with the slide. At this time the extractor withdraws the empty case and as the slide continues rearward the case strikes the ejector and is propelled out the ejection port. The compressed recoil spring drives the slide forward to strip another round from the magazine and chamber it upon locking with the barrel.

Dimensions are comparable to other entries in the XM9 trials. With an empty

magazine, the weight is 32 ounces, slightly less than the Beretta 92SB-F (34.5 ounces). Since the P-85's barrel is only 4.5 inches long, the overall length has been kept to 7.84 inches, 0.7 inches shorter than the 92SB-F. The P-85 is 1.125 inches thick (0.325 inches thinner than the 92SB-F, although the magazine capacity remains the same) and 5.63 inches in height (almost identical to the 92SB-F).

The barrel has been cut from a piece of 410 stainless steel bar stock. Its broached, six-groove bore has a right-hand twist with one turn in 10 inches and the barrel tube itself is threaded into a monoblock containing the chamber, upper and lower locking lugs and feed ramp. To improve performance with all types of bullet configurations, the feed ramp is polished at the factory. Chambers are roller-burnished to insure smooth extraction.

There is no barrel bushing and the barrel rests in a hole drilled into the front end of the slide. The slide's large, open-top ejection port provides a large exit area for ejected cases.

An ambidextrous, hammer-drop safety has been mounted to the slide. When the safety lever is rotated downward until a white dot is visible, into the "safe" position, the ring-type hammer, if cocked, drops forward out of engagement with the trigger bar and onto a safety drum without contacting the firing pin. Additionally, forward movement of the firing pin is blocked and the trigger bar remains depressed below its notch on the hammer. When rotated upward into the "fire" position (a red dot appears), the hammer cannot contact the firing pin unless the trigger is pulled all the way to the rear to lower the firing pin block and subsequently release the sear. The decocking lever on our test specimen was somewhat difficult to manipulate. However, those who carry this pistol for serious social purposes will holster it with a round in the chamber, hammer down with the safety lever in the "fire" position.

Although smaller, the extractor is similar to that of the Model 1921/28 Thompson .45 ACP submachine gun. Strong and reliable, its claw is larger than most in caliber 9mm Parabellum. With a round in the chamber, it protrudes slightly from the right side of the slide and serves as a tactile loaded-chamber indicator.

Aligned with the lower hole in the front of the slide, the recoil spring's aluminum guide rod has an unusual "hourglass" configuration at its front end to clear the bottom lug on the barrel during disassembly. Its steel tip locks the barrel's swinging link securely in place to facilitate reassembly. To prevent unintentional disassembly, the recoil spring's extended end goes into the slide while its closed end slips snugly over the guide rod.

The slide's interior-cut grooves ride on two sets of short rails protruding above the frame in front of the trigger and back at the hammer. A similar system of mating the slide to the frame is employed on the Beretta 92SB-F.

The front sight blade, held to the slide by two roll pins, sits atop a platform integral with the slide casting. It contains a single white-dot insert. The open, square-notch rear sight can be adjusted laterally for windage zero by drifting it crosswise in its dovetail on top of the slide. It has two white-dot inserts that washed away when we cleaned the pistol in solvent. Colored dots are of



Ruger P-85, fieldstripped.

### RUGER P-85 SPECIFICATIONS

- Caliber: .....9mm Parabellum
- Operation: ..... Locked-breech, short-recoil, semiautomatic, double-action trigger system with hammer-drop lever, firing pin block.
- Weight, empty: .....32 ounces
- Overall length: .....7.84 inches
- Height: .....5.63 inches
- Width: .....1.125 inches
- Barrel: ..... Six-groove, broached bore, right-hand twist with one turn in 10 inches. Polished feed ramp and roller-burnished chamber.
- Barrel length: .....4.5 inches
- Finish: ..... Aluminum alloy frame black anodized; steel components stainless steel or black oxide.
- Grip panels: ..... Black General Electric Valox with deep grooves; single retaining screw on each panel.
- Magazine: ..... 15-round capacity; staggered-column, detachable box-type; steel body with removable floorplate, three indicator holes and plastic follower.
- Sights: ..... Front: fixed, forward sloping ramp-type with white circular dot. Rear: open square-notch with two circular white dots, adjustable for windage zero by drifting in slide dovetail.
- Price: ..... Suggested retail: \$295 with one magazine; \$325 with spare magazine, plastic storage box and padlock.
- Manufacturer: ..... STURM, RUGER & Company, Inc., Dept. SOF, 49 Lacey Place, Southport, CT 06490
- T&E summary: ..... Robust and reliable; low perceived recoil with very little muzzle flip; high hit probability; generally excellent handling characteristics; milspec quality throughout; economical; highly recommended.

little use in stress scenarios and I would prefer Armson's self-luminous Trijicon sights.

The slide release lever (slide stop) constitutes my only serious criticism of the P-85. It's too long, as is the Beretta's. Those who fire from the Weaver position will find their thumbs invariably resting on the release lever. The slightest downward pressure will prevent the slide from holding open after the last round has been fired. Extended slide stops are an IPSC fetish that have no place on combat handguns. Not to worry. Production series slide release levers will be shorter.

Most unusual is the ejector, fabricated from a sheet metal pressing. It must be pivoted downward on its axis pin into the magazine-well before the slide can be separated from the frame.

The trigger mechanism is simple and robust. When the trigger is pulled, rotating on its integral trunnions rather than the usual pivot pin, it draws a single trigger bar, on the left side of the frame's interior, forward. If the hammer is uncocked, the trigger bar first pivots it rearward, compressing the hammer spring (coiled around a steel strut). At the end of the trigger pull, a window in the trigger bar pulls a peg on the firing-pin block to free the firing pin and release the sear. If the hammer is already cocked, the trigger bar, disengaged from its bent on the hammer, rotates only the firing pin block and sear forward to release the hammer. The hammer then falls forward to strike the firing pin. When the trigger is released, the trigger bar is thrust rearward again by a spring-loaded pin and the trigger itself pivots forward.

A military lanyard ring has been provided at the end of the hammer spring's seat and protrudes out the bottom of the frame. The front of the trigger guard is hooked for those who desire such nonsense. Experienced shooters employing the proper two-hand grip will simply ignore it.

Trigger pull weights are a function of the hammer spring's strength. Too light a

spring will result in erratic ignition of less-sensitive milspec primers. The double-action pull weight on our test specimen was a respectable 12.5 pounds. Single-action pull weight was a rather heavy 7.5 pounds, with just a slight amount of creep. Some judicious stoning by an experienced armorer would remove any trace of grittiness.

Deeply grooved, the grip panels are molded of black G.E. Valox, a dense, high-impact engineering plastic. They carry the Ruger name and escutcheon on both sides. Only a single screw retains each grip panel. Commendable, but the steel screws turn into threads tapped directly into the aluminum frame. I would much prefer steel bushings, as they can be replaced if the threads strip.

Although ambidextrous, the magazine latch must be pushed forward to release the magazine — somewhat frustrating at first to those accustomed to depressing the magazine latch on an M1911A1. When released, magazines fall cleanly away. There is no magazine disconnect, a much-disputed feature which interrupts trigger/hammer engagement after the magazine has been removed.

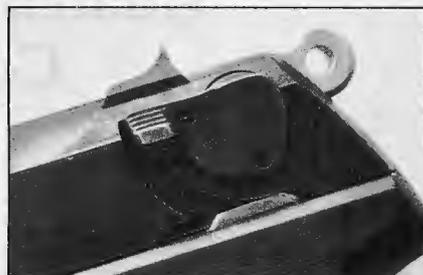
Tapered, in the Browning High Power manner, the P-85 single-position-feed magazines need no beveled magazine-well in the frame. Both the magazine body and floorplate are sheet-metal pressings fabricated from blued, low-carbon spring steel. These staggered-column magazines hold 15 rounds. There are three indicator holes (marked 5, 10 and 15), but the 15th cartridge is barely visible in the last indicator hole. Avoid loading 16 rounds. When the slide is forward, a fully loaded magazine must be slapped smartly to engage the magazine latch. The magazine follower is plastic. As the floorplate is removable, the magazines are easily disassembled for cleaning. At the Ruger plant I examined a prototype magazine with a rubber pad attached to the floorplate. It will please combat shooters if produced.

Fieldstripping presents no problems. Place the decocking lever in the "safe" position. Withdraw the magazine. Rack the slide to the rear and hold it open by upward pressure on the slide stop. Push the ejector downward, into the magazine-well, until it

locks in its lower position. A projection on the ejector will lower the firing pin block and permit forward movement of the slide.

*Continued on page 76*

**BELOW:** Front sight blade, with single white dot, is attached to slide by two roll pins.



**ABOVE:** An ambidextrous hammer-drop safety lever is mounted to the P-85's slide.

**BELOW:** P-85's magazine release is ambidextrous, but must be pressed forward rather than depressed to drop magazine.



**BELOW:** SOF Technical Editor Peter G. Kokalis feels the P-85's slide release lever is too long. Slide fails to hold-open after the last round is fired because of thumb pressure on slide stop when Weaver hold is employed. Production series slide stops will be shorter.

**BELOW:** P-85's firing pin, cast to 48 Rockwell C hardness, can be bent 90 degrees without rupture. This combination of high strength with ductility cannot be matched by the competition anywhere.



# EL QUICHE PATROL

## Guatemalan Army Keeps Lid on Communist Insurgents

Text & Photos by Steve Salisbury

“MANY good soldiers and officers have been killed here,” the husky Guatemalan army lieutenant whispered as he halted our 42-man patrol along a dirt road that wound through the mountains of the northwestern Guatemalan province of El Quiche.

It was an early December night and the lieutenant's breath came out of his mouth as puffs of vapor in the evening chill. But despite the cold, our camouflage uniforms were sweat-soaked from tension as well as hiking. The hills along the roadside were ominous shadows in the dim moonlight, and Lt. Carlos Ernesto Alvarez (a *nom de guerre* for security reasons) passed word up and down our Indian file, warning his men to be ever alert for a guerrilla ambush. The black-faced troops were well aware of the danger, though, and needed no reminder to keep their Israeli-made Galil assault rifles trained on the terrain from where we might receive incoming rounds.

They were a young bunch, in their late teens and early twenties. Many were Indians who had lived all their lives in El Quiche and had been fighting the communists here for at least the last two years. They relished the prospect of killing terrorists in combat.

We pushed on, walking five meters apart peacefully for about an hour, then...

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

Bullets whistled overhead as a couple guerrillas down the road spotted and opened fire on our point man. He returned and his automatic rifle bursts while the rest of us, hunched under 50-pound knapsacks, lumbered up toward the point of contact trying to flank them. But the two guerrillas vanished in the darkness as quickly as their muzzle flashes.

“¡Putá!” cursed Lt. Alvarez. “They always run.”

Indeed, the guerrillas in Guatemala are on the run today. They appear to have been reduced from the serious threat they posed in the early 1980s to little more than a nuisance now, bottled up in the remote northern hinterland. According to Guatemalan intelligence sources, the communists can now muster only 1,500 combatants — down from their peak strength of as many as 6,000 fighters in 1981 — and rebel activity has been limited to infrequent ambushes, assassinations and sabotage.

Still, there are periodic flare-ups of guerrilla activity. Last November, guerrillas killed nine soldiers and a second lieutenant and destroyed a truck in two separate ambushes three weeks apart in El Quiche. Late that same month, the Guatemalan army allowed me to cover its counterinsurgency efforts in the province.

At 1700 on 2 December, I flew in an army Cessna with my captain escort to an airstrip six kilometers outside the Indian town of Nebaj (pronounced “Ne-BAK”) in northern El Quiche. At the army detachment in Nebaj, I met Colonel Fernando Cua and his excellent staff of officers. Over the next three days they gave me detailed briefings on the past and present military situations in the province.

This impoverished, predominantly Indi-

an province has traditionally been a guerrilla hotbed. Captain Ismael Galvez Marroquin works in the intelligence section at the headquarters of Military Zone 20 in Santa Cruz, the capital of El Quiche, and according to him as many as 2,000 combatants of the “Guerrilla Army of the Poor” (one of four guerrilla factions, this one known by its Spanish initials, EGP), backed by some 50,000 sympathizers, laid siege to El Quiche in the early 1980s.

“They were everywhere, ambushing soldiers, killing people,” said the captain. “They even blew up part of this garrison,” he said, referring to a car-bomb explosion in 1982 which severely damaged what was then the headquarters for Military Zone 20 and is now a military annex building.

Today, Capt. Galvez estimates that there are no more than 300 guerrillas and 5,000 EGP sympathizers (many being the rebels' family members) in El Quiche, and they have been primarily isolated around Mount Sumal, some 30 kilometers north of Nebaj. Although guerrilla strength has dropped tremendously, the army keeps the heat on the rebels with constant patrolling. This means that virtually everyone goes into the bush, including artillery troops in an infantry role.

On 5 December, I joined Lt. Alvarez and his troops of the *Compania de Artilleria* of the 1st Battalion for a week of scaling peaks higher than 8,000 feet around Mount Sumal, part of an operation involving as many as 400 soldiers. Our faces smeared with black shoe polish, we moved out of the Nebaj detachment at 1900.

I followed Lt. Alvarez in the middle of our Indian file. The broad-shouldered officer with jet black hair was a tough, decorated veteran of many firefights. He had learned many techniques of counterinsurgency from battlefield

### SOUTHERN SENTINEL

Steve Salisbury stands watch for SOF in Central America, frequently making his way into the field to cover firsthand the various military actions underway in that volatile region down south. His most recent article for SOF was “Contra Aid” in April 1987.



**FN MAG-**armed Guatemalan army machine gunner surveys the mountains of El Quiche in Military Zone 20.



Wounded Guatemalan army soldier being carried to helicopter for evacuation.

experience, and one was that when marching we would take off our bush hats.

"This makes it harder for the guerrillas to know it is the army if they see our silhouettes," whispered the lieutenant as we paused. "They don't wear the same hats we wear. Also, it is easier to see without a hat when you're climbing up mountains."

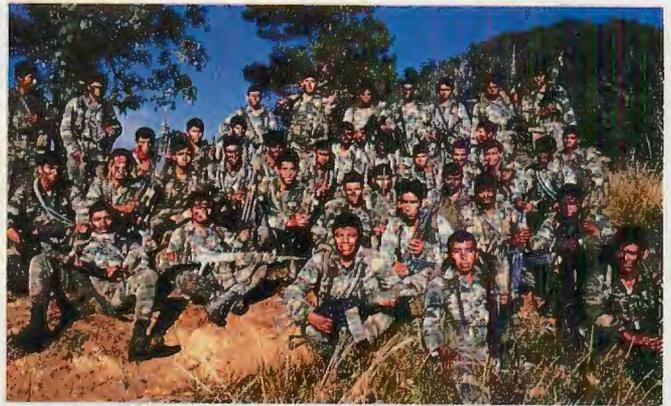
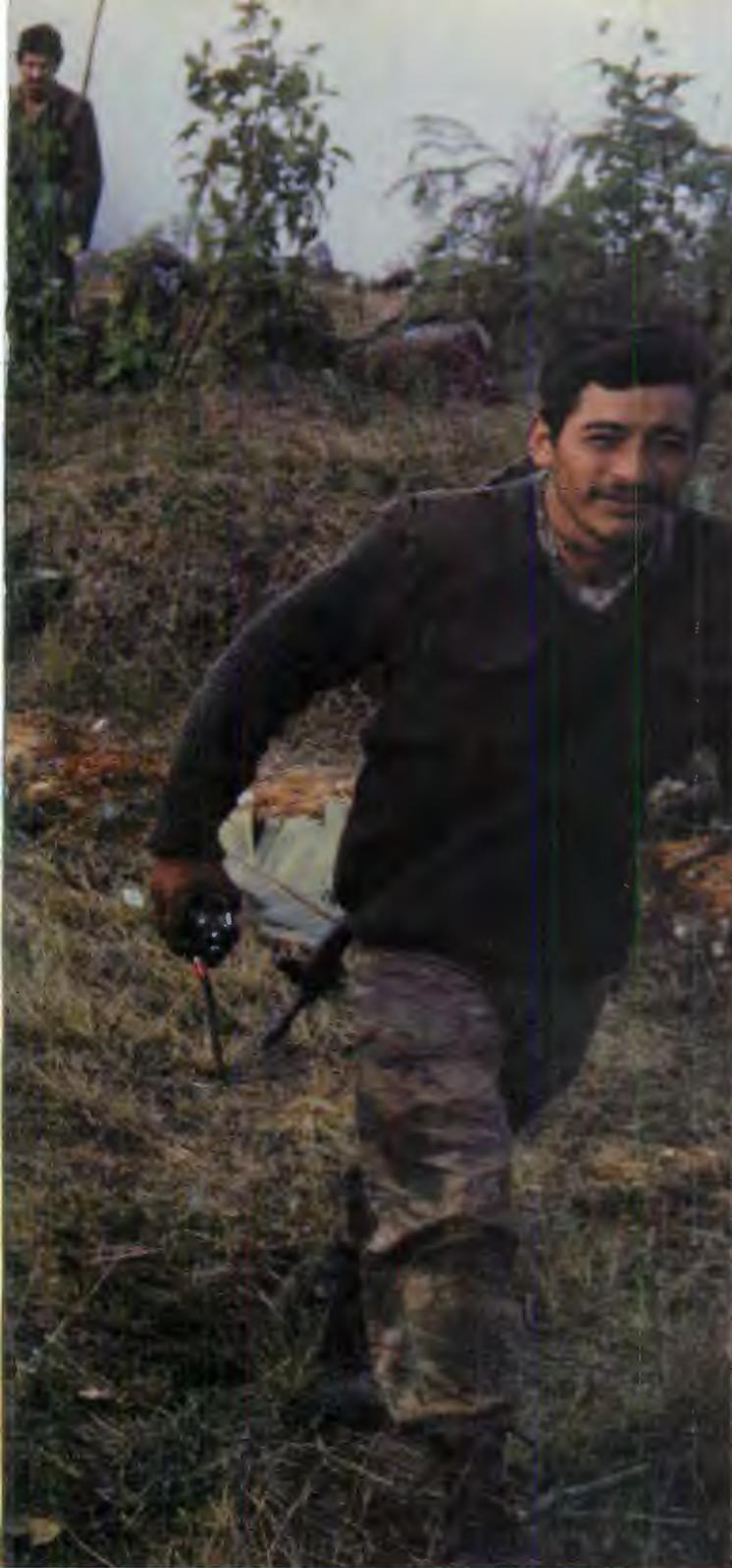
Despite its being a tropical country, winter nights in the highlands of Guatemala are cold — with temperatures often hovering around freezing — and we wore ski masks and gloves as well as sweaters.

After our brush with the guerrillas that night, we pressed on, alternating along the road and trails through the bush until 2330, when we arrived at a military detachment a few kilometers north of Tzabal, one of several model villages constructed by the army over the last four years for refugees fleeing guerrilla violence.

We rested in the welcome warmth of the barracks until 0430, when we moved out again. It would be the best night's sleep we would have that week. We spent the next six nights wide-eyed and wet, shuddering in

cold rain, because we usually patrolled at night. Struggling through the bush in the darkness and fog kept our minds off our sore, shivering bodies.

We did not patrol much during daytime because it would be easier then for the guerrillas to detect us. Also, the days could get very hot. This was a mixed blessing, because we could dry our clothes in the sun, but the abrupt changes of climate between night and day made virtually all of us sick. Most of the men already had caught the flu from an 18-day patrol they had completed



Guatemalan army Lt. Alvarez and his troops in El Quiche.



Guerrilla weapons captured by Guatemalan army.



Guatemalan Indian civil defense men in Acul, a model village in El Quiche.

only days before beginning this one. Nearly everyone was coughing and spitting up mouthfuls of green phlegm. Our gloves were stained with the vile substance as we muffled our coughs, clapping our hands over our mouths as the lieutenant had ordered. I had fever and chills myself, and with every step I took I thought my throbbing head was going to explode.

But we marched on. "We are almost always in the field," said a sick Indian soldier in perfect Spanish. "That's what being in the army is all about."

The warm golden rays of the sun felt good as we waited in ambush at our mountaintop position on 8 December. Over the last couple days we hadn't seen any guerrillas, but we felt their presence. The night before, the lieutenant and some troops had seen what they thought was a zepelin rumored to be ferrying supplies to the guerrillas from Mexico.

Pungi-pit traps seemed to be everywhere. I almost fell in one, but Lt. Alvarez saved me. Others have not been so lucky. I was told that a couple troops had been severely

wounded, impaled on the shit-smeared sticks. This was a trick the guerrillas had learned from Vietnamese advisers, according to Guatemalan military sources. In fact, the guerrillas called the northern part of El Quiche the "Ho Chi Minh front."

At 1030, the mountains echoed with a flurry of gunfire and M79 explosions as an army patrol skirmished for about five minutes with a squad of guerrillas a few kilometers away. We heard over the radio that there were no casualties, but one peasant was detained on suspicion he was a guerrilla



Guatemalan army soldiers crossing a river in El Quiché.



collaborator.

Some hours later, another firefight erupted in the same area. It lasted not much longer than the first, and again no casualties were reported.

"This is how the war has become," said Lt. Alvarez. "The terrorists fire a few shots of harassment and flee. They only put on a big ambush once in a while when they have a sure thing, but they do not do it as much as before. A few years ago we had battles for hours and they were ambushing us all the time."

A little later Lt. Alvarez spotted through his binoculars about 10 guerrillas dressed in camouflage and civilian clothing at least three or four kilometers away.

"¡Putá! If we only had helicopters," he lamented. "By the time we walk there, they'll be gone." Guatemala had only one UH-1 Huey helicopter functioning at the time, according to the officers in Nebaj, and it was almost exclusively used for evacuation of wounded and for resupply.

At 0100, we lifted our ambush and headed for the hilltop where the guerrillas had been spotted. Each of us had to hold on to the knapsack of the man in front so as not to get lost in the darkness. Occasionally someone would stumble as we struggled through the underbrush up and down muddy slopes.

A couple hours before dawn, a sergeant fell and his rifle accidentally discharged, instantly killing the man in back of him with a head shot. Lt. Alvarez was pissed. It was the first time one of his men had been killed by an AD, but accidents happen and the veteran lieutenant handled the situation calmly, like a true professional.

He split the patrol into two groups. I followed the lieutenant and 16 troops to a hilltop clearing where we waited in ambush for any guerrillas who might be tempted to patrol at the site of the gunshot, but none came.

At daybreak, the rest of the soldiers rejoined us, carrying the body of the dead

#### Prisoners held by Guatemalan army.

trooper. As a chopper circled overhead, guerrilla snipers opened fire on us from a hill 300 meters away. We flung ourselves to the grass and fired back in semiauto. The popping caps sounded like a performance of flamenco dancers who had gone berserk and were snapping their castanets in a deafening cacophony. Our machine gunner added a heavy staccato rhythm, blasting away in five-round bursts with his Belgian-made FN MAG.

The guerrillas took to their heels after five minutes when our grenadier started to zero in on them with his M79. We suffered no casualties, but Lt. Alvarez tried his best to inflict some on the guerrillas, dispatching a squad to chase them. The rest of his men provided security as the chopper landed to bring us water and evacuate the soldier killed by the AD.

We had not drunk water for more than 36 hours and my throat was so parched it felt like it was stuffed with fiberglass. We quenched our thirsts, guzzling from our canteens after the lieutenant refilled them from a couple 10-gallon plastic bags. Unfortunately, the chopper did not bring us more food.

We had been issued locally-made Guatemalan army rations of four five-ounce cans of corn *masa*, spaghetti, sausage with egg, and jelly or juice per day. With a palate spoiled by American cuisine, I didn't find the Guatemalan rations tasty. But they were a treat to the Guatemalans, who were accustomed to eating rice, beans and tortillas when they were at their bases.

Our rations were hardly enough for a meal, however, and many troops had less than a half-dozen cans left midway through our mission. For its remainder, we had to live off the land, foraging pomegranates, oranges, wild corn and berries as well as raiding stores of squash, beans and fruit the guerrillas left behind in shacks.

On the morning of 10 December, we ren-

dezzed with the patrol of Lieutenant Hugo Perez, a blond-haired officer with penetrating blue eyes. He had three prisoners. One was a 13-year-old guerrilla who had been captured a couple weeks ago by Lt. Alvarez's patrol and who was now being used as a guide to locate guerrilla encampments. The other two were an 18-year-old girl who wore multicolored Indian garb and a 25-year-old man, both suspected of collaborating with the guerrillas. All were Ixil Indians and only the man spoke Spanish.

"They [the guerrillas] threatened to kill our relatives if we left, and they also said the army would kill us if we turned ourselves in," the man stuttered, explaining why they had not taken advantage of the government's amnesty program, which offers resettlement in model villages with electricity and potable water to guerrillas and guerrilla collaborators who turn themselves in.

A guerrilla sniper had killed a sergeant of Lt. Perez's patrol the day before, but the soldiers did not take out their anger and frustration on the prisoners. The prisoners were bound, but they were treated well—in contrast to how the guerrillas had treated soldiers they had captured in November.

The guerrillas had tortured and executed the captured soldiers. The face had been cut off one of the bodies, and two corpses were found with flesh of their left thighs hacked off, giving rise to speculation that a sect of Indian guerrillas might have eaten the flesh of their enemy's fallen to obtain the strength of their spirits. The guerrilla initials EGP had been carved in the back of the body of a young lieutenant.

The guerrilla savagery was a heinous warning that a Khmer Rouge-style blood bath could take place in the United States' own backyard if the communists ever seize power in Guatemala. But as we headed back to Nebaj over the next couple days, we were content knowing that we had pushed the guerrillas deeper into the wilderness and farther from the towns and villages of El Quiche. ✕

# BRUSSELS' BAR SIMBA

## Saloon for Mercs

by Jim Shortt

Photos Courtesy of Charles Masy



**L**A Renaissance reads the sign above the door at the old Brussels building. But here in Belgium, and indeed, around the world, 42 Rue Marche au Charbon is known to military veterans by another name — *Bar Simba*. Before the Katanga Brewery closed, it was the only watering hole outside Africa where former Congo mercenaries could drink Simba-Tembo beer and recollect their part in the short-lived Republic of Katanga.

*Bar Simba* is also the headquarters of the Brussels branch of the French Foreign Le-

### OUR MAN IN LA RENAISSANCE

Jim Shortt, a long-time associate of *Soldier of Fortune* Magazine, is the author of six books on military and martial arts subjects. Shortt is currently the director of projects for a London-based security company. His training missions have taken him to Europe, the United States, the Middle East, West Africa and, of course, Brussels, where he is a regular at the *Bar Simba*.

LEFT: Author Jim Shortt (right) at *Bar Simba* with owner Charles Masy.



greeted by a legion veteran singing in French:

*Les Druses s'avancent à la bataille  
En avant, légionnaires à l'ennemi  
Le plus brave au combat comme toujours  
C'est le Premier Etranger de Cavalerie*  
This song of the 1st REC (*Régiment Etranger de Cavalerie*, Regiment of Foreign Cavalry) — the elite of the legion before the paras — recalls the Foreign Legion battles against the Druze in Syria. Times haven't changed much.

My blurred memory of that evening alternates between endless rounds of strong, black Belgian beer, *Chimay Trappiste*; stories of wars the media missed (thankfully); and the songs — *Anne-Marietje*, *Fallschirmjägerlied* and *Op Walcheren*, the music to which the Para-Commandos march. The legion veterans replied with *Le Boudin*, *Legionnaire de l'Afrique* and *Contre les Viets* — the last being sung by a 1st BEP (*Bataillon Etranger de Parachutistes*, Battalion of Foreign Paras) veteran of Dien Bien Phu.

*Le Patron* — their host — at *Bar Simba* is Charles Masy, a veteran of wars in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Charles Masy's father was a Corps of Engineers veteran of the trench fighting in World War I. By his 14th birthday, Charles' Belgium was again occupied by the Germans. At the age of 17, he joined the resistance movement. His closest scrape with the enemy came when he was arrested by the Gestapo. Charles convinced his interrogators that they had seized an innocent youth, and he was released. He continued to fight with the resistance until 1945, when he applied to join the Belgian SAS (Special Air Service).

gion *amicale* (association), and *L'amicale de la Force Publique*. The *Force Publique*, officered by Europeans, maintained order in Belgium's equatorial African colonies.

Located near the central police station, *Bar Simba* boasts a clientele drawn from active-duty military, police and veterans. Veterans from World War I to the Falklands have drunk, sung and, on not a few occasions, passed out here. The time-honored custom of donating your cap badge, unit insignia, airborne wings or commando qualification patch is evidenced by the massive display of elite unit insignia that hangs behind the bar. Green Berets, SEALs, Rangers and Marines have "swapped lies" here with their European counterparts, as is witnessed by the bits of America they've left behind at this international "rogues' gallery."

I first encountered *Bar Simba* while leading a three-man combat training team at the Para-Commando school of the Belgian army. The Belgian military *Etat Major* (army headquarters) had asked me to bring a team to establish a close-quarter battle syllabus for the Belgian Para-Commando Regiment. Over a beer in the regiment's *Sous-Officiers* (NCO) club it was suggested that I visit *Bar Simba*.

Two hours later, I arrived and was

ABOVE: Charles Masy stands in front of Katanga map inside *Bar Simba*. Left of map is photograph of Masy in the Congo, taken while he served there.

BELOW: Group of mercenaries from 52 Commando stand easy during drive on Stanleyville.





When the war ended, the Belgian SAS battalion was handed back to the Belgian army. It was redesignated 1 Parachute Battalion-SAS. "I joined 1 Para, which still wore the SAS winged dagger as its badge at Tervuren in 1945," said Charles. "I completed my Para-Commando training, kept my nose clean and rose through the ranks. I chose to become a professional soldier."

Like most European countries that had colonial possessions, the post-1945 period was a busy time for the Belgians. The elite Regiment Para-Commando saw its share of the action.

Belgian possessions in Africa — based around the equator and including the area covered by the current African states of Congo, Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi — had been kept relatively peaceful since 1886 by the *Force Publique*. By the 1950s the force was 30,000 strong, highly disciplined and smartly turned out. But by 1953 the winds of change were blowing. The Para-Commando was tasked with assisting the *Force*. The regiment helped to preserve order, often by parachuting into villages in rebellion or under siege.

On 30 June 1960, the Belgian possessions were given their independence, starting with the Congo. *Force Publique* was rechristened *Armée Nationale Congolaise* (ANC). In July 1960, units of the ANC mutinied, massacring white settlers and Belgian officers. The Para-Commandos moved in. The rebellion was aggressively put down. All but 300 of the original 2,800 members of the ANC were discharged and the remainder were placed under the command of a former NCO who had been promoted to colonel.

On 11 July, with the backing of the Belgians, the mineral-rich province of Katanga declared itself a separate country under Moïse Tshombe. The United Nations opposed the new republic and sent in troops to dismantle the country and restore it to the Congo. If the United Nations weren't enemy enough, Katanga also had to cope

ABOVE: *Merité Katangaise* (left) with palm leaf. Badge of the Katangese gendarmes (top center) commanded by white mercenaries. The *Kansimba* "young leopard" badge (bottom center) of Black Jack Schramme's 10 Commando. Katangese *Croix de Guerre* (right). Crossed swords show Charles Masy won this twice.

BELOW: Lt. Charles Masy in Katanga.



with a rebellion of the Baluba tribe within her own borders. The Baluba, noted for their brutality and cannibalism, started massacring white families.

Instead of an army, Katanga had a gendarmerie of former ANC members. The Belgian army had pulled out, but not before seconding officers to the Katangese. The leader of these men was Para-Commando Colonel Guy Weber. One of his men was Lieutenant Charles Masy.

To boost the numbers of the small gendarmerie, one of the Belgians, Carlos Huyghe, suggested that Katanga recruit personnel from white Africans and Europeans. This is where the Congo mercenaries started.

Without consulting the Belgians, Tshombe tried to recruit French Para-Commando officers, including legion paras. The French mercenaries demanded total control of the gendarmerie. The former CO of the French 3rd Colonial Para Battal-

ion, Colonel Trinquier, was contracted as its commandant. However, when he tried to take up his position, the Belgians rerouted his plane to what is now Zambia.

Charles Masy remembers the period well: "Some of the worst trouble we had, including atrocities, was at the hands of the U.N. troops, particularly the Sikh and Ethiopian contingents. They seemed to personalize it and were determined to crush Katanga.

"We were based at Kongolo at the time, which is in the north of Katanga on the border with Kivu. The U.N. troops attacked us on three occasions. They came at us very aggressively, not like these days when they have their hands tied."

Besides the U.N. forces, the mercenary army of Katanga had to cope with Congolese army deserters who had linked up with Baluba tribesmen and were engaged in ravaging the countryside. These tribesmen were unopposed by the U.N. forces, whose main interest was to bring down the Katangese government. In September 1961, the United Nations attacked the gendarmerie at Jadotville, in December at Elizabethville, and decisively beat them a year later, again at Elizabethville, thus toppling the Katangese republic.

In what must be the sole surviving embassy of the old Katanga, Charles brings out memorabilia: copper-cross coins, the enameled badge of the gendarmerie, and two medals hanging from red, green and white ribbons. "Moïse Tshombe gave these to me himself," said Charles. "This is the Katangese *Croix de Guerre*. The crossed swords on it mean I won it twice. This is the *Merité Katangaise*. The palm leaf means I was also mentioned in dispatches." Prominently displayed on a wall in *Bar Simba* is a large-scale map of the Katangese republic. Behind the bar hangs the flag of the republic: a triangle of red meeting a triangle of white and united by a thin green line. On the white are three red crosses. "Copper crosses were once the currency of the region," explained Charles.

"In 1962 the mercenaries left Katanga. The whites had lost about seven men out of a total of about 138 remaining mercenaries, which included French and Germans from the legion, Belgians, British and South Africans. I really don't know how many blacks died — a lot, the majority because of the U.N. performance.

"We headed for Rhodesia. I went to Nyasaland [Malawi], but the Brits threw me out because of my service in the Katangese gendarmerie as an officer. When I arrived in Rhodesia, some friends showed me some ads in the newspapers calling for volunteers to join the Rhodesian SAS, which was in the process of being reformed. I was interviewed by the CO who, when he saw Katanga on my passport, told me to go to South Africa and get it changed.

"I stayed in Rhodesia for about three weeks," Charles continued. "Then one day when I came out of a tobacco shop I was arrested by two men who said they were immigration officials. I was held for two



ABOVE: Merc at play in mock cooking pot surrounded by gendarmes posing as cannibalistic Baluba tribesmen.

BELOW: 42 Rue Marche au Charbon. Finding *Bar Simba* isn't difficult; leaving while still sober, however, is.



days. They asked me what I had done in Katanga, what I had done in Rhodesia, who I had met. They then asked me about Katangese operations on 4th, 5th and 6th September 1961, after which they produced a detailed file." It was obvious that the U.N. authorities had compiled intelligence dossiers on all the mercenaries. "Finally," said Charles, "they asked me: 'How many did you kill?' I was fed up with their games, so I said: 'Not enough!!' They put me on a plane for South Africa.

"In South Africa I was given a job by a Belgian and worked there for about two years. But the Congo flared up again and Tshombe, now serving as president of the Congo, asked for mercenaries to help. Jack Schramme, a Belgian, formed 10 Commando, which was called Kansimba, meaning 'young leopards.' "

Charles Masy again reached behind the bar and brought out a black embroidered patch with the words "Commando" at the top and "Kansimba" at the bottom. "This was Black Jack's unit badge. It was worn on the left arm," said Charles. "We have had some commemoration patches made up for the old 10 Commando hands who come in here.

"A British ex-officer once approached me and suggested I go to the Congo because I knew the place. I was recruited in Johannesburg by Jan Gordon and left with the first volunteers.

"Before Mike Hoare arrived on the scene, we were formed into commando companies. I was with 52 Commando [2nd Company, 5 Commando]. One of our most successful operations was against Simba at Boende. Twice we had to turn back after a 300-kilometer advance because we couldn't

cross the river. The town lay between two rivers that joined like a "Y." We moved along the river about 12 kilometers and met a Belgian expatriate who organized boats which got us behind the town and we took it. Between Mibuta and Watsa we saved 1,489 Europeans. We were in action at Albertville, where we lost two mercs, a German and a South African — Koetler and Nestler. They were killed on August 29th, 1964, in our first operation as 5 Commando. Later, the French formed a 6 Commando, which is less well-known. We re-equipped

at Leopoldville and then moved to Coquilatville. After that we moved on to Stanleyville.

"The worst for me was when we took Stanleyville. The massacre by the Simba had been terrible. I remember a young nun that the Simba had beaten and raped and then tied to a cart outside the convent so that passersby could rape and abuse her — she eventually died. Later, the mercenaries, acting as advisers, guided in both the Belgian Para-Commando Regiment [*Opération Dragon Rouge*] and Congolese army units. That was the climax of the Congo operation."

Charles finally left the Congo as an officer in 1966 and returned to his native Brussels. He bought *La Renaissance* that same year with the money he had made during Congo service plus a year in service to the Portuguese. "Some other Congo mercs and I were approached by the Portuguese government. We went to Portugal for a year and trained for an operation which we were only told would be in Africa and entailed releasing a prisoner. Nothing came of it, but we got our wages," said Charles. *Bar Simba*, as it became known, rapidly became the haunt of those veterans of Europe's forgotten wars. Legion veterans of every nationality regularly come through its door seeking a contact for work.

Shortly after buying the bar, Charles was recruited through former Congo mercenaries to assist the Royalist government of Yemen in the civil war against the Egyptian/Soviet-backed republican government. Leaving his wife in charge, Charles set off for Yemen. "There were British SAS, French Para-Commando and legion and Belgian mercenaries," said Charles. The mercenaries in the Yemeni war were some 48 in number — 18 of whom were Brits who had all seen service with 22 SAS. The remainder were French and Belgians under Roger Faulques — a legion hero who operated only with French government approval. The Egyptian and Soviet backers of the republicans used chemical weapons against the Royalists long before their use in Southeast Asia or Afghanistan.

"Soon after I finished in the Yemen, the Biafran-Nigerian war started and so people came looking for me to go there. I declined and another Belgian took my place. Within three weeks he was dead," Charles said. "On another occasion three Belgians and an Italian were killed by a mortar strike. One of them had served with me in Katanga, another in the Yemen."

Recently, an Afghan came into the bar and left a small packet containing the personal effects of three Belgians whom he claimed had been killed in his country fighting the Soviets. He left names and asked Charles to find the next of kin — with no other clues to their identity.

*La Renaissance* is not an exclusive drinking club, but it is a special one. Said Charles, "Everyone comes here. Generals sit down and drink with privates. That is the way it is." ✕

# FRENCH MASQUERADE

## SF Trooper Bluffs Pathet Lao

by James Perry



Operation White Star, one of Special Forces' first classified operations in Southeast Asia, ran officially from 1959 to 1962 — and unofficially until 1964, when the CIA abandoned General Vang Pao's "secret army" in the Chu Pong Mountains of Laos and Special Forces moved next door, to South Vietnam.

Under the command of Colonel Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, 107 Green Berets were sent to Laos in 1959 to upgrade the training of the 25,000-man Royal Lao army in order to halt the advance of the communist-backed Pathet Lao, which then controlled two of Laos' 14 provinces and was threatening several others.

Captain James Perry, one of those origi-

nal 107, has chronicled many of his adventures and misadventures during White Star for *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* (see "Bull in the Indochina Shop," "White Star Warriors," "Fire in the Hole!," "Another Bridge on the River Kwai" and "Ladies From Hell," *SOF*, January, April, May, October '84 and January '85).

By the coming of the winter monsoons in 1959, Operation White Star had moved into Phase II of its concept, shifting the emphasis from technical weapons training to teaching basic infantry tactics. The plan had never been approved by Paris, however. Their legionnaires at Savannakhet were responsible for that training.

### WHITE STAR WARRIOR

Captain James M. Perry is well-known to SOF readers for chronicling his Laotian adventures during Operation White Star, the first covert Special Forces mission since World War II. A 24-year military veteran, Perry served in the Marine Corps and U.S. Army. As a Special Forces instructor in the Army he taught High-Altitude, Low-Opening (HALO) parachute tactics. White Star was one of Perry's three tours under "Bull" Simons.

**A**FTER six long, hard months of drumming weaponry into the hearts and minds of the Lao soldiers, every man on White Star began dreaming of a combat role, even if it only meant training the Lao in the bush and then turning them loose on the Pathet Lao. Our blood was up. We wanted some kill reports.

My team in Pakse was given two Lao companies to train. The word had come down from Bull Simons in Vientiane.

"Don't let the French have a clue to what you're teaching," he said. "We're not authorized to do anything more than technical training. But I'll be damned if I'll teach a Lao how to shoot an M1 rifle and not show him how to use it in combat!"

My French counterpart, Captain Jacques Beudreau, *Legion de les Coloniaux*, was a bony, tight-lipped man with hollow cheeks and sallow skin. He refused to speak English and his thick Alsace brogue was often incomprehensible to me. He had since colored the Alsatian he'd learned as a boy on a farm with the *patois* of the legion, an ingestion of German, Italian, Spanish. Whatever came naturally. He also had a bad speech habit of preceding everything he said with the word *donc*, meaning "so then."

Jacques had a team of four, two of whom taught mortars and two who taught light infantry tactics — French infantry tactics. They stunk, both the instructors and the tactics.

The French teamhouse was close by mine, almost a chalet of sorts. It was raised high in the air on concrete stilts and had a spacious balcony around it, from which flew the French *tri-couleur*, as if it were a

presidential palace.

My teamhouse was a two-story stucco flat on the ground. It was also across the street from the only theater in town, which had two outdoor speakers that blared Chinese music all night long. I made every effort to conceal the fact that Americans lived there, for the Pathet Lao, the communist guerrillas, sometimes used Pakse as if it were their own. The less said about our presence, the better.

The Bull had finally returned our weapons, M1 Garands, which we kept slung beneath our bunks. I was also never without my hip-holstered Smith & Wesson .38, and if we took a vehicle beyond *Kilometre Cinq* (the security limits of the Fourth Military District in Pakse), we shoved in a rifle or two. But as for arms during our usual working day, there were none.

One night, shortly after Kong Le tried an unsuccessful coup in Vientiane, the word came down that the Pathets would attack every American teamhouse in Laos that night. We broke out the M1919A6 machine gun and placed it at the end of the hall, top floor, aimed at the head of the stairs. Then we sandbagged the sleeping quarters and waited. When the sun came up we looked out the window and were pleased to discover that the two Lao infantry companies we'd been training had surrounded the house during the night, providing perimeter guard, just as we'd been teaching them!

The French were very blasé about weapons. Even though they'd lost the war in Indochina, Frenchmen still skulked the back streets with nothing more than a pocket knife.

"*Donc*," Jacques would say, "we are loved and respected by the Lao, for we are French. Who would harm a Frenchman here?"

He may have been right. In the several times I was stopped at a Pathet Lao roadblock, even though my French was terrible, I got away by posing as one. We even took to flying a small French flag whenever we went beyond *Kilometre Cinq*.

Therein lies my story.

High up on the *Plateau des Bolovens*, a triangle of rainforest that divided the borders of Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, lived a Dutch-Vietnamese *métis*, Jean Cadeaux, with his wife, Faviane, and his 18-year-old son, Tigu. Mme. Cadeaux was French-Vietnamese and Tigu, who spoke perfect English, smiled when he called himself "one-quarter Injun."

Jean was a *planteur*, a farmer, though he also herded water buffalo, more than 3,000 of them. He had a paradise for a home, large and sprawling, with a thatched roof and a huge kitchen that harbored a large woodstove. Mme. Cadeaux was an expert at making and smoking sausages, the meat for which Jean and Tigu gathered on the plateau. The giant gauer, a breed of wild oxen weighing a ton or more and whose flesh is much like that of domestic cattle, roams the rain forest freely. Jean reasoned that, as long as it came out

smoked sausage, who was to know the difference. He saved his buffalo for sale, Lao Kip 3,000, or \$24, each.

The Pathet Lao came through from time to time and took what they wanted, no payment rendered. Jean, alone and defenseless, let them have what they wanted. There was no shooting over the matter. The Pathets had agreed on a non-aggression pact with the Cadeaux farm.

The vegetables Jean grew were largely shipped to the French garrison at Savannakhet from a short dirt runway the French had built there for their own convenience. Their C-47s hopped in and out of there daily, but Air America stayed away. The Bull didn't want Cadeaux's cover blown.



Jean Cadeaux was secretly passing intelligence to Vientiane, identifying the Pathet Lao units on the plateau and the Viet Minh advisers who ran with them. They were there in great numbers and growing daily, working on the terminus of a spur of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Jean, a skilled woodsman, had not yet been able to find it.

The drive from Pakse to the plateau was several hours long over an unimproved 50-kilometer winding dirt road. It rose from the Mekong River level to over 4,000 feet, where it ended at Jean's farm. There was no security along the way, no army outposts. When you left Klick Five, you were on your own. But halfway up was the small, *barrio*-styled town of Pak Song, where Filipinos from the United States Aid for International Development had established a small hospital.

A pause for the merit of the Filipinos who augmented U.S. forces in Laos in 1959-60. They were Third-World help, accustomed to living under harsh conditions. Put one in a *lava-lava*, a tubular skirt worn by everyone in Southeast Asia, and he was difficult to tell from a Lao. The Pathets left the Filipino hospital alone, for they often brought their wounded and sick there for treatment.

The Green Berets in Pakse valued Jean Cadeaux for more than just his clandestine work on the plateau. He was a very pleasant man, a white hunter in his own right, a man with a glorious reputation as a killer of Bengal tigers. He hated them, having almost been killed by a wounded one. He was also a consummate woodsman, potting grouse, pigeons and the jinky little *Tiki* on the wing as if they were tied to the barrel of his shotgun. Mme. Cadeaux prepared all of these in *haute cuisine*, combining French and Dutch recipes on the huge woodstove. It was difficult to turn down an invitation for dinner there, even if it did mean running a dangerous road.

I had decided to go up one weekend. As an excuse I used my need for fresh vegetables, fruit and some of Mme. Cadeaux's smoked sausage. Vientiane, anxious for its share, approved the trip.

"But you leave that goddamned French flag behind," the Bull growled, "and you keep your mouth shut if a Pathet starts flinging French at you at a roadblock." There was a slight pause in radio transmission, followed by a heavy sigh and a soft "My Gawd." Then, "Where do you want me to ship the body, Perry?"

He'd cautioned me several times about posing as French; that I was pushing my luck with that sort of thing. My French wasn't all that bad. I'd picked up some of the legion *patois* and I swaggered like a legionnaire. But I'm from the Deep South and my tongue is still honeyed. The French howled at my accent. Jacques scowled.

"*Vous Américains*," he chided derisively, "you could live in Paris for 30 years and I could still pick you out from your tongue. French is for Frenchmen to speak. All others should leave it alone."

It rankled me a little. His reluctance to try English forced me to speak poor French with him.

"Well," I told the Bull, "if I take a Frenchman with me — one of the legionnaires from here — is it okay if I ride under his identity?"

"Are you talking about that Frog, Jacques Whatever-His-Name-Is?"

"Beudreau, sir," I replied, "Jacques Beudreau."

"Okay, Boo-drough, but whatever you call him, he's also a snitch. His headquarters gets daily reports on your efforts at tactical training. My God, Perry! Can't you get our security shit together down there?"

"I'll tighten it, sir," I said, then, "I'll put some vegetables and sausage on the next plane to Vientiane. A trade. I could use a couple of bottles of Jack Daniels."

"You got 'em," said the Bull, then, "Out."

Father Louis, the prelate of the Catholic mission at Champassak, heard of my going. He made a special trip down to see me.

"Please," he pleaded, "I have heard rumors. I think them valid. The Pathet would like to take you prisoner."

*Continued on page 73*

**SOF WORLD WAR II**

# **ALPINE ELITE**

## **The Making of America's 10th Mountain Division**

**by Leroy Thompson**

**Photos Courtesy of U.S. Army**



**ABOVE: Patrol of the 86th Mountain Infantry, on skis and in winter dress, takes a tow from a Weasel at Spigyana in January 1945.**



**I**N the waning months of “peace” before the United States was swept up in World War II, the U.S. Army, at the prodding of a group of American outdoorsmen, set in motion a train of events that would finally, in the waning months of the war in Europe, bring defeat to the stubborn German defenses in the mountains of Italy. That train of events is the story of the U.S. Army’s 10th Mountain Division.

Alpine troops had been an elite within European armies for years, but the United States, despite the presence of large mountain ranges on the North American continent, had long neglected the need for such specialized troops. The winter war between the Soviet Union and Finland particularly illustrated the usefulness of troops trained to fight on skis in winter conditions, but few U.S. troops could ski at that time, in 1939.

The initial idea for forming a unit of U.S. ski/mountain troops came about as the suggestion of a group of American skiers led by Charles Minot “Minnie” Dole, who had previously been active in establishing the National Ski Patrol. They argued that, should Britain fall to the Germans and Canada be used as a springboard for an invasion of the United States, such specialized troops might be necessary to help defend the northeastern United States. In retrospect, this threat may not have seemed very likely, but as Hitler’s war machine rolled across Europe the idea had much more currency. One of Dole’s first suggestions was that the National Ski Patrol could be used as guerrillas and guides.

Dole’s efforts eventually began to pay off, and the War Department began considering the formation of three specialized mountain/ski divisions — the 10th, 12th

and 14th Light Divisions (Alpine). In August 1940, the War Department ordered experiments in winter warfare. Dole still had met only lukewarm reception for his ideas in Washington, so he set out to gather every bit of information on mountain troops he could, to better prepare himself to argue the case for such specialized troops within the U.S. Army. Fortunately, Henry Stimson, the new Secretary of War, was a mountaineer, which helped Dole and John Morgan get an appointment to see General George C. Marshall, the head of the Joint Chiefs.

### SPECIAL UNIT SPECIALIST

Leroy Thompson served in Vietnam and Thailand with the U.S. Air Force Combat Security Police, a Ranger-trained special unit in existence during the Vietnam War. He has trained with special operations and anti-terrorist units in more than a dozen countries.

Thompson is a contributing editor for *Combat Handguns Magazine*, for which he writes a column on VIP protection and anti-terrorism. He has authored more than 200 articles on special operations and units and on weapons and security subjects, including many for Omega Group publications. Among his numerous specialized books are *U.S. Special Forces of World War II*, *U.S. Special Forces Since World War II*, *U.S. Elite Forces: Vietnam*, and *The Rescuers: The World’s Top Anti-Terrorist Units*.

Partially as a result of Dole’s efforts and partially as a result of the efforts of a few officers in the War Department who also believed in the idea of specialized troops, an agency was soon set up within the Office of the Quartermaster General to test and develop clothing and equipment for winter operations. The offer of guides from the National Ski Patrol in case of emergency was also accepted. To form the basis for some form of Army winter capability, six divisions stationed in northern states — the 1st Division at Fort Devons, Massachusetts; the 44th Division at Fort Dix, New Jersey; the 5th Division at Fort Custer, Michigan; the 6th Division at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; and the 3rd and 41st Divisions at Fort Lewis, Washington — were ordered to form “ski patrols” within their ranks.

An even more important step was the formation of a group of experts in mountaineering and skiing, including Dole, to advise the military on equipment and training for mountain/ski troops. One of the first steps taken by this group was to gather foreign manuals on winter warfare and translate them. They also looked into lightweight food and equipment. As a result of their efforts, the committee eventually supplied the Quartermaster General with specifications for all sorts of equipment, including rucksacks, sleeping bags, ski pants, gaiters, headbands, felt insoles, knives, boot toe protectors, mittens, tents, ski caps, white camouflage trousers, ski repair kits, snowshoes, ski poles, ski boots, stoves, and even clips to hold a rifle close to the body while skiing or climbing. Throughout this period, Dole wrote literally thousands of letters urging the formation of a mountain division.

Men of the 10th Mountain Division in action against Germans in Italy along Perretta-Modena Highway in March 1945.





**LEFT:** Tramway constructed near Mount Belvedere in Italy by the 126th Mountain Engineers in operation in February 1945.



**BELOW LEFT:** Artillerymen of the 616th Pack Artillery load their 75mm howitzer in action in Vincinetta area in February 1945.



As the ski patrols were trained within the selected divisions, tactical doctrine for their use developed. In many ways, the tactics that evolved were similar to those for the old horse cavalry. Much of the specialized equipment was tested, as were the tactics. As the military skiers became more proficient, they gained confidence and began to see themselves as somewhat of an elite. In the Adirondacks, men from the 44th Division got involved in a race with local lumberjacks to prove to them that skis were faster than snowshoes. Other military ski patrols carried out long treks during heavy snows to prove their mobility. One point which the tests and training definitely proved was that military skiers needed steel-edged skis to hold up under the hard usage.

Moving in its ponderous way, the War Department finally began studying sites for a camp to be used for winter/mountain training and as a base for a possible mountain battalion, brigade, or division. Pando, Colorado, was chosen. Then, on 15 November 1941, the 1st Battalion, 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment, was activated at Fort Lewis. Recruits for the new unit included college skiers, outdoorsmen, lumberjacks, cowboys, forest rangers, mountaineers, hunters, trappers and others experienced in the outdoors. Certain naturalized citizens, including Swiss mountain guides and Austrian ski instructors, found a home in the 87th as well. Early in the unit's training, members climbed Mount Rainier, Mount McKinley, Mount St. Elias and other peaks.

In July 1942, men of the 87th helped test the Weasel — a caterpillar-type snow vehicle. Throughout this period, too, recruits were being trained in skiing, rock climbing, winter survival, rappelling, etc. So the new regiment would have artillery support, pack artillery troops also trained in rock climbing and other winter skills. As the training progressed, all sorts of equipment were developed, among the most important being nylon climbing rope.

In August 1943, the 87th got a chance to use its specialized skills as it joined thousands of other troops — including the 1st Special Service Force, which was also trained as mountain/ski troops — to invade Kiska in the Aleutians. The 87th did not get its baptism by fire there, however, because the Japanese had already fled the island, though the troops did get a chance to practice survival in near-arctic conditions. Portions of the 87th would remain on Kiska until January 1944. While there, most troops kept their climbing skills up by scaling Kiska volcano.

When the 87th returned to the United States it was to join the 10th Light Division (Pack, Alpine), which had finally been activated on 15 July 1943 at Camp Hale, the

*Continued on page 71*

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## I. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
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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?  
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2. SOF is interested in what its readers think about the subjects of the articles in the August 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
Interview: John K. Singlaub .....	1	2	3
Ruger's P-85 .....	1	2	3
El Quiche Patrol .....	1	2	3
Brussels' Bar Simba .....	1	2	3
French Masquerade .....	1	2	3
Gooney Birds .....	1	2	3
Battle at Three Pagodas Pass .....	1	2	3
A Slow Boat to a Slow War .....	1	2	3
Alpine Elite .....	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
Interview: John K. Singlaub .....	1	2	3
Ruger's P-85 .....	1	2	3
El Quiche Patrol .....	1	2	3
Brussels' Bar Simba .....	1	2	3
French Masquerade .....	1	2	3
Gooney Birds .....	1	2	3
Battle at Three Pagodas Pass .....	1	2	3
A Slow Boat to a Slow War .....	1	2	3
Alpine Elite .....	1	2	3

SECOND FOLD → UP

3. If you were going to assign a writer to do an article on rifles, what would you have him write about? \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you were going to assign a writer to do an article on pistols, what would you have him write about? \_\_\_\_\_

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Place an X in the space provided next to those subjects you want to read about.

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9. A) Was this issue Excellent \_\_\_ Average \_\_\_ or Poor \_\_\_.

- B) Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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\*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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# 10TH MOUNTAIN DIV.

Continued from page 68

new mountain facility in Colorado. Among the other recruits for the new division were some 5,000 mules, about two-thirds assigned to the 604th, 614th, 615th and 616th Pack Artillery Battalions. Each of these battalions had eight 75mm howitzers which broke into six pieces for transport on the mules. With skilled crews, the 75s could be assembled and brought into action within five minutes. The sophisticated college graduates — and the 10th had large numbers of these who were drawn by the lure of serving in a ski unit — soon learned to handle the mules almost as well as the division's country-bred mule skinnners. Two other regiments — the 85th and 86th — along with specialized support troops rounded out the division.

The *Military Ski Manual*, written by Lieutenant Frank Harper, offers insight into the development of U.S. specialized tactics for the 10th. The manual stresses that in mountain warfare the skilled trooper has advantages of both mobility and confidence on both the attack and defense. The trained mountain trooper can be used in hit-and-run raids or on full-scale assaults on tactically important heights. Also stressed is the importance of demolition training for mountain/ski troops, since they will often be fighting in terrain which lends itself well to the use of demolitions. The manual also covers important tactical considerations such as the usefulness of sniping by ski troops and techniques for marksmanship on skis (for example, forming a V with ski poles to rest the rifle on), the usefulness of the bayonet when attacking downhill but its disadvantages when attacking uphill, and the proper use of grenades on ice to add ice splinters to the metal fragments. Tips for winter survival, information on skiing and climbing, and other such skills are covered as well in this 1943 manual.

Since the Army was learning about mountain troops as it went, some ridiculous ideas were tried at Camp Hale, such as a "manual of skis." Meant to take the place of the manual of arms, this idea was scrapped because the men in the rear ranks kept getting clobbered by the skis of those in front of them.

Training at Camp Hale was rugged, and many initial recruits who had not volunteered through the special office Dole was running to steer skiers and mountaineers into the unit could not adjust to Camp Hale's cold nor to the rigorous training of the mountain troops. So rough was the training that a common saying was, "Anyone who transfers to combat from the mountain troops is yellow."

One famous story from this time was widely reported, though it is probably apocryphal. Supposedly, a 10th Division radioman on patrol on Sugar Loaf heard a plane, on approach to Pueblo airport, which reported, "Number 15 to Pueblo, Number 15 to Pueblo. Coming in at 8,000 feet: gliding, gliding, gliding..." The trooper, accord-

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ing to the story, turned his radio on and crooned, "Sugar Loaf Mountain Patrol to 10th Division HQ. Coming in at 12,000 feet: walking, walking, walking..."

In November 1944, the division was formally redesignated the 10th Mountain Division. When Brigadier General George Hays took command of the division that month, he added the "Mountain" arc over the divisional shoulder sleeve insignia, which helped instill even more morale and *esprit de corps* in the unit. Hays soon found that the 10th was far more egalitarian than most military units. So many members of the division knew each other from pre-war skiing that off-duty officers and enlisted personnel mixed freely. The fact that the 10th had more college graduates than any other division in the Army probably added to this crossing over of the usual barriers of rank. Still, the effectiveness of the unit was not affected. So intelligent were the 10th Mountain recruits that over 64 per cent of the 86th Mountain Infantry Regiment scored high enough to be eligible for OCS. Most refused to go, however, for fear they would have to leave the 10th.

With the 10th there was also the irony that a large number of Austrian nationals who had been working as ski instructors in the United States found themselves in uniform to fight against Germans and Austrians on the other side. These Austrian nationals served their adopted country well.

Under Hays, the 10th Mountain Division finally got its chance to see combat. In December 1944 and January 1945, the unit deployed overseas to the Italian theater, the logical assignment since Allied troops were fighting their way up Italy's mountainous spine. Ironically, though Italy was where the 10th was most suited to fight, the division had originally been offered to Eisenhower. Bedell Smith, Eisenhower's chief of staff, had turned it down because of all the mules. Mark Clark, on the other hand, welcomed the 10th for use in Italy, where it proved invaluable.

Assigned to IV Corps — which included such miscellaneous units as the 92nd Infantry, the Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Brazilian Expeditionary Force, the 1st Armored Division and the 6th South African Division — the 10th was into the line by January 1945. Feeling right at home in the Apennines, the 10th got a chance to send out its only ski patrols of the war during its first weeks in combat. By mid-February, the snow was melting.

The 10th's greatest contribution was in cracking the Gothic Line. Troops from the 10th moved up Riva Ridge to capture critical ground overlooking Mount Belvedere. This high ground was garrisoned by crack German *Gebirgsjäger*, who didn't believe the Americans had any units that could climb well enough to attack them. The

climb was, indeed, tough, but the members of the 86th Mountain Infantry managed to scale the face of Riva Ridge at night in virtual silence carrying heavy equipment. As they climbed, they emplaced nylon ropes with pitons and snaplinks. In all, 800 men made the climb to get into position for the attack. The plan called for the men of the 86th to complete their difficult climb and be in position to assault by 0515 on 19 February. Control of this high ground was critical, because the 85th and 87th were to jump off at 2300 against Mount Belvedere.

The 86th's attack was successful, though they had to fight off numerous counterattacks, and the 85th and 87th were successful in their assault on Mount Belvedere, finally fighting with fixed bayonets. By 0700 on 20 February, Belvedere had been captured, but during 20-21 February the mountain troops had to hold off seven counterattacks.

By 21 February, the 126th Mountain Engineer Battalion of the 10th had rigged an aerial tramway up Riva Ridge, allowing supplies and casualties to make the trip up or down in five minutes rather than the eight hours it would have taken otherwise.

Early in March, the 10th Mountain advanced toward the Po Valley. The 10th could have broken out through the mountains which for months previously had stalled the Allied drive through Italy, but the rest of the 5th Army was not ready to follow up or to exploit such a breakthrough. On 14

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April, the 10th Mountain spearheaded the final assault to crush German resistance in Italy. As the German defenses crumbled, the 10th's advance became so rapid that Hays had to order his men to march for eight hours, ride trucks for eight hours and rest for eight hours. During this advance, Private First Class John Magrath of the 85th Mountain Infantry became the 10th's only Medal of Honor winner.

The 10th didn't stop when they reached the Po River, either. They used boats to cross and continued to press the retreating Germans. During this advance, Colonel William Darby, of Ranger fame, joined the 10th as the assistant divisional commander. Darby led a task force from the 86th to liberate Verona, then was killed on 1 May in Tarbole after men from the 10th had captured it from the rear by climbing over cliffs and rocks.

One day after Darby's death, on 2 May 1945, the Germans capitulated in Italy, and the war was over for the 10th Mountain Division. So highly did Clark rate the 10th that he sent Hays a letter saying, "I look upon the action of the Tenth Mountain Division as one of the most vital and brilliant in the war." It looked for a while at least as if the 10th might end up fighting Tito's partisans should they try to seize Trieste, but this threat did not materialize.

In June, members of the 10th helped organize the first post-war international ski race in Austria. Then, in July, the members of the 10th Mountain Division boarded

transports for the States. They were slated for use in the Pacific against Japan, but the Japanese surrender on 14 August meant that the war was really over for the men of the 10th. On 20 October 1945, the unit was disbanded at Camp Carson, Colorado.

Compared to some units which had been in combat for years, the 10th had not seen that much action, but what it did see had been intensive. During its 114 days of fighting, the 10th Mountain Division had taken over 5,000 casualties and had acted as the 5th Army's spearhead during the final drive in Italy.

After the war, members of the 10th played a major part in broadening the popularity of recreational skiing. Ex-10th Mountain members, for example, developed many of the nation's foremost ski resorts, including Vail, Sugarbush Valley, Crystal Mountain and Whiteface Mountain. Post-war skiers and mountaineers owe much to the equipment developed for the 10th.

The experiences and expertise of the 10th Mountain Division graphically illustrated the value of troops specially trained to operate in winter weather and in the mountains. As a result, the U.S. Army has continued to keep certain elements trained in such skills.

The 10th Mountain Division has recently been reactivated, though not as a fully trained mountain division as it was in World War II. The 10th is now one of the Army's new light infantry divisions (LIDs), though it retains its full formal designation as the "10th Mountain Division" in honor of the unit's unique place in U.S. Army history. ✎

## MASQUERADE

*Continued from page 65*

"Captain Jacques is going with me," I soothed the priest. "I'll pretend to be a Frenchman."

"In an American jeep?" he questioned.

"We'll make it look French," I explained.

"But you'll take your rifles just the same?" He knit his brow, worried. I slapped him on the back.

"Father," I grinned, "if the Pathets stop me and find much more than a pistol on my hip, somebody's gonna plug me."

"Please," he said, "maybe some hand grenades at least."

"Okay, Father, a couple of hand grenades."

"Bon," he smiled, "and now, *mon capitaine*, maybe you could give me a few liters of essence for my *voiture*?"

I kept the Good Father in gas. He had a little gray car, they call it a *deux chevaux*—two horsepower. Two liters of gas would take him to Hell and back and often did. Recently, one of the highland priests, Father Bernard, had been assassinated by the Pathet Lao. Father Louis had driven the distance through enemy lines to bring the body down. The car meant everything to him. A couple of gallons of gas now and then was nothing.

Jacques was happy to go with me. His team had no vehicle. Instead, the legion provided them with bicycles. He rode his

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with the aplomb of a diplomat in a limousine, back ramrod straight, legs stroking the pedals with a determined pump.

"Good for the lungs," he'd breathe heavily, as he locked the bike at its station. But secretly he envied my having a jeep and, on the pretext he might forget how to drive in the next five years he'd be in Pakse, I let him have the vehicle from time to time, more to keep the peace between us. But never out of the city.

This time we were going almost 50 clicks away, a real sojourn for him, and the mention of a real French meal at Cadeaux's house excited him. He brought along several bottles of the best wine he could find.

"I need a French flag, Jacques," I told him. He wanted to know why.

"Roadblocks. The priest says the Pathet are looking for me. With a Tricolor, we'll be French, not American. And you can do the talking."

"So then," he said, his eyes narrowing, "that's why you invite me. You want to sneak up there under the protection of the legion! What if they don't give a damn that you're French or not . . . just start shooting?"

"Aw, come on, Jacques!" I kidded back, "you told me the Lao love and respect the French. They're not going to pot a Frenchman, legionnaire or not. But if you're worried, here." I flipped him a frag grenade. "Take one of these." He fumbled and dropped it, then stooped over to pick it up.

"Maybe you'd better give me one

more," he said.

I gave him two, both of which he managed to squeeze in the front leg pockets of his legion trousers. The third he hung on his belt by the safety spoon. We tied the small French flag to the grill and we were off.

It was a pleasant day, enough clouds in the sky to screen out the hot sun. It had rained that morning, but the road was only slightly muddy. Still, it slowed us down, and I didn't reach Klick Five for almost half an hour. I turned off at the five-shack village of Lao Ngam and started the long climb to Pak Song on the narrow, winding, laterite-topped road. From time to time the jeep flushed a pheasant or a flock of bush grouse, or scattered a troop of monkeys into the trees. I kept the jeep in second, its gears growling at every bend.

We were halfway up when a Pathet carrying an AK-47 stepped from behind some bushes and leveled the weapon. I hit the brakes. More Pathet spilled from the tree line. Jacques tried to brass it out. He stood up, gripping the windshield, and swept his arm across the road.

"Get out of the way!" he yelled in Lao. "We're coming through!"

A comrade, obviously an officer though he wore no insignia, moved to Jacques' side. He kept his AK slung in front of him, his finger on the trigger. His French was beautiful, schoolbook Sorbonne.

"Who are you and where are you going?" he demanded. Jacques looked down his nose at him.

"*Nous sommes Français*," Jacques said haughtily. I tugged at his trouser leg to slow him down. He was acting too much like Charles de Gaulle.

"I can see your flag," the officer said. "You still didn't say where you are going." Jacques gestured up the road.

"Now where in the hell else can I go but Pak Song?" he asked. "We have a hospital there."

"The hospital is Filipino," declared the officer.

"Yes, but I have two doctors and a nurse there," Jacques snorted.

He was right. The staff was French. I covered my mouth and coughed to keep from having to speak. The officer pointed his AK at me.

"You are French too?" he asked, a suspicious tone in his voice.

I nodded, maybe a little too weakly. I was starting to shake inside, as much from the thought of spending the next few years in a bamboo cage as from the wicked-looking working end of the AK-47 shoved under my chin.

If this guy thought I was anything but French, he'd haul my ass out and let Jacques proceed on his own. The Pathet wasn't satisfied with just a nod. He wanted to hear my voice. He prodded me with the AK.

"Can't you speak?" he demanded. I coughed hard.

"He's got the croup," Jacques explained, kicking me in the shin, "but he hasn't lost his tongue. Speak to him!"

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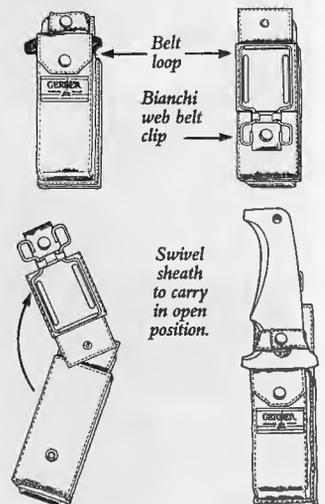
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I coughed a little harder and through it, I spat out a few guttural words in legion *patois*, some German and a little Italian mixed with some half-decent French.

"See!" Jacques beamed. "Legionnaire!"

But it didn't seem to satisfy the officer. He was in midstride to my side of the jeep when Jacques stopped him with an upraised bottle of wine.

"Here," he said, "take it. Have yourself a little drink tonight and let me get on with my business in Pak Song."

The Pathet took the bottle from Jacques, grinning. He also removed the grenade from Jacques' belt, turning it over in his hands as he examined it.

"American," he said. "What are you doing with this?"

"Tigers," Jacques answered, his arms in a Gallic gesture. "We have no rifles."

"That makes you a fool," the Pathet said.

"If I carried a rifle and you stopped me, I might be tempted to shoot," said Jacques, winking back in jest.

"That," smiled the Pathet, "would make you twice the fool." He raised the AK-47 to the level of Jacques' chest and sighted down the barrel. Jacques eased it away from him and the Pathet laughed.

Several other soldiers were moving around the jeep, inspecting it. They unscrewed the caps from the jerry cans, one of water, one of gas. They took the gas. The officer flipped open the glove compartment

and my heart stopped. I'd left a copy of the field manual on Special Forces operations there. He flipped through the pages, studying the illustrations.

"English!" he screwed up his face. "I don't read English. What is this book?"

Jacques took it and studied it for a serious moment.

"A book on military tactics. We use these books in our training. I read it for laughs." He closed the book and handed it back.

"Here, you can have it. It's full of pictures." The officer stuffed the book in his back pocket. He bounced the grenade in the air.

"I'll keep this too. No danger. We haven't seen a tiger in weeks."

"So then," Jacques smiled wryly, "we can go now." It wasn't a question. It was a declaration.

"We are taking your gasoline," the officer said, "and your spare tire." I looked back over my shoulder. Two soldiers were busy trying to figure out how to get the tire off. I jumped out with a tire iron and took it off for them. They rolled it away into the bush. I silently reminded myself that if I ever jumped a Pathet jeep, I'd shoot the hell out of the tires first.

"*Donc*," Jacques said again, "there is nothing else left to give."

The officer eyed my .38. He reached for it and I covered it quickly with my hand.

"*Non! C'est le propriété de France!*" I thought I spoke it well, broad "a" and

swallowing the "nce." He pulled his hand back and shrugged.

"Since you have no other weapons." But he eyed the pistol again and pointed a finger at me.

"Come back this way again with that and I'll take it away for sure. We are not at war with the French, but do not tempt yourself with wearing a pistol." He patted his own. "Mine is Soviet. I can get all I want."

I nodded, relieved. I'll bet he could, too. Jacques sat back down and punched me in the side. He waved his hand up the road.

"*Allons*," he said, as if he meant it, "we go."

I started the engine, dropped the jeep in gear, Jacques waved goodbye and we leaped forward. In the rearview mirror I could see the Pathet soldiers waving goodbye. I didn't look back. Jacques did, gleefully patting his pockets where the other two grenades were stashed.

"Dumb bastards didn't even ask about these," he snorted.

"They probably thought they were your balls!" I said. "Damn! Don't be so arrogant if we get stopped again. That sonuvabitch almost shot you!"

"Perry," he said seriously, "it takes balls to make a trip like this just to get a good French meal. Balls!" he laughed. "They're for soldiers!" He slapped me on the knee. I grinned back.

"Tell me," he asked, "were you afraid?"

"Scared shitless," I said softly. He

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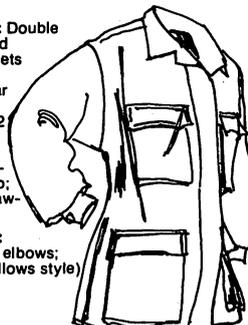
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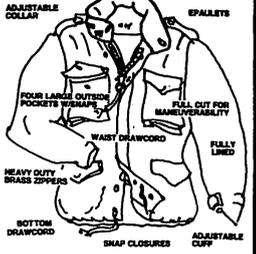
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leaned back, dangling a leg outside, completely relaxed.

"So then," he said, "I'm happy. You owe me one. The legion has just saved your life."

He may have been right about that, but the legion didn't save my spare tire and the five gallons of gas.

"I'll get you a spare from my headquarters. No need to report this to your commandant, *Le Bulle*." He looked puzzled. "Why do you call him *The Bool*?" he asked. I laughed.

"He's got balls," I said, thumping one of the grenades in Jacques' pocket, "just like you. Big ones."

"What would he have done back there?" Jacques wanted to know.

"Shoot probably," I said, "even with an AK at his head. He doesn't speak French. And none of this had better get back to him either, or you and I are gonna tangle assholes."

"*Jamais*, Perry," he said, a sneer working at the corner of his mouth. "My mouth is closed." He made a zipping motion across his lips. I glanced over at him.

"Like hell you say! You've been reporting my tactical training to Savannakhet." He drew back at the accusation.

"Not me. Your Lao Company commander, Sop Non Satt. He even turns me in now and then."

"So then," I used his idiom, "you don't care if we give tactical training? We're only

supposed to be technicians."

He shook his head again.

"I was at Dien Bien Phu. The Minh held me prisoner for seven years. So you teach a few Lao how to kill Minh. I get my revenge from that."

Beudreau still had four years to go on his assignment to Pakse when I left Laos in 1960. He came down to the plane to say goodbye.

"I'm going up to the plateau tomorrow for a month," he told me. There was a twinkle in his eye. "Cadeaux and I struck a deal. I kill the gauer and Mme. Cadeaux makes the sausages for us."

"Where'd you get a vehicle?" I asked, not too sure he hadn't stolen one from the American mission.

"No vehicle. I'll catch the supply plane out of Savannakhet."

I unstrapped the .38 from my waist, holster and Randall knife included, and handed it to him.

"I won't be needing this. Maybe you can find a use for it. I'll get another in Hong Kong."

The present stunned him. He sucked in his breath happily as he strapped on the belt. He grabbed my hand and pumped it.

"*Merci, mon ami! Merci!* I'll see that the Pathets don't take it away! They never shoot at Frenchmen anyway!"

But later in the game, they did start shooting at Frenchmen. Soon, all of the legionnaires were pulled in behind the walls at

Savannakhet and went out only when they were dead serious about killing Pathet Lao.

I hope Jacques Beudreau got a shot or two at a Pathet jeep, especially the tires. ☒

## RUGER'S P-85

*Continued from page 53*

Allow the slide to move forward under control. Align the lug on the slide stop with the disassembly notch on the slide. Press the slide stop from the right side and pull it out of the frame until it locks in its captive position.

To remove the slide stop completely you must lift up its retaining spring. Push the slide assembly forward and remove it from the frame. Lift up the rear end of the guide rod and withdraw it and the recoil spring from the slide. Pull the barrel away from the slide and out to the rear. The extractor can be removed by pulling it slightly away from the slide and forward. Remove the grip panels. No further disassembly should be attempted. Reassemble in the reverse order, making certain the ejector is still down and the hammer is in the uncocked position. Insertion of a magazine will return the ejector to its working position.

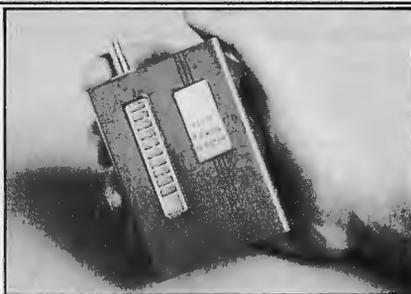
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mine the pistol's performance with as many different types of ammunition as possible and to assess its handling characteristics. Eleven lots of ammunition, ranging from surplus military ball to currently popular commercial loadings, were chosen for SOF's test and evaluation.

Military ball ammunition, all FMJ (Full Metal Jacket), included Israel Military Industries' submachine-gun load with a black-tipped color code (distributed by Action Arms, Ltd., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 9573, Philadelphia, PA 19124), Finnish (headstamped "VPT 44"), British (headstamped "H 'broad arrow' 44. N 9MM IIZ"), Spanish Toledo Arsenal (headstamped "FNT 1952"), Yugoslav ball manufactured at Prvi Partizan Titovo, Uzice in 1960 (headstamped "PPU60 KAL 9mm") and 1983-manufactured Portuguese ball (headstamped "FNM-83-5" with NATO cross in circle).

Commercial ammo consisted of Winchester's 115-gr. Silvertip Hollow Point, Federal's 115-gr. JHP (Jacketed Hollow Point) and three loadings from Black Hills Shooters Supply (Dept. SOF, 3401 South Highway 79, Rapid City, SD 57701): 115-gr. JHP, 115-gr. FMJ and 125-gr. Lead RN (Round Nose).

There were no failures to feed or eject throughout the entire course of the test. In all instances the ejection pattern was approximately 2 feet to the right. With one exception, primer ignition was positive.

Yugoslav 9mm Parabellum ammunition carrying the "PPU60" headstamp has notoriously hard primers. It delivers erratic performance even in the closed-bolt H&K MP5 submachine gun. All of these cartridges required two hits for ignition to occur in the P-85. Except for practice, I cannot recommend their use in any firearm.

Practical accuracy was excellent. At 21 feet, when fired from a strong Weaver hold, our most accurate load, Black Hills' 115-gr. JHP, will consistently group five rounds into a neat 1-inch group.

Handling characteristics are superior to most large-capacity double-action pistols. Grip-to-frame angle is 15 degrees, identical to the Colt M1911A1. With the barrel mounted relatively close to the frame, the axis of recoil is quite low. As a consequence, perceived recoil is mild and there is little muzzle flip. Target re-acquisition on succeeding shots is correspondingly rapid. Those who practice "tap, rack, bang" drills will find most of the slide's corners sufficiently rounded.

This is a simple and reliable design with a minimum of parts and ample strength in critical, stressed areas. One of the P-85's most outstanding features is its price. Ruger's cost-efficient manufacturing techniques have resulted in a suggested retail price of only \$295. If you want a spare magazine and sturdy gray plastic carrying case with padlock, that will set you back another \$30.

Ruger's P-85 slides right into Bianchi's M12 holster — recently adopted by the U.S. Armed Forces. Look for it to stay there. It will also meet with wide approval by the public and cost-conscious law enforcement agencies fed up with \$600 whiz guns. Concealment holsters are already available. My P-85 has been stuffed into a Bruce Nelson #1 Professional (Combat Leather, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 8691 CRB, Tucson, AZ 85738 — catalog, \$3).

Is the Ruger P-85 destined to become our next U.S. service pistol? I'll be surprised if it isn't. ✕

## BURMA

*Continued from page 45*

ning of 29 December, after Karen and Burmese clashes, the Karen intercepted Burmese radio messages ordering a pullback to headquarters, which began the next day. By 31 December, 62 Battalion was reported to have left No. 5 mine area and 31 Battalion was moving slowly and cautiously along the hilltops, apparently circuiting Mae Kasa.

The same day I was driven up to the Mae Kasa mines for a tour of inspection. The situation was quiet and we delivered tobacco and betel-nut supplies to the MNL soldiers dug in on the hillsides. Most were sleeping; some were fishing in the nearby river. Antimony — which looks a bit like

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<p><b>Gerber BMF Knife</b> 8" Bowie blade with chisel tooth saw. Overall length 13". Blade thickness 1/4". Weighs 15 ounces without sheath, 28.5 ounces with. Constructed from carbon surgical stainless steel, hardened to c54-55 Rockwell. Sheath features jeweled compass, attached diamond sharpening hone, Alice clips, belt loop, and more. Retail \$160.00 <b>Sale \$129.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Chronosport</b> The name in divers watches! All black, multi function analog/digital combination, alarm, rotating bezel, sweep second hand, timer, two time zones, more! With nylon strap - Retail \$462.00 <b>Sale \$346.50</b> With bracelet - Retail \$545.00 <b>Sale \$408.75</b></p> 	<p><b>Compact Scuba</b> All in one unit, ready to use! 2 Cubic Foot Capacity cylinder with regulator mounted on top. Includes neoprene belt holder and filler. Overall length 17 1/2", 2 1/2" wide. Use for emergency air supply, short dives, and more! Retail \$175.00 <b>Sale \$139.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Seiko</b> Quality divers watch from a top name! All black with HD black rubber strap. Multi function digital and analog displays. Alarm, two time zones, timer, rotating bezel, sweep second hand, more! Model SPW005. Retail \$350.00 <b>Sale \$264.95</b></p> 
<p><b>Camouflage rubber coated</b> 7X35 with rapid focus, carry case, strap. Measures approx. 7 X 5 X 2". Model 139. <b>\$85.00</b></p> 	<p><b>Camouflage rubber coated</b> 7X50 with rapid focus, carry case, strap. Measures approx. 7 X 8 X 2 1/2". Model 140. <b>\$99.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Black rubber coated</b> Nikon Tropical 7X50, individual focus for each eye, includes special lens covers, strap. Measures approx. 8 1/2 X 8 1/2 X 3". Model 750HIPF. Retail \$630.00 <b>Sale \$399.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Compact Nikon</b> 9X25, with center focus, carry case, strap. Porro prism, measures approx 4 1/2 X 4 X 4 1/4". Model 925CF. Retail \$190.00 <b>Sale \$119.95</b></p> 
<p><b>U.S.TECH SCUBA</b> All American made equipment! Shadow all black BCD with power, pack, large pockets, and more. ARIS series Explorer regulator with ARIS octopus. Datacom double console (PSI/Depth), and Aluminum 80 K cylinder with boot. Retail over \$1000.00 <b>Sale \$579.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Dive Flasher</b> Ideal for diver location, rescue work, or marking. O-Ring sealed. Uses one C cell battery. <b>Waterproof to 150'</b>. Measures approx. 5" X 1 1/4". <b>\$29.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Mini Flash Light</b> Features pocket clip, magnet in butt, transparent housing. Screw down lens to turn on. Very bright. Uses two AAA batteries (included). Overall length 4 3/4", 3/4" wide. By Pelican. <b>\$8.95</b></p> 	<p><b>Mask, Snorkel, Fin Package</b> Graphite black fins with vented blade and open heel, silicone mask with tempered glass, and large bore silicone snorkel. Rugged, high quality, great for snorkeling or SCUBA. Retail \$140.00 <b>Sale \$84.95</b></p> 

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lead — is mined from open-cut scars using bulldozers, though the work had been suspended for the present. Production for 1986 was down from previous years to 500 tons, but with first quality (over 50 percent pure) antimony fetching \$615 (U.S.) a ton in sale to Thai merchants, that's still a substantial contribution to the war coffers.

Thai authorities have been monitoring the border conflict out of concern for any possible spillovers into Thailand. They are prepared to tolerate refugees but not military incursions. The big brass was chopped in for a quick appraisal while two Royal Thai air force L-19 Bird Dogs were stationed at Sangkria, from which the newly constructed road to Three Pagodas served as a convenient airstrip. And, for a while, shotgun-toting Border Patrol Police were checking traffic coming and going from the border.

Whether the Burmese intention is to achieve a military victory over the insurgent forces and push them out of their Three Pagodas base once and for all, or whether it is merely to apply an economic blockade, is yet unclear.

If it is the former (and current dry season conditions favor the continued Burmese presence for at least three months), then the onus is on the attackers to break the stalemate.

The Mon are resigned to their defensive role. Limited military muscle prohibits a major offensive of their own, and the NDF combined force is yet to be blooded. The proposed reunion of the Nai Nonla and Nai Shwe Kyin factions will satisfy the desires of the party and people, but won't tip the military balance very far.

Furthermore, the expanding Thai settlement opposite Three Pagodas township, with its swarm of new buildings under construction, including a "hotel-resort complex" and busloads of Thai tourists, may preclude future Burmese ventures here if this one fails.

That being the case, the Mon may well expect a continuing, if not intensified, offensive. Should the Burmese government fail to dislodge the Mon, the insurgents will remain what they have been in the past: not a tangible threat to the Rangoon regime, but a persistent thorn in the side of the Burmese and a constant reminder of the minority dissatisfactions that are like a plague along the nation's frontiers.

**COMBAT WEAPONCRAFT**

*Continued from page 14*

walls, injuring occupants of adjoining rooms.

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In order for an entry team to be able to arrest and handcuff suspects quickly, most members should carry handguns. There should only be one shotgun, rifle or submachine gun for every five to seven officers.

Finally, getting the door open doesn't necessarily involve breaking it down. Sometimes a little gimmick will get the work done for you. Everything from posing as a delivery man to feigning an auto accident with the suspect's parked car often works in getting the door open and the people out of the house. My personal favorite is to announce something in a muffled voice when the person inside asks "Who is it?" after you've knocked at the door. Invariably, following several requests to repeat your unclear statement, the unsuspecting occupant opens the door to an unmuffled rendition of: "State Narcotics!"

Opening doors by less amicable means without demolishing them has been the subject of considerable experimentation over the years. The grand tradition of narcotics enforcement is, and always has been, kicking in the door. However, this method is also unreliable, slow and likely to place the kicker at risk while standing before the door. Although I have kicked in many doors, I never developed as much power in my foot as there is in a 12-pound sledgehammer or a cement-filled pipe used as a battering ram. Consider using these aids before you risk breaking your ankle or getting shot while poised in front of the door.

Since all doors are different, individualized break-in techniques are needed. Doors of trailer homes, for instance, open outward. No amount of kicking or battering will give you satisfactory results. Wrought-iron gates in front of doors often need the force of a tow truck to pull them off their hinges. If your approach is to kick in the door, be prepared for some surprises. In one particularly successful door kicking that I observed, the suspect was attempting to peer out through the keyhole at the moment the door was kicked in. He had the only black eye I have ever seen with the word "Schlage" clearly imprinted above his eyebrow.

Once inside the house it is important to remain alert to what is happening outside. On one occasion, after searching a house unsuccessfully, a plainclothes member of my team greeted someone who came to the front door and negotiated a drug purchase. After a few minutes, the dealer returned to the house, delivered the goods in the living room, and was promptly

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arrested by the officers who had been hiding in other rooms.

With good planning, group coordination and precise execution, "doing the door" can pay off in even unexpected ways. ✂

**BATTLE BLADES**

*Continued from page 18*

different sharpening situation. The fact is that no sharpening aid that applies a pre-set bevel to a blade will work on all knives all the time. Most such aids will eventually wind up putting a thick, chisel-like edge on your knife if used over a period of time. Some gadgets, such as those with pre-set carbide cutting blades, actually cut a groove along the edge of your knife and will damage a fine edge. These are better left in the kitchen if used at all, for those that do work do so on extremely thin blades.

What if you are one of those people who simply can't sharpen a knife with a handheld stone? There is a solution to your problem, and the guys at Spyderco have the answer. They have developed a couple of sharpening aids that enable you to vary the bevel that is applied from knife to knife. This solves the problem of having a pre-set bevel that will work on a thin blade but not on a thick one, and vice versa.

The first of these Spyderco sharpening aids is a device they call the Tri-Angle Sharpmaker, and it will put a shaving edge on your knife and not screw up the blade. The other is an item they call the Fold-A-Vee Sharpmaker, which is a small unit designed to be carried into the field and used by backpackers. You can reach them by writing Spyderco, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 800, Golden, CO 80402, or by calling 1-800-525-7770.

To sum things up, my personal favorites of the sharpening systems are the India bench stone and the medium Arkansas natural stones. When I am in the field, I carry a pocket-sized medium or soft Arkansas stone or a pocket-sized Spyderco high-alumina ceramic stone of 500-600 grit. I am one of the lucky ones who has never had any difficulty sharpening a knife with a handheld stone, and I prefer the pure simplicity of this method. Not everyone is so fortunate, however, and many people, in their search for a reliable way to sharpen their knives, have chosen to buy sharpening aids, most of which leave a lot to be desired.

It's your money and your knife. Whichever approach you take, get your knife sharp and keep it that way. ✂

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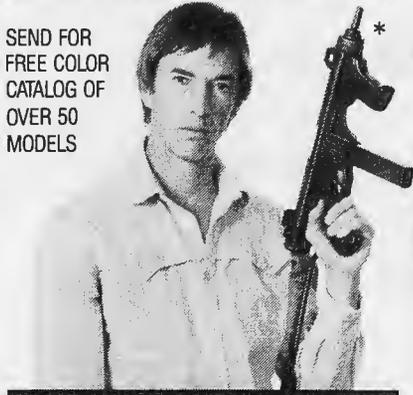
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## SINGLAUB

Continued from page 31

ple who believe in providing support, in trying to make his life a little easier.

SOF: What is in those friendship kits?  
SINGLAUB: Well, it's a bag — it has a toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, razor, shaving cream, soap, insect repellent, water purification, metal mirror, blue bandanna and some hard candy and a Spanish-language Bible.

SOF: Where can people send donations for these freedom fighter kits?

SINGLAUB: They can be sent to the U.S. Council for World Freedom. The address is 2621 East Camelback Road, Suite 145, Phoenix, Arizona 85016. We then package them up and ship them to the contras.

SOF: What caused the collapse of the southern front?

SINGLAUB: The basic thing that caused it was the withdrawal of U.S. support. When logistical support was stopped, it was not physically possible for the private sector to run contra bases with five separate lines of supply. Also, the lack of political cohesion among the various groups. They had a problem accepting their supplies from the FDN. The collapse also was the result of the withdrawal of the advisers. They were more than advisers, as we discussed. They were performing training and support functions, directly developing tactical plans, plus maintenance and medical functions.

SOF: Let's go back again to the Creoles. Does anyone understand why the U.S. government did not take advantage of the fact that along the Atlantic coast there were black, English-speaking Creoles who rose up against the Sandinistas? They were the first organized resistance. Most Americans still don't realize that there are black, English-speaking people in Nicaragua fighting the communists.

SINGLAUB: That's true. One of the problems is the difficulty of supporting them. You have got to get there either by air or by sea. That creates some logistics support problems. We didn't have enough time and talent to provide support for all the other groups. I think it's a crime. Very disappointing.

SOF: The Tower Commission report indicates that there were communications between you and Oliver North about recruiting and deploying former U.S. military trainers to assist the contras.

SINGLAUB: Yes, what about it?

SOF: Was that the SOF training team?

SINGLAUB: That was certainly one of them.

SOF: Were you very successful in getting volunteers?

SINGLAUB: We had more volunteers than we had a capability to support. You've got more guys that want to get into the action than you can accommodate. I've got file folders full of resumes of guys who want to get in the act.

SOF: Early on, the administration justified supporting the contras as a legiti-

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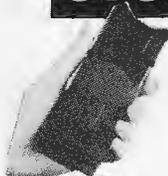
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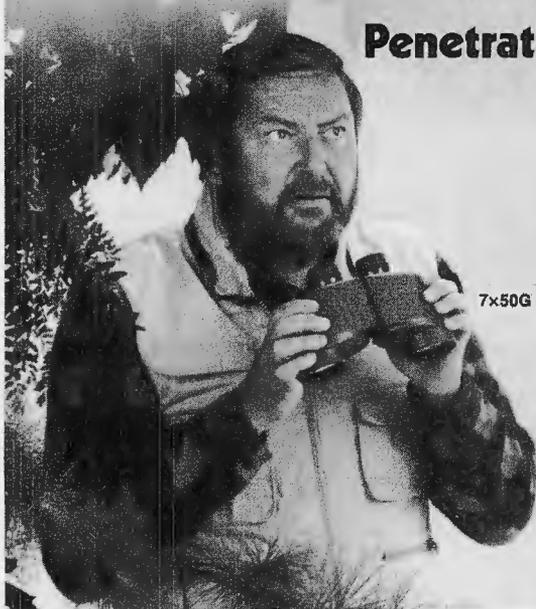
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mate means of interdicting arms shipments to the communists and denied that it was attempting to overthrow the government in Nicaragua. Was this a subterfuge?

**SINGLAUB:** You have to understand that, if we recognize the government of the Sandinistas in Managua, no U.S. government official can afford to say that the object of our program is to overthrow that government. They would be subject to prosecution under the Neutrality Act.

**SOF:** Should we maintain diplomatic relations with Nicaragua?

**SINGLAUB:** No, of course not. I think the United States ought to immediately withdraw recognition from the Sandinistas, isolate Nicaragua to the extent that it can be done by resistance forces and, if that is not sufficient, commit the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force. Completely isolate the battlefield. It is necessary to give the resistance the air defense capability to defend geography and hold airfields and ports inside Nicaragua, so we don't have to rely on operating out of a nearby country.

I think that's one thing Reagan ought to do. If he would take that tack, that would take the heat off of the Iranian thing. There are other things he could do.

**SOF:** Are you talking about a total blockade of Nicaragua?

**SINGLAUB:** Yes. ☒

## FULL AUTO

*Continued from page 28*

body, can be mated with several optional brackets.

A steel plate at the end of the mount serves four functions: It acts as a gas check, applies constant forward pressure to the mount, prevents the bolt from inadvertently falling out and holds the recoil-spring guide rod on PARA models with folding stocks.

Scopes with 1-inch tubes or integral NATO STANAG 2324 mounts can be attached to the A.R.M.S. #5 Multibase, which features multiple eye relief, an iron sight see-through and a quick-detachable, spring-loaded clamping bar with self-locking, captivated thumb-nuts. A lower profile is provided for NATO STANAG-type scopes by use of the #7 A.R.M.S. III Adaptor Bracket, which is also quick-detachable with multiple eye relief. Any of these combinations should bring your FN FAL back down to 2 MOA.

The A.R.M.S. FN FAL mount carries a suggested retail price of \$95. A Paratrooper model with recoil spring guide sells for \$120. A #5 Multibase will set you back \$42. If you don't want an iron sight see-through and prefer a lower profile configuration, then use the #7 A.R.M.S. III Adaptor for \$38. A.R.M.S. also produces excellent mounts for the Heckler & Koch series,

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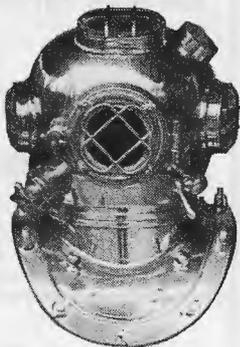
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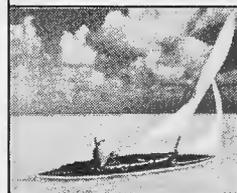
The RZFM-6 scope is set for parallax-free viewing at 300 meters but can be altered by rotating the ocular. The ocular has been fitted with a protective rubber rim. Suggested retail price of the RZFM-6 scope with 1-inch steel tube is \$560. A NATO STANAG 2324 mount with an aluminum scope tube costs \$620. Scope caps are extra. My Peruvian contract FN FAL is equipped with an RZFM-6 NATO STANAG mounting on a #7 A.R.M.S. III Adaptor Bracket attached to the A.R.M.S. FN FAL mount. With match-grade reloads, it will consistently shoot to under 2 MOA.

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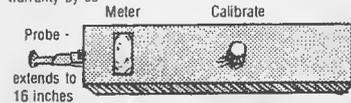
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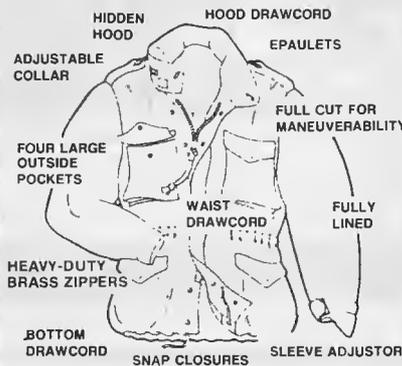
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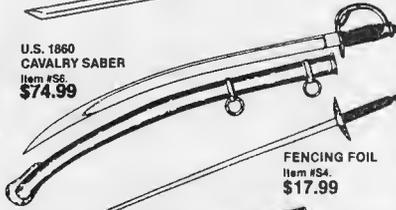
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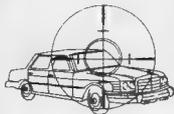
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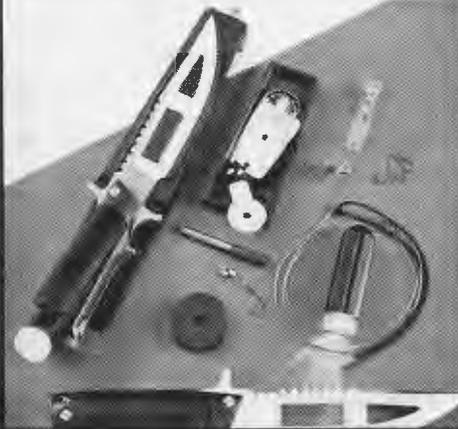
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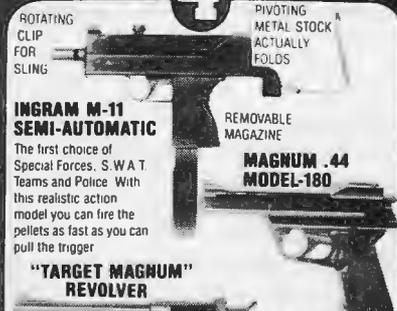


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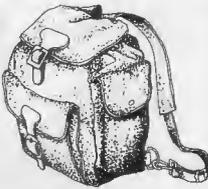
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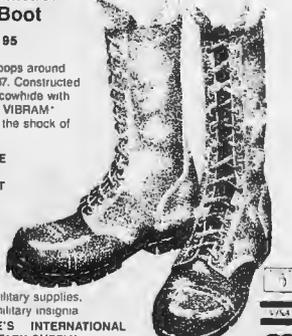
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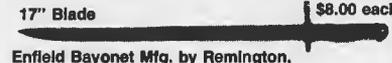
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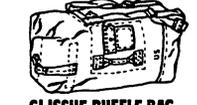
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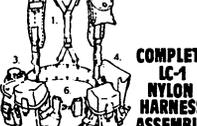
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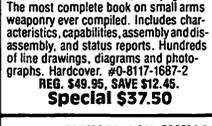
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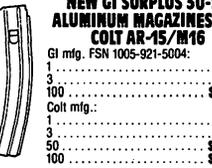
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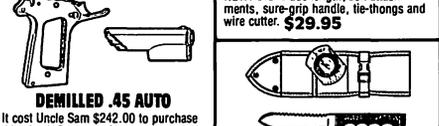
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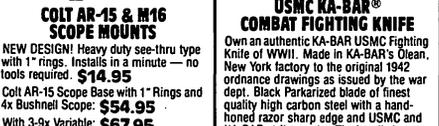
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**NEW M1 CARBINE ACCESSORY KIT**

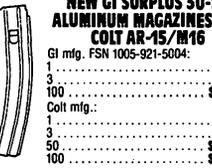
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